



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2011

VOLUME 39, ISSUE 4

Beatific Vision

College Officials Witness Beatification of John Paul II, Meet with Church Leaders in Rome

As a champion of authentic Catholic education, Bl. John Paul II was both a guiding light and a friend to Thomas Aquinas College. “At a time of great confusion within Catholic higher education, Bl. John Paul II provided much-needed clarity and affirmed the mission of this college with the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *Fides et Ratio*,” says President Michael F. McLean. “On a more personal level, he honored us greatly by blessing the plans for our chapel in 2003.”

In gratitude for the late Holy Father’s life and leadership, Dr. McLean, Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors R. Scott Turicchi, and their wives traveled to Rome for John Paul’s May 1 beatification. While there, they also met with some 15 cardinals and other Church leaders.

“It was heartening to see how well regarded the College is within the Curia, both among those who have visited our campus and those who only know us from afar,” says Dr. McLean. “The prelates with whom we met all have a deep affection for Thomas Aquinas College, and they see our mission as being one with the Universal Church.”

Old Friends and New

In many respects, the beatification provided an ideal opportunity to fulfill a visit originally planned by Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, the College’s late president. Dr. Dillon had intended to travel to Rome in 2009, but was killed in an automobile accident while stopping in Ireland for an academic conference. “Tom had scheduled meetings with many of the same dignitaries we met on this visit,” says Dr. McLean. “It was a privilege to build on the relationships that he had worked so tirelessly to establish.”

Among those the McLeans and Turicchis visited was Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P., theologian of the papal household. “Fr. Giertych was very encouraging, and we had a great talk about the proper relation between faith and philosophy,” recalls Dr. McLean. Fr. Giertych would later visit the campus in September and serve as the keynote speaker at the College’s 40th Anniversary Gala in Beverly Hills.



President Michael F. McLean and Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors R. Scott Turicchi visit with Francis Cardinal Arinze, Emeritus Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship.

Other notable meetings included those with Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura; Ennio Cardinal Antonelli, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family; Antonio Cardinal Cañizares Llovera and Francis Cardinal Arinze, current and emeritus Prefects of the Congregation for Divine Worship; and Giovanni Cardinal Lajolo and Edmund Casimir Cardinal Szoka, current and former presidents of the Governorate of Vatican City State. “It was impressive that during Easter week and while preparing for the beatification, these Vatican officials were so generous with their time,” says Mr. Turicchi. “We found their knowledge and love for the College, and their appreciation for the good that it is accomplishing in the world, to be a cause for renewal of our own energy and love for Thomas Aquinas College.”

Blessings and a Blessed

“From meeting with these princes of the Church, to seeing the relics of St. Peter and the tomb of the beatified John Paul II, the trip was remarkable and blessed in so many ways,” says Dr. McLean. “Yet most memorable of all was the Beatification Mass itself.” The McLeans and the Turicchis were blessed to witness the event from a balcony directly above St. Peter’s Square. “We had a wonderful visit with Archbishop Harvey, Prefect of the Papal Household, earlier in the week, at which he kindly presented us with invitations to the Beatification Mass,” explains Dr. McLean. On the balcony they had the pleasure of seeing another friend of the College, the Hon. Frank Shakespeare, former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See and a member of the Honorary Dinner Committee for the College’s 40th Anniversary Gala.

“None of us will ever forget the Holy Father’s proclamation, ‘*Beatus Iohannes Paulus Secundus!*’, or the cheers that seemed to echo around the Eternal City,” recalls Dr. McLean. “We are delighted to see John Paul counted among the Church’s most honored holy men and women, and we ask for his continued intercession on behalf of Catholic higher education. Bl. John Paul II, pray for us!”

The Timeless and the Time-Sensitive

New Website Employs Modern Tools in Service of College’s Classical Program

Visitors to www.thomasaquinas.edu will no doubt be surprised — and pleased — by what they see. Instead of Thomas Aquinas College’s old, static website now resides an elegant, dynamic replacement. The new site is both efficient in its functionality and comprehensive in its account of the mission, history, and curriculum of the College. It also features, for the first time, information about the rich day-to-day life of the community.

“The old site, which served us well for so many years, had passed its time,” says Director of College Relations Anne S. Forsyth (’81). “The Internet and its technology have since evolved to the point that we can now present the College in a much more complete, cleaner, and more user-friendly way.”

The new website is made possible by a generous gift of Board of Governors Chairman R. James Wensley and his wife, Germaine. “The College has such a good story to tell,” says Mr. Wensley, “and we wanted to make sure we were telling it in the best way possible.”

Favorites

Chief among the new site’s improvements are a series of tabs, or news modules, on the front page, each geared toward one the College’s key constituencies — prospective students, current students, alumni, parents, and benefactors — which offer up-to-the-minute news stories, timely links, and calendars pertaining to the life of the College. “Visitors can now come to the site and, every day, learn about what’s new on campus, what our alumni are up to, or what upcoming events are in the works,” says Mrs. Forsyth.

“Or they don’t need to come to the website at all,” she adds. “Because the site features an RSS feed, subscription forms for our e-newsletter, and integration with social-media sites like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, our friends can choose to simply let the news come to them.”

In addition to stories about the College, photo slideshows from campus events, and audio and video from lectures and interviews with Church dignitaries, the site boasts extensive information about admissions, financial aid, and giving opportunities. It also includes two new blogs, one providing dispatches from and information about the annual High School Summer Program, and the other, entitled “Faith in Action,” chronicling the good works, milestones, and achievements of the College’s alumni.

Constructed with graceful simplicity in mind, the site offers gateway pages for students, parents, and alumni that contain each of these groups’ most-needed forms and services. “Whether it’s making tuition payments, ordering sweatshirts from the bookstore, or contributing to our annual fund, the new website is designed to make everyone’s interactions with the College simpler,” says Mrs. Forsyth.

Browsing History

Plans for the new site began in the summer of 2010, when Mr. Wensley graciously offered to pay for the hiring of an external web-design firm. As project man-



ager, Mrs. Forsyth then assembled a project team consisting of members of the Development, Admissions, Alumni, Business, Financial Aid, and Information Technology departments, which conducted a nationwide search of Internet professionals who could create a highly usable site in keeping with the College’s Catholic identity and classical style. Working closely with R.

Scott Turicchi, co-chairman of the Board of Governors’ Development Committee and president of j2 Global Communications, the committee ultimately opted for the services of a local firm.

“Alison Bradley is an extraordinarily talented developer with an impressive portfolio of sites she has created for businesses and other institutions,” says Mrs. Forsyth. “And her partner, Andy Gilman, who holds a master of arts degree from St. John’s College, brought to the table a strong understanding of liberal education, what distinguishes the College’s approach to it, and how that could best be expressed online.” Over the next nine months, the two worked closely with the College and an international team of programmers to design and build the site, while Communications Manager Chris Weinkopf produced and assembled the content.

The website publicly launched on July 21. “We look forward to sharing this new site with friends and visitors,” says Mrs. Forsyth, “and through it, sharing both the timeless mission of the College and timely campus news with all our friends and visitors.”

From the Desk of the President

Dr. Michael F. McLean’s Remarks to the Incoming Freshmen at Convocation 2011

In a speech at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in 1991, Pope Benedict XVI, Joseph 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, 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.”

Pope Benedict continued by noting that those who oppose the authority of the Church often say:

“The freedom of the Christian would be rescued by appeal to the classical principle of moral tradition: that conscience is the highest norm that man is to follow, even in opposition to authority. Authority — in this case the Magisterium — may well speak of matters moral [they say], but only in the sense of presenting conscience with material for its own deliberation. Conscience would retain, however, the final word.”

In defense of this resistance to the authority of the Church, Pope Benedict continued, some authors claim that “conscience is infallible.”

In a series of seminars earlier this summer, writings on the theme of conscience by three great figures from the Catholic intellectual tradition were discussed. The first of those writers, St. Thomas More, was at the center of precisely this conflict — in his case, of course, in the 16th century — faced, as he was, with King Henry VIII’s challenge, in the name of freedom and self-determination, to the authority of the Pope and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

More did not believe in the infallibility of conscience, simply speaking, but in the authority of a well-formed conscience, a conscience guided by the teaching authority of the Catholic Church: “For the seven years that I have studied the matter,” he said, “I have not read in any approved doctor of the Church that a temporal lord could or ought to be head of the spirituality.” When challenged at his trial by Lord Chancellor Audley, “What, More, you wish to be considered wiser and of better conscience than all the bishops and nobles of the realm?,” St. Thomas More answered, “My lord, for one bishop of your opinion I have a hundred saints of mine; and for one parliament of yours ... I have all the General Councils for 1,000 years.”

The second of those writers, our own patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, reminds us that conscience is not infallible but can be “false or erroneous,” and makes the point that only a “correct conscience binds absolutely and intrinsically,” while a false conscience “binds only in a qualified way and for an extrinsic reason.” Moreover, one who follows a false conscience which is mistaken in things which are intrinsically evil “acts against the law of God and sins mortally.” For every man, St. Thomas says, is “bound to know the law of God.”

The third of those writers, Bl. John Henry Newman, also recognized that “the promptings of conscience are not in all cases correct,” and that the image of God found in conscience could “fade away and die out [in] men who transgress their sense of duty and [so] gradually lose those sentiments of shame and fear.” The image of God which men form based on the experience of conscience, Cardinal Newman continues, “may expand, deepen, and be completed ... by means of education, social intercourse, experience, and literature.”

The Correct Formation of Conscience

Encouraged by this observation from Cardinal Newman, let me suggest a few ways in which Catholic liberal education, as understood and practiced here at Thomas Aquinas College, contributes to the formation of a correct and well-formed conscience, a conscience guided by the law of God and the authority of the Catholic Church.

First is the fact that we who are responsible for the College, and you who attend the College, rely on Divine Revelation and on the authority of the Church to guide us in deciding who should teach and what should be taught. In the words of the College’s founding and governing document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, “Divine Revelation not only communicates the truth but also designates teachers to clarify, define and explain it. Thus, Our Lord told His Apostles, ‘Anyone who listens to you listens to me’ (Luke 10:16) and commissioned them to teach, promising to remain with them forever. On this account, the believer embraces at once Christ as the supreme teacher and the successors of St. Peter and the Apostles as altogether truthful and divinely appointed interpreters of His teachings.”

Having accepted as a matter of faith the teaching authority of the successors of Peter and the Apostles, the founders of Thomas Aquinas College quickly came to accept the primacy of St. Thomas Aquinas among the teachers in our program because of the consistent encouragement of the popes from the time of St. Thomas up to our own time. To take but a few examples: Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), said that St. Thomas’ theology was a definitive exposition of the Christian faith;



John Paul II, in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, wrote that “the Church has been justified in consistently proposing St. Thomas as a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology;” and Pope Benedict XVI recently completed a three-part catechesis on St. Thomas’ work, in which he said, “All of us who are faithful children of the Church can and must, at least in some measure, be disciples of St. Thomas.”

