



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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Eastward Bound!

College Signs Agreement to Open New England Campus

On February 7 the National Christian Foundation and Thomas Aquinas College announced that they had entered into a preliminary agreement, under which the NCF will give to the College the former campus of a secondary school in Northfield, Massachusetts, on May 2, 2017. By God's grace, and contingent upon the approval of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, the branch campus will open its doors to students in the fall of 2018.

"To maintain an intimate community of learners, we have always thought it important to keep the student body on our California campus at 400 or fewer," says President Michael F. McLean. Since reaching full enrollment some years ago, however, the College has had to turn away increasing numbers of applicants each year. "We have long been considering, therefore, the possibility of a second campus."

Given the tremendous challenges and costs involved, however, that prospect never before seemed feasible. "The question of a second campus would have remained no more than academic — but for this extraordinary opportunity that the National Christian Foundation has offered us," says Dr. McLean. "Never did we imagine we could acquire a campus so fully developed and so beautiful."

Located in a lovely rural setting in the Connecticut River valley, approximately 90 miles northwest of Boston, the property includes dormitory and classroom space sufficient for an eventual enrollment of 400 students. Among its 20 buildings are a library, a science hall, a large auditorium, a music building, a gymnasium with related athletic facilities, and a beautiful chapel that can be adapted easily to Catholic worship.



Courtesy of Northfield Mount Hermon School

"From the beginning, we have been impressed with Thomas Aquinas College for its commitment to academic excellence," says Emmitt Mitchell, founder of the NCF Heartland's Board of Directors. "We selected it because of this reputation, its strong leadership, and its financial strength."

Pioneers Once More

"We are profoundly grateful to Emmitt and the National Christian Foundation," says Dr. McLean, "for this magnificent gift of the Northfield property and for their steadfast support of our effort to launch our unique program of Catholic liberal education in New England."

The plan for the branch campus "is to start small and build slowly, just as our founders did in California," explains Dr. McLean. Thirty-six freshmen will be accepted in each of the first four years, and more as time goes along, allowing the student body to increase slowly to

a maximum of 350-400 students. Seasoned members of the California teaching faculty have volunteered to move East as part of this new venture and will be a strong source of congruence between the California and New England campuses in all aspects: the academic program, the residential life, and the spiritual life of the new community.

"Both campuses will be fully committed to, and governed by, our founding document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*," says Dr. McLean. "Both will initially be part of one college, with a single faculty, a single board of governors, a single curriculum, and a single accreditation, but we will explore the path to the possible independence of the two campuses in the years to come."

Thomas Aquinas College, New England will be blessed to operate with the "full support" of the Most Rev. Mitchell T. Rozanski, Bishop of the Diocese of

Springfield, who wrote Dr. McLean upon learning of the College's desire to open the branch campus. "I will do whatever I can to help you in establishing the school here to form faithful witnesses to Christ in our Catholic faith," His Excellency remarked. "We are greatly encouraged by Bishop Rozanski's warm welcome and pledge of assistance," said Dr. McLean. "We look forward to working with him to provide even more young people the intellectual, moral, and spiritual formation they need to serve the Church and our country well."

Trust in Providence

After being unoccupied for 12 years, the New England campus will require some renovations, but it is structurally sound and architecturally rich. "It will be a challenge to raise the funds to fully restore the campus and to meet the financial aid needs of our new students, but we have no doubt that it can be done," says Dr. McLean. "The NCF has promised to match every dollar our benefactors contribute — up to \$5 million total. The NCF is deeply committed to the success of our shared venture, for which we are humbled and grateful."

Peter L. DeLuca, founder of the College and its vice president for finance and administration, likens the opening of a second campus to the founding of Thomas Aquinas College 46 years ago. "We always believed that, as long as we were doing God's work, He would provide the means to make it possible," says Mr. DeLuca. "Our confidence in His providence, as well as in the mission of the College, is as great as ever."

**Photos of the
New England campus:
Pages 6–7**

Faith & Reason

USA Today Names College among "10 Best" Catholic Schools

According to *USA Today* and the statistics website College Factual, Thomas Aquinas College is one of the country's "10 Best Roman Catholic Colleges," schools that are "devoted to providing a strong education while being rooted in the Roman Catholic faith."

The colleges included on the list are institutions at which "tradition and faith are important," writes College Factual's Megan Cahill, and which "also value diversity and open dialogue." The rankings measure the schools' academic performance by way of College Factual's quality-ranking system, which focuses on students' educational outcomes, such as graduation rates, loan-default rates, and future salaries.

"Thomas Aquinas College takes a unique approach to post-secondary education and only offers one integrated program of study that culminates in a Bachelor of Arts degree," writes Ms. Cahill. "Instead of textbooks and lectures, students read the original works of great thinkers

and discuss them in various settings. The traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church are intertwined with this Socratic method of teaching for an education experience for both the mind and the soul."

The story also cites the College's "great student to faculty ratio," "excellent graduation and freshman retention rates," and "diverse student body that comes from states all across the nation." Previously *USA Today* has identified Thomas Aquinas College as one of the country's "Best 10 Colleges for the Money," based on its "good outcomes for students" and "reasonable price tag" for the excellent education it offers.

The latest rankings — an assessment of Catholic colleges in a secular guide — are reflective of a longstanding



ing trend: the College's consistently favorable reviews for both its academic program and its fidelity. Each year Thomas Aquinas College is named to the top of the lists of such publications as *The Princeton Review* and *U.S. News & World Report*, while also achieving the highest possible marks from faithfully Catholic sources such as the Cardinal Newman Society and the *National Catholic Register*.

"The latest *USA Today* ranking, along with the many other guides that highly rate Thomas Aquinas College, are strong indicators of what some did not think possible, but what we have firmly held from the beginning," says President Michael F. McLean. "A faithful education can also be excellent; indeed, if it is true to the intellectual patrimony of the Church, it certainly will be. Our students and our tutors demonstrate this truth in the classroom every day. It is deeply gratifying to see their work receive the recognition it deserves."

One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic

Cardinal Müller Visits College for All Saints' Day, Receives Highest Honor

On November 1, 2016, the Solemnity of All Saints, as members of the Thomas Aquinas College community gathered to honor members of the Church Triumphant, they were joined by one of the preeminent leaders of the Church Militant, His Eminence Gerhard Cardinal Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

"It is fitting that, on this day when we honor those who have lived out the Faith heroically," said President Michael F. McLean, "we should be blessed to welcome this prince of the Church who is charged with promoting and defending that same faith throughout the world." In recognition of the Cardinal's lifelong fidelity to Christ and His church, the College presented him with its highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion.

Cardinal Müller's visit came about as a result of a trip that College officials took to Rome last spring, during which Dr. McLean invited His Eminence to visit the campus. When the Cardinal later learned that he would travel to Chicago in the fall, he contacted Dr. McLean to ask if that would be a good time for a visit, and the president happily agreed. "In light of his weighty responsibilities in the Church," said Dr. McLean, "it is a great honor that His Eminence would spend some time with us and address our community."

The Universal Church

While on campus, Cardinal Müller offered the Solemnity Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, joined at the altar by the College's four chaplains and clergy from throughout Southern California. "In our prayers for each other, we express our communion in faith and love. Invoking the living saints in Heaven, therefore, signifies the insertion of ourselves in the 'we' of the praying ecclesial community, that is the Risen Christ," he said in his homily. "The confines of death are overcome, and we are uniquely received in Christ, with Christ, and through Christ in the circle of the living members of the Body of Christ."

That evening members of the College's Board of Governors, Boards of Regents, benefactors, faculty, and staff — as well as guests from the Order of Malta and the local



chapters of Legatus — attended a reception honoring Cardinal Müller in St. Bernardine of Siena Library. The group then joined students in St. Joseph Commons for an All-College Dinner and His Eminence's much-anticipated address.

"It is always a great joy to be here at Thomas Aquinas College," began the Most Rev. Robert Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, who offered the invocation. "Heavenly Father," he prayed, "we thank You above all tonight for Thomas Aquinas College, one of the great liberal arts Catholic colleges in the world. Lord, may it always be a place where Your truth, and Your goodness, and Your beauty are conveyed. We thank You tonight, Father, for the presence among us of Cardinal Müller, a link to Pope Francis, a link to the Universal Church. Lord, guide him, protect him in his crucially important ministry."

In his lecture, "The Question of God Today," Cardinal Müller spoke of the secularism and atheism that are increasingly prevalent throughout the Western world, and that are doomed by their inability to meet man's deepest needs. "The atheistic conviction that intellectual history and breathtaking progress of nature and technological sciences, as well as global and digitized ways of knowing, cohesively would lead to total immanentism and secularism is contradicted by the fact that the human being always asks anew and wants to seek the existential questions regarding his origin and destiny," he said. "The question about a sense of being, and the goal of our existence, thus cannot be dismissed by positivism

as devoid of sense or irrational, and hence it cannot be forced to silence."

Following the Cardinal's lecture, the entire room, including His Eminence, rose to sing "Happy Birthday" to the College's long-serving chaplain, Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., who was turning 91 years old. The student-led group Chrysostomos then performed several hymns, and Resident Assistant Sarah Dufresne ('14) presented the Cardinal with a spiritual bouquet — including promises of more than 100 Masses, 50 Rosaries, and 80 other devotions — on behalf of the College community.

