



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

40TH ANNIVERSARY

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Celebrating Four Decades

College Commences Festivities with Gala in Beverly Hills

Forty years ago, with neither an endowment nor a steady stream of revenue, with a freshman class of just 33 students, and with only the leased site of a shuttered seminary for a campus, Thomas Aquinas College began its first semester of classes. Forty years later, the College is celebrating the vision of its founders; the generosity of its benefactors; the accomplishments of its alumni; the trust and support of its parents; the hard work of its students, faculty, and staff; and four decades of abundant grace.

On September 17, 2011, more than 400 friends of the College gathered to begin the year-long festivities with the 40th Anniversary Gala at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. “It was a joyful night of thanksgiving, of looking back and looking forward,” says President Michael F. McLean. “We have so much to be grateful for, and so many people to be grateful to; this was a beautiful opportunity to reflect on the achievements and the promise of Thomas Aquinas College.”

Mass of Thanksgiving

The Honorary Co-Chairmen for the 40th Anniversary Gala were two shepherds who have guided the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, and his recently retired predecessor, Cardinal Roger Mahony. Although Cardinal Mahony was unable to attend the event, Archbishop Gomez offered the Mass of Thanksgiving beforehand. Joining him at the altar were the evening’s keynote speaker, Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P.; the Most Rev. Thomas Curry, Auxiliary Bishop for the Santa Barbara Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles; the College’s chaplains; and numerous alumni priests and other clergy.

For a short time, a Beverly Wilshire ballroom was transformed into a sacred space, where bishops and priests in gold vestments offered the Sacrifice of the Mass. The clerics were aided by students of Thomas Aquinas College — acolytes who assisted at the altar and members of Thomas Aquinas College Choir, who filled the room with the sound of beautifully sung hymns and motets.

“The hand of Providence has been evident in the life of the College ever since the very beginning,” observes Dr. McLean. “There was no better way for us to begin the



commemoration of this anniversary than in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord, to Whom we offer all thanks and praise.” Dr. McLean further expressed gratitude to Archbishop Gomez, saying, “It was a true blessing to have with us our new bishop, who has been most generous to and supportive of the College.”

Remarks and Benedictions

Following the Mass was a reception with music provided by a student string quartet. The gala itself then began with a performance from the student choral group *Chrysostomos*. Dr. McLean welcomed attendees to the celebration (see page 2), and introduced the various speakers for the evening, including two alumni of the College, Brenna Scanlon (’06) and Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem (’94). (See page 5.)

Keynote Speaker

The keynote speaker for the gala was the theologian of the papal household, Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P., who spoke about the distinctiveness and primacy of faith (page 3). Commonly dubbed “the Pope’s theologian,” Fr. Giertych is charged with ensuring that the speeches, articles, and remarks presented to the Holy Father for his approval are consistent with the Church’s tradition. His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI appointed Fr. Giertych to the position in 2005.

“We are grateful to the Chairman of our Board of Governors, Jim Wensley, and his wife, Germaine, for introducing the College to Fr. Giertych,” says Dr. McLean. “Because of our discipleship to St. Thomas, the College has always had a strong affinity with the Order of Preachers. Combining that with the centrality of theology in our curriculum, it was not only an honor, but it was also most fitting, to have this renowned Dominican theologian speak at our anniversary gala.”

Following dinner and Fr. Giertych’s remarks, the Tim Buley swing band played well into the night, and attendees celebrated 40 years of Catholic liberal education with fine food, spirited conversation, and dance. “The evening was marked by three characteristics which have defined the College these past 40 years,” says Dr. McLean, “prayerfulness, intellectual inquiry, and great joy.”

“The Celebration Has Just Begun”

College To Mark Anniversary with Additional Events

“Given all the people we have to thank, and all the blessings God has bestowed upon us over the last 40 years, one event seemed insufficient to the task of celebrating the College’s anniversary,” says President Michael F. McLean. “So September’s Gala in Beverly Hills was not the conclusion of our anniversary commemorations, but merely the first event.”

To include as many members of the greater College community as possible — parents, students, faculty, staff, alumni, benefactors, board members, and other friends — the College has scheduled numerous events across the country and throughout the academic year. “The celebration has just begun,” declares Dr. McLean.

On-Campus Dinner

The next commemorative event will take place on January 28 — the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas — at the College’s campus in Santa Paula, Calif. That evening, President McLean will host an all-school dinner featuring a distinguished guest with deep ties to the College, the Hon. J. Leon Holmes.

Judge Holmes has served as a United States district judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas since July 19, 2004, and chief judge since 2005. He received his bachelor of arts degree from Arkansas State University in 1973, his master’s degree from Northern Illinois University in 1976, and his doctorate from Duke University in 1980. In 1982, he earned a *juris doctor* from the University of Arkansas, graduating first in his class.

From 1983 until July 2004, Judge Holmes practiced law privately, except for a two-year break from 1990 to 1992 — during which he served as a member of the teaching faculty at Thomas Aquinas College. Although he soon returned to the practice of law, Judge Holmes’ relationship with the College continued. He and his wife, Susan, have

five children, two of whom — Jeremy (’99) and Joseph (’09) — are graduates.

“I remember Leon well as a colleague and as a parent, and he remains a good friend,” says President Michael F. McLean. “We were sorry to see him leave teaching, but we all had the utmost confidence that he would go on to do good work in jurisprudence, as he has. We are delighted and honored that now, as a federal judge, he will return to campus to help us mark our 40th anniversary.”



Alumni Events

Meanwhile, the Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Association is making preparations for two anniversary celebrations of its own, one on each coast. In April, the first event will take place in the greater Washington, D.C., area. President McLean, Director of Alumni Relations Mark Kretschmer, and Alumni Association President Jonathan Monnereau all plan to be in attendance at a gathering that will feature reminiscences about the College’s history and a gourmet meal prepared by Mr. Kretschmer himself.

On June 9, a second alumni celebration will be held on campus. “The evening will mark the culmination of our festivities,” says President McLean. “Appropriately, it will be right here, on campus, surrounded by many of the men and women who have graced our classrooms and who now represent the College so well in the Church and the world.” Then, the president adds, “It will be back to work as, by the grace of God, we get started on the College’s next 40 years.”

From the President

Dr. Michael F. McLean’s Remarks at the College’s 40th Anniversary Gala

Tonight offers an opportunity to look back and rejoice in the countless ways in which God has blessed Thomas Aquinas College over the past 40 years. We are forever indebted to our founders for the courage they had in establishing this institution at a time when our church and our country were threatened by relativism and skepticism from all sides.



Scripture scholars associate a time period of 40 — whether days, months, or years — with a period of testing, trial, or probation; a period which always ends in restoration, revival, or renewal. The 40-year history of Thomas Aquinas College has certainly been marked by its share of testing and trial, but it has also been a period in which the College has established a national reputation for academic excellence, attained a position of leadership among colleges and universities, and prepared itself for a strong and successful future, committed to its mission of Catholic liberal education and confident in God’s goodness and in His providence.

Our Alumni

One measure of the College’s success is seen in the lives of its graduates and alumni. In the commemorative book you will receive this evening, you will find many reflections from our graduates about their time at the College and the many ways in which their intellectual, spiritual, and moral formation — in our classrooms, our residence halls, our confessionals, and at the altar of God — now serves them in their varied professions and pursuits: as leaders in our parishes as priests and pastors; at prayer in our convents and monasteries; as teachers in our elementary schools, high schools, graduate programs, and seminaries across our country; as witnesses to the truth and the culture of life in hospitals and courtrooms; and as they serve with honor in our armed services. And we cannot forget the many graduates who in the quiet of their homes are raising strong and faithful Catholic families, helping to build up the Kingdom of God.

Few can testify more eloquently to the goodness of the College than its graduates, and we are honored this evening to have with us two of them who have offered to speak briefly about what the College has meant in their lives and how the education they received is helping them advance the work of the Church.

Miss Brenna Scanlon graduated in 2006 and is now the principal of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish School in Oxnard, Calif. Before enrolling at Thomas Aquinas College, Brenna was a collegiate-level soccer player at La Reina High School in Thousand Oaks but decided to attend the College (and play soccer at a considerably lower level) after attending the High School Summer Program. (See page 5.)

Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O. Praem., a member of the class of 1994, is a priest of St. Michael’s Abbey in Orange County, where he teaches philosophy in the Norbertine seminary. Fr. Sebastian holds advanced degrees from The Catholic University of America and from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas. He has returned to his alma mater on many occasions for lectures and seminars, and to serve as chaplain in our High School Summer Program. (See page 5.)

Brenna and Fr. Sebastian are just two of our graduates, of course, but they represent the best aspirations and accomplishments of Thomas Aquinas College. Our hope is that our students will grow in their knowledge and love of God, and that as graduates they will serve Christ and His church, their country, and their communities with fraternal charity and an abiding desire to do genuine good in the world.

Extending Our Gratitude

Many individuals deserve thanks for contributing to this work and to making the success of the College possible. This is a very fitting occasion to mention some of these individuals.