St. Thomas is a reliable guide to what should be taught, and in what order, knowing as he does the proper order of the philosophical disciplines (from logic to natural philosophy to moral and political philosophy to metaphysics), the order proper to the science of theology itself, the proper relationship between philosophy and theology, and the proper relationship among all of the disciplines included in a liberal education — disciplines which Hugh of St. Victor called “ways by which the lively soul enters into the secrets of philosophy.”

Thomas Aquinas College’s very structure, then, is determined by the teaching authority of the Church, and your decision to attend the College speaks well of your disposition to that authority and your willingness to be guided by that authority in the important decisions of life.

Individual courses within the curriculum also bear out Newman’s point about the importance of education — and literature — in the formation of conscience. The study of Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics* in the junior year, for example, helps you understand what it is to be virtuous, the order among the virtues, and the essential connection between the life of virtue and human happiness. The study of theology, beginning as it does with the study of Sacred Scripture and culminating with the study of the Trinity and the Incarnation, deepens your knowledge and love of God, strengthens your personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and makes you more disposed to obey the natural and divine laws. As well, many works of literature — some by exemplifying tortured consciences (one has only to think of Oedipus, for example, or Macbeth or Ivan Karamazov) — are conducive to the formation of a proper conscience.

The Meaning of Freedom

More examples from our curriculum could be given, but I would like to return now to the contemporary problem of conscience described by Pope Benedict — the apparent conflict between the freedom of conscience on the one hand, and submission to the authority of the Church on the other. This problem is not remote from higher education; on the contrary, it has defined Catholic higher education for the past 50 years. Many Catholic colleges and universities have compromised their Catholic identity, believing that Catholic educators should not be bound to any fixed conceptions but free to subject every doctrine to critical examination and possible rejection. Too often this has led to actual rejection.

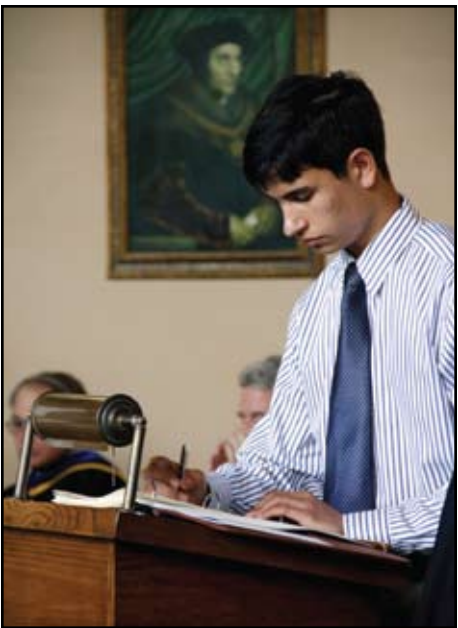
It is no accident that the founding document of Thomas Aquinas College discusses freedom and Catholic education at some length. The founders of the College recognized that many Catholic educators consider religious doctrine to be a restriction on academic freedom, convinced that the acceptance of religious doctrine not only inhibits, but even destroys the life of intelligence. Moreover, most educators believe that academic freedom is required for the acquisition of truth — to quote the College’s founding document: “more truths will be discovered, and more surely held, it is said, if all beliefs are subject to question and possible reversal.”

In the section of the founding document on “Freedom and Catholic Education,” the founders of Thomas Aquinas College address the contemporary problem of freedom and authority as it pertains to higher education this way: “The Christian Faith and the theological tradition of the Church present a view of freedom which is altogether opposed to the foregoing notions. Rather than supposing that men can attain the truth by the exercise of freedom, they teach that men become free by finding, or being found by, the truth and abiding in it. For the Christian believes that Christ Himself is the Truth, and believes Him when He says, ‘If you make my words your home you will indeed be my disciples, you will learn the truth and the truth will make you free’” (John 8:31-32).

Our founding document goes on to say that “true freedom consists in the inward re-birth and transformation of ourselves by the grace of God.” Liberal education helps us achieve freedom specifically through knowledge — knowledge of the true principles of thought and action.

All of this being said, my advice to you, then, is this: Submit your consciences in all things to the authority of the Church, as urged by St. Thomas More, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Bl. John Henry Newman. As members of this community, submit your consciences in the specific ways in which the College proposes — to its teachers, principally the authors of Sacred Scripture, St. Thomas, St. Augustine, and Aristotle; to the order and contents of its curriculum; to its spiritual life; and to its rules of residence. If you do, you will grow in wisdom and knowledge of the truth, and true freedom will more and more be yours.

Thank you very much.



Freshman Michael McCarty of La Crescenta, Calif., signs his name in the College’s Register of Students.

Hopes Realized

The Matriculation Address of Right Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem

Note: On August 22, the Right Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem., Abbot of St. Michael's Abbey in Silverado, Calif., served as Thomas Aquinas College's 2011 Convocation Speaker. He delivered the following address to the student body and faculty of the College.

Dear Dr. McLean, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Daly, Members of the Board of Governors and Regents, College Chaplains, Fr. Buckley, Fr. Raftery, Fr. Hildebrand, tutors and staff, students, and especially members of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2015:

It is truly a pleasure for me to be here for Mass and now for this Matriculation ceremony. As I mentioned in the homily (see page 8), I am very conscious of the fact that the College this year is celebrating its 40th year of existence, and so it is a special honor for me to be here on this occasion.

Speaking of the years which gave birth to institutions like the College, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI wrote — and he does write about, speaks, and refers to those very same years not infrequently in his talks, addresses, and documents — “I am speaking from experience, since I, too, lived through that period with all its hopes and confusion.”

Hopes and confusion. This phrase sums up well the spirit which permeated those years, at least for those whose hearts beat with the heart of the Church. Thomas Aquinas College, founded in 1971, received its first class 40 years ago with 33 students and a closed-down seminary as its first site. It was only a few years before that educational facilities in this country and abroad exploded, with demonstrations, student strikes, violence, and protests — even daily ones — against everything imaginable. In Europe this phenomenon became known as the Spirit of 1968. And in this country it was frequently played out against the background of the conflict in Vietnam.

One such event stands out especially in my mind. It took place in 1970, the year before the College was founded, during the spring semester. On May 4 at Kent State in Ohio, nine students were killed by National Guardsmen during a demonstration which, unfortunately, turned violent, a demonstration which was the culmination of several days of protest. As a result to this terrible loss of life, university campuses across the U.S. were united in the announcement and observance of a day of protest, with classes being canceled and various programs and lectures taking their place.

Four million college students at over 900 colleges and universities took part in that day. I was a sophomore at a college seminary on the East Coast, where the enrollment at that time was roughly the same as this college's is presently. Student representatives declared a strike for that day. All classes were canceled.

The Church in those years was undergoing Her own disturbances and unrest. Already liturgical celebrations not faithful to the changes authorized by the Holy See were inaugurated under the heading of a “creativity” which, in fact, was arbitrary. These resulted in

what our Holy Father has called “deformations of the liturgy.” Many priests and religious felt themselves free of their obligations and just abandoned their callings. An authentic renewal gave way to an adherence to the so-called Spirit of the Vatican Council, which truly went far beyond what most of the Council fathers understood to be that spirit. Papal teaching, whether concerning religious or marital life, was contested, and bitterly so.

In light of all this, and to no one's surprise, seminaries and religious houses were quickly emptying — seminaries like that one which first hosted the College. Down in Orange County a junior seminary and novitiate, St. Michael's, which had been founded in August, 1961 — exactly 10 years before the College — likewise emptied. And its founding superior, Fr. Ladislav Parker, was faced with a situation which was dire, to say the least.

With his six fellow exiled confreres, Fr. Parker proclaimed in his Hungarian-accented English that “the Norbertines of St. Michael's would hold on to all that was good in the old and would not reject whatever is good in the new.” And with that, the situation began to turn around.

“Members of the Class of 2015, you are truly blessed to be enrolled in an institution with teachers just as the Holy Father describes — teachers convinced of our human capacity to advance along the path of truth.”

This explains, in part, why Fr. Parker, who was St. Michael's equivalent of Dr. McArthur, was so interested in and supportive of the College. From that time until today, St. Michael's and Thomas Aquinas College have pursued parallel tracks. We have followed paths which more frequently than not have intersected and even coincided, always with the same common good in sight.

It is for this reason that the College some years ago honored our founding abbot, Abbot Parker with the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. It was an honor he truly valued and appreciated on a personal level, yes, but also — more importantly for him — as an honor for his community. It is an award for which his confreres still are grateful today.

That relationship continues and grows in mutually beneficial ways. Annually students from the Abbey's prep school visit the College, with a number over the years choosing to enroll. Likewise, each year a number of students at the College visit the Abbey, and upon graduation some have entered the Abbey's formation program. Several alumni are currently in that program. Likewise, each year some students visit our sisters' community in Tehachapi, the Bethlehem Priory, and some alumnae of the College have entered there also. One made her solemn profession on January 29 along with eight other sisters, as their young community was officially recog-

nized by the Vatican and the Norbertine Order, and welcomed warmly into the Diocese of Fresno.

More recently, one of our confreres who is an alumnus of the College again participated in the College's summer program for high school students. And one of your best tutors is also the result of the formation program at St. Michael's Abbey.

I was especially happy a few months ago, when with the consent of the Council of Confreres which advises me, I could assign one of our priests, Fr. Hildebrand Garceau, as



chaplain here at the College. Fr. Hildebrand will complete his current assignment as the pastor of St. John the Baptist in Costa Mesa, a position that he has held for a full six-year term. That assignment will end in the middle of October because the incoming pastor is on business for the Order until then. Fr. Hildebrand will take up his assignment then, and once again there will be a Norbertine chaplain here on campus, as there has been in recent years.

Providentially Fr. Hildebrand is also an alumnus of the College, the Class of 1978. His assignment here represents what we can say is the completion of a circle of sorts, an historical first.

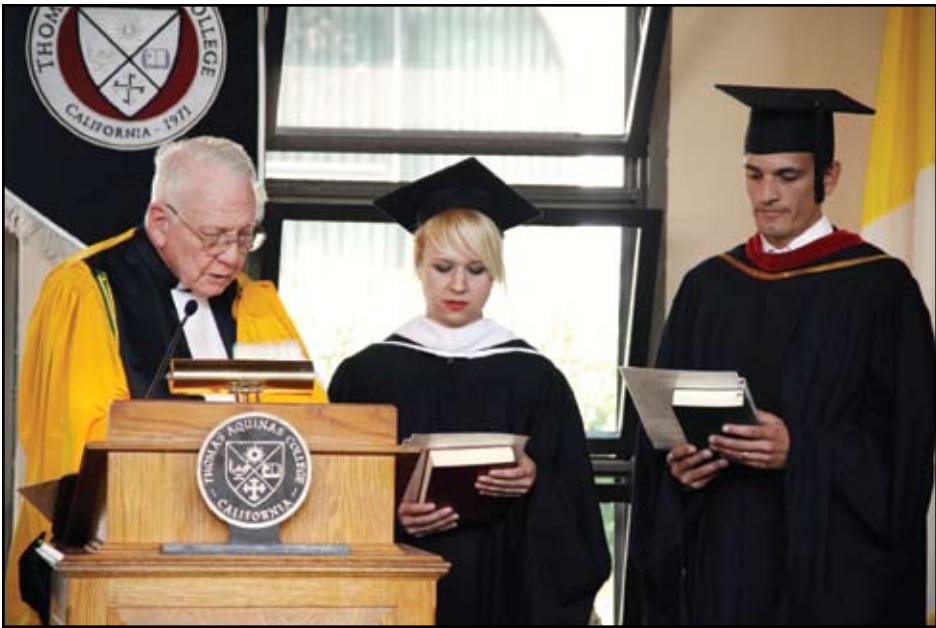
Now, lest you think I am here to make publicity for St. Michael's Abbey, let me assure you, that is not all I am doing. I thought the 102 freshmen, who lack the historical perspective that some of us older people up here have, should know that, looking back at the age which the Holy Father has characterized as one of hopes and confusion, and looking around now, we can say some hopes were realized, and some hopes have been realized dramatically so. The members of the Class of 2015 should always feel blessed to enjoy one such hope realized, which is Thomas Aquinas College.

