



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE FALL 2022

Volume 50, Issue 4



*Remembering
Dr. John W. Neumayr
1930 – 2022*



Welcoming the Class of 2026 on Both Coasts!



“Today You Begin an Enormously Worthwhile Pursuit”

Dr. O'Reilly's Remarks to the Class of 2026

At the beginning of this new school year, it is natural for you to consider why you are here at Thomas Aquinas College. Why are you embarking on a unique course of studies that will occupy you almost entirely for the next few years?

It is a common view nowadays that liberal education is not practical, that a college education should be specialized, and should prepare us for the “real world.” On this view, liberal education might actually seem like a waste of time. How should we judge this claim?

Freshmen will read in a few weeks about Socrates' discussion with Hippocrates and Protagoras. In this dialogue, the young Hippocrates seeks a teacher; he says he is in search of learning that “nourishes the soul.” Protagoras claims that he “educates people.” He denigrates “arithmetic, astronomy, and geometry” (studies that are thought to perfect the mind). He says that he can teach his students something more worthwhile; namely, “the proper management of one's own affairs, how best to run one's household, and the management of public affairs.”

These are very practical goals, but are they the proper goals of education?

Whatever else one might say about liberal education, it is different from practical training. One difference is that liberal education starts with wonder. That is, it is motivated by the question “why?” Practical training is motivated by the question “how?” Liberal education is pursued for the sake of perfecting the mind, for coming to know the “why” of things. In other words, it is ordered to knowing the truth. This is a great goal. For as Christ told us, He is the Truth that makes us free. It is the truth, then, that sets one free and makes it the suitable study of the free man.

Our founding document, which we call the Blue Book, states several key principles that define Thomas Aquinas College. First among these is that there is a natural order of learning and, second, that learning begins with general judgments that are common to all. I know of no other college that states these two principles as the foundation of a genuine liberal education.

Third, and most fundamentally, the Blue Book posits that the intellectual life ought to be “conformed to the teachings of the Christian Faith ... which stand as the beginning of one's endeavors because they guide the intelligence in its activities, and as the end ... because those endeavors are undertaken so that the Divine teachings themselves may be more profoundly understood.” The life of faith, then, is intimately bound up with the curriculum. Our motto sums it up succinctly: “Faith Seeking Understanding.”

So, I hope it is clear that today you begin an enormously worthwhile pursuit. There is nothing frivolous in your efforts, and it is certainly not self-indulgent. Your part will be challenging, but most things worth striving for are.

We, the faculty of Thomas Aquinas College, welcome you, the Class of 2026. It is our hope that you will thrive here. And I pledge that we will do all that we can do to encourage you in these efforts.

May God bless you.



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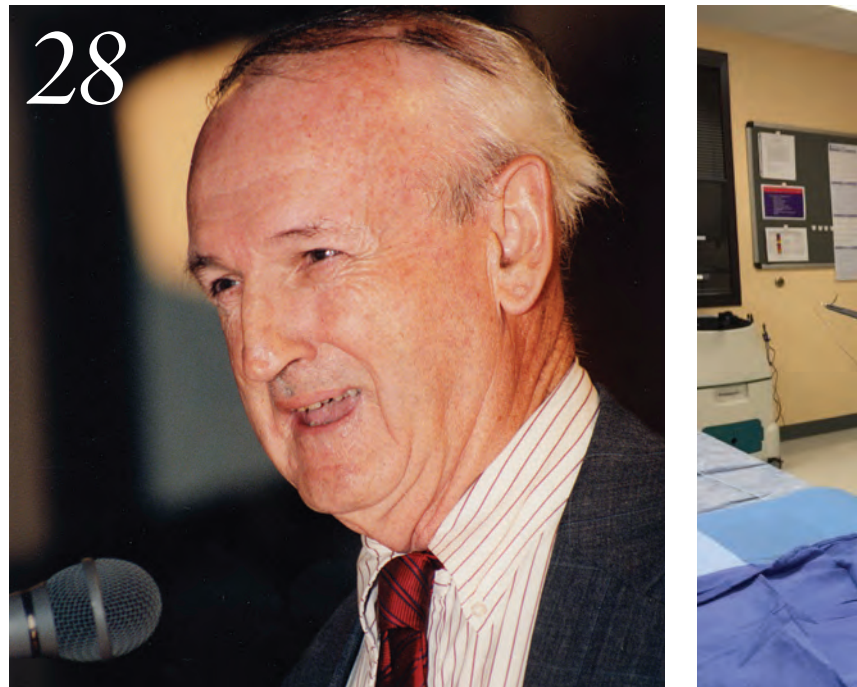
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Convocation 2022

New Year, New Students & Old Friends

ALUMNI PRIESTS RETURN FOR START OF 52ND ACADEMIC YEAR

Witnessing to the fruits of five decades of Catholic liberal education, two alumni priests came to Thomas Aquinas College this summer to mark the start of its 52nd academic year, the fourth on two campuses.

At the College's August 20 Convocation in New England, Rev. John Higgins ('90) — pastor of Holy Cross Church in the Bronx — served as the principal celebrant at the morning's Mass of the Holy Spirit and delivered remarks at the ensuing Matriculation ceremony. Two days later, Rev. Michael Hurley ('99), O.P. — pastor of St. Dominic's Church in San Francisco — reprised the same role in California.

"One of God's many blessings to Thomas Aquinas College over



the years has been the abundance of vocations to the priesthood and religious life among our alumni, some 10 percent," said President Paul J. O'Reilly. "As we move forward into our second half-century, it seemed only fitting to celebrate this bounty by bringing back two of our alumni priests to help start the new year and inspire our students."

Assisted at the altar by chaplains Rev. Greg Markey and Rev. Carlos Viego, Fr. Higgins offered the Mass of the Holy Spirit in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel, petitioning God for a successful school year. "What I think the Lord wants us to do," he said in his homily, "is to fall more in love with this task of encountering His wisdom, His truth, and contemplating it."



Fr. Higgins described how he fell in love with “this task” as a TAC student more than 30 years ago. “I am a cradle Catholic, but my faith was not mine; it was borrowed from my parents’ faith,” he said. Attending the College, however, compelled him to make the Faith his own. “Having been captivated by the truth, I discovered that it is a He ... This led me to consider a vocation of total dedication to God.” He has been living that vocation as a parish priest in the Archdiocese of New York ever since his ordination in 1996.

In California, Fr. Hurley offered the Convocation Mass alongside chaplains Rev. Robert Marczewski and Rev. John Chung in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel — a building that didn’t exist when he was a student in the late 1990s, yet signifies so much of what drew him to the College. “At a time when Catholic schools were not leading with a strong Catholic identity, Thomas Aquinas College was up front about it,” he recalled.

Moreover, it was at the College that he discovered his vocation through the holy example of a Dominican chaplain. “He encountered Scripture with a sense of wonder and a sense of self-effacing humility,” Fr. Hurley reflected. “I thought to myself, ‘That’s the kind of group I could see myself joining.’” Soon after his graduation in 1999, Fr. Hurley would do just that, entering the Dominican Order’s Western Province.

Following the Convocation Masses on both coasts, the Class of



2026 formally matriculated as students at Thomas Aquinas College. Addressing both sets of students, Dr. O’Reilly echoed the alumni priests in stressing that the TAC curriculum is ultimately about encountering the Truth, Who is Christ. “Thomas Aquinas College is not only an academic institution, it is a Catholic academic institution,” he said. “Much could be said about the role of faith as a principle and guide for liberal education. Our motto sums it up succinctly: ‘Faith Seeking Understanding.’”

The Matriculation ceremonies also witnessed the initiation of five new tutors. In New England, Dr. Pierre-Luc Boudreault, Dr. Daniel Gutschke, and Dr. Brett Smith — joined by Dr. Glen Coughlin and Dr. Joshua Lim, who have transferred to the East Coast faculty from California — made the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity. At the California ceremony, new tutors Dr. Ryan Brady and Dr. Charles Robertson would do the same.

“If I had to encapsulate in one word what this time at Thomas Aquinas College, these four years, the gift it was to me, it would be simply this: friendship,” Fr. Hurley told the new freshmen, encouraging the Class of 2026 to make the most of the rich education that lies before them. “May you, with joy, share this precious time together walking hand-in-hand, shoulder to shoulder as friends, toward our ultimate Friend.” ♦



“Let us Fall in Love with this Sacred Mission”

Homily from the 2022 New England Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit

by Rev. John Higgins ('90)
Pastor of Holy Cross Church, Bronx, New York

I hope you will indulge me, to allow a personal anecdote on this auspicious occasion of the Mass of the Holy Spirit to inaugurate the new academic year here at Thomas Aquinas College, New England.

Throughout my early teen years, my dear late father always spoke about the need for a Catholic liberal education based on the Great Books. He was not a college graduate himself; he worked in construction, but it's a need that he sensed. And as my older brother was getting closer to the time of his going away to college and discerning where he should go, my father discovered Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, California. It was exactly what he was looking for. It was amazing. My dear older brother, though he was bribed, did not accept the bribe and did not go. I'm not above a bribe. And I went. What a grace!

All through my father's final years, he was always praying there would exist a Thomas Aquinas College, East. He spoke about it to my archbishop long before he was my archbishop, Cardinal O'Connor. He encouraged Mr. DeLuca from the West Coast campus to come out and look at some college campuses — this was 20 years ago! He never gave up on his idea that there should be a Thom-



quoted St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who said: “I will spend my heaven doing good on earth,” and he went on to say: “If you see a Thomas Aquinas College, East, being founded in the near future, you should know who was praying for it.” The rest, as they say, is history.

The incredible gift from God that is this campus, this college — we're all so honored to be a part of it in one way or another. Just coming here early this morning, the windows open, I was here praying by myself with the Lord, and there was a fly that came in through the open window, and I thought: “Even that fly is lucky to be here in the

presence of the Blessed Sacrament in such a beautiful chapel, on such a beautiful campus, in such an extraordinary initiative of the Holy Spirit.”

Thinking back on my dear daddy's prayer, it's true: The Holy Spirit puts desires and longings into our heart, not to frustrate you, but to satisfy you. So, the words of our responsorial psalm: “Lord, send out Your spirit and renew the face of the earth.” Dear Thomas Aquinas College students and faculty and community: I rejoice that you are part of this work of the Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth

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as Aquinas College, East. When he passed in 2013, at his funeral Mass, the preacher

in a noble and invaluable important work of Catholic liberal education.

At the beginning of this academic year, it's good to invoke the Holy Spirit and ask the Holy Spirit to send into our hearts great and holy desires for passion and love for the truth, to enlighten and guide this academic year. We refer to Him by the Greek name from the Scriptures, the Paraclete, literally "the one whom you call to your side."

We ask the grace of that Holy Spirit to be in us, in the words of our patron, St. Thomas, to make us submissive without protest, poor without discouragement, chaste without regret, patient without complaint, humble without posturing, cheerful without frivolity, mature without gloom, quick witted without flippancy. And he prays, "Grant that I may know what you require me to do." That's what we want the Holy Spirit to help us with this academic year, to keep us focused on our study and our mission. Part of the work of the Holy Spirit, this Paraclete that we call to our side, is to help us understand the greatness of the task that we are about here — in Catholic liberal education.

There is an ancient anecdote about three stone masons, who, centuries ago, were contracted to build one of the great cathedrals of Europe. They were working side by side in the early stages of the construction of the cathedral. All three were placing the lines of mortar on the cut stones and the bricks. The first stone mason was asked, "What are you doing here?" He said: "I'm putting my mortar on these cut stones." The second was asked the same question, "What are you doing?" And he said, "I'm building a wall." The third, in answering the same question, said, "I am building a great cathedral to the glory of God." All three in this ancient anecdote were doing the same thing, but only one understood the greatness of his mission.

We need to have that same perspective of what we are about; to recognize the magnitude of this adventure. And the Holy Spirit helps us to realize that, even in the midst of preparing a prop for Euclid, or Ptolemy, or worse ... Descartes. It's all a part of the glorious work of what we are about here, in

this incalculably great mission.

In the Gospel today, Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit. Why does He rejoice in the Holy Spirit? He rejoices in the marvelous designs of God because He can see

"Part of the work of the Holy Spirit, this Paraclete that we call to our side, is to help us understand the greatness of the task that we are about here."

how the world couldn't capture the depths of God's plan, but the humble and the children did. And that this is God's gracious will, to hide and to reveal. Blessed are our eyes that are able to see the marvelous working of His providence and understand what we are about, to relish it — and this changes everything.

So, put it this way: We could approach what we are about by saying things like: "I've got to do my Euclid homework; I've got to study for finals; I've got to write my Senior Thesis." What I think the Lord wants us to do, though, is to fall more in love with this task of encountering His wisdom, His truth, and contemplating it — what we're about for four years here, and what St. Paul speaks about in the second reading today.



He says, "Hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to us." St. John of the Cross says, "We attain from God as much as we hope for from Him." The measure of God's blessing is not our merits; it's our hope, it's our trust in Him.

I think that was true from my dear dad. He hoped with a kind of certainty that God would bring a Thomas Aquinas College, East Coast, into existence — and that hope was realized. So this Holy Spirit that pours hope and love into our hearts, we ask Him to come and fill us, to enlighten our minds and to fill our hearts with love.

Just one last thought: From the superior of the Jesuits from many years ago — and I think it's especially to be directed to those who might say that Catholic liberal education is not worth it — it's worth it, it's worth it, it's worth it. Let us fall in love with this sacred mission.

To quote Father Arrupe:

"Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the mornings, what you will do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything." ❖

“Ask Mary to Reign in Your Heart”

Homily from the 2022 California Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit

by Rev. Michael Hurley ('99), O.P.
Pastor of St. Dominic's Church, San Francisco, California



By way of introduction, my name is Fr. Michael Hurley. I am an alumnus, and it's delightful to be with you today to celebrate this auspicious Convocation, the beginning of the school year.

Last night, when I arrived on campus, I was warmly greeted by Dr. and Mrs. O'Reilly in the Hacienda. I took the occasion to slip into the Guadalupe Chapel. As I walked into the chapel, the first thing that hit me was that it smelled like the chapel at Thomas Aquinas. There's something about that sense that above all triggers memory. I came in there, and a wave of memories bombarded my mind and my imagination.

I remembered the first time I ever entered into that little chapel down at the Hacienda, 27 years ago, as a freshman. I came, and I got down on my knees — the kneelers seem a little harder these days, or maybe my knees are less flexible. In those days, I came to pour out my heart to Our Lady.

I had just begun freshman year, and it was exciting, an adventure, but I felt like I was swimming in the deep end of the pool. I had failed the writing exam — oh boy! I couldn't have told a Euclid lemma from a lemming. I also remember — this is true confessions! — at the freshman orientation picnic, when someone mentioned that they were so excited to experience Latin, I thought they were making a sly but oblique reference to the chips and salsa. That was my Latin experience!

Last night, I was there, and just thinking about that moment. Subsequently, since in those four years we didn't have this beautiful place of worship, that chapel became a kind of refuge to bring not only the travails

of life, the rigors of those four years, but the triumphs; not only the sorrows, but the joys. And last night, as I was filled with a sense of remembrance, it occurred to me that it wasn't simply a moment of nostalgia, not simply a moment of remembering the past, but a powerful reminder that we do well to begin any endeavor by having recourse to our Blessed Mother.

Are we beginning a new project? Are we beginning a new year? Are we endeavoring something new? Is God's presence going to come alive in a new way in our lives? One place to go, the first place, the essential place, the necessary place: to come to Our Lady.

On this Convocation day, when it is right that we celebrate the traditional Mass of the Holy Spirit, we also celebrate, with the Universal Church, the Queenship of Mary, the octave of the Assumption of Our Lady, body and soul, into heaven. We celebrate the culmination, the crowning, the coronation of she who is now Queen of Heaven and of earth.

This morning, I want to reflect briefly on two aspects of the Queenship of Mary that can help us to help you, to help this college, begin well, to begin this new year in a fruitful way. I want to take two different images to unpack the power of the Blessed Mother, Queen of Heaven.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

The first image, before mentioned: Our Lady of Guadalupe. In some ways it's a capital-S sacramental the Church has been given, because it's not an artist's depiction. We, of course, have no physical description in the Scriptures. But the tilma is — what? We believe it is that miraculous gift of Mary to the Church. It's how Mary has chosen to reveal herself, if you will, to all of us.

I won't get into unpacking the fullness of the miracle of the tilma, but it really is living. It shouldn't exist, it shouldn't still be with us, and yet it is, and there are all sorts of wonderful connections and characteristics of the tilma. But the point is that in the tilma we see a connection between the Queenship of Mary and her role as our mother. Mary is our queen precisely because she is our mother.

