



# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

## FALL 2015

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### “A Hopeful Day for the Cause of Religious Liberty” Supreme Court Agrees to Hear College’s Case Against HHS Contraceptive Mandate

The Supreme Court of the United States has granted a writ of *certiorari* to Thomas Aquinas College’s challenge of the HHS contraceptive mandate.

On November 6 the Court announced that it had agreed to hear seven cases filed by religious organizations in opposition to the mandate that compels them to facilitate free contraceptive, abortifacient, and sterilization coverage for their employees. Among the lawsuits, which the Court is consolidating into a single case, is *Roman Catholic Archbishop v. Burwell, Sec. of H&HS, et al.*, in which the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., the Catholic University of America, and Thomas Aquinas College are co-plaintiffs.

“This decision by the Supreme Court is a sign of the importance of these cases and their implications for religious freedom and freedom of conscience all across the country — freedoms which we believe are guaranteed both by statute and the United States Constitution,” said Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean. “We are hopeful that the Court will uphold these freedoms and allow religious institutions to provide health insurance for their employees in a way consistent with the tenets of their faith.”

The Court’s acceptance of the case marks the latest step in a legal effort that began more than two years ago. The College originally filed a lawsuit in the U.S.



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

District Court for the District of Columbia on September 20, 2013, and prevailed, receiving a permanent injunction from the HHS Mandate. The U.S. government, however, appealed that decision, and on November 14, 2014, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia granted the government’s appeal, removing the injunction. At that time, the College filed a motion for an *en banc* hearing of the case. In July 2015 a majority of the court denied the motion. The College quickly requested and received an emergency stay in the matter, which effectively shields it from the Mandate until the Supreme Court rules on the merits of the case.

At issue, the College’s attorneys argued in their petition to the Court, is whether “the Religious Freedom Restoration Act ... allows the Government to force objecting religious nonprofit organizations to violate their beliefs by offering health plans with ‘seamless’ access to coverage for contraceptives, abortifacients, and sterilization.” The petition urged the justices to hear the case “because it affects the rights of untold thousands of nonprofit religious groups under federal law.”

In a reply brief filed in August, the College’s attorneys presented the legal reasoning behind their case, forcefully rebutting the government’s claim that

Catholic organizations’ opposition to the Mandate is “a quibble over a ‘bit of paperwork.’” For Catholic institutions, the attorneys argued, serious moral issues are at stake.

“The context and consequences of an action are obviously relevant to whether that action is morally objectionable,” the filing declared. “For example, giving a neighbor a ride to the bank may not be morally problematic — unless one knows the neighbor intends to rob that bank. A Jewish school may not object to hiring a vendor to serve lunch to its students — unless the vendor was required to serve non-Kosher food.” Catholic institutions, likewise, have “have no inherent objection to hiring an insurance company,” the brief stated, “but they strongly object to hiring an insurance company ... that will provide abortifacient and contraceptive coverage to their plan beneficiaries.”

With the Court having agreed to consider the matter, Thomas Aquinas College’s lawsuit could help determine the legal fate of the HHS Mandate. “This is a hopeful day for the cause of religious liberty in the United States,” said the College’s general counsel, John Quincy Masteller. “While the justices consider our case,” added Dr. McLean, “we ask that friends of the College, and all those who value religious liberty, please pray for a favorable outcome.”

### “Free” Books for a Liberating Education Benefactors’ Generosity Yields Richer Classroom Discussions

“A great book can be read many times, and each time the reader can discover something new,” says Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean. “We want our students, in the years to come, to go beyond their first readings. We want them to keep these books, to re-read them, and to ponder them.”

In the interest of helping students build up their own, personal libraries of great books, the College began in 2012 to provide all required texts, free of charge, to students at the start of each academic year. Three years later, the program has proven to be a significant cost-saver for students and their families, and a boon to classroom conversations.

#### Student Savings

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, college-textbook prices have soared over the last two decades, increasing at more than three times the rate of inflation. The College Board estimates that, on average, American college students spend \$1,200 per year on textbooks.

“Because our students read only original works, our texts are much less expensive than standard textbooks,” says Dr. McLean. The cost of furnishing the College’s students with their required texts comes to about \$500 per student, per year. “It is a great help to our families. They can rest assured that when their children arrive on campus, they won’t be saddled with additional expenses.”

The decision to provide the books at no additional cost has increased the College’s annual budget by approx-

imately \$180,000 per year. “We are very grateful to the College’s benefactors, whose generosity makes it possible for us to provide our students with their books at no extra cost to them,” says Dr. McLean. “This service is in keeping with our mission and our commitment to our students that lack of financial resources will not impede their education.”

#### Academic Benefits

Dean Brian T. Kelly reports that not charging extra for reading materials has also reaped positive results in the classroom. “When students were responsible for buying their own books, they would sometimes use poor translations because those were the cheapest,” he says. “Or they would borrow or buy used books from upperclassmen and siblings, and those books would often come with the important parts already highlighted, or the opening question for that day’s class penciled into the margin. So rather than gaining the experience of reading the book for themselves, they would get something predigested.”

By providing each student with a new text, Dr. Kelly finds, the College has been able to improve the educational experience for all. When students read from the same version of a text, with the same pagination, they can more easily locate particular passages. “Now we don’t waste time waiting for everyone to ‘get on the same page,’” he says. “That allows us to keep the conversations more centered on the text.”

Of course, sometimes, Dr. Kelly acknowledges, hav-



ing multiple translations on hand can help students gain a truer sense of the author’s meaning. “On those occasions, we simply provide the students with multiple texts, as we regularly do with Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. That way we know we will have all the needed translations available, rather than just hoping that students will bring them.”

To preserve the quality of the classroom experience, the College has no plans to shift to electronic texts, even though they are less expensive than bound books. “When you are holding an electronic book in your hands, you are really holding 5,000 books, plus your e-mail, weather updates, and sports scores,” says Dr. Kelly. “People will be a lot less present to the discussion if they have the addictive device in their hands. We are focused on giving students exactly what they need to gain the most from the discussion.”



# From the Desk of the President

## “The Order and Harmony of Catholic Liberal Education”

Note: Dr. Michael F. McLean presented the following address to the incoming freshmen at Matriculation 2015.

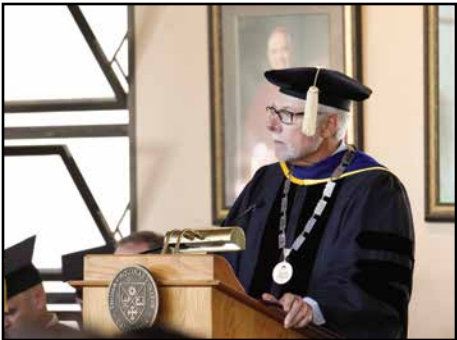
The College’s founding and governing document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education* (AKA “the Blue Book”) — the document written by the founders of the College to articulate and explain the College’s educational mission — speaks of literature and its role in the program:

The greatest works of literature, insofar as they appeal to the imagination and move the affections, are peculiarly accessible to the young, while at the same time they present or imply profoundly important views of human life and of reality as a whole.

Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, which we read and discussed with some of the College’s benefactors earlier this summer, and which you freshmen will read in the first semester, exemplifies this point.

As the Blue Book suggests, part of a playwright’s greatness consists in the thematic content of his works — the questions or issues posed by the words and deeds of the characters. In short, what the playwright gets you to think about — not ignoring, of course, the emotional movement which is his principal purpose.