The Medallion

To conclude the evening, Chairman of the Board of Governors R. Scott Turicchi presented His Eminence with the College's highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. Named for the College's patron, the Medallion pays tribute to those who have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to Christ and His church, as well as leadership in advancing the teachings of the magisterium.

"His Eminence Gerhard Cardinal Müller has shown an exemplary loyalty and devotion to the Holy Father and the magisterium of the Church by his steadfast orthodoxy throughout his nearly 40 years as a priest, bishop, and now cardinal of the Catholic Church," said Mr. Turicchi, quoting a unanimous resolution of the Board. "He has worked tirelessly to proclaim, support, and defend the teachings of the Church and to advance the mission of Christ on earth through his leadership of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith."

The Right Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem., Abbot of St. Michael's Abbey in Silverado, California, then offered the night's benediction. "O Mighty and Living Father, we thank You for the communion which we celebrate today, our communion with the saints," he began. "Assured of their unfailing help, we praise them as we strive each day to walk in their footsteps, and thereby walk in the footsteps of Your son. Bless in particular Cardinal Müller; strengthen and guide and inspire him and his collaborators in their responsibilities."

2016 Christmas Dinner



Many of the friends who have given generously to Thomas Aquinas College over the years gathered in downtown Los Angeles on December 4, 2016, for the annual Christmas Dinner. 1. Germaine Wensley, Librarian Viltis Jatulis, Lynda McLean, and Ted Kretschmer 2. President Michael F. McLean presents icons of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to the evening's honored guests: long-serving chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J. ... 3. Laura (Steichen '75) Berquist, director and founder of Mother of Divine Grace Distance Learning School and the wife of late College Founder Marcus R. Berquist ... 4. ... and San Francisco attorney Phil Hudner (in absentia), a member of the College's Bay Area Board of Regents. 5. Dr. McLean proposes a toast. 6-7. Members of the Grimm family lead the room in the singing of traditional Christmas carols.

“On Fire for the Faith”

College Governor Stephen Walsh Sponsors Students at FOCUS Conference

For four days in early January, some 13,000 Catholic young people from more than 500 colleges and universities across the United States gathered in San Antonio, Texas, for the SEEK 2017 conference. Among them were seven Thomas Aquinas College students, who — thanks to the generosity of College Governor Stephen Walsh — were able to deepen their faith and share the fruits of their formation with their fellow attendees.

“There was an influx of so many people into the small area of the city surrounding the Convention Center, probably 10 square blocks,” says Xavier Crawley (’19). “Everywhere you went you would see whole blocks jammed with young Catholics.”

The former chief investment officer of the Western Management Company, Mr. Walsh is a member of the President’s Advancement Council of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, which hosted SEEK. He sponsored the Thomas Aquinas College students’ attendance at the conference, provided for their airfare, and put them up in a hotel along the city’s Riverwalk, within walking distance of the Convention Center. “He really wanted us TAC students to see the universality of the Church, and to be able to experience that, and also to bring TAC to the conference, too,” says Emily Sanchez (’17). “We had our flag there, and we waved it proudly!”

Each day the conference began with Mass, with some 150 concelebrants and 13,000 faithful praying together on the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center floor. Then the men and the women broke into separate groups, followed by lunch and smaller sessions in the afternoon, featuring a wide range of topics from bioethics to vocations. Speakers included Rev. Mike Schmitz, director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota; theologian Dr. Edward Sri; Sr. Bethany Madonna of the Sisters of Life; and the Most Rev. Charles J. Cha-

put, O.F.M., Archbishop of Philadelphia. For dinner attendees explored the city’s restaurants, then returned for an evening keynote address followed by a special event — a concert one night, a comedian another, and a dance. The highlight, though, came on the last evening, when the whole conference came together for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, during which priests heard more than 4,000 confessions.

“It was like a mini-World Youth Day, and it had the same effect, fostering camaraderie among all these different people,” says Emily. “It was inspiring and amazing to be surrounded by so many people on fire for the Faith.”

It was also eye-opening. The overwhelming majority of students at SEEK attend secular colleges, where their faith is often marginalized, and living faithfully can be especially difficult. “The conference was geared toward students who face lots of challenges without the benefit of the formation and community that we can too easily take for granted here,” says Emily. “It gave me a greater appreciation for the College. It was also a reminder to stay humble, to be grateful for what we have, and to be generous in sharing it with others.”

Often, the students found, their peers from around the country were astonished — and heartened — to learn that a school such as Thomas Aquinas College exists. “When I told people what we do at the College, they were at first really confused,” Emily laughs. “But hearing more, they would usually say something like, ‘Whoa! That’s so cool that you spend time doing that.’ People were genuinely amazed that there was a college where you could read and discuss great books, and where the Faith and its teachings are taken seriously.”

It was also a change of pace for the College’s students, they admit, to attend lectures and talks that consisted largely of deeply personal, emotionally powerful testi-



Thomas Aquinas College students with Governor Steve Walsh at SEEK 2017: Nicole Steltz (’19), Matthew Plaisted (’18), Rose Simonse (’17), Alexandra Santamaria (’17), Mr. Walsh, Graham Crawley (’20), Xavier Crawley (’19), and Emily Sanchez (’17)

monials, when they were more accustomed to scholarly discussions in the College’s classrooms. “The conference took us out of our comfort zone and allowed us to connect with other Catholics who share our faith, but not our experiences,” says Xavier. Adds Emily, “It was helpful for us to recognize the relationship between the passions and the intellect, and how obviously the intellect rules, but you want your passions to be aligned with it. It was all about falling in love with Our Lord.”

When not making new friends the Thomas Aquinas College students met up for the occasional meal to discuss what they learned and how it complemented their studies. On the last day Mr. Walsh joined them for lunch. “He just seemed radiant with his enthusiasm for the Faith and young people in the U.S.,” recalls Xavier. “He wants more people to experience the beauty and the love that the Faith has to offer.”

Missionary Work at Home and Abroad

An interview with College Governor Stephen Walsh

How did you become involved with Thomas Aquinas College?

In July of 2012 I was invited by a friend to attend an Opus Dei executive retreat on your campus, and though I had never heard of the College, I decided to attend. Once there I was very taken by the beauty of the campus and the Chapel. But I was even more taken by the students I encountered. They sang at Mass, which was beautiful, and then stayed afterward to pray the Rosary. I was very moved. I also had the opportunity to speak with some of the students and was impressed with their deep faith and character. Since then I have visited classes and have had more occasions to speak with and listen to the students. These experiences have reinforced my initial impressions.



During the retreat weekend I met President Michael McLean and Vice President Paul O’Reilly, and then met with them a few more times over the ensuing few years. They approached me about joining the Board in the fall of 2013, and I was appointed as a member of the Board in the spring of 2014.

What is your background?

I have spent over 30 years in the financial services industry. Almost 25 of those years were with Western Asset Management Company, which is one of the leading fixed-income investment firms in the world, where I served as chief investment officer.

During my tenure there, I was appointed to the United States Treasury borrowing committee, a group of senior financial professionals who advise the Treasury and Federal Reserve on matters of the economy and markets.

What are some of your other interests?

When I was in college I went on a “Semester at Sea,” where I traveled around the world over a full semester. That experience engendered in me a love for international travel, and also opened my eyes to poverty and need in our world in a way growing up in Northern Illinois never could have.

Over time that led me to truly desire to help others and get involved in doing mission work abroad. That work has included trips to Mexico and Tanzania, where I became involved in a program called Carpenter’s Kids. I have since returned to Africa, including with my family a dozen or so times, and have helped with projects as varied as mosquito nets, agricultural help, educational support, and helping to put water systems in remote villages.

Our Catholic faith calls us to love our neighbor, and I believe our “neighbors” include those across the world. I feel blessed because something I love to do — travel abroad and help others — our Catholic faith actually calls us to do. My travels and work have showed me that as much as there is a tendency to think we are the ones helping or changing the lives of others, it is our lives that are changed when we truly give of ourselves to another in need. Helping others is such a beautiful and real way to encounter Christ.

You have recently returned from a conference of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), for which you sponsored seven Thomas Aquinas College students. What inspired this generous gift to them, and what was your experience there?

Over the last few years, I have become involved as a consultant/advisor to the leadership team at FOCUS. FOCUS, like TAC, is a great organization, placing missionaries on college campuses who walk with students

and help them stay, but also more deeply engage, with their faith. It is a critical time for young people, as so many walk away from their faith during their college experience. The missionaries encourage the students in Mass attendance, Bible studies, and Adoration. Importantly, they also develop authentic relationships with the students to help them in the challenging secular culture that exists on college campuses today.

Knowing the students at Thomas Aquinas College — their strong faith, their joy, and their willingness and ability to converse and share that faith — it seemed a natural fit for FOCUS. FOCUS’ SEEK conference was scheduled this year for San Antonio in the first week of January, and I thought that would be the perfect opportunity to bring the two groups together. So seven TAC students joined 13,000 students from around the country to share and grow in their faith.

Would you describe the conference?

There was Mass every day, with all 13,000 students in attendance (an amazing experience), 24-hour Adoration, opportunity for confession, and four days of inspiring talks by Catholic leaders, clergy, and laypeople. I saw the TAC students at Adoration one night, and one day we all met for lunch. They are a wonderful group of young men and women, and we shared stories of our experience and faith. From what I heard, they all were truly happy to be there and felt the experience was very positive in helping to build their faith.

