



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2012

VOLUME 40, ISSUE 4

Late Classmate Inspires Prayers for the Unborn

Praying for and with Andrew “Kent” Moore (’14)

Lining the sidewalk outside the Planned Parenthood facility in Ventura, Calif., one Saturday in early September were some 180 Thomas Aquinas College students who prayed for — and with — their departed friend, Andrew “Kent” Moore (’14).

The gathering served to pay tribute to Kent as well as to continue his work. A tireless advocate of unborn children and their mothers, Kent spent countless hours outside this clinic and others, praying for an end to abortion. This summer, while participating in a Crossroads pro-life walk across America, he was struck and killed by an oncoming vehicle in Indiana. His classmates were not only shocked and devastated by the news, they were also determined — determined to honor Kent in the way that they knew he would want to be honored: by serving Christ in the unborn.

“This prayer vigil happened because everyone knew that we *needed* to do it for Kent’s sake,” says Rebecca Bessette (’14).

Remembering Kent

Kent — as he asked his friends at the College to call him (because there were too many other Andrews in his class) — was a dedicated but reluctant activist. “I can safely say he pretty much hated praying in front of the local abortion mill,” recalls his father, Joseph Moore. “What Andrew *did* love was the Truth.... His love of Truth led him to a love of God, to a love of neighbor, to Thomas Aquinas Col-



lege — and to untold lonely hours spent in front of Planned Parenthood. And to the walk that resulted in his being taken from us.”

A chaplain at the College during Kent’s two years on campus, Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., remembers his zeal for not only knowing the truth, but for living it. “Kent took great pains to avoid even the slightest bit of discrepancy between his conscience and his behavior,” says Fr. Paul. “His devotion and work for life were not for show, but because he realized he would never be at peace until he carried through on what he knew to be true.”

“Kent gave his life in service of God and in defense of the unborn,” says Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean. “We miss him greatly; yet we

are also inspired by and grateful for his witness.”

United in Prayer

Early on Saturday morning after the first week of classes, Kent’s friends arose to decorate the cars — some 35 in all — that would form a makeshift caravan to take more than half of the Thomas Aquinas College student body to neighboring Ventura. They painted messages in his memory and in support of the pro-life cause on the windows. After morning Mass they met up in St. Joseph Commons and made the half-hour drive, joined by members of the faculty and their families as well as the College’s three chaplains.

There were no protests, no conflicts, and no angry words. A few passing drivers honked their horns in support. An elderly

woman who was walking by joined in the prayers. A young couple that had approached the clinic gratefully accepted a brochure for a local pro-life pregnancy center. The event was quiet, peaceful, and prayerful — just like Kent.

“It was good to get us together and do something in memory of Kent, to make it hit home,” reflects Sarah Dufresne (’14). “He’s really gone, and he really died while he was walking across the country praying for all the unborn babies.”

Adds Miss Dufresne, “I oftentimes think of John Paul II’s words addressing the youth, ‘Do not be afraid to go out in the streets.’ I think that there was a definite, holy boldness that we had as a college on Saturday, and I hope that continues.”

Memorial Mass

A month later, members of the Thomas Aquinas College community joined Kent’s parents and siblings for a memorial Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. “Kent walked in the way of the saints,” said College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., who served as the principal celebrant and homilist. Speaking fondly of the young man’s kindness, his innocence, and his love, Fr. Buckley urged those in attendance to emulate his pursuit of personal holiness, particularly his compassion for the victims of abortion. “I’m sure that what we can do now for Kent,” he said, “is to become committed in the same way to the right-to-life movement that he was.”

“Go to the School of St. Thomas”

Bishop Cary, College Welcome Freshmen at Convocation 2012

On Monday, August 20, 2012, some 102 students from across the country and abroad matriculated as freshmen at Thomas Aquinas College — the Class of 2016.

The morning began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, with the Most Rev. Liam Cary, the newly installed Bishop of Baker (Ore.), presiding. His Excellency, clad in red vestments, was joined at the altar by the College’s three chaplains, Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.; Rev. Hildebrand Garceau, O.Praem.; and Rev. Joseph Illo. Walking behind the clergy as they processed into the Chapel were members of the College’s Board of Governors and faculty, dressed in academic regalia.

In his homily, Bishop Cary urged the new freshmen to think of the College’s patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, “as a paraclete, perhaps with a small p” — that is, as an advocate or a champion. “We can find few others who are capable, even after all these centuries, of guiding us into the truth, the truth of the world, the truth of the City, the truth of our own life,” His Excellency added. “Study him carefully, you who are fortunate to be at this school that bears his name. Study him carefully with mind and with heart. And you shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free.... Go to the school of St. Thomas, and learn to breathe the Spirit of Truth.”



President Michael F. McLean and the Most Rev. Liam Cary, Bishop of Baker (Ore.), greet freshman Rebecca Dawson of Fort Collins, Colo.

Following the Mass, students, faculty, and staff convened in St. Joseph Commons for the Matriculation Ceremony. There, members of the Class of 2016 formally began their tenure as students when Director of Admissions Jon Daly called their names. Each approached the dais, greeting President Michael F. McLean and Bishop Cary, and then signed the College’s registry. “In pursuing this education, we hearken to Our Lord’s command to ‘be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,’” said

Dr. McLean. “We are also prepared to assume our responsibilities as members of a democratic society.”

In addition to the new students, the College welcomed its newest tutors, Dr. Travis Cooper and Dr. Patrick Gardner. Standing beside Fr. Buckley, the two made the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, as do all members of the College’s teaching faculty.

Bishop Cary then addressed the members of the Class of 2016, who hail from 4 countries, 25 states, and the District of Columbia. The new class brings the College’s total enrollment to 371, including 181 men and 190 women. Reiterating some of the themes from his earlier homily, His Excellency said, “I cannot say how much I envy you the opportunity to study under the aegis of St. Thomas. I would give anything to go back 30 years and start with this instruction.... I hope your years will be hopeful, and that you will absorb the great gifts of this wonderful master of the Christian life.”

With the freshmen thus prepared to commence their studies, Dr. McLean proclaimed the start of the new academic year, and the students — freshmen and upper-classmen alike — responded, in keeping with College tradition, with a standing ovation. Members of the faculty and Board of Governors then processed out of the Commons as they and the students sang “Immaculate Mary” in joyful anticipation of the new year, now at hand.

From the Desk of the President

Dr. Michael F. McLean's Remarks to the Incoming Freshmen at Convocation 2012

Earlier this summer I had the opportunity to participate in seminars with friends of Thomas Aquinas College. It being a presidential election year, we decided to consider texts that would help us to reflect on some of the fundamental principles animating this country.

Among the texts we read were excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, a work considered here in the Junior Seminar. In these excerpts, Tocqueville is concerned with religion and its essential role in American democracy. In a remarkable passage, he says that "religion is the first of America's political institutions."

"Religion's principal advantage," he continues, "is to provide clear answers to fundamental questions" — questions about God's existence, human nature, man's ordination to a supernatural life, and the nature of justice and human goodness — and to provide a counterweight to some of democracy's most dangerous tendencies: "its tendency to isolate citizens from one another, leading them to be concerned only with themselves alone and its tendency to open their souls excessively to the love of material pleasures."

It is good for us to be reminded of the essential role religion plays in public life and, as a consequence, to reflect on the vital role that Catholic liberal education — the education you freshmen are about to undertake — plays in public life as well. Where religion is to be robust, faith must be robust. For without faith, there is no religion; and without Catholic education, there is no faith. Or, because faith is a gift, and because grace builds upon nature, perhaps it is better to say that without Catholic education, whatever faith there is, is liable to be feeble and uninformed.

The Next Four Years

To those of you who are Catholic, I say, without hesitation, that the education you will pursue at Thomas Aquinas College will nourish and strengthen your faith. The education here is not undertaken from outside the Faith; it is not structured to criticize or challenge the Faith. Rather, it is undertaken from *within* the Catho-



lic faith — in the words of our founding document, it is *faith seeking understanding*. Our starting points in the study of theology are the principles, mysteries, and doctrines of our Catholic faith; our goal is to increase our understanding of these starting points, to the extent we can, and to deepen our knowledge and love of God.

"If Tocqueville is right, in pursuing this education we are also prepared to assume our responsibilities as members of a democratic society."

To those of you who are not Catholic, I say that if you pursue our curriculum faithfully and diligently, you will certainly grow in your understanding of Catholicism and will receive a philosophical formation that will put you on the path to wisdom.

In the first year, we undertake a careful reading of Sacred Scripture, trusting that it contains the revealed Word of God and trusting that God's revelation is coherent, cogent, and life-giving. We know from experience that not every difficulty which Scripture presents will be resolved in this first year; but we trust that this first year will awaken in you a certain wonder about God's revelation, inspire confidence in the deep unity between the Old and New Testaments, and kindle a desire to pursue energetically the more systematic theology of the second, third, and fourth years of our program.

Trusting in the guidance and teaching authority of the Church, in the second

year we undertake a careful study of the works of some of the greatest Fathers of the Church — most notably St. Augustine, St. Athanasius, St. Anselm, and St. John Damascene, among others. The works of these Fathers are great in their own right. Presupposing your acquaintance with Scripture, they will introduce you to profound reflections on grace; divine providence, the nature of God, the Incarnation, and the meaning and purpose of the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord.

Finally, trusting again in the authority of the Church and of the popes who over the centuries have urged us to "go to Thomas," and relying on the formation and preparation we have received in our philosophy tutorials, in the third and fourth years we undertake the scientific study of theology by considering carefully some of the most important parts of the *Summa Theologiae* — on the nature of sacred doctrine; on God's existence and attributes; on the eternal, natural, and human laws; on the Trinity, on the Incarnation; and on the sacraments. Our study of theology culminates in the contemplation of these central mysteries and doctrines of the Catholic faith, and assuming that this study has been enriched by the sacramental and devotional life provided by the College, brings us closer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and deepens our faith, hope, and charity.

A Preparation for Holiness and Citizenship

These are the ultimate ends of Catholic liberal education and are what make this education worthy of pursuing for its own sake. In pursuing this education we hearken to Our Lord's command to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." If Tocqueville is right, however, in pursuing this education we are also prepared to assume our responsibilities as members of a democratic society.

It is good to reflect on the purposes of Catholic liberal education at any time. It is especially good to do so as we begin a new academic year, an academic year that is also a presidential election year, where so

much is at stake for our country because of the challenges we are facing to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

It is important for all concerned — leaders and citizens alike — to recall the words of one of our modern popes, Pope Pius XII, who in his 1944 Christmas Message quoted Pope Leo XIII's 1888 Encyclical *Libertas*, in which Leo wrote that "it is not forbidden to prefer temperate, popular forms of government, without prejudice, however, to Catholic teaching on the origin and use of authority ..." adding that "the Church does not disapprove of any of the various forms of government, provided they be *per se* capable of securing the good of the citizens."

