



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

COMMENCEMENT 2012

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“Become the Saints for Whom the World is Waiting” Mother Assumpta Long Challenges Graduates at Commencement Ceremonies

Celebrating its 40th Anniversary, Thomas Aquinas College held its 38th Commencement exercises on May 12, 2012. Under a bright blue California sky, 66 members of the Class of 2012 received their diplomas and hoods, as well as words of wisdom from a longtime friend of the College, Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P., foundress and prioress general of the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. “Be the joy-filled Thomists, the passionate lovers, the convicted thinkers of this age,” Mother Assumpta told the graduates. “Become the saints for whom the world is waiting.”

Although the graduates, as faithful Catholics, should expect hostility and perhaps even persecution in the years head, said Mother Assumpta, they should enter the world filled with joy, not trepidation. “You have been surrounded by goodness, you have been immersed in beauty, and you have encountered truth,” she observed. “These are the tools with which a Thomist lives life to the full. These are the tools with which a Thomist betters the lives and longings of all around him.”

The day began with the annual Baccalaureate Mass. Members of the Class of 2012, the faculty, and members of the College’s Board of Governors processed into Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel clad in academic regalia. The College’s chaplains and visiting priests followed, vested in red for this Mass of the Holy Spirit. Head Chaplain and Assistant to the Dean for Religious Affairs Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., served as the principal celebrant and homilist.



In his homily Fr. Buckley reminded the graduates, “The problems, the challenges, the sufferings of life remain, but with hope they are looked at in a different way. Our hope is an openness to what God wills to do for us, to complete His dwelling in us, to resurrect our bodies after death. It is an openness to our future.” (See page 12.)

Following the Mass, the Commencement ceremony took place on the academic quadrangle. Speaking on behalf of the Senior Class, James W. Thompson addressed the question that looms in the minds of graduates everywhere: “What are we to do with ... the rest of our lives?” While a Catholic liberal education prepares the student for any possible vocation or career, he said, “The way in

which it will show itself the most is not in the greatness of mind, or even excellence of character, of its possessors, but in the charity with which they live their lives.” (See page 9.)

In her Commencement Address Mother Assumpta added that the graduates — who are both beneficiaries of a liberal education and disciples of St. Thomas — ought to live jubilantly. “Never underestimate the power of joy,” she said. “The world would like to portray you as somber, rigid fools. Shock the world with your life, your enthusiasm, your ready smile. There is no such thing as a somber, sour-faced Thomist.” (See page 3.)

Fittingly, the rest of the ceremony proceeded with much joy, as the seniors, one by one, received their diplomas to the cheers and delight of their assembled loved ones. The College also awarded Mother Assumpta and two of its founders, Mr. Peter L. DeLuca and Dr. John W. Neumayr, with its highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. (See story below.)

“In her address, Mother Assumpta spoke eloquently about joy, and she brought a great deal of it to our campus,” remarked President McLean. “We thank her for honoring us with her presence, and we salute the Class of 2012.”

Commencement 2012

Video, audio, photo slideshows & more:
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Faithful Founders

Mother Assumpta, Peter DeLuca, and John Neumayr Awarded College’s Highest Honor

The Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion is the highest honor conferred by Thomas Aquinas College, and eligibility for it rests upon a single criterion: *fidelity*. Neither fame, titles, nor offices are sufficient qualifications; the honor is reserved solely for those who, in the determination of the faculty and the Board of Governors, have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to God and His Church, as well as leadership in advancing the teachings of the Church.

“Nearly every year since our first Commencement in 1975, we have taken a moment during the graduation ceremony to pay tribute to the year’s Medallion recipients,” explains President Michael F. McLean. “This is a fitting time to do so, for we hope that as our graduates go forth from the College, they will emulate our honorees in their own lives.” At Commencement 2012 the College recognized three individuals for the significant roles they have played in founding institutions that are fortifying the Church and the culture: Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P.; Mr. Peter L. DeLuca; and Dr. John W. Neumayr.

Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P.

Thomas Aquinas College’s 2012 Commencement Speaker, Mother Mary Assumpta Long, O.P., is the foundress of two religious congregations — the Sisters of Life, formed with the support of the late John Cardinal O’Connor of New York, and later, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, established with the patronage of Mr. Tom Monaghan in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Because of Mother Assumpta’s zeal for souls, her fidelity to Christ, and her tireless hard work, the congregation of just four sisters that she established in 1995 has grown in only 17 years to more than 100, including two alumnae of the College, with a third set to enter this fall.



College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J.; President Michael F. McLean; Mr. Peter L. DeLuca; Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P.; Chairman of the Board of Governors R. James Wensley; and Dr. John W. Neumayr

The hallmark of the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, is joyful devotion to Our Lady and to her Son in the Blessed Sacrament.

With more vocations than their motherhouse can accommodate, the Sisters are in high demand at schools across the country. They can be found in classrooms in South Carolina, Florida, Texas, Arizona, and California. Their influence is growing, and twice in recent years they have been featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, generating international interest in their lives of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Peter L. DeLuca

A founder of Thomas Aquinas College, Peter L. DeLuca has devoted his life to the institution. So integral was he to the creation of the College that its first president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, has said of his onetime student, “This college simply would not exist were it not for Peter DeLuca.”

Not only does Mr. DeLuca have a love for the pro-

gram of Catholic liberal education that is at the heart of Thomas Aquinas College, he also has a business and financial acumen that has been indispensable from the earliest days of the school’s existence. As a consequence he has served not only as a tutor these past four decades, but he has held nearly every senior administrative position at the College, including that of interim president following the sudden death of Dr. Thomas E. Dillon in 2009. Most notably, Mr. DeLuca has overseen the physical construction and maintenance of the campus, with an eye ever toward beauty and graciousness.

John W. Neumayr

A fellow founder of Thomas Aquinas College, Dr. John W. Neumayr has also dedicated his life to the fulfillment of Catholic liberal education.

As a graduate student under the guidance of Dr. Charles de Koninck at Laval University in Quebec, Dr. Neumayr’s discipleship to St. Thomas Aquinas took root. So also did his desire to help young people embrace the thought of the Angelic Doctor and emulate his virtues. Thus, in collaboration with the other founders, Dr. Neumayr set forth the principles on which Thomas Aquinas College was established.

The resulting document, entitled *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, has been — without alteration — the governing document of the College ever since. Dr. Neumayr also laid out the College’s fully integrated program of the liberal arts and sciences, to which only minor refinements have been made over the years. In addition to having served as the College’s first dean, Dr. Neumayr is a senior member of the faculty and has served on the Board of Governors since the College’s inception.

From the Desk of the President

Dr. Michael F. McLean's Remarks to the Class of 2012 at the President's Dinner

Dean Brian Kelly has spoken to you this evening about the past — about what you have accomplished in your four years at the College, and about how you have grown in moral and intellectual virtue, as well as in the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. It falls to me to speak to you, briefly, about the future and about what the College's hopes and expectations are for you as you leave us and venture into the world beyond our gates.

Let me begin with some reflections about a seminar Dr. O'Reilly and I recently led about T.S. Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral*. A brief quotation from the play conveys the theme:

"It is out of time that my decision
is taken
If you call that decision
To which my whole being gives
entire consent.
I give my life
To the Law of God above the Law
of Man.
— *Murder in the Cathedral*, p. 74

The play is a dramatic representation of the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket, later St. Thomas Becket. As the quotation makes clear, Becket gave his life rather than betray his conscience — a conscience which demanded that he place loyalty to the Law of God above loyalty to the Law of Man.

The proximate cause of the conflict between Becket and the King of England was the question of who had primary jurisdiction over clerics accused of crimes, the Church or the State. King Henry claimed that the ecclesiastical courts were too lenient in exacting punishments — punishments which in fact could be severe, and which could include flogging, fines, degradation, and excommunication. Out of respect for Church law and the authority of the Pope, and despite the opposition of certain bishops, Becket resisted the King's efforts to bring these cases into the jurisdiction of the secular courts.

