



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

COMMENCEMENT 2014

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“Be Witnesses to the Truth”

Cardinal O’Brien Salutes College’s 40th Graduating Class

When members of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2014 gathered for their Commencement ceremony on May 17, they heard a powerful message from His Eminence Edwin Cardinal O’Brien, Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. “Be witnesses to truth,” he declared. “Help give the West a new birth of freedom: freedom tethered to truth and ordered to goodness; freedom lived beautifully, as you have been taught to live here in this beautiful and noble place.”

Having served as a chaplain in the United States Army, the rector of two seminaries, and the Archbishop of the Military Services, U.S.A., Cardinal O’Brien was uniquely suited to deliver this bold charge. “We find ourselves today in a postmodern world that can no longer affirm ‘the truth,’ only ‘your truth’ and ‘my truth,’” His Eminence told the 82 members of the College’s 40th graduating class. “It will be the task of your generation,” he added, “to remind the West that reason is part of our civilizational heritage, and that the Catholic Church is the great institutional safe-deposit box of reason in the 21st century.” (See page 3.)

Truth and Joy

The day began with the Baccalaureate Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, for which Cardinal O’Brien served as the principal celebrant and homilist. As the Thomas Aquinas College Choir sang *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* from the Chapel’s choir loft, members of the Class of 2014, the faculty, the Board of Governors, and the clergy processed into the building. Vested in red, the College’s four chaplains and several visiting priests joined His Eminence at the altar to concelebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit.



“What a blessing has been yours these last four years, Class of 2014, to have been formed here, at this college, in an atmosphere of deep Christian joy,” observed Cardinal O’Brien in his homily. “May that joy overflow, like living water, for a world so very athirst for the living God.”

Shortly after the Mass, the congregation reconvened on the academic quadrangle for the Commencement ceremony. Continuing the day’s theme of intellectual evangelization, Class Speaker Felicity Seeley (’14) spoke of the graduates’ duty to pursue the truth, to embrace it, and to share it. “The power of Truth is to change us from the inside out; to liberate us from sin and error; to free us from fear and lead us to eternal happiness; to transform

us, as He has all His saints throughout the ages,” she said. “It takes true love of neighbor, true love of Truth, to bring a stranger into our world, to show him the Truth, to help him desire that goodness and order.” (See page 4.)

Following Miss Seeley’s address, the College awarded Cardinal O’Brien its highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. (See story, below.) Then, amid the customary cheers and jubilation, the graduates each approached the dais to receive their bachelor hoods and diplomas, the culmination of four years’ diligent effort.

Remembering Kent

For all the joy and celebration, however, there was an undertone of sorrow. One member of the Class of 2014, Andrew “Kent” Moore, was not on hand to receive a diploma. Two years ago, while walking across the country in support of the unborn, Kent died after being struck by an oncoming vehicle. Yet his spirit was palpable at the Commencement ceremony, which his classmates dedicated to Kent. They also chose his namesake, St. Kentigern, for their Class Patron.

“Surely he is here with us in the Communion of Saints,” said Cardinal O’Brien at the Baccalaureate Mass. “We remember his family as well as the pro-life cause which he so heroically championed, and which Thomas Aquinas College has so unfailingly and successfully promoted.” In his remarks at the Commencement exercises, President Michael F. McLean asked those present to “please join us in praying for the repose of Kent’s soul, for the consolation of his parents and siblings, who are with us today, and that his example might always be an inspiration for these graduates.”

Called to be witnesses to the truth, the Class of 2014 has one of its own members for a model and guide.

The Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion

College Awards Cardinal O’Brien its 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 for those who 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 to pay tribute to the year’s Medallion recipients,” said President Michael F. McLean during this year’s Commencement ceremony. “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 2014, Dr. McLean continued, the College awarded the Medallion to “a faithful soldier for Christ,” His Eminence Edwin Cardinal O’Brien, Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

In receiving the Medallion, Cardinal O’Brien is in good company. Past recipients include Bl. Mother Teresa, M.C.; Servant of God Rev. John Hardon, S.J.; and



Cardinal O’Brien’s onetime superior, the late John Cardinal O’Connor, Archbishop of New York. While presenting the honor, Board of Governors Chairman R. Scott Turicchi praised the Cardinal for a life of “exemplary loyalty and devotion to the Holy Father and the magisterium of the Church.”

A Soldier’s Priest

After his ordination to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of New York in 1965, young Fr. O’Brien became a civilian chaplain at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Five years later, he shed his civilian status, undertaking flight and parachute training to earn the rank of captain and become a chaplain in the United States Army. He briefly served

at Fort Bragg in North Carolina before heading to Vietnam in 1971, where he traveled the country by helicopter to minister to soldiers in the field. After the war he became a chaplain at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia.

In 1973 Fr. O’Brien took what would become a 24-year break from his chaplaincy duties and departed for Rome, where he earned a Doctorate in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas. Upon his return stateside in 1976, he served as the vice-chancellor of the Archdiocese of New York and associate pastor at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Between 1983 and 1985 he was the priest-secretary to two Archbishops of New York, Cardinals Cook and O’Connor. Over the next dozen years, he served as rector at the North American College in Rome and St. Joseph’s Seminary in New York, where among his students was the College’s head chaplain, Rev. Joseph Illo.

St. John Paul II appointed Fr. O’Brien to the episcopacy in 1996 as the Auxiliary Bishop of New York. Only one year later, however, the new bishop left his home state to become the Archbishop of the

Archdiocese for the Military Services, U.S.A., the spiritual shepherd for Catholic members of the American Armed Forces and their families around the world. Archbishop O’Brien continued in that role for 10 years until Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI named him the Archbishop of Baltimore in 2007.

In 2012 Pope Benedict elevated Archbishop O’Brien to cardinal, then named him the Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. The Order claims 23,000 clerical, religious, and lay members worldwide. It is responsible for promoting and defending Christianity in the Holy Land, through both prayer and financial assistance.

“From his chaplaincy in the jungles of Vietnam,” said President McLean, “to his care of our nation’s 1.5 million Catholic military men and women, to his stewardship of the Church’s work in the Holy Land, Cardinal O’Brien has exhibited the qualities of a knight in service to his Lord, Jesus Christ: steadfastness in service, courage in teaching and defending the truths of our faith, and selflessness in shepherding the souls in his care.”

From the Desk of the President: “Martha’s Plight”

Dr. McLean’s Remarks to the Class of 2014 at the President’s Dinner

It can be humbling for those of us engaged in the active life, and perhaps as well for you, most of whom are about to embark on an active life, to consider St. Thomas’s many reasons for saying that the contemplative life is more excellent than the active life. I will pass over his first eight reasons and go right to the ninth: “Our Lord adds a ninth reason,” St. Thomas says, “when He says: ‘Mary has chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.’”

In expounding this text, St. Thomas appeals to Augustine, who says: “Not — Thou hast chosen badly but — She has chosen better. Why better? Listen — because it shall not be taken away from her. But the burden of necessity shall at length be taken from thee, whereas the sweetness of truth is eternal.”

We ought to be encouraged, however, by other things St. Thomas says when comparing the active and contemplative lives. For example, immediately after the text I just cited, he says: “Yet in a restricted sense and in a particular case one should prefer the active life on account of the needs of the present life. Thus, too, the Philosopher says: ‘It is better to be wise than to be rich, yet for one who is in need, it is better to be rich.’” Eminently sound advice from an eminently practical man, not to be forgotten — especially when it comes to the financial needs of the College!

Another encouraging remark is found in the next article where St. Thomas argues that the contemplative life is of greater merit than the active life. “Nevertheless,” he says, “it may happen that one man merits more by the works of the active life than another by the works of the contemplative life. For instance through excess of Divine love a man may now and then suffer separation from the sweetness of Divine contemplation for the time being, that God’s will may be done and for His glory’s sake. Thus the Apostle says: ‘For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren’ which words Chrysostom expounds as follows: ‘His mind was so steeped in the love of Christ that, although he desired above all to be with Christ, he despised even this, because thus he pleased Christ.’”

Finally, in the following article, where St. Thomas says that “the active life hinders the contemplative, in so far as it is impossible for one to be busy with external action, and at the same time give oneself to Divine contemplation,” he also says “the active life may be considered as quieting and directing the internal passions of the soul; and from this point of view the active life is a help to the contemplative, since the latter is hindered by the inordinateness of the internal passions. Hence Gregory says: ‘Those who wish to hold the fortress of contemplation must first of all train in the camp of action.’”

I find these comments of St. Thomas encouraging, and I hope you do, too, because Martha’s plight is really the plight of us all: “Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to Him and



said, ‘Lord do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.’” The demands of the active life press upon us, but to the extent that we imitate Martha’s love and her service — she, after all, “received Him into her house” — the active life pertains to charity and so can be a preparation for the contemplative life and a means to our salvation.