They should also be grateful that while this age in which they live and study has lots of confusion — and much worse — this still is a time of great hope for the Church. Those hopes, to no small degree, are rooted in the Providence which brought to the Chair of St. Peter first Bl. John Paul II and now Pope Benedict XVI. Through the Pope's own experiences as a theologian and university professor, he has more than just an historical perspective. He speaks with authority. He speaks insightfully, especially to all those involved in the noble endeavor of higher learning at Catholic institutions.

Just last Thursday during his Apostolic journey to Spain on the occasion of World Youth Day, His Holiness met with young university professors from Catholic institutions of higher learning all over Spain. During his remarks he criticized the prevalent contemporary approach of higher learning, an approach which is focused on utility and pure pragmatism. He said, “These are things that lead to abuses, seen in a science that acknowledges no limits beyond itself and a political totalitarianism which easily arises when one eliminates any higher reference than the mere calculus of power.”

Speaking to and with those young professors, he said, “We realize that we are a link in that chain of men and women committed to teaching the Faith and making it credible to human reason. And we do this not simply by teaching, but by the way we live our faith and embody it, just as the Word took flesh and dwelt among us.”

Members of the Class of 2015, you are truly blessed to be enrolled in an institution with teachers just as the Holy Father describes — teachers convinced of our human capacity to advance along the path of truth. Never take this for granted, and pray that it may always be so. Thank you.



Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., administers the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity to the College's newest tutors, Elizabeth Reyes and Jared Kuebler.

“Loyal to the Institution and the Idea of the Institution”

Dr. Ronald Richard Retires after 35 Years on Teaching Faculty

With the retirement of Dr. Ronald Richard at the close of the last academic year, Thomas Aquinas College bade farewell to one of its longest-serving, most-respected tutors — and more.

During his 35 years at the College, Dr. Richard undertook a wide array of roles and an even broader range of tasks. A physicist and an astronomer, he served multiple terms on the College’s Instruction Committee, where, among other things, he helped to refine the natural science portion of the curriculum. A mathematician, he conducted the annual statistical analyses that the College used to set its budgets and determine faculty hiring levels. An economist, he contributed to a 1991 financial study that was the basis of the College’s growth strategy for the subsequent two decades. A computer scientist, he established and administered the College’s first computer network in the early 1990s. A linguist, he translated texts from French, German, and Latin into English for student use. And a stalwart of the community, he served as a longtime member of the Board of Governors.

Of course, before all these roles, Dr. Richard was and remains a gifted educator. Over the course of his tenure, he taught almost the entirety of the College’s academic program, including all four years of philosophy and mathematics.

Aristotle and Astrophysics

Yet even to recount all these accomplishments is only to tell a small part of Dr. Richard’s many talents and experiences. Well before he ever came to the College, he had a distinguished career as a scientist. After earning a bachelor’s degree at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a master’s in aeronautics and astronautics at the University of Michigan, he worked at Jet Propulsion Laboratories in Pasadena, Calif., where he initially calculated preliminary trajectories for launches to the moon, Venus, and Mars, and later contributed to the theoretical design of space computer programs.

It was only while earning a Ph.D. in astrophysics from the University of California, Los Angeles, that he discovered a passion for teaching. That passion first brought him to Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, where he spent six years teaching physics and astronomy, before coming to Thomas Aquinas College in 1976.

Dr. Richard quickly proved to be an indispensable part of the team of educators who labored to establish the College in its early years. “Ron was someone who, on the one hand, had the commitment to Aristotle and St. Thomas that are central to the College, and on the other hand had a real command of mathematics and physics,” recalls Peter L. DeLuca, one of the College’s founders and its vice president for finance and

administration. “He gave a kind of confidence to the leading group in the College in those years in terms of the formation of the curriculum in those areas.”

Dr. Richard would play a significant part in shaping the natural science component of the College’s integrated curriculum. “When I came here we were using St. John’s College manuals, which were interesting, but were not well suited for the way we approach things,” he says. “So I asked the Instruction Committee if I could write a Senior Lab manual, and it gave me the go-ahead.”

Team Player

Throughout his time at the College, Dr. Richard would often show such initiative, while also gladly doing whatever was asked of him. “Ron was absolutely a team player, loyal to the institution and the idea of the institution,” says Mr. DeLuca. “He was in the highest counsels of the school, and that is reflected in the fact that he was the first tutor to be appointed to the Board of Governors who was neither a founder nor an administrator. He was a real leader in the institution.”

He still is. Despite retiring from formal teaching, Dr. Richard intends to remain active in the life of the College. The faculty has honored him with the newly created title of Tutor Emeritus, and he is currently completing a calculus manual for junior and senior mathematics.

“There are a lot of original works in calculus that were not available when I first came to the College, but now with Google Books, there are many more,” he explains. “So I am going through the works to find what might be suitable and, where necessary, translating the texts into English.” Dr. Richard is also in consultation with members of the teaching faculty about finding ways to incorporate quantum physics and additional evolutionary biology into the senior natural science course.

“I’ll keep busy,” he says — as always.



Liberated Pagan

Legacy Society Profile: Leslie Hidley (’86)

Leslie Hidley of Ojai, Calif., is a writer, and a funny one at that. She finds humor where one might least expect it, in subjects ranging from the sublime to the mundane. “I write about my family, friends — and raccoons in the backyard,” she says.



Type her name into YouTube, and you will see a video of her reading one of her essays — a harrowing tale of getting her finger stuck in the gas tank of an SUV, then praying to avoid immolation as firefighters saw through the tank to cut her loose. Frightening, yes, but the way she tells it in stoic deadpan, uproariously funny.

When Mrs. Hidley arrived at the College in 1982, she was a 36-year-old mother of four and, as she describes it, “a pagan,” with no religious convictions whatsoever. And yet, after reading about Thomas Aquinas College in a local newspaper, she considered herself a natural fit for its unique academic program. “I always liked the idea of a classical education,” she says, “because you learn things that are worth knowing, instead of whatever everybody thinks this year.”

She also saw the faith life of the College as an asset, not a liability. Having dabbled in modern philosophy, she had become disenchanted with the reigning relativism of the day. One such philosopher had instructed her “not to have beliefs,” she recalls, which she “pretty quickly realized is nonsense because everybody believes *something*” — even modern philosophers.

At the College, she soon discovered that it is reverence for truth, not denying its existence, that produces true freedom. In the Socratic conversations around

classroom tables, “you could ask anything you wanted,” she says. “Even as a pagan, I didn’t have to confine my questions in any way. I found it really liberating.”

Alas, Mrs. Hidley’s time as a student at the College was short-lived. After one year, her daughter, Kate (Svoboda-Spanbock ’87), enrolled. “I thought it wasn’t sporting for Kate to have to go to school with her mother,” Mrs. Hidley laughs, so with a heavy heart, she withdrew from the program. She hoped to return later, but her three other children — Jack (’90), Theo (’92), and Josh (’94) — would soon follow Kate’s lead and also come to the College. Soon thereafter Mrs. Hidley’s focus would shift, first to a new family business, and then to being the doting grandmother of nine girls and one boy.

Converted by Christ’s Love

But the effects of her one year at the College have endured. Her time on campus, she says, played a significant role in her conversion to Catholicism some two decades later. “Mine was not an intellectual conversion,” she observes. “I was converted by Christ’s love, manifest in Catholics” — including the love she experienced from her tutors and fellow students.

One such manifestation came by way of the College’s founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur. As Mrs. Hidley recalls it, she went to St. Joseph Commons early one morning to practice her Euclidean propositions. She was sitting alone at a table when the six-foot, six-inch tall Dr. McArthur strode over and joined her with his breakfast tray.

“I had never even met him, but I didn’t like Ron McArthur,” she admits regretfully. Being someone who is slight in stature, she thought him “too tall.” He also reminded her of “every base commander I had ever met,” conjuring up negative memories from her childhood as a military daughter. So at first she tried to ignore him, and continued studying as though he were not there. But

after 20 minutes, her curiosity got the better of her. “I said something charming like, ‘Yeeeeeeessssss?’” she recalls, “and he said, ‘I just wanted to tell you how loved you are here.’”

Dr. McArthur’s comment “stunned me,” Mrs. Hidley remembers, “not just because he said it, but because it was the truth. ... That just knocked me for a loop. Still does.” Many more such knocks would ultimately land her in the Church.

Death and Tax Strategies

Though her days as a Thomas Aquinas College student and parent are now behind her, Mrs. Hidley’s relationship with the College continues. She is a member of the Legacy Society, having made a generous contribution for a charitable gift annuity.

Naturally, she finds much humor amid talk of estate planning and her eventual death. “I didn’t want the kids to be ticked when I die because I’m going to leave the College some money, so I thought I better give some of it now!” she jokes. “Of course, I have an ulterior motive, too. My sister, Cathryn (Krause), is the beneficiary after me, with the instructions to take the proceeds and buy Christmas presents for my grandchildren. So they’ll get Christmas presents from me even after I’m dead!”

Tom Susanka, the College’s director of gift planning, was director of admissions back when Mrs. Hidley first came to the College nearly 30 years ago, and has enjoyed witnessing her journey from applicant, to student, to parent, to benefactor. “Leslie’s enthusiasm for the College has never waned,” he says. “We are grateful for her generosity, and even more for her wit, her kindness, and her friendship.”

For more information about the Legacy Society, please contact Mr. Susanka at 800-634-9797 or by e-mail at tsusanka@thomasaquinas.edu.

An Irishman, Philosopher, Husband & Father

Thomas Aquinas College’s New Vice President for Development, Paul J. O’Reilly

“We lived in a part of town that was nicer than the neighborhoods that Catholics were supposed to live in,” remembers Dr. Paul J. O’Reilly of his childhood as the second of eight children in battle-torn Belfast, Northern Ireland, in the 1970s. “My mother, Carmel, wanted to give us a better life, but people went out of their way to show us we were unwelcome there.”

