



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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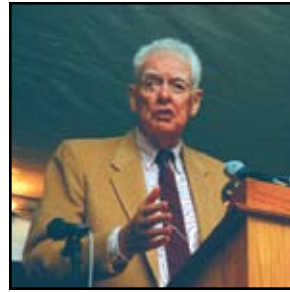
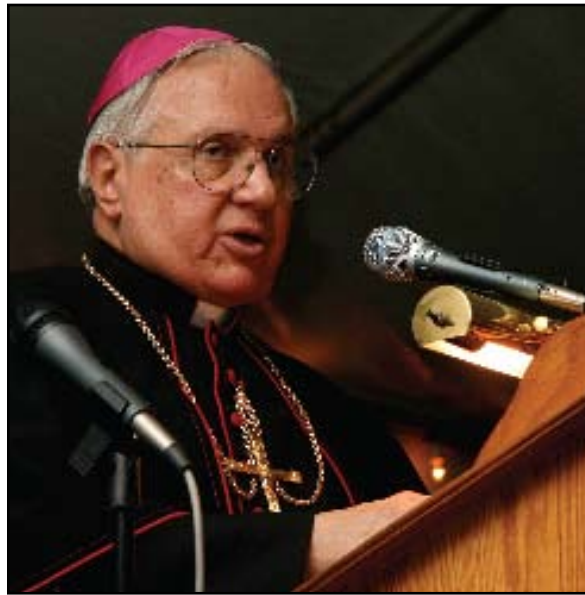
Saluting the Past, Looking to the Future

Campus Celebration Is a Night to Remember

Students at Thomas Aquinas College look forward to the three or four “formal dinners” held on campus throughout the year. A nice break from the normal routine, a formal dinner offers them an opportunity to dress up and linger over a special meal. But not all the students are able to be so relaxed: many are needed to help in the kitchen, wait on tables, move furniture, and so on.

On the evening of September 16, 2006, however, students were treated to a party that required none of their manpower. Instead, kitchen and maintenance workers were hired from off campus for the day, leaving all the students free to join in the celebration of the College’s 35th anniversary. Said Dr. Dillon, “This is a milestone for the College, and I wanted to ensure that the students could simply enjoy the party.”

In the late afternoon, His Excellency Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, offered a Mass of Thanksgiving in St. Bernardine of Siena Library. A reception and dinner followed in St. Joseph’s Square. With faculty members and their spouses also in attendance, the group seated under the softly-lit canopy numbered more than 450. Though a forest fire raged in the mountains just miles away, the



Clockwise from upper left: Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, President Thomas E. Dillon, President Emeritus and tutor Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, Dr. Jack Neumeyer, founder and tutor, Mr. Marc Berquist, founder and tutor, Mr. Peter DeLuca, founder, Vice-President for Administration and Finance, and tutor.

celebration went on unabated.

Dr. Dillon served as Master of Ceremonies throughout the evening, and introduced Bishop Bruskewitz saying, “He is a true shepherd of souls who has courageously defended the Faith, in season and out of season.” In his Keynote Address (see page 5 for text), Bishop Bruskewitz commented in some detail on the powerful lecture concerning reason and will that Pope Benedict XVI had given just days before at Regensburg, and noted the many ways it applied to Thomas Aquinas College.

Later in the evening, four of the College’s founders shared some humorous stories from the early years, as well as some solemn thoughts about the nature and purpose of genuine Catholic liberal education. Throughout the audience, there was a palpable sense of gratitude and respect for these courageous men who brought Thomas Aquinas College to life and have helped sustain it through the years.

Following dinner, students and faculty alike spent the remainder of the evening dancing to the strains of a Dixieland band led by Mr. Tom Sullivan, who has served on the College’s Board of Governors for the past 34 years, and as its chairman from 1975 - 1985.

Celebrating a Milestone

Gala Dinner Features Papal Biographer

On September 30, 2006, Thomas Aquinas College held a gala dinner at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles to celebrate a milestone in its history. e than 600 alumni, friends, and benefactors turned out for the event to commemorate the College’s 35th anniversary.

Following a Mass of Thanksgiving (see page 7), guests were welcomed into the Beverly Wilshire’s beautiful Wintergarden room for a cocktail reception. Behind brocade curtains, in the adjacent ballroom, an army of waiters put the finishing touches on dinner tables adorned with dramatic floral arrangements. When the curtains were drawn, the 16-piece Johnny Crawford Dance Orchestra struck up its famous vintage dance tunes, and guests took their places.

Mr. Jim Newman, a veteran member of ABC7’s “Eyewitness News” team, acted as Master of Ceremonies for the evening. (See article on page 2.) The Archbishop of Los Angeles, Cardinal Roger Mahony, gave the invocation (see page 2), and various officials, friends, and benefactors of the College offered congratulatory remarks throughout the evening. (See page 3.) The official biographer of the late Pope John Paul II, Mr. George Weigel, gave the Keynote Address (see page 5), and the final benediction was offered by Rev.



Msgr. Francis Weber, Archivist for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and Director of the San Fernando Mission. (See page 8.) Guests then danced the night away to the music of the Johnny Crawford Dance Orchestra.

Said President Dillon, “On behalf of the entire community of Thomas Aquinas College, I offer my heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the success of this celebration—to Sir Daniel Donohue, our honorary chairman, to Fred Ruopp and his dinner committee, and to all those who supported it financially. It was edifying to see the tremendous turnout and the great good will that exists for Thomas Aquinas College.”

Sir Donohue is Gala’s Honorary Chairman



The College was honored to have one of its dearest friends, Sir Daniel Donohue, serve as Honorary Chairman of the 35th Gala Celebration in Beverly Hills. A Gentleman-in-Waiting to His Holiness the Pope and a Knight of the Equestrian Order of Holy Sepulcher, the Order of Malta, and the Order of St. Gregory, Sir Daniel is also the president of the Dan Murphy Foundation. Founded by him and his dear wife, the late Bernardine Murphy Donohue, the foundation has contributed in a magnificent way over the years to Thomas Aquinas College.

Says President Dillon, “As we celebrate this milestone in our history, I am mindful that were it not for the unparalleled generosity of Sir Daniel and the Dan Murphy Foundation, Thomas Aquinas College simply would not exist, let alone thrive as it does today. We thank God for their partnership in our noble endeavor to do all we can to help build souls for Christ.”

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“To Remain Faithful to Him in All Things”

President Dillon Expresses His Gratitude

What a privilege and joy it is to be here tonight celebrating the 35th anniversary of Thomas Aquinas College among so many good friends.

Who would have guessed when the College opened its doors to 33 students in 1971 that just 35 years later it would have earned an international reputation within the Church for its leadership in Catholic education and would have established a reputation as one of the premier liberal arts colleges in the United States, even according to such secular oracles as *The New York Times*?