In the case of *Oedipus Rex*, we wonder, among other things, about whether Oedipus is culpable for killing his father and marrying his mother, having done so ignorant of the fact that it is actually his father he is killing and his mother he is marrying. We also wonder what Sophocles is suggesting about the role of the gods in the events of the play in light of the repeated references to “oracles” and to “fate” — “I was fated to lie with



my mother,” says Oedipus, “and I was doomed to be murderer of the father that begot me.”

We don’t necessarily look to the poets or the playwrights for the full truth about these matters, as grateful as we are to them for the pleasure we have experienced and for the fact that they have been the source of our wonder.

The College’s founders, again in the Blue Book, call wonder “the proper human motive for higher education.” “The proper satisfaction of wonder is knowledge of the causes,” they continue, and knowledge of the highest causes is “human wisdom if attained through the light of the natural capacity of human reason ... and wisdom without qualification if it comes through the study of God in light of what He has revealed about Himself.”

To pursue the highest wisdom about the issues raised in *Oedipus Rex*, Catholic liberal education turns to philosophy and theology, just as you freshmen will do in the later years of your studies here, and just as our benefactors did in their seminars this summer.

Again, the Blue Book: “Theology will be both the governing principle of the whole school and that for the sake of which everything is studied ... the sequence of courses will be designed to introduce you to every essential part of the intellectual life ... and will be structured in detail, basing itself upon the natural order of learning and taking as

examples and guides the work of the best minds in each of the disciplines.”

And so in the Junior Year you will look to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* for the classic treatment of the voluntary, the involuntary, and the chosen. Not only does Aristotle’s discussion shed light on the particular case of Oedipus but it also sheds light on the principles that lie at the root of our criminal-justice system and the judgments we make about rewards and punishments.

We look to the theologian, in this case St. Thomas Aquinas, who is our patron and whose works we study carefully in the Junior and Senior Years, to clarify that the divine presence in human action, contrary to the impression left by *Oedipus Rex*, need not be compulsory and that there is more to human-divine interaction than struggle, force, and malevolence. St. Thomas explains that any human effect depends at once on the power of God and the power of man. Moreover, he explains that God’s causality is always exercised on us “according to our measure,” as he says, “which means that we act voluntarily and not as forced.” Finally, he explains that, while God can produce all natural effects by Himself, His use of secondary causes speaks to the immensity of His goodness.

“The order and harmony of Catholic liberal education, an education which you freshmen are about to begin, is a beautiful thing both to behold and to experience.”

St. Thomas’s treatment of these matters sheds light on the questions raised by *Oedipus Rex* and illustrates one final principle that the College’s founders emphasize in the Blue Book: “Philosophy,

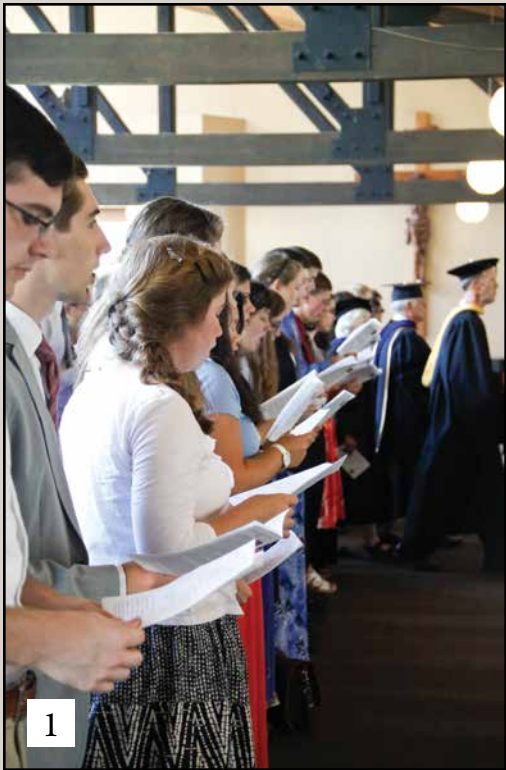
under the Christian dispensation,” they write, “is not only worthy of pursuit for its own sake, but as a handmaid or help to theology.” Repeatedly in his discussion of the mysteries of God’s causality, the dispensation of His grace, and His role in our lives, St. Thomas invokes the aid of philosophy.

It is philosophy, for example, which teaches that the power of a lower agent depends upon the power of the proximate higher agent, and finally on the power of the supreme agent. It is philosophy, too, which teaches that it is proper to man, and to every rational creature, to act voluntarily and to control his own acts. Finally, it is philosophy which teaches that knowledge precedes the movement of the will and, accordingly, that divine help must precede the movements of our will toward the ultimate end.

The order and harmony of Catholic liberal education, an education which you freshmen are about to begin, is a beautiful thing both to behold and to experience. In my example, you have seen how a work of imaginative literature read early in the program sets out some problems and how those problems are addressed in an orderly way by the higher disciplines of philosophy and theology. As the Blue Book says, this is an education which “begins in wonder so that it might end in wisdom.”

In this particular case, the wisdom finally attained is that God is always and intimately present to us, that He loves us eternally, that He intends our good, and that He offers all of the help we need to attain our supernatural end — perfect enjoyment, not of some created good, but of Himself. Greater understanding of matters like these is the very purpose of Catholic liberal education; attaining the reality signified in this case — the enjoyment of God — is the very purpose of life itself.

### Convocation 2015



1. Members of the Class of 2019 sing “Come, Holy Ghost” at the start of the Matriculation ceremony. 2. New tutors Peter T. Knuffke and David M. Grothoff make the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity. 3-4. President McLean and Bishop Olmsted welcome the freshmen. 5-6. Registrar Mark Kretschmer looks on as members of the Class of 2019 officially register as students at the College. 7. Students applaud the start of the new academic year.



# “Be Wiser than Despair”

## The Convocation Homily of the Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted

“Lord send out Your spirit and renew the face of the earth.”  
— Psalm 104

May this heartfelt prayer resound in all our hearts as a new academic year begins at Thomas Aquinas College. I am grateful for the opportunity to celebrate this Mass of the Holy Spirit with you today. For some years now, we in the Diocese of Phoenix have profited from the Catholic education offered at this college, and especially from the fire of love that the Holy Spirit has ignited in its graduates. On behalf of the Church in Phoenix, I want to express my appreciation of the witness to Christ offered by the faculty, staff, and students of this exceptional institution, and to thank you for your love of learning and your desire to offer fitting worship to the Blessed Trinity. Thank you, too, for being wiser than despair.

When I first met Dr. Quentin Faulkner he was seriously engaged in a spiritual journey that would lead him into the Catholic Church. He had already left behind his ministry in a Protestant denomination; he was teaching in the School of Music at the University of Nebraska, and was an organist at the Catholic Cathedral of the Risen Christ in Lincoln. A few years later, after being received into the Church along with his wife, Dr. Faulkner published a book with an intriguing title: *Wiser than Despair*.

This book could only have been written by someone who is familiar with the mystery of the Cross, and who believes firmly in the victory of the Risen Lord Jesus; someone who trusts the truth, loves the Church, and has served Christ faithfully in turbulent times, like those in which we live.

“Wiser than despair” — this seems a fitting description of the grace that Christ is offering to the Church in America today, and especially to us who have the privilege to bear witness to the Gospel of life as a culture of death and radical secularism wreak havoc around us.

Events of this summer of AD 2015 have provided many temptations to despair. On the sixth of June, five justices of the U.S. Supreme Court decided that they could redefine marriage. It is worth noting that the other four justices all wrote strongly worded dissenting opinions, which shows the gravity of this disastrous decision. Chief Justice John Roberts pointed out that the majority opinion has no basis whatsoever in the U.S. Constitution; and Justice Samuel Alito stated that this decision “will be used to vilify Americans who are unwilling to assent to the new orthodoxy.”