What I love about TAC is that it truly holds and builds young people in their Catholic faith and prepares them for their lifelong journey. FOCUS is trying to do the very same thing on secular campuses. It would seem very natural that some TAC graduates might go on to work as FOCUS missionaries. But wherever in life they are led, I pray they will be great witnesses to their faith.

Catholic Liberal Education in the Marketplace

College Hosts Talk for Students Interested in Engineering Careers

On Sunday, November 13, the College’s Office of Career Advisement sponsored a talk and Q&A for students who are considering a career in engineering. Leading the discussion were two local engineers — one civil, one mechanical, with extensive civilian and military experience — who shared their wisdom about how best to apply the benefits of a Catholic liberal education in the marketplace.

The first speaker was Adam Wallach, a mechanical engineer and project manager at the Naval Facilities Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center in Port Hueneme, California, where he leads a team that specializes in designing systems for underwater submarine surveillance. Mr. Wallach holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and previously worked for Walt Disney Imagineering, designing show action equipment.

Joining Mr. Wallach was his retired predecessor at Port Hueneme, Ted Kretschmer, father of the College’s director of student services, Mark Kretschmer. In his 40-year career with the Navy, Mr. Kretschmer worked on projects ranging from the establishment of a research camp at the North Pole to the protection of U.S. nuclear-powered submarines. A two-time graduate of the University of Notre Dame with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in civil engineering, Mr. Kretschmer holds patents and patent disclosures related to ocean technology.

Over the course of the nearly two-hour meeting, Messrs. Wallach and Kretschmer shared their wealth of experience to help students understand the wide variety of opportunities available in their profession as well as the lifecycle of a typical engineering project. Both professionals took questions, offering their assistance and networking help as needed, and stressing the compatibility of the College’s liberal arts curriculum with careers in the so-called STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines.

“I see the TAC program, which focuses on analysis to find the truth and understand basic principles, to be very complementary with the training and characteristics of a good engineer,” said Mr. Kretschmer. “The engineer must deal with facts, not emotions, in solving problems, and so focuses on truth. Engineers often form teams to discuss

the facts and propose solutions in a similar process to the College’s round-table approach, and practicing engineers must hold high ethical positions to meet the requirements of finding truth.”

When evaluating young engineers, Mr. Wallach added, he cares not so much that they immediately know how to solve a problem, “but that they are willing to open up a book — actually to admit what they don’t know, and then go figure it out, and that they are asking the right questions.” Consequently, he told the students, “I think that, because of the foundation that you have, you would end up being much better engineers than a lot of engineers who learn the recipe for how two pieces fit together without appreciating the bigger picture.”



Recent Career Advisement Events

Psychology

On September 17 Gregory Wood, MFT, a licensed marriage and family therapist for more than 25 years, gave advice and encouragement to students who are interested in pursuing careers in mental health, psychology, and counseling. “This is a field in which we get to overtly practice the Spiritual Works of Mercy,” said Mr. Wood. “We are doing that all the time, in that we get to pray, regularly throughout the day, if we’re praying with or for our clients.” He also answered students’ questions and offered assistance to students seeking jobs or graduate education in the mental-health field.

Discernment Workshop

At an October Career Discernment Workshop, classmates from the Class of 1999 shared their wisdom about how to best make use of one’s Catholic liberal education in a job search. The first speaker was the College’s director of student services, Mark Kretschmer (’99), who at 23 years of age was the youngest branch manager for Kinko’s Inc. in the Los Angeles market, responsible for \$1.5 million in annual sales. Following Mr. Kretschmer was Nathan Haggard (’99), a systems engineer at Apple Inc., who manages the technical relationship with some of Apple’s largest enterprise customers such as Disney, Amgen, and Toyota.

Nursing

Alumna Clare Hoonhout (’08), RN — an emergency department nurse for Scripps Health in San Diego, California — spoke on January 25 to a roomful of students eager for her expertise and counsel. “Your four years here at TAC serve as an excellent foundation for nursing for two key reasons. First you are immersed in the intellectually rigorous life,” she said. “Second is our Catholic faith. ... It is with our faith that we are able to love and serve even the unlovable who come through our doors. We understand that suffering is not pointless, and that death is not the end.”

Banking & Finance

On February 5 Beverly Stevens, a former Wall Street banker and the current editor of *Regina* Magazine, presented an overview of the financial industry and advice about how the College’s students can best break into it. “You have an extremely strong education,” said Mrs. Stevens. “You’ve actually had to read first sources and think — and that, in and of itself, is a skill that is rare in the U.S.” The challenge, she continued, is “how to present that to people.” Her advice: “Tell them, ‘I went to a Christian school. Responsibility was important, and so were ethics and integrity.’ That is the kind of thing that bank recruiters like to hear.”

Construction Update

St. Cecilia Lecture and Concert Hall Set for Fall Debut

Construction continues apace on Thomas Aquinas College’s newest building, the St. Cecilia Lecture and Concert Hall. After procuring the necessary permits, the College began the process of grading the land early last year. Initially there were some delays, owing to the need to sort and remove rock from the site, but by July the grading was complete. Then began the process of building the retaining walls around what will be the building’s lower level, site of a future coffee shop and student recreation room.

By September the retaining walls were in place, and workers drilled the shaft for the hydraulic cylinder of the building’s elevator. At that point the building visibly began to take form. Before Christmas, the outside walls of the coffee shop and recreation-room area at the lowest level were complete. The concrete slab for the main floor was poured, and the steel columns that will support the main roof had been erected.

“As the three-dimensional shape of the building begins to appear,” observes Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca, “interest and excitement

are growing among students and faculty.” Set to open its doors this fall, St. Cecilia Hall is the fourteenth building to be constructed since the College acquired its California campus in the 1970s. It is situated on the southwest corner of the academic quadrangle, adjacent to St. Gladys Hall and Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

With its concert-hall acoustics, theatrical lighting, and 482-person stadium seating, St. Cecilia Hall will offer an ideal setting for the biweekly events that make

up the St. Vincent DePaul Lecture and Concert Series. The building will also host the annual Matriculation ceremony and orientation assemblies, dramatic productions, dances, informal musical performances, and academic conferences.

In addition to the main auditorium, St. Cecilia Hall will include a discussion room for post-lecture question-and-answer sessions, informal “Tutor Talks,” and senior thesis defenses. Its lower level will feature a recreation area and a coffee shop that opens out to a terrace overlook-

ing the future site of the campus tennis courts.

“Thanks to the Fritz B. Burns Foundation of Los Angeles, which generously provided the funding for St. Cecilia Hall, we will soon have a facility worthy of the excellent speakers and musicians that we regularly bring to campus,” says President Michael F. McLean. “It is a joy to see it take shape, and we look forward to its becoming an integral part of the life of the College, as well as a place of welcome for our friends and neighbors.”



College Update

Recent Events and Happenings

U.S. News: College Among Most Beloved

In postscripts to its “Best Colleges” rankings — in which Thomas Aquinas College ranked within the top third of the top tier — *U.S. News & World Report* has named the College to the top 10 on its lists of colleges “Where Students Are Eager to Enroll” and “Where the Most Alumni Donate.”



In its survey of college enrollment for the 2015-16 academic year, the newsweekly found that 66.4 percent of the applicants admitted to Thomas Aquinas College go on to enroll in the fall — the fifth-highest freshman “yield” rate among American liberal arts colleges. “A higher yield,” writes *U.S. News* reporter Farran Powell, “typically indicates a school’s popularity and desirability in a student’s eyes and is often associated with a ‘first-choice school.’”

The College’s appeal, however, is not limited to prospective students. The magazine also found that Thomas Aquinas College has the second-highest alumni-giving rate in the United States — and the highest among all national liberal arts colleges — suggesting a high level of alumni satisfaction. The College is the only Catholic institution to make the Top 10 rankings, the only one from the Western United States, and the only one founded within the last 100 years.

Additionally, *U.S. News & World Report* has included the College in its recent list of just 66 schools nationwide that promise to meet students’ full financial need.

College Soars into Top 10 in Annual Kiplinger Rankings

A perennial top performer in *Kiplinger Personal Finance’s* annual college rankings, Thomas Aquinas College has jumped several spots — into the “Top 10 Best Values in U.S. Colleges,” or as the magazine describes it, “the crème de la crème” of its newly published guide, “Top 300 Best College Values of 2017.”



“Thomas Aquinas College’s sticker price — which is about half that of many private colleges on our best values list — and generous financial aid awards propel this pint-sized, Catholic liberal arts college up 15 places on this year’s combined best values list,” writes *Kiplinger*. The magazine ranks the College No. 7 in the country among all colleges and universities, up from No. 22 in 2016, and No. 4 among private, liberal arts schools — an eight-point leap from its No. 12 ranking last year.

Introduced in 1998, the *Kiplinger* guide emphasizes value, restricting its analysis to measurable standards of academic quality and affordability. To gauge academic quality, the editors look at admission rates, the percentage of students who return for sophomore year, student-faculty ratios, and four-year graduation rates. In determining affordability, they consider sticker prices, financial aid, average debt at graduation, and students’ median earnings 10 years post-graduation.