Who would have guessed that its alumni would have become such leaven in their workplaces, in their communities, and in the Church, and that from the alumni would come so many strong Catholic marriages and families as well as so many vocations to the priesthood and religious life?

Unbending Resolve

In 1969, amidst a great deal of turmoil and disintegration in higher education, our founders proposed and planned a new college that would uphold what is best in our intellectual heritage, and would conduct liberal education under the guiding light of the Catholic faith.

The founders were unbending in their resolve to pass on the great intellectual patrimony of our civilization and the wisdom of the Church's greatest thinkers. The one thing that has characterized Thomas Aquinas College from the beginning has been its determination to remain faithful to Christ and the teaching Church and never to compromise its principles.

Whatever the financial and material difficulties, whatever the pressures and obstacles of the day, the College has remained steadfast in its commitment to the true, the good, and the beautiful. This has always been a venture of faith seeking understanding, and despite our many human weaknesses, I think that God has rewarded our aspiration to remain faithful to Him in all things.

Profound Gratitude

Tonight I stand here profoundly grateful to God for His many blessings on Thomas Aquinas College—blessings well beyond anything for which we might have hoped and wholly disproportionate to our meager human efforts.

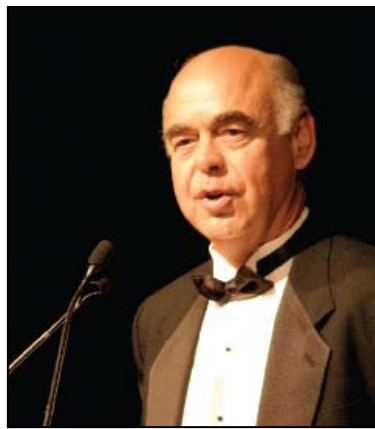
I must also express my profound gratitude to all those who have been God's instruments in the blessings the College has received:

Gratitude to our faculty and staff, who have been unwavering in their dedication to the life of the mind and who, in their commitment to Christian wisdom, have made many sacrifices to implement our high educational ideals.

Gratitude to our students, who have entrusted their minds to us through the years and have devoted themselves to the pursuit of the truth.

Gratitude to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, whose Cardinal McIntyre graciously invited us into the archdiocese 35 years ago and whose Cardinal Manning and, now, Cardinal Mahony have so kindly encouraged our work.

Gratitude to the Dan Murphy Foundation, which, in a special way, under



the leadership of Sir Daniel Donohue, has supported and encouraged us in our mission of Catholic liberal education.

And gratitude to the Fritz Burns Foundation, which has been a steady partner in our endeavor to foster moral and intellectual virtue.

And let me tonight also express deep thanks to all our many benefactors, living and deceased, whose prayers and sacrificial gifts have been extraordinary and without whom this college simply would not exist. You, our generous benefactors, through your magnificent support, truly are instruments of God's providence, helping to work great good in so many lives. Let me thank you for your partnership in this noble endeavor, which has had such positive effects in society and in the Church.

A Bright Future

Looking to the future, it is certainly our resolve to stay the course and extend the work that, through God's grace, has been so well begun. The future, I think, looks bright. Yes, there are scholarships to be provided, an endowment to be enlarged, a campus to be finished, and at the heart of the campus and of special importance to us all, there is a chapel to be completed and consecrated.

All this will require great sacrifices. However, the considerable accomplishments of the College in its short history inspire high hopes that such goals will be achieved, so long as we remain true to the intellectual and religious ideals which animate and give strength to the College.

Thomas Aquinas College has never been concerned with the expedient or the transitory, but from its inception has been dedicated to what is intrinsically worthwhile and enduring. We have always thought that if our civilization is to survive, those studies which have nourished and sustained it through the centuries must thrive for generations to come.

So no matter what are the intellectual vagaries of the day, at Thomas Aquinas College we are devoted in season and out of season to the twin pillars of faith and reason and to seeking and speaking the truth, happily making ourselves disciples of that Master who Himself is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

We at Thomas Aquinas College shall remain faithful to our Catholic heritage and shall continue to treasure our intellectual tradition. So long as the love of truth burns in

our souls, so long as we cherish and revere our faith and devote ourselves to Christ, the College will flourish.

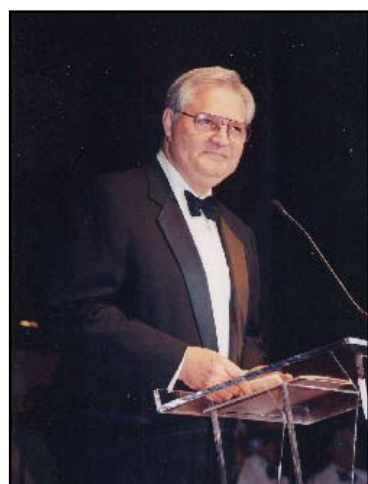
What Thomas Aquinas College has undertaken is an ennobling and enriching endeavor, one that has proven already to be of vital consequence to the Church and to society. We invite everyone here tonight to make our mission yours as well. We invite you to join with us in helping to form future generations of young people who care deeply about our Church, about our country, and about doing great things with their lives.

Thank you all for coming tonight, and thank you for your support, your encouragement, and your prayers. God bless you!

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The one thing that has characterized Thomas Aquinas College from the beginning has been its determination to remain faithful to Christ and the teaching Church and never to compromise its principles.

Veteran Newsman MCs Gala



Serving as Master of Ceremonies for the Gala Dinner was long-time friend of the College Jim Newman, a veteran member of ABC7's "Eyewitness News" team in Los Angeles. Mr. Newman's career as a journalist spans 20 years and includes experience in the print media as economics editor for the Associated Press in Washington, D.C., as well as radio and television broadcasting for two major networks.

A knight of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, he received a BA degree from Westminster College in Missouri, and attended the London School of Economics. He is a former president of the Economic Broadcasters Association and has received numerous awards including the prestigious Janus Award for Excellence in Financial Broadcasting.

So, of all the many tributes one could give to Thomas Aquinas College, I would say thank you for teaching generation after generation of young men and women, steeped in our Catholic faith and tradition, to learn how to think and to search for the truth, aided by our Faith. That is a tremendous contribution you make, and I hope you go on making it for hundreds of years to come.

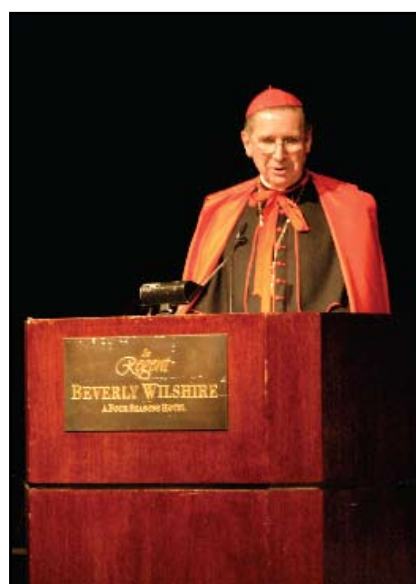
Teaching Young People How to Think

Invocation by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Los Angeles

Before leading you in our invocation this evening, I would like to first of all offer my congratulations to Thomas Aquinas College. One can think of a variety of qualities, virtues, and attributes of this College, but the one that comes to mind most readily to me and is the most satisfying is that unlike so many other places of higher learning, Thomas Aquinas College teaches young men and women how to think.