Not long after the tragic Supreme Court decision was handed down, a series of videos was released by the Center for Medical Progress, offering damning evidence of the practice of Planned Parenthood making profits by selling body parts of aborted babies. The ugly face of such horrific evil turns our stomachs and tempts us to despair; but as people of faith, let us instead shout to God, “Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth” (Ps. 104).

As I have prayed and considered how best to respond to these dreadful evils of the summer, I am reminded of a saint who lived in Nazi Germany last century and who faced similar large-scale disregard for the dignity and



rights of human beings. She is the virgin and martyr Edith Stein, now known as the Carmelite St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. I also mention her today because she was a renowned scholar with a deep appreciation of St. Thomas Aquinas; but even more I speak of her because of the way the Holy Spirit led her to faith in God.

Two women were the Lord’s instruments in leading Edith Stein to discover and to accept the gift of faith: the widow of an academic colleague, and a woman whose name is unknown. Let me speak briefly of each woman, beginning with the wife of a fellow philosopher and friend Adolf Reinach of the University of Freiburg. Professor Reinach was killed during World War I on Flanders’ fields. His death left Edith distraught and disoriented. She had admired his wisdom and his kindness; if there were a God, she thought, how could He allow such a good man to be killed in war?

“For some years now, we in the Diocese of Phoenix have profited from the Catholic education offered at this college, and especially from the fire of love that the Holy Spirit has ignited in its graduates.”

Then, when asked by Professor Reinach’s widow to come and help her to collect and publish her late husband’s unpublished papers, it was with considerable hesitation that she traveled to the Reinach home. There, to her surprise, she met a woman who, instead of being overwhelmed with sorrow, was filled with hope, and who even offered Edith and others peace and consolation. More than 20 years later, Edith would tell a priest friend, “It was my first encounter with the Cross and the divine power that it bestows on those who carry it. For the first time I was seeing with my very eyes the Church, born from her Redeemer’s sufferings, triumphant over the sting of death. That was the moment my unbelief collapsed and Christ shone forth.”

Not long after this meeting with Mrs. Reinach, a second woman crossed her path in what seemed like pure coincidence — but in faith we know there is no such thing as coincidence.

A friend took Edith to see the cathedral in Frankfurt. This is how Edith described what happened, “We went into the cathedral for a few moments, and as we stood there in respectful silence, a woman came in with her shopping basket and knelt down in one of the pews to say a short prayer. This was something completely new to me. In the synagogue, as in Protestant churches I had visited, people only went in at the time of the service. But here was someone coming into the empty church in the

middle of a day’s work as if to talk with a friend. I have never been able to forget that.”

An anonymous woman, whom Edith never saw again, stirred within her heart the hope of being able to talk to God as with a friend, longing for a relationship with God that went beyond philosophical concepts and that combined truth with love. If this woman could be so absorbed in prayerful communion with God, just seconds after leaving behind the noisy turmoil of the city outside, then could she not hope for a similar loving intimacy with God?

Dear sons and daughters in Christ, Edith Stein reminds us of two tremendous blessings of our Catholic faith, which Protestant Christians are lacking: firstly, the spiritual tools for dealing with suffering; and secondly, the great treasure that is Jesus personally present to us in the Eucharist. Both of these make it possible to be wiser than despair. The Sacrament of the Sick, the Stations of the Cross, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, the Sacrament of Confession, and much more provide us with rich sources of grace and consolation.

So, those of you who are presently dealing with sorrow or suffering, turn to these spiritual resources with great hope. Remember that the Cross is the Tree of Life, the vessel by which Jesus redeemed the world. When we take up our cross and follow Jesus, our friendship with Him deepens and expands, as do our relationships with others whom He gives us to love.

Remember, too, that suffering and sacrifice are a key part of fulfilling one’s vocation and mission from Christ. As St. John Chrysostom said in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, “Do not think that you are destined for easy struggles or unimportant tasks. You are the salt of the earth.”

As for the Eucharist, the patron of this college is a great example of one who turned constantly to the Blessed Sacrament to deepen his friendship with Jesus. When St. Thomas Aquinas celebrated the Eucharist, he became so absorbed in the mystery of Christ’s love that tears frequently ran down his face. In his commentary on the Eucharist and John 6, he wrote, “Nothing is more a source of wonder than that God should become one of us.” In the Eucharist, Christ draws close to us by becoming even smaller than He did in the Incarnation; He became so small so that He could be our food, the Bread of Eternal Life. So great was Thomas’s awe and wonder at Christ’s love in the Eucharist that he wrote beautiful hymns that continue to inspire us today, such as the *Panis Angelicus*, in which he exclaims: “O res mirabilis! Manducat Dominum, pauper, servus et humilis”; “O marvelous wonder, a poor and lowly servant eats the Lord God!”

Recall that Thomas lived at a time when the Albigensian heresy, similar to popular false notions of human nature today, were undermining the dignity of human persons and producing twisted notions of femininity and masculinity. As a result, there were misunderstandings about the Eucharist and a tragic decline in Eucharistic devotion and practice. Various means were taken to restore a proper appreciation of the Eucharist, such as celebrating Benediction regularly, putting the tabernacle in a more prominent place in the churches, ringing bells at the elevation of the Host and Chalice at Mass, and so forth. While all these made a difference, none proved as effective as the Eucharistic hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas. Such beauty could only come from a heart full of love for our Savior and from a friendship with Him that was nourished each day at the Table of the Lord.

Beloved sons and daughters in Christ, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Edith Stein, and all the saints inspire us to bear sorrow with dignity and hope, to be wiser than despair, and to treasure the love of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Note: The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix, was the principal celebrant of the 2015 Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit.



Resident Assistant Sarah Dufresne ('14) and head women's prefect Margaret Smillie ('16) bring the gifts of bread and wine to the sanctuary at the Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit.



# College Update

## Recent Events and Happenings

### College Welcomes Bishop Robert Barron

Members of the Thomas Aquinas College community are celebrating the ordination of a friend of the College, the Most Rev. Robert Barron, as the new bishop for its pastoral region in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

On September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of Mary, the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles — joined by the most Rev. Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, and the Most Rev. Joseph M. Sartoris, retired Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles — ordained Bishop Barron at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. Present at the joyful occasion were the Chairman of the College’s Board of Governors R. Scott Turicchi, President Michael F. McLean, and Dean Brian T. Kelly.

“I was delighted by Bishop Barron’s episcopal coat of arms,” said Dr. Kelly. “It contains two references to St. Thomas Aquinas, including his motto, *non nisi te domine*, or ‘Only You, Lord.’” Bishop Barron’s obvious devotion to our patron bodes well for his episcopate.” The former president and rector of the Archdiocese of Chicago’s Mundelein Seminary and founder of the Word on Fire media ministry, Bishop Barron delivered a lecture at Thomas Aquinas College in 2013.

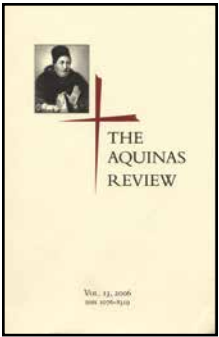
“It was an honor and a privilege to witness the ordination of Bishop Barron and the Archdiocese’s two other new bishops,” said Dr. McLean. “We are delighted that Bishop Barron is serving our pastoral region, and we look forward to working with him.”