68 Alumni Priests!

By God’s grace, there are now two more Thomas Aquinas College alumni priests. On November 13, 2016, His Eminence Raymond Cardinal Burke, Patron of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, ordained Rev. Joseph Hudson, O.S.B. (’03), and Rev. Robert Nesbit, O.S.B. (’07), at Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey in Hulbert, Oklahoma. With their ordinations, the College can now claim 68 alumni priests.



Rev. Robert Nesbit, O.S.B. (’07), and Rev. Joseph Hudson, O.S.B. (’03)

Fr. Hudson and Fr. Nesbit are two of the 11 Thomas Aquinas College alumni serving at Clear Creek

Abbey, where a fellow graduate — Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B. (’00) — was recently named subprior. Abbot Philip Anderson, O.S.B., appointed Fr. Morey to his new position this past spring, less than seven years after his ordination in 2009. Fr. Morey succeeds another alumnus of the College, Rev. Mark Bachmann, O.S.B. (’82).

Late last year, *Tulsa World* published a story which hailed Clear Creek as “a global attraction in rural Oklahoma” and quoted Fr. Morey about the challenges and joys of religious life. Being a monk means “giving up your own plans ... your own routines, your own ways of doing things,” Fr. Morey told reporter Bill Sherman. And yet, in this sacrifice, there is the freedom of Christ. “There’s a certain liberation,” he said, “from things that hold you back.”

Board Freezes Tuition Rates for Fifth Year

To help ease the financial burden on students and their parents, the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors voted at its recent annual corporate retreat to freeze the cost of tuition and room & board for the 2017-2018 academic year. This is the fifth year in a row that the College’s governors have kept the cost of attendance at the same level.

Next year, tuition at the College will remain at \$24,500, and room & board at \$7,950, bringing the total cost of attendance — including all books and fees — to \$32,450. That amount is well below the average of \$43,921 for private, non-profit, four-year colleges in the United States, according to The College Board’s Annual Survey of Colleges (2015).



In order to keep its unique program of Catholic liberal education available to all motivated students and their families, regardless of means, the College maintains a generous financial aid program. No student is ever turned away on the basis of financial need, and the College asks its students to take on no more than \$18,000 in debt over the course of their four years’ study.

“We are determined to make attendance at Thomas Aquinas College as affordable for students as we can,” says President Michael F. McLean. “And we are grateful to the benefactors who supply what is needed for the 70 percent of students for whom our relatively low cost of tuition is beyond reach.”

L.A. County Supervisors Honor Librarian

At last May’s Commencement exercises, Thomas Aquinas College honored Viltis Jatulis, who was stepping down after 45 years as head librarian and reducing her work hours to part-time. Upon learning of Mrs. Jatulis’ semi-retirement, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recently recognized her faithful service, issuing a formal proclamation that reads, “With sincere congratulations and best wishes, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles does hereby join in your celebration.”



Viltis Jatulis

A graduate of the University of Montreal, Mrs. Jatulis earned a master’s degree in library science at the Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois. She was among the original members of the faculty when Thomas Aquinas College opened its doors at its first campus in Calabasas, California, in 1971. Starting with only a set of the great books, she made it her mission to furnish the College’s library, which today holds some 65,000 books and recordings. She has also assembled a rare books collection, featuring a wide array of unusual and valuable

College Names Commencement 2017 Speaker, Baccalaureate Mass Celebrant

The Superior General of the Sisters of Life in New York, Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, SV, has accepted President Michael F. McLean’s invitation to serve as Thomas Aquinas College’s 2017 Commencement Speaker.



Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, SV

“We are honored and grateful that Mother Agnes Mary has agreed to join us for Commencement and to share her words of wisdom with our students,” says Dr. McLean. “For more than 25 years she has been a tireless servant of mothers and their babies — a true testament to the Culture of Life.”

A religious community of women that is both contemplative and active, the Sisters of Life has as its unique charism the protection and enhancement of the sacredness of every human life. Its founder was the late John Cardinal O’Connor, who was also once the College’s Commencement Speaker, having traveled to the California campus in 1989, two years before establishing the order. When the community first began, it consisted of just eight members, Mother Agnes Mary — its first superior general — among them.

Mother Agnes Mary is also the chairperson of the board of directors for the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, a national organization of religious communities that is faithful to the Holy Father and the magisterium. “We look forward to welcoming Mother Agnes Mary to our campus,” says Dr. McLean. “I am confident that she will be a great source of inspiration for our graduating seniors and for us all.”

Joining Mother Agnes Mary at this year’s Commencement will be a good friend of the College, Rev. Paul Scalia, who has graciously agreed to serve as the principal celebrant and homilist at that day’s Baccalaureate Mass.



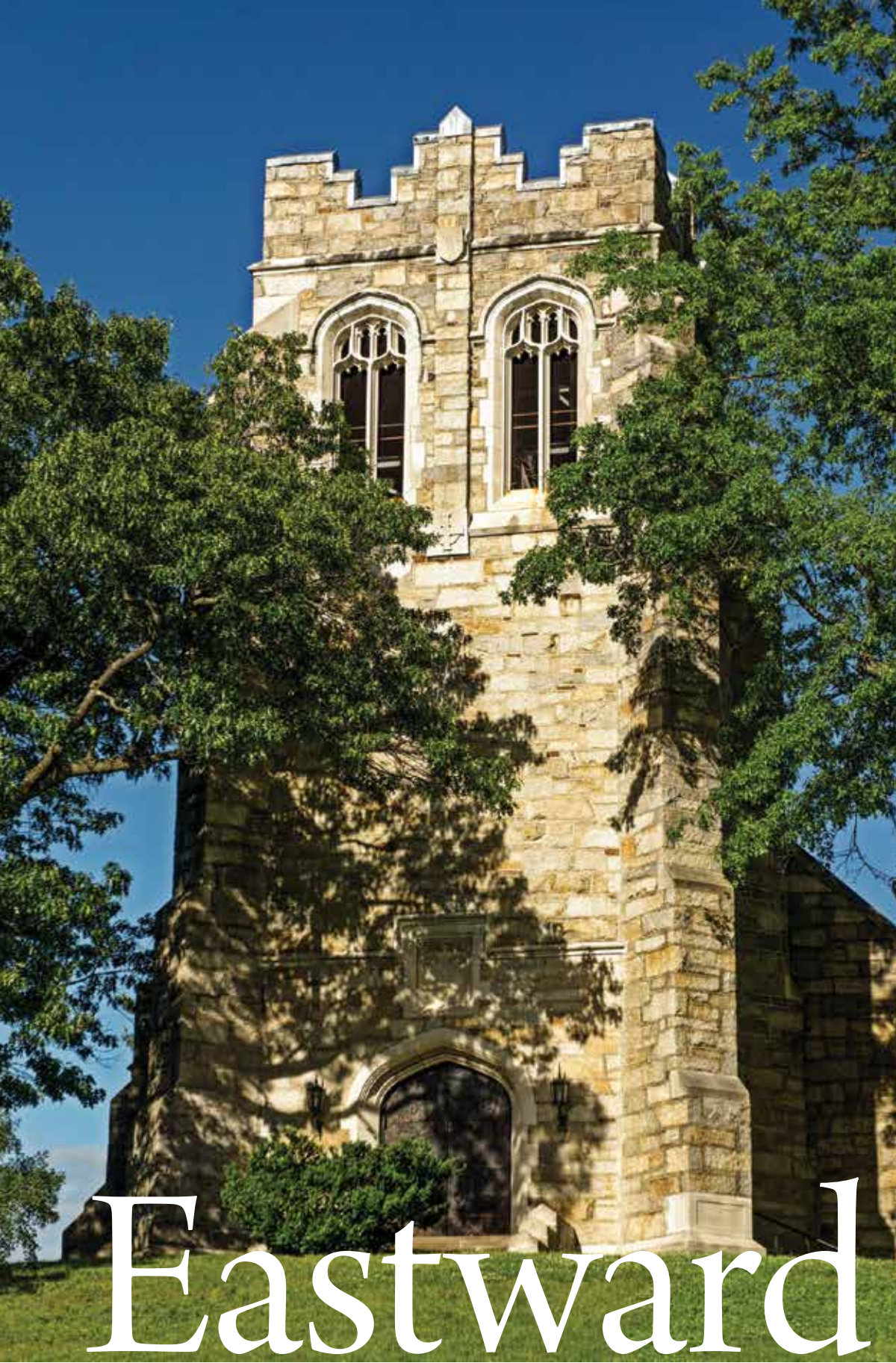
Rev. Paul Scalia

The Episcopal Vicar for Clergy in the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, Fr. Scalia is the chaplain of the College’s Washington, D.C., Board of Regents. He is also the son of the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, who himself visited the College and addressed the community in 1997.

“Fr. Scalia is a good and faithful priest and a great blessing to the Church,” says Dr. McLean. “It has been a joy to visit with him during trips to Washington over the years, and I am delighted that we can now welcome him to our campus as well.”

works as well as other treasures, some priceless, such as letters written by many saints, illuminated manuscripts, and published volumes of Aristotle and St. Thomas dating from the 16th century.