The philosophical and theological formation you receive at Thomas Aquinas College helps you understand well this quotation from Pope Leo XIII, just as it helps you understand well the words of Pope Pius XII himself later in the same document when he explains the true meaning of the democratic ideals of liberty and equality: "that, before the State, everyone has the right to live honorably his own personal life in the place and under the conditions in which the designs and dispositions of Providence have placed him."



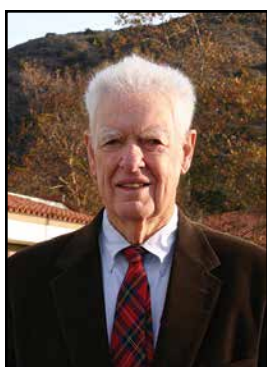
Freshman Michael McCann of St. Louis, Mo., signs his name in the College's Register of Students.

Prayers for Dr. Ronald P. McArthur

Amid Health Concerns, Founding President Retires from Teaching

In letters sent to the alumni, faculty, and staff of Thomas Aquinas College on July 29, 2012, Founding President Ronald P. McArthur announced that he will no longer be able to continue teaching classes at the College. "The prospect saddens me in many ways," Dr. McArthur wrote. But he promised that he will continue to pray "for the College, that it become even better, and that God will look upon the school with even more favor than He already has."

On August 15, the Feast of the Assumption, Dr. McArthur underwent open-heart surgery. The initial reports were encouraging, with doctors remarking that the operation had gone better than they had expected. In



the following weeks, however, there were setbacks, which, by God's grace, prompted increased prayers on behalf of Dr. McArthur's many friends at the College and elsewhere. As of late October, his condition has improved, and he has returned home, where he is now convalescing.

"Dr. McArthur is the founding father of Thomas Aquinas College, and he has long been our guide in this noble project of Catholic liberal education," says President Michael F. McLean. "He is sorely missed in the classroom, where for decades he has enlightened students with his great knowledge and love of our curriculum. He is missed, too, on the faculty, where he has been a model to the dozens of tutors, myself included, who have come here over the years to follow his example. And he is missed in the Commons, on the arcade, in the Chapel — all the places where we had grown accustomed to seeing his kind, cheerful smile and his larger-than-life presence."

Dr. McArthur is adamant that, even though he has stopped teaching, his close relationship with the College will endure. "My years here have been memorable in many ways, and among those experiences that stand out in my memory are the friendships I have made with so many of you along the way," he wrote in his letter to tutors, administrators, and staff at the College. "I think of your innumerable kindnesses to me, of the significant ways you have helped me, and of the Christian spirit which has been so visible in all the things you have done. While this will no longer be, we can continue to pray for one another."

Dr. McArthur has requested that alumni "set aside time in your lives to pray for Thomas Aquinas College, that the Lord take care of it so that others will benefit as you have from the wisdom you have gleaned as students." The College, in turn, asks that its friends continue to pray for Dr. McArthur's health and spirits, and for his family.

A Graduate’s Reflections: Madison Cox (’12)

A New Alumna Looks Back at Her Time at the College and Ahead to Her Future

Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its May 11, 2012, meeting.

I am so delighted to have this opportunity to extend my thanks to you. I am delighted, too, that I have the opportunity to do so in the form of a story. I love a good story, and I may be partial, but I think this is a very good story, indeed.

The short version of the story is this: Thomas Aquinas College turned my life on its head.

Before coming to the College, I was a Protestant in her early 30s with a good job, great friends, and a wonderful church. Life was quite good, but I had the nagging sense that something was missing. I decided that I needed to pursue seriously my lifelong interest in teaching. Yet the idea of studying education itself did not appeal to me in the least. I wanted to find a school that believed in absolute truth, a place where I could study serious things, valuable in themselves, without the distractions arising from the moral and intellectual confusion common on secular campuses or the identity crisis now afflicting so many Christian institutions.

Somehow I believed that someone would hire me as a teacher if I just knew enough material worth teaching. Many people told me that I could never find work as a teacher without following the usual course. I brazenly ignored them and decided to study Aristotle and St. Thomas.

A Lesson in Evangelization

When I applied for admission to the College, I wrote an essay about the role of education in evangelization. I had hoped for a future in education specifically that I might make use of the scholar’s desire for knowledge to lead him to Jesus Christ, Truth itself. Little did I know that my tutors here would be evangelizing me.

I have seen over the years that our faculty is composed of extraordinarily patient men and women who understand that the truth has a compelling power all its own. To paraphrase the great 19th cen-



tury Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The truth is a lion. You don’t have to defend it; you just have to let it out of its cage.

In my freshman theology class, to cite one example, Mr. DeLuca never imposed a Catholic viewpoint on our discussions of Scripture. On the contrary, he simply encouraged a thoughtful consideration of the text. The students he was leading in that class included a Mormon, a Presbyterian, and an atheist. We had *really good* discussions. And Mr. DeLuca always dignified our disparate suggestions about the meaning of the text with his own thoughtful consideration. I had been learning Scripture since early childhood, so I was very surprised to discover that new questions about passages I thought I knew well were beginning to form in my mind; but I managed to continue, my mind mostly undisturbed by these questions for quite some time.

The Church Triumphant and the Church Militant

And here I’ll depart briefly from the written text to tell you a story — since we’re meeting in the library today — about a work-study position I had that contributed to this process that was beginning, I think, before I even came to the College. I was assigned to work in the library, and the assistant librarian asked me to go into the autobiography section and painstakingly remove one volume at a time and inspect them closely to decide where they should be placed in the library.

(Everything had to be moved out of autobiography to correspond to Dewey.)

Of course, in our autobiography section we had many lives of the saints. I knew nothing about the saints. I was completely ignorant of all of them. So this, for me, was a crash course in the lives of our elder brothers and sisters. It was there that I met John Vianney. I can remember during my sophomore year having a particularly difficult class — I believe it was philosophy — and feeling so strongly after that class that it would be a great consolation and help to be able to pray to John Vianney, but my Protestant convictions would not allow it.

My consciousness of the impending storm did not come until the second semester of my sophomore year. It was as if I had woken up one morning to find that all of these bits of data that I had been collecting about the Church, outside of class as well as in, had silently formed a great mountain of evidence that I would have to address. I saw that I already knew too much, and I was terrified. The process I then entered was long and painful. Friends and family were understandably dismayed. Yet I look back on it now as a time of joy.

“I had hoped for a future in education specifically that I might make use of the scholar’s desire for knowledge to lead him to Jesus Christ, Truth itself. Little did I know that my tutors here would be evangelizing me.”

The Lord was pouring out graces in abundance. I wish I could share with you every one of the wonderful details. But in the interest of time, we’ll skip to my junior year, April 24, 2011, when I was received into the Church during the Easter Vigil. Our own Fr. Paul Raftery conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation, signing me

Mary Magdalene. The joy of the occasion was so powerful that even my Protestant family members rejoiced.

Learning to Teach

With that matter settled, I was able to turn my attention more thoughtfully to the matter of my vocation as a teacher. One of the questions I entertained during my Thomas Aquinas College career was whether our discussion method could be adapted to younger ages. Imagine my surprise when I learned that it was already being done, and it was being done, moreover, by people who shared my philosophy of teacher preparation.

Thanks to fairly recent charter-school legislation, a modified form of a great books education has been brought to thousands of Arizona students in public schools. I learned that the organization responsible for this astonishing feat would be interviewing potential teachers here at the College. I was soon invited to fly to Arizona to give some teaching demonstrations at a couple of the charter schools in this consortium.

My first actual classroom experience was a revelation. Connecting with that group of ninth graders was one of the great joys of my life. I would never have imagined that my first time in the classroom would feel as natural as breathing. It caused me to appreciate my education in a whole new way. For I realized during that class that my tutors here had taught me not just how to learn; they had taught me how to teach.

The hardest part turned out to be choosing which grade level to teach. After lengthy prayer and deliberation, I decided to accept an offer to teach fifth grade at Archway Classical Academy in North Phoenix.

As I think about what all these years here at Thomas Aquinas College have meant to me, I am humbled and deeply grateful for the work you have done to make it possible for me and for my friends. It is work of eternal significance. May God guide you as you shepherd our school. Thank you.

The Reviews Are In ...

College Receives Top Marks in 2012-3 Guides

The Princeton Review

- Highest rating for academics and financial aid: 99
- One of only 10 colleges nationwide to be named to the “Financial Aid Honor Roll”
- Named to select list of “Best Value Colleges”
- Quality of Life rating: 97
- Top 15 percent of American four-year colleges
- Top 20 for “Most Religious Students,” “Happiest Students,” and “Best Classroom Experience.”



U.S. News & World Report: “Best Colleges”

- Top tier among all liberal arts colleges
- Top 25 for “Least Debt” among graduates
- Top 40, “Best Value Colleges”
- Most Popular among Applicants and Most Loved by Alumni



Association of College Trustees and Alumni

- Top 2 percent of country’s major colleges and universities
- One of only three colleges in the U.S. to receive a perfect score for ensuring that students study seven key areas: composition, literature, American history, foreign language, mathematics, science, and economics
- Highest rating — “A” — for strength of curriculum



The Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College

- One of only 22 colleges and universities in the United States recommended “for fidelity and excellence”
- “Stands alone as the only Catholic college that exclusively teaches from the Great Books, with an impressive intellectual rigor that is matched by a commitment to orthodox Catholicism”
- “Fully committed to its Catholic identity, its Great Books approach, and a discussion-style class format utilizing Socratic dialogue”
- “Stimulating but not intimidating ... intellectual, yet relaxed and personal”



Forbes: America’s Best Colleges

- Top 20 percent of all colleges and universities nationwide
- Top 100 private institutions
- Top 10 Catholic schools



Kiplinger

- Top 10, “Best Values in Private Colleges Under \$20K”
- Top 100, “Best Values in Liberal Arts Colleges”
- Rankings based on academic excellence, freshman retention rate, graduation rate, and net cost



College Welcomes Two New Tutors ...

Dr. Travis Cooper

He may have attended dances in St. Joseph Commons, slept in the men’s residence halls, participated in discussions about the great books, and attended Mass in the Chapel, but Travis Cooper was never actually a student at Thomas Aquinas College. Although given the frequency of his campus visits and the number of friends and family members who *were* students at the College, there certainly were times when he felt, or wished, that he had been one, too.