President Michael F. McLean and Dean Brian T. Kelly with the College’s new bishop, the Most Rev. Robert Barron

### Free, Online Archive of The Aquinas Review

For the first time since Thomas Aquinas College Founding President Ronald P. McArthur established *The Aquinas Review* in 1994, the scholarly journal is fully available online. A complete archive of back issues is now accessible, free of charge, via the College’s website.



An annual publication, *The Aquinas Review* exists to provide a forum for a deeper consideration of the matters that constitute the College’s curriculum and are central to genuine Catholic liberal education. Consistent with the nature of the College, *The Aquinas*

*Review* is marked by fidelity to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and a respect for the great tradition of liberal learning.

“I am very pleased that *The Aquinas Review* is now available online,” says Dr. Anthony Andres (’87), a graduate of the College and a member of its teaching faculty who has succeeded the late Dr. McArthur as the journal’s editor. “I have had a lot of alumni and current subscribers ask how they can find articles from back issues, and now those are easily available. Moreover, every article is a searchable PDF, which means that scholars who are looking for answers to particular questions can easily find them.”

The archive and a free-subscription form for the print edition of *The Aquinas Review* are available on the College’s website at [thomasaquinas.edu/review](http://thomasaquinas.edu/review).

### Celebrating St. Junipero Serra

In the days and hours after His Holiness Pope Francis canonized St. Junipero Serra on September 23, the campus of Thomas Aquinas College was abuzz with celebrations of California’s new patron saint.



Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., offers a blessing by the College’s statue of the newly canonized St. Junipero Serra.

That night, the men of the residence hall formerly known as *Blessed Junipero Serra* sang at the evening Mass. For the propers of the Mass, they sang arrangements composed by junior Giorgio Navarini, who also served as director of the self-styled “Serran Choir.”

The next morning the community gathered in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel for a mid-day Mass in St. Junipero Serra’s honor. Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., served as the principal celebrant and homilist. “As we see in the life of St. Serra, when the Holy Spirit becomes active in us, through His gift of fortitude, we become free from any paralyzing fear and allow God to do great things through us,” said Fr. Paul.

Following the Mass, the College’s chaplains led a procession to the statue of St. Junipero Serra that stands outside the residence hall that bears his name. Blessing a wreath and then placing it at the foot of the statue, Fr. Paul announced that, henceforth, Blessed Junipero Serra Hall would be known as *Saint Junipero Serra Hall*, reflecting its patron’s new status among the Communion of Saints. “St. Junipero Serra,” said Fr. Paul, “pray for us, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.”

### Graduate Becomes College’s First L.A. Seminarian

There are 62 priests among the Thomas Aquinas College alumni, but none yet in the College’s own Archdiocese of Los Angeles. By God’s grace, that will soon change.

On August 8, Michael Masteller (’13) entered the Archdiocese’s St. John’s Seminary in Camarillo. “From the seminary, I can still see Topatopa,” he says of the mountain range that rises above the College’s campus. “I love Thomas Aquinas College. I love California. I love the Church. And all these things meet here.”



Michael Masteller (’13)

It was during his time at the College that Mr. Masteller first began to discern seriously his vocation. “Obviously the great access we have to the Sacraments, daily Mass, and confession, as well as always having the Chapel available for prayer, was very helpful,” he says. “The biggest thing for me, though,” was an early-morning, daily holy hour that he kept with two friends during his Senior Year. “That experience of being closer to God, of committing to Him — it changed my life. It made me a better person.”

Upon graduating, Mr. Masteller spent two years teaching at a Catholic high school in Wisconsin, during which time he decided to pursue a diocesan vocation. By virtue of his studies at the College, he has been exempted from first-year pre-theology classes and now enters the seminary as a second-year student. God willing, his ordination as the first alumnus priest in the archdiocese is just six years away.

# Fidelity & Excellence

## College Receives Top Marks in Catholic and Secular Guides

The annual college guides have issued their editions for the 2015-16 academic year, and once again Thomas Aquinas College is alone among American colleges and universities in earning the highest praise from both secular and Catholic publications. Among the highlights:

- The **Princeton Review** places Thomas Aquinas College within the top 15 percent of four-year colleges, naming it one of *The Best 380 Colleges* in the United States. The guide gives the College scores of 95 for academics and 99 for financial aid, plus a score of 97 for quality of life. It additionally lists Thomas Aquinas as one of its Best Western colleges and the only Catholic institution on its exclusive list of 20 Great Financial Aid schools.



- In the 2016 edition of its “Best Colleges” guide, **U.S. News & World Report** rates Thomas Aquinas College in the top half of the top tier of all American liberal arts colleges and No. 30 among the Top 40 “Best Value” national liberal arts colleges. The magazine further cites the College as having the highest freshman retention rate (87 percent) and highest proportion of classes under 20 students (100 percent) among national liberal arts schools. The College ranks as No. 8 on its list of national liberal arts colleges for lowest student debt, which averages \$16,263 over four years — less than half the national average of \$35,000.



- The **National Catholic Register** has selected Thomas Aquinas College as one of only 39 “faithfully Catholic colleges and universities” recommended in its “Catholic Identity College Guide 2015.” The College earned a perfect score on the *Register*’s list of 10 questions that gauge the fidelity and spiritual strength of Catholic institutions.



- **USA Today** and the statistics website College Factual have ranked Thomas Aquinas College as No. 12 of 1,223 schools nationwide on their list of the country’s “Best Colleges for the Money.” Overall, the rankings place the College in the top 15 percent of American colleges and universities and No. 20 out of 82 schools on their list of Best California Colleges. The rankings highlight that the student-loan default rate among Thomas Aquinas College alumni is 0.0 percent, compared to the national average of 13.7 percent.



- The **American Council of College Trustees and Alumni** has given Thomas Aquinas College a grade of “A” for strength of curriculum. The College rates among the top .2 percent of American colleges and universities, just 24 schools in all, named to ACTA’s coveted “A List.” It is also one of only four schools nationwide to receive a perfect score for its curriculum.



“We are heartened, as always, by the College’s reviews in the latest college guides,” says Admissions Director Jon Daly. “Taken together, these findings suggest that the College has largely succeeded in its goal to offer a faithfully Catholic, academically excellent education at a price that is truly affordable to all.”

To read these and other reviews in full, see [thomasaquinas.edu/reviews](http://thomasaquinas.edu/reviews).



# New Buildings & Patronesses

## College Breaks Ground for St. Cecilia Concert and Lecture Hall ...

On the afternoon of Friday, September 25, incense filled the air, holy water blessed the ground, and four spades pierced the soil at the site of Thomas Aquinas College's forthcoming lecture and concert building, St. Cecilia Hall.

Set to open its doors in 2017, St. Cecilia Hall will be the fourteenth building constructed since the College acquired its campus in the 1970s. Situated on the southwest corner of the academic quadrangle, adjacent to St. Gladys Hall and Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, St. Cecilia Hall will host the College's biweekly lectures and concerts. The building is made possible through an \$8.5 million grant from the Fritz B. Burns Foundation of Los Angeles.

### Seeking St. Cecilia's Intercession

Prior to the groundbreaking ceremony, the College offered a Votive Mass in honor of St. Cecilia, the 4<sup>th</sup> century virgin, martyr, and patroness of music for whom the building is named.

In his homily, Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., noted the fortuitous location of St. Cecilia Hall, which will neighbor St. Gladys Hall (a classroom build-



Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean prepares to break the ground for St. Gladys Hall alongside three representatives of the Fritz B. Burns Foundation: Trustees Cheryl Robinson and Maureen Rawlinson and President Rex Rawlinson

ing), as well as Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. "We have the art complementing the science, the philosophy, and the theology," he remarked, "and the science, the philosophy, and the theology complementing the art. And at the head of it all is this chapel, where God Himself is present in a very special way. So we see here, then, a concrete example of the ideals of the founding fathers of Thomas Aquinas College."