It's interesting that early depictions of

Our Lady of Guadalupe will often have a crown on them — in fact, there’s one in the Hacienda. It symbolizes her queenship. I had the great privilege two weeks ago to celebrate, with the whole Dominican chapter in Mexico City, on the feast of holy father Dominic, a Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. If you’ve never been to the Basilica, put it on your bucket list — a powerful place of pilgrimage and of prayer. What I noticed above the tilma is a beautiful crown symbolizing Mary’s queenship.

And this is connected to the Scriptures. We know in ancient Israel, who is the queen? Oftentimes it’s not the spouse of the king, for various reasons, some practical, and others ... well, kings have many wives, like David and Solomon. Your queen is going to be a figurehead, or ceremonial, unless there’s a greater source of unity. As we know, Scripturally, the one who had the power of the queen was who? The mother of the king. Mary, insofar as she is mother to the King of Kings, is queen.

Juan Diego would have known this, because she is dressed as a princess, as royalty. He would have immediately got the connection: “The person who I am encountering is not just some common person, it is royalty, royalty in every way.” And so what does this queen do and ask of Juan Diego, and ask of us? Well, she simply reassures us as a mother. If you know the story, you know that she appears, she asks Juan to be an advocate, to have a great basilica — a place of healing, unity, and prayer for all peoples — be built. And he says, “I’m not the right person! I don’t have the social connections, I don’t have the political connections. I’m the wrong person!”

His fears are, perhaps, confirmed when the bishop says, to paraphrase, “Don’t call us, we’ll call you.” He puts him off. And then, to top it all off, his uncle becomes gravely ill. And so he avoids the place



Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, from Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel

she appeared to him before — he literally walks around the mountain in Mexico City. And in that moment, we have the message of Guadalupe, the queen, the mother. She says, “My little Juanito, Diegito, am I not your mother? Are you not under my care and protection? Do not be afraid. Do not be anxious. Am I not the source of your joy?”

Precisely because she is queen, she can be our mother. As mother to the king, her queenship gives us a kind of intimacy to her maternal care for us. As you begin this school year, then, have recourse to Mary, queen of the world and mother of your life.

Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom

This leads to the second image, perhaps more proximate to the specific goal of this college, and that is “faith seeking understanding,” in its most general sense. Last night, as I exited from that Guadalupe Chapel, I noticed something that I hadn’t ever really noticed before — I don’t know if the light just hit it right; I don’t even know if it was there 27 years ago. I noticed a bronze icon of Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. A Byzantine almond-shaped presence of divinity, and there Mary is as queen. And because she is queen, she is the seat of wisdom, the place of all intellectual illumination, insofar as wisdom is both a moral virtue, a cardinal virtue; but also a supernatural, a gift of the Holy Spirit. She is an image for precisely what this college is all about: the pursuit of wisdom, the pursuit of

nothing less than the truth.

All of your academic endeavors, as students, as tutors, as those who are involved in administration, whatever your specific role or vocation is at this college, it is in pursuit of what? Wisdom. Who better to lead us to that wisdom than Mary, the very place, the very seat of wisdom?

Make no mistake. What’s the Gospel about? What does Jesus say? He says, “Father, I give you

praise.” Why? “Because you have made it hard to find wisdom,” to paraphrase. The pursuit of wisdom is difficult. Those who think they are wise and learned, guess what? They end up with a kind of opinion, they end up with buzzwords and fads. They don’t end up with the presence of truth, which is not just an idea; Wisdom, which is not just thought, but which is a person.

“All of your academic endeavors, as students, as tutors, as those who are involved in administration, whatever your specific role or vocation is at this college, it is in pursuit of what? Wisdom.”

The truth is a person. Wisdom is the discovery, the encounter with the person of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. And so He says, “Blessed are you who see, and many longed to see but didn’t see it. Blessed are you who hear.” So how can we hear, how can we see?

We go to the Blessed Mother, seat of wisdom, because that’s where the Lord is. Put it this way: In the pursuit of wisdom, we seek the seat of wisdom precisely because God Himself sought Mary herself to be the place of His incarnate wisdom.

I’m just noticing this now: We have an image of Mary, Seat of Wisdom, as you exit this chapel! From here, it has almost Guadalupian colors and the crown. As we, in this place, worship the Lord, as we are fed by the Lord, we have recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth, Mother, and Seat of Wisdom.

As you depart from this place, as you are filled with the Holy Spirit and the living bread of angels, glance up and invoke Our Lady to be your queen. Ask her to reign in your heart. Dedicate this year under the auspices of her mantle. Let her be your mother. Let her help us to seek for the fullness of wisdom. Amen. ❖

Meet the Freshmen

Varied Paths Bring Class of 2026 to Thomas Aquinas College

Among the 155 members of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2026 are students from 34 states and seven countries, including 84 alumni of the High School Summer Program. And while most of the freshmen are the first in their family to attend the College, some 28 percent are the children of alumni, and a few represent a new but quickly growing cohort: third-generation TAC students.

It's an extraordinary class that merits a closer look ...

Pete Rondeau (CA'26)

When Assistant Dean Travis Cooper called members of the Class of 2026 to sign the College's student registry at the California Matriculation in August, one name drew thunderous applause and a standing ovation. Peter Rondeau (CA'26) is beginning his time at Thomas Aquinas College at the age of 61,



recently retired from globe-spanning military and civilian careers.

That Mr. Rondeau would enrich his retirement by pursuing Catholic liberal education would have surprised his younger self. Born and raised in Florida, his early years were not marked by academic rigor. "I was a horrible student!" he admits. "After graduating high school in 1979, I said, 'Great! I'll never have to

go to school again in my life!'" Yet within three months he was enrolled in a local community college, studying electronics.

Two years later, Mr. Rondeau changed careers by enlisting in the United States Marine Corps, where he studied Russian and became a Russian linguist. In the late 1980s, when the United States and the Soviet Union began pursuing nuclear arms reduction, he served his country as a nuclear arms control inspector. After leaving the Marines in 1993, he spent some time designing and installing security systems for museums before embarking on a decades-long career in construction management.

When Mr. Rondeau retired in November 2021, he began thinking about what to do next: "When I used to daydream about, 'What would I do if I won the lottery?', the answer had always been, 'I'd go back to school.' Well, now it was time to put up or shut up."

His quest ultimately brought him to Thomas Aquinas College in search of some "brain-stretching" — which he has found in abundance. "I go into class with a very clear idea of where I stand on a topic, and what it means," he says. "Then one of my fellow students just blows me out of the water. He says something, and I'm thinking, 'I never really thought about it like that.'"

So far, Mr. Rondeau is greatly enjoying his unconventional retirement. "When I boil it down," he laughs, "my options were either to hang around a bunch of disillusioned old guys, talking about blood-pressure medication and government conspiracy theories, or hang around a bunch of bright, inquisitive young minds and have them force me to talk about and explore stuff that I wouldn't have come across otherwise."

"My options were either to hang around a bunch of disillusioned old guys, talking about blood-pressure medication and government conspiracy theories, or hang around a bunch of bright, inquisitive young minds."

As evidenced by the applause he received at Matriculation, his fellow students are glad to count him among their own. "I was inspired by him choosing to do this for his retirement," says Carrie Armstrong (CA'25). "Whenever I get bogged down with so many assignments, I try to remind myself that he's doing this as something that's not work; this is actually leisure. He's doing it as something good." ❖

Liam O'Brien (NE'26)

Liam O'Brien (NE'26) comes to Thomas Aquinas College from Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin, by way of the tough streets of downtown Denver, Colorado. After high school, he ministered to the homeless for a year, submitting his heart to service — and, perhaps unexpectedly, preparing himself for the four-year adventure he has now just begun.

It all began with a fateful conversation with his mother, Cecilia (Johnson '92). "My parents encourage us to take gap years, which has worked out great for my older siblings," says Liam.

“Approaching the most broken in society, I was able to see in my own ways that I was broken, too.”

But he already knew that he wanted to attend Thomas Aquinas College. Why wait? “I went to my mom at the end of my senior year and said, ‘I just want to go to college.’ But she said, ‘No, you’re going to do a gap year.’” Relenting at last, he asked with some exasperation, “Well, what am I going to *do*?” His mother



responded, “You should look into Christ in the City,” an apostolate devoted to bringing Christ to the homeless of Denver.

Dubious, Liam applied. It would change his life.

In 2021 he began a one-year commitment as a Christ in the City missionary. It was a rich, sometimes difficult time. “We walked the same street every

day, so I would see the same people almost daily,” he says. Spending time with these men and women soon had its effect. “Approaching the most broken in society, I was able to see in my own ways that I was broken, too,” he says. “I formed real friendships with these people; our relationships shifted from me serving them to both of us giving to each other.”

After eight months of service, Liam had reaped such fruit from his time in Denver that he was seriously considering a second year. But in March 2022, he visited his sister Norah (NE’24) at Thomas Aquinas College, New England. “All through that visit, people would ask, ‘Are you coming here next year?’” he remembers. “Maybe the year after,” he would answer evasively. When he returned to Denver, the question kept echoing in his mind, and he applied to the College within a week.

Well into his freshman year, Liam is grateful for the roundabout path that led him to Thomas Aquinas College. Although it was difficult to leave his friends at Christ in the City, he understands that the same faith that animated him as a missionary remains to shape his new life as a student: “At the center of both communities is wanting to know God and His creation better.” In gratitude for his year of growth and his enriched perspective, he adds with a smile, “I’m forever thankful that my parents forced my hand with the gap year.” ❖

Rose Grimm (CA’26)

After 50 years of pursuing its educational mission, Thomas Aquinas College is beginning to show its age in the best way: It has begun welcoming third-generation students, as the grand-

children of its earliest alumni reach college age. Matriculating on the California campus this year was one of the first five known legacy grandchildren to date, Rose Grimm (CA’26) of Peoria, Arizona, who is honored to carry on her family’s legacy.



Rose’s grandparents on both sides attended the College in the late 1970s. As students, Rosalind (Teichert) and Daniel Grimm (both ’76) were friends with Kathleen (Kraychy ’78) and Carl Sauder (’77). Little could the two couples have known, though, that some 20 years later they would be even more closely united, by marriage. Their children Bill Grimm (’02) and Margaret Sauder (’03) wed not long after their TAC graduations and soon welcomed their first child — Rose.

Since the College “runs in the family,” it would be easy to imagine Rose rebelliously forging her own path elsewhere, but she is thrilled to be following in her parents’ and grandparents’ footsteps. In 2020 she attended the High School Summer Program to experience firsthand the life and place that has enchanted her family for decades. Almost immediately, she was at ease with the College’s curriculum and pedagogy.

“I’m a big talker, so being silent for long stretches of time doesn’t agree with me,” she laughs. Accordingly, Rose found the Discussion Method an optimal fit. “When you talk about the

“I used to look forward to the weekend. But now, I can’t wait to have class again! That’s a new thing for me.”

things that you’re learning, it clicks in your head. You understand why something is so, instead of just being told.”

Although only a few months have elapsed, Rose has already found her freshman year at the College transformative. She has fallen in love with mathematics, for instance, which in high school had seemed impossible. “Euclid is logical,” she says. “Instead of just memorizing theorems, you get to see why it works; you get a feeling of power from demonstrating a prop and knowing you did it well.” This changed attitude is only one sign of the manifold growth of mind and spirit watered by each day’s studies. “I used to look forward to the weekend,” Rose reflects. “But now, I can’t wait to have class again! That’s a new thing for me.”

It is new for Rose, just as it was new for her parents in their time, and her grandparents in theirs: Truth is timeless, and its fruit always fresh. ❖

“What I Did Over Summer Vacation”

Students Share the Gift of their Education and Plan for their Futures

Josefine Sedler (CA'26)

For the past two summers, Josefine Sedler (CA'26) has interned at FATHOMWERX, a makerspace at Naval Base Ventura County, most recently in its Science and Engineering Apprenticeship Program.



“As an intern, I met people working on a wide variety of projects, from heavy-weight lifting drones to augmented reality training procedures,” she says. “My work was mainly with the 3D printers. I learned to use 3D modeling software to design a custom, 3D-printable GoPro mount. Its purpose was to make a ship’s smokestack inspection easier.”

“My work was mainly with the 3D printers. I learned to use 3D modeling software to design a custom, 3D-printable GoPro mount.”

Gradually, she brought her design to life, watching it evolve from computerized model to tangible prototype. “A highlight of the summer was when I was allowed to go inside the ship’s smokestacks to test the camera mount myself!”

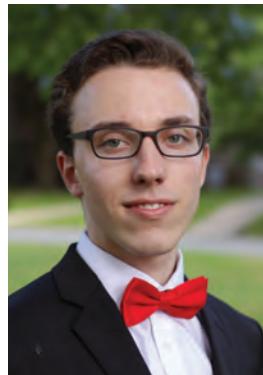
Josefine has long had a penchant for engineering of all kinds — but given all

those kinds, she was grateful for the sense of direction that the internship gave her. “The hands-on work experience has been very helpful for showing me what engineering is really like,” she notes, “and for giving me a better idea of the specific type of engineering I am interested in.” ❖

Ian Talty (NE'25)

The summer of 2022 sent waves throughout the world of pro-life legal activism, and Ian Talty (NE'25) caught those waves while working with lawyers in and around Chicago.

Among other duties, he helped to organize the Law of Life Summit in Schaumburg, Illinois, an event sponsored by attorney Royce Hood. “The event got a bunch of politicians and lawyers together to talk policy,” he says. “It was right around the time that the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, so the energy was very exciting.”



After the historic *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision, the Thomas More Society, a non-profit national interest law firm, began working to enact pro-life legislation across the nation, and Ian aided in the effort. “I organized information about abortion statutes in all 50 states and D.C., explaining what they were at the time *Roe* was overturned,” he says. “I wrote it up in a document and put it onto an interactive map on their website.”

With many years of discernment still ahead, Ian is unsure whether he wants to pursue a career in law, but he was grateful

for his experience. “I enjoyed working with the lawyers for good causes.” ❖

Ashleigh Meyers (CA'23)

“I did a wide array of work: setting up an exhibit, cataloging artifacts, and digitizing photos and negatives,” reflects Ashleigh Meyers (CA'23), one of two research



fellows at the Kern County Museum in Bakersfield, California, this summer. “I learned so much local history I had never heard of, which was wonderful!”

Ashleigh’s responsibilities included scouring the museum’s archives to find materials for research scholars, which could be a complicated task. “One project asked for photos of Dustbowl migrants, and there wasn’t a folder dedicated to that specifically,” she notes. “Instead, I had to research where the migrants had settled, what work they did, and corroborate the date to those areas to find the right folders; eventually, I was able to find the photos requested.”

Ashleigh returns to campus with a renewed appreciation for liberal education. “I was able to directly see how my communication skills from the College benefitted me while working with others, which has definitely boosted my confidence for speaking in class,” she says. Working at the museum also “solidified my passion for history — so much so that I am planning on writing my Senior Thesis on one of the history books, specifically *The Landmark Herodotus*, that we read here at the College.” ❖

Serafin Olguin (CA'23)

Page and Turnbull, a historical-preservation architecture firm in Sacramento, California, welcomed Serafin Olguin (CA'23) as one of its interns this summer. "I worked closely with the architects and historians at the firm," he says. Among his responsibilities, he "helped by writing reports, reviewing architectural plans, and doing historical research for the various projects."



One of the firm's projects is designing a new wing for the California State Capitol. "I was able to go with the architects to the State Capitol and inspect the projects that they had done in the past, as well as learn about their upcoming projects," he reports. Though he initially found the work overwhelming, "my experience at TAC helped me to take a step back and understand the larger picture before tackling these projects head on."

Serafin enjoyed discussing that larger picture with the firm's architects, especially because he is writing his Senior Thesis about architecture. "They listened to what I had learned in philosophy and theology at TAC, and how I thought they might relate to architecture. Not only did they help me by listening and sharing their ideas; their general attitude and motivation toward their work inspired me and made me happy to work with them." ♦

"They listened to what I had learned in philosophy and theology at TAC, and how I thought they might relate to architecture."

New Mexico Shrine-Builders



How many college students spend their summers acquiring proficiency building with traditional adobe? That's just what the past months taught five Thomas Aquinas College students from both coasts. Paul Dinan (NE'23), Casey Kirk (NE'23), Paul Lessard (CA'24), Jack Haggard (CA'24), and Christopher McCann (NE'24) were among 22 young Catholic men who traveled to Gallup, New Mexico, to volunteer their labor for the Saint Kateri Rosary Walk.