A native of Palm Springs, Calif., Dr. Cooper earned his associate’s degree at St. Mary’s College, his bachelor’s at the College of St. Thomas More, and his master’s and doctorate in philosophy at the Catholic University of America. It was while at CUA that he came to know Thomas Aquinas College well, first through his sister, Kathryn (’06), and then through her classmate — and his future wife — Briena (Dunkel ’06).

“I came back here whenever I could,” he says, recalling the long-distance courtship that reached from California to Washington, D.C. During “at least a dozen” trips to campus over many years, he was, he says, “astonished at the quality of the student life.”

In the College he saw a commitment to liberal education for its own sake which, in turn, fostered in its students a love of truth, a devotion to the Faith, and deep friendships. “I learned during my own experience, first as a student and then as a teacher at another small Catholic college, that it’s not easy to establish a good, vibrant student life,” Dr. Cooper reflects. “I’ve always been amazed at how the College has managed to achieve that, and how wonderful it is to be a student here.”

Dr. Cooper remembers looking into a teaching position at the College after completing his coursework at CUA, but instead he and his new bride returned to his alma mater in Fort Worth, Tex. There, he taught Latin and philosophy for several years, and the couple welcomed three children, all boys.

When Dr. Cooper became aware of an opening on the Thomas Aquinas College faculty last summer, he was eager to apply for it. “Over the course of my teaching, I began to see in more detail and with more conviction what a college curriculum needs to look like and what the *spirit* of a college is. Thomas Aquinas College has, better than any Catholic college in the country, achieved that goal. So it is a dream come true that I now have this opportunity.”

This year Dr. Cooper is teaching Senior Seminar, two sections of Freshman Language, and Sophomore Philosophy. He enjoys the interaction inherent in the College’s use of the discussion method, a departure from the lecture-based teaching he has done in the past. “It’s more difficult than it looks,” he says. “Rather than planning beforehand exactly what you are going to say, you must chart where the conversation needs to go, and how to get it there. In class it takes constant, active awareness.”

Dr. Patrick Gardner

When Patrick Gardner was a high-school student in suburban Milwaukee in the 1990s, two classes captured his imagination: classical literature and economics. One offered a smattering of poetry, philosophy, and history; the other, a coherent, analytical methodology by which to arrive at answers about the common good. Naively, he believed that he had to choose between the two.

“If there was one thing that was pushing me away from the literature, it’s that the arguments seemed too slippery,” Dr. Gardner recalls. “I wanted something sharper, something more logically rigorous.” So when Harvard University offered him admission, he enrolled, with visions of becoming “a hot-shot economist.”

Less than one semester into his freshman year, however, he discovered that modern economics was not what he had hoped it to be. “It was a lot of advanced math put to the service of undiscussed presumptions,” he says. Fortunately, to fulfill a requirement, he had enrolled in a class on classics in Christian literature, where he discovered St. Teresa of Avila, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

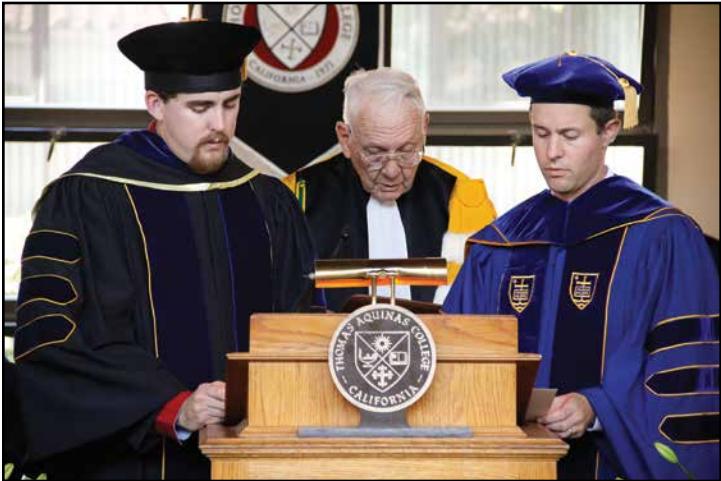
“*This* is what I’m interested in,” he remembers thinking. “It is poetic and moving, but it is also an intellectually serious, rigorous reflection on what a human being is, how we know things, how we know about God.” His new yearning was “to read more Augustine and Aquinas,” but alas, neither is well represented in most secular philosophy or religion departments. So he sought them out, first in Harvard’s History and Literature program, and then at the

University of Notre Dame’s Medieval Institute, where he studied under a renowned Thomist, the late Dr. Ralph McInerny.

During his time at Notre Dame, Dr. Gardner not only earned his master’s and doctoral degrees, but also met his future wife, Kate; and the couple welcomed the first two of their three sons. After Dr. Gardner completed his studies, the family moved to Austin, where he taught at the University of Texas.

Even though he had found beauty and intellectual rigor in philosophy, Dr. Gardner still sensed that something was missing. “I had always loved math and physics, especially for their clarity and order of demonstration. I wanted to pursue them further in college,” he says. Yet amidst the disconnected departments of modern academia, he thought he had to choose between the so-called hard sciences and philosophical inquiry.

Not surprisingly, he was attracted to Thomas Aquinas College where, as a new tutor, he has been spared this dilemma. In addition to Sophomore Seminar and Junior Philosophy, Dr. Gardner now teaches two sections of Freshman Mathematics. “Coming back to math and the so-called hard sciences as part of a coherent curriculum,” he says, “*that’s* the missing piece that I’ve been wanting all along.”



Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., administers the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity to the College’s newest tutors, Dr. Travis Cooper and Dr. Patrick Gardner.

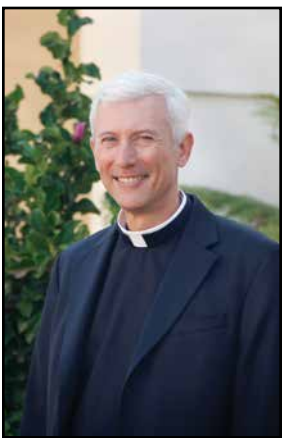
... and a New Chaplain

Rev. Joseph Illo

Rev. Joseph Illo was born not far from a college campus, in the Bronx, N.Y., while his father was earning a doctorate in literature at Columbia University. Growing up as a faculty kid, he always lived near one college or another and enjoyed the spirited, intellectual atmosphere. As a young man he assumed that he, too, would spend his adulthood working on or near a college campus. Providence, however, would soon intervene to alter those plans — or at least to defer them.

When Fr. Illo was 10 years old, accompanying his mother as she delivered meals to shut-ins around the parish, he thought little of the frequent suggestion that he should one day become a priest. While an undergraduate at Pennsylvania State University, he delighted in serving the Catholic community through the campus Newman Center, but he interpreted this joy as a confirmation that he should become an academic, not as a calling to the priesthood.

His vocation only became evident to him shortly after his graduation from college, during which time Fr. Illo worked at Ignatius Press in San Francisco. While there



he came to know the vocations director from the nearby Diocese of Stockton (Calif.), to which he applied and was accepted. He then went on to study philosophy and theology with the Dominicans in Oxford (Blackfriars) and Rome (the Angelicum), and finally as a seminarian at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Dunwoodie, N.Y.

On June 29, 1991 — the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul — Fr. Illo was ordained to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ. Since then he has faithfully lived out his calling as a diocesan priest, primarily by serving in parishes, including St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Modesto, Calif., where he was pastor for the last 13 years.

Yet the desire to return to a college campus has endured, and it has come to fruition in his latest assignment — as a chaplain at Thomas Aquinas College.

“I had been asking for permission for several years to be a Newman Center chaplain, or perhaps to work in a college or university,” Fr. Illo explains. “The Bishop kept saying, ‘Well, we need you in the parish,’ but finally he said, ‘OK, after your second term is done in your current parish, we’ll consider that.’”

Fr. Illo received his Ordinary’s permission last spring and promptly sent out inquiries to several faithful Catholic colleges and one seminary, receiving offers from four of them. He ultimately opted for Thomas Aquinas College, due in large part to its proximity to his diocese as well as an admiration he had formed for the school nearly three decades earlier. In 1984, shortly before entering the

seminary, he had visited the College with his younger brother, who was thinking about applying. “I realized, boy, if I had my undergraduate years to do over again, I would come here,” he recalls.

“I thought the approach to liberal arts education was unique and spot-on; it was so much better than anything I had ever heard before. And, of course, the topography didn’t hurt,” he says. “It looked like a paradise here.”

As a chaplain, Fr. Illo’s appreciation of the College has deepened. “There’s a confidence among the whole community here that comes from the Socratic Method and the way conversations about the great books continue outside the classroom,” he reflects. “This is a college in the original sense of *lodging together*, kind of like the colleges of the Middle Ages. It’s not just the curriculum, it’s the life. It’s not perfect; of course there are challenges and problems. But the greatest obstacle in our age — the hermeneutic of our time — is fear. People are afraid of running out of resources, of overpopulation, and of ruining the planet. People are afraid of each other, and they are afraid of God. Thomas Aquinas College addresses this persistent, low-grade fear not only by studying the eternal truths, but by forming a true “college” of scholars who work, pray, study, and recreate together.”

Thus, after eschewing life on a college campus to follow God’s will, Fr. Illo now finds himself living and ministering on a college campus. Such is the hand of Providence!

Formation Beyond the Home

Parents' Association Profile: Hope and Keith Marotti

The parents of four Thomas Aquinas College graduates, Hope and Keith Marotti confess that it was neither the College's unique academic program nor its strong Catholic identity that first attracted their interest. It was its location — nearly 2,000 miles from their home in Kalamazoo, Mich.

"Richard was a model child until age 13," says Dr. Marotti of the couple's eldest. "Then all hell broke loose."

Bright and articulate, but headstrong and argumentative, teenage Richard gave his parents all they could handle. "He was our most rebellious, problematic child," says Dr. Marotti. "He was really a handful." So the Marottis were thrilled when a postcard advertising the College's Great Books Summer Program for High School Students, then in its inaugural year (1997), appeared in their mailbox.

"It was a win-win," says Mrs. Marotti. "Richard obviously was interested in getting away from home and going to California for two weeks," Dr. Marotti explains, "and so were we!" The rest of the family put Richard on a flight to Los Angeles, then left for a vacation of its own.

A Changed Kid

To the Marottis' delight and surprise, the Summer Program gave them much more than two weeks' respite. "Richard came back a changed kid," says Dr. Marotti. "I think that was the first time in his life that he had been challenged and asked to think, and he really liked that." Adds Mrs. Marotti, "He says he learned more in those two weeks than he had in the previous two years of high school."