Among those in attendance were three representatives of the Fritz B. Burns Foundation — President Rex Rawlinson and Trustees Maureen Rawlinson and Cheryl Robinson — as well as members of the College's Board of Governors, faculty, and President's Council. Also present were two members of Gladys and Fritz Burns' family, their daughter Frances Morehart and granddaughter Missy Mueller.

The four-decade long development of the College's campus, Fr. Buckley explained, is a testament to the generosity of such benefactors. "It is because of the calling of

people who want to serve the Lord and their response to that calling that we are able to have this campus and this new building," he said. "We ask the Lord to bless them in a singular way and enable them to see the great contribution that they have made and are making to the formation of the students of Thomas Aquinas College."

### Blessing and Breaking Ground

Immediately after the Mass, the chaplains and several student acolytes led the congregation in a procession to the future site of St. Cecilia Hall. There, President Michael F. McLean observed that the building, "will be a beautiful and acoustically appropriate venue for our St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert series, with space enough to welcome members of our wider community." He additionally thanked the trustees of the Fritz B. Burns Foundation, "who share with us a firm commitment to genuine, Catholic liberal education, and have been our partners for decades now in helping our students receive a sound intellectual, moral, and spiritual foundation."

The College's head chaplain, Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., attended by a student acolyte, then proceeded to bless the grounds of the new building with incense and holy water. "Bless, O Lord, the site for St. Cecilia Hall," he prayed. "Through the gift of Your eternal wisdom, grant that the undertaking that we begin today, for Your glory and our own well-being, progress day by day to a successful completion through Christ Our Lord."

With the land thus prepared, Dr. McLean, Mr. and Mrs. Rawlinson, and Mrs. Robinson ceremoniously turned over the first four shovelfuls of dirt, thereby launching the construction of St. Cecilia Hall. The crowd of students, tutors, and others who had gathered to witness the occasion cheered exuberantly, before moving "just a few feet to the east," as Dr. McLean put it, to the Fritz B. and Gladys C. Burns Plaza for the dedication of the College's new statue of St. Gladys. (See story, below.)

## ... and Unveils, Blesses New Statue of St. Gladys

For the last year, students at Thomas Aquinas College have studied around the classroom tables in St. Gladys Hall — and they have met for dances and other events in the adjacent Fritz B. and Gladys C. Burns Plaza — but the building was not truly complete. Only on Friday, September 25, with the unveiling and blessing of a new statue of the building's patroness, is St. Gladys Hall now truly finished, a permanent and beloved fixture on the Thomas Aquinas College campus.

Immediately following the groundbreaking ceremony for St. Cecilia Hall (see story, above), members of the College assembled in the Burns Plaza for the unveiling and blessing of the statue, "Springtime of Our Faith," by Los Angeles sculptor Christopher Slatoff. A 5<sup>th</sup> century Welsh monarch, St. Gladys is the patron saint of Gladys Carson Burns, the cherished wife of the late Fritz B. Burns, whose Los Angeles-based foundation contributed the \$3.2 million grant that funded the construction of the College's newest classroom building.

When guests arrived for the blessing ceremony, the statue of St. Gladys, which stands on a pedestal just outside the hall's southern entrance, facing northeast — toward Wales — was draped in a tarp. Her appearance was a mystery as, until recently, has been her story, until Providence deigned to make her life and example known through a college some 6,000 miles away from her homeland and 16 centuries after her earthly life.

"St. Gladys Hall has been a wonderful addition to the academic life of the College, and I think that St. Gladys herself has proven to be a wonderful patron for our students," said President Michael F. McLean. "I have to admit that she was not a saint with whom many of us were familiar when the name was first proposed for the



building, but our devotion to her has grown as we have come to know about her life and her holiness. She was a wife, a mother, and a queen, and then, in later years, she took up the contemplative life, as did her husband. Her life is a great model for all of us."

Upon completing his remarks, Dr. McLean, with the aid of Mr. Slatoff, removed the tarp, revealing the sculpture, much to the delight of those in attendance. Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., then blessed the statue with holy water. "O God, you approve of the sculpted images of your saints in order that when we behold them we may be led to contemplate and imitate their lives and holiness," he prayed. "Therefore we beseech you to bless and sanctify this statue, wrought to the memory and honor of St. Gladys. And grant that whosoever through inspiration of this image earnestly strives to honor her may, by her merits, obtain grace in this life and eternal glory in the next, through Christ Our Lord."

The statue, which depicts St. Gladys in her queenly regalia and holding one of her seven children, features blooming Welsh daffodils on her robe and various crosses representative of the forms that the Cross took in ancient Wales. "It portrays a time when Celtic spirituality, deeply connected with Creation, emerged and blossomed out of the dark ages that followed the Roman Empire's fall," said Mr. Slatoff. "St. Gladys was able to present her faith to people just as a loving mother would present a beautiful object to her child. Through her efforts, a formerly pagan king was converted, and a whole generation was raised so dedicated to Christ that many of them would go on to become saints as well."

Commending this fine work, the chairman of the College's Board of Governors, R. Scott Turicchi, observed that for Mr. Slatoff, "This is not a job. It even goes beyond a vocation. It is a spiritual journey in the creation of each of these pieces, and I sense that that journey on each



piece shapes him as much as he shapes the clay that produces the models that can ultimately be cast into bronze." Mr. Turicchi also thanked representatives of the Fritz B. Burns Foundation, President Rex Rawlinson and Trustees Maureen Rawlinson and Cheryl Robinson, who were present. "I would like to reiterate the gratitude that we have to the Fritz B. Burns Foundation ... not only for the generous contributions to make this hall a reality, but for helping to realize a dream over 35 years of making this campus now nearly complete."

Mr. Rawlinson, in turn, spoke of the similarities of St. Gladys and the patron saint of the College's next building, St. Cecilia Hall, reflecting on the lessons both can teach Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. "St. Cecilia and St. Gladys were both born in precarious times. They both stood up for their faith, and they both had tremendous influence," he observed. "It's still a lot like that today. The position of Christians in the world is precarious, as it was then."

Both saints also helped to bring about the conversions of their husbands, added Mr. Rawlinson, a fellow convert. "When I look at it, what I think is, when you marry a Catholic girl, you never know what exactly you're going to get, and you might get a little more than you bargained for!"



# “We Must Be Happy Warriors”

## The Matriculation Address of the Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted

It is a joy for me to be here today. I have never been to this campus before, although I certainly had great admiration for the College, learning about the ways that you pursue the truth, wisdom, and also a love of Christ, and also having the privilege of having some of our students from the Diocese of Phoenix come here and study and then come back and enrich our local church. So I pray that all those from the Diocese who have come in the Freshman Class, and many of the rest of you, come and serve in Phoenix. We would welcome you to be there.

### Weapons of War

When I was first ordained a priest, the pastor of the cathedral in the Diocese of Lincoln, where I was assigned, would say frequently to me, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*; “If you want peace, prepare for war.” Those words struck me as very funny in



the devil the “father of lies.” So what this institution is about, and what those of you who are students here are about, is coming to be soldiers against the father of lies. A society that can do things like what I mentioned in my homily — things that totally twist the notion of femininity, masculinity, marriage, and the dignity of human persons — is one that needs happy warriors for truth, the truth of the

“We thank You for this institution, Thomas Aquinas College, for the way that it is an instrument of Your goodness and truth and of charity and hope. Bless everyone associated with Thomas Aquinas College. May the year ahead be filled with many blessings. May the College continue to produce scholars, seekers for the truth, people committed to the truth who will bear witness to the living Jesus Christ.”