The O’Reillys often found graffiti on their walls, and they grew accustomed to the sound of shattering glass as rocks — and once, a package designed to look like a bomb — crashed through their windows. They moved to a safer part of town after two of Paul’s uncles, both successful businessmen, were murdered by gunshot, their restaurant destroyed by a bomb blast.

Unfortunately, the situation did not improve. “One of my brothers was abducted, and my sister was viciously attacked,” Dr. O’Reilly explains. Concerned that her children would be drawn into a life of vengeance, Carmel, now separated from her husband, applied for and received refugee status for her family in Canada.

Thus at the age of 16, Paul began a new life in North America — one step closer to Thomas Aquinas College, where he would come first as a student, then as a tutor, and now as the new vice president for development.

From Canada to California

On Christmas Eve, just seven months after the family emigrated to Canada, Carmel was tragically killed in an automobile accident, orphaning Paul and his seven brothers and sisters. Heroically, their Uncle Ed and Aunt Dorothy, already the parents of four, agreed to adopt the eight devastated children. “Their principal concern then, as it is now, is that all of us would be one loving family, brought up in the Catholic faith,” says Dr. O’Reilly. To pay the bills, the newly expanded family undertook a succession of business opportunities, first opening a donut shop, then becoming loggers.

It was during this time that Paul developed an entrepreneurial spirit. “I was convinced I was going to



make a name for myself in business,” he says, having been accepted into the University of British Columbia’s business program. His newly adopted mother, however, urged him to meet with a beloved family priest before enrolling. At Fr. Nielson’s recommendation, Paul agreed to pay a visit to Thomas Aquinas College in the spring of 1980.

“Within half a day of being on campus, I fell in love with the place,” he recalls, drawn by “the intellectual rigor of the classroom, the energy of the students, and just how careful and considerate the tutors were.” Over the course of his six-day visit, he completed an application, received an offer of admission, and formally declared his plans to enroll that fall.

College and Back

During his time as a student, Paul discovered that his avocation was not for business, but for philosophy. “My experience at the College helped me see the wisdom in the Catholic intellectual tradition,” he says. “It made me appreciate the fullness of the intellectual life as it is found in the Church.” The College also helped bring him to his vocation as the husband of classmate Peggy (Steichen ’84).

Within one year after graduation, the O’Reillys were married and living in Quebec, where Paul pursued graduate studies in philosophy at the Université Laval. He then taught for two years at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, N.H., before returning to Thomas Aquinas College as a member of the teaching faculty in 1989.

“It was delightful,” he says of that time. “I started to get to know tutors professionally. It was kind of humbling to be in their presence as a colleague, to see from the inside their dedication to the program and their devotion to the Church and the students. I was also impressed by the students that came, their devotion to the intellectual life, and their kindness to me as a rookie tutor.”

New Role

Indeed, it was his own devotion to his students these past 22 years that gave Dr. O’Reilly a moment’s pause when President Michael F. McLean asked him to become the College’s new vice president for development. “Stepping away from the classroom has its difficulties,” he admits, even though, in keeping with College policy, he still teaches one class per semester. Yet leading the effort to make the College’s education affordable for the 70 percent of students who receive financial aid has its own rewards. “It is a real joy coming to know the College’s benefactors,” he observes. “They make everything we do here possible. They are so inspiring in their dedication to the good of the College and their desire to help.”

As he takes on his new job, Dr. O’Reilly says he will draw strength and support from his wife of 26 years, Peggy, and their 12 children — the second of whom, Cathleen, graduated from Thomas Aquinas College this spring. Recognizing how the College has touched their lives has only increased his desire to give back to his alma mater. “It is because I see the good of the College — what it has done in my life and in the life of my wife, my children, and all of the alumni — that I agreed to take on this position,” he says. “I am willing to do anything I can do to help the mission of the College.”

Welcome Back

Two Classmates Return as Members of Teaching Faculty

Jared Kuebler

Following a profound spiritual conversion around the time of his confirmation, Jared Kuebler sensed he had a calling to the priesthood. He visited monasteries, both in his native Southern California and in Europe, but opted to attend college first. At the urging of some wise priests, he decided to visit, apply, and ultimately enroll at Thomas Aquinas College.

During his first two years on campus, Jared gradually discerned that his vocation was not to the priesthood after all — a realization that was confirmed when he fell in love with classmate Maria Kaiser. Thinking seriously, for the first time, of not spending the rest of his life in a monastery, he remembers wondering, “If I got married, what would I do for a job?”

Then his thoughts turned to his tutors at the College: “That’s the greatest job in the world. I’m having so much fun in class, and these men get to do it for the rest of their lives!”

Shortly after their graduation in 2003, the Kueblers married. Not long after they moved to Vienna, Austria, where Jared entered the International Theological Institute. During that time Mr. Kuebler got his first taste of teaching, leading Socratic seminars in an undergraduate philosophy class modeled after the College’s freshman course. After completing his master’s in theology, he moved with his family to Florida to undertake doctoral studies at Ave Maria University. There, he was able to try his hand at lecturing, which he enjoyed, but which also gave him an even greater appreciation for the Socratic discussions at the College.

That experience confirmed Mr. Kuebler’s longing to return to his alma mater and to teach in more than one discipline. “There were a lot of places I was interested in teaching at, but I always had it in the back of my mind that it would be sad if I could never do Euclid again, or Newton,” he says. “It was always my dream to come back, particularly for the community of tutors here and the opportunity to teach across the curriculum.”

That dream has at last come true. Mr. Kuebler is teaching freshman philosophy and sophomore theology, as well as sophomore seminar, and enjoying what he still considers to be “the greatest job in the world.”



Elizabeth Reyes

When Elizabeth Reyes visited Thomas Aquinas College as a high school senior, she had little intention of enrolling. Her heart was set on a college with a study-abroad program. While on campus, however, something changed her mind: the faculty.

“I was intrigued and impressed with the humility of the tutors,” she recalls. “They ate lunch with the students, and they genuinely seemed interested in what the students had to say. It was clear that the students were the focus of the faculty.”

That impression would lead Miss Reyes to the College twice — first as a student, and now as a member of that same teaching faculty.

It was while at the College that “I started to understand what education is,” Miss Reyes notes. “It is a freeing of the soul and the mind, instead of just learning servile tasks.” A lifelong lover of animals, she was fascinated to explore this interest across the breadth of the College’s curriculum — studying Creation not only through the natural sciences, but also in literature, philosophy, and theology. Her senior thesis examines how animals can help lead man to God, a theme that has endured throughout her academic career.

After graduating from the College in 2003, Miss Reyes went to the Braniiff Graduate School at the University of Dallas, where she earned a master’s degree and completed her doctoral work in English literature. There, she also acquired what she describes as the “missionary spirit of teacher,” leading classes of undergraduates through the works of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and other great authors.

This experience was a good preparation for a return to the College, where Miss Reyes is now able to teach the curriculum that once so excited her, while not being confined to any single discipline. “I missed math and science while I was away,” she says. “Physics was one of my favorite studies at the College.” In her first semester she is teaching senior seminar, freshman natural science, and freshman philosophy.

Now a tutor herself, Miss Reyes says she is thrilled to get to know her students and join them around the lunch table. She is also pleased to be working alongside the very educators who once so inspired her. “It is special to be amongst a faculty that loves what they do,” she remarks. “It is such an honor to be here.”



Campus Update

Recent Events and Happenings

Faculty Changes

In recent years, planned giving — such as estate gifts and charitable annuities — has become an increasingly popular way for benefactors to support Thomas Aquinas College. In response to this heightened interest, **Quincy Masteller**, formerly the College’s vice president for development, is shifting the focus of his efforts to work with Director of Gift Planning Tom Susanka in overseeing the College’s Legacy Society. Given the legal complexities of planned giving, Mr. Masteller, an attorney by training and the College’s general counsel, is uniquely suited for this position. “We view planned giving as an essential part of our long-term development plan,” says President Michael F. McLean, “and we are confident that Quincy will help build upon our success in this area.”

Succeeding Mr. Masteller as vice president for development is senior tutor **Dr. Paul J. O’Reilly**. “It has been a policy of the College since its founding to have members of the teaching faculty hold various key administrative positions, so that the operations of the College remain tethered to the academic mission,” explains Dr. McLean. “Paul is very committed to that mission, and brings a high level of energy and commitment to his new position.” (To learn more about Dr. O’Reilly, see page 5.)

Among the other administrative roles held by tutors at Thomas Aquinas College is that of the assistant dean for student affairs, who oversees campus activities, residential life, and student discipline. Having completed his four-year term as assistant dean, **Dr. John Goyette** is returning to a full-time teaching schedule. Replacing him as assistant dean is senior tutor **Mr. Steven Cain**. “Assistant dean is one of the most demanding positions at the College, but it is also among the most important and the most rewarding,” says Dr. McLean. “Over the years Steve has shown great devotion to the well-being of our students. They are blessed to have him in this new role.”

Lastly, **Mark Kretschmer** is the College’s new registrar, replacing tutor **Sean Collins**, who held the post for the previous 12 years. A graduate of the Class of 2000, Mr. Kretschmer has worked at the College since 2004 as the director of alumni relations, career counselor, and manager of the student bookstore. With this new position, he will now also oversee student enrollment and registration. Under the terms of the College’s polity, by becoming registrar, Mr. Kretschmer also joins the administrative faculty — “a well-earned honor,” says President McLean.

Conference on Social Teaching

For the third consecutive year, the College hosted a conference this summer on the social doctrine of the Church. Sponsored by *The Aquinas Review*, the event consisted of three seminars concerning the fundamental principles underlying the Church’s teachings on economics and social justice. Led by the College’s founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, and five fellow members of the teaching faculty, this year’s seminars examined two papal encyclicals (*Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*), St. Thomas Aquinas’ discussion of fraud in the *Summa Theologiae*, and Rev. Heinrich Pesch’s *Ethics and the National Economy*.

Summer Seminar Weekends

In July the College conducted two Summer Seminar Weekends for members of the President’s Council, the generous benefactors who form the backbone of the College’s annual financial-aid fund. The seminars focused on the Church’s teaching regarding conscience, with readings by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Thomas More, and Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman. Guests attended Mass each day in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, conversed with student summer workers, and enjoyed delicious meals and social events. “The seminars were a joy,” reflects Vice President for Development Paul J. O’Reilly. “These weekends give President’s Council members a wonderful opportunity to experience the unique education that they so generously help to make possible for our students.”



Hearst Foundations Announce \$50,000 Grant

For much of the last two decades, The Hearst Foundations have been loyal benefactors to Thomas Aquinas College, and this year is no exception. The New York-based philanthropies, which primarily fund education, health, culture, and social-service programs, have awarded a \$50,000 grant to support the more than 70 percent of Thomas Aquinas College students who receive financial aid.

“Once again, we find ourselves owing a great debt of gratitude to The Hearst Foundations,” says President Michael F. McLean, who notes that the foundations first established an endowment at the College in 1994. “The College has, since its founding, welcomed all students who are willing and able to complete our academic program, regardless of their financial means. It is generosity such as that of The Hearst Foundations’ that makes this commitment a reality.”