It is amazing the people I meet, young people who have graduated from places of higher learning who simply never learned how to think, never learned how to find the roots, the principles, and the values for their own beliefs in life, much less the profession or career in which they are engaged.

Given the great faith tradition of Thomas Aquinas College, I have decided to use as the invocation the prayer we used for meals during the recent conclave in Rome to elect our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. It is in Latin, so feel free to join in.



Benedicite.

Edent pauperes et saturabuntur. Et laudabunt Dominum qui requirunt Eum. Vivent corda eorum in saeculum saeculi.

Gloria Patri....

Pater noster....

Oremus.

Benedic, Domine, nos et haec tua dona, quae de tua

largitate sumus sumpturi.

Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Jube, Domine, benedicere.

Ad cenam vitae aeternae perducatur nos Rex aeternae gloriae.

Amen.

The Realization of a Dream

Dinner Committee Chairman Welcomes Guests



Frederick J. Ruopp, Member of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors since 1982

Your Eminence Cardinal Mahony, reverend clergy and religious, distinguished guests, and friends: On behalf of Thomas Aquinas College, its students, its faculty, its Board of Governors, I welcome you to this 35th anniversary celebration of the founding of the College.

We are joined in our welcome by our Honorary Dinner Chairman, who is a great patron of charities and education throughout the United States as well as here in Los Angeles, Sir Daniel Donohue. Daniel has done so much for so many.

We would also like at this time to thank our terrific dinner committee. These people have done a wonderful job, and they've gotten this whole dinner together for us in a very elegant way. So, thank you members of the dinner committee.

Others tonight will speak to you about the growth and the building out of our beautiful campus. Still others will give you some of the folklore and some of the interesting stories in the growth and life of this college.

For myself in these brief comments I would just like to say that Thomas Aquinas College is the realization of a dream. This was a dream of a college that would imbue in its graduates a love and knowledge of all that is best in the Western tradition intellectually and spiritually, and all done in the light of the Christian faith. It's an extraordinary institution. Our graduates are everywhere in this country, and they are doing great things.

So again, thank you all so much for being here. Enjoy the evening!

Fulfilling the Vision of Our Founders

Chairman of the Board Reflects on 35 Years



Maria O. Grant, Chairman of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors

An evening like this offers an opportunity to look back and reflect on the blessings that we at Thomas Aquinas College have received, and I want to thank all those who have made the College a reality: our founding Board of Governors and the original tutors who had a vision and made it happen; our first donors who stepped out and funded a very new idea and all those donors who followed them, past and present; all the members of the Board of Governors who have given us such wise counsel and advice over the years; our tutors whose expertise, intellects, and faith have shaped the

College into the vital entity we are today; our students who have shown their commitment to the College by coming to us from all over the United States and many places in the world.

Finally, I want to thank in a very special way all those who are helping build Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Five years ago, I stood here and announced to you that we had a wonderful lead gift from the Dan Murphy Foundation of \$10 million to build our chapel. Two weeks ago, I stood in the middle of that chapel, looking at the walls rising around me. No picture or virtual reality DVD can do justice to how beautiful that chapel is going to be and how it will really become the heart of the campus.

So, I thank all of you here and those not present who have done so much to help us fulfill and realize the vision of our founders. Thank you.

A Great Legacy

Los Angeles County Supervisor Presents Proclamation

It is a pleasure to be here this evening once again to support a great college that is providing light to this world in darkness.

To me, this is a very special room we're in tonight. Back in 1980, when I first ran for the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors against an entrenched incumbent, two special people kicked off my campaign in this room: Ronald Reagan and Jonathan Winters. Tom Sullivan, the first Chairman of Thomas Aquinas College's Board, was there that evening, as were some others. What was impressive was that Ronald Reagan stood up here and took questions from the audience—we had about 500 people—and he talked about foreign affairs, domestic affairs, international relations. It was all very complex. Yet, the *Los Angeles Times* failed to report it the next day.

Nevertheless, Ronald Reagan gave us a great legacy, and Thomas Aquinas College is also giving us a great legacy and great opportunities for our young people, so many of whom have been denied the opportunity of receiving a quality education.

On behalf of the County of Los Angeles, I present this proclamation. Thank you for 35 good years of bringing the Good News of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to the world and to the next generation.



Michael Antonovich, Los Angeles County Mayor and Supervisor

An International Reputation for Excellence

A Salute from the Grand Master of the Order of Malta



Richard B. Madden, President, Western Association of the Order of Malta

It is so wonderful to be here this evening, and I am so proud that the Order of Malta is represented here by some 26 knights and dames. I am also pleased to be able to announce and to read a short letter from His Highness and Prince, the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, as follows:

Dear faculty, students and friends of Thomas Aquinas College—On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the founding of Thomas Aquinas College, permit me to offer my sincere congratulations to the entire community for reaching this milestone in such a challenging time. Thomas Aquinas College has

earned an international reputation for excellence in Catholic higher education by demonstrating that seeking knowledge under the light of faith and reason is possible, desirable, and necessary to form the truly wise Catholic person.

The educated Catholic is essential to our Order's mission to support and defend the Faith in this secular generation that can be hostile to the profession of our faith, or any faith. In fostering Catholic religious values, and vocations to the priesthood, the consecrated religious life, and Catholic marriage, Thomas Aquinas College sets a wonderful example for young Catholics and for all of us.

I wish to commend the administration and faculty of Thomas Aquinas College for their collaboration with the knights and dames of the Order of Malta in convening and hosting an annual weekend retreat for our members. The charism of the Order is "Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum" (defense of the Faith and humble assistance to the poor and the suffering) really has meaning only with the eyes of Faith in following our Lord Jesus Christ. By offering our members the opportunity to enrich their spiritual lives, Thomas Aquinas College is materially aiding the Order in its mission.

Congratulations and with prayerful wishes for many years to come,

*Fra' Andrew Willoughby Ninian Bertie
Grand Master of the
Sovereign Military Order of Malta*

An Oasis in a Spiritual Desert

Vice-Chairman of the Board Offers a Toast

I want to give the toast to Thomas Aquinas College and the people that have made it great. This society we live in is a spiritual desert, and in that society, Thomas Aquinas College is an oasis and has been an oasis for 35 years. People make history, history doesn't make people. And the people of Thomas Aquinas College are changing history for the better and our culture for the better.