St. Kentigern

The life of your class patron, St. Kentigern, after whom our late and dearly beloved friend and classmate, Kent Moore, was named, bore witness to the ordination of the active life to the contemplative life, as well as to the tension that sometimes exists between them. St. Kentigern actively labored as a bishop, living an austere life and making many converts by his holy example and preaching. His work culminated, however, in the founding of a large contemplative monastery in Wales, of which he was the first superior. Called by King Roderick from the contemplative life back to the active life in Scotland, however, St. Kentigern continued to preach and evangelize until founding the See of Glasgow in 581, where he served until his death in 603. St. Kentigern is an excellent model — he seems to have been a man who fulfilled his duties, despite, perhaps, his own personal preferences, and who combined well the active and contemplative lives.

I offer these brief reflections on the active and contemplative lives because they look forward to your pursuits after graduation and because I am often asked, as I suspect you have been and will be often asked, “What good is a liberal education?” or “What have you spent your time and money doing these past four years?” I submit that a very good answer would be “preparing well for the active and contemplative life.”

Consider some of the extremely

important and, I would say, eminently practical things you have learned in your time here. From Socrates, that honest and heartfelt conversation about serious and fundamental things is an integral part of the “examined life.” From Aristotle, that life is not about the acquisition of wealth, the attainment of honor, or the pursuit of pleasure, but rather is about the cultivation of intellectual and moral virtue in the company of good friends. From Sophocles and St. Thomas, that human law must reflect the natural and eternal law and be ordered to the common good. From Scripture and Shakespeare, that we are called to serve others and to love our neighbors as ourselves. From Augustine and Dante, that “our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee,” and that life is ordered to the attainment of heaven.

These are but a few examples, but if you were to consider the matter carefully and at greater length, you would see that your education has been practical in the deepest sense — that it has drawn your attention to the things that make life most worth living and, to that extent, has been an excellent preparation for the active life and for the contemplative life to which the active life is ordered.

The Uses of a Liberal Education

To the question, though, of what you can *do* with your education, I would offer some reassurance: While it seems to make sense that students ought to pursue programs narrowly focused on the labor market — at least to the extent that *jobs* are the be all and end all of education — there is growing evidence that this narrow focus may not work. As an article in the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out recently, “nobody can predict where the jobs will be — not the employers, not the schools, not the government officials who are making loud calls for vocational training. The economy is simply too fickle to guess way ahead of time ... [and] choosing the wrong path could make things worse, not better.”

Moreover, the article continues, “a narrow educational focus would have forced you to pick a career at 17, before you knew much about your interests and abilities. An incorrect choice would require starting over again later on, a not always easy thing to do.”

It is better, then, to have taken the logic class that we hope improved your thinking and reasoning skills and the seminar that we hope improved your writing and reading skills. For these, along with the conversational and analytical skills you have picked up along the way, will help in any field. As you consider what you will *do*, be assured of the value of your education, be confident in articulating its strengths, and always remember that you are better prepared than you might think for doing something important and rewarding, something of service to your Church, to your country, and to your community.

Utilitarian concerns inevitably play a role in life and must be taken seriously. Unfortunately, however, they have become a virtual obsession in education and in the broader culture today. The real answer to the question about the good of your education is found in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians: “If, then, you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.” The curriculum of the College, ordered as it is to Catholic philosophy and theology, has helped you to grow in the knowledge and love of God while the moral and spiritual life of the College has fostered and strengthened your personal relationship with Christ. These are great gifts, examples of the higher things of which St. Paul is speaking.

I am certain that God has a plan for each and every one of you, and that one of the greatest gifts you have received here is the ability to quiet your soul and to hear His voice. This is excellent preparation for discerning whatever work you are called to do. Together with the other gifts you have received, it is also excellent preparation for confronting the atheism and relativism of our time and for heeding St. John Paul II’s call in your class quotation “to work with God in the building of the *civilization of love*.” These things many of you will do by engaging in spiritual and corporal works of mercy, acts of charity which are the summit of the active life. Finally, and most importantly, your education has put you on a path which, if you follow it faithfully, will one day lead to your joining the angels and the saints, among whom, we trust, is Kent Moore, in seeing God in the beatific vision.

Commencement Festivities

1. After completing their theses, seniors burn the draft copies ...
2. ... and after their last exam, they dive into the campus ponds ...
3. ... then boast of their accomplishments in St. Joseph Commons.
4. After the President’s Dinner, seniors go bowling with the tutors ...
5. ... and then mingle with parents at the President’s Reception the next day.



“You Have Been Formed for a Mission”

The Commencement Address of His Eminence Edwin Cardinal O’Brien

An old Irish joke has it that a commencement speaker is like the deceased at an Irish wake: You have to have him so that the party can begin!

Thank you for inviting me to share this special day with you on this beautiful campus, which so magnificently evokes both faith and reason, and which reminds us that beauty is a unique path to God in our confused and sometimes ugly age.

Dear friends of the Class of 2014 of Thomas Aquinas College:

Your commencement day falls between the canonization of Pope St. John Paul II, which was celebrated on April 27, and the Ecumenical pilgrimage of Pope Francis to Jerusalem, Greece, and Rome, which will begin in just one week — the Greek Patriarch, the Pope of Rome on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. That seems an entirely appropriate and happy coincidence for a school like this. For Thomas Aquinas College, which seeks to train young minds in the classics of Western civilization and does so in an authentically Catholic spirit, is a school which appreciates that Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome are the three pillars of Western civilization — the civilizational heritage of which you, the Class of 2014 are the heirs and trustees.

Permit me a few brief thoughts on Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome, their place in the civilizational project that we call the “West,” and the challenges which that project faces today.

Jerusalem

From biblical religion, the West learned the crucial lesson that our lives are not cyclical repetition or chaotic happenstance. Rather, the Bible taught the West that our lives are *in via*, “on the way,” a journey, a pilgrimage, with an origin, a design, and a destination. The origin is God, creator of heaven and earth, and the destination is the Kingdom of God, in the wedding feast of the Lamb, of which St. John wrote in the 21st chapter of the Book of Revelation.

This notion of life as journey or pilgrimage has been crucial to the forward thrust of Western civilization, its orientation toward the future, and its striving to improve the human condition. Life as journey and pilgrimage is never dull and never boring; life as journey and pilgrimage is always an adventure. And if so many of our contemporaries seem, today, dazed and bored, perhaps that’s because they have paid insufficient attention to Jerusalem — to the biblical foundations of our civilization.

And perhaps, in your families and professional lives, you can do something to remind the world that biblical religion liberates human beings in the deepest meaning of human liberation.

Athens

From classical Greek philosophy, which lives here in Santa Paula as it lives in few other American institutions of higher learning, Western civilization learned that there are truths embedded in the world and in us, and that men and women can arrive at those truths through the exercise of reason. (We just heard the Class Speaker give a beautiful exposition of truth and reason.) That confidence is at the root of our convictions about the natural moral law, as it is at the root of Western science.

You have learned here, I’m sure, that reasoning is hard work. But I expect you’ve also learned that the exercise of reason can be exhilarating. Love lifts us out of ourselves; so does learning. As heirs and trustees of the tradition of Athens, my hope for you is that you will all be lifetime learners, who never tire of stretching your minds, as I pray you will never tire of opening your hearts.

And in a culture that is increasingly confused about the truth of things, be, like John Paul II, witnesses to the truth: the truth that there is more than “your truth” and “my truth,” the truth that there is something properly called “*the truth*,” and we have access to it by our reason. There are other avenues to truth, of course: but it will be the task of your generation, tutored by the Pope and saint



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who wrote the encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, to remind the West that reason is part of our civilizational heritage, and that the Catholic Church is the great institutional safe-deposit box of reason in the 21st century West.

Rome

From Rome, and from great figures like Cicero, who through your studies have become your traveling companions on the pilgrimage of life, Western civilization learned that the rule of law is superior to the rule of brute force in the exercise of arbitrary power. That lesson has to be learned in every generation. But in learning it, we recapitulate the lessons learned, not without cost, in the Roman forum and in the building of a law-governed polity that once ruled the entire Mediterranean world.

As that Roman lesson about the superiority of the rule of law worked itself out in the Christian Middle Ages, other ideas were added to the mix: that there is an inherent sense of justice in the people to which just government must attend; that consent is essential to just governance; that positive law must be tethered to the natural moral law if law is not to decompose into an instrument of tyranny. Pope St. John Paul II reminded the West of these truths in his social magisterium; and it must be your care and concern to be witnesses to these truths in your lives as citizens.

Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome: three pillars of the West; three mutually dependent pillars of the West. All must be sturdy; each must reinforce the others, if the Western project is to continue, and continue in ways that support genuine human flourishing. Let me take a brief moment to explore this along the *via negativa*: by way of the bad example of recent history.

As the great French theologian and friend of John Paul II, Henri de Lubac, taught us in his book *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, 19th century European high culture misunderstood the God of the Bible as the enemy of human maturation and freedom. So the God of the Bible had to go, in the name of liberation. The rapid and often virulent secularization of European culture followed.

But then what happened? It turns out that, if you throw the God of the Bible over the side — if you throw

Jerusalem over the side — the Athenian pillar of Western civilization begins to crumble. Reason, left to its own devices, is diminished, and then begins to question its own capacities. Or, to put it another way, if you no longer believe that the God of the Bible imprinted the divine reason on creation, in his very act of creation, then, sooner or later, you will cease to believe that creation is “reasonable:” that there are truths built into the world and into us that we can get to by reason. And that is precisely where we find ourselves today: in a postmodern world that can no longer affirm “the truth,” only “your truth” and “my truth.”