"New Mexico has an old and unique blend of cultures — strong Spanish Catholic roots intertwined with Pueblo Indian, to the point that you don't always know what's Indian and what's Spanish," says Mr. Lessard. The Rosary Walk and Shrine respects that blended culture: Its structures feature Spanish

mission architecture, built from traditional adobe, and it is dedicated to the first canonized Native American.

Volunteers spent the summer building individual shrines commemorating each mystery of the Rosary. "The work was hard in the best sense," recalls Mr. Dinan. "Along with the grime came a great thrill, knowing that we would all come back in 20 years and show our families the spots where we worked and the structures we built."

Their shared life and labor in the desert provided the volunteers with manifold opportunities for spiritual growth. "It felt surreal at times," Mr. Dinan observes, "everyone from a different part of the country there in the stark, barren desert of New Mexico, trying to find Christ and show Him to others." ♦

Nancy Reichert (CA'23)

It was a choice between interning at a law firm in Washington, D.C., and ministering to the homeless — and Nancy Reichert (CA'23) chose what Scripture calls “the



better part.” She worked in Denver, Colorado, with an organization called Christ in the City. “We would go out onto some of the most dangerous and populated streets of Denver with a team of four missionaries, and just meet the men and women who called that street home.”

“We would go out onto some of the most dangerous and populated streets of Denver with a team of four missionaries, and just meet the men and women who called that street home.”

Recognizing each person’s dignity, however, had unexpected costs. “It was hard to see people I had genuinely become close to, covered in bruises and cuts from a fight they had the night before over a place to sleep,” Nancy says. “It was surprisingly easy to love the homeless, but it was hard because we wanted better for them.”

She still maintains contact with some of her new friends on the streets of Denver. “It’s easy for me to get bogged down in how much homework I have, but if my friend James can be grateful for an old, crushed Nutri-Grain bar that I gave him because it’s all I had in my backpack,” she remarks, “I can only imagine the things in my own life that I have been taking for granted.” ❖

Tanner Sheffield (NE'23)

“TAC has equipped me with a knowledge of, and therefore a love of, the liberal arts,” says Tanner Sheffield (NE'23). That newfound love Tanner to help launch a Chester-



ton Academy at his parish in Yuba City, California, this past summer. “There isn’t much presence of a liberal education in my

hometown,” he says. “Helping to get the school off the ground is a concrete way to further TAC’s founding vision of bringing the education offered at TAC into the world.”

Thanks, in part, to Tanner’s efforts, the Chesterton Academy of the Most Holy Eucharist opened its doors this fall. After his graduation next May, he hopes to return through those doors as a teacher, “if both God and the headmaster are willing.”

In addition to shaping his future plans, Tanner’s work this summer has given new impetus to his studies. “If I am to teach the liberal arts, then my grasp of TAC’s curriculum is of paramount importance,” he observes. “This new perspective has redoubled my enthusiasm for the curriculum. There is now an immediate practical effect for me contained in the speculative end of the sciences we study here at TAC.” ❖

Sophie Cummings (CA'23)

The World Youth Alliance (WYA), where Sophie Cummings (CA'23) interned this summer, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the worldwide defense of human dignity. “The core of the program was a course on human dignity as the foundation of human rights. It was an amazing complement to the Junior

Norah O'Brien (NE'24) and Gabrielle Margand (NE'24)

“Growing up in Yonkers, New York, farm life was a foreign concept to me,” laughs Gabrielle Margand (NE'24). That changed this summer, when she joined classmate Norah O'Brien (NE'24) in Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin, where they worked as farmhands.

“I’d read Virgil’s *Georgics* and was drawn to the bucolic picture he painted,” says Gabrielle. Day one in the fields dispelled her agrarian illusions. “Hoe in hand, we dug rhubarb for eight hours in the Wisconsin sun — a colossal feat for my flabby scholar’s body,” she laughs. Even Norah, a veteran farmer, struggled initially. “Being at school for the last two years, I seem to have only held onto the romance of my childhood

days growing up on a farm,” she muses.

The friends took their hardships in cheerful stride, and



ultimately returned to the College with calloused hands and a fresh perspective. “Surrounded by miles of Wisconsin countryside, I was often accompanied only by my own thoughts,” says Gabrielle. “I found time to pray and contemplate as I worked, a habit I’ve tried to carry into the school year.” For Norah, the return to farm work brought a renewed sense of satisfaction. “We were tending the food that would feed families and make for

good conversation over dinner tables,” she reflects. “Those are the places that keep the world going around.” ❖

Year curriculum of TAC, asking how man can be happy and what is the purpose of society. Through WYA, I learned about these questions from a political angle.”



Sophie’s learning was more than merely speculative. “The most memorable part of the summer was attending a political forum at the UN headquarters in New York City,” she notes. “I attended on WYA’s behalf, monitoring for anything being proposed that was contrary to human dignity, and I wrote reports of each conference I attended.”

The WYA convinced Sophie that liberal education has an undeniably practical value. “I saw what a great need there is for clear thinking motivated by charity, and how many stimulating avenues there are to use it. If the world cannot agree on basic principles about man and society, we will not be able to agree on practical measures to govern ourselves. It is key to have a foundation which is rooted in the natural law.” ❖

Ambrose Terneus (CA’24)

“I didn’t have much background in coding,” says Ambrose Terneus (CA’24). “But in the summer of 2021 I spent a week or two taking intensive coding courses



on the Internet, and I continued that over Christmas break.” This summer, taking advantage of those scattered forays into the field, Ambrose took his coding skills to another level, developing algorithms for Anchor Group, a software consulting and development company based in Wisconsin.

Ambrose relished the opportunity to hone his craft. “I built an algorithm that calculated shipping costs,” he says. “If a client

goes to an e-commerce website and plugs in an order for certain items, the algorithm will calculate the smallest number and smallest size of the necessary boxes, based on the dimensions and weight of the items, and then send those calculations to a third-party shipping company to get the rates.”

His formation at the College, especially studying Euclid’s *Elements* as a freshman, has contributed to Ambrose’s affinity for coding. “Trying to figure out how Euclid develops a proposition, rather than just memorizing what he says, rewires your brain and trains it to think logically,” he says. “I think that helped me learn to code more quickly and efficiently.” ❖

Katelyn Woods (CA’25)

“Geriatric care has been on my list of possible careers because the dynamic between youth and the elderly is so beautiful,” reflects Katelyn Woods (CA’25). “When my grandfather



was diagnosed with cerebral dementia, it seemed like the perfect time to try out that sort of job for myself.” Thus Katelyn spent her summer working in the activities department for the memory-care unit at her grandfather’s nursing home.

In that capacity, she organized events for residents — to whom she also provided a listening ear. “Emotional outbursts aren’t uncommon in memory care. I had to learn to handle them on the spot, since each resident should be helped differently,” she says. In those moments, she found herself marshaling habits she acquired in her TAC classroom discussions. “If I learned anything during freshman year, it was how to think on my feet! Every class brings unexpected ideas and intellectual challenges.”

Katelyn also learned much from the residents she served. “One woman with intermediate Alzheimer’s read the same book about French art every few days,” she recalls. “She’d tell me about it all day,

carrying it with her from room to room. She was absolutely delighted to learn more about the beauty in the world and never failed to be interested in it. I try to think of her when faced with my schoolwork.” ❖

Thomas Costa (CA’23)

When Dr. Gavin Colvert, head of school at Stella Maris Academy in San Francisco, visited the California campus last year to recruit seniors for teaching positions,



he was approached by a junior with a different idea. Thinking ahead, Thomas Costa (CA’23) was wondering if teaching could be in his future — and if a summer in the classroom may be a good way to find out.

That inquiry led to a summerlong internship which focused on developing essential teaching and classroom skills. “Different students learn in different ways,” says Thomas, reflecting on his experience. “I had to learn to think more in terms of ‘How would *this* student more easily understand this?’ rather than simply, ‘How am I going to present this?’”

“It’s important to learn how other people think so I can broaden my own horizons.”

Coming to better understand the art of teaching has also had ramifications for Thomas’s approach to *learning* in the College’s classroom discussions. “What makes sense to me in my mind may not make sense to someone else in the same way. It’s important to learn how different people in class think, so as to convey my thoughts to them more clearly,” he says. “This works in reverse as well. It’s important to learn how other people think so I can broaden my own horizons to more easily receive what they’re saying.” ❖



One Program Two Coasts

RECENT EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

New President Confronts New Atheists

 Thomas Aquinas College's new president, Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly, presented the opening installment of the St. Vincent de Paul Lecture & Concert Series on both campuses this year, speaking on the subject: "What the New Atheists Can Teach Us About Our Program."

"As the position of the New Atheists becomes more and more embedded in our culture, it will be difficult to undo the intellectual customs and prejudices of those who have absorbed their rhetoric," said Dr. O'Reilly. Yet TAC students, he continued, can be the antidote to this cultural malady. "You are learning to consider and defend first principles. You understand the different kinds of arguments. You understand where philosophy and theology begin and end."




"The unique program at TAC prepares us well to learn from the mistakes of the New Atheists."

Drawing on authors covered in the College's classical curriculum — most notably St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas — Dr. O'Reilly proceeded to refute the three principal objections that prominent atheists such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris raise against the Christian faith: Evil cannot exist in a world ruled by a good and omnipotent deity, natural principles alone can account for the existence of the universe, and Sacred Scripture is merely the recycled mythology of older religions.

"The unique program at TAC prepares us well to learn from the mistakes of the New Atheists," Dr. O'Reilly argued, noting that works such as the Book of Job and *The Brothers Karamazov* reckon with the problem of evil, that the work of great mathematicians and philosophers exposes the flaws in the New Atheists' methodology, and that rigorous study of the Scriptures and Church fathers will quickly dispel the New Atheists' facile caricatures. "By immersing ourselves in the program, we can become the new evangelists," he concluded. "We can do our part to 'renew the face of the earth.'" ❖

Friends & Family Gather for Alumni & Parent Day

 Whether coming to visit their children or to catch up with old friends, hundreds of members of the Thomas Aquinas College family traveled to the New England campus on September 10 for fellowship, scholarship, and fun at Alumni & Parent Day. The annual event included Mass in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel and a tour of the campus, as well as lunch under a giant tent on the Gould Lawn and seminars on the College's founding and governing document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*.

At that night's dinner, President Paul J. O'Reilly addressed parents and alumni. "It's important to build a building with a strong foundation," he said of the College's program of Catholic liberal education. "That's what TAC does: We give you a strong foundation to build on throughout your life." Dr. O'Reilly then took questions, which included topics such as the number of alumni in religious life, growth plans for the New England campus, and the College's Great Books curriculum.

"The Alumni & Parent Day in New England was a huge success; it was in fact a slice of heaven," said Parents' Association President Paula Cummings. "Everything was wonderful — the beautiful Mass, the lovely weather, the hospitality, and the camaraderie among the alumni, parents, students, tutors, and administrators. The addition of the parent and student seminar, discussing the Blue Book, was a wonderful glimpse at the teaching methodology in action and a reminder of the enlightened mission of TAC." ❖



College Guides

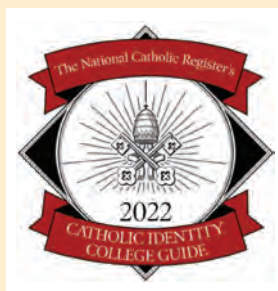
TAC Tops Both Secular & Catholic Rankings for 2022-23

• **The Princeton Review** places Thomas Aquinas College within the top 15 percent of four-year colleges in 2023, naming it one of *The Best 388 Colleges* in the United States. The guide gives the College scores of 91 for academics, 93 for quality of life, and 96 for financial aid. It additionally lists the College on a number of “Top 25” lists, including No. 1 for “Most Religious Students,” No. 3 for “Their Students Love Their College,” No. 4 for “Best Classroom Experience,” and No. 8 for “Happiest Students.”



• Of the 201 “Best American Liberal Arts Colleges” that appear in *U.S. News and World Report’s* 2023 rankings, Thomas Aquinas College is one of only two Catholic schools to crack the top 50 (No. 45) and one of only six to make the top 100. It is also the only Catholic institution to crack the top 25 for “social mobility,” based on the number of low-income students admitted. The guide further ranks TAC first in the country for the highest proportion of classes under 20 students (100 percent) and the lowest proportion of classes with more than 50 students (0 percent).

• The **National Catholic Register** has selected Thomas Aquinas College as one of only 43 faithfully Catholic colleges and universities included in its “Catholic Identity College Guide 2022.” The guide is based on the schools’ responses to 10 questions which, the *Register* explains, are designed such that “a ‘YES’ answer reflects essential elements of the renewal of Catholic identity called for by Pope St. John Paul II’s 1990 apostolic constitution on higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Out of the Heart of the Church), its 2000 ‘Application to the United States,’ canon law, and other relevant Church documents.”



• **Washington Monthly**, which rates schools “based on what they are doing for the country,” considered some 1,739 colleges and universities nationwide for its 2022 list. Thomas Aquinas College ranks in the top 100 among liberal arts colleges, at No. 69. The College also ranks at No. 34 on the magazine’s list of schools that offer the “Best Bang for the Buck” in the Western U.S.

To read these and other reviews in full, see thomasaquinas.edu/reviews. ❖

College Hosts Academic Conferences on Both Coasts

Strengthening the bonds between contemporary Thomists, Thomas Aquinas College, California, hosted some 60 participants at its first-ever Thomistic Summer Conference from June 16 to 19. The conference was an opportunity for fellow Thomists to meet, share their ideas, and think together about how the Angelic Doctor’s thought can face the challenges of modern philosophy and modern science. Papers included “*Libertas*: Divine Law and the Nature of Liberalism”; “The Physics of a Natural Philosopher: Pierre Duhem and Charles De Koninck on Science, Philosophy, and Faith”; and “Jordan Peterson, God, and Christianity.”




The following weekend, Thomas Aquinas College, New England, hosted the 2022 conference of the Sacra Doctrina Project, “Grace and Sanctification: Divine Causality, Human Action, and Supernatural Glory.” At the conference, attendees wrestled with questions raised by Christ’s redemption of the world and the Church’s mission of perpetuating that redemption through subsequent history. What does the undeniable need for redemption say about human nature’s relationship to the supernatural? Does sanctifying grace abolish or elevate human freedom? And what can we say about the beatific perfection of the next life?

“It’s really encouraging to see the bold and visionary mission of TAC,” said one of the New England conference’s keynote speakers, Rev. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., rector of the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome. “It’s just so encouraging also to see the youthful Thomistic movement that’s emerged in the United States in the last 15 years.” ❖

New Books

Recently Published Works from Faculty Authors

Dr. Michael Augros ('92)

 In a newly published book, Dr. Michael Augros ('92), a tutor on the New England campus, brings a little-known, yet fundamental, work of St. Thomas Aquinas to English readers — for the first time.



St. Thomas's *Exposition of 'The Divine Names'* is a line-by-line commentary on a treatise which medieval philosophers mistakenly believed to be by the Dionysius mentioned in the New Testament (cf. Acts 17:34), an early pagan convert of St. Paul. The treatise, *The Divine Names*, addresses how finite intelligences can know and speak about the infinite God — a question that would acquire supreme importance in St. Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*.

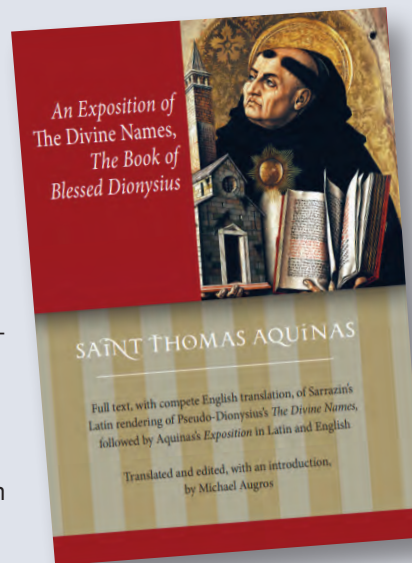
"There is some need to explain why this work did not sooner undergo complete translation into English," says Dr. Augros in the volume's introduction. "Thanks to modern scholarship, the author of *The Divine Names* was some time ago demoted from Dionysius, disciple of St. Paul, to Pseudo-Dionysius." But Dr. Augros adds another, perhaps more pervasive reason. "Some notable exceptions aside, many English-speaking Thomistic scholars of the last couple of centuries have focused more on the Aristotelian than the Platonic and Neoplatonic roots of St. Thomas's thought." This commentary's careful engagement with a deeply Neoplatonic text, therefore, highlights an underappreciated dimension of the Angelic Doctor's mind.