Society for Aristotelian Studies

On June 16-17 the Society for Aristotelian Studies, an international consortium of scholars, held its annual West Coast meeting at the College on the theme, “Aristotle’s Natural Philosophy and the Cosmologies of Modern Science.” Among the lectures

were three by members of the Thomas Aquinas College faculty: Dr. Carol Day (“Time, Space, and the Expanding Universe”), Dr. Andrew Seeley (“Aristotle’s Matter and an Evolutionary Cosmos”), and Dr. Thomas Kaiser (“Something from Nothing This Way Comes”).

Zeiters Honored for Service to the Poor

The Diocese of Stockton, Calif. is honoring Dr. Henry Zeiter, a member of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, and his wife, Carol, with the Bishop’s Award for Life of Service to the Poor. Says the Most Rev. Stephen E. Blaire, Bishop of Stockton, “Their lives embody the concepts of charity and social justice and are shining examples of faith, courage, and service to God and community.”



Dan Evans / Lodi News-Sentinel

A world-renowned ophthalmologist, Dr. Zeiter has traveled to China, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Bulgaria to perform surgeries for the needy and to pass on his skills and knowledge to local physicians. Mrs. Zeiter has been active in raising funds to construct and support a Stockton homeless shelter. Together the couple also supports numerous Church, philanthropic, and educational organizations — including Thomas Aquinas College.

The Zeiters have given extensively to the construction of several new buildings on campus, most notably Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, as well as to the annual financial aid fund. In 2010, in recognition of their decades of generosity, the Zeiters were inducted into the College’s Order of St. Albert the Great.

Dr. and Mrs. Zeiter see their support of the College as very much in keeping with the service to the poor for which the Diocese of Stockton is recognizing them. “When I used to go to poor areas of the world, I never wanted to give them a fish; I wanted to give them a fishing pole,” said Dr. Zeiter in 1999. “I think the same thing is going on at the College. It’s a place that teaches people how to fish.”

“Henry and Carol have been faithful and generous benefactors to the College,” says President Michael F. McLean. “We are delighted that the Diocese of Stockton is celebrating their efforts.”

Alumni Show Their Gratitude

Thanks to the hard work of the Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Association, an impressive 64 percent of alumni contributed to the College’s annual financial aid fund over the last fiscal year. Although there are, as of yet, no comparative statistics for 2010-2011 alumni giving at other colleges and universities, it is certain that the College’s rate will be, once again, among the highest in the nation. Last year, *U.S. News & World Report* listed the College among its “Top 10 Best-Loved Schools” nationwide for alumni satisfaction as measured by alumni giving.

“When philanthropic foundations see the great value our alumni place on the education here, they can likewise be confident about supporting our program,” says President Michael F. McLean. “Our alumni are our finest ambassadors, and because of their generosity, more worthy students will have the opportunity to become the *next* generation of Thomas Aquinas College alumni.”

Chapel Architect Honored

Duncan Stroik of the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture has been named one of the 2011 winners of the prestigious Palladio Awards for his design of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at Thomas Aquinas College. The awards, sponsored by *Traditional Building* and *Period Homes* magazines, are named for Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, who created architecture suitable for his time while drawing from the great works of the past. To qualify for a Palladio Award, a project must “meet all the functional needs of contemporary usage while applying lessons learned from previous generations to create beauty in the built environment.”

“We congratulate Duncan on this well-deserved honor,” says Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca. “The vision for the Chapel was that it would employ all the latest technological and engineering advances, while retaining timeless elements of beauty and reflecting the Church’s 2,000 year tradition in Sacred Architecture. Duncan executed this vision to perfection, and it is gratifying to see him receive the appropriate recognition.”

Board of Regents Hosts 5th Annual Golf Classic

Sherwood Country Club in Westlake Village, Calif., was the site of the fifth annual Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic, hosted by the Board of Regents on May 23. The Classic benefits the many Thomas Aquinas College students who rely on assistance from the school’s student scholarship fund — some of whom were present to sing for and to personally thank the attendees. Sixty-six golfers participated in this year’s event, which was followed by a clubhouse awards ceremony and reception.



President Michael F. McLean and Board of Regents Chairman Scott Daily were also on hand to speak about the College and to present awards to this year’s winners, including the foursome with the lowest gross score: Dan Gallagher, Ed McCarthy, Tom Dann, and Lawrence O’Neil.

Summa Cum Laude

College Achieves Top Scores in Newest Editions of Catholic and Secular Guides

Each fall, the various college guides — Catholic and secular, online and print — produce their annual reviews and rankings of colleges and universities. Among the new editions for the 2011-12 academic year, the College has once again earned the highest marks for academics, financial aid, Catholic identity, and campus living.

“Even though we do not actively seek it, we are gratified by the College’s treatment in all the college guides,” says President Michael F. McLean. “Our students and faculty continue to demonstrate that a classical education, taught in the light of faith, can yield outstanding results by any reasonable measure.”

Below is a summary of this year’s rankings and ratings. For more information, including links to the original reviews, see: thomasaquinas.edu/about/college-reviews.

The Princeton Review

As it has for several years now, The Princeton Review has listed Thomas Aquinas College among *The Best 376 Colleges*, its annual guide about the top 15 percent of colleges and universities in the United States. It has also dubbed the College as one of the 121 “Best of the West.” The guide awards the College the highest possible score for academics, and includes it as one of only 10 institutions on the “Financial Aid Honor Roll” of schools that receive the highest possible rating for financial aid.

“We’re pleased to recommend Thomas Aquinas College to users of our site as one of the best schools to earn their undergrad degree,” says Robert Franek, The Princeton Review’s senior vice president and publisher. “We winnowed our list based on institutional data we collected directly from the schools, our visits to schools over the years, and the opinions of our staff, plus college counselors and advisors whose recommendations we invite. We also take into account what students at the schools reported to us about their campus experiences at them on our 80-question student survey for this project.”

In its profile, The Princeton Review quotes extensively from Thomas Aquinas College students, one of whom observes that the College creates “an atmosphere of trust and faith that makes it easier to study, to live, and to grow.” Another notes that the College “takes learning seriously for its own sake, not just as preparation for a job.” Others speak favorably of Thomas Aquinas College’s “strong Catholic identity,” “rigorous curriculum,” and “holistic education” that is “demanding on every level,” teaching students how to “read and think critically.”

In addition, The Princeton Review gives Thomas Aquinas College a “Quality of Life Rating” of 96 (out of 99), and places it in the Top 20 of several categories, including: “Class Discussions Encouraged,” “No One Cheats,” “Students Are Very Religious,” “Dorms Are Like Palaces,” “Low Cost of Living,” and “Very Little Drug Use.”



National Catholic Register

The *National Catholic Register* has selected Thomas Aquinas College as one of only 31 colleges and universities nationwide for its “Catholic Identity College Guide ’11.” The guide is based on the schools’ responses

to 10 questions which, the *Register* explains, are designed such that “a ‘yes’ answer reflects essential elements of the renewal of Catholic identity called for by Pope John Paul II’s 1990 apostolic constitution on higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Out of the Heart of the Church), its 2000 ‘Application to the United States,’ canon law, and other relevant Church documents.”

Questions include whether faculty members are required to take an Oath of Fidelity to the Church, whether the Sacraments are readily available for students, whether there are only single-sex residence halls on campus, and whether the institution limits its honors and awards to those who uphold Church teaching. On all 10 questions, the College answered in the affirmative.



American Council of College Trustees and Alumni

In its second annual report on the curricular strength of American colleges and universities, the American Council of College Trustees and Alumni has put Thomas Aquinas College at the very top of the list.



On its “What Will They Learn” website, ACTA features evaluations of the major public and private colleges and universities in all 50 states — 1,007 four-year institutions in all, with more than 7 million undergraduate students among them. Thomas Aquinas College is one of only 19 institutions in the country to receive an “A” grade, and one of only three to receive a perfect score.

“Hundreds of schools across the country are abandoning the core curriculum, but Thomas Aquinas College is not one of them,” says ACTA’s press secretary, Daniel Burnett. “That’s exactly what the American people want,” he adds, citing an ACTA-commissioned Roper study, which found that 70 percent of American adults believe that colleges should require classes in core disciplines.

While numerous guides rank colleges and universities based on popularity or reputation, ACTA’s annual rating is unique inasmuch as it evaluates schools solely on the

basis of their curricula. Rather than comparing colleges against one another, it measures them by objective criteria to determine what students are learning.

The ACTA evaluation focuses on the substance of schools’ mandatory courses and texts, or core curriculum. The association has identified seven essential areas of study for undergraduates — composition, literature, American history, foreign language, mathematics, science, and economics. The more of these areas of study required by a college or university, and the more substantive the readings, the higher the school’s overall ACTA rating. Less than 2 percent of colleges nationwide received an “A,” and only 0.3 percent, including Thomas Aquinas College, achieved a perfect score.

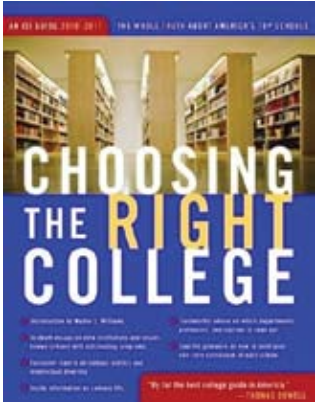
Intercollegiate Studies Institute

“In 1971, in response to the shock-secularization and academic decline of Catholic colleges in America, a small group of scholars in California envisaged something different. ...”

So begins the review of Thomas Aquinas College in the Intercollegiate Studies Institute’s *Choosing the Right College*. “Its success, both by the founders’ standards and by the world’s, has been remarkable,” the guide continues. “The program to which they have adhered from the beginning is widely recognized as one of the most rigorous in the country. Over 40 percent of those who complete it go on to graduate study in virtually every field.”

The guide observes, “The keystone to Thomas Aquinas College’s education is its corporate commitment to a rationally knowable objective reality. The College believes that Truth, with an emphatically capital ‘T,’ is accessible through faith and reason.”

Notably, ISI gives the College a “green light” for its “political and social environment,” meaning that at Thomas Aquinas College students with traditional or religious sensibilities will not “find themselves isolated, ostracized, or even officially sanctioned for dissenting from campus orthodoxies.” Moreover, Thomas Aquinas College “does not press its ideas onto students through lectures and textbooks,” the guide remarks, “but genuinely tries to lead them through the Socratic method, placing the emphasis on their own reasoning powers as engaged with a text and other readers.”



U.S. News & World Report

In the 2012 edition of its Best Colleges guide, *U.S. News & World Report* places Thomas Aquinas College in the uppermost tier of all American liberal arts colleges. The guide also praises the College for the generosity of its financial aid program, featuring it on the Top 40 “Great Schools, Great Prices” list, and ranking it among the top national liberal arts colleges for the “Least Debt” carried by graduates.