Matters came to a head in January of 1164 when the King sought Becket's formal and public acceptance of the "Constitutions of Clarendon" — 16 articles which attempted to restrict ecclesiastical privileges and curb the power of the Church and the extent of Papal authority in England. One of the provisions of the "Constitutions" required that clerics be tried not only in ecclesiastical courts but, afterwards, in secular courts as well. Becket's refusal to accept the "Constitutions" culminated in his flight to France in October of 1164.

Steadfast in his conscientious resistance to the "Constitutions," which he regarded as attacks by the King on the independence of the Church, Becket was nevertheless willing to make certain minor concessions. By December of 1170 enough of a reconciliation was reached that Becket returned to England, but bringing with him sentences of excommunication for two of the bishops who had cooperated with King Henry. Four knights who came from France — and who are characters in the play — demanded absolution



for the bishops. Becket would not comply, and was killed by the knights in the Cathedral of Canterbury.

The Present Context

The conflict of conscience depicted in Eliot's play is not only of historical interest. In an address delivered at the Tenth Bishops' Workshop of the National Catholic Bioethics Center in 1991, then-Cardinal Ratzinger said:

In the contemporary discussion on what constitutes the essence of morality and how it can be recognized, the question of conscience has become paramount, especially in the field of Catholic moral theology. This discussion centers on the concepts of freedom and norm, [or, in other words] on the apparent conflict between self-determination and external determination by authority. ... Morality of conscience and morality of authority, as two opposing models, appear to be locked in struggle with each other.

As you know, Catholics and others who believe in religious freedom are locked in a struggle of conscience with the Obama Administration today over the Administration's mandate that all health-insurance plans provide coverage for contraception, sterilization, and certain abortion-inducing drugs. His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, head of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said: "Never before has the federal government forced individuals and organizations to go out into the marketplace and buy products that violate their consciences. This should not happen in a land where free exercise of religion ranks first in the Bill of Rights." The Most Rev. Charles Chaput, who has visited the College and is the Archbishop of Philadelphia, described this mandate as "coercive and deeply troubling in its implications for the rights of conscience."

The question of conscience has long occupied a central place in Catholic moral theology. In his *Disputed Questions on Truth*, St. Thomas wrote that "a correct conscience binds absolutely and intrinsically. ... Whoever believes that something is a command [of conscience] and decides to violate it wills to break the law of God and, therefore, sins." Conscience, according to St. Thomas, is the act of judging whether some action should or should not be done or, after it has been done, of judging whether it was right to do or not. The judgment of conscience is made by considering the action in light of the principles of the Natural Law placed in our souls by God Himself.

The Catholic Church has always taught

that the judgments of a rightly formed conscience must be respected. Conscience is the voice of God and the echo of God's law within us. Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman put it well when he wrote that "conscience is a connecting principle between the creature and his Creator." Contrary to the Obama Administration, which has offered Catholics and others opposed to the HHS Mandate a year to "adapt" their consciences to the new rule, the Catholic tradition insists that the judgments of conscience are to be respected, nurtured, and preserved. Newman warned that the image of God found in conscience could "fade away and die out [in] men who transgress their sense of duty and [as a consequence] gradually lose their sense of shame and fear." The image of God, he continued, "if duly cherished may expand, deepen, and be completed ... by means of education, social intercourse, experience, and literature." Cardinal Newman believed that the mind must be carefully formed on the basis of "natural" conscience, not just any conscience, and to a mind so formed "the world, both of nature and of man, will give back a reflection of ... the One Living God."

Your Role in the Battles Ahead

I am cautiously optimistic that the Constitutional protection of religious freedom will prevail in the present conflict. But there are no guarantees. We are in a battle on this and on many other fronts. I am very confident that you have been well prepared to take your places in this battle against the forces of secularism and the ever-expanding reach of the federal government; that, in Newman's words, you have received an education which has "expanded, deepened, and completed" the formation of your consciences and the image of God in your souls.

You understand the proper relationship between faith and philosophy; you have a good understanding of the methods and doctrines of St. Thomas, the Church's Universal Doctor, and you will endeavor to apply those doctrines to the modern world in what I hope will be prudent and charitable ways. You have been strengthened morally and spiritually. You are the

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well-formed and well-educated Catholics the Church so desperately needs; you are the virtuous and intelligent citizens our country so desperately needs.

In 1985 Bl. John Paul II said, "New saints are needed." You who are Christians are called to be those saints; you who are not Christian are called to lives of virtue. "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," says Our Lord. In *Lumen Gentium* we read, "All the faithful, whatever their condition or state — though each in his own way — are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father Himself is perfect." You must strive for sanctity in your work, whatever it may be; you must strive for sanctity in your families, should you be called to the married state; you must strive for sanctity as priests and religious, should you be called to the priestly or religious life.

As hostile as the world may be, I urge you, like St. Thomas Becket, to continue to cultivate and carefully form your consciences. Act conscientiously in everything you do. Trust in the words of St. John's first Letter: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and [will] receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him. And His commandment is this: We should believe in the name of Jesus Christ and love one another" (John 3:21-23).

Thank you.



On May 9, 2012, Dr. McLean hosted the annual President's Dinner for the seniors, faculty, and staff of Thomas Aquinas College. Clockwise from top left: Tutor Dr. Thomas Kaiser shares a laugh with Madeline Flanders; Luke Seeley proposes a toast; Vice President Peter L. DeLuca shows off his iPhone to Mason Peddemors and Augusta Grimm; and Dean Brian T. Kelly bids farewell to the Class of 2012.

The Joy-Filled Heart of a Thomist

The Commencement Address of Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P.

Below is the prepared text of Thomas Aquinas College's 2012 Commencement Address by Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P., Foundress and Prioress General of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. Audio of the address is available via the College's website at thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2012.

President Michael McLean, Dr. Brian Kelly and members of the faculty; Mr. Jim Wensley and members of the Board of Governors; Fr. Cornelius Buckley and priests; President Emeritus, Dr. Ronald McArthur; Founders, Dr. Jack Neumayr and Mr. Peter DeLuca; distinguished graduates, family, and friends:

It is an extreme honor for me to have been invited to give the Commencement Address in such an important year for Thomas Aquinas College because, in some sense, the history of the College has been my history. I have visited and kept up with its wonderful growth from a few small trailers to your beautiful sprawling campus today. This is all due to the faith, vision, and hard work of those who love the Church and believe Her mission would best be carried out by those equipped with the finest education a young Catholic could receive today.

This past January 28, the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, this college celebrated its 40th Anniversary. God is good! What a tremendous gift this school and the young people educated by it have been and continue to be to the Church. Yet I cannot help but think that, after wandering in the desert for 40 years, the Israelites commenced their battle for the Promised Land. After 40 days of fasting, Jesus commenced His public life, leading up to His "hour." Today you, the graduates of 2012, enter the battlefield, commencing life in the world.

It is by the providence of God that you graduate in the wake of Pope Benedict's call for the Year of Faith. To you the Church entrusts the Gospel as well as the challenge of making the Gospel lived and loved. The *telos* of these past four years of education was not so you could proudly clutch a diploma on a California summer's day; it was so you could be Christ and bring Christ to the world.

You have spent these years encountering Truth. Of course the encounter with Truth is not only a relationship, but demands a response. Each one of you is invited by Christ to respond generously with his or her unique gifts. What will be the response of this graduating class?

Follow Thomas

You are blessed with the illustrious patron of St. Thomas Aquinas at this great institution. As you graduate, how can you continue to follow the example given to you in this Dominican patron? Everyone knows St. Thomas for his *Summa Theologica*, but who really was St. Thomas? Who was the man whose heroic virtue made him great in the heart of Christ and the Church?

We first glimpse St. Thomas' magnificent sanctity in his youth. He came from a wealthy family (one of the seven noblest families in all of Europe) who believed in the importance of education. One cannot lead nations and influence cultures without a strong education. Hence, St. Thomas' family sent him to the finest schools in Europe and planned a great future for their son.