On this occasion, I think a toast is proper. A toast by definition is that which gives thanks and praise to someone or to a group of people. I think our first praise and thanks has to be to the Almighty God who put the idea in the minds of a small group of people to form a Catholic college that was faithful to the *Magisterium* and the pope, and carried on the Catholic tradition as it should be. Our first praise and thanks, therefore, has to go to the Almighty God who started it and is watching over it.

The second praise and thanks has to go to those who took that idea and ran with it and caused it to

happen. It has been tremendous activity that has taken it from a little seedling, to a sapling, and now a full-grown tree.

It is enormous—the thousands of people that the College is helping. I think that this, our college, is an oasis in a desert of spirituality that it is changing it for the better. It is an oasis of truth, beauty, and goodness, and for all of us pilgrims who have been associated with it, Thomas Aquinas College has changed and enhanced our lives and made us better people. It will keep doing this, and get better and better and better.

So here's to all the people who have made Thomas Aquinas College what it is today. It's going to get even better. Thank you.



Jim and Judy Barrett, owners of Chateau Montelena Winery in California's Napa Valley

Gratitude from Alumni

President of Alumni Association Pledges Prayers and Support



Nicholas Zepeda ('90), President, Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Association

On behalf of the Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Association, I congratulate the College for 35 years of classical liberal education in a devoutly Catholic setting.

We alumni cherish the memories of our studies and our time on the campus, whether in Calabasas or Santa Paula. Our thanks go to our parents and our tutors, and to the College staff and all its patrons. These benefactors have made our education possible. Our thanks take form in our ongoing prayers and continued financial support for the College.

May God grant Thomas Aquinas College a future rich in His graces, wisdom, and guidance as it perseveres in its mission in the years to come.

“A Wall of Brass, A Pillar of Iron”

Thomas Aquinas College, an Icon of Fides et Ratio, says Bishop Bruskewitz

Allow me to begin by expressing my most profound thanks to Dr. Dillon and to all who have been responsible for extending the gracious invitation to me to be here with you to celebrate the 35th anniversary of this extraordinarily fine institution.

It is no flattery, but a fact, to point out that for many of us Catholics, as well as non-Catholics throughout the United States, Thomas Aquinas College has become the prophet Jeremiah's proverbial wall of brass, pillar of iron, and fortified city in the present condition of Catholic higher education in the United States.

I am sure that many of the students do not fully appreciate, as they will in the near future, the excellence of the education and formation that they are receiving and the wonderful intellectual and spiritual opportunities that Thomas Aquinas College has opened and continues to open up for them. The benefactors and staff members are, obviously, those most responsible for the fine condition of Thomas Aquinas College, and for all the wonderful hopes that its present superb condition imply for a very promising future.

A Catholic institution of higher learning, that is, post-secondary school education, must always be the important locus for the interaction, interfacing, and intersection of faith and reason, religion, and science, and on the intellectual level, the natural and the supernatural order. It is appropriate that this institution is named after the great Angelic Doctor of the 13th century whose accomplishments and whose intellectual depth continue to profoundly influence our world today, albeit not as appropriately and adequately as these should.

The Relationship of Faith and Reason

Just this week, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI speaking at the University of Regensburg, where he had been at one time a professor, remarked about the relationship of faith and reason in a way that, I believe, deserves quoting:

The fundamental decisions made about the relationship between faith and the use of human reason are part of the Faith itself; they are developments consonant with the nature of faith itself.

A critique of modern reason from within has nothing to do with putting the clock back to the time before the Enlightenment and rejecting the insights of the modern age. The positive aspects of modernity are to be acknowledged unreservedly: we are all grateful for the marvelous possibilities that it has opened up for mankind and for the progress in humanity that has been granted to us. The scientific ethos, moreover...is the will to be obedient to the truth, and as such it embodies an attitude which reflects one of the basic tenets of Christianity. The intention, then, is not one of retrenchment or negative criticism, but of broadening our concept of reason and its application.

While we rejoice in the new possibilities open to humanity, we also see the dangers arising from these possibilities, and we must ask ourselves how we can overcome them. We will succeed in doing so only if reason and faith come together in a new way, if we overcome the self-imposed limitation of reason to the empirically verifiable, and if we once more disclose its vast horizons. In this sense theology rightly belongs in the university and within the wide-ranging dialogue of sciences, not merely as an historical discipline and one of the human sciences, but precisely as theology, as inquiry into the rationality of faith.

Only thus do we become capable of that genuine dialogue of cultures and religions so



Over 450 students, faculty, and staff gathered for a formal dinner on September 16, 2006, held outdoors in St. Joseph's Square on the campus. Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, gave the Keynote Address. Two alumni priests serve in the Diocese of Lincoln, one as a parish priest and the other as a teacher in St. Gregory the Great Seminary there. One alumna is a cloistered Carmelite nun in Lincoln.

urgently needed today. In the Western world it is widely held that only positivistic reason and the forms of philosophy based on it are universally valid. Yet, the world's profoundly religious cultures see this exclusion of the divine from the universality of reason as an attack on their most profound convictions.

A reason which is deaf to the divine and which relegates religion into the realm of subcultures is incapable of entering into the dialogue of cultures. At the same time modern scientific reason with its intrinsically Platonic element bears within itself a question which points beyond itself and beyond the possibilities of its methodology.

Modern scientific reason quite simply has to accept the rational structure of matter and the correspondence between our spirit and the prevailing rational structures of nature as a given, on which its methodology has to be based. Yet the question why this has to be so is a real question, and one which has to be remanded by the natural sciences to other modes and planes of thought—to philosophy and theology.

For philosophy and, albeit, in a different way for theology, listening to the great experiences and insights of the religious traditions of humanity, and those of the Christian faith in particular, is a source of knowledge, and to ignore it would be an unacceptable restriction of our listening and responding.

Here I am reminded of something Socrates said to Phaedo. In their earlier conversations, many false philosophical opinions had been raised, and so Socrates says, 'It would be easily understandable if someone became so annoyed at all these false notions that for the rest of his life he despised and mocked all talk about being. But in this way he would be deprived of the truth of existence and would suffer a great loss.' The West has long been endangered by this aversion to the questions which underlie its rationality and can only suffer great harm thereby. The courage to engage the whole breadth of reason, and not the denial of its grandeur—this is the program with which a theology grounded in Biblical faith enters into the debates of our time. 'Not to

act reasonably is contrary to the nature of God.'

To Rediscover the Breadth of Reason

The Pope concludes by saying, “To this breadth of reason, we invite our partners in the dialogue of cultures. To rediscover it constantly is the great task of a college or university.”

I personally believe that this rediscovery is a work that has been undertaken and continues to be undertaken by this excellent college called Thomas Aquinas.

The urgency of the task has been reiterated on another occasion last week by Pope Benedict XVI. He said in a homily at Regensburg that what the Church believes must be proclaimed by the Church clearly in today's anxious and violent world:

It is necessary to recognize the modern pathologies associated with reason and religion and the ways that God's image can be destroyed by hatred and fanaticism.