But as John Paul II pointed out, that collapse of faith in the truth is socially and politically unstable. For if there is only your truth and my truth, and neither of us recognizes anything as *the* truth, then how do we settle the argument when your truth and my truth come into conflict? Against what horizon of judgment do we resolve our dispute? There isn’t any. So either you impose your truth on me, or I impose my truth on you.

And that brings us, in short order, to what Pope Benedict XVI called the “dictatorship of relativism.” In a society where Jerusalem and Athens have crumbled, Rome, too, must crumble. When the God of the Bible has been jettisoned and, as a consequence, faith in reason has disappeared, the rule of law will inevitably disappear as well, sooner or later.

In being formed by the unique education offered here at Thomas Aquinas College, you have been formed for a mission: and that mission is nothing less than the rescue of the civilizational project of the West. Some of you will do this in the beautiful microcosm of the family. Others of you will do this through a vocation to the priesthood or the consecrated religious life. All of you will do this, I pray, as citizens. It is a challenge that you have been uniquely equipped to meet, a task for which you are singularly well formed. The challenge and the task are daunting, to be sure. But the challenge and the task are also exhilarating.

Pope St. John Paul II, at your age, lived under a draconian Nazi occupation that seemed to mark the end of civilization: the end of faith, the end of reason, the end of law, the end of mercy and compassion and love. Take heart from his example. By holding fast to Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome, by holding fast to his conviction that Christ has conquered death and that God’s purposes will be vindicated, the young man who became John Paul II survived the Nazi tyranny and defeated the Communist tyranny.

That example can inspire you to be witnesses to truth, witnesses who will help give the West a new birth of freedom: freedom tethered to truth and ordered to goodness; freedom lived beautifully, as you have been taught to live here in this beautiful and noble place.

Godspeed on your journey.

For audio of Cardinal O’Brien’s address, see thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2014.



Cardinal O’Brien presents a diploma to Liam Atchley (’14).

What is Truth?

Excerpts from the 2014 Senior Address

By Felicity Seeley ('14)

Friends, “I should like to have a word with you, here, on this very spot. We shall be parting soon. Let us agree here that we will never forget one another. And whatever may happen to us later in life, even if we do not meet for twenty years afterwards, let us always remember” what good times we have had here, searching for Truth together. “And even though we may be involved in the most important affairs, achieve distinction or fall into some great misfortune, all the same, let us never forget how good we once felt here, all together, united by such good and kind feelings as made us, too, for the time perhaps better than we are.”

Alyosha’s words at the end of Dostoyevsky’s *Brothers Karamazov* remind us of the importance of each and every experience of goodness. This is what the Class of 2014 would like to thank all of you for. Cardinal O’Brien, members of the Board, parents and families, dear tutors and staff, thank you for joining us on this Commencement day to help us form another memory of love and unity. Christ said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). We thank all of you who have given us this school, which has been for us a means to increase in faith, hope, and love, a means for life more abundant than any of us could have imagined.

As Class Speaker, I am supposed to express what we have come to celebrate. My task is to vocalize what may not meet the eye when you look at our class today. You may see a small group of young students who are exhausted from four years of intense studying — and two months of partying. You may see a close-knit bunch of friends who are relieved to be done with this stage of their lives, and joyful to all be done together, if sad to say goodbye. And that is all we may understand ourselves: exhaustion and relief, sadness and vague joy.

But really, we have done something great, something to be proud of. What *have* we been doing these four years?

Finding Truth

Many of Thomas Aquinas College’s T-shirts say, *Carpe Veritatem* — Seize the Truth. You have probably seen them either on the website, in slideshows, or on the backs of your friends and family. We all came here as freshmen to seize the Truth. We all came because Thomas Aquinas College offered Truth, proposed its curriculum and method as truth-seeking. That is what the school set out to teach, and that is what the Class of 2014 set out to find. Did we find it?

Well ... “What is Truth?” (John 18:38). I know I did not have a clear idea when I decided to attend. Perhaps Pilate was right to ask the question. After all, human

beings have asked it since the beginning of language.

There have been many answers: “Truth is individual, dis-integrated facts,” or “Truth is relative.” Some people take a truth to be whatever an authority says, afraid that Truth isn’t strong enough to answer our questions. More recently, the common answer has been, imitating Pilate’s



... and Thomas Quackenbush to sing the National Anthem.

skepticism, “What is Truth? Why search for something so powerless, so meaningless, so being-less? After all, Christ, Who claimed to witness to the Truth (John 18:37), has been brought before the world time and again, and it has judged Him unworthy to be its God and King.”

In the beginning of our pursuit, we learned from Socrates that the first step is to admit, to yourself and others, that *you don’t know everything*. “Always be open to



The Class of 2014 elected Felicity Seeley as its Class Speaker ...

Truth,” he seems to advise. “Open your mind, open your heart, and *keep them open*. When you ‘know’ something, you could be wrong. Don’t blindly follow others’ leads; listen to them, ask questions, and don’t take anything for granted; they could be wrong, too.”

To find Truth we must be open to it; we must not greedily hold on to what we think is right, and we must always be willing to ask questions. Even if what we know is true, that truth can only deepen our souls and fill us up if we have faith in *its* depth, never being content with a surface explanation, but always diving in head-first.

This school’s attitude is ideal for both of these Socratic admonitions. Through the “Socratic Method,” the classes force us to test our own notions and conclusions by fielding the questions of peers and tutors. Similarly, we are encouraged to question and clarify the ideas and opinions of others, whether our fellow students and tutors, or the greatest thinkers Western civilization has ever known. Thus, the school helps in these first steps. Further, it gives us the thoughts that the world has judged the “great books.” We read many writers throughout the centuries of human history because many of them contain snippets and slivers of truth.

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If truth is found in all these places, however, perhaps our search is much more complicated than we thought. For every truth participates in and is a facet of *the Truth*. This includes truths of every subject, from philosophy and theology to astronomy and music. The challenge is to continuously fit them together so that no class is separate from the others, so that each brings Truth’s diversity to one place: our souls, hearts, and minds. We must always remember what we have learned, making sure that what we are saying now in math agrees with what we said last semester in theology. That is what an integrated curriculum is all about: making Truth one.

This is also what makes Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas so great. Their works form an integrated whole; these authors touch on everything because their idea of Truth is one. Every truth they find touches on another until they have built a complete understanding of the world. Anything that does not fit either has to be modified and fixed, or it has to modify and fix their world view. Each piece that *does* fit fills out their understanding of the whole.

The Beginning of Eternal Wisdom

The Truth we came to seek at Thomas Aquinas College is not simply “the knowable things,” whatever we

can fit in our minds such that we can be certain, knowing its cause, that it is the cause, and that it cannot be otherwise. If that were so, it would imply that Truth can be fully comprehended by us, that there is nothing beyond human understanding. But we know this to be false. Our patron, St. Thomas, spends time proving that God is infinite, that is, unbounded, and therefore far beyond the comprehension of our limited minds. But we already know that God is Truth. Thus, we can conclude that, while knowable things are part of Truth, and the foundation for our knowledge of it, the fullness of Truth is not knowable by us.

After all, Truth is to be found in every part of us. Searching for Truth is not just a formation of our minds, but also of our hearts. It teaches us to *desire* what we know of it, not only what is comprehensible, but also the mysteries. For this Truth is not merely of understanding, but one of *living* and *being*. It is both knowing and loving with our whole soul everything that we can know and love; it is participating in what God knows and loves.

That, friends and family of the Class of 2014, is what we have gained: the beginning of Eternal Wisdom. That is what we celebrate. Now we will go out into the world, hoping to continue our learning at the hands of God, Who teaches through His creation. We go out as Christ sent His Apostles: “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matt. 10:16). Being witnesses to Christ and the Truth means again baring our souls, showing our world to those who have not seen it. God will give us courage and aid. “Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say,” Christ orders us; “for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”

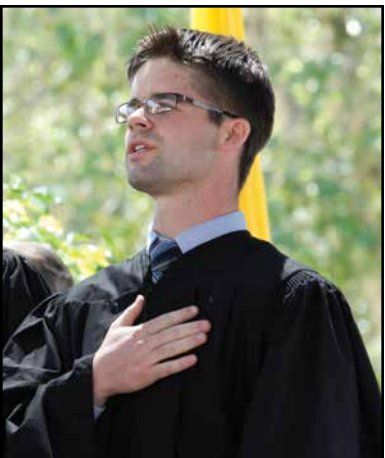
As I see it, Christ is the jackhammer to Plato’s Cave. With one saving act, He destroyed the dark world of opinion forever; the world will never be the same. His help is more effective than any argument, and His love shining through us, informed by the Truth we have found here, is all we need in order to serve Him and bring others to love Him, too.