— The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix  
Benediction at Matriculation 2015

the beginning, but as I have had the privilege of serving the Lord, they have struck me as having a lot of wisdom. The Lord has put us here on earth with a mission, a mission that draws us ever closer to His beloved son, Jesus Christ. He gives us a mission on behalf of others. It is a mission that, in a world that has been cast off-angle by Original Sin, means that we must always be part of a struggle — but we must be happy warriors in the process.

The first thing to remember is whom we are at war with. St. Paul says that it is not human beings; it is principalities and powers; it is the evil one. It is always helpful to remember that Jesus called

human being, the truth of the dignity of every human being.

How do we prepare to be happy warriors? How do we prepare to be instruments that Christ can use in order to raise questions in a way that draws in those who are confused, or those who are at the present time not aware of what is happening around us?

The weapons, it seems to me, are pretty evident just in coming here for these hours that I have had to be with you. First of all there are the theological virtues: faith and hope and charity. These are called “theological” because they come from God. We cannot create our own faith, our own

charity, our own hope, but we can receive them and, receiving them with gratitude, we can grow in them. That is, they can have a free range over our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and because of this, as Dr. McLean explains so well, we can come to an awareness of seeking goodness and truth and beauty and how those help us grow within. C. S. Lewis says we are much bigger on the inside than we are on the outside, and that is because we are made for truth and goodness and beauty.

I love the very first line of *Fides et Ratio* by St John Paul II, that document on faith and reason, where he says that it is on the two wings of faith and reason that we fly toward the truth. That image is one that I think we should continue to keep in mind.

I am so grateful that you have this ceremony for the new tutors, that they make their Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity. That is a great witness to all the rest of us of the great help that comes from using the wings of faith and reason. We make a Profession of Faith. This Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity do not restrict our freedom. They strengthen our freedom by helping to confirm our will and our strength so as to rally around certain things we know because of the great gift of Revelation, the gift of Christ, the wisdom, and the truth and beauty and love of God. So thank you, David Grothoff and Peter Knuffke, for beginning your service as tutors here by making the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity.

### Conversion, Communion, Solidarity

When St. John Paul II was preparing for the whole world to celebrate the second millennium of Christianity, he sent an apostolic exhortation for all of America, North, Central, and South. It was entitled, “On the Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion, and Solidarity.” That title expresses what I hope for every one of you freshmen, all of you who study here, and those who help you to study here: that every day you will encounter the living Jesus Christ; that that encounter will swell

your heart more and more every day; and that it will also humble your heart because of awe and wonder at Who He is and the fact that He desires to live within you; and that you will accept His invitation to take these three paths on which He always is leading us — conversion, communion, and solidarity.

It is a great gift to continually be reminded of what we need to turn away from. *Conversion* means being turned, allowing God to turn us away from the darkness and toward the light and brilliance and radiance of Jesus Christ, allowing the Lord to do that within us.

Then there is *communion*, because when we turn away from those things and toward Christ, He brings us into this great, deep communion. That is what our hearts long for and what we will have forever in Heaven. But already here on Earth we taste that, especially at the Eucharist.

And then *solidarity*: Pope Francis reminds us to go to the peripheries, that is to those who do not know. He says that we have a great need for a culture of encounter, so that when we go there, we don’t knock them over first with hard truths, but we encounter them in kindness and love and friendship. Building these bridges on the basic virtues that allow human relationships to happen moves us to deeper levels of solidarity for the sake of justice and truth and goodness and right.

So that is my prayer, that the Church in America — north, central, south, and especially all of you within that — will be happy warriors because you know the love of Jesus. You will know that you have entered into a deeper and deeper friendship with Him, and that you have allowed him to freely lead you upon the paths that will bring us to fulfilling our mission in His name.

May God bless each of you, the students, the faculty members, the Board, and all who are associated with this great college.

*Note: The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix, presided at the College’s 2015 Matriculation ceremony.*

## The Perfect Gift ... *A Christmas Novena of Masses*

Beginning on December 16, the chaplains of Thomas Aquinas College will offer a novena of Masses in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Each person enrolled in the Novena will receive a beautiful, personalized card from the College. (Cost: \$5 per card, includes shipping and handling)

[thomasaquinas.edu/christmas-novena](http://thomasaquinas.edu/christmas-novena)





# Second-Time Freshmen

## One in Four Members of the Class of 2019 Studied Elsewhere Before Coming to the College

There are more than 83,000 students on Arizona State University’s 640-acre urban campus, making the odds of a chance encounter with an old friend slim, at best. Yet one day this past summer, when **Moises Gomez** was visiting the university with his sister, he ran into one of his classmates from Thomas Aquinas College’s 2012 High School Summer Program, **Joseph Zwemke**. The two friends greeted, then discussed some exciting news.

Just an hour before, Joe had received word that the College had accepted his application to transfer from ASU in the fall. This development followed Moises’ own decision to transfer to the College from a prominent Catholic university. Despite having initially enrolled in other schools, the two friends would be reunited in the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2019.

Moises and Joe are not alone among members of this year’s Freshman Class, nearly a quarter of whom have already completed some undergraduate work at other schools. Whether foregoing lucrative scholarships or the opportunity to play intercollegiate sports, these “second-time freshmen” have made significant sacrifices to pursue what they now regard as a far greater good — the gift of a Catholic liberal education.

“I enjoyed my time at my first school, but I knew I wasn’t studying what would be necessary to perfect myself.”

### “I Missed the Passion”

What most of these students have in common is an initial, strong desire to come to the College, which they disregarded for seemingly good or prudential reasons. Moises, for example, cherished his time in the Summer

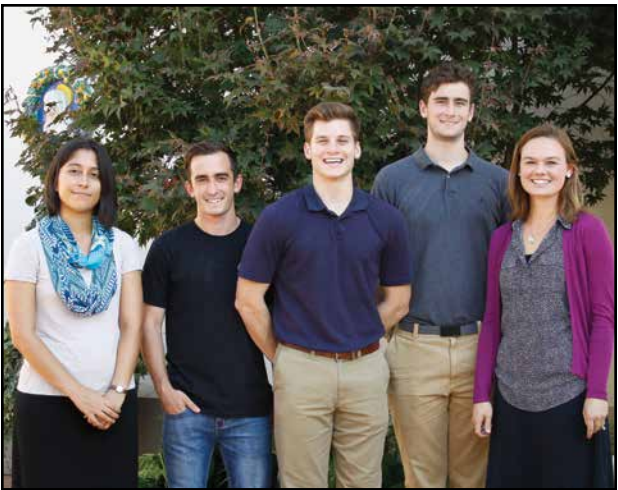
Program, but the offer of a large scholarship — “almost a full ride,” he notes — coupled with the opportunity to play intercollegiate soccer, drew him away. “My brother graduated from the College in 2010, and I never doubted that I would like it here or that I would enjoy the academic life,” says **Anna Goodwin**. “But I got great tuition benefits to go to one of Southern California’s most highly rated private schools, so I thought I would try to take advantage of that.”

Yet in most cases their studies elsewhere, even under the best of circumstances, left something to be desired. “In the Summer Program, I felt that I had discovered, for the first time, a type of learning that could elevate me to a fuller understanding of my faith,” says **Bella Ayala**. She hoped to replicate that experience by studying biology at one of California’s top public universities, but could not. “I missed the passion that I had felt studying the great books.” After two years, Bella and her twin sister, **Angelica**, decided to leave for Thomas Aquinas College.