As I said before, we are forever indebted to the College’s founders for the courage they displayed in establishing this institution at a time when many in Catholic higher education had signed on to the Land ‘O Lakes Statement and in so doing positioned themselves in opposition to the teaching authority of the Church and in opposition to the correct understanding of the role of faith in Catholic higher education. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Ron McArthur, Peter DeLuca, Jack Neumayr, the late Mark Berquist, Dick George, the late Frank Ellis, and the late Lt. Col. William S. Lawton.

We owe a great debt of gratitude as well to long-time faculty members Viltis Jatulis and Larry Shields. Mrs. Jatulis has served as our librarian since the beginning of the College 40 years ago. She started with only a handful of texts on the shelves of a small office, and has built for the College an impressive collection of books and other treasures that are now housed in the beautiful St. Bernadine of Siena Library. We thank and salute Viltis for her years of dedication to and love for Thomas Aquinas College and our students. Larry Shields joined the faculty in 1972 and has been an excellent teacher, an inspiration to students, and a helpmate to his fellow tutors for 39 years.

Very early in its history, the founders realized that the College could not be securely established without the help of outside counselors and benefactors. They sought to form a governing board to assist them in their efforts. I would like to acknowledge this

evening the earliest members of our board, men who contributed to the effort when there really was yet no college and very little to gain from their participation. All are deceased now, and include the Very Rev. Norman F. McFarland, the former Bishop of Orange; Herbert H. McDade, Jr., a close friend of Ron McArthur’s; John E. Schaeffer, who helped organize the very first fundraiser for the College and whose five daughters are all graduates; Francis J. Montgomery, who was among the College’s most generous benefactors and whose son, Mark, serves on our board today; and J. Edward Martin, who was instrumental in master-planning the College’s beautiful campus in Santa Paula.

Every board needs a chairman, and I would like to recognize those who have served in that capacity from the College’s earliest days, through good times and bad, and who worked diligently to keep the College true to its mission and moving in the right direction: Tom Sullivan, Fred Ruopp, the late Dr. William Weber Smith, Maria Grant, and our current chairman, Jim Wensley.

As well, I would like to recognize and thank Laura Berquist, a graduate of the College’s first class and the wife of our late founder, Mark Berquist, and Terri Dillon, the wife of our late president, Tom Dillon. Both of these women have given us eloquent examples of what it means to be a loving and supportive spouse while being fully engaged in the apostolic work of the Church. Both are devoted to the College, and have done much to advance and more firmly establish it.

Finally, I want to thank *you* — faculty, staff, chaplains, clergy, religious, alumni, friends, and benefactors, here, across the country, and around the world for everything you do to contribute to the College’s success.

Looking Forward

Much has been accomplished. Perhaps we can say, with Churchill, that we have reached the end of the beginning. More, however, remains to be done — we must strengthen our endowment, complete our campus, provide scholarship assistance to needy students and families, and continue to attract the students and faculty essential to our work.

Most important, however, is our duty to remain faithful to our mission of Catholic liberal education conducted under the guidance of the teaching Church. Only by so doing will we continue to send well-educated young people into the world *ex corde ecclesiae* — from deep within the heart of the Church — to bring the light and love of Christ to a world plagued by ignorance, doubt, darkness, and sin.

Let us pray and work together to ensure that what has succeeded with God’s help for 40 years continues to be successful and true to its mission for generations to come.

Thank you very much.



The Archbishop of Los Angeles, the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, served as an Honorary Co-Chairman for the 40th Anniversary Gala and the principal celebrant and homilist at the Mass of Thanksgiving that preceded it. In the above photos (left from top), His Excellency receives the gifts of bread and wine from Dinner Committee Chairs Maria and Richard Grant; greets Terri Dillon, wife of late College President Thomas E. Dillon; and offers the Mass, joined at the altar by numerous alumni priests and other clergy.

Papal Theologian: “The Distinctiveness and Primacy of Faith”

Keynote Address from Thomas Aquinas College’s 40th Anniversary Gala

By Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P.

“You foolish men! You foolish men!” These are the words that Jesus said to the disciples as they were on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:25). Incidentally, the same expression was used by St. Paul as he criticized the Galatians, or rather the missionaries that followed him to Galatia and tried to distort the purity of the Galatians’ adherence to Christ in faith by imposing upon them Jewish traditions and an external Law: “You foolish Galatians!” (Gal. 3:1). Cleopas and the other disciple going to Emmaus sincerely testified that they had their own hopes and ideas about the Messiah and that was why they were so discouraged after the crucifixion. Jesus reacted directly, telling them that this was foolishness, and during the long walk, Jesus gave them a lengthy exposition on theological hermeneutics.

The basic key in the light of which the Scriptures and also human projects, ideas, and plans are to be read is the eternal plan of the heavenly Father that has become manifest in the Paschal Mystery. “Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:26). The human mind is to be open towards the divine mystery that has been disclosed in the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, a mystery that can never be fully exhausted, but can be known; and whoever does not permit the penetration of his mind by that mystery, is foolish!

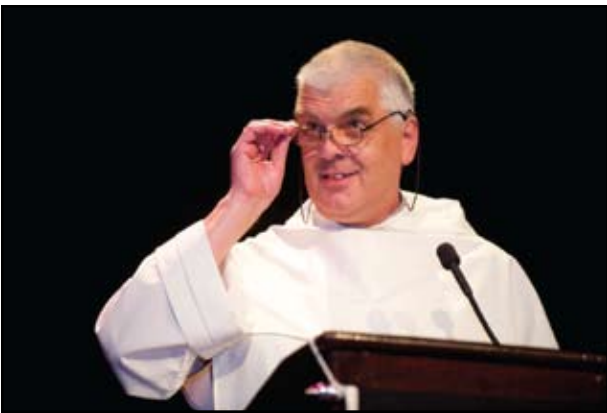
The Thinking Mind of the Believer

The Council of Chalcedon in the year 451 clarified that in Jesus Christ there are two distinct natures, the human and the divine, and that they are unmixed, *ασυγχύτως* [*asynkhytos*], within the one Person of Jesus Christ. Something similar has to be said about the thinking mind of the believer. Reason and faith are to be kept in the mind as distinct and unconfused.¹ Unfortunately both the Gnostics of antiquity and our contemporary Gnostics muddle these two discourses. When this confusing mix happens, it is always faith that becomes distorted.

Gnosticism is an attempt to change faith into a science. The revealed truths of faith are then subjected to hetero-interpretations in the light of axioms that come from without the Paschal Mystery. Whenever there is an attempt to scan the divine mystery according to this-worldly criteria (be they scientific, coming from linguistics, archaeology, history, comparative religion, astronomy, philosophy, psychology, political science, or from ideologies such as political and personal projects, or ideas about pastoral relevance), then faith is subordinated to merely human ideas. When the truths of faith are basically said to be nothing but the same as what other sciences are saying according to their methods, such a facile concordism destroys faith. All attempts to make faith work or to make it credible according to a this-worldly relevance that then becomes supreme, in which the Faith is adapted, refashioned according to our own ideas — all such attempts lead to confusion.

In the Gnostic approach the mind does not confess the truth and therefore is closed upon the divine mystery. The mind is locked in some form of reductionism and it cannot reach out to the fullness of truth, and Revelation is reduced to the level of just one more argument that may or may not at whim be taken into consideration. A true believer notices that something has gone wrong, that a shift has appeared and that even within the pretense of a religious discourse, the true light coming from the living God has been snuffed out.

In fact, in the life of faith we do not scan the revealed mysteries according to our own criteria, but we do exactly the reverse. We scan our own lives according to the



supreme criterion that is the truth revealed supremely in the Paschal Mystery. We believe God because God has spoken and has enabled us to enter into a relationship with Him, on His terms, not ours. The revealing God is the prime object of our faith, and also the motive for our faith. Believing God, because of God, we allow God and His truth to penetrate our minds, and also our intellectual life, our culture, our decision-making, our morals and our affectivity.

The Significance of the Logos

In the New Testament we find several terms describing Jesus. He is called the rabbi, teacher, king, prophet, the way, the truth, the light, the gate, and the shepherd. But there are two terms that are given special prominence. Jesus is the Son of the Eternal Father, and He is the Word, the *Logos* of the Eternal Father. Meditating on the significance of the Word, the *Verbum*, Aquinas discovered that in the psychology of cognition there comes a moment in the search for truth when the mind moves from reflection, opinion, doubt, or persuasion, to a moment when a concept, a mental word appears in the mind, and the knower can say that he knows.² That appearance of that word, the *Verbum* means that the truth has been grasped. The mind receives the truth in its fundamental contours with conviction.

In the Word that was made flesh, in Jesus Christ, the divine concept for man became visible for us. In Jesus we find the initial divine project for us disclosed. That divine project consists in our being planned to become children of the heavenly Father through our brother Jesus Christ. This initial divine plan precedes our coming into existence, our creation. It also precedes sin, both the sin of Adam and our own sin. St. Paul tells us that “before the world was made ... God chose us ... determining that we should become His adopted sons, through Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:4). And St. Peter tells us that Christ is the “lamb without spot or stain ... Who though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time” (1 Pet. 1:9-20).