Thus began a transformation. "Richard would take a few more years to really get out of his rebelliousness," says Dr. Marotti. "But we saw an immediate change in terms of his attitude and how he thought about things. You could tell that the Summer Program had had an impact on him, because he talked about it *a lot*."

The Marottis were convinced that Richard should come back to the College for his undergraduate studies. "I was sold on it by everything I had read," Dr. Marotti



Hope and Keith Marotti at the June ordination of their son Rev. Francis Marotti ('07)

says. "I was convinced that the great books program would give him a strong foundation to do whatever he wanted to do. He would learn how to think, how to really use the skills of philosophy and rhetoric the way they were meant to be used."

Richard, however, was not so sure. "He said he loved the Summer Program," Dr. Marotti recalls, "but the school was 'too small,' 'too religious' — blah, blah, blah." So Richard — a National Merit Scholar — applied to, was accepted at, and was offered scholarships to numerous prestigious colleges across the country, and he visited a good many of them. Dr. Marotti prayed and fasted over Richard's decision and — not coincidentally, he believes — Richard's experiences of visiting other campuses proved unsatisfactory. "In the end, despite himself, he decided to go to Thomas Aquinas College."

Dr. Marotti recalls visiting Richard during his freshman year and being impressed by the company he kept. "I took a group of the students out to dinner in Ojai," he says, "and as I listened to their conversation, I thought, 'This is a group of college freshmen, and I am the only one with a Ph.D., but I am the stupidest one at the table!'"

Four years later, Richard graduated from the College as a member of the Class of 2003. Looking back at how far he had come since his teenage years, he told his parents, "Had you not sent me here, I might be dead right now."

Like Dominos

In light of Richard's experience — as well as their own, when they each attended the High School Summer Program for themselves — the Marottis' younger children had no doubt about where they would go to college. "The rest fell like dominos," says Mrs. Marotti. In short order all three matriculated at and graduated from Thomas Aquinas College.

Their daughter Rose (Lindsey '05), a professional chef by training, is now a full-time wife and mother of two young girls in Las Vegas, where she lives with her husband, a fellow chef. The Marottis' second son, Rev. Francis Marotti ('07), was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Kalamazoo this past summer after completing his studies at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. (See story, page 6.) The family's youngest, Marie ('12), graduated from the College this past spring with plans to enter nursing school.

As for Richard, in 2009 he earned a *Juris Doctor*,



Hope and Keith Marotti's four children, Richard ('03), Rose (Lindsey '05), Fr. Francis ('07), and Marie ('12), standing beside their Thomas Aquinas College diplomas, which hang in the Marottis' living room

magna cum laude, from the University of California Hastings College of the Law. He now lives with his wife and their two young daughters in Sacramento, where he is an associate at Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld, LLP, specializing in health-care law. "Richard is a lawyer," his father laughs. "Given the amount of time he spent arguing with me, I take great pride in that. I was probably the first training that he ever had!"

Four Diplomas

For Mrs. Marotti, seeing her last child graduate from the College this spring was bittersweet. "I remember thinking, 'Oh my gosh, I'll never be at one of these graduations again,'" she says. "I was so sad to think that this is my last one. It all goes by so quickly."

Yet that is the Marottis' lone complaint about their children's time at the College. "They just absolutely loved it there, and they made really good, lifelong friends," says Dr. Marotti. "From a parent's standpoint, it was probably the best formation they could have had once they left home."

Today, proudly hanging in the Marottis' living room are their children's four diplomas from Thomas Aquinas College. "They're not allowed to have them back until I die," says Dr. Marotti. Further testifying to their loyalty to the College, the Marottis are longtime members of the President's Council, the College's financial backbone, consisting of hundreds of loyal benefactors who contribute \$1,000 or more annually. "I have only wonderful things to say about Thomas Aquinas College," he adds. "It is a fantastic place, and every parent should send their kids there."

Partners and Ambassadors

College Establishes New Parents' Association

"As the parent of two graduates, I know well the great good that Thomas Aquinas College does in the lives of our children," says President Michael F. McLean, father of Melanie (Marx '93) and Mark ('08). "And over the past 37 years I have also seen the great good that parents do for this school by raising children who yearn to learn and live under the light of Faith."

In gratitude to those who have so ably prepared and supported its students, the College has established a formal association of parents and grandparents of all students and alumni: The Parents' Association of Thomas Aquinas College.

"For years there has been a vibrant, albeit informal, fraternity of Thomas Aquinas College parents," says Dr. McLean. "The opportunity for parents and grandparents to now come together in a more formal way is a tremendous blessing."

The purpose of the Parents' Association is twofold. "First, it is to support,



promote, and pray for the mission of the College," says Dr. McLean. "Second, it is to be an organization of ambassadors for the College in the world." Parents can be particularly credible champions of the College, he adds, "because they have entrusted to us their most precious gifts — their children."

The College hopes that participation in the Parents' Association will also engender and enhance friendship among the parents and grandparents of its students and alumni. Further, it hopes that parents and grandparents will see themselves as a vital part of the Thomas Aquinas College

community. Finally, it is the hope of the College that the activities of the Parents' Association will improve the culture in the Church and the nation by supporting Catholic liberal education. Members can further this end in a number of ways, such as:

- Praying for the College, its faculty, staff, students, and benefactors
- Introducing the College to prospective students and their families
- Assisting graduates with their professional and vocational pursuits
- Assisting the College to host local receptions and seminars to introduce new friends to the College
- Helping to provide for the needs of the College by their own donations or through introductions to prospective benefactors

Dr. McLean has appointed Robert Bagdazian, the College's director of development and the father of Daniel ('13)

and Gabriel ('14), to help launch the new association. "Becoming a member of the Parents' Association is easy," Mr. Bagdazian says. "If one or more of your children or grandchildren has matriculated here, you are a member!"

Membership is free and lifelong. "Our relationship with the College doesn't end when our children graduate," he explains. "Through the Parents' Association, parents and grandparents can continue to stay connected and involved long after their children have moved on to the next stages of life."

As the Parents' Association begins to take root, Mr. Bagdazian says he is looking for members who are willing to take on active roles within it. "I encourage parents and grandparents who want to get involved — who want to host a reception, or to help out in some other way — to contact me," he says.

For more information, please call Mr. Bagdazian at 805-421-5927, or e-mail rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu.

Rev. Maximilian Okapal, O.Praem. ('02) Canons Regular of Premontre, Orange County (Calif.)

Enrolled in public schools since kindergarten, Christopher Okapal ('02) did not give much thought to choosing a Catholic college. Yet by his junior year in high school, he was beginning to discern a vocation, and so he marked the boxes for "theology" and "classics," among others, as his "interests" on the various standardized-test forms. As a result of that fortuitous checking, a pamphlet about liberal arts colleges soon arrived at his family home near Portland, Ore., and one of the schools listed was Thomas Aquinas College.

He remembers thinking, "This school is Catholic. They take the Faith seriously. They believe there is such a thing as truth. They have a rigorous program of studies, of searching for the truth in philosophy and theology. This is the place for me!"

For the next four years he underwent an intellectual and spiritual formation that led him, just months after his graduation, to enter St. Michael's Abbey in Orange County, Calif. There he received his religious name, Maximilian, as well as a decade's worth of further education,

including four years at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome. The culmination of all this preparation came on June 23, 2012, when the Most Rev. Cirilo B. Flores, Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego, laid hands on Frater Maximilian, making him *Father* Maximilian, at an ordination ceremony at Mission Basilica in San Juan Capistrano.

"Having prepared for so long, to finally be right in the face of my ordination, was a very big thing," Fr. Maximilian says. "It was very humbling, and I experienced a great amount of gratitude to God who had brought me to that point through the ups and downs of life. It was very apparent that I could not have accomplished this on my own without God's grace guiding me."

Indeed, Fr. Maximilian remarks, every day as a priest is a reminder of his dependence on God and the marvel that the Lord would work through him. "When I am saying the Mass and consecrating the Sacrament, it's very clear that that's not something I can do through my own power, but only through the power of Christ working through me," he observes.

"When I'm giving absolution in Confession, it's powerfully apparent that it's Christ's forgiveness coming to the penitent, and I am just a vessel for that."

During those times in the confessional, he adds, he is particularly grateful for his education at Thomas Aquinas College. "The seminar discussions teach you to listen seriously to what other people are saying, and while they're talking to already think about what to say. In Confession, you have to hear what people are saying and think about the best way to respond, how to help them resolve the situation. You have to be able have a conversation — but not an unfocussed one — a conversation in which people are trying to reach a specific result."

In addition to his normal sacramental duties, which include regularly offering Mass at St. Michael's Abbey Church, Fr. Maximilian's primary apostolic responsibilities are at the Abbey's preparatory school. He teaches Latin to the underclassmen and philosophy to the upperclassmen, and he serves as the college counselor. In that latter capac-



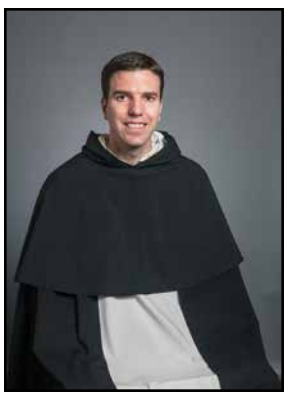
Rev. Maximilian Okapal, O.Praem. ('02), on his ordination day, with his parents, Daniel and Mary, and the Most Rev. Cirilo B. Flores, Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego

ity, he says, he gently recommends his alma mater to those who he believes would make a good fit.

"The College encourages students to lead an authentic Catholic life in an atmosphere where virtue is promoted and rewarded, and where the sacraments are so readily available," Fr. Maximilian says. "It creates the atmosphere where, no matter what one's vocation, he will be able to perceive that call, be aware of what it involves, and be prepared to follow it."

Rev. Jerome Augustine Zeiler, O.P. ('00) Dominican Friars, Province of St. Joseph

As the fourth of five children growing up in Dallas, Tex., Rev. Jerome Augustine Zeiler, O.P. ('00), had a strong sense of his vocation. "When I was in kindergarten, I knew I was going to be a priest — or a motorcycle policeman," he laughs. Discerning what *kind* of priest he was called to be, however, took somewhat longer.



He got the first inclination when he was a freshman at Thomas Aquinas College in 1996. It was at that time that he made the decision to start attending Mass daily and adoration more regularly. "Prayer life is the foundation of the spiritual life, and that really began for me at the College in a way that it never had before," he recalls. "In seeking to know the truth and act accordingly, I also grew in virtue. I grew in my desire for it and in my practice of it — not perfectly, by any means — but it was a time of great spiritual growth."