In the light of these distortions, Christians need to say clearly that the God in whom we believe and proclaim confidently is a God who has a human face. Only this can free us from being afraid of God, which ultimately is at the root of modern atheism. Only this God saves us from being afraid of the world and from anxiety before the emptiness of life.

While theology is necessary in our world, it is not necessary to understand the Faith. Deep down, it is quite simple: belief in God the Creator, and Christ the Savior, and in everlasting life as expressed in the Apostles' Creed... Modern attempts to make God unnecessary have always failed because it became clear that something is missing from the equation! When God is subtracted, something does not add up for man, the world, and the whole vast universe.

The world faces two approaches to the ultimate questions about life: What came first, Creative Reason, the Creator Spirit who makes all things and gives them growth, or Unreason which, lacking any meaning, somehow brings forth a mathematically-ordered cosmos as well as man and his reason? If a human being is nothing more than a chance result of

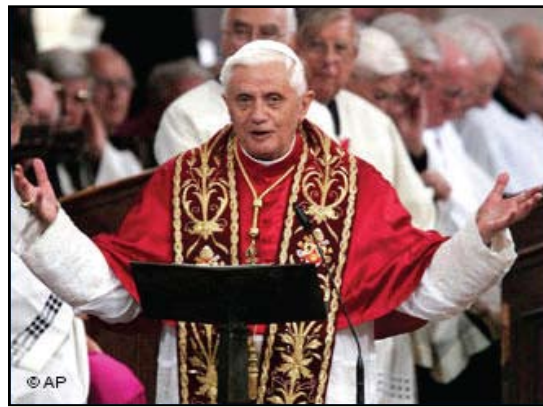
evolution, humanity becomes meaningless. Christians, on the other hand...believe that at the beginning of everything is the Eternal Word, with Reason and not Unreason.

The idea of an ultimate judgment which makes people afraid is actually the prospect of the triumph of justice. We want to see the outrageous injustice and suffering which can be observed in human history to be finally undone, so that in the end everyone will find happiness and everything will be shown to have meaning...So faith is not meant to instill fear, but to call people to accountability.

As I listened to the Holy Father's words, I could not help but apply them to the 35th anniversary of this institution, particularly because the Pope concluded by saying, “We are not meant to waste our lives, misuse them, or spend them selfishly. In the face of injustice we must not remain indifferent and thus end up as silent collaborators or outright accomplices.”

In all that the present Holy Father has spoken, particularly most recently in Regensburg, one finds an echo of the incredibly sublime writing

Continued on page 6



Pope Benedict delivered his now-famous lecture at Regensburg on September 12, 2006.

“A Crucial Sector of the Rampart of the West”

Official Biographer of Pope John Paul II Gives Keynote Address at Gala Celebration

Your Eminence, Maria Grant and members of the Board of Governors, Dr. Dillon, faculty, students, and friends of Thomas Aquinas College:

Thank you for inviting me to share this evening with you and to celebrate with you the 35th anniversary of Thomas Aquinas College—one of the jewels in the crown of higher education in the United States.

Speaking of gems, a quick Google search revealed that 35th anniversaries are known, for purposes of jewelry stores and the Hallmark Corporation, as “emerald anniversaries.” But “emerald” brings up “Emerald City,” which brings up *The Wizard of Oz*, and if there’s anything that Tom Dillon manifestly isn’t, it’s the wizard of Oz, or the wizard of anyplace else, for that matter. So let’s forget the emerald business and just say, “Happy 35th anniversary.”

The Origins of Thomas Aquinas College

When did this remarkable enterprise called “Thomas Aquinas College” begin? You could, obviously, say that it began 35 years ago, when a group of educators, concerned about what they rightly perceived as the meltdown in American higher education under the cultural pressures of the sixties, decided to try something different. True as that might be, though, to think of the College that way might suggest that Thomas Aquinas College is defined by what it isn’t, or by what it’s against, and that would be a serious mistake: for this is a college that knows precisely what it is, and precisely what it’s for.

We could widen the historical lens a bit and say that the seeds of this enterprise were sown in 1955, when the dean of Catholic historians in the United States, Father John Tracy Ellis, challenged American Catholics to bring the Catholic tradition of intellectual excellence to bear on U.S. Catholic institutions of higher education. And there would be some truth in that, too, although the people of Thomas Aquinas College have read Father Ellis’s injunction rather differently—if far more accurately—than many of their peers in Catholic colleges and universities; and to explore that rocky terrain would not be quite appropriate for an after-dinner reflection, which is, after all, meant to aid, not impede, good digestion.

No, I suggest we widen the historical lens by several orders of magnitude. So, as we ponder the origins of Thomas Aquinas College on this anniversary, let’s revisit the city of Ephesus, in Asia Minor, toward the end of the first century A.D.

There, insofar as tradition and scholarship can determine, the aged apostle whom history would eventually know as St. John the Divine sat down to write his Gospel. The genre “gospel” was likely well known to him, but (inspired, we believe, by the Holy Spirit) he had something distinctive in mind. His would be a different kind of Gospel, and so he began in a distinctive way: *Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ὡς ἦν ὁ λόγος*—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John the evangelist wanted to bear witness, in the very first sentence of his Gospel, to the truth he had learned in Christ, from Christ, about Christ: this Jesus of Nazareth was not only the “Lamb of God” to whom the Baptist had born witness, this was the Word, the *Logos* of God, come into the world for the world’s salvation.

And in bearing that particular witness in that particular way, St. John, two millennia ago in Ephesus, set in motion the cultural revolution of which we are the heirs here tonight, as we honor Thomas Aquinas College.

The Origin of “The West”

Why? Because John’s identification of the historical Jesus of Nazareth with the *Logos* of God was the crucial moment in the coming-together of faith and reason, the coming-together of Jerusalem and Athens that is at the very foundations of the civilizational enterprise we call



Over 600 guests gathered at the Gala Dinner celebrating Thomas Aquinas College’s 35th anniversary at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles on September 30, 2006. George Weigel delivered the Keynote Address. In it he praised Thomas Aquinas College because “...it prepares men and women of character whose lives, as well as their arguments, put the good ideas, the true ideas, the ideas that reflect the *Logos* as the creative agent of history, into play.”

“the West.” The civilization of the West did not begin in the Enlightenment; it did not begin in the high Middle Ages or in the era of the Fathers of the Church (although it took many of its characteristic intellectual forms in those great periods of cultural accomplishment). No, if you want to find one absolutely crucial point from which to date the beginning of what we know as “the West” as the unique civilizational enterprise it is, I suggest we look to Ephesus, and to John’s identification of the One on whose breast he had reclined at the Last Supper with the *Logos*, the Word, the Reason of God. (And, given our proximity to Hollywood, I suppose I must insist, with the historical Da Vinci, that that was the apostle John, not Mary Magdalene, reclining next to the Lord at the Last Supper...)