Unfortunately a current of thought appeared within Catholic theology that shifted the initial divine project of our adoption in Christ to after Creation and after sin, viewing it as a post-lapsural divine response to our sin. This has led to the viewing of Creation, of the cosmos and its nature, as an autonomous reality, a “pure nature” that is to be studied by an autonomous mind, completely free from faith. In such a vision, divine creative omnipotence screened the Paternity of God. The cosmos began to be viewed as a self-justifying fact or as a fruit of an impersonal divine potency and not as a gift of the heavenly Father. Nature, including human nature, was viewed as being free from grace, which was then treated as an extraordinary, optional, and ultimately unnec-

essary gift. This has led, among others, to a vision of morality built uniquely on rational philosophical reflection, on the Natural Law, divorced from grace, from openness to the divine paternal love.

The Paternity of God can only be seen in faith through the Paschal Mystery of Christ. If we fail to see the hand of the Father in the Paschal Mystery, we end up, like the disciples on the way to Emmaus, treating Jesus’ death as a mere penal or political event, and we remain focused on our own projects. That leads to discouragement. When we attribute primacy to our own ideological or intellectual projects that we want to impose upon reality, we fall out of the filial relationship with God. The encounter with the living God, Who has disclosed to us His Paternal, personal face, made visible in Christ, the image of the invisible Father, becomes impossible, whenever in our minds our own word and not the *Logos* that was made flesh becomes supreme.

This shift has dangerous consequences. If our own word becomes more important than the disclosed divine Word, or if it becomes so intermingled and confused with the divine Word that finally it becomes the ultimate criterion, then we are witnessing to self and not to Christ. Then, in the celebration of the Eucharist, it is not the Paschal Mystery that is in the center, but the celebrating priest or the celebrating community. And then in moral formation it is not the power of grace that enables a demanding ethos that is in the center, but an adapted, refashioned ethos, reduced to the possibilities of weak and wounded human nature.

The revealed Word of God manifested in the Paschal Mystery has to remain in the center of the human mind, it has to be received in faith, and it has to be kept distinct and unconfused with purely natural thinking.

Faith and the Dignity of Reason

Faith, as it inhabits the mind, does not cripple the mind. Faith is a gift of God that needs to be received, developed, and expanded so that it will become the fundamental axis of life, of thinking and deciding. In the encounter with God, faith that opens to grace has to be supreme. But faith does not deny the dignity of reason. It is not a brake imposed upon the reason by ecclesiastical authority. It is the extension of reason towards the salutary truth. And reason, because it is reasonable, allows itself to be drawn beyond its natural limits towards the revealed truth.

The dogmas of the Church are a gain for the mind, and not an impediment, because they lead the mind to the life-giving truth. When faith is interpreted uniquely as a humble obedience of the mind, it is immediately concluded that the contents of faith are basically irrelevant. Many people think in this way, and so they do not treat their faith seriously. They declare their faith, out of obedience to the Church, but that faith is only a thin veneer that does not penetrate their mind and influence their lives.

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Notes:
¹Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, O.P., *Le mystère du Père. Foi des apôtres, Gnoses actuelles*, (Paris : Fayard, 1972).
²Hyacinth Paissac, O.P., *Théologie du Verbe. Saint Augustin et Saint Thomas* (Paris : Cerf, 1951).

In faith, reason is dethroned, but its capacities are respected and even extended. Faith stimulates reason and invites it to go forward. As John Paul II taught in *Fides et Ratio*, reason is not to clothe itself in various forms of reductionism, demanding that reality be viewed only through some limited key, ideology, or focus. Faith invites reason to the fullness of truth.

In 18th century Europe the ideas of liberty and reason were raised against the Catholic Church, accusing the Church of furthering slavery and superstition. Today the Church is the only institution in the world defending liberty and defending the dignity of reason against the relativist and nihilist distrust of reason. Faith is telling reason: Have confidence in the natural power of reason, in its capacity to know fundamental truths on its own authority, truths about essence, being, nature, anthropology, the differences of the sexes, the principles of ethics, of psychology and pedagogy. Reason has a natural urge for truth and a capacity to arrive at it. That is why it also has a duty towards truth, once truth is known. And faith does not deny this capacity of reason.

Reason on the basis of its own dignity is therefore entitled to address all questions and to focus in all possible directions, including the most interesting direction, where however it finds a blind or rather a blinding spot. Reason, as it engages in all scientific endeavors, may also ask about God within the philosophy of God or, as the English call this discipline, within natural theology. But in this cognition there is a limit, irrespective of the development of the cognitive methods in all other sciences. Reason itself cannot penetrate from within the inscrutable mystery of the living God. Since in God there are three Persons, God cannot be reduced to the rank of the answer to a riddle, or even to the rank of the all-explaining Absolute. A person is always a mystery that cannot be fully exhausted. And God hides in a mystery, which is to be accepted as such, and which can only be penetrated within faith, in which there is trust, and which leads to hope and charity.

Therefore, paradoxically hiding in the mystery, God reveals His personal face. The conclusions of a philosophical reflection about God are not the same as the encounter with the living God in faith. And that encounter in faith has to be kept pure. It is more important than philosophical knowledge, even knowledge about the Absolute, and it is not to be distorted by considerations and principles coming from without faith.

All other scientific questions may be raised by reason. But reason, when it is open to the divine mystery in faith, knows that in every reality that is studied there is also a further dimension that relates that reality to the divine Paternity, and this dimension cannot be discovered by reason alone. Faith, therefore, as it enables the encounter with God and includes a transmitted content accepted by reason on the authority of the self-revealing God, supplies also a corrective and extending perspective to the thinking mind in all fields of human research. For this reason, theology that is thinking within faith is the queen of all the sciences.

Theology as Mother

Faith that is kept distinct and unconfused with reason allows the mind to look also into the truths of faith. The divine *Logos* is to be received by the mind of the believer, and then within theology, the mind can look into the intelligibility, but not the rationality of the mysteries of faith. The intellect as distinct from the reason is humble as it faces the truth. The reason tries to prove that something is true, whereas the intellect merely stands fascinated by truth and views its interior coherence and beauty, its implications and ramifications. Aquinas in his speculative theology therefore never tried to rationally prove the truths of faith. He received them in faith, and then with his perspicacious intellect he viewed their interior logic, without ever, as Adam in the Garden of Eden or as the modern philosophers of suspicion, trying to check out to see whether God is true.

Aquinas was primarily a theologian who, with his penetrating mind, viewed the mysteries of faith and then worked out a theological synthesis. In this he had a definite

pastoral intent. He stressed the maternal role of theology as it furnishes the mind. Following St. Augustine, he said that sacred teaching is to generate, nourish, strengthen, and defend the Faith through which we are saved. Theology does not grant the life of faith, because it is a gift of God. A mother also does not give life. She transmits it, as she has received it from God.



Fr. Giertych with President and Mrs. Mclean and Chairman of the Board of Governors R. James Wensley

Theology then, like a mother, is to transmit the life of faith. Then it is to nourish that life of faith, so that it would not wither out of hunger. Next, it is to strengthen the thought structures of the mind as they accept the primacy of the truth disclosed by the divine Word. And finally theology is to defend the life of faith against opposite winds that may blast it out of the mind.

The study of theology in the school of Aquinas allows the student not only to believe, but also to know what it is that is believed. The synthesis that Aquinas offers has the pastoral value of being clear and granting intellectual confidence within faith. But faith itself does not grow uniquely through knowledge, not even theological knowledge. It grows through the quality of prayer, of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, through the practice of the theological virtues.

To Be Formed in the Word

In the second half of the 20th century, many people in the Church reacted against Aquinas, looking for different approaches in theology. They were reacting against the excessive rationality of neo-scholasticism. Aquinas had been read as a philosopher, not as a theologian. There was the idea that philosophical argumentation is sufficient, and that its conclusions are self-evident, and so they have to be convincing, and so logically, if somebody is not convinced by it, that this must be caused by ill will! Moral obligation, moral law, or even naturally acquired virtues were in the center of moral reflection, and not the living God. In presentations of moral theology it was the Natural Law and not the new law of grace that was the final reference.

It is not surprising that such a reading of Aquinas generated resistances against his teaching. It must therefore be remembered that the point of departure of theology is not pure nature, the created reality that would be viewed by an intrigued mind. The point of departure is revealed truth, the divine Word disclosed in the Paschal Mystery leading to our divine adoption, and when that mystery is received in the humility of faith, then the confident and robust mind may look into it perceiving its life-giving richness.

The well-educated Catholic mind needs to be formed in the Word, the *Logos* that has been received. But first of all the believer needs to be initiated into a life of faith. It is only then that the mind can ask questions, real questions, and it may search for answers within the great Catholic tradition that respects the mystery of faith. It is important that young adults will be offered a synthesis that respects the distinctiveness and primacy of faith and that strengthens the mind, inviting it to go forward in the journey towards truth.

But why am I saying all this. It seems that you have been doing this here for the last 40 years!

Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P., is the Theologian of the Papal Household.



Scenes from the 40th Anniversary Gala: 1. Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors R. Scott Turicchi shares a dance with his wife, Lannette. 2. Dan Grimm ('76) directs the Thomas Aquinas College Choir at the Mass of Thanksgiving. 3. At the gala, couples fill the dance floor, dancing to the music of the Tim Buley swing band. 4. The evening's keynote speaker, Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P., Theologian for the Papal Household, meets with the event's Honorary Co-Chairman, the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles.