“It is good to see that we have maintained our high rankings in the *U.S. News* college guide,” says Director of Admissions Jon Daly. “That the guide singles out Thomas Aquinas College for both academics and financial aid confirms that the College is a truly viable option for students seeking an excellent education at an affordable price — especially during this economically challenging time.”



Forbes

In assembling its annual list of “America’s Top Colleges,” *Forbes* magazine “focuses on the things that matter the most to students: quality of teaching, great career prospects, graduation rates and low levels of debt.” Using these criteria, the nation’s leading business magazine has ranked Thomas Aquinas College within the top quartile of its list — that is, among the top 150 schools nationwide. It also places the College in the Top 25 of all schools in the West, remarking on its “unique education with courses based on the Great Books and seminar method.”



About.com

Internet portal About.com, a subsidiary of the *New York Times*, ranks Thomas Aquinas College as one of the nation’s 23 “Top Catholic Colleges and Universities.” The site’s college admissions writer, Allen Grove, describes the College as a “Catholic college with a great books curriculum and no traditional majors” that “has an impressive graduation rate and represents an excellent value.” He notes that the College “frequently ranks highly among national liberal arts colleges” and “wins praise for its small classes and its value.” In a comparative analysis of standardized-testing results at Catholic institutions, Mr. Grove additionally finds that the College’s students have the third-highest average SAT scores in the country.



Learn More ...

“As pleased as we are with our rankings, it is difficult to quantify the great good that is accomplished in the minds and souls of our students through the College’s rigorous academic curriculum and its fidelity to the teaching Church,” says Director of Admissions Jon Daly. “We strongly encourage students who want to learn about what we do here to come visit or to participate in our summer high school program.”

Teamwork & Camaraderie

A Prefect’s Favorite Memory from the Summer High School Program

By Kathleen Sullivan (’06)

Note: Miss Sullivan is a doctoral student in literature at The Catholic University of America. This past summer she served as the head prefect for women at the College’s Great Books Program for High School Students. Below is an excerpt from a letter she wrote to the Board of Directors at The Christianform, a philanthropic foundation dedicated to promoting young Christian leaders, which furnished a grant that paid for the prefects’ stipends.

Whenever I am asked how it feels to work as a prefect for the Thomas Aquinas College Summer Program, I always respond, “truly blessed.” Those words ring deeply, for being able to immerse myself in the rich spiritual and intellectual community of the College during those two weeks has been a wonderful rejuvenation for my body, mind, and soul.

I have been working on the program since the summer of 2005. I love every aspect of it, and this year was no different. From this summer one event especially stands out in my mind: the hike to the Punch Bowls in the Los Padres National Forest just behind the campus. Nick, a student in a wheelchair, wanted to go on the hike despite being unable to walk, and since he had a pole-chair contraption that he had used during Boy Scout trips, he joined the group.

At first it was rough going, with some of the guys struggling to carry the heavy load, and with others impatient at the delay caused by the slow progress. But then, about 10 minutes into the hike, a prefect stepped up, called all the guys back together, and said, “OK, men, I’m going to need each and every one of you. The girls are going ahead, but we’re all going to stay back and form shifts to carry Nick. We’ll switch every two minutes so we don’t get tired. We’ll pace ourselves and work as a team. We’re going to do this together and we’re going to bring Nick to the top. All right, let’s make Shift 1.”

I stayed back to take some pictures, and seeing the boys group together in forming their teams to carry Nick was beautiful. My heart simply overflowed with the nobility those young men displayed that day. And they did it!

Every two or three minutes a call went out, “OK, Shift 2, carry! Shift 3, get ready!” They carried Nick over rocky river beds, trudging through the cold water; they car-

ried him through narrow tree-lined paths, successfully avoiding poison oak; and they carried him up a steep, sandy ravine, which is somewhat risky even on two feet.

It was beautiful. It was inspiring. It made me so proud to be a witness of selfless teamwork. They made it all the way up to the Punch Bowls, and back down again, without a single mishap, and with constant cheers of encouragement and camaraderie. An amazing brotherhood was formed that day.

At the end of the two weeks, as I said goodbye to Nick, I asked him what his favorite part of the program was. With a big smile emerging, he answered without hesitation, “the Punch Bowls hike.”

Yes, Nick, that was my favorite part, too.

So thank you to The Christianform for allowing me the honor of working for two weeks in a very special place with a very special group of people. You have given me the opportunity to share and receive much joy and happiness while developing my own abilities to guide and lead these young people to an appreciation of the good achieved by Thomas Aquinas College. It is so rewarding to have been a prefect for these past seven years, and even more rewarding to receive thanks from current students for something I said or did that caused them to think more seriously about attending the College.

So, in return, the thanks go to you. I will be keeping you all in my prayers.

To learn more about the Summer Great Books Program for High School Students, see <http://thomasaquinas.edu/admission/summerprogram>.



“This, Too, Is a Privileged Place”

The Convocation Homily of Right Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem

Note: The Right Rev. Eugene Hayes, O.Praem., Abbot of St. Michael’s Abbey in Silverado, Calif., was the principal celebrant of the 2011 Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit.

As you know, today we are celebrating a votive Mass of the Holy Spirit. It is a tradition of long standing for Catholic educational institutions to do this for the opening of a new academic year, imploring God’s graces and wisdom upon all those associated with the college: students and staff, administration and faculty. For us here today it is particularly appropriate as this academic year 2011-12 marks a significant anniversary, the 40th anniversary of the founding of the College. So I invite all of you to join me in praying at this Mass of the Holy Spirit that His presence be felt and His gifts be experienced in ever-deeper ways in the days and months of this year of celebration.

I mentioned that we are celebrating a votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, and as you know such votive Masses are not tied to any particular date or liturgical season. But rather they are what one might call “occasion” Masses, Masses tied to events, particular celebrations.

Occasionally votive Masses can take precedence over particular observances. So while we are celebrating the Mass of the Holy Spirit, in every other place today, August 22, eight days after the Solemnity of Mary’s Assumption into Heaven, the Church celebrates the memorial of the Queenship of Mary. She holds a unique place in the Kingdom of Her Son, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As such we are assured today of Mary’s special intercession on behalf of us gathered here in the Chapel, the Chapel which bears her name under the unique and appropriate title for today, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity.

Our first reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-11). The book is also known as the Fifth Gospel, or the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, Whose coming was promised by Jesus, spoken of in the prophets of Judaism — Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel — and experienced personally by all the prophets of old when receiving their call. The coming of the Holy Spirit, we are told, is experienced first by the Apostles gathered in the upper room, and then witnessed by devout Jews from every nation under Heaven.

The Holy Spirit, then, descends regardless of one’s personal origin. I have been told that this freshman class has 102 students, and in the Commencement issue of the *College Newsletter*, I saw there that the graduating Class of 2011 included students from across this country and various provinces of Canada, from Ireland, from the United



Kingdom, and from Belgium. I was told, too, that this past summer at the program for high school students there were even students from Germany and Argentina present.

Now what does that tell us about the place in which we find ourselves today? It tells us that this, too, is a privileged place, a place of God’s blessing. A place to which people who are devout and serious, thirsty for knowledge and truth and wisdom, come to be taught; come to learn how to reason; come to know.

But that is not all. In considering the events of Pentecost, it is clear that the inspired author St. Luke had very much in mind another event described in the Scriptures, one found in the first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis. There we can read that the whole world had the same language and the same words, and yet they used bricks and mortars, and said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with

its top in the sky, and so make a name for ourselves” (Gen. 11:4). And God, seeing what they had done, knowing their motivation, to make a name for themselves, got hold of them and confused them as to their common language and scattered them.

Here in this place people say that there is likewise one language spoken, the same language, the same words with the same meaning; that regardless of origin, all hear the words and understand them as part of their own language, words like *verum*, *bonum*, *pulchrum*, words like knowledge, wisdom, and love.

However, there is also a difference, as St. Paul reminds us today. There are indeed different kinds of gifts, but one single Holy Spirit; different forms of service, but the one same Lord; different workings, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. For to each individual a manifestation of the Spirit is given, not to make a name for oneself, but ordered to that supreme of all goods, the common good, which is God. In commanding all and ordering all, is there not a gift to which St. Paul speaks in the next chapter after the one we heard today? That gift, of course, is love. Not any love, but that love which does not seek its own interest, that love which rejoices with the truth and is the truth.

In this new academic year beginning today, we pray that the Spirit of that same love, the Spirit which is love itself, be a frequent, indeed a daily, constant reference point for students and staff, administration and tutors. And may Our Lady, whom we invoke today, especially as the *Sedes Sapientiae*, the Seat of Wisdom, watch over all involved in the audacious yet humble endeavor which takes place here day in and day out. Mary, Seat of Wisdom, pray for us.

Fifty Priests in 40 Years

College Celebrates the Ordinations of its Four Newest Alumni Priests

Rev. Nicholas Blaha ('02)

If there was a single experience that convinced him of his vocation to the priesthood, says Rev. Nicholas Blaha ('02), it was the time he spent at an orphanage in El Salvador while a seminarian for the Diocese of Kansas City, Kan., in 2010.

"These kids lack parents. They are just starving for affection, love, and acceptance. That experience was such a clear confirmation for me of a vocation. This was what it meant to be a *spiritual* father, because it was so tangible."

Of course, Fr. Blaha began to discern his vocation many years earlier. He thinks back, for example, to the three priests who served as chaplains while he was a student at Thomas Aquinas College, and how, together, they formed his sense of ministry. "Each one substantiated a different aspect of the priesthood for me," he recalls. Rev. Bart de la Torre, O.P., was an exemplar of the spiritual life and preaching; Rev. Michael Perea, O.Praem., was a model of devotion to prayer and liturgy; and Rev. Wilfred Borden, O.M.I., was a master at fostering community and serving others.

When he graduated from the College in 2002, Fr. Blaha says, "I felt like I had an excellent education and I wanted, in some small way, to give it to others." So he pursued what he describes as "a trial period of apostolate" by spending three years as a missionary on secular campuses for the Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

That experience gave him a glimpse of what it would mean, as a priest, to serve as an *alter Christus*. "I saw God working in people's lives, bringing about conversions. It wasn't me doing it, but in some sense, it wouldn't have happened had I not been there," Fr. Blaha observes. "That was a mark of the call of God; God is going to do this, but he won't do it without me."

In 2006 he entered the seminary, and on May 28, 2011, the Most Rev. Joseph Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City, Kan., conferred upon him the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Fr. Blaha currently serves as the parochial vicar at Most Pure Heart of Mary Parish and the chaplain at Hayden Catholic High School, both in Topeka.



Rev. Joseph Dygert ('02)

At a young age, Joe Dygert experienced firsthand the transformative power of the Sacraments and, by extension, the importance of the priest who administers them. "Up through ninth grade I really didn't take my faith that seriously," he says. "There were other things that were more important to me, like fitting in with the crowd at school."