In a beautiful homily at Regensburg earlier this month, Pope Benedict XVI taught that, in the Christian view, the world does not begin in nothingness. No, the Pope preached, “We believe that at the beginning of everything is the eternal Word.” We believe, in other words, that everything that is, begins “with Reason and not Unreason.” “And with this faith,” the Pope continued, “we have no reason to hide, no fear of ending up in a dead end.” Why? Because, Benedict taught, “this creative Reason is Goodness, it is Love. It has a face. God does not leave us groping in the dark. He has shown Himself to us as a man.”

And in that man, the man of Nazareth, we meet the *Logos* of God. The recognition of that, the definition of that, is at the very *fons et origo*, the very beginning, of “the West.” That is where Europe and its progeny, like the United States, begin. That is where Thomas Aquinas College begins.

Irrationality on the March

That is why this college, so small as the world measures educational largeness, is poised on the edge of an even more brilliant—dare I say, an even more urgently important—future: because it is dedicated to the *Logos*, to the truth of things, to the wisdom of both Athens and Jerusalem. And because of that commitment, it can give us the kind of educated men and women we need in a world where irrationality is rampant, on the march, and threatening.

As everyone who hasn’t been stuck in a soundproof cave in Antarctica for the past two weeks knows, Pope Benedict did more than preach a homily at Regensburg on September 12. He gave a lecture at his old university, speaking on the relationship of faith and reason, a theme that had been developed in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* by

his predecessor, John Paul the Great, and a theme to which Benedict XVI wished to return—with perhaps an even greater sense of urgency.

Why? Because, as the Pope argued in his Regensburg lecture, the future of civilization was being threatened today by two forms of irrationality.

There is the irrationality which teaches that it is the will of God that we do the irrational—such as willfully killing innocents in the name of God. This irrationality, the Holy Father suggested, was grounded in inadequate ideas of the nature of God Himself—for if we think that God is merely Will with a capital “W” (as some Muslims believe and as Christians like Scotus and Ockham also taught), then we can conclude (as jihadist Muslims do) that God can will whatever God likes—including the irrational. One cannot, however, believe any such thing of a God who presents Himself to the world as *Logos*, as incarnate Reason.

A Great Question

And so, thanks to the brilliance and courage of Benedict XVI, a great question has been put on the table of the world’s conversation: how does our concept of the very nature of God shape our concept of the world, of our responsibilities in the world, and of the just society?

Or, I must add immediately, our lack of a concept of God. For there is another irrationality afoot in the world, causing enormous mischief in Europe as well as in many segments of American high culture: I mean that secularist irrationality, often called “postmodernism,” which teaches us that while there may be “your truth” and “my truth,” there is nothing we can know, with certainty, as *the* truth, which includes, among many other things, the truth that persuasion is morally superior to coercion in public life; or the truth that human beings are the bearers of rights which the state is obliged to respect; or the truth that the murder of innocents in some putatively great cause is irrational and always wicked.

A West that cannot say with certainty that anything is the truth—a West which is caught in the quicksand of postmodernism—is a West that will not be able to deploy the new knowledge 21st-century genetics gives us so that the result of the revolution in biotechnology is genuine human flourishing, not Huxley’s brave new world of manufactured and stunted humanity. By the same token, a West that cannot say with certainty that anything is “true” is a West that has been stripped naked before its enemies, not because it lacks material power (which it has in abundance), but

Continued on page 6

“Rampart of the West,” continued

Address by George Weigel, continued from page 5

because it cannot explain to itself why its civilizational achievement is good, and why it is worth defending.

A Community of Reason

By being a community of reason—by enabling its students to create communities of reason in their post-collegiate lives—Thomas Aquinas College is preparing its students for the most urgent public task of the early 21st century. No one can fail to be impressed by the statistics over these past 35 years: 44% of Thomas Aquinas graduates go on to graduate or professional school; 35% becomes teachers; 11% enter the priesthood or the consecrated religious life. Those are results in which any Catholic college or university could take justifiable pride.

But what is most important, I believe, is what happens to everyone who comes through Thomas Aquinas College—not just the professionals and teachers and professed witnesses to Christ, but even to young men like the computer geek working in a hotel in Victoria, British Columbia, whom I met over a beer Friday night a week ago: they all become men and women of reason who can foster communities of reason where their peers (and perhaps even some of their parents) can come to grips with the fact that human beings can know the truth of things, including the moral truth of things; and where the people whose lives they touch can come to understand that in knowing those truths, we come to know our responsibilities and our duties, the fulfillment of which is a crucial index of the happiness for which, as St. Augustine reminds us, all human beings long—the happiness that is our intuition, here and now, of the eternal happiness promised us because of the saving work of God in Christ.

The notion that “ideas have consequences” has become something of a truism, perhaps even a cliché. What really counts, however, for ourselves and for history, is that we get the ideas right. The world almost came apart in the 20th century because of false ideas about human nature, human community, human origins, and human destiny. The world is at risk of coming apart in the 21st century for the same reason—because of false ideas about the human condition in all its dimensions. Thomas Aquinas College prepares students who are not only equipped to critique the bad ideas, it prepares men and women of character whose lives, as well as their arguments, put the good ideas, the true ideas, the ideas that reflect the *Logos* as the creative agent of history, into play.



Mr. Weigel lauded the College's graduates saying, "They all become men and women of reason who can foster communities of reason."

The Living Rampart of the West

I have been privileged to spend a total of about a year and a half of my life in Poland, and in the course of that experience, I've learned a lot of Polish history—including the fact that Poles have often thought of themselves, throughout the drama of their millennium-long story, as the *antemurale Christianitatis*: the “rampart of Christendom.” That was true in 1683, when the Polish cavalry of King Jan III Sobieski repelled a Turkish invasion at the Battle of Vienna; that was true in a different way when Poland led the successful non-violent resistance to the communist usurpation of the West's liberties that we now know as the Revolution of 1989. Given the nature of the threats facing us today, however, no one place is likely to be the *antemurale Christianitatis* or, in a more pluralistic vein, the *antemurale occidentalis*, the “rampart of the West,” the defender of the civilizational accomplishment that emerged, as Benedict XVI reminded the world at Regensburg, from the marriage of faith and reason, of Jerusalem and Athens.

The ramparts to be fortified and defended today are within each one of us. For unless a critical mass of the people of the West believe that they can know the truth about how men and women ought to live together, the darkness will, eventually, suffocate the light: not the Light of which St. John wrote at the end of the prologue to his Gospel, for that Light can never be extinguished, but the light of Western civilization.