**Patrick Nazeck** was likewise studying biology at a public university, but found it “hard to stay on the path that I wanted to be on,” spiritually, socially, and academically. “Throughout the year, I kept getting the sense that I was supposed to come here,” he says. As Moises describes it, “I enjoyed my time at my first school, but I knew I wasn’t studying what would be necessary to perfect myself.”

### Starting Over

In deciding to come to the College, these students are effectively restarting their academic careers. “Because our curriculum is sequential and integrated, all of our students must begin as freshmen, even those who have already attended other colleges,” explains Director of Admissions Jon Daly. “Students who come here from other schools willingly postpone their gradu-



Five of the members of the Class of 2019 who completed at least a year of college elsewhere before enrolling at Thomas Aquinas: Bella Ayala, Patrick Nazeck, Moises Gomez, Joseph Zwemke, and Anna Goodwin

ations — and extend their tuition payments — by a year or two. It is a real testament to how seriously they take their education.”

As far as the students are concerned, however, these sacrifices are a small price to pay. “I am enjoying every moment here, soaking it all in,” says Joe. “I just wish it could go on longer than four years.”

Well into their first semester at the College, the second-time freshmen seem to have found what they were missing. “I have loved every moment of every day,” says Anna. “I love the community. I love the desire to learn. And I really love reading original sources.” Citing “the spiritual life, the friends I am making, the wholesome relationships, reading the great books, and learning about the things that matter most,” Moises concludes, “The more time I spend here, the more I learn why I am supposed to be here.”

# New Tutors

## Two Graduates Join College’s Teaching Faculty

### David M. Grothoff (’07)

When he was in high school, David Grothoff had a good friend who decided to attend Thomas Aquinas College. It was an intriguing choice, David thought, but not for him.

Instead, David opted to study mechanical engineering at the University of Missouri. “Engineers were the ones who figured out how the world works,” he reflects. “I was interested in knowing how natural things operate.” To his surprise, engineering school could not sate his curiosity. “No one was interested in answering my questions,” he recalls. “For example, we used equations involving force all the time, but if you asked someone, ‘What is a force?’ that wasn’t seen as a reasonable question. The underlying assumptions didn’t matter.”

When his friend invited him to visit the College during his Junior Year, David accepted. Attracted by the faithful community, and surprised to learn that philosophy could answer the sort of questions that fascinated him, he decided to enroll after completing his engineering degree. “Some people worried that I would find the mathematics here to be repetitive or boring because of what I had already done, but that wasn’t the case,” he says. “Yes, I was already proficient in the mechanics of calculus, but this was a very different outlook, and very different questions were being asked, better questions.”

Upon graduating from the College in 2007, Mr. Grothoff elected to combine his background in engineering with his studies in philosophy and pursue advanced degrees in the philosophy of science. After a



one-year break from schooling, during which he worked for a home-development corporation, he enrolled at The Catholic University of America. There he earned a licentiate in philosophy and completed the coursework for his doctorate. He also met his wife, Crystal, who was enrolled at the nearby Dominican House of Studies. The Grothoffs married in May 2014 and they are expecting their firstborn son at Christmas.

In his first semester at the College, Mr. Grothoff is teaching three sophomore classes: math, natural science, and seminar. Although he taught undergraduates at CUA, he finds leading classroom discussions at the College to be far more demanding. “It’s fairly easy to fill an hour with a lecture,” he says. “It takes much more preparation, energy, and attention to lead a good discussion for an hour — but it’s also much more rewarding.”

### Peter Knuffke (’04)

Even when he was a child, Peter Knuffke was a Thomist. “I used to discuss theology with my dad a lot, and when he would describe the different points of view of various theologians, I would always say, ‘No, no! The position that Thomas Aquinas took — that’s the right one!’” he remembers.

When he was 11 years old, and his mother cited “the will of God” to explain why he could not participate in some desired activity, Peter turned to Thomas. “I pulled down the *Summa* to see what he had to say about God’s will,” he recalls. “Then I started reading, and I thought, ‘That’s pretty interesting.’”



So when it was time for Peter, then in high school, to select a college, the choice seemed obvious. “I knew that Thomas Aquinas College offered a great books program and a serious intellectual life. I also knew that, here, Thomas Aquinas was studied seriously, and that is what interested me most.”

His time at the College, Dr. Knuffke says, “was demanding, but good.” He delighted in the four years of theology and, of course, reading St. Thomas, as well as Aristotle, Boethius, and Dante. He augmented his study of Latin by meeting weekly over lunch with two of his tutors, John Nieto and Steven Cain, to translate St. Augustine’s *Confessions*. “Usually we would discuss about two to three lines of the translation before we would get lost in a massive conversation about the text,” he laughs.

After his graduation from the College in 2004, his love of learning brought him to the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome, where he studied classics and patristics, earning a licentiate and doctorate in Christian and Classical Letters. He then spent two years conducting research in Eastern Christian theology in Athens, Greece, while completing his dissertation. It was during that time that, looking at his bookshelf, he noticed that his most beloved tomes were the great books from the College’s curriculum. That realization led him to look into the possibility of returning to his alma mater as a member of the teaching faculty.

Now back on campus, Dr. Knuffke teaches Junior Philosophy, two sections of Sophomore Natural Science, and Freshman Seminar. He most enjoys “introducing students to the great masters of the intellectual tradition,” he says, though transitioning to his new role has had its challenges. “But the most difficult part,” he admits, “is learning to call my old tutors by their first names.”



# Ordinations for the College’s 61<sup>st</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> Alumni Priests!

## Rev. Jacob (Joseph ’06) Hsieh, O.Praem.

Within the last 18 months, Rev. Jacob (Joseph ’06) Hsieh, O.Praem., has had the honor of singing at the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and at the Papal Easter Vigil in St. Peter’s Basilica. Neither accomplishment, however, could give the sort of joy he experienced on June 27, when he received the Sacrament of Holy Orders at the hands of the Most Rev. Kevin William Vann, Bishop of Orange, at the Mission Basilica San Juan Capistrano.

“The grandeur of the experience was overwhelming,” he recalls. “I remember thinking, ‘I can’t believe that I am going to be a priest.’ Then, to have my confreres, my brother priests, come to me at the kiss of peace was very moving.”

As a newly ordained priest with the Norbertine Fathers at St. Michael’s Abbey in Silverado, California, Fr. Jacob plans to spend his life serving God and the Church through his gift for music. He is currently teaching Church history to high school juniors and Gregorian chant to the Norbertine sisters in Wilmington, California, after which he will likely go to Rome for two years to earn a licentiate. He then expects to instruct St. Michael’s seminarians in the art and meaning of the chant that makes up the community’s life of prayer.

### Music and Ministry

Fr. Jacob’s musical training began when he was 5 years old, with piano lessons in his home city of Dallas. “I practiced three to four hours a day, and five to six on weekends,” he says. He first played with an orchestra when he was 15 years old, and in high school he was the second-highest ranked pianist in the state of Texas. “Music was, and remains, a huge part of my life.”

Initially he considered attending a conservatory,

yet ultimately he decided on Thomas Aquinas College, thanks to the influence of a high school theology teacher, Bruce Clark, who is a member of the College’s Class of 1989. “Mr. Clark did everything imaginable to make me love the Faith,” says Fr. Jacob. “We also read Euclid and the dialogues of Plato. I was very inspired by him, and he convinced me to go to the College.”