When I was a freshman, a senior commented on freshman theology, pointing out to me, “If you are reading the Bible and it is not changing your life, you are not reading it.” She was right. The Scriptures are pure and eternal Truth. The same power can be attributed to all the Truth we read here. The power of Truth is to change us from the inside out; to liberate us from sin and error; to free us from fear and lead us to eternal happiness; to transform us, as He has all His saints throughout the ages, into His servants, friends, and brothers. When Pilate scoffs, it is only because he cannot see this power. He does not search for it, he does not love it.

I end with the hope that Alyosha expresses in his speech at the stone: “Ah, dear friends, do not be afraid of life! How good life is when you do something good and just! Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened!” We look forward to that day, when together, “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

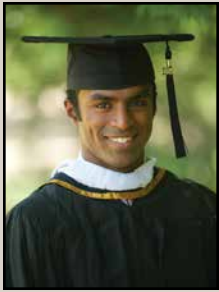
Thank you, and congratulations to the Class of 2014!

For the full text and audio of Miss Seeley’s address, see thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2014.



... Patrick Cross to lead the Pledge of Allegiance ...

The Class of 2014 and Senior Thesis Titles



“In Your Light We Shall See Light”:
An Investigation of Theology’s
Place in the Order of Learning
and Her Relation to the Human
Sciences

JACOB ALEXANDER
Tempe, Arizona



Do Animals Have Feelings Too?
An Exposition of the Difference
Between the Emotions of Humans
and Animals Based on Aristotelian
Philosophy and Modern Neuroscience

**ANGELIQUE PAULE MARIE
ATCHLEY**
Anaheim, California



A Link to the Past:
An Investigation of the Role of
History in the Understanding and
Development of Political Science

LIAM THOMAS ATCHLEY
Anaheim, California

The Importance of Emotions
and the Insufficiency of Mathematics
in a Correct Understanding of Music

**GABRIEL JOSEPH
BAGDAZIAN**
Santa Paula, California



The Fittingness of the Baptism
at the Jordan

MARIA JOHANNA BARRETT
Montreal, Quebec, Canada



The Mystery of Material Beings:
An Investigation of
Unity and Complexity

REBECCA ANNE BESSETTE
Upland, California



Would Aristotle Sky-Dive?
A Defense of Dangerous Activities

WILLIAM JOSEPH BITTMAN
Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada



The Reality Beyond Sense

JESSE BRUCE BLACKLOCK
Long Beach, California



“Ask and You Shall Receive”:
An Investigation into the Nature
of the Causality of Prayer

LUKE ROBERT BLAIN
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Technology in the Intellectual Life:
The Place of Modern Technology
in the Life of a Christian

JACOB BORCHERS
Walnut Creek, California



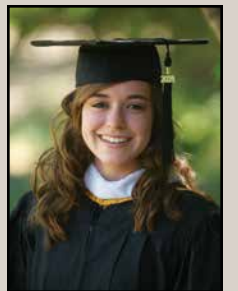
“Who Do You Say That I Am?”
An Investigation of Human Persons
and How We Come to Know Them

EDWARD JOSHUA BUECHE
Shelby Township, Michigan



Render to God What Is God’s:
A Defense of the Natural Law as the
Foundation of the Political System

ELISABETH RAE CERVANTES
Redding, California



On the Moral Character of Music

SAMUEL ALFRED CHASUK
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



The Place of Friendship in the
Attainment of Man’s End

**DANIELLE CLAIRE
CHOUINARD**
Omaha, Nebraska



On the Morality of Human
Genetic Modification

MARTIN JOSEPH CISKANIK
New Castle, Delaware

Our Knowledge and Love in the
Heart of the Trinity

MIRJANA SAWABI COCCIA
Randolph, New Jersey



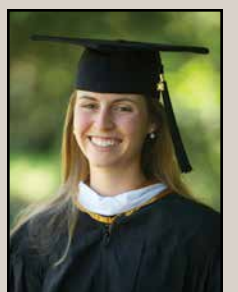
“Theirs Was the Task and Nobly
They Performed It”: A Defense of
the United States Constitution and
Its Promotion of Happiness

PATRICK TOBIN CROSS
Leominster, Massachusetts



Is There Such a Thing as a Stoic
Christian? The Incompatibility of
Epictetus’ Presentation of Stoicism
with the Christian Life

JENNIFER RAGNHILD DAILEY
Orange, California



“The Time of Death Is Every Moment”:
A Consideration of How to Live in the
Present Moment

HANNAH JANE DEROCHER
Milford, Michigan



“In All Its Radiant Mystery”:
The Significance of Holy
Communion Under the
Species of Bread

**COLLEEN MARIE CECILIA
DONNELLY**
White Rock, British Columbia, Canada



The Soul of the Apostolate:
Contemplation as the
Soul of Evangelization

SARAH PAULINE DUFRESNE
Ventura, California



Blessed Are Those Called to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb: An Investigation of the Call to Participate in the Holy Mass
CARTER MORRIS FARRIER
Camas Prairie, Montana



“When He Saw Him, He Had Compassion”: An Exposition of the Necessity of Christian Witness for Evangelization as Seen through the Parable of the Good Samaritan
NIKOLINA ANDREA FLOREZ
Auburn, California



“But You Have Come ... to Jesus, the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the Sprinkled Blood That Speaks More Graciously Than Abel’s”: An Inquiry into How the Sacrifice and Death of Abel Prefigure the Crucifixion of Christ
MICHAEL JOSEPH SCHAEFFER FORSYTH
Santa Paula, California

“For Suffering, It Seems, Is Infinite, and Our Capacity Without Limit”: An Investigation into the Transformative Power of Emotional Pain in C.S. Lewis’ *Till We Have Faces*

MARGARET ELIZABETH GARDNER
Brookfield, Wisconsin



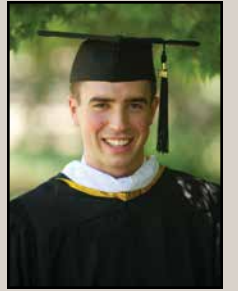
Descartes’ Cognitive Theory: A Confused Affirmation of the Two Kinds of Human Knowing

CAITLIN SHEA GRIFFITH
Idaho Falls, Idaho



Aristotle’s *Topics*: A Place for Credible Opinions

ANDREW JOSEPH GRIMES
Minneapolis, Minnesota



A Critique of Rousseau’s Understanding of Human Nature and Private Property
ADRIENNE MARGUERITE GRIMM
San Dimas, California



“When Pride and a Little Scratching Pen Have Dried and Split the Hearts of Men”: The Impoverishment of Human Knowledge and the Role of Beauty in Science
MARIETTA ANGELINA MICHELLE GRUMBINE
Whittier, California



“For Me, to Live Is Christ and to Die is Gain”: Death in Christ as Fullness of Life and Completion of Joy
ASHLEIGH ROSE GRYNNER
Taos, New Mexico

On the Apparent Conflict Between the Common Good and Human Rights
MICHAEL JOSEPH HEINSER
Groton, Massachusetts



What Is Government But the Greatest of All Reflections on Human Nature? An Inquiry into One’s View of the Role of Sensation as the Fundamental Principle Determining a Government

STEPHANIE ALISON ELIZABETH LAMORE
New Britain, Connecticut



“And They Were Both Naked... and Were Not Ashamed”: The Nude as the Highest Material Object of the Visual Arts

MARIANA ELIZABETH LANGLEY
Savannah, Georgia



Essence *in re* and Essence in the Mind: The Remote and Proximate Foundations for Universality
SARAH GRACE LANGLEY
Cleveland Heights, Ohio



The Severe Mercy of Sts. Augustine and Faustina: Reconciling the “Doctor of Grace” with the “Secretary of Mercy”
SEBASTIAN JOSEPH LEMMON
Nevada City, California



The Holy Cosmos: Creation, Communication, and Natural Science
MARICLARE ELIZABETH LESSARD
Pasadena, California

Can Rights Suffice? An Investigation of the Natural End of Government through a Comparison of the Political Theories of Locke and Aristotle

ANTHONY MICHAEL LETTENNEY
Santa Paula, California



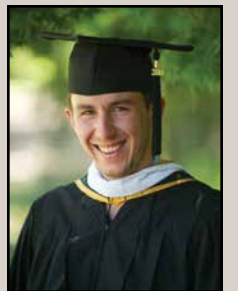
“I Have, However, Cogitating with Myself, Seen Further. . .”: A Comparison of William Harvey and Isaac Newton with Regard to Final Causality

RACHEL MARIE GENEVIEVE LOGAN
East Moline, Illinois



“The Power of the Society Can Never Be Supposed to Extend Farther Than the Common Good”: Why Religion Is a Common Good and How the First Amendment Protects It

ALEC IAN MACISAAC
Porterville, California



A Defense of Agriculture as an Art in the Order of Nature Against Genetic Engineering as an Abuse of the Order of Nature
PATRICK FRANCIS MAHAR
Phoenix, Arizona



Contemplation: The Source of Merit of the Active and Contemplative Lives Alike
SARA MARIA MAJKOWSKI
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada



How Man Can Merit from God by Nature
AILEEN ROSE MCCARTHY
Gallup, New Mexico

Senior Thesis Titles



The Role of Religion in Government
GEORGE WILLIAM MOHUN
Santa Paula, California



Life's Work: The Relationship of
Political Virtue to the Happiness of
Every Man
**CHRISTOPHER MATTHEW
MOLANDER**
Clovis, California



In Defense of Pi: An Examination of
the Relationship Between Straight
and Curved
**JOSEPH FRANCIS
MONTANARO**
Stafford, Virginia

Tenebrism in Literature: A Validation
of St. Augustine through an Analysis
of *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*

JESSE DAVID MOORE
Bakersfield, California



A Structural Reexamination
of the Angelic Hierarchies for
the Illumination of Man as a
Cosmological Being

LUKE AARON MOSCOSO
Denver, Colorado



An Investigation of the Necessity of
Friendship for Happiness on Earth
and for Achieving Salvation

BRIAN PETER MURPHY
Cheshire, Connecticut



Collateral Damage: Whether the
Killing of Innocents in Combat Is
Reconcilable with Morality

NOLAN JOSEPH NAPIER
Rancho Palos Verdes, California



The Caribou, The Citizen, and The
Saint: An Examination of Man's
Natural and Supernatural End

ERIC MICHAEL OGRODNICK
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada



"It's All Part of the Plan": A Defense of
St. Augustine's Painting Analogy as a
Response to the Problem of Evil

MARIA BRIANA PAPE
Boise, Idaho

Charity for Each Other Is the Surest
Way to Great Holiness: An Essay on
The Second Great Commandment

**FELICITY GABRIELLE
ELIZABETH PASTRONE**
Lunenburg, Massachusetts



An Exposition of Newton's Two
Lunar Theories: On the Importance
and Utility of Natural Philosophy

JOHN FRANCIS PASTRONE
Lunenburg, Massachusetts



When Mercy Seasons Justice:
An Examination of Justice and Mercy
as Attributes of the Divine

**ELIZABETH WINFIELD
PEDDEMORS**
Attica, Michigan



The Carpenter of Nazareth:
A Consideration of Christ's use of
Parable as a Tool for Teaching
the Divine to Fallen Man

ELIZABETH ANN PERRY
Delta, British Columbia, Canada



The Stuff That Matters:
The Atom as an Element

KRISTIN RENAE PERSONIUS
Keller, Texas



Ask Not What Your Country
Can Do for You

ANDREW JOSEPH PFEIFFER
Downers Grove, Illinois

Don't Worry, Be Stoic!
ALEXANDER POTTS
Kansas City, Missouri



The Cosmic Game: Angelic
Causality in the Material Realm
THOMAS QUACKENBUSH
Oak View, California



"Am I a Beast More Complicated
and Savage Than Typhon, or Am I a
Tamer, Simpler Animal with a Share
in a Divine and Gentle Nature?" An
Exposition of the Best and Most
Complete Definition of Man

ABIGAIL LYNN QUINAN
Manassas, Virginia



To Kiss the Earth: A Look at the Fruit
of Suffering as Seen in *The Brothers
Karamazov*

ABIGAIL GRACE RETALLICK
Missoula, Montana



Logic, Truth, and Being: An
Investigation into the Principles of
Reason and Knowledge

**ZACHARY TAYLOR
REYNOLDS**
Alleyton, Texas



"Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra
veneratur": An Investigation
into the Cosmic Liturgy with
Cardinal Ratzinger

**SEAN PATRICK JOSEPH
ROBERTSON**
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

The Class of 2014 and Senior Thesis Titles



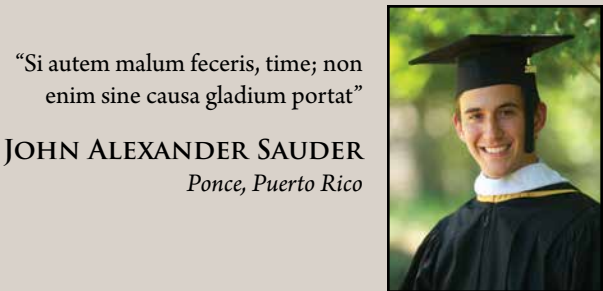
An Exegesis of Prospero as a God Figure in *The Tempest*
MARIA VERONICA RUSSELL
Ann Arbor, Michigan



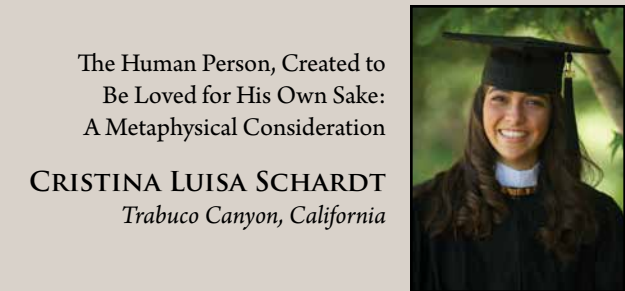
“More Than a Requirement”:
An Inquiry into the Affective and Voluntary Nature of Love
REBECCA ELIZABETH RYLAND
San Marcos, California



The Role of the Saints in Man’s Salvation
RACHEL ANN SANTINE
Macomb, Michigan



“Si autem malum feceris, time; non enim sine causa gladium portat”
JOHN ALEXANDER SAUDER
Ponce, Puerto Rico



The Human Person, Created to Be Loved for His Own Sake: A Metaphysical Consideration
CRISTINA LUISA SCHARDT
Trabuco Canyon, California



When Justice and Mercy Kiss: An Examination of the Compatibility of Justice and Mercy
KIMBERLY MADSEN SCHMIDGALL
Fairborn, Ohio



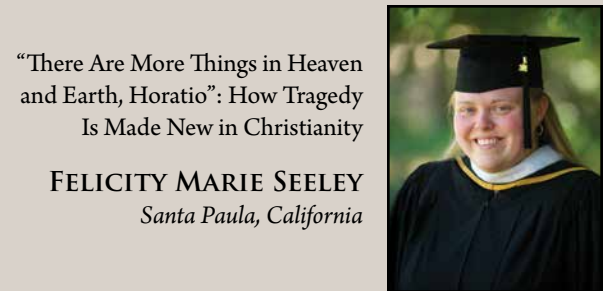
Subdue the Earth: A Defense of the Importance and Necessity of Manual Labor
SEAN MICHAEL SCHMIDGALL
Portland, Oregon



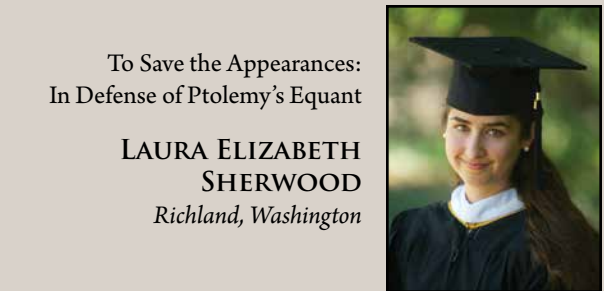
Whether It Is Self-Evident That All Men Are Created Equal
JACK JOSEPH SCHUTH
Wayzata, Minnesota



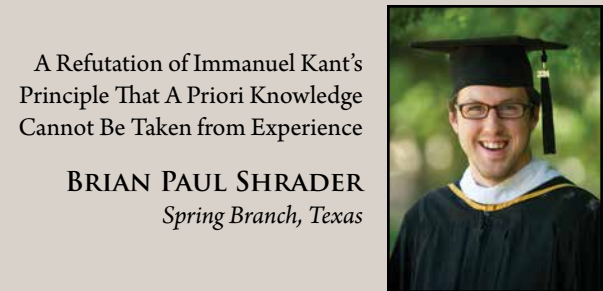
“The Clerk’s Tale”: An Insufficient Account of How to Accept Trial from God
STEPHANIE MARY SEBASTIAN
Rio Grande, Ohio



“There Are More Things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio”: How Tragedy Is Made New in Christianity
FELICITY MARIE SEELEY
Santa Paula, California



To Save the Appearances: In Defense of Ptolemy’s Equant
LAURA ELIZABETH SHERWOOD
Richland, Washington



A Refutation of Immanuel Kant’s Principle That A Priori Knowledge Cannot Be Taken from Experience
BRIAN PAUL SHRADER
Spring Branch, Texas



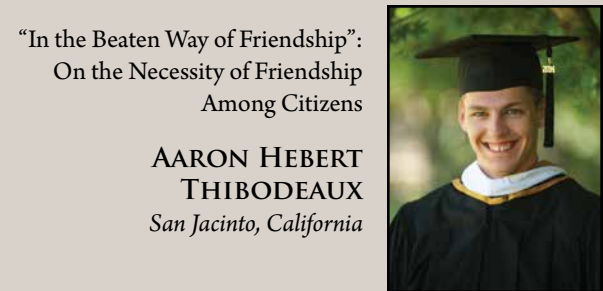
God Writes in Pen: The Natural Law in the Heart of the Vicious Man
MONICA ROSE SMILLIE
Helena, Montana