Among the most prolific scholars on the College's faculty, Dr. Augros is no stranger to complex writing projects, but this latest book had a singularly roundabout genesis. It began 17 years ago, in Washington, D.C., where one Christopher Briggs was working in the publishing field — and dipping into Thomistic theology when he could. One day, he made a startling discovery: "Not all of Aquinas's works had been translated from the old Latin into the new Latin — which is to say, English," says Mr. Briggs. "I couldn't believe that!" Among those untranslated works was this commentary on *The Divine Names*.

Mr. Briggs brought this troubling discovery to a friend, Dr. Christopher Oleson, then teaching at a Catholic seminary in New York, who shared his dismay at the incomplete translation of St. Thomas's works. When Mr. Briggs proposed funding a

translation project, the ideal translator sprang into Dr. Oleson's mind: Dr. Augros, who was teaching at the same seminary at the time. "I called up Mike and said, 'You don't know me, but Chris Oleson said I should talk to you,'" Mr. Briggs recalls. "I asked him not only to take the commentary out of the Latin into English, but to translate *The Divine Names* itself." Perhaps to Mr. Briggs' surprise, Dr. Augros responded with a simple and enthusiastic, "Great! When do we start?"

Although the initial translation took Dr. Augros a mere eight weeks in 2005, the process of revision — not to mention the sublunar necessities of licensing the text and finding a publisher — was more time-consuming than Mr. Briggs had anticipated. Moreover, life intervened. Dr. Augros and Dr. Oleson relocated to teach at Thomas Aquinas College in 2009 and 2010, respectively, and Mr. Briggs was pressed with other professional and personal commitments. Even so, none gave up the hope of finally delivering Dr. Augros's masterful translation to the press. At last this year, thanks to the attentive editorial eye of another Thomas Aquinas College tutor, Dr. Sean Cunningham, the volume has finally seen the light of day, published through Thomas More College Press as the first in a series of translations of the medieval scholastic tradition.



The long and difficult road to publication was worth it: Readers are already hailing Dr. Augros's translation as a milestone in English-speaking Thomistic studies. "The book is a gem: It is expertly translated, helpfully includes the original Latin on facing pages, and features an excellent introduction," says Dr. David C. Schindler, professor of metaphysics and anthropology at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C. "In relation to the ongoing task of a proper interpretation of the thought

of Aquinas, it is indispensable. This book deserves to be on the shelf of every serious scholar of the classical Christian tradition, right next to Aquinas's two *Summas*."

Readers can thank Dr. Augros and his editors for this translation of *An Exposition of 'The Divine Names,'* which will prove an invaluable treasure to any who pursue truth and wisdom in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas. ❖



Dr. Ryan Brady ('07)



An upcoming book by Dr. Ryan Brady ('07), a member of Thomas Aquinas College's teaching faculty on the California campus, addresses a detailed but crucial question in moral theology: "Is the practical wisdom of the prudent man founded upon some kind of innate or ac-

quired instinct, or does it presuppose understanding of intellectually grasped basic principles?" *Conforming to Right Reason*, published by Emmaus Academic Press, guides readers through St. Thomas Aquinas's teachings on reason, will, conscience, virtue, and the natural law to answer this decisive question.

"My interest in this subject began when I realized that many scholars were discussing virtue in very subjective ways that seemed to bracket it off from the influence of natural law," says Dr. Brady. "These notions, it seemed to me, would make reason feckless when it comes to morality and reduce the life of virtue to a pursuit of a kind of nebulous conception of the 'good' that would be unmoored from first principles."

Advance response to the book has been overwhelmingly positive. As an exercise in systematic theology, *Conforming to Right Reason* is "an extremely impressive work," according to Rev. Kevin L. Flannery, S.J.; "In an exhaustive and precise manner, [it] examines areas of Thomas Aquinas's thought

that are of fundamental importance for contemporary ethics and moral theology." Moreover, Dr. Brady's meticulous translations have garnered widespread attention: "As a professional translator of Thomistic works from the Latin, his fluency in Aquinas's language and thought is simply outstanding," says Dr. David Elliot of The Catholic University of America.



"As a professional translator of Thomistic works from the Latin, his fluency in Aquinas's language and thought is simply outstanding."

"In the end, I am quite pleased with the result," reflects Dr. Brady. "I hope the two extra years I spent working on it in my spare time will make the book more widely accessible to anyone interested in the relationship between the will and reason, the true nature of freedom, and the centrality of intellectually informed virtue for attaining happiness and union with God." ❖



Dr. Glen Coughlin ('81)



New England tutor Dr. Glen Coughlin ('81) has published a new translation of a work that is integral to the College's classical curriculum — Aristotle's *De Anima*.

A member of the Class of 1981, Dr. Coughlin earned his master's and doctoral degrees at the Université Laval, where some of the College's founders studied before him. In 1987 he returned to his alma mater as a tutor. Over the years, he has contributed several original translations of Aristotle's works for the College's tutorials, and in 2004 he published a translation of Aristotle's *Physics*.

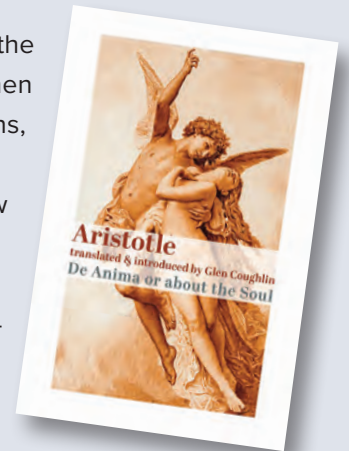
The *De Anima*, or *About the Soul*, Dr. Coughlin notes, plays a crucial role in the life of a Thomas Aquinas College student. "It's the first book in Aristotle's philosophy about what we would call biology," he explains. "Like the *Physics*, the *De Anima* is a very general consideration, and although a lot of Aristotle's particular doctrines have been overturned by modern science, his general principles are still true."

Studied in the second semester of sophomore year, the *De Anima* provides a key lens through which the College's students evaluate more recent contributions to philosophy in their


junior and senior years. For example, Aristotle resolutely affirms that we truly know what we know, and steers his audience away from the skepticism of some of his contemporaries — a skepticism that is echoed in some of the modern philosophers, such as David Hume.

"If I were to say, like Hume, that the imagination is really the intellect, then I would have to draw his conclusions, which are fairly radical," observes Dr. Coughlin. "Hume does not know whether he exists!" With Aristotle's guidance, students at the College wrestle with Hume's premises without being forced into his conclusions.

As with his translation of the *Physics*, Dr. Coughlin's translation of the *De Anima* is faithful to Aristotle's words and syntax, resisting the temptation to force the original text into the mold of contemporary parlance. "Dr. Coughlin's translation of Aristotle's *De Anima* is masterful in its literal but readable rendition of the text," says Dr. John J. Goyette, dean of the College's California campus. "It is especially suited to the kind of careful study at which we aim in our philosophy curriculum." ❖



College Honors June and Jack Heffernan

 One afternoon this summer, two dear friends received much-deserved recognition for their tremendous and longtime generosity to Thomas Aquinas College.

Back in May, as part of its first New England Commencement, the College extended membership in the Order of St. Albert to June and Jack Heffernan. Named for St. Albert the Great, who taught St. Thomas Aquinas, the Order recognizes those benefactors whose generosity to the College has been exceptional. Ordinarily, members receive a cast bronze bust of St. Albert and are inducted into the Order during Commencement Exercises. Unfortunately, the Heffernans were unable to attend graduation to accept the honor in person.

So, on August 18, Thomas Aquinas College President Paul O'Reilly; his wife, Peggy; and Vice President for Advancement James Link paid a visit to these stalwart friends of the College at their home — and brought the bronze bust with



Thomas Aquinas College president Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly (right) and his wife, Peggy (left), present a bust of St. Albert the Great to June and Jack Heffernan.


them. “June and Jack are tremendous supporters of the College’s mission of Catholic liberal education,” said Dr. O’Reilly. “We were sorry when they weren’t able to make Commencement in May, but it was an honor and a joy to get to thank and recognize them in person.”

For their part, the Heffernans were humbled to receive the bust and accepted it with pleasure. “We’re honored to support Thomas Aquinas College,” said Mrs. Heffernan. “It’s doing tremendously important work for our nation and the Church.” ❖



Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel

Architect Wins 2022 Palladio Award for TAC Chapel

 Cited for its widespread impact on the world of sacred architecture, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel — the crown jewel of Thomas Aquinas College’s California campus — has earned its architect, Duncan G. Stroik, a 2022 Palladio Award from *Traditional Building*. According to the magazine, the Chapel “has not only elevated the campus’ reputation on a national level but also has led to a revival of sacred architecture in towns, cathedrals, and college campuses.”

“When the Chapel was built in 2009, in many people’s minds, it was the first grand new classical college church in 50 years,” says Mr. Stroik. With the critical input of the College’s late president, Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, Mr. Stroik deployed his vast knowledge of traditional design to create a vernacular that integrates early Christian architecture as well as elements from the Romanesque, early Renaissance, Baroque, Spanish Revival, and Neoclassical periods. The final design earned Mr. Stroik his first Palladio Award in 2011.

Why, then, another award, more than a decade later? Because Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, the editors of *Traditional Building* contend, has inspired not only the students and faculty of Thomas Aquinas College, but admirers worldwide, both believers and non-believers alike. “How do you measure the impact of a building?” they ask. “The answer lies in the way it inspires those who use it.” ❖



Duncan G. Stroik


New Faces

College Welcomes New Members to its Teaching Faculty



New tutors Dr. Pierre-Luc Boudreault, Dr. Daniel Gutschke, and Dr. Brett Smith make the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity at the New England Matriculation.

Dr. Pierre-Luc Boudreault

 When he arrived as a freshman at Université Laval in 2005, Dr. Pierre-Luc Boudreault unwittingly took his first step toward one day becoming a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College.

Raised near Québec City, Dr. Boudreault had an early fascination with philosophy, which drew him to Laval. Little did he know, however, that three of the College’s founders — Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, Dr. John W. Neumayr, and Marcus R. Berquist — had attended the same institution several decades prior. There they studied under the renowned philosopher and theologian Dr. Charles De Koninck, whose approach to Thomism profoundly influenced the College’s founding principles.

Sometime after Dr. De Koninck died in 1965, Laval hired one of his onetime students, Warren J. Murray, a high school friend of Mr. Berquist and his brother Duane. This old friendship — and a common love of Thomism — brought Mr. Murray to Thomas Aquinas

College on a few occasions over the years. “He came as a guest lecturer,” says Dr. Boudreault. “He even told me he had the experience of leading a seminar with students during one of his visits.”



“I desire to share in the College’s mission to educate young people in the love of truth and pursuit of wisdom under the light of faith, the tutelage of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the best minds in each discipline.”

Although Dr. Murray had retired by the time Dr. Boudreault studied at Université Laval, he was more than willing to share his knowledge. “I took private lessons with him and consulted him a lot for my master’s thesis and my doctoral thesis, as well as for my articles and talks,” says Dr. Boudreault.

As Dr. Boudreault was finishing his

Ph.D. at the University of Western Ontario and starting to apply for academic jobs, Mr. Murray suggested Thomas Aquinas College as an option for a fulfilling career: “He thought it could be a good fit and suggested I apply.”

While pursuing his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Western Ontario, Dr. Boudreault also got to know Dr. Michael Fox (’75) — a member of TAC’s first graduating class, a fellow Laval Ph.D., and now a professor of philosophy at St. Peter’s Seminary, not a mile away from UWO. “He often spoke to me about the College, and he obviously had a very high opinion of it.”

By the time he finished his doctorate in 2020, Dr. Boudreault was eager to investigate the school that such mentors had praised and recommended to him. Hired to join the New England faculty, he has already found their recommendation prescient. Just a few months into


teaching Freshman Mathematics and Natural Science, as well as Sophomore Seminar, Dr. Boudreault finds himself more engaged than ever as a teacher.

“I have enjoyed the Discussion Method, which strongly encourages students to read — it depends on it!” he says. “Where I taught before, I would most of the time find myself lecturing to a class

where a majority of students had not done the reading I had assigned, to the point that I would sometimes have the unpleasant and frustrating feeling of speaking to a wall.”

With more active students, of course, Dr. Boudreault must be more active as a teacher — a challenge he is eager to meet. “I desire to share in the College’s mission to educate young people in the love of truth and pursuit of wisdom,” he says, “under the light of faith, the tutelage of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the best minds in each discipline.” ❖

Dr. Daniel Gutschke

 Even though he did not attend Thomas Aquinas College, Dr. Daniel Gutschke — a new tutor on the New England campus — has long had a fascination with it, thanks to an early encounter with founding president Dr. Ronald P. McArthur.

In the fall of 2007, when Dr. Gutschke was a senior at Christendom College, the school bestowed the *Pro Deo et Patria*



“Dr. McArthur’s approach demanded an active response on the part of students, helping them to appropriate the truths under consideration much more fully than if they had been merely passive.”

Medal, its highest honor, on Dr. McArthur, Rev. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R. (the first chancellor of Franciscan University of Steubenville), and Dr. Warren H. Carroll (Christendom’s founding president). Dr. Gutschke was deeply moved at seeing these champions of Catholic liberal education onstage together. “I saw this event as a beautiful testimony to the fact that each of these colleges, with its own unique charism, was engaged in the same effort to renew Catholic higher education and form intelligent, faithful, and enthusiastic Catholics.”

During Dr. McArthur’s stay at Christendom, he offered a tutorial class like those at Thomas Aquinas College, giving Christendom students an experience of the unique variant of the Socratic Method that the College has developed. Dr. Gutschke participated in that tutorial and found the experience intriguing. “I appreciated the manner in which his carefully formulated questions helped students to understand and articulate the principal themes of the text under consideration,” he says. “Dr. McArthur’s approach demanded an active response on the part of students, helping them to appropriate the truths under consideration much more fully than if they had been merely passive.”

That exposure to the College left a lasting impression on the young scholar. “Having had such a positive experience of TAC,” Dr. Gutschke says, “I aspired to a life dedicated to the pursuit of wisdom as a member of the TAC community.”

Dr. Gutschke graduated from Christendom College in 2008 and went on to earn his Ph.D. from The Catholic


University of America in 2018, simultaneously acquiring almost a decade of teaching experience. He taught courses at CUA before returning to Christendom in 2014, where he continued to teach while writing his dissertation.

During his eight years at Christendom, Dr. Gutschke taught introductory courses in philosophy for undergraduates, as well as more advanced courses in ethics, metaphysics, and modern philosophy. For his first year at Thomas Aquinas College, he is teaching Freshman Theology and Seminar, as well as

Sophomore Language. “I am so excited to be reading with my students such Great Books as the Bible and *The Iliad* of Homer, and to be considering the beauty and nuance of the Latin language,” he says.

Dr. Gutschke joins the TAC-New England community with his wife, Theresa. “We met at Christendom College’s Christ the King Chapel, on December 20, 2017,” he says. “After a beautiful courtship consisting of prayer, conversation, and enjoying the marvelous Shenandoah Valley together, we were engaged in the same Christ the King Chapel on December 20, 2019, and were married there on December 20, 2020.” The Gutschke family is now at home in the rolling hills of Northfield. ❖

Dr. Brett Smith

 “I am the son of a Baptist dairy farmer, and my wife Melissa’s father works for a Baptist college — Cedarville University, where we met,” says Dr. Brett Smith, a new tutor in New England. The Christian faith, with its essential conviction that man is liberated by truth, has long been near to Dr. Smith’s heart. Through it he fell in love with Sacred Scripture, which, in turn, led him to the Catholic Church.

“Melissa and I were in the same graduating class,” recalls Dr. Smith. “She studied English, and I studied philosophy. I first noticed her during our sophomore year, but we did not meet until the spring semester of our junior year.” The couple agreed to write letters over the summer, and that was when their romance truly blossomed. “I guess you could say I fell in love with her writing,” Dr. Smith says. “By the end of the summer, I was ready to marry her.” They wed soon after their graduation in 2008 and have since been blessed with seven children, whom Mrs. Smith homeschools.

It was over the course of his graduate studies that Dr. Smith would gradually find his way to the Catholic faith. “The two keys by which I unlocked the truth of the



“I realized that what I most wanted in a college was an environment in which I could continue to grow in wisdom, ideally through teaching a variety of subjects.”

Catholic faith were Scripture and history, in that order,” he reflects. “From Scripture I learned that the church Christ founded could never fail in its faith or disappear from the earth, and from history I learned that the faith of that church always has been the Catholic faith.”

In 2011 Dr. Smith received a Master’s in Divinity from Corban University; he then earned a Master’s in Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America in 2016. That same year, he and his family were received into the Catholic Church.