Alumni Testimonials for the 40th Anniversary Gala

Prepared to be Principal

By Brenna Scanlon ('06)

It is no exaggeration for me to say to you that initially I went to the College kicking and screaming. It was the summer before my senior year in high school, and the thought of attending college at Thomas Aquinas College had never crossed my mind. I was a typical 17-year-old who subscribed to the popular mentality that college consisted of four years of having the most fun of your life. And after college you would pick a job — if you were smart, one that made you a lot of money, of course.

At 17, college was not about getting an education or studying, God forbid, but was more of a reward for getting good grades in high school. This mentality worried my Catholic parents, and they took action.

My mother drove me, her defiant teenage daughter, up the winding Santa Paula roads to the College and dropped me off at the Great Books Sumer Program back in July of 2001. She left me there despite my comments that she was the worst mother ever, and that this was a huge waste of time. I would never go to this college, no matter how great they thought it was, not over my dead body.

“I had entered Thomas Aquinas College as an 18-year-old with a one-dimensional world view: How will my college experience affect me? By the time I graduated I learned to think along different lines: How could I use the gift of my college education to affect others, to do God’s will, to participate in His plan, whatever that might be?”

Little did I know that I would later eat those words, and that my experiences over the next two weeks would change the direction of my life forever.

Two months later, I was frantically working on my Thomas Aquinas College admission application, praying

that I would be accepted. I no longer wanted to attend college anywhere else.

This college was different. After having sampled what it offered, I could not pass it up, even if that meant admitting to my parents that they were right.

It is hard to summarize the experiences that ensued over those next four years of my attendance. But it is easy to recognize that my time at the College changed my perspective on life. I had entered Thomas Aquinas College as an 18-year-old with a one-dimensional world view: How will my college experience affect me? By the time I graduated I learned to think along different lines: How could I use the gift of my college education to affect others, to do God’s will, to participate in His plan, whatever that might be?

Through my studies and the well-ordered community life of the College, I learned that my life was not just about me, but that I was part of a larger mosaic. Having received such an incredible education, I had a serious responsibility to put the truths I had learned to good use in the service of others.

Upon graduation I became a high school teacher and received my master’s in education from Loyola Marymount University. Today I work for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles as the principal of Our Lady of Guadalupe School, a parochial elementary school in Ventura County. It is one of the largest elementary schools in the region, serving more than 280 students. Our Lady of Guadalupe is located in one of the poorest neighborhoods in the county, in *La Colonia* of Oxnard, so I am privileged to serve a parent group who makes sacrifices every day so that their children can have the gift of Catholic education.

At Thomas Aquinas College I learned that education is more than just a compilation of standardized tests, textbooks, and state standards. Education is a process of discovering and realizing fundamental truths about humanity and the world around us. For it to be well-ordered, it must be understood within the Christian context of the human person in relation to God. And in order for this pursuit to be fruitful, one must



ground oneself in the graces received through prayer and the sacraments.

At Our Lady of Guadalupe School, in addition to weekly Masses, we have daily faculty prayer, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for all students, monthly school rosaries, reconciliation, rigorous academics — and really good basketball teams, too. The education that I received through Thomas Aquinas College has given me the clarity to initiate these activities and use the truths I acquired in all my dealings with students, parents, faculty, and staff.

It is a longstanding tradition at Our Lady of Guadalupe School that every year we choose a theme for our current school year. This year our theme is gratitude. As I was reflecting on my education at the College, our school theme of gratitude has been constantly on my mind. I am overwhelmingly grateful for the education I received at Thomas Aquinas College.

As a principal with the responsibility to operate a school with a balanced budget, I am acutely aware that the cost of tuition never covers the actual cost of a Catholic student’s education, and I am grateful to the many men and women whose generosity makes possible the education of others. Many such men and women are here tonight, and so it is with a humble and very grateful heart that I say thank you for inviting me to participate in this celebration, and for your generous support of the College that makes the education it offers a reality.

Formed for Formation

By Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. ('94)

It is truly an honor for me to be here, standing to represent the priests and the religious who are alumni of our college. I just want to speak a little bit about the good things that I do as a priest.

My primary apostolate at St. Michael’s Abbey of the Norbertine Fathers in Orange County, Calif., is prayer. I go there to pray; I am there to worship God and to praise God, and I learned that at the College. I learned that that’s the most important thing in a human being’s life, to worship God the way He ought to be worshipped.

The other things I do for spreading the Kingdom of God involve teaching seminarians. I teach philosophy at the Abbey. I also give retreats very frequently, especially for the Missionaries of Charity. I am a regular guest on *Catholic Answers Live*. I also do a number of other things around the diocese: I help with confessions; I have a regular Sunday assignment at St. Mary’s in Fullerton; I try to contribute to the building up of the Kingdom of God on earth through the grace of God.

I could hardly imagine doing these things without the blessings I received from Thomas Aquinas College. I would not be a priest today if I had not gone to the College. I think I speak for many of the priests and of the religious who have come through the College. It is really a blessing you find there — the possibility to hear the call of God that you would not find in other places.

That is something, too, that I imbibed when I came to the College. I learned how to trust St. Thomas and St. Augustine as teachers.

I remember when I first came to the College. I had been formed in a secular education. I was an electrical engineer, and so I had a skeptical disposition. I thought of St. Thomas as a relatively smart fellow who was probably wrong on a lot of things but, for the most part, as a medieval guy, he did a good job.

In the areas where I found myself disagreeing with him, I started thinking about

it, and I started getting arguments to the contrary. I realized that in every single case I was wrong. And I started to think, “Gosh, this guy really is someone who needs to be trusted.” I learned to trust St. Thomas and St. Augustine as teachers when I was at the College, and that is important for me as a teacher now at the Abbey.

I am not a “Thomist.” I am a disciple of St. Thomas. My job is to communicate and facilitate the teaching of St. Thomas to my seminarian students at St. Michael’s Abbey. The Church has taught us that we ought to hold St. Thomas up not just as a model but as a teacher for all priests. I learned that at Thomas Aquinas College — that trust of St. Thomas and St. Augustine.

I learned also the importance of communicating to the seminarians the need to actively assimilate the truths that they are learning. I do not allow my seminarian students to sit there like sponges and simply listen to me pontificate. I ask them questions, and I want them to ask me questions in return.

Because they are active in their own education, I notice that they internalize their knowledge. By the time they finish the philosophy program at the Abbey, it is something that has become a way of life for them and a way of understanding the world.

Finally, as a guest on *Catholic Answers Live*, I listen to sometimes very diverse questions from people around the world about the Catholic faith. At the College, of course, we have the seminar method of education. So I feel that I have been really blessed with that capacity to hear someone and understand what he is saying and to try to address his questions in a way he can understand.

I am grateful for all these things, but most especially for the love and the example that I found in the tutors and in my fellow students. So I thank you, Thomas Aquinas College. I thank you, all the tutors, everyone who has taught me, everyone who has been a friend of mine through the years. I ask for your prayers and I ask for God’s blessing upon everyone here.

“The Church has taught us that we ought to hold St. Thomas up not just as a model but as a teacher for all priests. I learned that at Thomas Aquinas College.”



Celebrating More than 50 Alumni Priests

“One of the greatest affirmations of the work we do at the College is that so many of the young men who graduate from here go on to answer God’s call to the priesthood,” says President Michael F. McLean. In Thomas Aquinas College’s first 40 years, 52 alumni have been ordained and are now serving as pastors, chaplains, seminary professors, and missionaries in 12 religious orders, 21 states, and 8 countries across the world. Many more alumni are preparing for the priesthood as seminarians. Below is a list of the College’s alumni priests to date. “We are honored to count these, our spiritual fathers, among our alumni,” says Dr. McLean.

Rev. Hildebrand Garceau, O. Praem. ('78)

Chaplain
Thomas Aquinas College
Santa Paula, Calif.



Rev. Hildebrand Garceau, O. Praem. ('78)

Rev. Peter M. Short, O.M.V. ('78)
Cordoba, Argentina

Rev. Isaiah Teichert, O.S.B.Cam. ('78)
Guestmaster and Vocation Director
Immaculate Heart Hermitage
Big Sur, Calif.

Rev. Peter H. Hopkins, L.C. ('79)
Irving, Tex.

Rev. Edward N. Hopkins, L.C. ('80)
Thornwood, N.Y.

Rev. Mark A. Avila, O.M.V. ('81)
Rome, Italy



Rev. Isaiah Teichert, O.S.B.Cam. ('78)

Rev. Mark P. Bachmann, O.S.B. ('82)
Subprior
Our Lady of the Annunciation of Clear Creek Abbey
Hulbert, Okla.

Rev. Barry O'Toole, L.C. ('83)
Thornwood, N.Y.

Rev. Francis Gloudeman, O.Praem. ('84)
St. Michael's Abbey Seminary
Orange County, Calif.

Rev. Rory O'Toole, L.C. ('84)
Chaplain
Cumbres High School
Merida, Mexico



Rev. Brendan R. Kelly ('85) gives his first blessing to his nieces following his ordination.

Rev. Kermit Syren, L.C. ('84)
Spiritual Director, Holy Apostles College & Seminary
Vocations Director, New England region
Cromwell, Conn.