That beautiful campus of Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, soon to be enhanced by a magnificent chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, is a crucial sector of both the *antemurale Christianitatis* and the *antemurale occidentalis*—not because it is a bunker into which timid souls retreat, but because it educates the kind of men and women who can make the case for reason, for persuasion, and for civility in a world of irrationality, coercion, and incivility, including lethal incivility. The graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, in turn, become part of the living rampart of the West.

That is no mean accomplishment. That is cause for celebration.

And that is why those who have made Thomas Aquinas College possible in the past and present, and those who will continue to make it possible in the future, deserve the thanks of us all.

Godspeed on your journey into the future.

“Wall of Brass, Pillar of Iron,” continued

Address by Bishop Bruskewitz, continued from page 4

of Pope John Paul II in his great encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, Faith and Reason.

The Strong Synthesis of Philosophy and Theology

Certainly, one of the great contributions that Thomas Aquinas College has made, and continues to make, is a witness to a strong synthesis of philosophy and theology in its academic undertakings. Not only does the College provide for a strong spiritual formation for students and staff, but it also makes it possible for these intellectual connections between faith and reason, between philosophy and theology, to be part of the warp and woof of the achievement in academics of the graduates of this fine institution.

In a certain sense, and not stretching the analogy too far, Thomas Aquinas College stands as an icon, in my view, of the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* of Pope John Paul II. Our present Holy Father, Pope Benedict, commenting on that encyclical, might in the same commentary also be making reference by implication to this institution. He says, for instance,

Just as philosophy must listen to empirical knowledge that matures in the different sciences, so it should also consider the sacred tradition of the religions and, above all, the message of Sacred Scripture as a source of knowledge by which to be made fertile. There is no great philosophy that has not received clarifications and indications from the religious tradition, whether we think of the philosophies of Greece, or India, or of the philosophy that has developed within Christianity, or yet again, of modern philosophies, convinced of the autonomy of reason and which consider such autonomy as the ultimate measure of thought, but all the same, remain in debt to the great themes of thought that the Biblical faith has contributed to philosophy all along the way. Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling would not be thinkable without the premises of faith, and Karl Marx himself, albeit in his radical confutation, lives on the horizons of hope inherited from the Hebrew tradition. Wherever philosophy eliminates totally this dialogue with the thought of faith,



At the 35th anniversary celebration on campus, Bishop Bruskewitz greets emeritus member of the Board of Governors Ed Mills and his granddaughter, Mary Teichert ('08).

it ends up, as formulated, once by Jaspers, in a seriousness that goes on emptying itself. In the end, it finds itself forced to abandon the problem of truth, that is to say, it abandons itself because a philosophy that no longer asks itself who we are, why do we exist, whether God and eternal life exist, is a philosophy in abdication.

The Holy Father goes on once again in almost an implied tribute to the work of Thomas Aquinas College by saying that in the culture, the dethronement of theology and metaphysics has made thought much more narrow, and it makes human beings become stupid through irreligiosity. “In leaving aside the ultimate questions, reason has made itself indifferent and boring. It has become irrelevant for the existential dilemmas of good and evil, of death and immortality.”

Giving Courage to Many

The Pope in *Fides et Ratio*, and also by implication, Thomas Aquinas College, has given courage to many men and entire peoples. What the witness of this College is has perhaps sounded hard and cutting to the ears of many, and even aroused hatred, but when it ceases there will be an instant of fearful silence. For when God and man, sin and grace, death and eternal life are no longer spoken of, then all the cries and all the noise there will be, will be only a vain attempt at self-deception before the silencing of what is truly human.

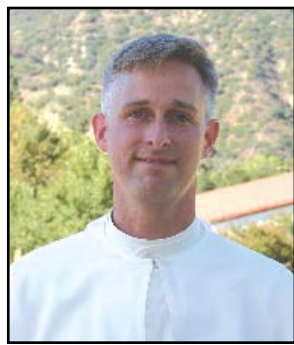
We must always oppose the danger of this silence with what Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI called “parrhesia,” with the fearless frankness of faith, thus providing a service not only to the Catholic Church but to the whole of humanity.

Allow me in closing to assert what I feel is a mission, indeed a mission from God, a call from God, and a sending forth from God given to this institution. Once again in Jeremiah's terms, it is to stand as a pillar of iron, a wall of brass, and a fortified city against the pervasive materialism that marks Western culture; against the decline of culture that had been nourished for hundreds of

Continued on page 7

“The One, True Foundation of Thomas Aquinas College”

Love of the Holy Eucharist is the Greatest Blessing



Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem., is a graduate of Thomas Aquinas College's Class of 1994. In 2005, he was ordained a priest in the Order of Praemontre. Having completed a PhD in philosophy at the Angelicum in Rome, he now teaches in the

Norbentine's seminary at St. Michael's Abbey in Orange County, California. He kindly gave the homily at the Mass of Thanksgiving offered at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel prior to the Gala Dinner on September 30, 2006.

The favors of the Lord I will recall, the glorious deeds of the Lord. Because of all He has done for us; for He is good to the house of Israel, He has favored us according to His mercy and His great kindness. (Isaiah 63:7)

In the second article of the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, after giving ten different reasons why it was most fitting that God should become Incarnate to save us, St. Thomas concludes by stating: “There are, however, many more reasons which could be given, but they are above the comprehension of human understanding.” The best, the highest reasons behind the Divine love for us remain hidden in this life, only to be revealed in the glory of the life to come. *Quantum potes, tantum aude: quia maior omni laude, nec laudare sufficis*, we sing in the tremendous Eucharistic hymn of praise, the *Lauda Sion*: As much as you are able to praise Him, so much dare, since He is more than all your praises fair, nor does all your strength suffice to offer praise of sacrifice.

Gratitude for Innumerable Blessings

Perhaps the surest mark of persons advanced in the spiritual life is a deep and constant spirit of gratitude and joy: for persons who are very close to God are more constantly and profoundly aware of the higher goods which God constantly lavishes upon His beloved ones. As we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the foundation of Thomas Aquinas College, we turn once again to God in a profound and humble spirit of gratitude. Yet we ought to consider carefully what are the deepest reasons for which we should be grateful, lest our praise be less than as much as we are able, and our gratitude be lacking even in the sight of men.

Perhaps the most tangible and visible manifestation of God's blessings upon the College are the material blessings bestowed upon it in recent years. The College is on its best financial footing since its foundation, and many worthy buildings have replaced the shantytown of

temporary modular units which once adorned Ferndale Ranch. When I first visited the College in 1985, before I was a student there, there was only one permanent building, St. Joseph Commons. Today we are on the verge of dedicating the crown jewel of the College, an exquisitely-fashioned temple dedicated to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity. Yet, thankful as we are for such goods, they cannot be the deepest reason for our gratitude to God, since material goods are the very least of all goods.