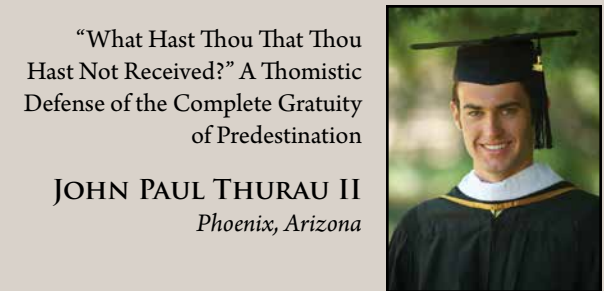
Bawdy Humor in *The Canterbury Tales*
JAMES WRANOVICS SPONSLER
Tehachapi, California



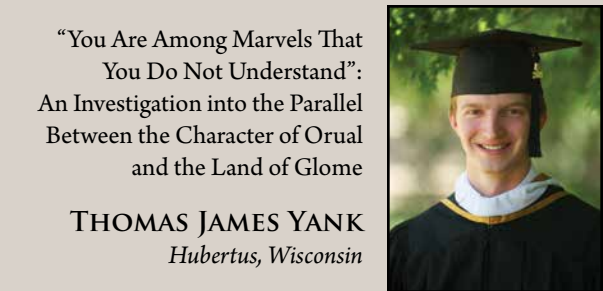
The Wealth of Nations and the Pursuit of Happiness
PHILIP ANTHONY TARR
Willoughby, Ohio



“In the Beaten Way of Friendship”: On the Necessity of Friendship Among Citizens
AARON HEBERT THIBODEAUX
San Jacinto, California



“What Hast Thou That Thou Hast Not Received?” A Thomistic Defense of the Complete Gratuity of Predestination
JOHN PAUL THURAU II
Phoenix, Arizona

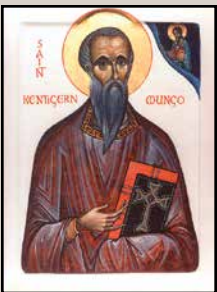


“You Are Among Marvels That You Do Not Understand”: An Investigation into the Parallel Between the Character of Orual and the Land of Glome
THOMAS JAMES YANK
Hubertus, Wisconsin



Leibniz: God’s Knowledge of Contingent Things in *Discourse on Metaphysics*
LEON ISAAC ZEPEDA
Alhambra, California

Patron of the Class of 2014:
St. Kentigern
Namesake of Andrew Kentigern Moore (’14)+



Orthodox Church in America <http://oca.org>

Senior Reflections

Staring at the Light in the Abyss

Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its May 16, 2014, meeting.

By Patrick Cross ('14)

I would like to start off by thanking you all for having me here today. I do not know if I am more honored or terrified to be here, but I am very honored. If I start trembling in the middle of my speech, it's because I do that when I am incredibly confident.



My path to Thomas Aquinas College has not been unique. I am from a family of seven. My older sister and brother are both graduates, and my father was a graduate of the first class on the old campus. I am originally from Massachusetts, where I spent the early years of my life being homeschooled, and later on I attended a high school called Trivium School.

My love was and still is for politics and art — an odd duo of interests, I admit, with very little commerce between them. However, my parents told me that whichever one of these I chose to pursue in life, Thomas Aquinas College would give me a solid foundation on which to build and from which to draw inspiration. I had and have great faith in my parents, and so I decided to attend Thomas Aquinas College in the fall of 2010.

As to my upbringing, my path to this college, my intellectual capacity, my stature, and indeed my very countenance, I am nothing more than an average Thomas Aquinas student. However, upon reflection it has often

occurred to me that the average student at this college has been blessed to a greater degree than perhaps any person in the world, past or present. And to say this, I believe, is not to be hyperbolic.

As regards our upbringing, we students, for the most part, have been born into families as stable as any. As regards our home, we have been blessed to live in a land which affords us unparalleled peace and opportunity to perfect ourselves and others. As regards our religion, we are the inheritors of the one true Catholic faith. And finally, as regards our learning, we have received an education which induces more essentially to the end of man than perhaps any in the world today. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, "We have truly been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven."

My fellow seniors and I have, admittedly, labored little in the acquisition of these bounties. You, our families, and our friends have been the laborers; we the recipients. Therefore, I would like to thank you for all you have done for us. However, with every blessing there is a duty, and we are reminded of the words of our Savior, that "to whom much is given, much is expected." Our blessings have been greater than any, and so too must be our duty.

This duty can be intimidating, but it is ours only because you, as instruments of the Lord, have equipped us. Friedrich Nietzsche, perhaps the antithesis of all we do here, once said that when you stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back into you. My fellow seniors and I stand before the rest of our lives. In front of us is a culture hostile to all we believe in. We, as it were, stare into the abyss. However, we are not like Mr. Nietzsche. We have faith and for the last four years, with the guidance of this college, we have sought understanding. So as we stare into the abyss before us, we do not see a sinister face staring

"We have received an education which induces more essentially to the end of man than perhaps any in the world today. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, 'we have truly been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven.'"

back. We see a light shining in the darkness, and it is by this light that we shall move forward.

Our skills and our interests will take us far apart from each other. Some will teach, some do business, others pursue the religious life. I, as I said earlier, intend to pursue politics and art, and if I am lucky, combine them in editorial cartooning. However, in the immediate future I will serve as an Admissions counselor for the College, a task I am honored and delighted to take up.

Wherever our paths take us, I want to assure you, the Board of Governors, that we will strive to reward all the work and sacrifice you have so nobly performed for this college, by bringing the light of truth to those we encounter in our life ahead. We are excited by the prospect of bringing truth to others, and we have the assurance not that we shall never meet with hardship and at times fall, but that when we fall, we shall rise, and when we sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to us.

On behalf of my class and the whole student body, I would once again like to thank you, the Board of Governors, for all that you do. May God bless you, and may God bless Thomas Aquinas College.

Mr. Cross is from Leominster, Massachusetts.

On Our Duty and Our Gift

Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its May 16, 2014, meeting.

By Laura Sherwood ('14)

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be here today and, above all, I would like to thank you on behalf of all my fellow students for your efforts in support of the College as members of the Board of Governors. The education we have received here is truly invaluable, and it would not be possible without your support. We will always be praying for you and for all the benefactors of the College.



Before I came here, I knew no graduate or current student, I knew next to nothing about the program, and I could recognize St. Thomas on a holy card, but that was just about all I knew about him. My wonderful mother first heard about the College when I was in middle school and, by the grace of God, even then I was saying I wanted to attend Thomas Aquinas College. Throughout high school I always said the same. Then came the summer after my senior year, long after I had been accepted, long after I had put the deposit down to come here, when I realized that I had never thought about *why* I wanted to come.

Suddenly I was not pleased with myself for embarking on such a great California adventure, when I could have attended the local Catholic-but-not-really university and roomed with my best friend, going home whenever I wanted. In hindsight, I know that the Lord wanted me to receive this incredible education and therefore gave me the grace of almost perfect confidence throughout the whole college decision-making process, and even long before — otherwise, I do not know that I would be here today.

My high school education was rigorous, and to this day I love my teachers. Still, it was nothing but a preparation for good SAT scores, the Advanced Placement college tests, and getting good marks at the university of my choice. I had experienced nothing like a Thomas Aquinas College education, and because of this, my freshman year here was difficult. It took me quite a while to get used to the Discussion Method, to be able to understand the structure of arguments in the texts. Our readings in the Philosophy tutorial were so unintelligible to me that they might as well have been in a different language.

But I was changing. One of my favorite parts of my freshman year was coming to realize that the world was intelligible. It was so incredible for me to be able to see, over and over again in the Natural Science tutorial, how nature acts for an end. The exhaustive categorization of syllogistic forms for arguments and the beautiful progression in Euclidian geometry were truths that I just never would have expected. Growing up, I was immersed, without even knowing it, in our post-Cartesian, cultural idea that the outside world is unintelligible. The liberation from that was life-changing.

Here at Thomas Aquinas College we receive the education of a free man, insofar as it helps him to achieve freedom. We do not pursue this education for the sake of rocketing ourselves into the job market. We pursue this education to learn about the truth that allows us to function according to the highest parts in our soul. Such studies not only liberate us from the falsehood that is so apparent in our culture today, but also from our own ignorance. As Christians we believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and so we know that our studies are ultimately focused on Him. The Gospel of John records Jesus saying, "I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." Here we have the privilege of becoming free by finding, or in many cases being found by, the truth and abiding in it.

Here at the College I have been found by the Truth, and now it is my duty to take it into the world. We as

"Here at the College I have been found by the Truth, and now it is my duty to take it into the world. We as Christians are called to form a city on a hill, and to be a light of the world. But for us graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, the rules by which we are this light and by which we will evangelize our culture have been defined by our education here."

Christians are called to form a city on a hill, and to be a light of the world. But for us graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, the rules by which we are this light and by which we will evangelize our culture have been defined by our education here. Next year I will be teaching geometry at St. Mary's High School in Phoenix, Arizona. By the grace of God, there will be three other ladies from my class teaching there with me, and many more of my friends will be teaching within the Great Hearts Charter School system, also in Phoenix. This coming December, I am marrying one of my classmates here in our beautiful chapel. We cannot begin to thank you for making all this possible.