Yet as he matured, he began to think more deeply about the spiritual life. One day during his sophomore year in high school, while walking in the woods near his family home in Colorado Springs, the reality of sin and hell dawned upon him. This newfound awareness prompted him to go to confession, where he was overwhelmed by the depth of Christ's mercy. The experience "changed my life," Fr. Dygert reflects. For the next 15 years, he considered a calling to the priesthood, culminating in his ordination at the hands of the Most Rev. Michael J. Sheridan, S.Th.D., Bishop of Colorado Springs, on June 19, 2011.

There were, naturally, many stops along the way. The first was at Thomas Aquinas College, which Fr. Dygert describes as "a real blessing to me." Particularly of value, he notes, was "the great gift" of reading the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. "The education I received at the College is indispensable for me as a priest."

Next he enrolled in the Ave Maria School of Law, but only for one year. "In hindsight, I can see that I was running away from the seminary," Fr. Dygert observes. "I was trying to find some other way to serve God, and I thought, 'I can serve God as a lawyer!' While that is true — one *can* serve God as a lawyer — that wasn't where He wanted *me* to go." Fr. Dygert's time in law school helped him realize that "It wasn't enough to be living a vocation other than giving myself completely to Christ in celibacy and in a priestly vocation."

Today he does just that as the parochial vicar at Ave Maria Catholic Parish in Parker, Colo. He teaches religion to students of all ages, leads the RCIA program, assists the St. Vincent DePaul Society, and serves as the chaplain for the local chapter of the Knights of Columbus. Most important of all, Fr. Dygert offers the sacraments — ever mindful of their transformative power in the lives of his parishioners.



Fr. Jonathan Perrotta ('95)

It was a longing for marriage that ultimately led Rev. Jonathan Perrotta ('95) to his priestly ordination. "I briefly thought about the priesthood," he recalls, "but I wanted to get married."

God, however, had different plans.

The story of Fr. Perrotta's vocation begins back when his grandfather, still a young man, was himself eager to find a wife. He started a 27-day long novena to the Blessed Mother, and the day after it was completed, met the woman he would eventually wed.

Decades later his grandson, Jonathan Perrotta of Ann Arbor, Mich., enrolled as a freshman at Thomas Aquinas College. "Being at the College," he says, "was a profound blessing that made me all the more convinced of the truth of our faith." After his graduation in 1995, still not envisioning himself as a priest, he began working at Trader Joe's, eventually managing and opening several stores throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

Although his next decade was consumed with work, Jonathan still thought he wanted to get married. In 2005 he took the matter to prayer — beginning the same novena his grandfather had once prayed to find a wife. "As I prayed it," he recalls, "I became convinced that I had to ask God what *He* wanted me to do."

Soon thereafter, he attended a day of discernment sponsored by the Archdiocese of Detroit, and his vocation became clear. "I had this powerful sense of Mary being there, and she was saying, 'This is the answer to your prayer; this is my answer to you.'" Within a year, he entered the seminary. Although his grandfather had since passed away, Jonathan's grandmother — now elderly and ill — took an active interest in his vocation. "She was always praying and offering her sufferings for me so I could be a priest," says Fr. Perrotta.

On June 11, 2011, the Most Rev. Earl Boyea conferred the Sacrament of Holy Orders on Fr. Perrotta at St. Mary Cathedral in Lansing, Mich. That day, for the first time in five years, Fr. Perrotta's grandmother was blessed with the strength to attend Mass, and thus witness her grandson's ordination — another fruit of the novena her late husband had prayed all those years ago.

In God's providence, that novena has now begotten another vocation. For Fr. Perrotta, now the parochial vicar at the Church of the Holy Family in Grand Blanc, Mich., there is great peace in answering Christ's call. "There is a sense of fittingness. This is who God made me to be."



Rev. Edmund Waldstein, O.Cist. ('06)

As the child of two alumni, Thomas Waldstein was always interested in one day coming to Thomas Aquinas College, but during his teenage years, something else almost lured him away — the religious life. While his father, theologian Michael Waldstein ('78) served as founding president and taught at Austria's International Theological Institute, Thomas got to know the Cistercian monks at *Stift Heiligenkreuz* monastery outside of Vienna. Their prayerful life appealed to him, but at the recommendation of his family's priest, he opted to come to the College first.

"I was completely captivated right from the start," he says of his education at the College. Still, the religious life continued to call, and after watching two monks make their final professions during the summer between his sophomore and junior years, Thomas e-mailed the abbot concerning his intention to drop out and enter the community right away. "Although I loved the College, the monastic life was a stronger pull," he says. To his surprise, the abbot strongly encouraged him to complete his undergraduate education before entering the monastery.

Thus, for the next two years Thomas remained at Thomas Aquinas College during the academic year, while living in community at the monastery during Christmas and summer vacations. "I am very grateful that I went back to the College, because finishing up has been a big help to me in the religious life," he says. "Having seen the intellectual life as ordered to God has prepared me for the monastic life, because the whole point of monasticism is to order one's life to God."

Held in high esteem by his classmates, Thomas was elected to deliver the Class Speaker's address at their graduation in 2006. He then formally joined the Cistercians. In 2009, he made his final profession, taking the religious name of Edmund. On June 19, 2011, His Eminence Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, O.P., Archbishop of Vienna, ordained him to the priesthood at *Stift Heiligenkreuz*.

"When I took final vows, I had the feeling of entering something huge," Pater Edmund reflects. "When I was ordained to the priesthood, I had the feeling of becoming very small. I had the great sense of being unworthy, but that did not matter because it was not about me." In addition to participating in the monks' rich prayer life, he is now completing a doctorate in theology, after which he will teach at the Cistercians' seminary in Vienna.



In Memoriam

Molly Malcolmson Gustin, March 6, 1923 – May 10, 2011

One day this past spring, one of Molly Gustin’s former colleagues on the Thomas Aquinas College faculty observed that Mrs. Gustin’s book *Tonality* continues to occupy a privileged place in the College’s great books curriculum.

To which Mrs. Gustin replied, “That shows good sense.”

Not that she was prideful; Mrs. Gustin took little credit for her profound exposition of music theory, insisting that it was merely the extrapolation of realities that are plain to hear for anyone willing to listen. Her discourse on what constitutes good music and bad — not as a matter of subjective opinion, but as a matter of objective reality — drew upon the truths of nature and mathematics. It was no novel interpretation, she explained. “It’s the only music theory that’s ever existed.”

On May 10 Mrs. Gustin, who had retired from the College’s faculty in 2008 after 36 years of faithful service, suffered a severe stroke and died that evening. Predeceased by her husband William in 2005, she is survived by two daughters, four grandsons, three great-grandchildren, and thousands of intellectual heirs — the students who have already studied her work, and those who will study her wisdom and insights for many years to come.

A Love of Learning

A precocious child, Molly Malcolmson learned to read at age 3 and enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles, at 16. It was there that she met William Gustin, whom she dropped out of school to marry during her sophomore year. She then took a wartime job as a draftsman for the Douglas Aircraft Company to help support her husband’s academic studies.

Thereafter Mr. Gustin became UCLA’s first mathematics Ph.D. and accepted a teaching assignment at the University of Indiana, Bloomington. There, Mrs. Gustin made liberal use of one of the perks of her husband’s new position — free tuition for faculty spouses — and earned multiple degrees, culminating in a doctorate in music. Thence began a 50-year career in higher education that included teaching assignments at Park University in Kansas City, Kansas; St. John’s College at both its Annapolis, Md., and Santa Fe, N.M., campuses; and Portland State University in Oregon.

It was while working in Portland in 1971 that Mrs. Gustin first learned of a new Catholic college with a classical curriculum in Southern California. Intrigued, she trav-



eled down to Thomas Aquinas College and delivered a guest lecture during the school’s inaugural year. Impressed by her erudition, College officials invited her to join the teaching faculty. Impressed by their vision for liberal education, she gladly accepted and became a tutor in 1972.

Because of her background and expertise in music theory, Mrs. Gustin proved invaluable in the establishment of the College’s music tutorial. In addition to teaching music, and in keeping with College policy that tutors instruct throughout the integrated curriculum, over the years she also taught mathematics and natural science. She soon became a beloved tutor among both her colleagues and her students, famous for her quick wit, her wry candor, her exacting standards, and her infectious love of music and mathematics.

“Molly was an excellent teacher and an inspiration to her students,” says Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean. “She was a great colleague and a great friend, and she will be missed.”

Saying Goodbye

Members of the Thomas Aquinas College community prayed a rosary for Mrs. Gustin in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel on the evening of May 17, and the

following morning a memorial Mass was offered for the repose of her soul. Her body was interred that afternoon at Pierce Brothers Santa Paula Cemetery beside her mother, who was buried there in 1985. Afterward the College community and members of Mrs. Gustin’s family remembered her at a luncheon in St. Joseph Commons. (Audio from talks given at the luncheon is available on the College’s website, www.thomasaquinas.edu.)

“Not only is Molly one of a kind, I think she is the sixth proof for the existence of God,” reflected her dear friend, Director of Gift Planning Tom Susanka. “For who but God could imagine such a woman as Molly Gustin?”

Mr. Susanka first met Mrs. Gustin while she was a professor and he a student at Portland State University, and he entered the College as a freshman during her first year on the faculty. “Molly insisted on using her reason, and she insisted on *us* using our reason and on aiming at and — when possible — grasping the truth,” he recalled. “This, I think, is what endeared her to us. She sought the truth and held it dear.”

Warren Carroll 1932 – 2011

A convert to Catholicism in 1968, Dr. Warren Carroll was unwavering in his love of the Church and its history. Just nine years after his conversion, he founded Christendom College in Front Royal, Va. “He was a major figure in the movement that has been attempting to restore Catholic education,” says Thomas Aquinas College Dean Brian T. Kelly.

After serving as Christendom’s first president, Dr. Carroll became the chairman of its history department in 1985, a position he held until his retirement in 2002. Over the course of his career, he also authored several popular historical works, most notably *The History of Christendom*.

As an educator, Dr. Carroll touched the lives of numerous members of the Thomas Aquinas College faculty, including Dean Kelly, who studied under him, and tutor Dr. Anthony Andres, who formerly served on the Christendom faculty. Says Thomas Aquinas College’s own founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, “Dr. Carroll did yeoman’s work presenting an apology of the Church and its contributions to Western civilization.”

Mary Gehr 1916 – 2011

A faithful and generous friend of Thomas Aquinas College for the last 15 years, Mary Gehr of Shawano, Wis., greatly admired Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. “She gave generously to the Chapel project, and would check in to see how it was coming along,” notes College General Counsel Quincy Masteller. “She described it as ‘heaven on earth.’”

Her generosity to the College was multifaceted. As a onetime stockbroker, Mrs. Gehr managed her own

portfolio and often made gifts from her stock holdings. A dear friend of late President Thomas E. Dillon and his wife, Terri, she donated her family’s cherished table linens for use in the Doheny Hacienda, the official residence of the College’s president. She was also a member of the President’s Council and the Legacy Society.

“Mary was a lovely lady,” recalls Mr. Masteller. “I remember she was so glad when the Chapel was completed, but also sad that, in her old age, she would never see it” — in this life, at least.