By the time he had completed his doctoral studies in theology at CUA in 2018, Dr. Smith realized he was looking to teach at a rare kind of institution. “I wanted to work at a school that would be faithful to the magisterium and that would help students to develop in the whole life of wisdom, including both its intellectual and spiritual aspects,” he says.

That desire led him to join the fac-

ulty at Immaculata Classical Academy, a Catholic high school in Louisville, Kentucky, where — trained theologian though he was — Dr. Smith taught across many disciplines. “Over time, I found that I loved teaching other subjects, not only theology,” he observes. “All truth is from God and leads us back to Him. I realized that what I most wanted in a college was an environment in which I could continue to grow in wisdom, ideally through teaching a variety of subjects. Thus,” he adds, “Thomas Aquinas College changed, in my estimation, from one good option to the ideal place to be.”

Joining the College’s faculty, Dr. Smith has gotten his wish: This year he is teaching Freshman Theology and Sophomore Philosophy as well as Sophomore Seminar, where the readings include history, poetry, and theology. “I consider it a great privilege,” he says, “to pursue the life of wisdom with the TAC community.” ❖

Dr. Ryan Brady ('07)

 Despite attending a nominally Catholic college on the East Coast, Dr. Ryan Brady ('07) experienced a deepening of faith in his first years out of high school. Indeed, as his faith increased, so did his dissatisfaction with his college’s deviations from magisterial teaching, prompting him to leave just shy of his graduation. While away, he encountered Rev. Robert Nortz, S.T.L. — a Maronite monk who spoke enthusiastically about an altogether different Catholic school which took the Faith more seriously: Thomas Aquinas College.

“Fr. Nortz appreciated the way that the College approaches the pursuit of truth in an integral and ordered manner,” he says. When the priest described TAC, Dr. Brady was “captivated by how beautiful it sounded.” He soon applied, was accepted, and enrolled as a member of the Class of 2007.

Providence, however, had other plans: After three semesters, Dr. Brady felt the stirrings of a religious vocation. He sought the advice of the College’s founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur. “He thought that I should go discern that vocation while I had the desire,” Dr. Brady remarks. Heeding that advice, he moved nearly 3,000 miles to join Fr. Nortz’s community, the Maronite Monks of Adoration in Petersham, Massachusetts, “a contemplative monastery with a great love of St. Thomas Aquinas.”

The monastery, in fact, modeled its formation on the College’s curriculum, and also hosted Dr. Duane Berquist, brother of College founder Mark Berquist, on a weekly basis for extensive discussions of St. Thomas’s philosophy and theology. Dr. Brady savored the rich spiritual and intellectual formation he was receiving and thus stayed for a number of years. Nevertheless, he came to realize that his desire to “share the fruits of contemplation” with others was not compatible with a strictly contemplative way of life, and he opted against taking permanent vows.

With only a semester of credits re-



Rev. Robert Marczewski watches as Dr. Charles Robertson and Dr. Ryan Brady ('07) make the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity at the California Matriculation.




“I’m very excited to be here, and to work with these students, who have such a great zeal for the truth.”

maining at his original college, Dr. Brady finished his B.A. there in 2012. The love of wisdom born at TAC and nurtured by his time with the monks, however, led him to pursue advanced studies in theology. Dr. Brady completed an M.A. at the Christendom Graduate School in 2013 and earned his Ph.D. from Ave Maria University in 2018.

While at Ave Maria, Dr. Brady met his wife, Rebecca, a fellow theology student. “We were friends for a year before our engagement, but we had a very short courtship,” he says. “We had a sense that we were good for each other. One of the first things she asked me after we had been dating for a few weeks was, ‘Will you get me to heaven?’” He laughs. “I responded, ‘Well, I can’t get you to heaven, but I could help you!’” The couple wed in 2016 and has been blessed with three children.

For the next few years, Dr. Brady taught at St. John Vianney Seminary in Miami, Florida, before he was offered a position on the TAC-California teaching faculty. “It’s been my dream for many years to teach here,” he says. “When the offer came, the only answer I could come up with was, ‘Yes!’” He is happily living that dream, teaching Freshman Mathematics and Seminar, as well as Sophomore Philosophy. “I’m very excited to be here, and to work with these students, who have such a great zeal for the truth.” ❖

Dr. Charles Robertson

 Like many students of Catholic theology in the last few decades, Dr. Charles Robertson has rubbed shoulders with numerous alumni from Thomas

Aquinas College, but in his case the encounters were more than tangential. “My last year of high school, I was taught by TAC grads, one of whom is now a tutor on the New England campus, Dr. Josef Froula,” says Dr. Robertson. “I’ve always known that TAC existed and that it had a program that was based on Great Books, and I always liked that idea.”

A native of Saskatchewan, Canada, Dr. Robertson attended seminary in British Columbia for several years after high school. After discerning that he was



“I’ve known many people who have come to the College. I have always been impressed with their ability to think through an issue and read books carefully.”

not called to the priesthood, he left to complete his undergraduate degree at the University of Saskatchewan, where he remembered the example of Thomas Aquinas College. “I tried to model my education on the Great Books principle, which was more or less successful,” he says. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the TAC influence, he earned his B.A. in philosophy, graduating in 2004.

That same year he also got married. “My wife, Heather, and I met at World Youth Day in Rome in the year 2000,” he notes. “I got to know her a little bit there, and when I left the seminary, I started to pursue her.” The Robertsons have since been blessed with eight children.

As his young family grew, Dr. Robertson completed a master’s in history from the University of Saskatchewan in 2008. The following year the Robertsons moved to Houston, where he earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of St. Thomas’s Center for Thomistic Studies. The family returned to Canada in 2012 while Dr. Robertson finished his dissertation, “The Ethics of Embryo Adoption and Embryo Rescue: A Thomistic Approach,” which he successfully defended in 2017. He then spent the next few years teaching online at Newman Theological College and assisting students with special needs in Saskatoon’s Catholic schools. But in early 2022, when the opportunity to teach at TAC arose, Dr. Robertson could not ignore it.

“I’ve known many people who have come to the College,” he says. “I have always been impressed with their ability to think through an issue and read books

carefully.” The latter aspect has been especially attractive. “In the past few years, I have seen a decrease in the number of people who seem to actually understand what they are reading, or who even have mastered the simple skill of outlining a reading,” he laments. “To be in an environment where those skills are a real focus is right up my alley!”

Dr. Robertson will be deploying those skills this year in the Freshman Philosophy and Mathematics tutorials, as well as in Freshman Seminar. “My family and I are just thrilled to be here,” he says of his new home in California. And Thomas Aquinas College is thrilled to welcome the Robertsons. ❖

James C. Link to Serve as New Vice President for Advancement

As an erstwhile religious brother and high school teacher with extensive experience in nonprofit development, James C. Link brings a unique skill set to his new role as Thomas Aquinas College's vice president for advancement: a monk's love of service, an educator's zeal for learning, and an ambassador's gift for making friends.



"As a former educator, and as somebody who aspires to grow in holiness and wisdom, it's so enriching for me to be a part of this community," he says. Mr. Link succeeds Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly, who has left the Advancement Office to become the College's new president.

Growing up in northern New Jersey in a deeply Catholic family, from an early age Mr. Link found himself falling in love not only with the Faith, but with its most radical expression, religious life. When he graduated from high school, he entered Iona College as a postulant in the Congregation of Christian Brothers.

Although he spent 10 years with the brothers, teaching theology and serving as assistant headmaster for religious education at Iona Preparatory School in New York state, Mr. Link ultimately did not take final vows. When the school's headmaster heard the news, he offered him a position as the school's assistant headmaster for advancement. "When the students left in June, I was 'Br. Link,' wearing a black suit and the collar," he laughs. "When they came back in September, I was in a jacket and tie, and I was 'Mr. Link.' They were a bit confused but very understanding. I was the first brother to leave the Congregation and be offered a job as a layman."

From these humble beginnings, he began a 30-year career in educational fundraising, including stints at Dartmouth College, Iona College, Hartwick College, and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. In 2007 he launched his own fundraising consultancy, working out of Annapolis, Maryland.

It was around this time that Mr. Link first became involved with Thomas Aquinas College. "One day I got an appeal letter from TAC, and I made a gift," he remembers. "I kept giving and started getting

the newsletter and the other publications. It intrigued me — I found TAC's materials compelling."

An Eagle Scout, he had enthusiastically given to the Boy Scouts of America for many years but began to reconsider as the organization gradually adopted morally compromising policies. Finally, with a heavy heart, he removed the BSA as a beneficiary from his will. "My attorney asked, 'Who are you going to put in place of the Boy Scouts?' I replied, 'I don't know ... I'm getting mail from this little Catholic college in California. Put them in.'"

This gesture caught the attention of the then-vice president for development, Dr. O'Reilly, who invited Mr. Link to visit the California campus. "I was blown away by the program," he remembers. "I'll never forget the classes. I taught high school students the way I was taught: to repeat what you tell them. Here, students wrestled with the material; they had to make the truth their own."

When the College discovered the possibility of acquiring its New England campus, Dr. O'Reilly thought of Mr. Link as someone who could help with East Coast development. Mr. Link soon began working for the College one day a week, then three, finally becoming a fulltime employee in 2016. He moved to Massachusetts to help launch the new campus and later relocated to California to become the College's executive director of development.

He has been a cheerful member of the administrative faculty ever since — known for his attention to detail and willingness to perform any task, no matter how humble. "Many times I come into the office early in the morning, only to find Jim here before anyone

"As a former educator, and as somebody who aspires to grow in holiness and wisdom, it's so enriching for me to be a part of this community."

else, preparing for a trip and calling benefactors on the East Coast," says Dr. O'Reilly. "He has introduced us to many of the most active and generous Catholics in the country, including several who are now among TAC's most committed benefactors."

For his part, Mr. Link is grateful to serve in any way he can. "I feel like this is where the Lord wants me to be, and I'm grateful for that opportunity," he says. "TAC is the best place I've ever worked and the most worthy of philanthropic support." ♦

Father, Founder, and Friend: Remembering Dr. John W. Neumayr

Friends and Family Mourn TAC Founder at Funeral on California Campus

Friends and family gathered on July 25 at Thomas Aquinas College, California, to pay their respects to Dr. John W. “Jack” Neumayr, a beloved founder, tutor, and governor who died on July 4. The day was marked by prayer, friendship, and reminiscing late into the afternoon about Dr. Neumayr’s singular character and accomplishments. (See obituary, page 41.)



her children laid their husband and father to rest, to the gentle sounds of plainchant and birdsong. At his request, Dr. Neumayr was interred beside his old friends and College co-founders, Dr. Ronald McArthur and Marcus Berquist, in a tranquil plot cooled in the evening by the shadows of a nearby orchard.

That morning, Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O. Praem. ('94), offered a Solemn High Requiem Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, assisted by Rev. Joseph (Jereme '03) Hudson, O.S.B., and Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P. The College choir exalted the liturgy with exquisite renditions of its petitionary chants and consoling motets. As grand as the ancient liturgy was, it did not overwhelm: Like Dr. Neumayr himself, it shone with a firm but quiet light.

With the conclusion of the Requiem Mass, the Neumayrs and their fellow congregants escorted the casket to the waiting hearse, accompanied by the plaintive tones of bagpipes played by Thomas Neumayr, one of 12 grandchildren. From there, the casket was taken to Pearce Brothers Cemetery in nearby Santa Paula for the Rite of Burial.

When Fr. Sebastian had blessed the gravesite, Mrs. Neumayr and

Back on campus, the College hosted a luncheon for the Neumayr family in St. Joseph Commons, which, though filled wall to wall, was nevertheless suffused with quiet and calm. Many of the Neumayr children addressed the gathering, as did several of his friends.

Among those, Thomas Susanka, a student from the College’s early days as well as its emeritus director of gift planning, recalled a recent conversation with Dr. Neumayr, “which, if I had had it earlier in my life, would have made me a better man. Jack opened his heart to meditating on what life would be like in heaven: the perfection of our knowledge of God in His perfection; the fulfillment of all that is not yet seen but which our faith now hopes for; and the unending peace in the company of those people who we loved and who God has loved.”

Added Mr. Susanka, echoing the thoughts of so many who knew Dr. Neumayr, “he was a father, a guide, and a saint to me.” ❖





Clockwise from top-left: Dr. Neumayr's casket in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel; Mrs. Neumayr greets Mrs. McArthur before the funeral Mass; Dan Grimm ('76) leads the Thomas Aquinas College Choir; Fr. Sebastian and Fr. Paul process into the Chapel.



Left: Dr. Neumayr's grandson Thomas leads the funeral procession around the academic quadrangle; above: Mrs. Neumayr and Mary Bridget ('86); right: Fr. Sebastian blesses Dr. Neumayr's casket at Pearce Brothers Cemetery in Santa Paula.

REMEMBERING DR. NEUMAYR

The “Fixed Point” for Our Family

A Daughter’s Eulogy for Dr. John W. Neumayr

by Mary Bridget Neumayr ('86)



My name is Mary Bridget Neumayr. I am the oldest of Dr. Neumayr’s children. On behalf of our mother and my six siblings, I thank you for being here today. It brings great joy to our family to be at a chapel and campus that he loved and to see so many of his family, friends, former students, and colleagues. We appreciate all the outpouring of sympathy and prayers for him.

One of his early students recently sent us a copy of a letter our dad had written to her over 34 years ago, following the death of her father. It seems fitting to quote from that letter on this occasion. He said in the letter:

“Fathers, whether they know it or not, are like the polestar — a fixed point from which we take our bearings. They are counted on, in the normal course of things, to give stability to life.” He also said that “When my father died 10 years ago, even after a protracted illness prepared us all for his end, the world seemed to lose its fixed point. We are all children no matter what age. Indeed we get over the loss — but it is a loss nonetheless.”

For our family, as I believe for many here today, he was that fixed point and source of stability.

He was born in the Midwest, in St. Paul, Minnesota, and was the second oldest in the family with two brothers and one sister. Around the time of World War II, his father was a traveling physician. When our dad

was very young, his family moved to the West Coast, initially to Seattle, then to stops in different parts of California, including Yosemite, where their neighbor was the photographer Ansel Adams. The family settled in San Francisco just prior to the Second World War.

He attended elementary and high school in San Francisco. He starred in track during high school and at age 14 held a world record in the high jump; he also excelled in basketball at St. Ignatius High School. He attended Notre Dame on an athletic scholarship and played basketball; he also coached the Notre Dame freshman basketball team while in graduate school, and recently he told me that he had considered pursuing a coaching career.

He went to Notre Dame during its

*“Fathers, whether they
know it or not,
are like the polestar —
a fixed point from which
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They are counted on, in the
normal course of things,
to give stability to life.”*

golden era and often recalled fondly the many fabled characters he met there. He studied philosophy as both an undergraduate and graduate student at Notre Dame. He subsequently studied law in San Francisco, explored a potential religious vocation with the Dominican Order in the Bay Area, and, at the recommendation of his close friend Ronald McArthur, obtained a Ph.D. in philosophy from Laval University in Quebec. His teaching began at Santa Clara University in 1962, and in 1966 he joined the faculty of the St. Mary’s College Integrated Program. In the following years, as you will hear more from others today, he, Dr. Ronald McArthur, Mark Berquist, Peter DeLuca, and others went on to found Thomas Aquinas College.

While teaching at Santa Clara, he met and married our mother, Bridget Cameron. They met on a blind date, to which he was late. She was British, a graduate of Oxford University, and had come to Berkeley through a Fulbright scholarship. While the couple who arranged the date broke up, our parents went on to a marriage of nearly 59 years. They had 7 children and 12 grandchildren.

Our dad was our fixed point and a source of stability for our family for many reasons.

Growing up, he was actively engaged in our schooling, sports, hobbies, and interests. My own interest in law, government, and politics derives from his influence.

From my earliest age I remember him discussing the state of the world and the importance of promoting truth in public life.

Our dad had extraordinarily wide interests. Athletics was a great passion in his life. He loved to play not only basketball, but also tennis, and later in life and up until the time that he passed away he was an avid golfer. He also had an encyclopedic knowledge of the sports world. His passion for sports continued to the end of his life; as recently as this past January, he decided that it would be good to get to a Duke basketball game before Coach K retired, and he and my sister Anne and her husband, Brooks, made their way over to Wake Forest for a game with Duke. He told me once that he enjoyed watching sports because, unlike so many other things in life, it was something very real and objective.

He was a person with a deep curiosity about this world. He loved to travel throughout the country and internationally. I can recall vividly our cross-country road trips to national parks and a memorable trip to Eastern Europe before the Iron Curtain fell.