Thomas wanted the good and worked diligently to make the most of the gifts he had been given. He studied hard. He worked hard. He put his whole self into his tasks. Yet at some point in his teenage years, Thomas felt the stirring of God deep in his heart. He realized that God had a plan for him, different from the plans of his own family. God wanted Thomas to consecrate his very life to Him, to follow Him as a Dominican brother. Once Thomas realized God's will, Thomas was passionate about his vocation: He put God before any desire for worldly greatness.

As you may know, Thomas suffered for this dedication. His family bitterly opposed him, even going so far as to lock him up in a castle tower for an entire year. The people who should have loved him the most, and proven their support in times of trial, forced Thomas into



uncomfortable situations. Who can forget the sending of a prostitute into Aquinas' room to change his mind?

The Encounter with Christ

Today you graduates might reflect on your parents' sacrifice. What has and will come from it all? For Thomas the fruit was an unwavering commitment to truth. Thomas would not yield when it came to pursuing, promoting, and living the good. His life had been captured by the beauty of Christ, and all else had to be properly ordered to this highest end.

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We live in an age where commitment to truth is challenged. Simply consider the recent HHS Mandate, a policy whereby those who follow their religious convictions will pay steep penalties. Look at the way our media mock those leaders who live out their beliefs, portraying them as prejudiced, hard-hearted, and unenlightened. Not only is our commitment to truth challenged, but truth itself is called into question. Allan Bloom, author of *The Closing of the American Mind*, writes:

There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the students' reaction: they will be uncomprehending. That anyone should not regard the proposition as self-evident astonishes them, as though he were calling into question $2 + 2 = 4$.

It is no longer a probability; if you are passionate about your vocation, you will be persecuted and placed in uncomfortable situations. The world will look at you with incredulity when you stand up for your beliefs. How will you respond? Will you be the Thomists of our generation, unwavering in your commitment to truth?

St. Thomas Aquinas was brilliant, but he lived his knowledge in the utmost humility. He made a point to not only ponder the great ideas but to apply those ideas to the "real world." One could say that Thomas lived more in reality than most of us do. After all, this is what



it means to be a contemplative. In the words of Fr. Pierre Marie Emonet, O.P., "The contemplative is not one who discovers secrets no one knows, but one who is swept into ecstasy by what everyone knows." Aquinas saw the beauty of life, and the beauty was translated into volumes of written commentary, into walking over 9,000 miles across Europe, into long hours of teaching, and into ordinary everyday conversations.

St. Thomas was not a hard-hearted individual, fleeing from the reality of life. He was a lover of life. We think of him as the author of the *Summa Theologica*, but let us not forget he also wrote the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Thomas wanted to convert all men to Truth. He wanted to engage the world in a dialogue that would transform his culture. This desire led Thomas to take part in and to be aware of the issues of his day. Thomas didn't seclude himself in his study; rather he was intensely involved in the most active elements of society, engaging the world in public debates and challenging the leaders of his day to standards of greatness. As he himself put it, "Knowledge of the Faith does not pacify; rather it stirs up."

Aquinas was truly stirred up and he stirred up those whom he encountered. He challenged the world because of his passion for truth. He spoke calmly and fearlessly and was utterly devoid of any arrogant love for the lime-light. During his process for canonization it was reported that even in heated disputes, he was always calm, humble, and never used large, affected words. Those of you who have witnessed or been part of a seminar know what heroic virtue lies behind that observation!

It is easy to rant and convey one's opinion. It is easy to speak well when others are there to notice your achievement. But to believe wholeheartedly in something and yet resist the urge to impose the truth on others, to merely propose the truth and to let truth itself convince, that is a lifetime's achievement. Aquinas' activism was a way of life marked by respect for all men, even those in error. He influenced others by his words as well as his demeanor.

One of the most striking elements of Thomas' demeanor was his continual focus on truth. He never argued for the sake of winning; he argued to make truth loved and to make the good lived more fully. Yves Congar observed, "In his *Summa* alone, [St. Thomas] wrote more than 3,000 articles, and in none of them, except here and there when he wished to retract some statement, does he speak of himself; there is not one of them that is not like a monstrosity behind which the theologian hides in order to exhibit his God." That is the humility which will overturn the wisdom of this world. That is the model of what it means to engage the secular society.

The message we bring to the world is not ourselves. Humanity's hope is not a new program or governmental mandate. Only an encounter with Christ will bring about the change people long for. That is not to say we won't establish organizations or charities — I hope the graduates of 2012 will found many such institutions — but our focus will be different. For the Christian, charity is not a program but a Person to be loved. Fixing the economy is not about more money but about promoting human dignity. Establishing justice is not making a world of conformity where everyone is the same, but allowing each individual the freedom to flourish and reflect God. Such change only occurs *with* God at the center of our endeavors. The world is saved by Christ alone, and the Christian



points the wayward world back to its Maker. In imitation of God Who dwelt among us, the Christian lives in the world and lifts up its brokenness to the Healer of All.

The Power of Joy

Today, graduates, you are being sent out into a confused world. Do not be afraid to engage the secularism, the consumerism, the relativism of modernity. You have been surrounded by goodness, you have been immersed in beauty, and you have encountered truth. These are the tools with which a Thomist lives life to the full. These are the tools with which a Thomist betters the lives and longings of all around him.

This noble vocation is brought to fulfillment in both the extraordinary and the ordinary moments of life. Aquinas confronted error before great professors of his time as well as through the lived witness of his everyday actions. Aquinas didn’t merely preach truth; he reached out in truth and charity to others. He smiled at people and took the time to get to know those around him. During St. Thomas’ process for canonization it was reported as common opinion that everyone “believed the Holy Spirit was truly with him for he always had a happy countenance, sweet and affable.”

Never underestimate the power of joy. The world would like to portray you as somber, rigid fools. Shock the world with your life, your enthusiasm, your ready smile. There is no such thing as a somber, sour-faced Thomist. Everyone knows a Thomas Aquinas College graduate can think; do they know about your deep friendships, your active compassion, and your love for this world? Do they know of your love for the Blessed Virgin Mary? If they do not, how can you call yourself a Thomist?

Observing the crisis of our age and looking ahead to the upcoming “Year of Faith,” Pope Benedict XVI said that Catholics must study especially how to proclaim the Gospel to a world undergoing “faith fatigue.” He challenged us to learn how to move the hearts of men who



seem to have had enough of Christianity. The Pope asked us to reflect on how faith, as a living force, could become a reality today.

Perhaps you read the address. Perhaps you caught how our Holy Father highlighted young people as an answer to the fatigue of modernity. You were the ones he called upon to awaken the worldly and to break through the “whatever” attitude of so many searching people. In so doing, Pope Benedict spoke of this era as the age of Eucharistic adoration and sacramental confession. Truly, then, this is the age of the Thomist, for the great loves of Aquinas’ life were the Blessed Sacrament and the saving power of the Cross. It was for this reason that St. Thomas risked everything he was.

Pope Benedict calls confession the “sacrament of joy rediscovered.” The Christian life is not easy, and at times we fall. It is in these moments that the Cross becomes our *Exultet* of the Easter Vigil. No man is abandoned to his sins or ought to be defined by his past mistakes. “The experience of sin, which is the refusal to follow God

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and an affront to His friendship, brings gloom into our hearts.” This is not the will of God for us. God wants us to be happy. On the Cross Christ reached out to save us. In the sacrament of confession, the same restoring grace is offered.

Aquinas frequented the sacrament often. His words are simple: “In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so, in the spiritual life, a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.” He further speaks of confession as the sacrament of true friends, the means by which we reconcile ourselves with Christ after pushing Him away. When one is estranged from a friend, how great is the joy of forgiveness. Never forget the humility that values friendships. A true Thomist is often found outside the confessional because a true Thomist is always seeking happiness and genuine friendships. If you wish to be a follower of Aquinas, go often to where you will rediscover this joy.