Rev. Joseph T. Orlowski, F.S.S.P. ('93) at his ordination in 2004

Rev. Christopher De Herrera, O.S. ('85)

Pastor
Sacred Heart Parish
Peñuelas, Puerto Rico

Rev. Brendan R. Kelly ('85)
Pastor, St. Wenceslaus Church
Teacher, St. Gregory the Great Seminary
Lincoln, Neb.

Rev. Jeffrey W. King ('86)
Pastor
Santo Nino Parish
Reserve, N.M.

Rev. Steve P. Tobias, O. Cart. ('86)
Princeton, B.C., Canada

Rev. Matthew O'Donnell ('88)
Pastor
St. Luke Church
Stockton, Calif.

Rev. James E. Isaacson, S.J.C. ('88)
Pastor
St. Peter Church
Volo, Il.

Rev. Bernard McCoy, O. Cist. ('88)
Lismore, Ireland

Rev. Joseph K. Levine ('89)
Associate Pastor
Blessed Sacrament Church
Ontario, Ore.

Rev. Paul C. Moreau ('89)
Parochial Vicar
Saint Michael the Archangel Catholic Church
Woodstock, Ga.

Rev. Gary B. Selin ('89)
Formation Advisor, House Father, and Professor of Theology
St. John Vianney Theological Seminary
Denver, Col.

Rev. John J. Higgins ('90)
Pastor
Church of the Assumption
Peekskill, N.Y.

Rev. Charles A. Van Vliet, F.S.S.P. ('91)
Pastor
St. Francis of Assisi Church
Lincoln, Neb.

Rev. Donald J. Bauer ('92)
Pastor
Church of St. Rose of Lima
Cadott, Wis.

Rev. Christopher S. Manuele, O. Mar. ('92)
Administrator
St. Joseph's Melkite Church
Scranton, Penn.

Rev. Joseph M. O'Hara ('92)
Pastor
Sacred Heart/St. Wenceslaus Parish
Diocese of La Crosse, Wis.



Rev. Robert F. Fromageot, F.S.S.P. ('94) (left), Very Rev. J. McNeely, F.S.S.P. ('99) (right) offer Mass in Our Lady



Rev. Gary Selin ('89) at his 2003 ordination with the Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, then Archbishop of Denver, now Archbishop of Philadelphia; and the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, then Auxiliary Bishop of Denver, now Archbishop of Los Angeles



Rev. Joseph M. O'Hara ('92)

Priests in the College’s First 40 Years



John M. Berg, F.S.S.P. ('93) (center), and Rev. Matthew of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Rev. Michael J. Goyette ('94)
Parochial Vicar
St. Isidore the Farmer Parish
Vineland, N.J.



Rev. Ramon Decaen ('96) (left) and Rev. Michael J. Goyette ('94) (right) with former Thomas Aquinas College chaplain Rev. Gerard Stekler, S.J., at the Dedication Mass of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel on March 7, 2009

Rev. Jonathan Perrotta ('95)
Parochial Vicar
Church of the Holy Family
Grand Blanc, Mich.

Rev. Thomas P. Bolin, O.S.B. ('96)
Subprior
Monastery of San Benedetto
Norcia, Italy

Rev. Nicholas E. Callaghan ('96)
Parochial Vicar
Parish of St. Margaret of Cortona
Bronx, N.Y.



Rev. John M. Bingham, O.P. ('00) blesses President and Mrs. McLean following his ordination in June 2010.

Very Rev. Fr. John M. Berg, F.S.S.P. ('93)
Superior General
Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter
Fribourg, Switzerland

Rev. Robert M. Novokowsky, F.S.S.P. ('93)
Chaplain
St. John the Baptist Latin Mass Community
North Little Rock, Ark.

Rev. Joseph T. Orlowski, F.S.S.P. ('93)
Parochial Vicar
Holy Family Catholic Church
Dayton, Ohio

Rev. Robert F. Fromageot, F.S.S.P. ('94)
Assistant Rector
St. Francis of Assisi Church
Lincoln, Neb.

Rev. Anthony J. Myers, S.S.J. ('94)
Comunidades de San Juan
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Rev. Sebastian A. Walshe, O.Praem. ('94)
Professor of Philosophy
St. Michael's Abbey Seminary
Orange County, Calif.

Rev. Mark D. Moriarty ('95)
Pastor
Mary Queen of Peace
Rogers, Minn.

Rev. Ramon Decaen ('96)
Pastor, Cristo Rey Parish
Coordinator, Hispanic Ministry
Lincoln, Neb.

Rev. Augustine Hilander, O.P. ('99)
Parochial Vicar
Holy Family Cathedral
Anchorage, Alaska

Rev. Michael J. Hurley, O.P. ('99)
Parish Administrator
St. Dominic's Catholic Church
Benicia, Calif.



Rev. Joshua M. Morey, O.S.B. ('00) (right) at his ordination

Rev. John M. Bingham, O.P. ('00)
Parochial Vicar
Saint Dominic's Parish
Benicia, Calif.

Rev. Joseph B. Lee, F.S.S.P. ('00)
Faculty
Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary
Denton, Neb.

Rev. Rhone C. Lillard, F.S.S.P. ('00)
Our Lady of Fatima Chapel
Pequannock, N.J.



Rev. Edmund Waldstein, O.Cist. ('06) at his ordination

Rev. Nicholas Blaha ('02)
Parochial Vicar, Most Pure Heart of Mary Parish
Chaplain, Hayden Catholic High School
Topeka, Kan.

Rev. Joseph Dygert ('02)
Parochial Vicar
Ave Maria Catholic Parish
Parker, Colo.

Rev. John Paul Erickson ('02)
Director
Archdiocesan Office of Worship
Minneapolis, Minn.

Rev. Peter J. Sharpe ('04)
Parochial Vicar
Sts. Anne & Joachim Catholic Church
Fargo, N.D.

Rev. Edmund Waldstein, O.Cist. ('06)
Cistercian Abbey Stift Heiligenkreuz
Vienna, Austria



Rev. Rhone C. Lillard, F.S.S.P. ('00) offers Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Toasts and Benedictions

Reflections on the Occasion of Thomas Aquinas College’s 40th Anniversary

Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, S.D.B.
Secretary of the Vatican Secretariat of State

The Holy Father sends cordial greetings and prayerful good wishes to all assembled for the celebrations marking the fortieth anniversary of Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula. He prays that this happy occasion will inspire in the academic community an ever more confident trust in the harmony of faith and reason and a more fervent desire to grow in that wisdom which is ‘the refulgence of God’s eternal light and the image of His goodness’ (Wis. 7:26).

Commending all associated with the work of the College to the intercession of the Angelic Doctor, His Holiness cordially imparts the ... Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Zenon Cardinal Grocholewski
Prefect, Congregation for Catholic Education

With joy and paternal benediction I greet the administration, faculty, staff and students of Thomas Aquinas College in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California, as they mark their 40th Founding Anniversary as a Catholic institution of Higher Education. I am grateful for the thoughtful invitation that the College has offered me, to be a part of this important moment in its history. Surely this is a beautiful gesture of communion with the Universal Church and the Holy See, that the Institution’s academic community would wish to manifest.

Forty years! These have been 40 years of search for knowledge and also of Christian wisdom, which Thomas Aquinas College has been promoting, following the example of the Angelic Doctor, after whom the College is named.

Imbuing both the individual students and the academic community with Christian inspiration is the main calling of Catholic institutions of higher learning such as yours. It will evermore enable this College to have its distinctive character and to participate more effectively and in harmony with the evangelizing mission of the Church, toward the renewal of the temporal order.

Entrusting all of you to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Seat of Wisdom, I send to you my warmest regards and best wishes.

The Most Rev. Pietro Sambi[†]
Apostolic Nuncio to the United States (2005-2011)

The number ‘40’ is quite significant, especially in Scriptural terms, since it represents both preparation and fulfillment. We now give thanks to Almighty God for all the blessings that have brought Thomas Aquinas College to this point in time, and we beseech Him to bestow upon this great academic institution many sustaining graces for future days. A Blessed and Joyous 40th Anniversary to all of you!

The Most Rev. José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles

Your work of forming men and women to be true apostles in our world is vital to the Church’s mission of the New Evangelization. In our world today, we still see so much confusion about the proper relationship of faith and reason. We see people trying to set science and religion in opposition to each other; we see so many wrong ideas about the meaning of life, about the nature and purpose of the human person. So our world vitally needs the true Catholic perspective that Thomas Aquinas College offers and teaches to your students: that truth is a unity, that faith and reason are in harmony, and that God has a plan for His creation and for His story.

One vital service that this great Catholic college can provide in our culture is to help restore and promote the true vision of the transcended nature and human dignity of the human person. As you celebrate your 40th anniversary, I want to urge you to keep digging deeper, to renew yourselves always in the intellectual and spiritual wellsprings of your patron saint, the great Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas. I ask his intercession and also the intercession of Our Blessed Mother Mary that God in His mercy and goodness might grant Thomas Aquinas College all the graces you need to play your part in the renewal of Catholic education and the New Evangelization of our culture.

Thanks be to God for Thomas Aquinas College.