Over the course of his four years' studies, he came to develop an appreciation for the spirituality of the College's patron, the Church's Universal Doctor. "I loved St. Thomas, and I wanted to be his disciple. I wanted his teaching and wisdom to infiltrate my whole spirituality, and I wanted to preach that to others. I wanted a life of study and prayer that pours into preaching for the salvation of souls," he reflects. "My contemplative life began in earnest at the College, and I knew God was calling me to a continued life of study and prayer. I knew that that had to be a part of my life."

In hindsight, joining the religious order to which St. Thomas himself belonged may seem like an obvious choice, but it was not at the time. The diocesan and the religious life are both appealing in their own ways, and each religious community has its unique charism. Fr. Zeiler found himself intrigued by the myriad possibilities.

Having read some of the work of St. John Vianney

while at the College, he was first attracted to the seminary named in this great saint's honor in the Archdiocese of Denver. Yet mindful of Fr. Zeiler's desire for a contemplative life, Denver officials wisely advised him to first spend a year working for the Diocese before formally entering the seminary, so as to see if the diocesan life was for him.

It was not. "I found that I needed the fraternal support, the contemplative aspects, and communal prayer of a religious community," Fr. Zeiler observes. He also craved the discipline inherent in the religious life, noting, "The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience really appealed to me." Thus over the course of the next year he tested two contemplative orders, but neither seemed quite like home.

"Prayer life is the foundation of the spiritual life, and that really began for me at the College in a way that it never had before."

It was then, Fr. Zeiler notes, that the particulars of his vocation became clear. "I realized I had a Dominican charism in my heart, that God was calling me to be a Dominican." In short order he investigated, applied to, and was admitted to the Dominican Order's Eastern Province of St. Joseph. As he prepared for the priesthood, he pursued advanced studies in philosophy at the Catholic University of America, earning his licentiate this past spring — just weeks before his May 25 ordination at the hands of the Most Rev. J. Augustine DiNoia, O.P., Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

Fr. Zeiler now serves as a parochial vicar at St. Gertrude's in Cincinnati, Ohio, where, in addition to his daily sacramental duties and assisting at the parish school, he is the chaplain for the high-school youth group, the 20-something group, and the RCIA program. "I am extremely busy," Fr. Zeiler remarks, "but a busy priest is a happy priest."

Rev. Francis Marotti ('07) Diocese of Kalamazoo (Mich.)

Call it a prophecy, a premonition, or an emotional impulse borne of raw emotion and too little sleep, but on the day he brought his infant son, Francis, to be baptized, Dr. Keith Marotti was overcome by a sudden thought. "I just have a feeling," he remembers telling his wife, Hope. "This one's going to become a priest."

While the Marottis put little stock in that prediction, they never forgot it. It seemed particularly poignant several years later, when young Frankie, now six years old, drew a picture of his family seated in the front pew at Mass. In the sanctuary stood the priest, reverently elevating the host, with the words "Father Francis" beside him.

Two decades later Rev. Francis Marotti ('07) would, indeed, consecrate the Eucharist in his family church — as a new priest at his first Mass. A day earlier, on June 23, 2012, he had received the Sacrament of Holy Orders from the Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley, Bishop of Kalamazoo (Mich.).

Despite the early intuitions, throughout his youth and childhood, Fr. Marotti did not expect to become a priest. "Going along in high school, I didn't take my vocation or life very seriously," he says. "I didn't consider anything weighty about our faith or about the world."

That would start to change when, following the lead of his older brother, Richard ('03), he attended the Thomas Aquinas College High School Summer Program between his junior and senior years. That experience convinced him to enroll as a freshman at the College the next year. Maturity soon followed.

"It came all of a sudden during sophomore year," Fr. Marotti recalls. "We were reading St. Augustine, both in theology and in seminar, and then later we were reading Dante. I remember those having a big impact on me. They



The Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley, Bishop of Kalamazoo, ordaining Rev. Francis Marotti ('07)

Rev. Fadi Auro ('03) Archdiocese of St. Louis (Mo.)

“What I found is a pearl of great price,” Rev. Fadi Auro ('03) recently told his diocesan newspaper. “When I discovered this intimacy with the Lord, it was so much more important than anything I left behind.”

On Saturday, May 26, the Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis, conferred the Sacrament of Holy Orders upon Fr. Auro at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. Dr.



Lisa Johnston | St. Louis Review
Fadi Auro ('03) with the Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis

Andrew Seeley, a member of the teaching faculty, had the privilege of representing the College at the ordination ceremony, and described it as “a beautiful experience of the communion of the Church, with probably 1,500 people in attendance.”

Looking back, it may not have come as much of a surprise to Fr. Auro or his family that he became a priest. “My mother has videos of me ‘saying Mass’ as a child,” he told the *St. Louis Review*. Yet few would have expected his ordination to take place in this hemisphere, let alone for the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

According to the *Review*, Fr. Auro was born in the United Arab Emirates, the child of Iraqi Chaldean Catholics who were visiting the United States, and then stayed when the first Persian Gulf War erupted in 1991. Raised in California, he was “intellectually unconvinced” about his faith until a powerful conversion experience at the age of 17. From there began a spiritual and intellectual journey that brought him to various Catholic colleges, including Thomas Aquinas College, Christendom College, and the Pontifical

“When I discovered this intimacy with the Lord, it was so much more important than anything I left behind.”

University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

“Fadi had a very joyful spirit. He had this delighted smile on his face he would get during class,” recalls Dr. Seeley, who taught him Freshman Philosophy. “Fr. Auro said that his preparation at the College, the process of coming to clarity through careful reasoning and discussion, stood him in great stead as he went on to other places.”

It was in the Eternal City that, thanks to the introduction of his spiritual adviser, Fr. Auro first made the acquaintance of a good friend of the College, His Eminence Raymond L. Burke, Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura and the College’s 2010 Commencement Speaker. Cardinal Burke was, at the time, the Archbishop of St. Louis, and at his recommendation Fr. Auro applied to the Archdiocese’

Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. Thus, by the workings of Providence, Fr. Auro would go from Rome to the city that has historically been known as “The Rome of the West” due to its strong Catholic identity and its having mothered numerous other Midwestern dioceses.

Of course, that was just one leg of a much larger journey that began with his childhood in Abu Dhabi. Fluent in several languages, Fr. Auro today is a “bi-ritual priest,” able to offer the Mass in both the Eastern rite of his upbringing and the Latin Rite that is prevalent in the West. For his first assignment, he is serving as an associate pastor at the Church of the Ascension in Chesterfield, Mo.

“During his time at Thomas Aquinas College, Fr. Auro was trained in the listening and presentation skills of conversation, the discipline of mathematical and scientific studies, and introduced to the philosophical and theological sources of St. Thomas,” reflects Dr. Seeley. “I believe that Fr. Auro’s parishioners will experience graces from his formation for the next 50 years.”

Rev. Joseph Bolin ('01) Archdiocese of Vienna (Austria)

By the time he finished his freshman year at Thomas Aquinas College, Rev. Joseph Bolin ('01) had contemplated careers in farming, mathematics, computer science, and philosophy. The only possibility he had not considered, it seems, was the priesthood or religious life.

“Somehow I had gotten the impression that a vocation to the religious life or the priesthood essentially came by way of a voice from God,” Fr. Bolin says. “Since I hadn’t experienced any such thing, I hadn’t really pursued the idea much.”

His thinking began to change during his sophomore year, when a visiting Norbertine priest delivered a vocations talk on campus. The priest spoke of how the vocation to the religious life was a higher calling, one worthy of praying for and pursuing. “This idea of actually praying for a vocation was new to me,” Fr. Bolin recalls. “It was one concrete step along the way of developing a different view of what vocation is.”

So he began praying *for* a vocation, and through his studies, his devotional life, and serving Mass in the chapel, he developed a deeper love for the Faith, Scripture, and liturgy. Still, he doubted that he possessed the qualities necessary for the priesthood, until an e-mail exchange with one of his brothers, Rev. Thomas Bolin, O.S.B. ('96), set his mind at ease. “You don’t need to think a lot about whether you have the ability,” he recalls his brother saying, citing St. Thomas. “The presumption should rather be that you *can* have the ability, because it is something you would ask God to give you as a gift.”

It was another reminder to put his trust in God. Shortly after graduating from the College in 2001, Fr. Bolin went to Austria to pursue a master’s degree and then a licentiate in theology at the International Theological Institute (ITI). He also spent time investigating and visiting various religious communities, but was frustrated by his inability to find one that seemed the right fit.

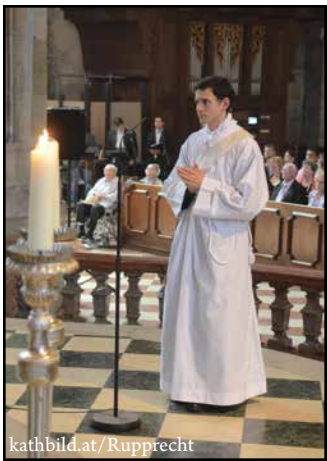
On a pilgrimage to Lisieux, he shared this concern with a priest who offered a fresh perspective. “Maybe not being able to find a community could be seen as a providential sign,” the priest said. Perhaps, he recommended,

Fr. Bolin should consider becoming a priest in the diocese where he was then residing — Vienna. “That suggestion clicked,” Fr. Bolin says. He took the priest’s advice and, on June 15, 2012 — the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus — received the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The experience of actively pursuing his vocation and trusting God to work out the details — as opposed to remaining idle until presented with explicit, divine direction — was a radical shift from how Fr. Bolin had conceived of discernment in his youth. Thus inspired, he wrote and published a book in 2008 about his vocational insights. *Paths of Love* presents a practical, theologically rigorous account of three distinct traditions of vocation, those of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and Bl. John Paul II.

Paths of Love eventually found its way into the hands of the director of the National Office for Vocation of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, Rt. Rev. Christopher Jamison, O.S.B., who saw it as providing a much-needed addition to recent efforts to increase the number of vocations in the West. This summer Fr. Jamison organized an international seminar in England about the theology of vocation, with Fr. Bolin serving as one of the invited speakers.

Meanwhile Fr. Bolin serves as an assistant professor of dogmatic theology at the ITI and — more importantly, he would note — a shepherd of souls. As the lone priest at one of three churches that comprise a single, large parish 30 miles south of Vienna, he is primarily responsible for tending to the spiritual needs of the thousands of families in his pastoral care. Bountifully, his prayers for a vocation have been answered.



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, Bishop of Kalamazoo, and

along. I can’t think of how I would have come to the position in life where I would discern my vocation so seriously as I did at Thomas Aquinas College. That’s why the Lord put me there.”