He had an uncle, Bob Wallace, who was a kind of Renaissance man and was a great influence on our dad and a person whom he emulated. Over his life, our Dad became a Renaissance man, too. He cultivated an interest in, among other things, history, art, literature, politics, Americana, science, botany, music, and topography. When he and my mother moved from Los Angeles last year to live in North Carolina with my youngest sister, Anne, her husband, Brooks, and their family, our dad was willing to move, but not without all of his books. He brought back with him more than 50 boxes.

He was also a great conversationalist. While he was someone who was rarely early (unless for a tee time), when he went to any event, including a wedding or graduation or party, he was almost always the last person to leave, holding conversations late into the night.

He was also someone with a great sense of humor, which I believe he inherited largely from his mother. He loved jokes

and anecdotes; his quick wit was one of the qualities that drew people to him. He was also very kind and thoughtful and performed unseen acts of charity. One of my brothers recently told me that he made a practice of helping distressed drivers, sometimes to the alarm of his children.

He was a devoted family man. He and our mother were approaching their 60th

“He loved Thomas Aquinas College and the founders, the faculty, the Board, its supporters, and the students; so many people associated with the College were so important to him.”

so important to him. One of the happiest times of his life was coming back here last October for the 50th Anniversary Gala. He loved seeing the campus flourish and seeing so many people with whom he had long-standing friendships, including many of the people here today.

The reason our dad was such a fixed point for his family and for others was, perhaps more than anything else, that he was a person of deep faith. He was a daily communicant for much of his life and could frequently be found in the Chapel after Mass, praying. He was also a Third Order Dominican. Drawing on his deep faith, he could analyze the most fundamental and difficult questions, and provide sound, prudent advice on the most challenging topics. While he had such a full life and one that was so well lived, he never lost sight of our ultimate goal of being with God in the next world.

In that letter that I mentioned earlier, which our dad sent to his student over three decades ago, he provided some consolation



wedding anniversary and they were looking forward to the birth of another grandchild. He loved to hear from and visit with his seven children. As one of my sisters recently commented, he would “drop everything” when one of them called.

He loved Thomas Aquinas College and the founders, the faculty, the Board, its supporters, and the students; so many people associated with the College were

that perhaps applies to all of us here today. He said to her of her father: “Now he is in the other world and, because of that, your heart and your thoughts will be there, too. Heaven will be that much closer to you for the rest of your days.”

We hope and pray that he is already enjoying his eternal reward, and that through him we will all be “that much closer to Heaven.” Thank you. ❖

“A Gentleman Inside and Outside of Class”

Reflections of a Former Student and Fellow Tutor

by Thomas J. Kaiser ('75)



I am very pleased and honored to have this opportunity to say a few words about Dr. Neumayr as one of his former students and colleagues.

I have mentioned on other occasions that if it hadn't been for Dr. Neumayr, I probably would not have attended the College. When I first heard about the school, I was not the least bit interested. The program had a large emphasis on philosophy and theology, and I had no idea what value there was in studying those things.

On the other hand, I had no determinate idea of where to go to college or whether I should go to college at all. In the late '60s and early '70s, colleges and universities in this country were in a state of turmoil. There were student demonstrations and campus riots making education practically impossible. The abuse of alcohol, drugs, and sex was the culture of campus life. Moreover, Catholic colleges and universities had rejected the teaching authority of the Church in

“It's no exaggeration to say that meeting Dr. Neumayr changed my life. I ended up following a path that would not have occurred to me had I not met him.”

favor of so-called academic freedom. Many of my friends and relatives who had gone to Catholic colleges stopped practicing their faith or lost it altogether. So my parents and I were wondering whether going to college was a good idea at all.

Fortunately for me, Dr. Neumayr was invited by a friend of ours to come and speak about the College. He gave an ac-

count of how Catholic colleges and universities had gone astray, and he spoke of what true Catholic liberal education is and how faith can illumine reason. I didn't understand everything he said, but I was very impressed with him.

Growing up in Oildale, I had never met a man like him. The most educated and bright men I knew were my high school math and science teachers. They frowned upon faith and religion as superstition. I gathered from them that, to be intellectual, you must be a skeptic, especially about things pertaining to faith and morals.

Dr. Neumayr, on the other hand, struck me as someone who was not only well educated but wise, a man who loved his Catholic faith and believed that through it the light of Christ is brought into the darkness of this world. After hearing him speak, I thought that, although I really didn't know much about the program at Thomas Aquinas College, I could learn something from him. So, I decided to

apply and become a member of the first class of the College, as did several others who attended that meeting.

I would like to emphasize how important it was for me and my fellow students to have that admiration and trust for Dr. Neumayr and the other founders. When I applied there wasn't a college, strictly speaking. There was a campus that was being leased from the Claretian Fathers.

The program was only on paper and in the minds of the founders, still somewhat in outline form. There were no students or graduates to talk to or class discussions to observe. The College was not accredited, and there was no certainty that it would last long enough to graduate even one class. We had to take everything on the faith we had in the founders.

But one of the things that gave me that faith was the conviction that Dr. Neumayr and the founders had about the importance of this education for the good of the Church and for Western civilization. I believed them and wanted to be part of it. I not only became a member of the first class of the College, I have been teaching at the College for 40 years. So, it's no exaggeration to say that meeting Dr. Neumayr changed my life. I ended up following a path that would not have occurred to me had I not met him.

As a student my admiration for and trust in Dr. Neumayr continued to grow. I must say that Dr. Neumayr was an easy man to admire; he was a true Renaissance man. Besides his expertise in philosophy and theology, he was well versed in history, literature, writing, natural history, travel, domestic and world affairs. He had a beautiful wife and family; he was a daily communicant. And, last but not least, he was an outstanding athlete.

The biggest surprise to me was his love of comedy. He could quote exten-

sively from the routines of many of the great comedians. He not only loved comedy, but he was an accomplished comedian himself. At the first President's Dinner for graduating seniors, Dr. Neumayr, as dean of the College, was asked to give a few words of advice to the seniors. His remarks were so entertaining that it became a custom of the College for him to give a comic address for many, many years after he was no longer dean.

The material for his remarks had to do with his family life, life at the College, and current national and world affairs. So, he wasn't just repeating jokes that he had heard, but he was coming up with his own. His remarks were timely, hilarious, sometimes irreverent, and sometimes a bit off-color, raising the eyebrows of quite a few. He had a clever technique for deflecting the blame for the off-color jokes by introducing them as something he heard from his mother. After delivering the punchline, he would say, "I can't believe she said that."

One of the things that his students and colleagues appreciated most about Dr. Neumayr is his knowledge and love of the perennial wisdom, especially as it is epitomized in the writings of Aristotle and St. Thomas. Dr. Neumayr drank deeply of this wisdom and made it his own. I came to see this more and more in my years of teaching at the College, both from what students had to say about him and from my own experience.

Dr. Neumayr was a tremendous help to me in my years as a tutor at the College. He was always available to discuss the questions that I had, especially when I was teaching philosophy and theology. We had lunch together regularly, and the discussion was always on those topics. But even when I was teaching a course such as Freshman Natural Science, where I am supposed to be the expert, he would point out things that I had not noticed very clearly. I remember him saying that second semester of Biology is really about the potency of matter. He had a keen vision of the principles.

He said once that the study of philosophy is essentially a circular process. I was struck by that because I tended to think of learning as something more linear. You start at the beginning, and you just keep going. I have come to see that what he said is true. You never see the principles clearly enough at first, and you don't know what is contained in them until you see what they explain. You have to come back to the principles, take another look, and see them more deeply.

Jack loved teaching Junior and Senior Theology, which consist entirely in the texts of St. Thomas. He taught those courses for decades. I remember asking him not long before he retired whether he was still learning things after reading those texts so many times. He said he never ceased seeing subtle things that he had not seen clearly before.

Students loved having Dr. Neumayr

distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking."

When Dr. Neumayr asked how you were doing, he really wanted to know. This often led to an extended conversation — even when he was on his way to class — even when he was late!

One thing evident to me in the 50 years that I have known him was his ded-

"One of the things that his students and colleagues appreciated most about Dr. Neumayr is his knowledge and love of the perennial wisdom, especially as it is epitomized in the writings of Aristotle and St. Thomas."



Dr. Brian T. Kelly, Dr. John W. Neumayr, and Dr. Thomas J. Kaiser at a dinner celebrating Dr. Neumayr's retirement in 2016

for class and learned from him as from a master. A graduate of the College once told me that he felt very fortunate to have had Dr. Neumayr for all four years of philosophy, something that doesn't happen very often. He said that he came to think that Aristotle looked like Dr. Neumayr!

Jack was a true gentleman inside and outside of class. Newman's description of a gentleman fits him well: "He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the

ication to the College and its mission. He was a collaborator in writing *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*. He understood it clearly and was convinced of its truth both by faith and by experience. The Church has clearly and emphatically given us St. Thomas as the Common Doctor. *Ite ad Thomam*, Jack would remind us. He also saw the success of the program in what it did for our students intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

He was a zealous defender of the mis-

sion of the College. As a member of the Board of Governors from the beginning, he helped ensure that we stayed true to our mission and that we did nothing that would impede our success. When questions rose among our faculty about how to understand the *Proposal*, Glen Coughlin, as dean, consulted with Jack and the other founders in order to write a Report on Instruction, which spelled out in more detail what the founders intended. It was clear from Jack's comments that the primary goal of the College is to pursue the highest wisdom, especially as it is found in the works of St. Thomas. He told Glen, "The purpose of the College is to study St. Thomas in tranquility." He seemed to relish every moment he could spend teaching and discussing the works of St. Thomas.



Friends and fellow founders: On his last visit to the California campus in 2021, Dr. Neumayr with Peter L. DeLuca

When the opportunity to acquire a second campus presented itself, Jack was wary. He was concerned that our efforts in recruiting qualified students and faculty, and in fundraising, might have a negative impact on the California campus — that it might dilute our efforts

“The successful founding of the second campus is a testament to the vision that Jack and the other founders had of Catholic liberal education.”

here. In the end, however, Jack agreed that we should give it a try. I am very sorry he never had a chance to see the new campus. Over a year ago Jack had an opportunity to have Beau Braden fly him up to see the campus. Unfortunately, I was going to be in California to meet with members of the Board of Governors, so I asked if he could postpone the trip for a few days. That trip never happened.

A month or two before our first graduation, Jack's son-in-law, Brooks Braden, contacted me and asked what I thought about Jack coming for our graduation. I was thrilled with the idea and asked if he could come a few days early and make some remarks at the President's Dinner. Jack liked the idea, but he would let me know after he saw his doctor. Unfortunately, his poor health made the trip impossible. So, Jack never made it to the new campus. I think he would have been very pleased to see how things were going there, and our students would have been very happy to meet him and show their appreciation for all that he has done for them.

The successful founding of the second campus is a testament to the vision that Jack and the other founders had of Catholic liberal education. More and more families, educators, and benefactors are seeing the value of it. It is remarkable that after 50 years we can see how clear and accurate that vision was.

We have stayed true to the *Proposal*, and we have seen no reason to amend, modify, or change in any significant way what the founders established. Our success confirms that they were right.

I firmly believe that the founding of both campuses was providential. All of the founders have said that the good that has been accomplished is disproportionate to their own causality. It is Divine Providence that is directing things. Jack said, "When you consider the modest talents and efforts we brought to bear in founding the College, you have to conclude that this was God's project, not ours." The same is true of the founding of the second campus.

Jack and the other founders trusted in Divine Providence, and Jack was a willing and able instrument of it. I am confident that the legacy left by him and the other founders will continue on our campuses as long as we have the freedom in this country to educate in the light of the Catholic faith. It will surely live on in those who have received this education and in those who learn from them.

It is significant that Jack, who so loved this country and was proud of its history and the wisdom of its founders, died on July 4 on the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Watching the decline of this country was painful for Jack. I'm sure that he is now comforted by seeing what God's plan is and how His triumph will be accomplished.

We are all grateful for Jack's role in founding the College, and we were truly blessed to have him with us for more than 50 years to teach us and to guide us. He will be greatly missed. I was so happy to hear that he will be laid to rest in Santa Paula near the other founders who have passed away. He will not cease to be remembered by us. And I am certain we can count on his intercession for the good of the College.

May God reward him abundantly for all he has done for the College, the Church, and our country. ❖

“A Truly Great and Good Man”

A Friend Recalls Dr. John W. Neumayr

by Anne S. Forsyth ('81)

TAC Director of Special Projects



It is an honor to be asked to speak about Dr. Neumayr, a truly great and good man. I first met Jack when I was about 10 years old; when he and the other founders were making plans to open the College in the Bay Area, they would come for dinner parties at my parents' home in San Francisco and bring important guests with them such as Bishop McFarland and Fr. Martin D'Arcy.

I didn't know then that our founders were themselves important men. Nor did I appreciate the novelty or the stakes of their endeavor — to found a college! I did notice, however, that though Jack was nearly as tall as Ron McArthur, his was a quite different nature: Ron had a huge personality and a voice to match it, while Jack was quieter and more reserved; even then you had to listen closely to hear what he had to say.

One Christmas in the late 1960s, Dr. Neumayr brought Bridget and their children to our home for a visit, the first of many over the years. In fact, our young-

est sister, Laura, when she learned of Jack's passing, said that she couldn't remember a Christmas without the Neumayrs. In the years since, the friendship that began among our parents blossomed among all of us children.

Recalling my years as a student, first at Calabasas and then here on this campus, it seems odd that I never had Jack as a tutor; we were such a small student body then, and there was just a handful of tutors. But I had lunch with him often, and I remember him playing basketball and tennis. And I will never forget his remarks my senior year at the President's Dinner, delivered with a poker face but so truly funny that I thought I might literally die laughing. I recall, too, the night that Bridget spoke to us about the 40 English Martyrs, and how proud Jack was of his lovely and accomplished wife.

“When that last trumpet sounds, what a celebration there will be at our little cemetery in Santa Paula, where friends and collaborators, who brought the College to life and sustained it, will find each other again and together enter into the heavenly Jerusalem.”

After I returned to the College over 20 years ago, Jack would sometimes stop by my office for a chat, and I treasured those visits. I learned how truly wise he was, not only about intellectual things, but also about practical affairs — trends in our country's political life, innovations in the liturgy and the Church, and more. It struck me that he

was particularly good at tracing the lineage of so many of our modern ills to the errant philosophers who spawned them, thinkers we read in seminar, such as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Marx.

I last spoke to him a couple of months ago, and his mind was wonderfully sharp. We talked about the early history of the College and many other things. I will always cherish the memory of that conversation with a great man who had the kindest eyes in the world.

I recall two occasions on which I had a glimpse of the scope of Jack's mind, the mind of a wise man, who can order things well.

Some years ago, not long after Mark Berquist's death, I did a series of videotaped interviews with our remaining founders. During my conversation with Jack, he gave an amazing account of the natural progression of the liberal

arts, one to the next, and how together they prepare the mind for the study of philosophy, natural science, and finally for the queen of the sciences, theology itself. Though his discourse was about 50 minutes in length, Joe Haggard ('03), one of our graduates, was able to distill it and, with some masterful editing, produce a seven-minute version. It's a

marvelous introduction to the College for prospective students.

On another occasion, at a Board retreat in Ojai, Dr. Neumayr gave a memorable account of the corruption of Christian intellectual culture — which had been essentially Thomistic — that began with Descartes and was virtually complete by the beginning of the 19th century. He went on to describe the attempts made by some, when called on by Pope Leo XIII, to restore the Angelic Doctor to his rightful place of preeminence, and that, though well-meaning, they mostly failed, being unable to escape the errors of modernity. This was the reason for Thomas Aquinas College: a response to Pope Leo’s exhortation, a college where students would not only learn the doctrine of St. Thomas, but would become his disciples, making his method their own.

As significant as these lessons were for me, he taught me the most important thing of all by his attendance at daily Mass, following the example of our patron, who “never gave himself to reading or writing without first begging the blessing of God.”

I have been thinking about the proximity of our founders’ burial plots — Ron, Mark, and now Jack; with Tom Dillon and Molly Gustin, and my parents and other friends and family members from our college community, all nearby — and the words of St. Paul come to mind:



“He taught me the most important thing of all by his attendance at daily Mass, following the example of our patron who ‘never gave himself to reading or writing without first begging the blessing of God.’”

“We will all be changed — in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye ... The trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised” (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

When that last trumpet sounds, what a celebration there will be at our little cemetery in Santa Paula, where friends and collaborators, who brought the College to life and sustained it, will find each other again and together enter

into the heavenly Jerusalem.