The College has reached its maximum projected enrollment, and every year an abundance of bright and capable young students apply for entrance to the College, many more than we can accept. Moreover, the faculty of the College is among the brightest and most dedicated in our fair nation. Yet neither can these be the deepest reasons for our gratitude to God, since in the sight of the Lord even a very few can defeat a numberless army, and God who has no need of any instruments, can make



Rev. Sebastian Walshe ('94) (top) gave the homily, while the Rev. Msgr. Francis Weber, Director of the San Fernando Mission and Archivist for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, was the principal celebrant of the Mass of Thanksgiving offered at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel (above). Alumni priests and others in the area concelebrated the Mass with him.

use even of the weakest to effect His purpose.

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes

What, then, is the deepest reason for which we ought to give gratitude to God on this anniversary of the foundation of Thomas Aquinas College? The Gospel from today's holy Mass leads us to understand the true greatness of Thomas Aquinas College and its founders. In a foreshadowing of the Holy Eucharist, Jesus satisfies the hunger of a great multitude: that earthly bread was meant to be a sign leading the multitude to feast upon the Bread which came down from heaven. And while this historical event took place 2,000 years ago, Jesus bestows His blessings throughout all time using His weak, yet chosen instruments.

Thirty-five years ago, Jesus once again lifted up His eyes and saw a great multitude coming toward Him, and through many trials, He tested the founders of this College, though He Himself knew full well what He was about to do. These

were men unskilled in so many ways, lacking the knowledge and resources to achieve such an arduous good, yet they were children without guile who brought to Jesus their few loaves and fishes. Jesus blessed them, and by His blessing, a great multitude was fed and continues to be fed to this day—fed not with bread that perishes, but with the bread of sound doctrine that leads to life, and most especially with the Bread of Angels, the Holy Eucharist, which has been and must always continue to be the one true foundation of Thomas Aquinas College.

The Greatest Good— Love for the Holy Eucharist

The truth is that the greatest good which the College has accomplished in her 35 years is that she has brought those who have come through her gates to Jesus in the Eucharist. The whole curriculum, the whole order of life observed in the College has been for the sake of this. In this way the College has imitated her holy patron and teacher St. Thomas, whose whole life, his teaching, his labors, his keeping vigil, were for the sake of Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist.

In my years as a student at Thomas Aquinas College my love for Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar grew immensely. That love bore fruit in my vocation to religious life in an order which is dedicated especially to the Blessed Sacrament, and it bore more fruit still when I was ordained a priest of Jesus Christ in the year of the Most Holy Eucharist. For this I am most deeply grateful since I am sure that none of this would have happened without the instruction I received at the College, and without the good example of the tutors and priests there.

Beloved in Christ, if Thomas Aquinas College is to flourish in the future as it has in the past, we must not lose sight of its special mission in the Church, a mission so akin to that of her heavenly patron St. Thomas. We must render thanks and praise to God for this gift most of all. Let us dare to praise Him for the gift of a profound love of the Eucharist which has been nourished so greatly and so often through the mission of Thomas Aquinas College. And with this high praise upon our lips, God Himself will lavish upon us still further gifts, for it is easier for God to give much than to give little. May the merciful Lord see fit to give us His very self, today in the Holy Eucharist, and one day when the veil is torn asunder, in full vision of blessed eternity when for once and always, we shall finally praise Him as we ought.



Prior to the anniversary dinner held on campus, a Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated in the College's St. Bernardine of Siena Library to accommodate the large number who attended. Bishop Bruskeewitz was the principal celebrant.

Bishop Bruskeewitz, continued

years by the Christian faith—a culture that rejects comprehensive, coherent, and structured values; a crumbling culture; a universe breaking into pieces; a culture in question; and a culture that has in pluralism and relativism its fundamental goals.

To ask with George Bernanos: When freedom is extolled, freedom to what end? Freedom which is not truly free leads, as Pope John Paul II has repeatedly said, to totalitarianism. Indeed, unless truth trumps freedom in one's mind and imagination and psychology, there is no true freedom but only a pathway to despotism.

Cardinal Suhard once defined modern civilization, that is, a society without God, as a godless desert, a void in which society dies. To oppose this with the vigorous life of the intellect, with a deep and profound conviction of the truth

of the Catholic faith, and with an ardent devotion to the Roman pontificate which is, of course, the heir to the universal culture and values of humanity, Thomas Aquinas College, in my view, has the grand mission that will assist in leading all to their eternal salvation, as well as at the same time to save the civilization of this planet.

The first 35 years of Thomas Aquinas College are now completed. It is a time to look back and salute the past, but at the same time to gaze with trust and confidence in God with the prayers of the Angelic Doctor into the future, and to imagine that the next 35 years, perhaps the next 350 years will be a time of greater accomplishments in which the calling and mission of this school will rain down even greater blessings upon humanity.



Top, left to right: At the 35th anniversary dinner on campus, party-goers capture the celebration for posterity; Governor of the College, Tom Sullivan, leads his Dixieland dance band with a number on the clarinet; Johnny Crawford leads his band at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel celebration. Middle, left to right: Students swing dance to the rhythms of Tom Sullivan's band; Bishop Bruskewitz offers a Mass of Thanksgiving with College chaplains concelebrating; Bridget Neumayr, wife of founder and tutor Jack Neumayr, listens to Bishop Bruskewitz' talk. Bottom, left to right: Founder and tutor Marc Berquist addresses students, faculty, and staff at the celebration on campus; Beverly Hills gala attendees dance to the strains of the Johnny Crawford Dance Orchestra.

A Note of Hope

Archdiocesan Historian Looks to the Future

We conclude this evening on a note of hope, and we do this in an era plagued with global terrorism, wide-spread disdain for organized religion, and a torrent of scandals within the family of God's people.

Now, while having only minimal credentials as an historian, and even less as a prophet, I do see glimmers of better days for the mud-splattered Catholic Church in the years ahead.

In the providence of Almighty God, three movements have come on the scene which I believe are destined to re-invigorate the Church as part of Christ's assurance of being with his followers until the end of time.

The first is *Opus Dei* and such innovations as the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, which are rekindling the wonderful missionary and educational outreach of the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans of earlier centuries.

The second is the emergence of lay leaders who by word and example are quietly and forcefully telling the world about Christ in the 21st century. You have heard one of those this evening.

Finally, there is this small Catholic college movement of which Thomas Aquinas College was and is a pioneer. It is effectively preparing clergy, religious, and lay leaders for the next generation.

You good people here tonight are on the front line of this future because it is your treasure, your support, your prayers that are helping this trinity of events come alive.

As bystanders of these birth pangs of a new Catholic thrust into the modern world, we can identify in a certain sense with old Simeon, who, we are told, waited patiently for years for that marvelous day when the infant Jesus was presented in the temple. Perhaps we can close our gathering this evening by reciting his prayer: Lord, now let Your servant go in peace. Your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people, a light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people. Amen.



Rev. Msgr. Francis J. Weber, Archivist for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and Director of the San Fernando Mission

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