The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Mr. Cain, often speaks of the Latin word *munus*. It is translated primarily as "duty," but also can be translated as "gift." As members of the Thomas Aquinas College community, we have a duty to fight for the College, but this duty is also our unique gift from God. Thank you so much for everything you do for the College. Let us carry out our sacred duty and bring the light of Christ to the world by doing everything we can to support the College. I am confident that this duty is a gift that will bring us life more abundantly. Thank you so much.

Miss Sherwood is from Richland, Washington.

The Soldier and the Good Samaritan

An Interview with His Eminence Edwin Cardinal O’Brien

You have been Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem for two years now. Would you describe the mission and works of the Order?

While lore bases the founding of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in the Crusades, it was only in the mid-19th century that the Holy See decided to bring together a formal papal order. We now have 30,000 members in 35 countries.

The main goal of the Order is personal holiness, personal sanctity. We hope that the graces that come to our members through the Order will assist their efforts to be closer to Christ and the Church. In addition, our mission is to guard the holy places, to keep them from becoming museums. We also have a special allegiance to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and we support and encourage him in his pastoral work.

The Latin Patriarchate has 45 schools and 60 parishes and parochial centers. With the reduction in the Christian population there (it used to be that Christians were 10 percent of the population, but now they are barely 2 percent), it is difficult to keep all of these institutions open. It is very important, therefore, that support comes from outside to keep Christians close to their faith and encourage them that they are not alone. They are in a terrible situation, being hemmed in on every side. There is a wall, as you know — 440 feet long and 30 feet high — that is separating the Palestinians from their families and their places of work; they cannot enter the city of Jerusalem.

Only 5 percent of the Palestinians are Catholic, but we are interested in human rights for all these poor people. They feel they have no one to speak for them, so the Church tries to be their voice. But we leave it up to God. We do not get involved in the politics, but we do encourage our members to come on pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre and the other holy places, to see how the \$13 million they contribute each year supports the Latin Patriarchate. We want them to see, too, the repression that is taking place. Our hope is that they will have an influence back home.

“What would have happened a half hour before, if that Samaritan saw that this man was being pummeled half to death? Would he have a right to step back and say, ‘I will become a Samaritan about a half hour after this is over,’ or would he not have a right and obligation to step in and do what he had to do — and only what had to be done — to bring about justice there? That is what the military is.”

You mentioned that while the Christian population has shrunk rather dramatically, the Patriarchate nevertheless maintains the same number of schools. Who is enrolled?

Well, a large minority of the students in the schools are Muslim. As I say, “We build bridges, not walls.” At Bethlehem University, for example, I think half the population is Muslim. These young people graduate and are grateful to the Church, and they assume high positions in the West Bank, in its administration, in businesses, and so forth. These are moderate people, these are peace-loving people. The Arabs and Christians get along very well.

Among the Christians you do not hear the word “Catholic,” or “Protestant,” or “Orthodox.” It is “Christian.” We are all Christians, and we are all in this together. When we say that barely 2 percent of the population is Christian, we are talking about all the Christian denominations together, but I think our Catholic community takes the lead in many ways. The \$13 million that the Holy Sepulchre gives to the Patriarch is a fraction, probably a half or so, of all the money raised for and by Catholic institutions in the Holy Land.

It sounds like a great deal of coordination and cooperation is needed. Does your experience as Archbishop for the Military Services come to bear in this work now?

The military in the Western world has had a great interest in justice and in making sure that rights are being protected and so forth. Americans in general tend to have this protective mindset, but I think you get an extra taste of it when you see the sacrifices that Americans are making all around the world for perfect strangers — for their human dignity — and I think that coincides with what the Church wants, too.

As Archbishop for the Military Services, did you also minister to the families of service members?

Yes, and they are the ones who are suffering, sometimes more than the troops, because they are left alone for long periods of time. A man might be gone to Afghanistan and Iraq for three years, and when he returns his children will not even know him. Family breakups, adjustments, violence, and the scars these wars are leaving on the hearts and souls of our troops are going to last a long time.

You have emphasized the moral and just deployment of our troops and mechanisms of war. Would you speak about the Church’s “just war” theory?

Our troops need to be instructed in the just war theory. I gave a talk to some generals on nuclear warfare and the Church’s position on nuclear weaponry. One general said he had never heard of just war theory. He might have heard the term, but no one had ever spelled it out for him.

One of my greatest challenges and responsibilities was persuading 19-year old Catholics, who instinctively feel that there is some conflict between the Catholic faith and bearing arms, that they need not feel that way. I use the example of the Good Samaritan. The story is of a fellow who is beaten half to death, left dying. Two pass by, and they are big shots in the religious organizations of the time, and the third is a stranger, a Samaritan, who stops and pours oil and bandages the wounded man. We all know the story very well. Well, I say, “What would have happened a half hour before, if that Samaritan saw that this man was being pummeled half to death? Would he have a right to step back and say, ‘I will become a Samaritan about a half hour after this is over,’ or would he not have a right and obligation to step in and do what he had to do — and only what had to be done — to bring about justice there?” That is what the military is.

Military service is a Christian vocation, if only our people were conscious of the potential to adopt it as a Christian vocation. That is the role of the Church, to remind them that there need be no conflict, and that the Church considers — and always has considered — military service to be a lofty call: an act of love. Christ defined Himself as one who came to serve and not to be served. “No greater love than this, to give one’s life for a friend.” Our kids are giving their lives for perfect strangers. “Peace I leave you.”

You went from that very unconventional diocese to the Diocese of Baltimore, which is utterly conventional. Did you enjoy serving as archbishop there?

Immensely, especially because it is the premiere See in our country, with a great history. People are conscious of that Catholic history. We have 150 parishes in the Baltimore diocese serving about 500,000 people.

One of your main efforts was to improve enrollment at the Catholic schools of Baltimore. What is so important about Catholic education?

Well, the education landscape is a wasteland otherwise. I spoke in my Commencement Address about the importance of a biblical and a Christian outlook on life, and the role of the natural law, founded in the human person. (See page 3.) In our Catholic schools, the mes-



sage gets across that you must respect Johnny, and you must respect Sally, because they are children of God. We are unafraid to talk about these things at every level. We have the Ten Commandments and we have the Works of Mercy to carry out. This Catholic culture is built upon by formal religion classes, but it starts with a great sense of incorporation in Christ, of oneness in Jesus. At the earliest days children learn the word “Jesus.” Without all of this, what would there be? There would be, I am afraid, what we see elsewhere: policemen on every floor and shootings.

You have served as rector of St. Joseph’s Seminary in New York and of the North American College in Rome; and in recent years, you oversaw the Holy See’s visitation to American seminaries. Was it a difficult assignment to oversee that visitation?

Not really. We had some resistance, but some very fine leaders were chosen for the visitation, religious and secular clergy. At its completion, I received a letter from Cardinal Grocholewski, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education (for Institutes of Study), who oversaw the visitation, saying that he thought it had been a great success and would set a pattern for visitations around the world. We have really, I think, taken a big step in priestly formation as a result of the review in the mid-50s and now again in 2005.

This is not to ignore the grave problems we have been dealing with in recent years, but most of those were from the 1960s and ’70s. Very few, maybe two or three, happened this year, but I think in general we are over that era, partly because of the attention being given and also because of the education that our seminarians and our religious are getting now on marriage, on human sexuality, and in their pastoral responsibility. We do, however, still have a price to pay, and we must help heal wounds and take care of those who have been harmed. That will go on for a long time.

Pope Francis is constantly mentioning to new priests, “Be a priest and a pastor first; you are not a scholar first.” I know many seminaries that are overflowing; one or two are turning people down now. Some have as many as 220 seminarians, and I think 90 percent of them make a holy hour every day. That is going to carry through with spiritual direction. It is a whole new Church.

Even as the world seems to descend to ever-lower depths, you see the Church coming to life again?

Well, yes. Look at this college. I am overwhelmed at the spirit here and the accomplishments of your alumni, at the vision of your founders. I can see that that vision has been carried through for 40 years now. It is great to see that similar enthusiasm and vision carried on through the generations. Your Board of Governors here certainly has kept that, and I hope this college continues to attract Board members like that for years to come.

Building the Civilization of Love

What’s Next for the Class of 2014

For their class quotation members of the Class of 2014 chose the words of one the Church’s newest saints, Pope St. John Paul II, offered at Toronto’s World Youth Day in 2002: *“The future is in your hearts and in your hands. God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with Him in the building of the civilization of love.”*

It is clear that the Class of 2014 has taken the late Holy Father’s message to heart. Its members are committed, whether in the marketplace, in the home, in the classroom, or in the media, to sharing the fruits of their liberal education and the gifts of their faith. They will be the educators and architects, the scientists and physicians, the religious and lay people who, working as members of the Body of Christ, will help to build the civilization of love.