Cardinal Roger Mahony
Archbishop Emeritus of Los Angeles

It is with great joy that I offer my prayerful best wishes to all of you on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of Thomas Aquinas College.

As you mark this happy and historic milestone, it is indeed my pleasure to congratulate you — the administration, faculty and staff, graduates, and school community — who have worked together so tirelessly to educate and build a community of faith.



For so many years now, Thomas Aquinas College has provided its students with a rigorous education, grounded not only in deep and thoughtful intellectual inquiry, but also in faith. Its breathtaking surroundings provide a tranquil place not only for learning, but for reflecting on God’s many gifts.

On behalf of all whose lives have been touched by the Thomas Aquinas College family, may I express our gratitude for the commitment and generosity which have marked this fine Catholic institution.

Asking the Lord’s most abundant blessings upon all of you, and with every best wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Resolution from Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor of the 5th District, County of Los Angeles

Whereas, in September 1971 Thomas Aquinas College opened its doors with 33 freshmen and four faculty members on the grounds of a former Claretian seminary in Calabasas to provide a rigorous course of studies in Catholic traditional and liberal arts education,

And whereas, the permanent campus is now in Santa Paula, students study the original writings of the greatest minds of Western civilization and engage in the seminar method of inquiry and discussion,

And whereas, its curriculum of courses in mathematics, experimental science, logic, literature, language, music, philosophy, and theology is fully integrated,

And whereas, Thomas Aquinas College is recognized as one of the premier liberal arts colleges in America, and has produced a rich legacy of alumni who continue to influence our nation,

Now, therefore, on behalf of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, I, Michael D. Antonovich, supervisor of the 5th District, join in the 40th Anniversary celebration of Thomas Aquinas College with sincere best wishes for continued success.



R. James Wensley
Chairman, Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors

I propose a toast to our president, Dr. Michael McLean. Since taking office after the tragic loss of Dr. Tom Dillon under difficult circumstances, Mike has taken the reins of this school with a firm and steady hand. Above all he personifies the mission of our school, learning how to learn in the light of faith. He has shown himself to be a strong and effective manager, and it has been a great pleasure for me to work with him.

So raise your glasses to the leader of Thomas Aquinas College, Dr. Michael McLean!



Maria and Richard Grant
Dinner Committee Co-Chairs

We would like to extend our gratitude to all of you. Your presence here tonight is a marvelous show of support for the college that we all love.

We are honored and delighted to toast Thomas Aquinas College and all those who have helped to firmly establish this shining example of academic excellence and complete fidelity to the teaching Church. This is a wonderful accomplishment, and in only 40 years! We pray that God will continue to bless the College, its faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends for generations to come. Congratulations!



Jonathan Monnereau (’05)
President, Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Association

I would like to thank each and every single one of you to the degree that you have enabled Thomas Aquinas College to fulfill her most noble mission over these past 40 years. If it were not for your generosity and your commitment to Catholic liberal education and principally to the College herself, I can at least personally say I don’t know where I would be.

On behalf of all alumni, I would like to raise a glass in honor of our beloved alma mater. And I would like to thank God for the past glorious 40 years, and to ask for an additional 40 years that are even more glorious.



The Founders Look Back

An Interview with Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, Dr. John W. Neumayr, and Mr. Peter L. DeLuca

Question: Dr. Neumayr, how did you come to know Dr. McArthur, Mr. DeLuca, and the other founders? How did your idea of founding a college come about?

Dr. Neumayr: I came to know Ron McArthur when he was teaching at San Francisco College for Women. My sister, who was one of his students, introduced us. I had returned home to San Francisco from the University of Notre Dame, where I had studied philosophy as both an undergraduate and as a graduate student. Ron and I met often to play tennis, and this gave us the occasion to discuss philosophy and education.

About this time Ron returned to his alma mater, St. Mary's College, to work in the Integrated Program directed by tutors from St. John's College, Annapolis, Md. Consequently, the great books idea entered our discussions. We said to ourselves, why not use the great masters as our means of pursuing liberal education?

I completed my graduate studies in philosophy at Laval University and began my teaching career in an honors program at Santa Clara University. Mark Berquist, who passed away last fall, was a colleague in the same program. In 1966 the two of us joined the faculty of the St. Mary's Integrated Program with Ron.

This was the 1960s, when the Enlightenment finally stamped out what little was left of the traditions of Catholic education. The Thomistic revival initiated by Pope Leo XIII in the 19th century had been largely absorbed into neo-Thomism, in which Thomistic language may have lingered but the thought behind it was essentially modern. Thomism had hitched itself to what was passing and impermanent. Wisdom is not here today and gone tomorrow. Catholic education had sold its birthright for "a mess of pottage." Many of us had lamented the mediocrity in the Catholic schools, but now with the collapse at hand, we came to think of making a fresh start.

It all seemed unlikely. Yet with encouragement from people whose thoughts we valued, we resolved to try. At this stage Mark Berquist and I came to know Peter DeLuca, who had been a student of Dr. McArthur. We all worked together with Ron beginning in 1969. We were, of course, novices at founding colleges, and apparent failures outnumbered seeming successes. But with the prayers of many (many of whom we shall never know), Providence allowed Thomas Aquinas College to come into existence in 1971. And, praise be to God, here we are.

Question: To what extent did you and the other founders look to St. John's College as a model in establishing Thomas Aquinas College? And how would your new college differ?

Dr. McArthur: I had heard about St. John's College from the time I entered St. Mary's College as a student. At St. Mary's we read the great books, and from the time I began to read Plato's dialogues I thought St. John's was the most serious and organized undergraduate education in the country. As I went through college, I thought there should be a Catholic college like St. John's, with a curriculum ordered by sacred theology. All my experience teaching at Catholic colleges confirmed that conviction. Thomas Aquinas College is the result of that conviction, shared later with the other founders. We hoped to profit by the strengths of St. John's College (and they are many), stay with original texts, and yet transform the whole endeavor by beginning with faith seeking understanding, and supplying the understanding through the study of our curriculum.

Jack, Mark, and I were greatly helped in the founding of the College by studying at Laval University under the direction of Charles De Koninck, who showed us how to read and learn from Aristotle and St. Thomas. Our studies there enabled us to begin the intellectual life from within — something we hoped we could encourage in our prospective students. Without such direction, we were convinced that the reading of the great books led to eclecticism, which is radically opposed to the Christian wisdom which directed our efforts.

Dr. Neumayr: St. John's College not only convinced us that the great books, the classical works of the great masters, should be used instead of textbooks, but also that tutorials and seminars were more engaging for the intellectual life than mere lectures. Beyond this, however, St. John's had developed the quadrivial part of the liberal arts, that is, the classic course of mathematical studies, in a way substantially in keeping with the curriculum we wished to establish.

But there was a difference from St. John's — one of great importance. It is one thing to read great authors for their thought and even to discuss their ideas in depth. It is another thing to read them with the desire primarily of knowing the *things* they talk about. The mind wishes to understand reality primarily and has only an interest in the great ideas insofar as they unfold what is true about the *visibilia*, "the visible things around us." In this sense Thomas Aquinas College, in its fundamental thrust, is not a great books college.

Question: How would Thomas Aquinas College differ from other Catholic colleges?



Dr. Neumayr

Dr. McArthur: We wanted a college that was seriously intellectual. We wanted, as such, to frame a curriculum that would be possible but demanding. At the same time, we wanted it to be deeply Catholic, which is impossible without a serious curriculum to match. People can have good will and be very good people, but there is no education unless the mind is developed. It is possible to have an institution with Catholic rules, a Catholic demeanor, good Catholics as teachers and students, but yet fail to educate. This is what we wanted to address.

Question: How does one start a college?

Mr. DeLuca: Given our reasons, the first thing was to write a clear statement of what we thought was wrong with American higher education and with Catholic higher education. We wanted to identify not just the weaknesses of particular institutions but the philosophical errors that were at the root of the problem. In the light of that radical critique, we stated our understanding of what Catholic liberal education is and gave a detailed idea of how it could be realized with modern students. The result was the publication, in 1968, of *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, the founding document of Thomas Aquinas College. After that, we just needed to find money, a campus, students, and teachers.



Mr. DeLuca

Question: You described your early efforts, Dr. Neumayr, as making a "fresh start." Can you explain what you meant by that, and what character this "fresh start" would have?

Dr. Neumayr: By "a fresh start" I meant that we intended to restore the core of the Catholic intellectual patrimony to its most authentic form. "The Queen," that is, Sacred Doctrine, "called her handmaidens to the tower" (Proverbs 9:3); theology calls upon the liberal arts and sciences to help her in her work. The human mind above all desires to know the highest things and to know with all the certitude that the mind can attain to. Hence, authentic education seeks God and makes use of all the intellectual tools and the order of their use to achieve its end in the surest way. Shortcuts are of no value. Modern Catholic education largely turns to humanism, where man is the end; and the disciplines therein have only a progressive and, therefore, passing character.

Thus the role of St. Thomas Aquinas. The goal of the whole Thomas Aquinas College program is to know God as it is possible in this life. Certain divine truths, the preambles to the Faith, such as God's existence and His attributes, are accessible to man's reason, as St. Paul tells in his epistle to the Romans — accessible as St. Paul says by way of the *visibilia*, that is, the visible things around us. All we know by reason of the transcendental depends upon our knowledge of the sensible world around us.