After his graduation in 2007, Fr. Marotti spent one more year discerning the priesthood while teaching high school theology in his hometown of Kalamazoo. The next fall, he entered the Diocese’ seminary program and began four years of studies at the North American College in Rome. In his final year there, while a deacon, he twice had the honor of chanting the Gospel at papal Masses, first on the Feast of the Epiphany, and then at the Easter Vigil.

Today Fr. Marotti is the parochial vicar at St. Philip’s in Battle Creek, Mich., where, in addition to his regular priestly responsibilities, he ministers at the parish high school, facilitates a youth discussion group, and serves as the chaplain at a neighboring hospital. Being a priest, he says, “is even greater than I had imagined, because you can never really understand what it is to celebrate Mass or to perform the other sacraments until you actually do it.”

On the day after his ordination, Fr. Marotti began the morning by baptizing his niece, then offering his first Mass at his family parish. That afternoon, he and his family celebrated at a party in his parents’ home, where an enlarged copy of Father’s prescient, 6-year-old artwork hung on the living-room wall.

“Pray Every Day to do God’s Will”

An Interview with Mother Mary Assumpta Long, O.P.

Mother Mary Assumpta Long, O.P., is the Foundress and Prioress General of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, in Ann Arbor, Mich. She served as the College’s Commencement Speaker this past spring, at which time she granted the following interview.

The Holy Habit

Q: We are so grateful to you for coming to our campus for Commencement, for the reflections you shared with us in your Commencement Address, and for your exhortations to our graduating seniors. We were all also affected by the sight of you in your beautiful habit. Can you speak about why it is important to you and your sisters that you wear the Dominican habit, and what effects the wearing of it has?

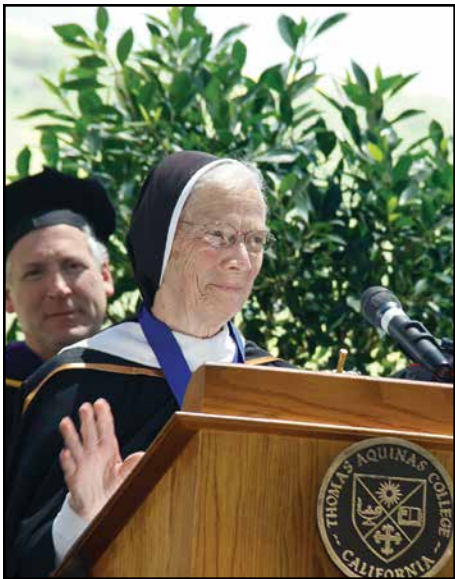
A: We learn from canon law that the religious habit is a witness to our poverty in our consecrated life. In reading the documents of the Church, we learn that we should have an identifiable sign so that people will know that we are religious. It is not worn for personal glory; rather, it is the greatest witness we have that we belong to the Lord. It is also a way to help to make Him known and loved, particularly to young women who might be willing to give their lives to the Lord.

As far as its being a witness to poverty, it is poverty, when you think about it, that we are not concerned about what we are going to wear. I think it is a great relief: I can go to the slums of Calcutta or the slums of the United States, or I could go to the White House, and wear the same thing.

Q: Have you been to the White House?

A: I have. I had the privilege when Pope Benedict XVI was here. President Bush had a dinner in his honor, and I was invited to attend. I have been privileged. And I have never had to worry about what I am going to wear.

The religious habit is such a positive thing. Just yesterday when I was traveling, I was approached by someone who wanted to speak with a religious, someone who would maybe listen to them and understand. In a habit, you represent



more than yourself. You represent, I think, the Church; you represent someone who is dedicated to the Lord and who maybe has an open ear, an understanding heart, and advice.

Growth of a Congregation

Q: At the time of the founding of your congregation, you had just four sisters, and now there are well over 100. That’s remarkable growth in 15 years. What accounts for it?

A: One thing is that we have a marvelous vocations directress. Not only does she travel to give talks at colleges and universities and other gatherings, but she walks the walk with these young women, helping to show them what God’s will is for them. She will tell some, ‘You ought to get married,’ or ‘You ought to look at another community.’ We are not in it for us; all we want is for a young woman to do God’s will, in whatever that is. We will be the first to say you need to get married, or you need to look at the Missionaries of Charity, for instance, or another community.

Discerning a Vocation

Q: What are the qualities you look for in young women? What makes them suited to the life of your congregation?

A: First of all it is important that they are living a spiritual life. The culture makes it challenging, and there are young ladies who may have had experiences which would impact their ability to enter religious life. It is essential for a young woman

to be able to live the life in freedom and happily, and unfortunately there are some wounds which may be an impediment. We certainly listen and work with them to assist them in their discernment.

We also look for those who would be able to live in a community, those who have a lot of give and take, who have a spirit of the vows, who understand the vows. We have an excellent formation program, where they study the vows, Church documents, Catechism, and Scripture.

Q: What goes into your sisters’ formation, and how many years of formation do they receive before their final profession?

A: Before final vows there are eight years in community life. There are typically three years of formation when they first enter, and then they go to the university to get a teaching degree. At the same time they are still being formed, because it takes years. The truth is that formation never ends; we are in formation the rest of our lives.

Q: What is the charism of the Dominican Sisters of Mary?

A: Since we are Dominicans, we imbibe the charism of the Order, which is grounded in Truth and teaching and preaching of the Truth.

Flowing from the Dominican charism is an emphasis on Marian devotion and the Eucharist. St. Louis de Montfort was a Third Order Dominican, and we make our total consecration to Mary using the de Montfort formula. Additionally, as a community we have Eucharistic adoration daily.

Q: You served as the first president of the Forum of Major Superiors, founded under the auspices of the Institute for Religious Life. Can you tell us about that?

A: Yes. The Forum of Major Superiors was established in 1986, under the auspices of the Institute for Religious Life. It served as an alternative to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. As you know, they have just had a visitation and have been asked to implement a number of reforms over the next five years.

Some Advice

Q: What advice would you give young women, or women of any age, about discerning a vocation?

A: I think the best thing they can do is to pray every day to do God’s will — say three Hail Mary’s every day that you will do God’s will. A sister advised me of this when I was young, and I must have done it. It leaves you open and able to pray that you will do God’s will, not our will. I think you cannot lose that way, because God knows us better than we know ourselves. If you feel called to religious life, make sure to make a retreat. That usually resolves it: Some women say this is not for me, and some are attracted. But maybe their children will have vocations.

For example, one of my sisters and I were very close. She always wanted to

get married and have a family, and I was always attracted to religious life. As I look back, I can see that that was the beginning of my vocation. I loved the sisters who taught us, and if they asked me to stay after school, I would have scrubbed floors. I think that was the beginning of my vocation and yet I didn’t know it at the time.

Q: But you didn’t feel drawn the way your sister was to motherhood?

A: No, not at all. You know, the irony of it was that they talked to her about religion but they never talked to me. The sisters, the chaplain — they all talked to her. My sister was wonderful and good, a great student. But it was so interesting because I knew she had a vocation to married life; she always wanted to get married.

Q: This has been a very quick visit for you. But you have traveled quite a number of times to our campus — since our earliest years. What is the good you see here at Thomas Aquinas College? What do you think the College does for the Church?

A: I think it is a special gift from the Holy Spirit to raise a place like Thomas Aquinas College. I think the question might be better put by saying, “What if there was no Thomas Aquinas College?”

I just thank God there is a place where young people can go and they know without a doubt they are going to get the Truth, the teachings of the Catholic Church, orthodoxy. It is like a breath of fresh air to know there is some place where parents can send their children without concern or worry that they are going to lose their faith. Parents agonize over sending their children to college.



President Michael F. McLean; Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.; and Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P., at Commencement 2012



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Our Patron, Mentor, Muse, and Master

Why We Read St. Thomas Aquinas

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 11 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/whywestudy.

St. Thomas Aquinas needs no introduction. He is our patron and mentor, our muse and our intellectual master. We love to talk about him and his decisive role in the construction and execution of our curriculum. From the very beginning it was so, and so it will remain until the good Lord decides our time is up.

Why is he so central to us? The answer simply put is that we are aiming to educate under the light of Catholic wisdom, and Thomas, more than anyone else, represents the pinnacle and synthesis of Catholic wisdom. He is the patron of Catholic schools and students. He has been named the Common and Universal Doctor and singled out for preeminence by an unbroken succession of popes since shortly after his death. It is remarkable to consider how highly and consistently the popes have praised him and the importance of his thought. Even our current pope, who before his accession to the throne of Peter was reputed to favor St. Augustine over St. Thomas, has echoed the endorsements of his predecessors in his Wednesday Audiences (for example, June 2, 2010).

While Thomas' teaching and writing are of vital importance, I hope to speak about them another day. Today I want to go a little deeper and talk about his spirituality. For his teaching and writings were the fruit of his complete devotion to the one who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. They have been a priceless gift to the Church and crucially formative for our own endeavor, but for Thomas they were secondary. We see this in a powerful way from a story told about Thomas near the end of his life. While saying Mass on the feast of St. Nicholas in 1273, Thomas was granted a vision of Heaven. He immediately discontinued all of his writing projects, including his great *Summa Theologiae*, which remains unfinished. He said that all of his writings seemed "like straw compared to what has now been revealed to me" (*The Life of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Foster, p. 110).

Today I want to address three aspects of St. Thomas' spirituality: his commitment to truth, his life of prayer, and his humility. Any attempt at an accurate portrait of St. Thomas the man must in some way address these three themes.

St. Thomas' Spirituality

Thomas saw that all being, and thus all truth, flows from God's creative hand. He lived in wonder and in a dogged pursuit of the truth, not merely because it is natural to desire knowledge, but also because all learning is drawing closer to God. This devotion to truth can be seen in his daily schedule. Many witnesses at his canonization inquiry testified that, aside from prayer, his time was almost completely devoted to study. There are famous stories of Thomas lost in contemplation, insensitive to his surrounding, even when at table with the king of France. He longed for, pursued, hunted truth. Once while praying in the Dominican chapel in Naples, a friend from Paris named Romanus walked in to speak with him. Romanus revealed that he had died two weeks earlier but had been allowed to visit to reward Thomas' merits. Thomas recognized an opportunity when he saw one, so he proceeded to quiz Romanus on the mechanics of the beatific vision.

His devotion to God's truth can also be seen in his rejection of all deliberate falsehood, and in the submission of his writings to the correction of the Church.