One last word ... I can’t think of Jack without Bridget, such true friends and partners as they were in raising their beautiful family. And I can only imagine how much you are missing him now, Bridget, you and all your children and grandchildren. May you find much consolation in the goodness of his life, the great love he has for you even now, and in all your memories of him.

Eternal rest grant unto Jack, O Lord, and perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. ❖

Above: Therese Susanka, Donna Steichen, Laura (Steichen '75) Berquist, and Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. ('94), visit with Dr. Neumayr at a dinner celebrating his retirement in 2016.

Left: Dr. Neumayr speaks with former president Dr. Michael F. McLean at the 2017 dedication of Founders Plaza on the California campus.



Faith in Action

News from TAC's Alumni Blog

Providential Path: Alumnus Monk Enters Priesthood

“I never would have expected I was going to become a Benedictine monk in Italy, in the birthplace of St. Benedict, and a priest!” says **Dom Augustine (Philip '13) Wilmeth, O.S.B.**, of his childhood years. “I wasn't agnostic or atheist, but like many kids nowadays, I just didn't think much at all about God or religion; it wasn't on my radar.”

Yet on September 18, 2021, His Eminence George Cardinal Pell, Prefect Emeritus of the Secretariat for the Economy, ordained Fr. Augustine to the holy priesthood. The young priest now walks in the footsteps of St. Benedict at the 1,000-year-old Monastery of St. Benedict in Norcia, Italy.



Dom Augustine (Philip '13) Wilmeth, O.S.B., with his mother, Anne, on his ordination day

Fr. Augustine's path to the priesthood was a surprising twist of Providence. Born in Anderson, South Carolina, and baptized Episcopalian, he attended a Catholic high school, where he first began to detect the stirrings of faith. “There were many exceptional teachers that were invaluable witnesses to the truth of the Faith and Christ,” he recalls. “It was really something for me as a young man to see adults I respected on their knees in prayer at Mass, or making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.” Inspired by their example, as well as their teaching — particularly about Church history — he entered the Catholic Church at the age of 16.

Around that same time he learned about Thomas Aquinas College and read its founding and governing document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*. “I was pretty convinced I had to go there; it was the only college I applied to,” Fr. Augustine remarks. In the fall of 2009 he enrolled as a freshman.

Immediately he availed himself of the intellectual and spiritual opportunities that the campus afforded. “The sacramental and liturgical life — not to mention the inspiring example of the tutors and chaplains — were invaluable helps for me and my classmates in growing up as adults and men,” he says. At



the urging of one of the College's then-chaplains, Rev. Charles Willingham, O.Praem., he consecrated himself to the Blessed Mother — a decision that would profoundly affect his future.

“After I was consecrated to Our Lady, she didn't waste any time,” he notes — and he began to discern his vocation. He visited the Benedictine monastery in Norcia after his sophomore year. “I had a very powerful experience — another moment of deeper conversion that was beautiful and freeing but also very intense, and I came to see that God was calling me here to continue that work of conversion as a monk,” says Fr. Augustine.

After graduating in 2013, Fr. Augustine entered the Monastery of St. Benedict, and he has been there ever since — surviving the 2016 earthquakes that virtually demolished the Basilica of St. Benedict and the Monastery itself.

In addition to praying the Divine Office, offering Masses, and hearing the confessions of visiting pilgrims, he serves as his community's cellarer, supplying its food and drink. He also oversees its brewery and manages its financial affairs. “This includes our reconstruction project: Rebuilding a completely ruined historic 16th century Capuchin convent exactly as it was,” he says, “and at the same time integrating state-of-the-art anti-seismic isolators into the foundation.”

“Like many kids nowadays, I just didn't think much at all about God or religion; it wasn't on my radar.”

Reflecting on the path on which God's Providence has led him, Fr. Augustine imitates the example of his namesake and likewise searches for echoes of the Lord's providential plan. “Several times throughout my life I have become very committed to a path once I had settled that it was what I should do and what I think God wanted me to do,” he observes. “This happened with my conversion, going to TAC, and, later on, becoming a monk. It might be partially from temperament and personality, but I also think that God has given me this special singlemindedness and conviction as a special grace — maybe I wouldn't have made it in any other way.” ❖

Alumna Mother Writes of “The Greatest Battle”

In *The Greatest Battle*, **Christy (Tittmann '89) Wall** shares the hard-won spiritual fruit of confronting a child's suffering. **Franz Wall ('16)** — an accomplished athlete, artist, and scholar — was severely injured in a skiing accident in November 2020. “For eight months I sat beside my son as he fought not only for life, but for a meaning to his new life,” she writes.

They were not alone. Franz's zest for life had won him many friends, and all were anxious to know how he was. Mrs. Wall, homeschooling mother of nine, resolved to keep them informed. “As I went through the horror of Franz's accident, I intended at first to communicate via Facebook,” she says. “Not only updates on Franz's condition, but to show my beloved agnostic friends how exactly we as Catholics look to our faith for strength and wisdom.”

At first Mrs. Wall wrote only periodic updates about Franz's tenuous physical condition, but those updates began to resound with unexpected depth. “I knew neither the extent of Franz's injury and the gut-wrenching agony we would be put through, nor could I have known the extent of people from all over the world who would be reading these updates,” she says. “Even more important, I did not know the depths of spiritual trial and consolation which we would experience. What started as a simple gesture to close friends turned into a really beautiful journey of love, faith, and prayer.”

As Mrs. Wall's writing drew more friends and intercessors to Franz's ongoing story, his condition improved. Readers heard



about their friend's admirable struggle to live, through his mother's words, which left them uniquely inspired. “Many wrote to me, asking me to write a book,” recalls Mrs. Wall. But with frequent trips to the hospital and the unpredictable nature of Franz's condition, such a project seemed impossible.

Eventually Franz's condition stabilized, and he was able to leave the hospital for home. Readers, meanwhile, were still asking for the book — and what had seemed impossible now seemed feasible. “After Franz came home, and life grew quieter, Our Lord began to write the book in my head,” Mrs. Wall recalls. “It was the best I could do to get out of the way and write. By trial and error, I let the story come to my heart, and I wrote.”

Thanks to the reliably candid criticism of her children, the book gradually took shape. “The hardest part was to recount the time in the hospital with Franz,” she says. “Many 3:00 a.m.'s, I sat huddled in my favorite bathrobe, sitting at the computer, shaking and crying as I relived my grief and worked to express it in a way that would speak to anyone reading it.”

The book, however, is more than a memoir of those days and nights spent at Franz's hospital bed. For Mrs. Wall realized, reflecting on her life, that Providence had prepared her to shoulder the cross she now faced. “*The Greatest Battle* is a series of stories culminating in Franz's accident,” she says. “Stories from the backstreets of Paris with a handsome boyfriend coming to the rescue. Stories about sailing a luxury yacht in high seas, a prophetic glittering dress of gold, and a wild horse who tamed the soul of a grieving mother.”

Thomas Aquinas College looms especially large in those memories. “There are stories about the wonderful people that embraced me as friends when I visited while in high school, and about the gallant men who helped me graduate; about finding my vocation, meeting my husband, and saving my soul,” she says. “It changed my life eternally. Without TAC I would have been lost.”

By God's grace, both Franz and Mrs. Wall have won the meaning they sought in those dark days immediately after the hospital. Though still much in need of prayers, Franz has made tremendous strides toward healing; and, for her part, Mrs. Wall has gained some insight into the mystery of pain. “My hope and prayer has been constant, to inflame readers with a love of God and, most importantly, to inspire them to trust God in the face of suffering and trial,” she reflects. “He has seared upon my soul to fight for the salvation of souls, and this has been a clear and fierce longing in my heart.”

With the release of *The Greatest Battle*, Mrs. Wall will ignite many more hearts with the same longing. ❖



Dr. Cara Buskmiller ('11): Obstetrician & Bioethicist

This past May, **Dr. Cara Buskmiller ('11)** finished not one, but two degrees: a fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine at the University of Texas in Houston, as well as a master's in bioethics through the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. She now devotes her days to research and clinical practice, finding time to publish not only scientific papers but ethical analyses of often bewildering medical questions.



"I've wanted to be a physician since age four," Dr. Buskmiller says, "but kids want to be many things at that age." Yet that early spark of interest hadn't sputtered by the time she entered high school, and she realized it was God keeping the flame alive. That led her to seriously consider medical school, which immediately posed a quandary: She wanted a school at the intersection of both authentic Catholicism and solid medical repute.

"I wanted a firm Catholic foundation to avoid the moral pitfalls doctors have to face," says Dr. Buskmiller. "My first priority was a Catholic college that would help a Catholic doctor stay Catholic; a college that would give me a deeply knit love for the Faith. But there aren't many Catholic colleges that are competitive in the medical field." That didn't stop her from looking: She would not sacrifice her priorities without a fight.

Sense of Urgency

Around that time she came across an ad for Thomas Aquinas College in the *National Catholic Register* — an ad which included a picture of a stethoscope. "It turned out it had nothing to do with medicine," laughs Dr. Buskmiller. But the ad served its purpose. She looked into the College and found herself admiring the Great Books, the integration of the curriculum, the Discussion Method, and above all the circumambience of the Catholic Faith.

But for all her admiration, she was not without misgivings. How would the Great Books prepare her for medical studies? That was when her father noticed that the College also offered a Summer Program for high school students. "He recommended that I at least look into that possibility," she recalls.

Dr. Buskmiller attended the High School Summer Program in 2006 and found herself marveling at the snapshot of Thomas Aquinas College those two weeks afforded. "About halfway through I had a conversation with tutor Dr. Phillip Wodzinski, and he asked me, 'You're thinking of applying, right?' And I said, 'Oh, yes!' I remember instantly thinking, 'Shoot, why did I say

that?' But I was thinking of applying. I had come to see TAC as the solution to many problems I was facing."

Dr. Buskmiller's unyielding commitment to the priority of attending a doctrinally grounded and spiritually enriching Catholic college led her to TAC in 2007, and she has been grateful for both the theological and the philosophical foundations she received. But not all her problems were solved: She went through Thomas Aquinas College perpetually conscious of the prerequisites for medical school which the College, owing to its classical curriculum, could not supply. "I took my pre-med pre-reqs during the summers between my years at TAC," she says. "I didn't really get a break from school for four years!"

Although she could have undertaken a post-baccalaureate program after she graduated from the College, rather than filling her summers with highly technical study, she thought that would take too long. "I had a growing sense of urgency about getting into the medical field," Dr. Buskmiller explains. She had noticed the increasing gulf between the secular medical consensus and the teachings of the Church, and she felt she could not wait.

That urgency even led her to reorient her Senior Thesis project. "I was going to write a beautiful thesis about Descartes' mathematics, but I decided to use the thesis credit hours as chemistry hours, and wrote on chemistry instead. I'm very grateful to the tutors who were on my board!"

By her senior year, Dr. Buskmiller was prepared to present herself as a competitive applicant to medical schools — a demanding process at any time, but especially while writing a thesis and tackling some of the most difficult subjects in the curriculum. "The tutors started to joke about my absences, because I would leave most Fridays to visit different medical schools on the weekends," she laughs.





“I wanted to do anti-abortion and fertility research, because a lack of supporting research in those areas is still a weak point in the pro-life movement.”

Medical School and Beyond

Her relentless work bore fruit when she was offered a spot at Texas A&M College of Medicine, which she saw as a gift from God. “It was the perfect place for me!” Not only would she be able to return to her home state of Texas, but A&M had a thriving Catholic student center. “I knew it would be a good place to make the transition out of TAC; I wouldn’t feel like I was out in the cold.” She declined two alternative offers and committed to A&M, and was able to graduate from Thomas Aquinas College with peace of mind in 2011. She was well on her way to being the physician she had dreamed of becoming at age four.

Of course, that way was neither short nor easy. Dr. Buskmiller graduated with her M.D. from Texas A&M in 2015, after which she decided to pursue advanced OB/GYN research during her residency. “I wanted to do anti-abortion and fertility research, because a lack of supporting research in those areas is still a weak point in the pro-life movement,” she says. This desire led her to an academic OB/GYN residency at Saint Louis University School of Medicine.

But Dr. Buskmiller’s 2015 was more than a professionally eventful year: Not long after she graduated from medical school, she fully embraced a vocation to consecrated virginity. “I felt certain that I had a call to become a physician, so I looked for ways that this part of God’s call would fit with my desire to be consecrated to Him. I briefly looked into a few religious orders, but

focused on consecrated virginity in my sophomore year at the College because I believed it was the way in which I was made to become a saint.” After six years of formation with the Diocese of Dallas, she was consecrated in June 2015. Spiritually invigorated with the confidence of at last living out her vocation, Dr. Buskmiller made her way to St. Louis to begin her residency.

During her time at St. Louis University, and alongside her academic and medical duties, Dr. Buskmiller helped to found a nonprofit organization named Conscience in Residency. Doctors in many residency programs are expected, as a matter of professional course, to dispense contraceptives, recommend abortions, and perform or at least tacitly consent to other morally inadmissible medical practices. Aspiring doctors face a complex challenge if they want to dodge those compromising programs. “The organization helps Christians apply tactically to residencies, taking away some of the headache of trying to do all those tactics and strategy alone,” Dr. Buskmiller explains.

Graduating from Saint Louis University in 2019, she found her passion for research unabated, and began looking at research fellowships in the OB/GYN field, settling on one at the University of Texas in Houston. “Residency gives you your specialty, but a fellowship gives you a sub-specialty,” she explains. “My sub-specialty is maternal-fetal medicine, with a focus on high-risk pregnancies.” Given the profoundly complex ethical challenges she will encounter in her sub-specialty, Dr. Buskmiller additionally decided to pursue a master’s degree in bioethics, which, along with her fellowship, she completed this past spring.

Planning Ahead

Where does she get the drive to do so much? “I constantly think of the dream of St. Francis, when Christ told him, ‘Rebuild my church,’” laughs Dr. Buskmiller. “I find myself thinking, ‘rebuild? It’s collapsing around our ears, Lord!’” She admits happily that God’s grace, manifested in that sense of urgency and zeal for the Faith that drove her to complete the College’s rigorous classical curriculum plus her medical-school prerequisites in just four years, has sustained her through 11 more years of advanced medical study.

Grace, however, never precludes human effort. “For TAC students who are interested in medicine, both current and prospective, it’s important to plan ahead,” Dr. Buskmiller advises. “Planning ahead isn’t a failure to rely on God’s will; it’s conforming to God’s will if you are going into a technical field!” Always willing to lend a hand, she graciously provided a guide for medically minded students at the College who are pondering that path. “I want the College’s students to know,” she says, “that it’s possible to get into a very highly technical sub-specialty after TAC.” ❖

John W. Neumayr

1930 – 2022

On Independence Day, Thomas Aquinas College lost one of its beloved founders, a longtime member of the teaching faculty who also served as its first dean and was, for more than 50 years, a member of its Board of Governors: Dr. John W. Neumayr. “Fitting for the 4th of July,” wrote his daughter, Jane Nemcova (’98). “No one understood more our American history, culture, and Constitution.”

Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, Dr. Neumayr lived in and around San Francisco from the age of 10. The second oldest of four children, he excelled at sports from an early age. He was selected to the all-city basketball team in his senior year and, as a sophomore, set the San Francisco city record in the high jump. In 1948 the University of Notre Dame recruited him for both track and basketball, and as a 6’ 4” small forward, he joined a Fighting Irish team that remained in the nation’s Top 20 throughout his four years.

While in high school he also fell in love with philosophy, thanks to conversations with one of his basketball teammates. “We had spent a lot of time talking literature and philosophy before we even knew what philosophy was,” he once recalled. He cultivated this interest as a college student and, upon graduating from Notre Dame in 1952, went on to earn a master’s degree there as well.

Dr. Neumayr then returned to San Francisco, uncertain of his interests. He pursued coursework toward a teaching credential,

“Jack Neumayr was a man who dedicated his life to education under the light of the Catholic faith.”

considered practicing law, and even tested a religious vocation with the Dominican Order. During this two-year quest, his sister Mary introduced him to one of her favorite teachers at the San Francisco College for Women, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, who would go on to become Thomas Aquinas College’s founding president. At his new friend’s urging, Dr. Neumayr then traveled to Quebec to pursue a doctorate in philosophy at Dr. McArthur’s alma mater, the Université Laval, under the renowned Thomist Charles De Koninck.

After completing his doctorate, Dr. Neumayr came back to the Bay Area once more and taught at the University of Santa Clara, where he met Bridget Cameron, an Oxford University graduate

from England who was working on a master’s in American literature at the University of California, Berkeley. The two wed in 1963 and would go on to welcome seven children, three of whom are Thomas Aquinas College graduates.