Members of the Class of 2012 sing *Non nobis, Domine, Domine non nobis, Domine Sed nomini, sed nomini, tuo da gloriam* — “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory” — at the conclusion of the Commencement exercises.

One of the greatest minds the world has ever known — the saint whose name this school proudly bears — was above all a Eucharistic lover. To him we owe the beautiful liturgy of Corpus Christi and a clear articulation of the sacrament of the Eucharist. To him we owe the example of a life of wisdom surrendered at the feet of Eternal Wisdom, an enormous intellect great enough to bow in adoration before his God. God knows the world needs thinkers and intellectuals. We need wisdom and knowledge. Yet, in the words of St. Catherine, “Upon knowledge follows love.” Love changes the actions and hearts of men.

As you graduate today, the world applauds your hard-earned knowledge with formal recognition. I beg you to go further. If you haven’t done so already, *fall in love*. Fall in love with Christ, with His church and with our faith. Live lives of passionate romance and heart-felt conviction. Now that you know the Truth, risk everything for the joy of following Him.

Let the Church boast of the graduates of this College as its martyrs of the 21st century. You will fearlessly profess truth, even unto death, to those who deny, ridicule, or simply do not believe. You will do this in imitation of Jesus who took on the form of a slave and suffered death that all men might have life. For God’s sake, for the sake of mankind, go out among the nations and spread the good news. The Word became flesh. May He be incarnate in you. Don’t be content to be mere intellectuals, mere scholars and teachers; be intellectuals bearing Christ into, oftentimes, an empty, hungry world. Be the joy-filled Thomists, the passionate lovers, the convicted thinkers of this age. Do this and you will become the saints for whom the world is waiting, loving, and living in Joy.

Thank you. May God bless you.

Semper Fidelis 2012
Alumnus Presents Graduate with Marine Corps Commission

At the start of this year’s Commencement Exercises, Noel Bulger, a member of the Class of 2012, led attendees in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. His classmates had chosen him for this honor because of his patriotism and his profound sense of duty — both of which would be on display just a few hours later.

After the graduation festivities were finished, Mr. Bulger returned to the stage at the foot of the academic quadrangle for a very different sort of ceremony. Surrounded by his family and his classmates, he became 2nd Lt. Bulger, accepting his



commission as a member of the United States Marine Corps. He is the sixth Thomas Aquinas College alumnus to join the ranks of Marine Corps officers over the past few years.

Fittingly, it was one of those fellow alumni officers who presented 2nd Lt. Bulger with his commission. Three years ago, only hours after his own graduation, Robert Mohun (’09) stood on the stage at the foot of the academic quadrangle to accept a commission as a Marine Corps officer. Three years later, Mr. Mohun — now 1st Lt. Mohun — returned, once again, this time to administer the oath and to welcome 2nd Lt. Bulger into the Corps.

In preparation for this occasion, 2nd Lt. Bulger spent much of his past two summers in Quantico, Va., at the Marines’ Officer Candidates School. There he underwent rigorous training and evaluation under deliberately stressful condi-

tions. The purpose of these trials, according to the school’s mission statement, is to ensure that candidates “possess the moral, intellectual, and physical qualities for commissioning, and the leadership potential to serve successfully.”

Clearly he passed muster, as evidenced by the delegation of Marines who came with 1st Lt. Mohun to present 2nd Lt. Bulger with his commission from the President of the United States. 2nd Lt. Bulger took his oath amid bursts of applause and cheers of “oorah!” Then his parents, Dr. and Mrs. Kyran Bulger of County Tipperary, Ireland, proudly affixed single gold bars to his midnight-blue coat.



1st Lt. Robert Mohun (’09) administers the Marine oath to 2nd Lt. Noel Bulger (’12) on Commencement Day 2012.

“The Marine Corps calls for a quick mind in a dynamic environment,” says 2nd Lt. Bulger. “Thomas Aquinas College prepares you for that (in the classroom), so that you are able to think on your feet. That’s something I’m definitely going to use in the Marine Corps.”

The Class of 2012 and Senior Thesis Titles



Matter Desires Man:
An Argument That All
Corporeal Creation Is Ordered
Toward Man by the Material
Principle
JOSHUA ALTIC
Eureka, California



Healing the Fractured Story
**JOSEPH ANTHONY
DOMINIC ANDRES**
Santa Paula, California



Soul Equivocation: Whether the
Soul Is an Equivocal Cause of
Cellular Life Outside the Body
PETER ANTHONY ASPER
Front Royal, Virginia

The Higher Men:
How Ayn Rand's Ideal Man
Falls Short of Happiness
CONOR MICHAEL BOPP
Omaha, Nebraska



Vive la Différence:
The Genius of Gender
and the Natural Order
LIBERTY ANN BRITTAIN
Tempe, Arizona



An Inquiry into St. Thomas's
Question on Obedience
ALICE MARY BULGER
Toomevara, Tipperary, Ireland



Perfect Love of Neighbor
Through Self-Love in the
Dialogues of St. Catherine of
Siena
**KELLY MARGARET
BULGER**
Toomevara, Tipperary, Ireland



"He for God Only, She for God
in Him": An Investigation of
Eve's Temptation in Milton's
Paradise Lost
NOEL KYRAN BULGER
Toomevara, Tipperary, Ireland



The Love That Purifies:
The Importance of Aristotelian
Catharsis to Dante's Journey
in the *Purgatorio*
**KATHRYN ROSE
CLAAHTSEN**
Plano, Illinois



The Veiled God of *Till We Have Faces*

THERESA LEE MADISON COX

Nashville, Tennessee



“But I Have Called You Friends,
Because All Things Whatsoever I
Have Heard of My Father I Have
Made Known to You”: How the
Incarnation Has Allowed for a
Deeper Friendship with the
God of Aristotle

LISA MARIE SORIANO CRUZ

Las Vegas, Nevada



On God’s Causality and Man’s
Freewill

JULIANNE RAGNHILD DAILEY

Orange, California

“No Mere Empty Commemoration
of the Passion and Death of Jesus
Christ, but a True and Proper Act
of Sacrifice”: A Comparison of the
Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms
of the Roman Rite According
to the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*

MARIE SUZANNE DONOVAN

Mequon, Wisconsin



Tragedy and Catharsis:
The Christian Experience

GABRIEL NIKOLAUS DUDA

Manassas, Virginia



Descartes’ Algebraic Approach
to Geometrical Lines:
Does a *New Method* Entail
a New Understanding?

ANNA MARIE DUNLAP

San Jose, California



The Purpose of Stories

NATHAN THOMAS DUNLAP

San Jose, California



The End of Medicine

JACOB EMERSON ELFRINK

Marshall, Missouri



“O, That Way Madness Lies”:
A Treatment Concerning the
Effect of the Study of Nature on
Technology

CHRISTOPHER THOMAS ELLEFSON

Fort Wingate, New Mexico

Men and Women: Intellectually
Complementary for the
Sake of Wisdom

ANNE ELISABETH FISHER

Houston, Texas



“We Shall See Him As He Is”:
A Consideration of the Beatific
Vision Contrasting the Positions
of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint
Bonaventure Bagnoregio

MADELINE MARIE FLANDERS

Muscatine, Iowa



Contraception and the Quest for
Self-Discovery: An Exposition
on the Opposition of Birth
Control and the Natural Law

MARK DANIEL FORRESTER

Fallbrook, California



The Molding of a Noble
Character in Jane Austen’s *Emma*

THÉRÈSE MARIE EMMA FOX

London, Ontario, Canada



Those Whom He Called Came
Freely: An Argument That the
Doctrine of Predestination Does
Not Contradict Man’s Free Will

DAVID XAVIER FREER

*Adelaide, South Australia,
Australia*



Through Things Seen: How the
Beauty of Nature Leads Man to
Love of God

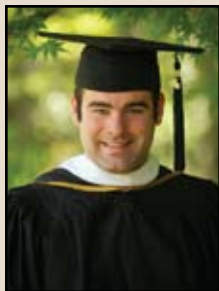
AUGUSTA MARIA DEIRDRE GRIMM

Ojai, California

“To Justify the Ways of God
to Men”: A Defense of
John Milton’s Character
Portrayals in *Paradise Lost*