Thomas' love of truth and his great learning and wisdom were organically linked to our second theme, his life of prayer. He advanced far in learning partly because he was intelligent and well-educated, but mostly because he pleaded so earnestly with God to illuminate him. Bernard



Gui, one of his earliest biographers, reports that "he never set himself to study or argue a point ... without first having recourse inwardly — but with tears — to prayer for the understanding and the words required by the subject. When perplexed by a difficulty, he would kneel and pray and then, on returning to his writing or dictation, he was accustomed to find that his thought had become so clear that it seemed to show him inwardly, as in a book, the words he needed" (p. 37).

"St. Thomas has been named the Common and Universal Doctor and singled out for preeminence by an unbroken succession of popes since shortly after his death."

In one extreme case Thomas was stumped by a difficult passage from Isaiah. For several days he prayed and fasted begging God to shed some light on the mind of the prophet. One night he stayed up late praying in his cell. From outside his secretary, Reginald, heard him conversing with what sounded like two other voices. When the voices grew quiet Thomas called to Reginald and proceeded to dictate a clear and thorough interpretation of the passage. After much and insistent entreaty, Thomas admitted that the two voices were those of Sts. Peter and Paul, sent to answer his prayer.

Bernard says, "In Thomas the habit of prayer was extraordinarily developed; he seemed to be able to raise his mind to God as if the body's burden did not exist for him" (p. 36-7). Thomas did not turn to prayer only in time of need; he lived his life in constant communion with God. He was especially mindful of God's presence in the Holy Eucharist. Each morning he would say one Mass and attend another before turning to his scholarly activities. Many witnesses for his canonization tell of this daily practice and of the tears he would frequently shed at the reception of God's body and blood. At other times he could often be found in the chapel with his head resting on the tabernacle. His love for Christ in this sacrament is manifest in his Eucharistic hymns, especially *O Salutaris Hostia*, *Adoro Te Devote*, the *Pange Lingua*, and the *Tantum Ergo*. These are still some of the most beautiful hymns ever written, and they flowed from the heart of a man who is often caricatured as living among dry abstractions.

His heart was full of Christ. There are many beautiful stories that show this. He became quite fearful in thunderstorms but would remind himself that "God came to us in the flesh; He died for us and rose again" (p. 53). So he knew where to turn when things got tough.

When he had completed his treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas brought the text and placed it at the foot of the crucifix. An old lay brother, Dominic of Caserta, saw Thomas deep in prayer gazing at the crucifix and "heard a clear voice say these words: 'You have written well of me, Thomas; what do you desire as a reward for your labours?'" (p. 42-3). Thomas replied: "*Nil nisi te*," which means, "Nothing except for you." This attitude can also be seen even at the very end of his life when he was given Holy Communion for the last time, and he exclaimed, "[I receive you] O price of my redemption and food for my

pilgrimage. For your sake I have studied and toiled and kept vigil" (p. 55).

Our consideration of Thomas' constant life of prayer and communion with Christ leads us to our third theme, his humility. Bernard says that Thomas' humility was a reflection of his desire to imitate the Master, to be Christ-like in all things (p. 48). You have heard of the man who was proud of his humility; Thomas was just the opposite. He was honest enough to know that he was humble, but he attributed this to a gift from God, and gave earnest thanks for being preserved from conceit.

Submission to God and One Another

I would like to finish with two brief stories: Once when Thomas was visiting the Dominican House of Studies in Bologna he was wandering the grounds of the priory deep in contemplation. Now the prior had given another visiting brother permission to take the first man he should meet as his helper for the day. So when he bumped into Thomas, he immediately put him to work, completely unaware of whom he was ordering around. Because Thomas was slow of foot, he suffered many hard words, always without protest. When others witnessed this they rushed to inform the visitor of Thomas' identity. The visitor was mortified at his mistake and profusely apologized. But Thomas gently reminded them that the way to perfection must be obedience. He added that "if God ... had humbled himself for our sake, should not we submit to one another for God's sake?" (p. 49).

Years later when Thomas was lying ill on his deathbed at Fossanova, it was very cold and so the monks carried logs in to keep a fire burning to help him stay warm. Thomas became distressed and was heard to say several times, "Who am I that the servants of God should wait on me like this?"

St. Thomas Aquinas, patron of our school, keep us humble, prayerful, and in love with God's truth.

St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

Highlights from the Last Quarter

- On August 24, tutor **Dr. Michael J. Letteney** presented the year's opening lecture, "History and Catholic Liberal Education."
- **Rev. Robert Spitzer, S.J.**, president of the Magis Center of Reason and Faith and the Spitzer Center for Catholic Organizations, lectured on September 14 on the subject, "On the Existence of God and Contemporary Physics: A Response to the So-Called New Atheism."
- Members of "**The Symbiosis Ensemble**" performed string trios by Mozart and Haydn at the September 28 Fall Concert.



- One Friday night each semester, the student body and teaching faculty gather for the **All-College Seminar** — simultaneous meetings of small groups (about 20 students, drawn from all classes, and two tutors) to discuss a pre-selected reading. The fall semester's seminar took place on October 12 and focused on T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*.

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

Good Things Come in Threes

How Susan and Mike Murray Triple Their Gifts to Thomas Aquinas College

When Mike Murray retired from a 25-year career in management at ExxonMobil in 2006, he and his wife, Susan, were eager to support higher education in some way. It was an opportunity to do good that they could not pass up.

As an ExxonMobil retiree, Mr. Murray qualified for the company's matching-gifts program, which will triple any gift he makes to an eligible institution of higher learning. For the Murrays, the program offered a simple way to maximize their giving.

"My wife and I wanted *somebody* to be able to take advantage of the ExxonMobil matching program," he says. To make their choice, the couple reflected on the experiences of their son Sean, a graduate of the College.

"A Decent Education"

After graduating from high school in 1991, Sean Murray enrolled at the University of Texas (UT) to study electrical engineering. While there he learned about Thomas Aquinas College through his local Catholic church. Intrigued by the College's great books curriculum, Sean decided after two years to leave UT and restart his undergraduate education as a freshman at Thomas Aquinas College.

Although Mr. Murray had never heard of the College, he was at peace with his son's decision. "I didn't have a strong opinion, as long as it wasn't a third-rate school," he laughs. "Sean was a National Merit Scholar in high school, so he needed to go somewhere where he would get a decent education. He convinced me that he would get that at Thomas Aquinas."

Soon Mike would come to see that his son was getting much more than just that. "A couple of times a year I would have to go to Los Angeles for business, so I would drive up to campus and see how Sean was doing," he recalls. "I liked the structure and the discipline both in the curriculum and in the campus life," he adds. "I appreciated the fact that there was a focus on education. You don't go to Thomas Aquinas to goof off."

Reflecting on his own education at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Mr. Murray notes, "I was trained at one of the best engineering schools in the country, and we studied Pascal and Descartes, but not their original writings. I suspect it was a lot easier the way we did it than the way the College does it. The College's way is more difficult, and probably a better education."

Sean graduated from the College in 1997, and three years later graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law. He is today a partner at the intellectual-property firm of Kobbe Martens in Orange County,



Calif., where he lives with his wife, Robin (Kretschmer '99), and their four children.

A Perfect Match

Sean's experience at the College convinced the Murrays that it would be a worthy recipient of their — and the ExxonMobil Foundation's — support. "There are way too many colleges that are involved in trying to teach people *what* to think instead of *how* to think. But at Thomas Aquinas College, where you learn through the Socratic Method, that's teaching you *how* to think. That, frankly, is a real plus," Mr. Murray says.

Discussions with Sean and Robin also convinced the Murrays that the College would put their gifts to good use — namely, financial aid. "Our children all had their college tuition paid for them because we were successful in the corporate world," Mr. Murray reflects. "But there are smart people whose families don't have that kind of money, and they need some help to go to a good school like Thomas Aquinas. We want to help people like that out."

Although the ExxonMobil Foundation does not allow gifts to be designated for a specific purpose, virtually all private, unrestricted contributions to Thomas Aquinas College fund the school's financial aid program. In keeping with its Catholic mission, the College is committed never to turning away a student on the basis of financial need. Every year the generosity of benefactors such as the Murrays helps the College to keep that commitment, ensuring that more than 70 percent of its students receive some form of necessary assistance.

For the last five years the Murrays have given the College generous gifts which the ExxonMobil Foundation has then *tripled*. "People don't realize that the ExxonMobil Foundation has given away \$450 million since it was started," Mr. Murray notes. "It probably gives away \$40 million to \$50 million a year."

"We're grateful to the Murrays, both for their kindness to the College and for having the wisdom to take

advantage of the ExxonMobil Foundation's exceptionally generous matching-gift program," says Tom Susanka, the College's director of gift planning. "Many corporations match the charitable giving of employees, former employees, and their spouses. But most of our benefactors who are eligible never take advantage of the opportunity, and that is a shame. They are missing out on a benefit they have worked hard to earn, one which could do wonders for the institution that they have so graciously chosen to support."

Mr. Susanka explains that many are unaware that they are eligible for matching-gifts programs, but this problem is easily remedied. "We have a matching-gifts search engine on the College website," he says (thomasaquinas.edu/match). "Just type in the name of your current or past employer, and it will tell you not only if you are eligible, but if so, how to start having your gifts matched."

That one small step could do a world of good. Just ask Susan and Mike Murray.

IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

Paul Meyer ('94)
July 10, 2012

Andrew "Kent" Moore ('14)
July 20, 2012
Student

Judith Tyler Bowles
July 23, 2012
Former employee

Robert Berlo
August 1, 2012
Member of the Legacy Society

John S. Schmitt
August 22, 2012
Former tutor; father of Julia (Six '81), Nicholas ('82), Sr. Mary Juliana, O.Cist. ('86), Stephanie (Langley '89), Carl ('90), Samuel ('92), and Clare (Metilly '94)

Patrick Doud Reilley
August 31, 2012
Son of Larry Reilley, Member of the Board of Regents

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Tom Susanka, Director of Gift Planning
tsusanka@thomasaquinas.edu
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“What is it we Believe?”

An interview with the Most Rev. Liam Cary, Bishop of Baker (Ore.)

On Convocation Day (August 21, 2012), the Most Rev. Liam Cary, Bishop of Baker (Ore.) served as the principal celebrant at the Mass of the Holy Spirit and the speaker at the Matriculation Ceremony.

Q: You were ordained a bishop just this past May. What was your reaction to the news of your appointment?

A: It was a complete shock. The Apostolic Nuncio called and said, “The Pope has named you the Bishop of Baker. Do you accept? I said, “Well, yes.” It was as if Pope Benedict was sitting across the table from me, because it was he who chose me and asked the nuncio to ask me. If I were to say no I would be saying no to the Holy Father. I thought of the sacrifices that he has made in his life — that he has served for so long and that he was ready for a well-deserved retirement. But that was denied him, and now he serves to the end. So how could I say no? To say no would have been to say, “I have a better path. I thought about it, and my path is better than the one you are asking me to follow.”