Although pleased with her 45 years at the College, she says she is not ready to leave just yet. “I know I should be retired,” she says. “But I enjoy the students, I enjoy the people, and my health is good.” Echoing the words of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean remarked, “We will be forever grateful to Viltis for all that she has done for the College — and for making the Library an integral part of our educational program.”



The Future Campus of Thomas Aquinas College, New England

Eastward Bound!

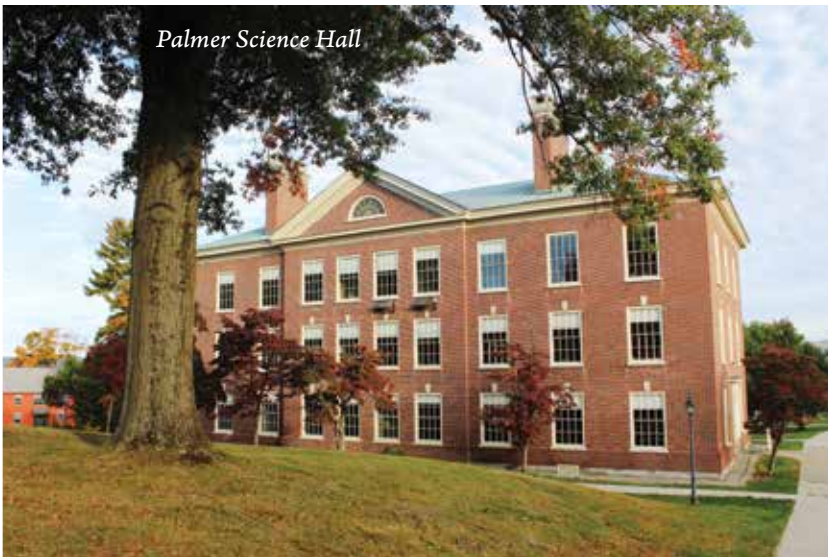
The College’s soon-to-be New England home owes its origins to a 19th century Protestant evangelist, Dwight Lyman Moody. A popular preacher who often attracted thousands to his services, Mr. Moody sought to broaden his evangelical efforts by providing a Christian education to young people of limited financial means. He thus founded two preparatory high schools in Western Massachusetts’ scenic Pioneer Valley: the Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies (1879) and the Mount Hermon School for Boys (1881).

In 1971 the schools merged to become a single, coeducational institution, the Northfield Mount Hermon School, operating on two campuses just a few miles apart. In 2005, however, the school consolidated onto the Mount Hermon campus. Four years later, Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., purchased the Northfield property with the intention of giving it, free of charge, to an institution that would maintain it and continue Mr. Moody’s legacy of Christian education. Hobby Lobby then entrusted the property to the National Christian Foundation, a leader in Christian philanthropy, to find a suitable recipient.

The College will share a portion of the Northfield property with the Moody Center, whose mission is to preserve the legacy of Dwight L. Moody. The Center will restore historic parts of the campus, operate a small museum, and establish and maintain an archive of materials related to the evangelist’s life and work.



Tracy Student Center



Palmer Science Hall



Stone Hall, classroom building



Above: This panoramic image of the New England campus shows the Auditorium in the background and, to the right, Merrill-Keep Hall, which will serve as a women’s residence hall.

Left: Constructed in 1909, Sage Chapel has been a place of prayer for over 100 years. Designed by one of the foremost architectural firms in the country, it is built from warm Rockport granite. After being adapted for Catholic worship, it will be the spiritual heart of Thomas Aquinas College, New England.

Right: The faculty and administration building, Kenarden Hall, is immediately recognizable by its external walls, composed of yellow bricks — a common construction material for early 20th century New England, but unique on the Northfield campus.



Above, left: Sage Chapel during wintertime; Northfield, Massachusetts, accumulates an average of 58.5 inches of snow per year.

Left: Sage Chapel, interior, pews and choir loft

Above, right: Thomas Aquinas College will share the campus’ 1894 Auditorium with the Moody Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the legacy of Dwight L. Moody.

Right: The interior of the Auditorium was acoustically designed to carry Mr. Moody’s sermons, without amplification, to audiences of more than 2,000 people.



Merrill-Keep Residence Hall



Billings Hall, classroom building

Alumni Updates

Graduates Put Faith in Action

Daniel J. Grimm ('76)

“Caring for the poor is not merely an option in Catholicism,” says Daniel J. Grimm ('76), the newly appointed director of Catholic Charities for the Santa Barbara pastoral region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. “Jesus spells it out as the nonnegotiable basis of morality when He describes the Last Judgment. And if you’re going to love the poor the way Christ did, you must love them with the humility and respect that is particularly Christian.”

Mr. Grimm is responsible for the work of Catholic Charities in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, which covers nearly 6,000 square miles and a population of more than 1.25 million residents. He oversees a staff of roughly 40 employees who

operate nine different service centers across the region, guided by a “Catholic charism,” as he describes it, that sets the organization apart from other social-service programs or relief organizations.

“The core of our mission is to follow Jesus’ command to ‘love one another as I have loved you,’” he says. That mission requires “having an eye, as we do, to the eternal salvation of all” — the needy as well as the wealthy. “The ministry of Catholic charities is every bit as much for people who have wealth as for people who don’t have wealth, because it’s vitally important for Christians who have wealth to deal properly with it in caring for the poor,” he explains. “In a sense, the wealthy need the poor; they are a gift from God for their salvation.”

Mr. Grimm and his wife, Rose (Teichert '76), are the parents of seven children, all Thomas Aquinas College graduates, and the grandparents of 17 grandchildren. He is also the director of the Thomas Aquinas College Choir.

Katie (Wynne '80) Short

In a Riverside, California, courtroom last fall, a legal team led by Katie (Wynne '80) Short delivered a blow to the state’s assisted-suicide law.

Attorneys from the Life Legal Defense Foundation — of which Mrs. Short is the vice president for legal affairs — sought an injunction against California’s End of Life Option Act, which went into effect last June. The attorneys argued that granting doctors the power to help kill their patients deprives sick and vulnerable Californians of the constitutional rights to due process and equal protection.

Although Life Legal did not obtain its sought-after injunction, it achieved an important victory nonetheless. In his ruling, Riverside County Superior Court Judge Daniel Ottolia granted that the six physicians and the nationwide medical group that Life Legal represents have standing to challenge the law, and that their case is “ripe” — that is, the End of Life Option Act may cause actual (not just hypothetical) harm to those it affects. As a result, Judge Ottolia rejected the state’s attempt to block Life Legal’s lawsuit, thereby allowing the challenge to continue.

A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, Mrs. Short has written numerous briefs for state and federal courts, including petitions for cer-



Daniel J. Grimm ('76), director of Catholic Charities for the Santa Barbara region, leading the Thomas Aquinas College Choir



Katie (Wynne '80) Short, vice president for legal affairs of the Life Legal Defense Foundation, at federal court in San Francisco

tiorari and amicus briefs in the United States Supreme Court and California Supreme Court. More recently she has also helped to defend undercover journalist David Daleiden against various legal efforts to derail his video exposé of Planned Parenthood’s gruesome organ-harvesting practices.

Mrs. Short and her husband, William ('80), are the parents of nine children, all home-schooled, including four alumni of the College and two current students.

Dr. Pia de Solenni ('93)

Last fall the Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange, California, created a new position in his diocese — Theological Consultant to the Office of the Bishop — to which he appointed Dr. Pia de Solenni ('93).

In this new role, Dr. de Solenni “collaborates and advises key members of the Curia, including the Bishop, on pertinent matters of theology, doctrine, and Church history,” according to a diocesan press release. A Dame of Malta, she also serves as the associate dean of the Augustine Institute’s new satellite campus at the Christ Cathedral in Orange.

“Pia is an inspirational and well-respected theologian and leader,” says Bishop Vann. “We are blessed as a diocese to benefit from her expertise, passion, and faith. I look forward to the many gifts that she will bring to the people of Orange.”

An ethicist and theologian, Dr. de Solenni is an expert on life issues, issues relating to women’s health, the new feminism, and culture. After graduating from the College, she earned a Sacred Theology Baccalaureate from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas and a Sacred Theology Doctorate, *summa cum laude*, from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. In 2001 Pope St. John Paul II awarded her the Prize of the Pontifical Academies for her groundbreaking dissertation — an analysis of feminist theories in the light of St. Thomas Aquinas’ teachings. (Fellow graduate Dr. John R. Mortensen '97 would become the second North American to win this same prize in 2010.)

Raymond Tittmann ('94)

Having founded not one, but two California offices for his former employer (Edison, McDowell & Hetherington LLP), attorney Raymond Tittmann ('94) has recently joined forces with another law firm, becoming a partner in the Los Angeles office of Wargo French.

“I am very excited to lead the insurance practice group in Wargo French’s Los Angeles office, and thankful for my college education for propelling me into my legal career,” says Mr. Tittmann. “I always tell people that if you can dissect Aristotle, you can certainly dissect an insurance policy, and wholeheartedly encourage Thomas Aquinas students interested in the law to consider a career in insurance. This move caps an exciting run for me. In addition to the College, I also want to express special gratitude to my clients who have been very loyal.”

While with Edison, McDowell & Hetherington, Mr. Tittmann was a founding partner at the firm’s Oakland and Los Angeles offices. Previously he was an associate and partner at Carroll, Burdick & McDonough LLP (now Squire Patton Boggs) for almost 12 years, and an associate at Paul Hastings for almost five years. He is a 1997 Dean’s List graduate of the University of Notre Dame Law School, which he entered upon his graduation from the College in 1994.