THOMAS JOSEPH GUYNAN

Schuyler, Nebraska



The Friend Is Another Self:
An Exposition on the
Highest Friendship

JAMES ROYAL HEFFERNAN

Springfield, Illinois



“Tyrant, Show Thy Face!”
Identity in *Macbeth*

AMANDA KATHLEEN HUDSON

Richardson, Texas



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Through Their Cathartic Effect

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A Defense of Shakespeare’s
Macbeth as an Aristotelian
Tragedy

MARIA GRACE KELLY

Santa Paula, California



“Until Natural Death”:
A Philosophical Argument
Against Euthanasia Based on the
Relationship of the Common
Good to the Private Good

KAYLA KERMODE

Maple City, Michigan

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Waking Love and Life: How Captivating Natasha Became a Real Woman and Fulfilled Her End in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

CHRISTINA SION KINNEY

Aliso Viejo, California



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PHILIP DOMINIC KNUFFKE

Fresno, California



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New Paltz, New York

"Are You Jacob Marley?"
The Apprehension of Substance Considered

EDWARD LANGLEY

Houston, Texas



The Natural Course of Things: Whether Production and Free Exchange Dispose Men to Strive Towards Virtue and Present an Understanding of the Common Good

ZACHARY THOMAS LEBOLD

Kansas City, Missouri



On the Performer's Role in the Production of Music, or A Defense of the Proper Dignity of the Performer against Boethius

JOSHUA YANHAN LO

Houston, Texas



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BRIDGET ANNE LYNCH

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THOMAS JUDE MALONE

Phoenix, Arizona



When No Man Was His Own: On Theatre's Ability to Move Men Toward Virtue As Represented in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

MARIE HELEN FRANCIS MAROTTI

Kalamazoo, MI

How Aristotle's Discussion of Contemplation in the *Ethics* Leads to the City

RACHEL TERESA

LILLIAN MATHIE

St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada



Love and Creativity in Goethe's *Faust*

LOUISE MILTON

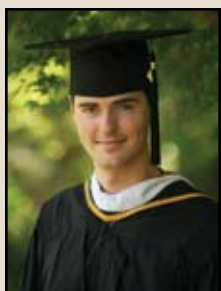
Mesa, Arizona



Speech: The Significance of True Speech for Society

ANNA ELIZABETH O'BRIEN

Richmond, British Columbia, Canada



Whether There Is Any Equivocation by Reason That Is Not Properly Called Analogy

COLIN EDWARD O'KEEFE

Spring Green, Wisconsin



Plato's *Symposium* and the Philosophy of Eros

SEAN MICHAEL STEWART O'NEAL

Monroe, Michigan



Deciphering Dante's Love

ANDREW JAMES O'REILLY

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

"Music That Falls Strangely on the Ear; Music That Is Different": A Consideration of Contemporary Music and Why It Is Good for Man

MICHAELLA ELIZABETH PAPE

Boise, Idaho



Tocqueville and Aristotle on Friendship and Self-Interest

MASON HAYES THOMAS PEDDEMORS

Lapeer, Michigan



"Omnia in Mensura, et Numero et Pondere Disposuisti": A Critique of Isaac Newton's First Law of Motion

ROBERT ANTHONY PFEIFFER

Waterford, Wisconsin



The Loss of an Essential Nature: An Examination into Whether Modern Philosophy Degrades Human Dignity

FIONA MARIE PUDEWA

Locust Grove, Oklahoma



Love God and Despise Man: A Defense of a Christian Message in *Gulliver's Travels*

KATHRYN ANN RAINEY

Kansas City, Missouri



"For Reason Made Gulliver a Miserable Man but Not a Man of Faithlessness and Falsehood": An Examination of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

LOUISA JOLANDA SCAMPERLE

Tempe, Arizona

The Class of 2012 and Senior Thesis Titles



A Consideration of the Supreme Court and How It Judges the Law
MATTHEW SCHMIDGALL
Portland, Oregon



A Good Man Is Hard to Find: An Investigation into the Tragedy of *Macbeth*
KELLIE DON SCHRAMM
Olds, Alberta Canada



“It Is Their Right, It Is Their Duty”: A Defense of the American Notion of Rights
LUKE ANDREW THOMAS SEELEY
Santa Paula, California

Why the Mind Still Matters: How to Understand the Mind in Light of Modern Science
STEPHANIE ROSE SIMIA
Hobart, Wisconsin



Do What Feels Right: Duty versus Character in the Moral Systems of Kant and Aristotle
CLARE ANN SMILLIE
Helena, Montana



On the Christian Need for Leisure: “Lord, Who Shall Dwell in Thy Tabernacle? Or Who Shall Rest in Thy Holy Hill?”
NICOLETTE LEE SUTHERLAND
Strongsville, Ohio



De Nomine: Dry Grammarians in Thirst of Truth
BERNADETTE MARIE TEICHERT
Oak View, California



“Uneasy Lies the Head That Wears a Crown”: An Investigation of Shakespeare’s Character Hal Under the Criteria of *The Prince* and *On Kingship*
JACK MARTIN THOMAS
San Juan Capistrano, California

The Substance of Space: An Examination of Extension in Physics
RYAN JON THOMAS
Corcoran, Minnesota

“The House Did Not Fall, Because It Had Been Founded on the Rock”: A Refutation of Spinoza’s Account of Faith
JAMES WALTER THOMPSON
Amherst, New Hampshire



“For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free”: An Investigation of Whether Rousseau’s Notion of Liberty Is a Common Good
AVERY MOTIEJUNAS UPCHURCH
Prescott, Arizona



“Will You Stay with Me; Will You Be My Love?” An Investigation of Personal Presence in an Age of Social Media
SHANNON MARIE WILLIAMS
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada



Supposing Wisdom Is a Woman, What Then? Finding Christ in the Old Testament Wisdom Literature
MARY ROSE WISE
Fredericksburg, Virginia



The Tradition of Veiling Women in the Church
LAUREN THERESA WITZANEY
Denzil, Saskatchewan, Canada



The Redemption of Achilles: *Et Verbum Caro Factum Est*
REBECCA MARIE WYCKLENDT
New Berlin, Wisconsin

PATRON

St. Michael the Archangel



CLASS QUOTATION

“If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world on fire!”
— St. Catherine of Siena

Freedom and Unity

The 2012 Senior Address

By James W. Thompson ('12)

Fr. Buckley; Mother Assumpta; dear faculty; members of the Board; friends and benefactors of Thomas Aquinas College; parents, relatives, and friends; and my beloved classmates:

During my years here at Thomas Aquinas College, I have on many occasions felt myself burdened with great responsibility, such as during exams or when writing and defending my senior thesis, as I am sure you have as well. I have always approached such occasions with some misgivings about whether I was up to the task; but never as much so as now. Before my accountability was only to myself, since all my efforts, however important the occasion, represented myself and no one else; but today I am faced with the task of representing not only myself but all of you, my classmates, a task that is as grave a responsibility as it is a great honor.

And I know that this is a responsibility that I must, in some measure, fail to fulfill. For, while in God all perfections are brought into one, in His creatures they cannot be so united, but jostle each other out just as the material bodies of those creatures do when attempting to occupy the same space. And so I am quite unable to present at once all the different and often contradictory perfections of you, my classmates. I cannot bring together the abstract rationality of Phil Knuffke with the impassioned exuberance of Bridget Lynch, the inspiring self-confidence of Colin O'Keefe with the earnest humility of Marie Donovan, or the intense studiousness of David Freer with the effortless brilliance of Josh Altic. (And our class could offer a list of oppositions that could rival any the Pythagoreans could contrive.) I cannot represent all of these people together any more than I could share the space behind this podium with them (and it is not my pride but my materiality that prevents it). And so, at least in this way, I know that I cannot represent you, a failing for which you must forgive me, for it stems from my being human rather than Divine.