At Santa Clara, Dr. Neumayr befriended a young philoso-

phy instructor named Marcus R. Berquist, and in 1966 both joined Dr. McArthur on the faculty at St. Mary’s College of California. Yet concerned by trends in academia and the broader culture, the three scholars soon began to think about establishing a college of their own.

In the fall of 1969, two years before Thomas Aquinas College opened its doors, Dr. Neumayr became its first dean, a position he held until 1981. He also assisted Dr. McArthur and Mr. Berquist in writing the College’s founding document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*. “When you consider the modest talents and efforts we brought to bear in founding the College,” he once said, “you have to conclude that this was God’s project, not ours.”

In 2012 the College awarded Dr. Neumayr its highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion, “for the wisdom and care that he brought to our founding, and for his service as a tutor, our first dean, and a member of our Board of Governors,” explained then-President Michael F. McLean. Dr. Neumayr continued to serve on the teaching faculty until his retirement in 2016, and he remained a member of the College’s Board of Governors for the rest of his days.

“Jack Neumayr was a man who dedicated his life to education under the light of the Catholic faith,” says Thomas Aquinas College President Paul J. O’Reilly. “Along with the other founders, he had the bold vision to establish the College as a beacon of light during the confusion about education in the 1960s. He loved the Church, and he loved his students. He was a giant who will be sorely missed. All of us at the College pray for the repose of his soul and the consolation of his family.” ❖



Richard A. Grant, Jr.

1939 – 2022

Richard A. Grant, Jr., a stalwart champion of the Catholic faith who dedicated his life to the work of Catholic education — and a devoted friend of Thomas Aquinas College — passed away August 10, clutching his beloved Rosary.

“Richard was a faithful friend of Thomas Aquinas College from the very beginning and, through his work with the Dan Murphy Foundation, he played a critical role in building up and sustaining the College over our first 50 years,” says President Paul J. O’Reilly. “We give thanks to God for the gift of his life and his friendship, and we pray for the repose of his soul, as well as for the consolation of his wife, Maria, and their family.”

Born December 18, 1939, Mr. Grant was a lifelong philanthropist, known world over, but especially in his native Los Angeles, for his generosity. In 1972 he wed Maria Ophuls, and the two would go on to enjoy 50 years in a loving marriage characterized by their unflinching commitment to service, welcoming two daughters and one granddaughter along the way.

A Knight Grand Commander of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Mr. Grant had a deep devotion to St. Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes, making some 15 pilgrimages to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France to accompany *malades* in hope of healing. He was also a member of the Order of St. Gregory the Great.

For half a century, he served as secretary-treasurer, then executive director, and finally president of the Dan Murphy Foundation, which promotes numerous Catholic initiatives, especially those per-

“Richard was a faithful friend of Thomas Aquinas College from the very beginning.”

taining to the religious life and inner-city schools in Southern California. Providentially, Mr. Grant’s tenure at the Foundation lined up neatly with the founding of Thomas Aquinas College, beginning just one year before the College opened its doors and concluding on the eve of its 50th anniversary. Over the intervening decades, he and Mrs. Grant would become deeply involved in the life of the College, with Mrs. Grant serving for 22 years on its Board of Governors, including six as chairman.

Working together, the Grants played major roles in the development of the College’s California campus. Under Mr. Grant’s leadership, the Dan Murphy Foundation made the lead gifts for the



Richard and Maria Grant at a 2009 dinner celebrating the dedication of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel

construction of both St. Bernardine of Siena Library and Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. The Foundation has also contributed significantly to the New England campus, which launched in 2019.

At a retirement dinner held in his honor two years ago, Mr. Grant was especially gracious in his comments about the College. “Fifty years ago, the Dan Murphy Foundation made its first grant to Thomas Aquinas College for \$25,000, and in the ensuing years it contributed many times that,” he said. “It’s been the best college investment we ever made: The College is now an internationally recognized institution whose graduates are playing an increasingly prominent role in the realms of church and state in this country and abroad.” He also noted that his “first real introduction to the College occurred in the early 1990s when I attended a Great Books Summer Seminar,” and he was “taken with the experience.”

At that same dinner, then-College President Michael F. McLean gladly repaid the compliments. “Through Richard’s good offices, the College has been the recipient of many generous gifts from the Dan Murphy Foundation for both capital projects and for student financial aid,” he said, “making it possible for many of our young people to receive the benefit of a genuinely Catholic liberal education that would not otherwise have been available to them.”

In honor of this tremendous generosity, the College inducted the Foundation into the Order of St. Albert the Great in 1993. In addition, the Grants themselves are longstanding members of the President’s Council and the St. Thérèse of Lisieux Legacy Society.

“I first heard of Richard from my father, who had met him while in Southern California for a College Board meeting,” recalls Anne S. Forsyth (’81), the College’s director of special projects. “He described him then as ‘a true Christian gentleman.’ That lovely phrase struck me at the time and when, many years later, I had the pleasure to meet and get to know Richard, it returned often to my mind. A perfect description for this great and holy man.” ❖

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Lisa Fusini
September 9, 2021
Mother of Sam ('13)

James Ormonde Lloyd-Butler
January 25, 2022
President's Council member

Larry Patrick
June 6, 2022
Father of Eric ('11) and Cassie (Mansfield '13)

Bruce Schardt
June 25, 2022
Father of Cristina (Durbin '14), Brian ('16), and Scott ('17)

Michael Conroy
June 29, 2022
Father of Anna (Flanders '18), Nicholas ('20), Maria ('22), Tom ('25), and Clare ('26)

Dr. John W. Neumayr
July 4, 2022
TAC co-founder, first dean, longtime member of the teaching faculty; father of Mary ('86), Jane (Nemcova '98), and Anne (Braden '05)

Jim Tierney
July 10, 2022
Member of the Los Angeles and Ventura Board of Regents

Joseph Kenneth Casey
July 17, 2022
St. Thérèse of Lisieux Legacy Society member

Richard A. Grant, Jr.
August 10, 2022
Husband of Maria, former chairman of the College's Board of Governors

Jan Harmonson
August 14, 2022
Husband of Patti, former TAC special events coordinator

Nelia Aguinaldo
August 20, 2022
Mother of Marienel (Kaufman '92), Bernadette (Goyette '95), and Regina (Sweeney '97); grandmother of Liam ('21), Therese ('22), and Angela Goyette ('23) and Catharine ('23) and Madeleine Sweeney ('25)

Paul Billion
August 19, 2022
Brother-in-law of College and Career Advisor Daniel Selmeczy ('08)

Diane Walsh
September 20, 2022
Wife of Tom ('83); mother of Andrew ('13), Theresa ('13), Angela ('16), Rose ('20), Nicholas ('21), and Liam ('22)

Kenneth Breckenridge Milton
September 12, 2022
Father of Fred ('83) and Joseph ('83); grandfather of Katherine (Marshallian '07), Benjamin ('10), Luke ('11), Nicholas ('12), Louise (Ciani '12), Stephen ('13), and Aidan Milton ('17)

Phillip Stephen Cronin
September 29, 2022
Father of Nicole (Tittmann '94); grandfather of Max ('22) and Madge Tittmann ('23) and Abby ('22) and Jack Mering ('25)

Dr. Nancy Ann Faller
October 5, 2022
New England campus nurse

Because the future needs the wisdom of the past ...



Please contact Paul Blewett, Director of Gift Planning
pblewett@thomasaquinas.edu | 805-421-5924

... help shape the future with a legacy gift today.



The St. Thérèse of Lisieux Legacy Society

Dr. Nancy Ann Faller

1946 – 2022



On October 5, Thomas Aquinas College bid farewell to a beloved member of its New England community, Dr. Nancy Faller, better known as “Nurse Nancy” by the students, faculty, and staff for whom she cared — and who loved her deeply.

In the three years since the College opened its Massachusetts campus, Dr. Faller served as its nurse, dutifully providing bandages, migraine cures, and daily check-ins to Covid-19 shut-ins. She was a joyful presence at campus events, instantly recognizable in her bright dresses with color-coordinated beanies and puffer vests, her Birkenstocks, and her myriad holiday-themed accessories. She was a daily communicant in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel and a lunchtime regular in Gould Commons.

“She would say she has 150 kids, because she saw all the students as her children,” observed Dominique Huckins (’25). “She would say she was so lucky, because even though she never married, she would get new kids all the time.”

Yet as Nurse Nancy was first to acknowledge, it was much more than luck that brought her to Thomas Aquinas College — or, rather, brought Thomas Aquinas College to New England.

“We cared for her physically, but she cared for us spiritually, and it’s been the best suffering and reward we’re ever going to have.”

Raised Catholic in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, along with her seven siblings, Dr. Faller slowly drifted from the Faith while she attended nursing school in the 1960s on a U.S. Army scholarship. She graduated in the midst of the escalating Vietnam War, and soon found herself at an Army evacuation hospital in Qui Nhon.

There she made the acquaintance of Sgt. David Rioux (’75), a critically injured member of the 101st Airborne Division who would go on to become a member of Thomas Aquinas College’s first graduating class. Dr. Faller, meanwhile, became an accomplished nurse and published expert in Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing, eventually earning a master’s degree from Russell Sage College and a doctorate in nursing from the University of Massachusetts. Nurse and patient lost touch after the war but reconnected decades later, becoming pen pals in 1995.

During one exchange, Dr. Rioux remarked that “Catholicism is the flower of Christianity” — a passing comment with eternal consequences. “In that one instant,” Dr. Faller observed, “I knew what the Catholic Church is, what it teaches; everything is true. I went to Confession and started going to Mass every day after that. My whole life changed.”

In the years to follow, Dr. Faller took up residence in Turners Falls, Massachusetts, and, in no small part because of Dr. Rioux, became an admirer and benefactor of Thomas Aquinas College. In 2007, when a prep school tried to sell its campus in nearby Northfield, she and some friends began praying for the property to come into the College’s possession. Ten years later, those prayers were answered when the National Christian Foundation granted the property to the College.

For three years, Dr. Faller cared for Thomas Aquinas College, New England, as its first nurse. And over the last few months — as she suffered peacefully through the late stages of pancreatic cancer — Thomas Aquinas College, New England, cared for her.

This summer, Nurse Nancy moved out of her longtime home, which she generously willed, along with the entirety of her estate, to the College. Requiring regular assistance, she took up residence in an on-campus apartment with two members of TAC’s first New England graduating class, newlyweds Simone (Kelly) and Nathanael Cassidy (both ’22).

“She received the sacraments every day, in a beautiful place surrounded by the people she loved, knowing that all her kids were praying for her,” reflects Mrs. Cassidy, who serves as the campus’s admissions visit coordinator. “We cared for her physically, but she cared for us spiritually, and it’s been the best suffering and reward we’re ever going to have. It was a glimpse of Heaven, honestly.”

“Nurse Nancy walked this campus praying for Thomas Aquinas College to come to Northfield. And when, in answer to those prayers, we did come, she gave herself to our students and school with her whole heart,” says Dr. Steven Cain, dean of the New England campus. “It has been a grace for us to be able to return that love during her final illness. She has been part of the very fabric of the community here, and she will be sorely missed. May God shed the light of His face upon her *in aeternum*.” ❖

UPCOMING EVENTS



Lecture: Dr. Adam SchulmanNovember 11
Dean, Saint John's College, Annapolis
"The Discovery of Entropy and its Significance"



Lecture: Dr. Michael PakalukNovember 11
Professor, The Catholic University of America
Aristotle's *Ethics*



Lecture: Dr. Anthony Andres..... January 13
Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College, California
"The Role of Dialectic in Liberal Education"



St. Thomas Day Lecture: Rev. Stephen
BrockJanuary 27
Professor of Medieval Philosophy
University of Chicago and Pontificia Universita
della Santa Croce



Lecture: Dr. John Goyette February 10
Dean, Thomas Aquinas College, California



Lecture: Pater Edmund Waldstein,
O. Cist. ('06)February 17
Member of the Institute of Moral Theology,
Hochschule Heiligenkreuz
"The Primacy of the Common Good"



President's Day Lecture:
Dr. Wilfred McClay.....February 24
Victor Davis Hanson Chair in Classical History and
Western Civilization, Hillsdale College

More events:

thomasaquinas.edu/events

Campus Mass schedules:

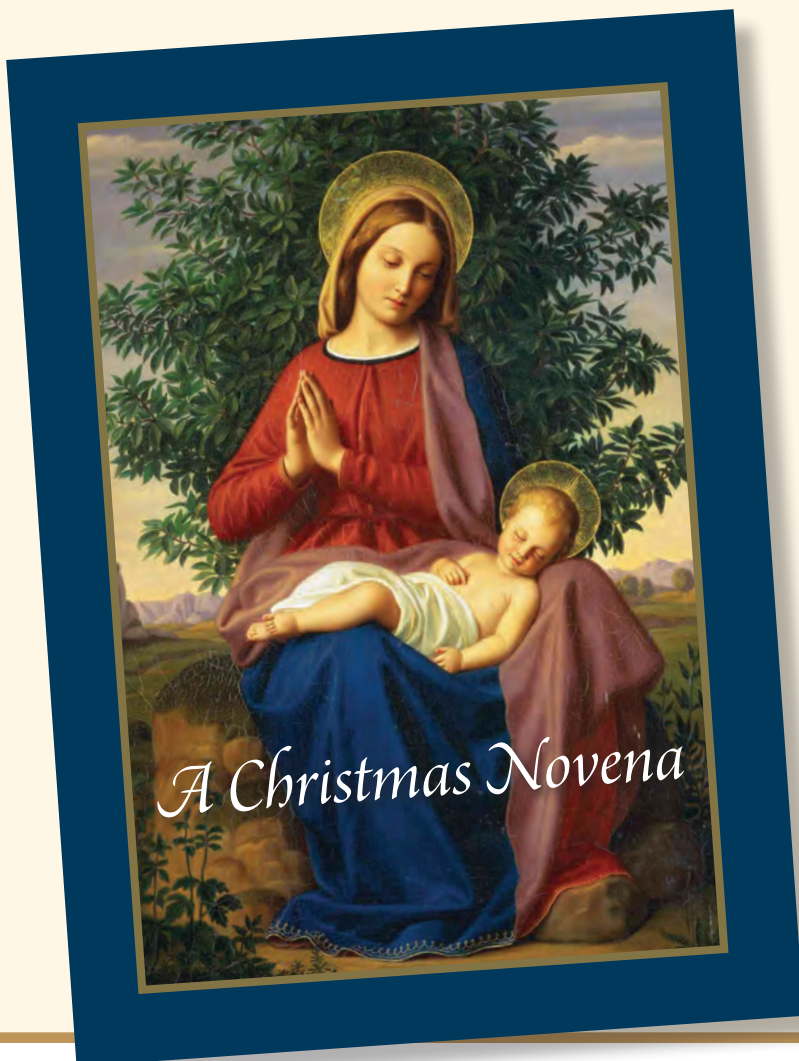
thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes

The Perfect Gift ... A CHRISTMAS NOVENA OF MASSES

Beginning on December 16, the chaplains of Thomas Aquinas College will offer a novena of Masses in the California and New England chapels. Each person enrolled in the Novena will receive a beautiful, personalized card from the College.

(Cost: \$5 per card, includes shipping and handling. All names must be received by December 15.)

thomasaquinas.edu/novena



STUDENT LIFE



1. Juniors welcome freshmen with live music at a movie-themed dance in St. Joseph Commons. **2.** Students try their mettle in a pull-up bar set up by a visiting recruiter from the U.S. Marine Corps. **3.** Seniors perform a skit at a dance on the St. Gladys patio. **4.** Students best the tutors in their annual game of Trivial Pursuit. **5.** For the first concert in the year's St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series, Lithuania's Ignas Maknickas and Greta Maknickaitė — siblings to junior Justas ('24) — perform a selection of classical pieces on the piano and violin. **6.** The Admissions Office holds a BBQ dinner for this year's student hosts. **7.** Students get soaked after a trip down the slip-n-slide at the All-College Picnic.





1. Students participate in a Graduate School Information Session hosted by Student Support Coordinator Emily (Barry '11) Sullivan. **2.** Many friends and family gathered in Northfield on September 10 for Alumni & Parent Day. **3.** Olivia Music Hall hosts a Saturday-morning music recital. **4.** Juniors take freshmen kayaking along the Connecticut River. **5.** Emulating the work of 19th century entomologist Jean-Henri Fabre, members of the Freshman Class collect insect samples. **6.** The seniors kick off the new year by hosting a "Dancing in the Moonlight"-themed dance ... **7.** including dance lessons!





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