Mr. Tittmann and his wife, Nicole (Cronin '94), are the parents of six children. A member of the College’s



Board of Regents, he also coaches elementary-school football at St. Monica Academy in Montrose, California.

Dr. John Finley ('99)

“Anything legitimately discovered by science can only help in terms of the overall evangelization effort of our church,” says Dr. John Finley ('99) in a recent story in the *St. Louis Review*. “Since God is the author of it all, of course, it’s going to complement what we learn in theology.”

A professor of philosophy at the Archdiocese of St. Louis’ Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, Dr. Finley has helped to secure a \$10,000 Templeton Foundation grant to incorporate natural science into his seminarians’ studies. Using the proceeds from the grant, Dr. Finley will offer a class next year entitled “Man and Woman, He Created Them: What Science Tells Us About Gender.” The course will examine the Church’s teaching on a host of timely and contentious issues — including gender theory, marriage, contraception, and the all-male, celibate priesthood — in light of the biology of the human person.

In the *St. Louis Review* story, author Dave Luecking notes that Dr. Finley “routinely taught across disciplines — for example, in science, the Bible or philosophy” during his “previous teaching stint” as a tutor at the College. “I enjoyed that interdisciplinary emphasis, so this makes a lot of sense,” says Dr. Finley. “It brings science into dialogue with philosophy and theology.”

Dr. Finley and his wife, Hilary, live in St. Louis with their three children. He returned to his alma mater in September to deliver a lecture, “The Extraordinary Unity of the Human Being,” text and audio of which are available at thomasaquinas.edu/lectures.

Paul McCown ('10)

At a September meeting the City Council of Troy, Michigan, appointed a new member to its ranks — Paul McCown ('10).

A native of Troy (population: 83,000) with a longstanding interest in politics, Mr. McCown had served on the city’s Zoning Board of Appeals for the previous three years. In 2015 he ran for the City Council in a competitive race, but came up short. A year later, however, a sitting member resigned, and the remaining members of the council undertook a comprehensive selection process to fill the vacancy. That process culminated in Mr. McCown’s appointment; his term will continue until November, at which point he will be up for election.

Governance is only a part-time job for Mr. McCown, who, by day, is the CFO and executive vice president of Dataspeed, Inc., an engineering firm that specializes in the design and construction of autonomous cars and mobile robots. The 30-person firm has partnered with a wide range of clients, including Ford, General Dynamics, and the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center. “Our staff consists entirely of engineers except for a bookkeeper and then me,” he laughs. “So I have oversight and responsibility for finance, accounting, HR, marketing — pretty much all departments except for engineering.”

After graduating from the College in 2010, Mr. McCown earned a master’s degree in economics and American politics at Pepperdine University and then returned to Michigan, where he held several positions in the financial sector before joining Dataspeed. In addition to his work as a public official and a corporate executive, Mr. McCown is a husband and father, having wed classmate Jacinta (Alarcon '10) in 2012. The couple have two sons and are awaiting the imminent arrival of their first daughter.



Of the Gridiron and Great Books

An Interview with James Atkinson ('97) and Tom Brittain ('96), Educators & Coaches

After graduating from Thomas Aquinas College in the mid-1990s, Tom Brittain ('96) and James Atkinson ('97) each found their way to Tempe, Arizona, where they became teachers at Tempe Preparatory Academy, a classical charter school. In an effort to attract and retain more male students, the two founded the school's football team, with Mr. Brittain serving as head coach and Mr. Atkinson as defensive coordinator. Success came quickly. The team, which began as a rag-tag squad in a city flag-football league, soon became an 8-man tackle program, and then graduated to 11-man. Over the course of the coaches' nearly two decades at the school, it became a perennial contender.

Meanwhile, some 15 miles to the west, a renaissance was under way at Arizona's oldest diocesan high school, St. Mary's Catholic. In 2012 the Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix, appointed Rev. Robert Bolding as the school's president-rector, and Fr. Bolding made it his mission to boost the school's sagging enrollment by enhancing its Catholic identity and incorporating elements of a classical curriculum. To these ends, over the next few years he hired numerous new teachers and administrators, including 11 Thomas Aquinas College alumni, Mr. Brittain and Mr. Atkinson among them.

Today Mr. Brittain teaches one section of speech and rhetoric and two humanities classes in the school's integrated studies program, Seat of Wisdom, while Mr. Atkinson serves as the assistant principal of curriculum and instruction. Of course, the two are also coaching football again, and this year they led St. Mary's Knights to the playoffs for only the second time since 2007.

In January they traveled to their alma mater as part of a recruiting trip, meeting with some two-dozen students for potential teaching jobs at St. Mary's. While on campus, they sat for the following interview, during which they discussed their backgrounds, their move to St. Mary's, and why they recruit fellow Thomas Aquinas College alumni.

How did you first come to Thomas Aquinas College as students?

TB: I had already earned a BA and was working on a master's degree at Northern Arizona University when I first learned about the College. I met a man named Tony Myers ('94) — now Fr. Tony — who had just left the Air Force and was about to start there. He told me all about the College, and that intrigued me. But I had already started my master's, and my wife, Melissa, and I were expecting our second child, so I didn't think it was realistic.



Tom Brittain ('96)

When I finished my master's, that dream of a great books education just didn't die. So I applied to Thomas Aquinas College. We had just had our fourth child, but my wife was very supportive. I didn't think I would get in, and if I did get in, I didn't think the finances would work; but the College was amazingly generous and I was able to come to TAC. My family came with me — we lived in a house in town — and to make ends meet I worked the 3:30 to 8:30 a.m. preload shift at UPS.

JA: I grew up in Tehachapi, California, and went through public school there. As I started applying for college, I didn't know where I wanted to go. I applied to a number of the Cal State universities, and things just weren't working out in terms of finding living space and other arrangements. Then my mom said, "Why don't you try Thomas Aquinas College? I've heard good things about it. Just try it for a semester."

I did, and during that first semester I fell in love with the program and all the classes. I'm more of a math-and-science kind of guy, so I ate up Euclid and Ptolemy. I also



loved the theology. And the rich Catholic life on campus was a game-changer for me. Coming here, and seeing people who took their faith much more seriously than I did, really impacted me and the way I lived out my faith. My dad was not a Catholic, but he converted to the Faith during my Junior Year. So being here produced a lot of good fruit for me and my family.

How did you both get into teaching and coaching?

TB: Well, after I graduated in 1996 I wanted to come home to Arizona. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I thought that teaching might be a good fit. Then the charter-school movement started, and Tempe Prep was opening as a great books school. So here I wanted to go back to Arizona, I loved the great books, and this charter school was opening up! It was very providential.

JA: I graduated one year after Tom, and I knew he had gone out to Tempe Prep —

TB: We saw each other at a wedding, and I told him about the job. We've been working together ever since, and it's been a great partnership.

JA: I went out there for the job and started teaching my first year out of TAC. Obviously there were struggles as a first-year teacher, but I really found a groove. I loved the interaction of coaching and teaching, building relationships with young men and women. Teaching virtues through athletics is an important part of what we did, and I spent 17 years at Tempe Preparatory Academy, teaching and coaching. Over the course of a few summers, I also went back East and earned a master's in theology from Christendom College.

How and when did you move to St. Mary's High School?

TB: It was always in the back of my mind that I would like to work at a Catholic school, and I had butted heads with leadership at Tempe Prep for a while; but things really came to a head in 2014. We had a new headmaster who suspended me from coaching for two weeks because I had asked my son Isaiah — who was then on the team and is now a freshman at the College — to lead the team in an Our Father. I was just so frustrated. I felt unappreciated and angry, but I didn't want to leave just yet. Isaiah still had a year to go, and I had coached my other sons all the way through their senior years, which was a great privilege.

We had a new headmaster who suspended me from coaching for two weeks because I had asked my son Isaiah — who was then on the team and is now a freshman at the College — to lead the team in an Our Father.

— Tom Brittain ('96)

Still, getting suspended turned out to be a blessing. I think it put me on Fr. Bolding's radar. He sent me a card of consolation, and I thought, "Man, it would be great to work for a man like him." It had always been my dream

job to coach at St. Mary's. They were a football powerhouse in the '70s, '80s, and '90s, having won nine state championships. Then, last summer, the job came open, and the timing was perfect. Isaiah had already graduated, and James had already moved over to St. Mary's a year earlier, so he could be my defensive coordinator. He makes me a much better coach. It was very providential.

JA: There had been a lot of turmoil at Tempe Prep, particularly with the issue of Tom's suspension. I was already on the verge of leaving, and that kind of pushed me over the edge. So I left a year before Tom did to teach at St. Mary's, although I continued coaching with him for his last year at Tempe Prep. Then, after one year of teaching at St. Mary's, they created a new assistant principal of curriculum and instruction position, which I now hold.

What kind of changes have taken place at St. Mary's?

JA: Fr. Bolding has reformulated the mission of the school and taken all kinds of steps to improve its Catholic identity. There are now two daily Masses and a confessional in the hallway, where students can go to confession every day at lunch. Three members of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, have joined the staff, and they teach a wide variety of subjects — not just theology — which is a reflection that the Faith is part of everything we do. Father also hired another assistant principal who reformed discipline on campus, rewriting and actively enforcing the dress code. The net effect has been to make the school a place where Catholics can feel good to be.