Question: What led to the determination that there would be one curriculum for all, with no electives?

Mr. DeLuca: We have an institutional commitment to the view that all men and women share a common rational human nature, a nature that is perfected by the knowledge of truth. We therefore believe that there is a single education which enables the student to acquire the knowledge of the truth and especially of the truth that will make him free. Traditionally, in Western civilization, this is called liberal education. Because it is perfective of man as man, it is the same for all.

Prior to the introduction of the elective system at Harvard in the 19th century, undergraduate liberal education typically exhibited a single curriculum. The "core curriculum" at many modern colleges is a vestige of that single curriculum maintained by those who still believe that some subjects are good for everyone. The elective system,

continued on next page



Dr. Neumayr leads a seminar discussion in 1978 in one of the temporary buildings on the College's permanent campus.

on the other hand, is based upon modern skeptical philosophy which denies the existence of truth and, therefore, of a single education that is best for all.

Question: Why does the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas have preeminence in the Thomas Aquinas College curriculum?

Dr. McArthur: The Church, in addition to having the means of salvation through the sacraments, is also a teaching church, and it has made pronouncements about teaching and learning, about which theologians to follow, about how to follow them, and about the spirit of learning. We took these to be authoritative in the same way that we took other aspects of our religion to be authoritative — these would be our measure. Since the Catholic Church taught us that St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, is the Common Doctor of the Universal Church, we could not conceive of trying to educate without being his disciples. We wanted, then, to crown our endeavors with the study of his works.

Lest anyone would think our purpose rather exotic, it is worth considering that the *Penny Catechism* is the catechism for St. Thomas Aquinas just as it is for the unschooled peasant; no difference. What St. Thomas does as a theologian is to unravel the catechism, to bring it to fruition with the best use of reason. We are rational animals; we want to understand. St. Thomas provides a great service, but it is an outcome of the same faith we all share.

Dr. Neumayr: Among scholars St. Thomas is a recognized master. For the Church he is *the* Theologian. The Church, as the popes have told us, has embraced his mind as her own — and this because he has unfolded the knowledge of ordinary experience, a knowledge shared by all men, with an almost unique fidelity to our shared experience. St. Thomas in his turn called Aristotle “The Philosopher:” the voice of the human mind itself. Speaking of Aristotle, then, Cardinal Newman said, “He told us our thoughts before we were ever born.”

Going from what we all know implicitly about the *visibilia* to an explicit account is not easy — and few, no matter their brilliance, have done it with perfect fidelity. Even the great St. Augustine concedes that though he knows what “time” is, he is at a loss when asked to explain it. St. Thomas and, perhaps, Aristotle before him were unique among men in this genius.

With good reason the College organized the course of studies to proceed “*ad mentem Thomae*.” This is to seek out an understanding of *things* according to the mind of Thomas; and not in any of the Neo-Thomisms that lived briefly and died in schools. This is to say that the College truly seeks to make its students disciples of Thomas. Discipleship asks more than a mere acquaintance with this master’s thought. His thought squares with our own and becomes our own.

Question: But why this unique role for St. Thomas? Why among the rich minds of the renowned scholars should Thomas stand out? Aren’t they all geniuses of a sort?

Dr. Neumayr: Yes, but Thomas was not only a genius, he was also a saint. This can hardly be claimed for most of the Masters. But you might ask what difference does sanctity make? Is it merely an inspirational aspect that it brings? Or does it bear on the intellectual life itself?

The moral, in fact, has a central part in the intellectual life. Most of the more serious errors in judgment are more moral than intellectual. It is a moral failing rather than an intellectual one to claim that you *see* what you do not *see*, or that you do not *see* what you do *see*. The fallen nature of man makes a dogmatism favoring our own ideas almost irresistible. Those who would insist that a mere hypothesis be absolute are claiming to see what they do not see. The sanctity and the genius of St. Thomas would give him a certain immunity from claiming that he sees what he in fact does not see.



This moral rectitude in the pursuit of Wisdom *ad mentem Thomae*, in my humble opinion, is inextricably tied up with the mission of the College, and its future depends on this discipleship to our patron.

What does this mean for discipleship? You can’t be a disciple of just anyone, but only one you take to be both wise and honest. St. Thomas makes clear, for example, that the five proofs for God’s existence set out in his *Summa Theologiae* are irrefutable. By his genius he sees the truth of the demonstrations; by his sanctity he does not lie. We, his students, though we may struggle, have every expectation that we may come to see as he does that God must exist and cannot not exist.

“We cannot allow our students to become mere ideologues, repeating someone else’s answers to questions which were not really theirs.”

Question: In the College’s curriculum, there are works by some with whom many would disagree — Rousseau, Marx, and Hegel, for example. Can you explain why the works of authors such as these are read in the College’s program?

Dr. McArthur: I find it difficult to answer this question. We are, on the one hand, believing Catholics, and woe to us should we become heretics or apostates. Since almost all modern philosophy would of its own impetus lead us away from our faith, there is a danger in reading the philosophers who have pounded the nails in our coffin. It is not surprising, therefore, that there have been those, serious Catholics among them, who have wished to consider them in secondary sources alone, which point out, many times without evidence, their errors.

My experience, when I read the original texts in college was exhilarating, for I began to understand for the first time the culture which surrounded me, and in that awakening I was helped to reflect seriously on the Faith I claimed to believe. I came to think that saints might make it through unscathed by the assault of modern philosophy, but that most of us, without facing it, would finally succumb and compromise our religion. Therefore, for that reason alone, I consider it imperative to read, to study, and to take seriously the modern philosophers.

There is, however, another reason for studying them. Socrates shows us in the dialogues how important

it is to consider the many aspects of the questions we cannot help but ask. For the most part, we start to consider things according to the opinions of those around us. If, however, we pursue the intellectual life, we try to supplant our faith with understanding. All the philosophers, therefore, can help us to think out various questions, provide us with various starting points, show us the consequences of those starting points, and

show us the seriousness of the intellectual positions they hold. Aristotle, for example, was aware of the positions of Plato and the pre-Socratics; they presented him with the various positions he had to weigh before coming to some of his own solutions. It is hard to conceive that Aristotle could have discovered as much as he did without Plato. I find it difficult to think, therefore, that we can successfully think out the great questions without considering the alternative answers which have been given them. We cannot allow our students to become mere ideologues, repeating someone else’s answers to questions which were not really theirs.

Question: As fine a program as you could plan, was there any guarantee there would be students who would come, students who would be successful?

Dr. McArthur: Since most of us founders had taught or were teaching in the integrated liberal arts curriculum at St. Mary’s, we knew that the curriculum we planned could be managed by students who were sufficiently intelligent and interested enough to attempt it. The question, then, was whether there would be any students who would come to a new college, seriously orthodox in a time of crumbling convictions, with an all-required curriculum including mathematics and the sciences, and using original texts rather than the usual textbooks.

Those who first came answered that question, and with a vengeance. They were not only agreeable to the curriculum, but arrived with a focused desire to study reality in the light of their faith. Much to my astonishment, some came having started at other colleges, and some came even having completed degrees at other colleges.

Question: Can you speak about the kind of students who did come, what they brought to the College, and whether their early influence has endured?

Dr. McArthur: I noticed right in the beginning that there was a tremendous desire that the College be Catholic. The students started immediately an evening rosary, which exists to this day. They wanted the Mass, they wanted the sacraments. We found from the beginning that they wanted not only the highest kind of learning, but to nourish their faith with the use of the spiritual classics of the Catholic tradition. Soon after classes began, we found the works of St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Francis de Sales and others like them in the chapel pews, all supplied by the students themselves.

The entertainment, too, at the first Christmas party consisted of music by Mozart, Haydn, Handel, Palestrina — all performed by students. From the very beginning, therefore, the students have contributed to maintaining not only a serious mentality in the College community, but a serious concern for the arts. The early excellence of their contribution explains, I am convinced, in significant part not only the excellence of our present choirs, but the various recitals and productions of Shakespeare, Gilbert and Sullivan, and others. They are all of the highest quality.



Question: What about tutors? Were you concerned that you had set the bar too high since they would have to teach across the curriculum, from mathematics to natural science to philosophy and theology?

Dr. McArthur: We were concerned from the beginning with the question of tutors. While we ourselves could function in parts of the program, we were in no way able to teach in all its parts. We nevertheless proceeded to found the College, convinced that God would somehow provide — and He has. There were always enough tutors (sometimes barely) to provide for a growing enterprise.

It is difficult to find tutors for this program, and this is for two reasons: a) a tutorship at the College is much more demanding than a professorship in the ordinary college or university, and b) it is a ticket to anonymity, since it is very difficult to write books and become known while at the same time becoming competent in various parts of our curriculum; for this reason, we have never had “a publish or perish” requirement.

I did think at the beginning that our goal should be that every tutor should be able to teach every part of our curriculum; but since that time I have changed my mind. It is, I think, almost impossible for anyone to become a superior teacher in all parts of the curriculum. Let those who can do so, but let us be content if all of our tutors can teach at least two-thirds of the curriculum. That itself is an achievement.