Achieving Unity

But if there are many things that, however diverse, have something in common, then they can be brought together, even by human power. And the fact that we are all standing here together today to celebrate our graduation surely signifies a more than accidental unity. I know this is



The Class of 2012 elected as its Class Speaker James W. Thompson of Amherst, N.H.

a unity that we did not share when we first came together here as freshmen; indeed it does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that we were as far from it then as we were distant in time from this day.

We all remember our first classes, where we set off in search of truth like knights-errant, forging bravely into the wild on our solitary quest (a quest which

“This is what brought us together as a class, this common striving for a good and the common enjoyment of it. The oneness that we have does not come simply from coming and going together to the same classrooms or matriculating at and graduating from this school in the same years, but can truly be called a friendship.”

may have seemed to many of our friends and relatives to be as illusory and foolhardy as the exploits of Don Quixote). But perhaps not truly solitary. For the most significant encounter during these early days was not the expected meeting with the great minds of the works we were studying, but with the other students who were on the same mission as we were and seemed to see think themselves just as well equipped for it as we were.

Granted, we had known that there would be other students besides us (this was the discussion method, after all), but we had most likely expected to encounter a polite and responsive audience for our own thoughts and insights, listening with rapt attention and only replying with affirmation and support. But what we met was something quite different; something not made of such malleable stuff as we had expected; something with its own shapes and motions, inexplicably resistant to our attempts to direct it; something wriggling and kicking and very much alive. Such were the minds of our fellow students, inexorably resilient and unceasingly at odds with ourselves and each other, and this not through any malice but quite by natural necessity. For living beings, unlike the inanimate materials of an artificial edifice, cannot be united simply by being forced together; and far more is required than local proximity to make them truly one. Nor can this come about by the strongest of them forcing the others to follow its will (as many of us may have been attempting to do during these early days, whether we intended to or not), since this would be to buy unity at the price of life.

Rather, union must come from something higher than all and yet common to all, a good which they strive for together and cannot attain alone, and which can be

enjoyed by all without suffering any diminution. The first step is the realization that this end cannot be reached without help. And while we may at first be annoyed with those who stand in the way of our train of thought and cause it to come to a screeching halt, we will later forgive the delay and count it a blessing when we realize that the particular track we were rushing along so merrily would have led us over a cliff.

Next comes the discovery that the good to be had is not in the reaffirmation of our own opinions, but in coming to possess something new; not in making something our own but in enjoying it with others, the goodness of it growing rather than diminishing with each new share claimed. And, as Aristotle says, in every community among those with a common end there is not only justice but friendship as well.

This is what brought us together as a class, this common striving for a good

and the common enjoyment of it. And the oneness that we have does not come simply from coming and going together to the same classrooms or matriculating at and graduating from this school in the same years, but can truly be called a friendship. I quote Aristotle again to say that “loving is the virtue of friends;” and though up to now I have used many metaphors and figures of speech, I assure you that I speak simply, precisely, and literally when I say that I love you all, my dear classmates, and I know that, at least in this, I can be sure that I speak for all of us.

An Objection

And yet I also know that — had I attempted to give this speech in a conversation or a classroom without the protection offered by the position of Class Speaker — I would have been justly interrupted in my discourse long before now by one of you taking on the role of the proverbial “conscientious objector.”

“Mr. Thompson,” he says. “You speak of us all being united by the pursuit of some common good, and yet you have not given us any hint of what this good is besides the fact that it is attained together and enjoyed together. What is this magical good that you keep speaking of?”

I, somewhat taken aback, reply to this objector, saying “I thought *that*, above all else, would be obvious. After all, we attend a school to pursue a liberal education together; it is to this education that I was referring, and I only failed to mention it for fear of making my speech too long and redundant.”

“That,” retorts the objector, “is only to push the question back a step. Why is this liberal education we have attained a good, and why is it a good that we are all able to share in together? Does not the

name liberal suggest more the breaking of bonds rather than the binding together of a multitude?”

“I will attempt to answer your question,” I respond. “But in so doing I must take a cue from Aristotle and abandon the dialogue format since it is inefficient and it’s losing its novelty.”

The objector was, indeed, correct in attending to the word “liberal” when trying to determine the good of the education we have received here over the last four years. The word, of course, means free, and therefore seems to beg further qualification; the natural question is “free from what?”

Does a liberal education give us what Socrates was always seeking to give to his students (or help them to recollect for themselves), a freedom from misconceptions about our own knowledge of the world, eventually coming to the realization that we, in fact, know nothing? Or is it an even more radical shaking of our foundations, showing us that there is *no* absolute reality, as Nietzsche and his fellow moderns would have it, and granting us the greatest and most terrible freedom of all: to make of the truth what we will?

Surely it cannot be either of these if it is to be a good. For the former, the shattering of our complacency and the clearing away of our false opinions so that we come to see our own ignorance, is but the beginning of something good. It makes room for real knowledge, but is of no value if we stop with it, just as one does not level a building unless he means to erect a better one in its place; no one simply takes joy in the rubble. A sense of wonder at the incommensurability of the truth with our power of knowing it is sometimes appropriate and necessary, especially in such subjects as theology (or perhaps Mr. Quackenbush’s Senior Natural Science class), but is not, simply speaking, our goal. And the idea that the truth is something we create excludes our attaining any good at all unless it be a kind of self-reflection — a worthy achievement to be sure, but not a resting place unless we believed that we ourselves were the greatest things there were to be known; only if we believed that we ourselves were God. And if I am looking for a good on account of which we, the many, can be united by pursuing it, it cannot be this total self-absorption, which would draw us into ourselves and more completely away from one another than the bitterest conflict.

So it might seem impossible that any act could be simultaneously freeing and uniting. In pursuing a liberating education are we not all like lines radiating out from the same center each in our own different direction, growing ever further apart? And yet it may in fact be possible to bring the two together, paradoxical as it might seem. Perhaps the surface which we are traveling on is in fact a sphere, and all the radii which appear to be fleeing each other by one who sees the world as flat will in fact come around to meet again in the same point. Perhaps our inability to see that something can be both liberat-



ing and conjunctive is from a similar lack of the proper perspective, and we should take a further removed point of view by looking at the nature of men in general, how they are united and divided, and in what way they are free.

A Response

The way in which men are divided from each other, at least most obviously, is by their corporeal nature, their limitation to this place and this time and not any other. And within these we are further limited by material circumstances which they

bring with them, relying on our surroundings for survival and progress. Indeed one might say that the ability to move through space or time is entirely contingent on our current place or time giving us the where-withal to do so, making these two our omnipotent masters. Likewise we seem to be just as determined when it comes to our thoughts and desires, for what can we know but what we come into contact with, and what can we pursue but what presents to us the most attractive appearances? All these restrictions will then determine whom we can and cannot come into contact with, and our union with one another is like that of cellmates or partners in a chain gang attached to one another at the ankle by the cord of our particular worldly circumstances.

Yet despite these considerations we also say that man is free. This is simply an acknowledgment of the fact that everyone recognizes, at least until he is confused and led astray by the narrow-minded view of the Darwinian natural scientists, that man is by nature essentially distinct from all the beasts, both in his will and his intellect, and this by freedom. Contrary to the picture painted above, this distinction consists precisely in the ability to transcend our individual circumstances, to in some way step outside of place and time. For within our own particular tiny piece

of the world, we encounter truths that are not restricted to it but are true at all times and everywhere, and goods which can be desired and pursued regardless of the greatness or smallness of the situation. How it is possible to find eternity and omnipresence in a particular time and place is, of course, a problem that philosophers have struggled with over the centuries (with many of them concluding that is not in fact possible). But the very fact that these men, separated by the twin tyrants of time and place, can still converse with one another on this question seems a strong indication that such a discovery must take place. Where else can these men meet except in eternity?