We have also reformed the curriculum. Our Seat of Wisdom program, which Tom teaches, combines English and history, and now consists entirely of great books. The program started as an optional track, but after its first two years we decided to make it the humanities curriculum for all of our students. And we have started to make similar changes in all of the other departments as well, such as math, science, and fine arts.



James Atkinson ('97)

To restore the Catholic identity, we need to hire Catholic educators, no matter what subjects they teach. We want to recruit teachers who take their faith seriously and who want to teach Catholicism as part of who they are.

— James Atkinson ('97)

Why do you recruit at Thomas Aquinas College?

JA: To restore the Catholic identity, we need to hire Catholic educators, no matter what subjects they teach. We want to recruit men and women who are well-formed in the Faith and intellectually. We need teachers who take their faith seriously and who want to teach it and live it out as part of who they are. We have sent recruiters here before. This is something we want to do regularly as part of maintaining a faculty that fits our mission and model.

TB: The interest among the students here has been very gratifying, and they have acquitted themselves well in their interviews. They are mature, well spoken, and they clearly love the College, the great books, philosophy, and theology. It is amazing to see so many people coming out of this program who want to teach math and science! At most schools it is rare to find math-and-science people who have some kind of liberal-arts background, so that is one thing that is refreshing and impressive about the College.

In Memoriam

William Peter Blatty (1928–2017)

Although best known throughout the world as the author of *The Exorcist*, William Peter Blatty, who passed away January 12, is remembered at Thomas Aquinas College as a faithful friend and generous benefactor with a great love for Catholic liberal education. “Bill had a deep faith, which manifested itself both in his work and in his support of the College,” says President Michael F. McLean. “He was keenly aware of the spiritual warfare that surrounds us, as well as its eternal implications for each of our souls.”



The son of Lebanese immigrants, Mr. Blatty was born in New York City in 1928. His family was nearly always destitute — forced to move dozens of times because it was unable to make its rent payments — yet buoyed, he said, by his mother’s deep faith. “My mom kept us going,” he told *The Washingtonian*. “It was the power of her faith and conviction that God would eventually make everything right. It just flowed out of her onto everything that she touched.”

It was his mother’s perseverance and support that led him to what he would call his “first home,” both physically and intellectually, at Georgetown University, where he enrolled with a scholarship in 1946. Studying philosophy and theology via the great works of Western civilization, he came to more deeply understand the Faith that his mother had passed on to him, while also developing the writing skills for which he would one day become famous. In the acknowledgments for *The Exorcist*, published 20 years after his graduation from Georgetown, he thanked his Jesuit instructors “for teaching me to think” and an English professor, Bernard Wagner, “for teaching me to write.”

Before becoming a novelist and screenwriter, however, Mr. Blatty worked for a number of years in various other professions: as a vacuum-cleaner salesman, a

beer-truck driver, a member of the Psychological Warfare Division of the U.S. Air Force, an editor for the U.S. Information Agency, a publicist for the University of Southern California, and a ghostwriter for “Dear Abby,” AKA Abigail Van Buren. He then came to Hollywood and found success writing comedies, most notably the 1964 “Pink Panther” film, *A Shot in the Dark*.

In 1970 he wrote the novel *The Exorcist*, inspired by a real exorcism that he learned about while a student at Georgetown. “Like so many Catholics, I’ve had so many little battles of wavering faith over the course of my life,” he once told IGN.com. “And when I heard about this case and read the details, that seemed so compelling. I thought, ‘My God, if someone were to investigate this and authenticate it, what a tremendous boost to faith it would be.’ I thought, ‘Someday I would like to see that happen. You know, I would like to do it.’” In later years, he would describe the book as “an argument for God” and “an apostolic work, to help people in their faith.” Its central point, he said, echoing the words of his mother, was “that God exists and the universe itself will have a happy ending.”

The book proved to be a critical and popular success, finding its way on to the *New York Times* Bestseller List, where it spent 57 weeks and ultimately sold some 13 million copies. Mr. Blatty also wrote the Academy Award-winning screenplay for the novel, and the resulting 1973 film was the first-ever horror movie to be nominated for Best Picture, grossing more than \$400 million in worldwide sales. In subsequent years, Mr. Blatty would pen numerous other novels and screenplays, including *The Ninth Configuration* and *The Exorcist III*.

Mr. Blatty’s relationship with the College began in the late 1990s, when he first learned about the school in a magazine advertisement. Disaffected with his alma mater for its drift from Catholic orthodoxy, he appreciated that Thomas Aquinas College offered an education so like the one he had experienced a half-century earlier. In 2002 Mr. Blatty launched the Peter Michael Blatty Memorial Scholarship Fund with a \$100,000 gift to the College.

“Decades ago I had established a scholarship fund in my mother’s name at my alma mater,” he wrote in a letter to President McLean. Now he would do the same, in memory of his father, “at your truly magnificent school, one I wish I myself had attended.” Over a dozen years, he and his wife, Julie, contributed more than \$400,000 to the fund, which provides financial aid to needy students.

“As a scholarship student himself, Bill was grateful for the gift of Catholic education in his life, which he generously chose to pass along to our students,” says Dr. McLean. “We pray now for the repose of his soul, as we know he would want us to do, as well as for the consolation of Julie and their family.”

IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

John Cariello

October 23, 2013

Legacy Society member

Rev. Daniel Colibraro

April 19, 2016

Legacy Society member

Marguerite A. Doyle

June 11, 2016

Benefactor

George G. Brennan

October 17, 2016

Legacy Society member

Barbara Breer

October 23, 2016

Legacy Society member

Dorothy McEwen

October 24, 2016

Legacy Society member

Helen Houseal

November 27, 2016

Mother of David ('91), Legacy Society member

Hal Enger

December 15, 2016

Legacy Society member

Margaret Halpin

December 23, 2016

Mother of David ('79), Mary Ann (Shapiro '79), and Kathleen (Santoro '82); grandmother of Philip ('97), Luke ('98), Sarah ('98), Celina (Ortiz '03) Skoby, Koert ('06), Rose ('06), Margaret (Tannoury'08), Caecilia Shapiro ('16), and Dominic Shapiro ('20)

Marie Theresa Waldstein

January 2, 2017

Mother of Michael ('77); grandmother of Johannes ('02), Maria-Theresia (Braden '05), Pater Edmund, O.Cist (Thomas '06), Benedict ('11), and Andreas ('19)

Rev. Michael Scanlan, TOR

January 7, 2016

Friend

William Peter Blatty

January 12, 2017

Benefactor

Kathleen Adell Burke

January 29, 2017

Member, Order of St. Albert the Great

Kathleen A. Burke (1922–2017)

A dear friend and generous benefactor of the College, Kathleen Adell Burke died on January 29, after receiving the Anointing of the Sick earlier in the day, at an Orange County hospital near her home in Los Alamitos, California.

Born and raised in Missouri, Miss Burke earned a Bachelor of Science degree from St. Louis University in 1944. She then moved to California, where she worked in the healthcare field throughout her adult life. She held positions in numerous organizations as a health nutritionist, developing and supervising meal programs for schools and neighborhood centers throughout the state.

“Kathleen was also an extraordinary minister of the Holy Eucharist, and she brought spiritual comfort and her lively personality to the elderly and incapacitated in hospitals and assisted living homes in Orange County,” says Tom Susanka, the College’s director of gift planning. “She loved to recount her unexpected — and, she insisted, unmerited — joy of witnessing God’s grace and mercy accompanying her ministry for the Church. During her many visits to the sick and dying, she saw men and women return to the practice and peace of their Catholic faith after years of separation from it.”

It was through her onetime pastor in San Diego — the College’s first chaplain, Msgr. John Gallagher — that Miss Burke became aware of Thomas Aquinas College. Drawn by the College’s strong Catholic identity and the morally healthy student life it engenders, she became a loyal member of the President’s Council in 1990.

In her generosity, Miss Burke also made provisions for the College that would extend beyond her death. As a member of the Legacy Society, she named the College as a beneficiary of three gift annuities and a life-insurance



policy. In her estate planning she willed to the College several rental properties that she owned in Los Alamitos. She also designated Thomas Aquinas College as a principal beneficiary of a private endowment that will likely provide for the financial aid needs of four students per year, every year, in perpetuity.

At Commencement 2011 the College honored Miss Burke by inducting her into the Order of St. Albert the Great. Established in 1998, the Order is named for the great 13th century bishop and celebrated scientist who was the teacher of the College’s patron, St. Thomas Aquinas. Membership in the Order is reserved for those benefactors whose generosity to Thomas Aquinas College has been exceptional, and their names appear on the pedestal of a statue of St. Albert that stands in the College’s academic quadrangle.

“Kathleen leaves a legacy of generosity and kindness to the numerous charities and people she knew and served over her life,” says Mr. Susanka. “She is a model for the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.”

The Father of Orthodoxy

Why We Read Athanasius

By Dr. Brian T. Kelly

The following remarks are adapted from Dean Brian T. Kelly's report to the Board of Governors at its November 12, 2016, meeting. They are part of an ongoing series of talks about why the College includes certain texts in its curriculum. To read the full text and the rest of the series, see thomasaquinas.edu/whywestudy.