Herbert H. McDade 1927 – 2011

Herb McDade first got to know Thomas Aquinas College Founding President Ronald P. McArthur when the two studied philosophy together at the Université Laval in the early 1950s. Mr. McDade served on the College’s Board of Governors from the time of its founding in 1971 until 1991, and supported the College financially throughout his life.

After his graduation from Laval, Mr. McDade spent 62 years in the pharmaceutical industry, working at major corporations such as The Upjohn Company, where he was the director of laboratory procedures, and the Revlon Corporation, where he was president of Revlon Healthcare and Revlon Healthcare International. In 1986 he became chairman, CEO and president of Armour Pharmaceuticals before founding his own consulting firm, The Thoma Corp., in 1989.

“Herb and his wife, Ann, always remained loyal friends of the College,” remarks Director of College Relations Anne Forsyth. Just days before his death, she remembers, the couple sent a tribute to be included in the 40th Anniversary Commemorative book. The text read: “Congratulations to the Founders, who dreamed ‘the impossible dream.’”

IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

Mary Gehr — January 17
Friend

John Patrick Wagner — March 19
Brother of Michael ('04)

Edward Palsa — May 4
Father-in-law of Chrisztina (Kowalski '94)

Molly Gustin — May 10
Tutor

Marlene Froula — June 21
Mother of Joe ('92), John ('99), Jeff (02), and Justin ('03); grandmother of Lucia ('15)

Dr. Warren Carroll — July 17
Friend, Founder of Christendom College

Tanja Rice — July 21
Sister of Kenneth ('05)

His Excellency Pietro Sambi
July 27
Friend, Apostolic Nuncio to the U.S.

Herbert H. McDade Jr. — August 17
Founding Member of the Board of Governors

Dorothy Grant Russell — September 4
Friend

Gene A. McDonald — September 15
Friend and library volunteer

The Poet of Catholic Liberal Education

Why We Read Dante Alighieri

By Dr. Brian T. Kelly

Note: The following remarks are adapted from Dean Brian T. Kelly's report to the Board of Governors at its May 13 meeting. They are part of an ongoing series of talks in which Dr. Kelly explains why the College includes certain authors in its curriculum. The full series is available at www.thomasaquinas.edu.



In the early cantos of the *Inferno*, Dante suggests that he is one of the six greatest poets of all time. This might sound like hubris, but many would suggest that he is too modest here.

The Italians know him simply as “the poet.” T.S. Eliot lays down the bold claim that “Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them; there is no third,” and further that Dante is “a model for all poets.” It is the assessment of many that the *Divine Comedy* is the most magnificent poem ever written. Eliot asserts that the final canto of the *Paradiso* “is the highest point that poetry has ever reached or ever can reach.”

And what other poet is the subject of one papal encyclical and the inspiration for another? Indeed, in 1921 Pope Benedict the XV issued *In Praeclara Summorum*, devoted exclusively to praising the great Florentine, and Benedict XVI has said that Dante inspired him to compose his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, on love.

If Dante had never written his masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*, he would still be considered a great lyric poet. His early *La Vita Nuova* is delightful. This slim volume contains courtly love poems in the early troubadour style, focusing on a recently deceased young lady, Beatrice, whose beauty, grace, and virtue had pierced Dante’s heart.

“Dante’s trip through the afterlife is remarkable in that it displays a solid formation in the liberal arts, in philosophy and the sciences, and in all of these as ordered to theology. Dante is a liberally educated man, and his poetry incorporates reason and argument without abandoning poetry’s fundamental aim of moving and cleansing the emotions.”

Dante’s love for Beatrice has confounded many, but is at the center of almost all of his writings. It is not a lustful desire but a purifying admiration. When Dante strays from the path of wisdom and virtue, he sees this as a departure from his idealized love of Beatrice. His commitment to her beauty and virtue is a sort of bridge to divine beauty and nobility.

There was no conflict between his total love for Beatrice and his love for and commitment to his own wife, Gemma. You can see that this love can be very difficult to grasp, but we as Catholics have an advantage since our devotion to Mary is this sort of love, a love that calls us to cling to her Son, the Word Incarnate.

The Divine Comedy

Indeed, Ralph McInerny, in his final book, *Dante and the Blessed Virgin*, argues that “Mary is the key to Dante.” We see these loves intertwined in the beginning of the *Inferno*, when Dante has lost his way and Mary, through St. Lucy, sends Beatrice to call Dante back to the path of righteousness. To do this more effectively Dante must travel through and experience Hell, and then Purgatory, and finally Heaven. Here he will see firsthand the effects of man’s choices on earth and ask questions of the damned and the elect.

This obviously gives the imaginative poet and storyteller great material to work with, and he draws on the length and breadth of Scripture, pagan and Christian literature, theology, philosophy, history, and his own times. In Hell we meet Judas, Caiaphas, Brutus and Cassius, Odysseus, Mohammed, Medusa and the Minotaur, numerous wicked popes and some of Dante’s own friends and relatives. We also find a number of the authors we read at the College, including Aristotle, but these are in the relatively mild Limbo.

As Dante travels through Purgatory and eventually Heaven, he is cleansed of his sinfulness and drawn into a greater understanding of God’s wisdom. He inquires about theological matters with the greatest saints and ultimately glimpses a vision of the Trinitarian Godhead. There is a sweet episode in which St. Bonaventure, the great Franciscan, sings the praises of St. Dominic, and St. Thomas Aquinas sings the praises of St. Francis of Assisi. In Heaven there is no longer any contention between these great orders.

It is hard to even begin to sketch the poem in a way that fairly represents its depth and richness. Think about what a great painting can capture in a moment, as it were. Think of what a beautiful poem can accomplish in a matter of 20 or 30 lines. Then think of what one of the greatest poets of all time can accomplish in 14,233 lines.

In the sophomore seminar we spend six weeks reading the *Divine Comedy*. I take it as more or less obvious that this work demands the time and attention we give to it. I would like to draw out two things that make Dante especially delightful for us and essential reading for the world: first, Dante’s education and second, his deep Catholicism.

The Poet’s Learning ...

First, Dante’s trip through the afterlife is remarkable in that it displays a solid formation in the liberal arts, in philosophy and the sciences, and in all of these as ordered

to theology. Dante is a liberally educated man, and his poetry incorporates reason and argument without abandoning poetry’s fundamental aim of moving and cleansing the emotions.

As a young man Dante proved skillful as a poet, finding his great theme of love and his muse, Beatrice. But he recognized his inadequate formation; he could not do justice to this noble theme. He had already studied the best poets, but if he was to create an epic poem of profound depth and wisdom he needed to know more. In the midst of an explosive political career, Dante took time to pursue the breadth of learning available in the late 13th century. He read Aquinas and Bonaventure, Augustine and Boethius, Aristotle and Plato, Averroes and Avicenna, and even lesser figures like Roger Bacon and Siger of Brabant. In other words Dante went back to school to get a good liberal education.

Through the years we have heard versions of this story from so many of our students. Sometimes, even with advanced degrees in hand, they have realized that to live up to their potential and calling they needed a liberating education. They needed the kind of formation that would help them to make a good beginning on the road to wisdom. And the power of this education is on display in *The Divine Comedy*. This work is a strong argument for the real value of liberal education.



Domenico di Michelino, La Divina Commedia di Dante

... and the Poet’s Faith

I also wanted to talk about Dante’s Catholicism. Here I will just look to *In Praeclara Summorum*, an encyclical issued by Pope Benedict XV, honoring Dante on the sixth centenary of his death. The Holy Father is effusive in his praise: “Among the many celebrated geniuses of whom the Catholic faith can boast ... and to whom civilization and religion are ever in debt, highest stands the name of Dante Alighieri.” He goes on to speak of the *Divine Comedy* as “a teaching for men of our times” and as “a treasure of Catholic teaching.”

How is it that Dante can be said to teach modern man? This poem is an enormously great and attractive work of art. But it cannot be read and savored without in some way inhabiting and forming some sympathy for the worldview it embodies. And Dante’s worldview is thoroughly Catholic. Even the geography and arrangement of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory reflect a thoroughly Catholic mind nurtured on the rich theological, intellectual tradition of the Church.

For the unbeliever it can be quite a challenge to adjust to the world that he finds in the *Divine Comedy*. But as the unbelieving mind adjusts, it cannot but be a little bit opened to the truths of the Faith. In coming to love and appreciate the beauty of the poem, the reader is in some small way initiated into the mysteries.

Pope Benedict XV insists that this is a matter of experience. He says, “we know now too how ... many who were far from ... Jesus Christ, and studied with affection the *Divina Commedia*, began by admiring the truths of the Catholic Faith and finished by throwing themselves with enthusiasm into the arms of the Church.”

So Dante’s great book is a wonderful apologetic; by its beauty and clarity and total commitment it invites nonbelievers to come home.

Pope Benedict XV ends this wonderful encyclical by speaking, as it were, to us, “And you, beloved children, whose lot it is to promote learning under the Magisterium of the Church,” (that’s us!) “continue as you are doing to love and tend the noble poet whom We do not hesitate to call the most eloquent singer of the Christian idea. The more profit you draw from study of him the higher will be your culture, irradiated by the splendors of truth, and the stronger and more spontaneous your devotion to the Catholic Faith.”

St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

Recent Highlights

- On May 14, His Excellency José H. Gomez, the Archbishop of Los Angeles, served as the College’s 2011 Commencement speaker.
- On August 26, senior tutor and Vice President for Development Paul J. O’Reilly presented the year’s opening lecture, “Catholic Liberal Education.”
- “The Camarata del Camino Real,” an 11-member group of current and past students of the College specializing in baroque music, performed at the September 2 Fall Concert.
- The Theologian of the Papal Household, Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P., spoke on September 16 about the moral theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.
- Rev. Anselm Ramelow, O.P., from the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, lectured on September 23 on the subject, “Does Art Imitate Nature?”



CAMPUS
LIFE

1. Students take to the campus volleyball courts after classes. 2. The student team celebrates a correct answer in the annual student v. tutors Trivial Pursuit match. 3. Theologian of the Papal Household Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P., meets with students for an informal conversation in the Student Lounge. 4. Faculty and students gather for the All-College Picnic. 5. Freshmen participate in an icebreaking event during Orientation. 6. At the annual Freshman-Sophomore dance, sophomores perform their own “Greek comedy” about the Olympian gods. 7. Students test their strength in a tug-of-war.

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

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

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

Calendar of Events

- Lecture
Dr. Peter Kalkavage, St. John’s College
“Music and the Soul”November 11
- Thanksgiving Recess November 24-28
- Advent Concert
The Thomas Aquinas College Choir December 2
- Christmas Vacation December 17 – January 8
- Lecture
Dr. Marc Guerra, Ave Maria University
“The Church and Modern Democracy
on Justice in Human Affairs”January 27
- 40th Anniversary On-Campus CelebrationJanuary 28
- Presidents’ Day Lecture
Dr. Joseph Bessette, Claremont Graduate University February 24