And from this it is clear why it is that what makes us free also brings us together. By transcending the material bonds which hold us apart, we are able to come together in the truths and goods which are not so bound. The fact that we stand together here today is merely a sign of the fact that we are united by something far more intimate, the timeless goodness and truth which we have together pursued and in some measure attained. And that this should bring us all together is in no way surprising when we consider that it was attained by our conversing with men far more removed from us in time and place, circumstance and disposition, and yet present to us today and everyday, here and everywhere, because of their undaunted, unbounded, transcendent, and truly liberal quest for the truth.

What Shall We Do?

This, then, is the source of our oneness as a class, and the reason that I am able, however imperfectly, to speak for all of us on this day by describing and praising it. And yet the occasion for my speech is not simply to celebrate the completion of something past, but also, and perhaps more properly, the beginning of something new. For this time at which we are most united is also, in a bittersweet paradox, the time at which we go our separate ways in the world. And so, even after having identified the good which we have achieved, the question remains: What are we to do with it during the rest of our lives? This is not to suggest that what we have learned has only a utilitarian value, but rather the greatness of it is such that it must impact and transform every-

thing that we meet, or else not come to its full fruition. And so I ask again, what shall we do?

Surely we should not simply look on the many in the world from whom our education has in some way separated us with the happiness which Lucretius felt when viewing a shipwreck safely from the cliffs above — seeing the sailors strive vainly against drowning — and delighting in the fact that he was no longer among them. This would be to bend our plowshares of unity into swords of division, forgetting that our own meager freedom from evil and error was only attained by a union with those greater than ourselves. No, we must instead enter the world as the enlightened, re-enter the darkness of the cave in Plato’s *Republic*, plunging into the darkness boldly because we know the way back to the light, in order to lead others back with us.

And while many of us may pursue this in the most apparent way, by becoming teachers ourselves and sharing our knowledge with others as it was shared with us, this is not the only or even principal means to share the good we have received here. For we can see in our own beloved college how liberality pervades far more than the classrooms.

This school is truly able to transcend its material circumstances in every way. The most obvious of these is financially. Through its optimistic but always justified faith in the generosity of donors, the College has been able to provide its education to all who sought it, regardless of whether their particular financial situation would have ordinarily enabled them to afford it or not. Without this liberality, as well as the immeasurable support of my own parents, of course, I, along with many of us, would not be here.

We see the same transcendence in the incredible accomplishments of our student choir, or those who come together to put on a dance or formal dinner, who, entering with little previous experience and expecting no material reward, have been able to bring forth creations of such remarkable beauty that they call to mind the miraculous building of the Ark of the Covenant by the unskilled laborers of Israel. Or in the seemingly limitless availability of the tutors to provide answers and assistance to the students, much of it outside of the classroom hours for which



Michaela E. Pape ('12) was chosen by her class to lead the National Anthem.

they are hired. The fact that each of the groups that I have mentioned would most likely protest that they were only doing what was expected from them is but a sign of the fact that here the extraordinary is commonplace.

A true liberal education will touch every part of whatever life the one who possesses it chooses to live. And the way in which it will show itself the most is not in the greatness of mind, or even excellence of character of its possessor, but in the charity with which they live their lives. For whenever we were taught something during our time here, whether by a tutor, a fellow student, or the author of a work, it was not by our teacher dazzling us with the brilliance of his intellectual superiority, but by his charity in helping us to ascend to an equal level, making that superiority no more.

And what can be more free than to love all our fellow men, regardless of their place or character, with a love that overcomes all obstacles and unites inexorably and yet without coercion? This, ultimately, is the fire of which St. Catherine speaks in our class quote, with which we are to ignite the world; this is how we can ultimately be united not only as a class or a school in our study of the true and the good, but as children of the self-subsisting True and Good; this how we can rise together and converge in eternity.

And so, onwards and upwards, Class of 2012, and may God bless you and speed you on your way.



Scenes from Commencement 2012: 1. Dean Brian T. Kelly hugs his daughter Grace after fitting her with the academic hood. 2. President Michael F. McLean signs the graduates' diplomas. 3. Avery Upchurch ceremoniously moves her tassel from right to left after receiving her diploma. 4. Tutor Michael Kolbeck and Dr. Kelly place a hood on Sean O'Neal.

Setting the World on Fire

What’s Next for the Class of 2012

“If you are what you should be,” begins the quotation from St. Catherine of Siena that the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2012 has chosen as its own, “you will set the whole world on fire.”

This is the spirited ideal to which the Class of 2012 aspires as its members leave the campus to embrace the vocations, occupations, and apostolates to which Our Lord is calling them. The graduates are determined to set the world ablaze spiritually, as further evidenced by their choice of a valiant class patron, St. Michael the Archangel.

This determination is all the more apparent in the plans and goals that these new alumni have set for themselves in the months, years, and even decades ahead. Whether as lay people or as religious, as surgeons, scholars, or servicemen — with plans firmly in place or still in the early stages of formation — members of the Class of 2012 are determined to be what they *should be*, according to God’s unique calling, so as to “set the whole world on fire.”

Medicine

“My time at the College has taught me how to think for myself and not necessarily be persuaded by what other people are telling me to be true,” reflects **Anne Fisher**, who is taking prerequisite courses for medical school at San Francisco State University. “I think that is valuable in medicine, especially in the current medical climate.” **Gabriel Duda** is likewise completing his prerequisites, with plans to enter medical school within the next year. Seeking to care for the human psyche, **Shannon Williams** will pursue a doctorate in psychology. Other members of the Class of 2012 — including **Kelly Bulger**, **Julianne (Dailey) Flathers**, **David Freer**, **Augusta Grimm**, **Rebecca Kretschmer**, and **Marie Marotti** — have set their sites on nursing.



Mary Wise has also decided to go into nursing, with an emphasis on critical care, for reasons that are both personal and inspiring. This past year her brother Matt (’06) died after a lengthy hospitalization resulting from pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. For Miss Wise, spending time at her brother’s bedside opened her eyes to nursing. “I enjoy being busy, on my feet, in an active environment where the number-one priority is serving and aiding people,” she says. “I suppose you could say that realizing nursing as my lifelong career path was my brother’s gift to me.”

National Service

Three members of the Class of 2012 have opted for careers of a civic nature. On Commencement Day **Noel Bulger** received his commission as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. (See page 4.) **Colin O’Keefe** has accepted a position with the Lucy Burns Institute, a non-profit organization in Madison, Wisc., devoted to disseminating information to help citizens in making their voting decisions. Finally, inspired by reading *The Federalist Papers*, the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, and Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* in his senior seminar class, **Luke Seeley** will be studying for a master’s degree in political science at the Hillsdale Graduate School of Statesmanship, with the long-term goal of teaching the discipline at the college level.

Foreign Language

All students at Thomas Aquinas College study two years of Latin, not only to master the language, but also

to understand the very nature of language itself, thereby preparing them to more readily learn *any* language in the future. For example, this fall **Marie Donovan** will be studying Farsi as part of a master’s program in Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Arizona. **Ian Joliat** is heading to Japan, where he will learn Japanese while teaching English to middle-school children; he intends to become an interpreter for international corporations. **Louisa Scamperle** will be drawing more directly on her Latin, studying Italian at the *Università per Stranieri* in Perugia, Italy.

Business

Among those who are pursuing careers in business is **Kayla Kermode**, who has been hired as a process consultant for insurance giant WellPoint in its procurement department in Thousand Oaks, Calif. **Thomas Malone** is entering the Master of Science in Business Analysis program at the Catholic University of America. **Jack Thomas** will learn the art and economics of winemaking by working for David O’Reilly (’87), owner of the Owen Roe Winery in St. Paul, Ore. **Thomas Guynan** will return to his home state of Nebraska to join the family’s grain, corn, and soybean business.