Athanasius, saint and doctor of the Church, stands out on the pages of Church history as the greatest champion of the mystery of the Incarnation. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is truly God and truly man. He is one person with two natures. From the beginning this was a hard saying. Though there were many conflicting heresies concerning Christ's divinity and humanity, Hilaire Belloc labels Arianism as "the first great heresy," and calls it "the summing up and conclusion" of all of its predecessors.

Belloc also says, "it has been the fashion to laugh at the Arian affair as though it were an almost incomprehensible and certainly ridiculous dialectical quarrel; hair-splitting and word-juggling. It was enormously more than that. It was a whole perverted aspect of the Catholic Church, affecting a great body of the hierarchy, established like a parasite *within* the organism, and threatening to starve and ultimately destroy its life. For Arianism was essentially the rationalizing spirit — that is, the inability to see that there are things beyond reason ... It was the spirit that asked of the Mysteries, 'How can such things be?'"

Arius proclaimed that "God has not always been father; there was a moment when he was alone ... the Son is not from eternity; he came from nothing" (Warren Carroll, *The Building of Christendom*). In other words, Jesus Christ was a creature. Even if He participated in some way in the divine nature, He was still not God.

"The Arian faction was so strong that at times it truly seemed that it was Athanasius against the whole world, *Athanasius contra mundum*. But the faithful in Alexandria never forgot him. When the Emperor tried to replace him, the people stoutly refused to accept anyone but Athanasius. He knew his sheep, and his sheep knew him."

The Arian heresy emerged at a very crucial and vulnerable time for the Church. It came shortly after the brutal persecution of Diocletian and the edict of Milan. Christianity was now in favor with the Roman emperor Constantine but not very firmly established in the fabric of the empire. There were many issues that needed to be worked out concerning the balance of power between papal, imperial, and episcopal authorities.

Seeing that the Arian heresy threatened the unity of the Church and empire, Constantine called the bishops of the world to come together for a council in the eastern city of Nicaea in 325. This was the first ecumenical council since the Council of Jerusalem described in the Acts of the Apostles.

This council produced a statement or "symbol" of faith that provides the basis for the creed that we recite at Mass every Sunday. This was carefully crafted to capture the basic beliefs of the Church and to unambiguously refute the teachings of Arius. Central to this was the crafting of a Greek philosophical term *homoousios*, which is translated as "consubstantial" or "one in substance."

Athanasius, a young deacon assistant to the patriarch

of Alexandria, proved very influential in the discussions among the council fathers because of his clarity, orthodoxy, and spirit. Shortly thereafter he succeeded Alexander as Archbishop of Alexandria at the very young age of 30.

As the adherents of Arius insinuated themselves into positions of influence in the imperial court, they labored to reestablish Arius and others in respectable ecclesiastical appointments. They even persuaded Constantine that Arius' position had been misrepresented, and the emperor requested that the young archbishop accept the heretic back into full communion with the church of Alexandria.

Athanasius remained intransigent and soon found himself summoned before, and condemned by, a kangaroo court of hostile bishops. For the next 40 years he bore the brunt of all the venom of the heretical party and was the last best hope of the orthodox. He was exiled on five different occasions from his see, and for several years lived in hiding. Various weak popes supported him and strong emperors opposed him. One episcopal court even accused Athanasius of murdering a priest. As evidence of his crime they produced a severed hand. As evidence of his innocence, Athanasius produced the "murder victim," alive and well. The Arian faction was so strong that at times it truly seemed that it was Athanasius against the whole world, *Athanasius contra mundum*. But the faithful in Alexandria never forgot him. When the Emperor tried to replace him, the people stoutly refused to accept anyone but Athanasius. He knew his sheep, and his sheep knew him.

By his words, deeds, and sacrifices in defense of the Incarnation, Athanasius earned the title "father of orthodoxy." How fitting then that our sophomores read his youthful treatise, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*. It is a short but marvelous work explaining why the Word was made flesh, and providing persuasive apologetics against the claims of the Jews and the Gentiles.

I want to say just a few brief words about a central concept of this treatise, i.e. the divine dilemma.

God created man out of gratuitous generosity. He made us in His image as an expression of the mind of God, and put us in the garden with one prohibition only. We were forbidden to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and if we fell, the punishment, death and corruption, was clear.

Well, you know the rest of the story. Having been given everything, we could not resist the one thing that was not allowed.

Where did that leave us? "Under the natural law of death ... No longer in paradise, but dying outside of it" (*On the Incarnation*).

Where did this leave God? According to Athanasius, this left God in a trap, which he calls the divine dilemma. There is no escape for man from the demands of divine justice. God cannot retract his words that man must die. But how "monstrous and unfitting," he wrote, that God's handiwork, the expression of his own mind, should come to nothing. What was the use of having made man if he was only to perish?

This is the trap: God cannot simply forgive and forget, and on the other hand He cannot allow man to pass into nothingness. To preserve the "divine consistency," man must die and man must not die.

How did God escape from this great perplexity? This is where the Incarnation comes in. To quote Athanasius:

For this purpose, then, the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. He saw ... the race of men that like Himself, express the Father's mind, wasting out of existence, and death reigning over all ... He saw too how unthinkable it would be for the law to be repealed before it was fulfilled. He saw how unseemly it was that the very things of which He Himself was the artificer should be disappearing.

He saw how the surpassing wickedness of man was mounting up against them; He saw also their universal liability to death ... And pitying our race, moved with compassion ... He took to himself ... a human body even as our own ... He took it directly from a spotless, stainless virgin, without the agency of human father ... As a temple for Himself ... He surrendered His body to death in place of all and offered it to the Father. This He did out of sheer love for us, so that in His death all might die, and the law of death thereby be abolished.

The Word of God solved the great and divine dilemma by Himself paying the price of redemption. The divine man died so that feeble man might live.

St. Athanasius, great spiritual warrior in troubled times, pray for us.

St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

Highlights from the Last Quarter

- **Dr. Marie I. George** ('79), a graduate of the College and a professor of philosophy at St. John's University, delivered a lecture on November 4 entitled, "Aquinas on God's Love of Material Creatures as the Basis of Environmental Ethics."
- The **Thomas Aquinas College Choir** hosted a Thanksgiving concert on November 18, performing Mozart's *Requiem* and *Piano Concerto No. 12* (1st movement).
- On January 13 **Dr. David Appleby**, a member of the College's teaching faculty, gave the first lecture of the spring semester, "Anachronism and the Historian."
- **Leonardo Defilippis** of St. Luke Productions performed his one-man stage play, *Vianney*, on January 27.



- Periodically members of the faculty or chaplaincy present on-campus "tutor talks," informal lectures followed by question-and-answer sessions. These late-afternoon gatherings afford an opportunity for the speakers to discuss some topic of interest to them and to share their thoughts with other members of the community. On November 6 **Dr. Andrew Seeley** presented "Turning the Whole Soul: The Moral Journey of the Philosophic Nature in Plato's *Republic*"; on February 8 Tutor Emeritus **Dr. Carol Day** spoke on the subject, "Friendship and Storytelling in *Don Quixote*"; and on February 22, **Dr. Travis Cooper** gave a talk entitled, "Themes, Images, and Tone in the Literary Work of Art: the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and A Simple Heart."

Text and audio from select lectures and concerts are available at thomasaquinas.edu/lectures.



CAMPUS LIFE

1. Librarian Viltis Jatulis hosts members of the Senior Class at a Russian tea party, like the ones they read about in Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace. 2. Junior and Senior women enjoy a relaxing Sunday barbeque at Ojai's Dennison Park in February. 3. Some 260 Thomas Aquinas College students traveled to San Francisco in January for the annual Walk for Life West Coast. 4. Members of the College's intramural football program play a friendly exhibition match against a visiting squad from John Paul the Great Catholic University. 5. A group of Thomas Aquinas College women hike in the nearby Los Padres National Forest with members of the Sisters of Life, who visited the campus early in the semester. 6. A group of runners participate in the "Nun Run SK," a fundraiser for the Sisters of Notre Dame. 7. The men of Sts. Peter and Paul Residence Hall dance with the women of St. Monica's at a weekend "tea party."

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

Weekdays	Saturdays & Civic Holidays	Sundays & Holy Days
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; please confirm Mass times at thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes.

** The first Mass of each day is offered in the extraordinary form.

Calendar of Events

For more information, please see www.thomasaquinas.edu/calendar

- St. Thomas Day Lecture**
Rev. Joseph Koterski, S.J.
Associate Professor of Philosophy, Fordham University March 7
- Dedication of the Founders Plaza**
Outside Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel
Following the 8:30 a.m. Mass March 7
- Spring Concert: Dido & Aeneas**
by Henry Purcell
The Thomas Aquinas College Choir March 24
- Student Triduum Retreat**
Retreat master: Rev. Joseph Aytona, CPM April 13–15
- Easter Recess** April 13–19
- Commencement** May 13
- Orange County Regents Scholarship Breakfast**
Keynote speaker: Leonardo Defilippis, St. Luke Productions May 17

805-525-4417 • www.thomasaquinas.edu

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE
10,000 Ojai Road
Santa Paula, CA 93060-9622
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