I should add that most of our students, who have never gone to other colleges or universities, cannot know that they are helped and directed by an uncommon group of competent and committed teachers. Our failures, and they are legion, are minor compared to the general abandonment of education they would find elsewhere.

Question: Mr. DeLuca, you brought practical experience and know-how to the group of founders, but you also had a strong desire to teach. How much of your career at the College has been given to teaching and how much to administration?

Mr. DeLuca: I do love to teach, and I believe that those involved in the leadership of the College should remain connected to its central and defining activity. I taught full time during two periods totaling about 10 years. In the other years, I have served as vice president for administration and finance, vice president for development and, briefly, as interim president. During the years I have served as vice president for administration and finance, I have usually taught one or two classes. In general, I try to serve the College in whatever way I am needed.

Question: You have had a great deal to do with the building out of the campus. Would you talk a little about that experience?

Mr. DeLuca: Believing that liberal education is rooted in friendship, we planned to limit the size of the College to about 350. Because we wanted to do just one thing and do it well, we eschewed graduate schools and research institutes. Moreover, in order to create a true community of learning, and to help preserve moral order, we envisioned a college of all resident students with strict segregation of the sexes in the residence halls. These things allowed us to conceive the campus as a complete, finite whole and avoid the architectural chaos that has overwhelmed colleges in the post-war expansion of higher education.

By the time we were master planning the campus, the College had been in operation for several years in a rented facility. The style of the rented campus, our experience at St. Mary’s College, the presence on our new property of a beautiful Hacienda, and the fact that the property had once belonged to Mission San Buenaventura led us to choose “California Mission” as our architectural style.

Our small size allowed our plan to relegate the automobile to peripheral parking lots. We were able to lay



Peter DeLuca, Ronald P. McArthur, and Board of Governors chairman Tom Sullivan breaking ground at the new campus.

out the various buildings in a way that related their functions appropriately: the academic buildings are grouped about the chapel while the dormitories are on the higher ground above. The whole is small enough to permit easy travel between buildings on foot, much of it in covered arcades.

We certainly learned as we went along. Our original plan called for more and smaller dormitories with more of an “indoor-outdoor” design than we ultimately built. Finding that our site has greater extremes of temperature, we built larger buildings with internal halls, while preserving the ideal of smaller living units within separate areas of the buildings.

Question: How did the building of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel differ from the construction of the other campus buildings?

Mr. DeLuca: First let me say how it did not differ. We began, as we typically did, with our faculty committee considering carefully how the building would serve the ends of the College and writing a “building program” to give direction to the architects. But the program differed from those for other buildings because this would be the most important building, the center of the life of the College.

The design and construction process was more complex than anyone had anticipated. We had separate design and executive architects, a construction management consultant, a general contractor, and subcontractors from as far away as New York, Spain, and Italy. We were building a structure that was at once a 13th century, Italian church and a modern, California building, meeting the required earthquake, energy conservation and fire codes. For me it was a great learning experience and a fascinating project.

Question: Thomas Aquinas College is singular in that its bylaws, established by the founders, require that the president be selected from among the members of the teaching faculty. How is this feature important?

Dr. McArthur: Our program of studies, and the method of teaching and learning, cannot be understood unless one has taught or learned in it. Therefore, at the twinkling of an eye, someone who has never undergone our kind of education might think that certain changes along the way might be quite compatible with the original intent of the College, but which in fact would ruin the whole endeavor. We therefore thought it essential to the preservation of the College that its president be a tutor.

Question: It is evident that the study of St. Thomas is a good for individual students. But is there a practical good for the Church as well?

Dr. McArthur: St. Thomas is the Common Doctor of the universal Church. The Church cannot put aside his wisdom and doctrine without severely compromising itself. The way in which the Church has thought about itself has

to a large extent been formed by the thought of St. Thomas. If it is going to be a teaching church and teach in a way that connects us with the whole of its tradition, it must use its own language and its own thought. So, if Catholicism is to again become alive, there must be those who can understand it from the inside. The study of St. Thomas is a wide avenue to that understanding. To push him aside would be a disaster affecting not only those who study but everyone who calls himself a Christian.

Question: About the graduates and the wide array of pursuits in which they are engaged — is this what you expected? Did you anticipate so many vocations?

Dr. McArthur: I have never believed that the number of vocations is extraordinary; it is what one would expect from any serious Catholic education. That number is exceptional in our time because of the general decline, and even disappearance, of anything genuinely Catholic at most Catholic institutions.

I did not have any particular idea about what the graduates would do upon leaving the College. I assumed they would do more or less what everybody else does, in some form or another. I am now, however, impressed that many of them are using their talents for the good of the Church and the souls of their fellow Catholics.

I think that it would be a sign of our failure if the preponderance of our graduates were to become successful in this secularized and ungodly society. Let them, for the good of the Church and their own souls, be that “sign of contradiction” without which our society will lose all its salt.

“As is the case with most worthwhile enterprises, if we had known ahead of time how difficult it would be, we would probably never have attempted it. Thanks be to God, we did!”

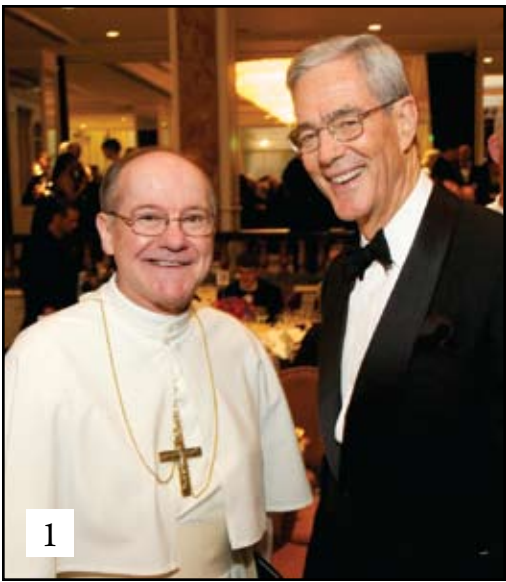
Question: What chance did you think the whole endeavor — starting a Catholic college — would have?

Mr. DeLuca: We correctly thought that it would be very difficult to find teachers both willing and able to give life to our curriculum. At the same time, we were certainly too optimistic about how easy it would be to raise money — particularly the large amounts needed to build a campus and endow a college. And we were too pessimistic about our ability to find students both willing and able to do our program. As is the case with most worthwhile enterprises, if we had known ahead of time how difficult it would be, we would probably never have attempted it. Thanks be to God, we did!

Question: What do you see for the future of the College?

Dr. McArthur: Because of an unwavering commitment to principle, the College is essentially the same as it has been from the beginning. However, the faculty has grown over the years with the addition of many excellent tutors, such that it is now better than we were as a beginning faculty, and it should become better as time goes on. There have also been an increasing number of good students seeking what we offer them. We are to that extent better able to educate our students, and they better able to profit from our efforts. Therefore, if the College remains true to its principles, and if future administrations govern according to those principles, the College will look much the same as it does now.

The College will never be popular, will never be widely understood, and will always find it difficult to support itself. Our best chance for continued success is to keep doing what we are doing, to do it as well as we can, and leave the rest to God. He will see to it that it does His work in the Church, and that is all that is important.



CAMPUS
LIFE



1. The Right Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem., Abbot of St. Michael's Abbey in Orange County, Calif, poses with Dinner Committee Co-Chair Richard A. Grant. 2. A student string quartet provides music during the reception. 3. Glen Coughlin, a tutor and member of the Board of Governors, takes to the dance floor with his wife, Maureen ... 4. ... as do President Michael F. McLean and his wife, Lynda. 5. Jane Forsyth ('11) directs the student choral group Chrysostomos. 6. The Tim Buley swing band provides entertainment into the late hours of the evening. 7. Keynote speaker Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P., talks with Lannette Turicchi, wife of Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors R. Scott Turicchi.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel
Schedule of Masses *

| Weekdays | Saturdays | Sundays |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 7:00 a.m. | 7:15 a.m. | 7:15 a.m. |
| 11:30 a.m. | 11:30 a.m. | 9:00 a.m. |
| 5:00 p.m. | | 11:30 a.m. |

* Schedules may vary; if traveling from afar, please call in advance to confirm.
** The First Mass of each day is offered in the extraordinary form.

Calendar of Events

- Tutor Talk — Dr. John FinleyJanuary 18
“A Consideration of the Gender Distinction According to Thomistic Anthropology in Light of Modern Biology”
- Lecture — Dr. Marc Guerra, Ave Maria UniversityJanuary 13
“The Church and Modern Democracy on Justice in Human Affairs”
- 40th Anniversary Celebration for Students & FacultyJanuary 28
Speaker: Hon. J. Leon Holmes
United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas
- Presidents’ Day Lecture February 24
Dr. Joseph Bessette, Claremont Graduate University
- Solemnity of the Dedication of
Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel..... March 7
- Tutor Talk — Dr. Kevin Kolbeck..... March 7
“O’Connor’s *Everything that Rises*”
- St. Thomas Day LectureMarch 9
Rev. Lawrence Dewan, O.P., Dominican College
“Faith and Reason: Creation and Metaphysics”

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