Education

Every year the career path that draws the most Thomas Aquinas College graduates is education, and 2012 is no exception. Echoing the sentiments of many of his classmates, **James Thompson** notes, “During my time here I have discovered that I really enjoy the process of learning. Because I love learning so much, it is something I would like to give to others as well.” Next fall Mr. Thompson will be teaching algebra to middle school students at Gendale Preparatory High School, part of Arizona’s Great Hearts Academies, a network of charter schools offering a classical curriculum. His classmate **Madison Cox** will be joining him in the Great Hearts system as a fifth-grade teacher at North Phoenix Archway Classical Academy.

In total, 12 of this year’s 66 graduates have formal plans to teach or work in the field of education, and at all levels. **Grace Kelly** will pursue certification as a Montessori teacher for younger children, and **Stephanie (Simia) O’Keefe** will be tutoring home-schooled students in her native Wisconsin. **Anna (Dunlap) O’Reilly** and **Kellie Schramm** will be teaching for Mother of Divine Grace, an online distance-learning program founded by Laura Berquist (’75). **Fiona Pudewa** will offer writing instruction



to middle schoolers via the Internet. **Philip Knuffke** and **Joshua Lo** are heading down to Argentina, where they will join the faculty of a Catholic school with a classical curriculum founded by Roberto Helguera (’91). Finally two members of the Class of 2012 will stay in Santa Paula as employees of their alma mater: **Christopher Ellefson** is joining the College’s Admissions Department as a counselor, and **Rachel Mathie** will serve as the resident assistant.

Law

Two members of the Class of 2012 have immediate plans to study law, albeit different kinds. **Sean O’Neal** will study the laws of the State at William and Mary Law School in Williamsburg, Va. **Clare Smillie** will be studying the laws of the Church in the Catholic University of America’s Canon Law Program, which includes a two-

year master’s degree in theology followed by three years of training to acquire a license in canon law.

Arts & Entertainment

“The purpose of the artist is to convey a message, to try to speak to the truth and the dignity of the human person,” says **Kathryn Claahsen**. “That is something I’ve been able to see in a very holistic, integral way here through the program.” Miss Claahsen hopes to refine her talent for painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago this fall. **Nathan Dunlap** is taking a job as an animator for a video-game company, with hopes of one day making films. A violinist since the age of seven, **Michaella Pape** intends to obtain a master’s degree in music.



Philosophy and Theology

Given the emphasis on philosophy and theology in the College’s curriculum, it is no surprise that at least a few graduates each year go on to study these disciplines at the graduate level. **Edward Langley** has received a full scholarship and stipend to pursue doctoral studies in philosophy at the Catholic University of America, and **Mark Forrester** will be studying moral and Thomistic theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. As of publication, **Joshua Altic** was still entertaining offers to study philosophy at the University of Dallas — or physics at Baylor University — while also contemplating law school.

Engineering

Building on his four years of mathematics at the College, **Robert Pfeiffer** will enter the electrical-engineering program at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. “Having investigated the principles of math and science at the College will be really helpful in studying the more advanced, modern math and science,” he says, “as will having a good philosophical foundation.”

Marriage

During their time at the College several members of the Class of 2012 were blessed to discern vocations to the marital state. “The College prepared us very well for marriage,” observes **Colin O’Keefe**, who wed **Stephanie (Simia)** the weekend after Commencement in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. “Here we had the opportunity to meet each other in a very spiritual environment and to grow together in the Faith as we came to know each other better in love.”

That same weekend three other couples were also married in the Chapel: **Bernadette (Teichert)** and **Edward Langley**, **Madeline (Flanders)** and **David Freer**, and **Anna (Dunlap)** & Dominic O’Reilly (’10). Four weeks later **Julianne (Dailey)** married her high school sweetheart, Steven Flathers, in Orange, Calif. Three more weddings involving this year’s graduates are planned for later in the summer.

Priesthood and Religious Life

It is always a special joy at the College when a graduate answers God’s call to a priestly or religious vocation. Some 10 percent of the College’s alumni are priests and/or religious, including 55 men who have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Often these vocations are discerned a few years after graduation, but not always. Among this year’s graduates **Mason Peddemors** is the first to answer the call. On August 14 he will enter the Western Province of the Dominican Order to prepare for the priesthood.



“Be Men and Women of Hope”
Excerpts from the 2012 Baccalaureate Mass Homily

By Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.
Head Chaplain

We have lived together for four years. And with someone, united in friendship, this is the beginning of closeness, to live with someone closely. After today you will go your separate ways, but that relationship will perdure. You can see manifestations of it during alumni week, when former roommates, dorm-mates, classmates (and dare I say, onetime dating partners) come together and celebrate what they remember as the good old days, shed now of the dark side that they endured together.

The first reading in our Mass tells us something about the closeness that comes from living together. It tells that God lived among His chosen people, even hinting at the presence of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. God said, “I will take you away from the nations, gather you from all the foreign lands. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you.”

But Jesus alone will tell us how far this friendship of God for man extends. He tells us that God truly makes your heart His dwelling place, that the two of you live together in a much closer union that you can possibly achieve by living with anyone else. “Whoever loves me will keep my word,” Jesus tells us in the Gospel, “and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our dwelling with him.”

In Jesus the life of God has been, so to speak, humanized in a man of flesh and blood. In obedience to the Father, He became man, suffered, and died in order to

achieve this unique intimacy. Clinging to Christ in baptism and faith, you become the dwelling place of God. You become part of the life of the Trinity itself. Think of that!

Prayer is an awareness of that relationship, being aware of the Persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — dwelling within you, a relationship analogous to, but much deeper than, the relationship of special friends, of roommates, of classmates, of lovers. Just as talking with and sharing with a friend or a lover is a desire for intimacy, so prayer is the desire to be one with God, despite the immense distance that separates you, a finite creature, from Him, the Almighty Creator.

As a practical consequence of this intimacy, I encourage you to be men and women of hope. Hope is the virtue of what we are now, that is, men and women of faith and charity, but it is also what we shall be. Our hope is an openness to what God wills to do for us, to complete His dwelling in us, to resurrect our bodies after death. It is an openness to our future.

The problems, the challenges, the sufferings of life remain, but with hope they are looked at in a different way. As St. Paul says, “If God is for us, who is against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, will He not give us all things with Him?” Our hope is based on God’s fidelity. He is more faithful than any friend or lover could ever be.

There are several characteristics of hope, but I will restrict myself to discussing two. First there is patience. I can think of faith without time; I can think of charity without time; but hope is the virtue that respects growth, respects development, respects time. Each of you carries now the scars of time as well as the gifts of time, and you’ll pick up many more scars and gifts as the years go by. So patiently live, who you are, with the scars and with the gifts combined.

A second characteristic of hope is joy. Ordinary life is filled with certain measures of frustration, temptation, desolation, failure, sickness, and so forth. And so it is unrealistic to say that you are expected to surfboard on the top of a wave of joy for the rest of your life just because you are conscious that Jesus is your co-pilot. But there is such a thing as a muted joy, the joy of a pilgrim, the joy of a promise truly there but not yet fully realized. Christ, though not visible, is with you with each step you take toward your final goal, and that is because the Holy Spirit dwells within you.

God bless the class of 2012!

For the full text and audio of Fr. Buckley’s Baccalaureate Mass homily, see www.thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2012.

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

Table with 3 columns: Weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays. Weekdays: 7:00 a.m., 5:20 p.m. Saturdays: 7:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. Sundays: 7:15 a.m., 9:00 a.m.

During the High School Summer Program (July 22 – August 24)
an additional weekday Mass will be offered at 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

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

- Great Books Summer Seminar Weekend #1 July 6–8
- Great Books Summer Seminar Weekend #2 July 13–15
- High School Summer Program..... July 22–August 4
- Religious Freedom Seminar
at the Napa Institute..... July 26
- Faculty Retreat August 13
- Freshman Orientation..... August 16
- Convocation..... August 20
- Opening Lecture: On Liberal Education
Dr. Michael Letteney, Thomas Aquinas College August 24
- All-College Picnic August 25
- Lecture — Rev. Robert Spitzer, S.J.
Magis Center of Reason and Faith..... September 14