Q: Dr. McLean mentioned in his introductory remarks at Convocation that yours was a “late vocation.” Can you describe your journey to the priesthood?

A: There are really two stages to my vocation. The first one was when I was just a boy. Our pastor was my father’s best friend, and he was at the house all of the time. My grandmother, my aunts, my uncles all revered this man, and this was the center of family life. So from a young age I was at ease with the thought of being a priest. It felt right to me. It didn’t have to; other people have had great conflicts. But I always wanted to be a priest. Even after I left the seminary the first time, I always said that I was still going to be a priest someday. But I put it off because I wanted to get more experience outside of the seminary.

The second stage in my vocation came many years later. When I got involved in my parish, I discovered that this is what I need to be doing. The desire to do more just flowed right into going back in to the priesthood.

I have often thought that, had I been ordained in the normal course of events, I might have done a lot of damage to people. It was the 1960s, and I was very much a child of my times. As it was, though, I had the chance to think my way through all of that without being in the spotlight, so to speak. When I went back to the seminary in the 1980s, it was with a different mind. My only regret at being ordained at the age of 45 is that I wasn’t able to do more service as a priest.

“After about 10 years, I went to Chicago to attend the Mass said by Bl. John Paul II there. This had a profound influence on me, as it did on many people and priests. It was then that I started to study the whole issue of contraception from a different perspective. I realized that I had been wrong and that the Church was right. And I figured if the Church could withstand the pressure of the world on something like this, then I could trust the Church on virtually anything.”

Q: On YouTube there is a video of a sermon you gave on the 40th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, in which you allude to having first received that encyclical less docilely than you do now. Is that right?

A: That’s an understatement of the first order! I remember precisely when I learned about it. I was working in San Francisco in the summer of 1968 at Pacific Gas & Energy, and while on a lunch break, I noticed a newspaper headline saying, “Pope Says No to Birth Control.” I



was very disappointed because I had been led to believe there was going to be a change in the teaching. Like so many other people, I resisted the teaching, thinking it was ultimately going to change.

After about 10 years, I went to Chicago to attend the Mass said by Bl. John Paul II there. This had a profound influence on me, as it did on many lay people and priests. It was then that I started to study the whole issue of contraception from a different perspective. I realized that I had been wrong and that the Church was right. And I figured if the Church could withstand the pressure of the world on something like this, then I could trust the Church on virtually anything. This is a kind of proof of the Lord staying with the Church.

People are still very much confused about the teaching. I think it is very important for us to recover a way of speaking about it that makes it clear that it is by no means an oppressive teaching, but rather one that is ultimately liberating. The fact is that contraception is the surest way to increase the suffering of women and to free men from any kind of sexual responsibility.

Q: In your homily you spoke of four cautionary prophecies that Pope Paul VI made if the teachings of *Humanae Vitae* were not followed. One was that there would be a coercive use of reproductive technologies by governments, especially on the poor. Could you say more about that?

A: Yes, that is in fact being done by governments elsewhere, in Latin America, China, India. Here in the United States we have the HHS contraceptive mandate, and on this issue the Church has taken a stand against the world. There is an effort here to drive the Church into complete privacy. It is as though it is inconceivable that anybody would object to the mandate, as though objections to it can’t be taken seriously.

Meanwhile we have all this evidence of family breakdown and the pauperization of women, single women who are left with children to care for when men abandon them. That this is the surest way to be poor in the United States is no critique of the heroic efforts of women to raise children on their own. This is heroism of the first degree. The problem is that people are getting poorer, and it might just be that contraception has something to do with that.

I think these kinds of connections need to be made not only as Catholic Christians but as American citizens, concerned about the future of our democracy and our government.

Q: The Holy Father has declared a Year of Faith starting in October. Do you have suggestions about how the faithful might profit from this occasion?

A: Faith is a real challenge in the world today, steeped as it is in secularism and relativism. We put our faith and our lives in a Man who was crucified, and in the people who associated with Him through time. This is no small thing. But we can take the significance of this for granted, especially when times are peaceful. When we start to realize, though, that there are threatening alternatives, it makes us wonder. During this Year of Faith, we should ponder certain questions: What is it we believe? What do I believe? How do we come to faith? What are the stages of believing?

By contrast it would be very helpful to think about the loss of faith, especially in our time. What brings about the loss of faith? How does one recover it? What is the role of prayer in faith? What is the role of hope? What is the relationship between faith and hope? What is the relation between faith and charity?

Frederick Ozanam of the St. Vincent De Paul society says, “Put your faith under the protection of charity.” This suggests to me that if you want to believe more deeply, or if perhaps you have lost your faith and you are recovering it, the best way to do so is to devote yourself to the service of the poor in charitable work.

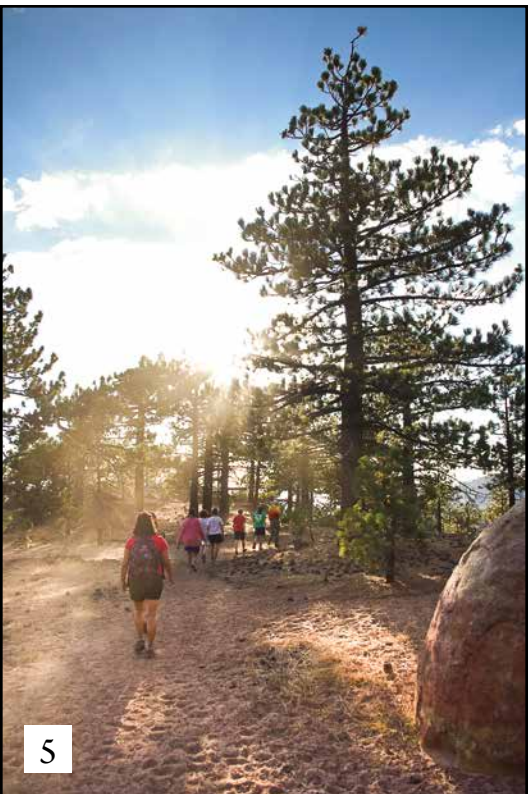
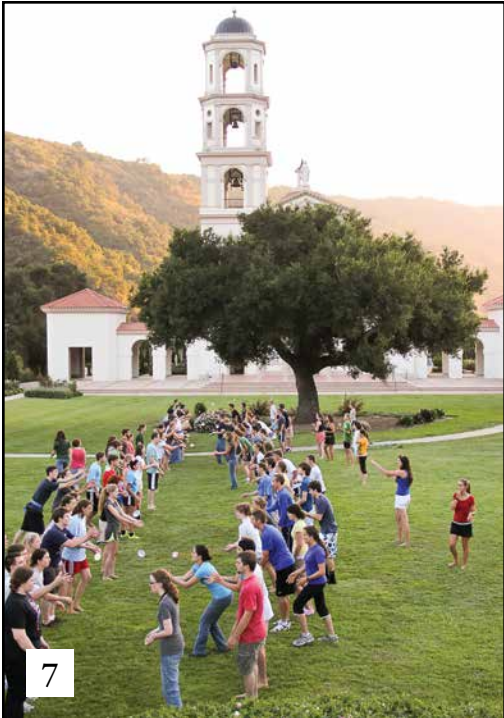
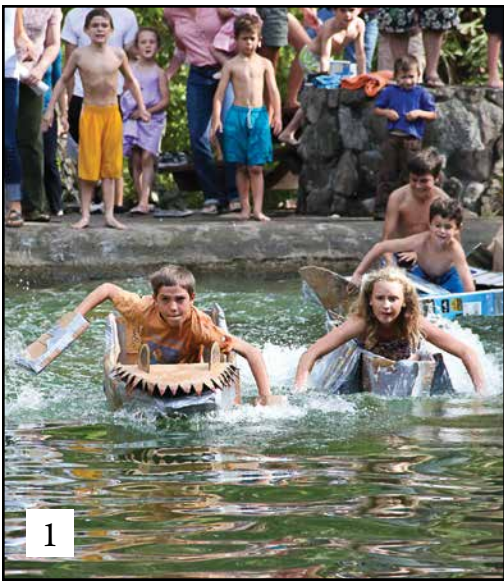
Q: When you accepted Dr. McLean’s invitation to visit our campus for Convocation, you said you had known about the College for sometime and that you “thought we were doing something right” here. Now that you have spent some time here and visited classes, what do you think?

A: It starts with the physical location. Just to walk everyday amidst such beauty — the terrain is beautiful, the buildings are beautiful, and the campus is ordered and tranquil, everything is in the right balance — it gives a certain peacefulness to life. Then there is the centrality and prominence of the Chapel, which is a statement in itself that everything is ordered to the glory of God.

I have also been very much impressed by the joyfulness of the students. I visited classrooms and saw them really attend to these great works of the Western tradition, and engage them directly — not through a filter of textbooks and bullet points. And they engage each other directly, too, and learn how to articulate their thoughts with respect. The classroom setting is not some huge lecture hall, but small, rather intimate rooms with large round tables that gather everybody in. What struck me, too, is the very companionable relationship the students have with their teachers. They are sitting right there at the same level with them and prompting them with questions, not flooding them with information.

To be able to do all this over a four-year period — I think this would be, in itself, a wonderful education. All of this seems to be very, very desirable, and I was quite impressed. It has certainly been a joy for me to be here.





CAMPUS LIFE

1. Children of alumni speed across one of the campus ponds during the annual Cardboard Board Race at Alumni Day 2012. 2-3. Members of the Senior Class welcome the new freshmen with a joint-class trip to the beach and then, that evening, a dance outside under the stars. 4. Students enjoy a home-made slip-and-slide at the Fall Barbeque. 5. The sun begins to set while students hike in the Los Padres National Forest at the women’s campout. 6. Chaplain Rev. Joseph Illo offers Mass at the men’s campout. 7. Freshmen participate in an ice-breaker during Orientation.

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

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

- Lecture: Dr. Jeremy Holmes ('99)
Academic Dean, Wyoming Catholic College.....November 16
- Thanksgiving Recess November 22–25
- Advent Concert: Bach’s Mass in B Minor
The Thomas Aquinas College ChoirNovember 30
- Christmas VacationDecember 15 to January 6
- St. Thomas Day Lecture
Rev. Michael Sherwin, O.P.January 28
- Lecture: Dr. Jeffrey Tulis
University of Texas at Austin..... February 22
- Lecture: Dr. William H. Donahue
St. John’s College, Santa Fe, N.M.March 15
- Easter Recess March 28 to April 3