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

When **Luke Blain** first arrived at the College, he never imagined pursuing a career that had anything to do with mathematics. “I didn’t like math very much in high school,” he says. “But seeing the progression of mathematical discoveries by Newton, Kepler, and Ptolemy really made the subject come alive.” He will tutor students in math and science in Northern California while completing prerequisite courses for graduate school in mathematics or physics. **Jacob Borchers** is preparing for graduate studies in computer science. **Joseph Montanaro** is the new IT administrator for Mother of Divine Grace School in Ojai, California.

Public Policy

Looking to gain a deeper understanding of citizenship and statecraft, **Zachary Reynolds** will pursue a master’s degree at the Hillsdale Graduate School of Statesmanship, after which he intends go to law school and work in the judiciary. **Nolan Napier** will study statecraft and international affairs at the Institute of World Politics in Washington, D.C.



Liam Atchley, William Bittman, and Michael Forsyth

Business

While a student at the College, **Michael Forsyth** had a summer internship with the SGB-NIA insurance brokerage in Woodland Hills, California, that has evolved into a full-time position. “In business, there’s a lot of interaction, negotiation, and working together to come to solutions,” he says. “That’s what we do every day in the classroom at the College.” **Liam Atchley** and **William Bittman** plan to spend the next year working and applying to MBA programs.

Journalism & Media

This summer **Elisabeth Cervantes** has an internship for the editorial page of the *San Diego Union Tribune*. “Because in journalism there is such a wide range of topics you have to cover, it is good to have the broad background that the College’s curriculum provides,” she says. **Felicity Seeley** will take some writing classes, with long-term ambitions to craft short stories, opinion pieces, and novels.

Arts & Entertainment

Combining his artistic talents with computer skills he acquired while working in the College’s IT department for his Student Scholarship job, **Gabriel Bagdazian** has set his sights on a career in graphic design. He is an IT administrator at Villanova Preparatory School in Ojai, and takes design classes on the side. “The College has helped me appreciate beauty a lot more, how important it is to every single person,” he observes. An accomplished soloist, **Colleen Donnelly** will attend the University of British Columbia’s School of Music, where she will concentrate in opera performance. **Angelique Atchley** plans to pursue a master’s of music degree in voice. **Patrick Cross** will spend the next year working in the College’s Admissions Department, but ultimately hopes to combine his affinity for art with his penchant for politics as an editorial cartoonist.

Education

Every year, education is the most popular career choice among the College’s graduates, and 2014 is no exception. “My time at Thomas Aquinas College has showed me what a gift a good teacher can be, and it has prepared us all to be excellent teachers,” says **Laura Sherwood**, who will be teaching geometry at St. Mary’s High School in Phoenix. Joining her as members of the St. Mary’s faculty are **Marietta Grumbine** (natural science), **Mariclare Lessard** (literature and music), and **Rebecca Ryland** (theology and speech/debate).

The Class of 2014 will be well represented in Phoenix, as several other members have accepted positions at the city’s rapidly expanding consortium of Great Hearts charter academies: **Mirjana Coccia**, **Sara Majkowski**, and **Elisabeth Perry** will be teachers at Great Hearts elementary schools, and **Alec MacIsaac** will teach drama, literature, and composition at the high school level. Also heading to Phoenix is **Hannah DeRocher**, who will teach history at St. Thomas the Apostle Roman Catholic Elementary School.

Among those working as educators elsewhere are **Thomas Quackenbush**, who will teach biology and chemistry at St. Monica Academy in Pasadena. **Andrea Florez** will oversee Bricks for Kids, an education program in Honolulu, Hawaii, that uses Lego blocks to teach children about physics, architecture, engineering, and robotics. **Adrienne (Grimm) LaFave** is working as a receptionist for Mother of Divine Grace School. **Kristin Personius** is spending the summer teaching children at the Institute of Reading Development



At the wedding of Danielle (Chouinard) and John Sauder with the celebrant, College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.

in Dallas. **Samuel Chasuk** will be a high school teacher at John Paul the Great Academy in Lafayette, Louisiana. **Caitlin Griffith** will teach Euclid, philosophy, literature, “and maybe some history” at the newly founded St. Thérèse Classical Academy in Santa Barbara, California. **Maria Pape** seeks to undergo training in the Montessori method of instruction. **Rachel Santine** will be teaching Latin, ancient history, and literature for Mother of Divine Grace School.

Marriage

“One of the things that helped prepare us for marriage was seeing the example of the College’s tutors and their families,” says **John Sauder**, who wed **Danielle (Chouinard)** one week after Commencement in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. The next day there were two more weddings: **Jennifer (Dailey)** married Luke Seeley (’12), and **Adrienne (Grimm)** wed Peter LaFave (’13). The nuptials continued in July, with the union of **Rebecca (Bessette)** and **Thomas Quackenbush** as well as that of **Sarah (Langley)** and **Patrick Wood**. Another Class of 2014 wedding is scheduled for December.

Religious Life

Although several members of the Class of 2014 are discerning vocations to the priesthood or the religious life, only one has thus far made firm plans to answer that call. Shortly after graduation **Maria Barrett** paid a visit to a Dominican monastery she hopes to enter next year. Miss Barrett credits the serene life of the College with allowing her to hear God’s voice more clearly. “Here, things are slower, so you are able to think more deeply and pray more.”

Law

“Developing your critical thinking, as we do at the College, helps you be exact and to the point in presenting an argument,” says **Leon Zepeda**, who plans to spend a year working as a paralegal at The Alvarez Firm — a Camarillo, California-based legal company led by fellow alumnus Justin Alvarez (’97) — before applying to law school. **John Sauder** is entering the Creighton University School of Law.

Architecture

“Being on this campus, you see how the structures of the buildings really elevate the mind to the intellectual life; they elevate men to be more virtuous and to be better,” says **Patrick Mahar**. Hoping

to inspire others, Mr. Mahar is enrolling in the classical architecture program at the University of Notre Dame, where he will study alongside classmate **Anthony Letteney**.

Medicine

With medical school as his objective, **Martin Ciskanik** is taking perquisite courses at the University of Delaware. **Abigail Quinan** and **Abigail Retallick** both plan to go to nursing school, but first Miss Quinan will spend a year as a medical assistant, and Miss Retallick is traveling to Brazil for a six-month missionary trip. **Aileen McCarthy** is also heading to the mission fields — in Córdoba, Argentina, where she will work with nuns in a Catholic hospital.

National Service & Public Safety

Eric Ogrodnick will work construction for a year in North Dakota to pay off his student loans and get into top physical condition before joining the Canadian Army. With an eye toward “contributing to the common good,” **Aaron Thibodeaux** seeks a career in law enforcement.

Philosophy and Theology

Given the emphasis on philosophy and theology in the College’s curriculum, it is no surprise that, each year, at least a few graduates go on to study these disciplines at the graduate level. “The program here made me fall in love with theology, knowing that we can come to understand God and his works better,” says **Sean Robertson**, who is pursuing graduate studies at Ave Maria University. **Andrew Grimes** will study philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. **Jacob Alexander** and **Luke Moscoso** are considering graduate programs, in philosophy and theology, respectively, with hopes of one day teaching college students or seminarians.

Psychology

With the aim of aiding families, **Cristina Schardt** is undertaking graduate studies at the Institute for the Psychological Sciences in Arlington, Virginia. **Ashleigh Grycner** also intends to study psychology, but will first take four months to work on an organic farm, teaching children about agriculture and conservation.

... and More!

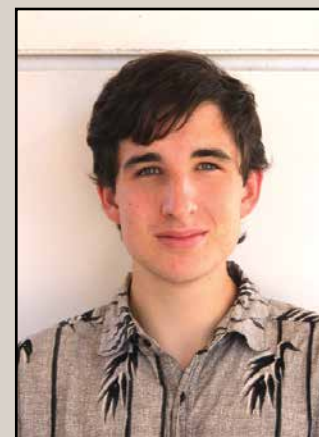
While at the College **Sean Schmidgall** worked part-time for a neighboring ranch, where he developed a passion for agriculture. So this native of Portland, Oregon, is venturing to Oklahoma, with the goal of starting his own cattle ranch. **Michael Heinser** is serving as an EMT for his local fire department while he awaits a response to his application for air-traffic-controller school. **Sarah Dufresne** will remain on campus for a year as the College’s resident assistant, before joining Justice for All in Wichita, Kansas, to train college students in prolife apologetics. **Danielle (Chouinard) Sauder** is working for Adoremus Books in Omaha, Nebraska. **Maria Russell** seeks to move to England to earn a master’s degree in literature. “Literature has always appealed to me,” she says, “because of the way it communicates truth through beauty.”



“The future is in your hearts and in your hands. God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with Him in the building of the civilization of love.”

– Pope St. John Paul II
Vigil Address, 17th Annual World Youth Day
Toronto, 2002

Members of the Class of 2014 dedicated this year’s Commencement ceremony to their friend and classmate, Andrew Kentigern Moore. “Kent” died in the summer of 2012 while walking across the country praying for the unborn. “He spent his life defending the innocents, and gave up his life for their sake,” wrote the seniors in the Commencement program. “May he rest in peace.”



Andrew Kentigern Moore (’14)
1992 – 2012

“Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.”
— Matthew 25:40

Commencement 2014 Keepsakes

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

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