Shortly after arriving on campus, Fr. Jacob found that his studies and the rich devotional life helped to deepen his faith. Although he had imagined that he would one day become a concert pianist or a doctor, he abandoned these plans when he discerned — with the help of his friends — a different vocation. “Matthew Valliere (’05) was very insistent that I should become a priest,” Fr. Jacob laughs. One day during their Sophomore Year, Matt scrawled, “God wants you for His eternal priesthood” on Fr. Jacob’s message board. Inadvertently, he wrote the words in permanent marker, and so there they remained, prophetically, for the rest of the year.

Just three months after his graduation in 2006, Fr. Jacob entered St. Michael’s Abbey. As a seminarian he studied philosophy under a fellow alumnus, Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem. (’94), before undertaking his theological studies at the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Toronto. He then taught high school Latin for a year in Orange County, followed by a year of studying theology and music at the Norbertine Generalate in Rome.

### Praying Twice

It was during his time in the Eternal City that, as a transitional deacon, Fr. Jacob was blessed to sing the *Exsultet* at the 2015 Papal Easter Vigil. “It felt like singing in front of the entire Mystical Body, with the Vicar of Christ in front of me, and all the cardinals up front,”



he says. “But I was also singing *for* the Church at the same time. The experience gave me a greater insight into the universality of chant and its tremendous power as a vehicle of prayer and expression in the public life of the Church.”

That insight will serve him well, he says, as he instructs novices at

the seminary. “It is my job not only to make them proficient in the practicalities of singing chant but, more important, to show them how to *pray* it,” he explains. “We need to convey the spirituality, the philosophy and theology behind music, to open an entire new world into the breadth and depth of the amazing minds of the monks who composed these chants.”

In passing along these lessons, he calls often upon his Thomas Aquinas College education, especially the Junior Year music tutorial. “I drew everything about overtones, and how to see music as a liberal art, from that class,” he says. “Everything deep that I know about music comes from the program, developed through my speculations during my time teaching chant at the Abbey.”

As a priest, a musician, and an educator, he is grateful for his tutors’ “patience, good example, and love for truth,” as well as for his classmates’ “great support” in helping him to discern and now live out his vocation. “They are an inspiration for me,” he says, “and they give me strength in my priesthood.”

## Rev. Joshua Mayer (’03)

“When I was about 5, I asked my mom when she was going to teach me about Jesus and Mary,” recalls Rev. Joshua Mayer (’03). “She was kind of surprised.”

Although his parents were not practicing Catholics, Josh had a longing to learn about the Faith, which he credits to the influence of some devout cousins. His mother responded by bringing him to several local churches, after which, he concluded, the Catholic one suited him best. He was baptized at the age of 6, largely on his own initiative.

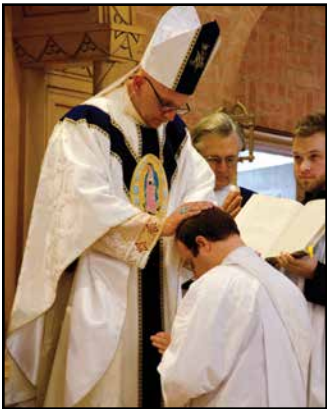
Yet if Fr. Mayer was precocious at the age of 5, he was “immature,” he admits, in his teenage and young-adult years. His grades in high school were respectable, but he was not a very focused student. “I liked learning and I liked the social environment of school, but the classroom was always pretty tough for me,” he remembers. “My plan was to *not* go to college.”

That changed, however, when a philosophy teacher, detecting some untapped potential, suggested that he apply to Thomas Aquinas College. “He said, ‘You have this thirst for truth that goes a little bit deeper; why don’t you go visit?’” So Fr. Mayer obliged, and the experience was enough to convince him to apply.

“At that point, I didn’t fully understand the program, what it meant to be studying these matters of perennial truth,” he says. “But the tutors were awesome, and the students were good people who I knew would be good examples to me, people I could lean on in my efforts to stay close to the Lord.”

Nevertheless, while at the College, he acknowledges, many of his bad habits from high school endured. “Academically, I did as much work as I needed to in order to get by, but no more.” Spiritually, he says, “I allowed myself to float along.” Surrounded by faithful classmates, “I let my friends carry me.” He would follow them to Mass and to confession and to nightly Rosary, but these spiritual exercises were more routine than heart-felt.

“I think, because of my maturity level, it wasn’t the



period of personal flowering that it often is for other students. I wasn’t ready for that,” he reflects. “Still, a lot of seeds were planted during that time.”

Those seeds, he can now see, began to take root in the first few years after his graduation in 2003, when he worked

in real-estate appraisal, advertising, and then waterscaping before becoming a high school science teacher. “It was almost like graduating, getting out in the working world, making my own decisions, and consciously making prayer a priority in my life — that was when I first realized what a gift my time at the College was,” he says. “That was when I made the Faith my own. Even though I had made that choice as a child, I had to do it again.”

While working as a teacher at a Catholic school in Gallup, New Mexico, he began to sense the stirrings of a priestly vocation, often during Eucharistic Adoration. “I would find myself envisioning what it would look like to be a priest in Gallup, and then I would feel a strong consolation, like a warmth of heart, or a joy, or peace,” he says. At first he dismissed these experiences, but “they kept happening, again and again.” Eventually he found the message impossible to deny. “It became clear to me that the Lord was asking me at least to apply to the seminary and to follow Him one small step at a time,” he says. “I remember thinking, ‘If I say that I am a follower of Jesus Christ, I should actually *follow* Him when I know He is calling me.’”

In 2009 Fr. Mayer entered St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, Colorado, as a candidate for the Diocese of Gallup. It was there, he notes, where the “seeds” planted at the College first blossomed, and he thrived academically. “All those skills, such as the ability

to read a text, really helped me,” he says. “Never before had I been considered a top student, but one day one of my seminary professors told me that I was one of the two best readers of text that he had ever taught.”

On June 13, 2015, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, the Most Rev. James S. Wall, Bishop of Gallup, ordained Fr. Mayer to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ. Today Fr. Mayer is the cathedral’s parochial vicar as well as the diocese’s associate vocations director. “I am learning how to seek workers for the vineyard — guys like me,” he says, for whom the Lord has glorious plans, even though they may be slow to develop.

## St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

### Highlights from the Last Quarter

- On August 28 **Dr. Phillip Wodzinski**, a member of the College’s teaching faculty, presented the year’s opening lecture, “Prudence.”
- Members of **The Symbiosis Ensemble** performed music by Bach, Haydn, and Mozart at the Fall Concert on September 18.
- 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 16 and focused on *Tree and Leaf*, by J. R. R. Tolkien.
- Dr. Jeffrey Lehman**, an assistant professor of education at Hillsdale College, spoke on October 30 on the subject, “The Psalms in St. Augustine’s *Confessions*.”

Text and audio from select lectures and concerts are available at [thomasaquinas.edu/lectures](http://thomasaquinas.edu/lectures).



# “What I Did Over Summer Vacation”

## Students Share the Gift of their Education and Plan for their Futures

### April Shonnard ('16)

Heading into the summer, April Shonnard hoped to find an internship that would combine her interest in law with her passion for the pro-life movement. Thanks to the assistance of alumna Katie Short ('80), director of the Life Legal Defense Foundation, April landed a one-month internship at Americans United for Life (AUL), a nonprofit organization that drafts pro-life legislation, for states and for the federal government, located just one block from the White House.



At AUL she worked on advocacy efforts with state-level right-to-life organizations across the U.S., researched the voting records of public officials, and analyzed how pro-life laws differ from state to state. She also helped to produce a report, translated from Spanish, about the status of pro-life policy in Latin America, and attended a number of educational seminars on topics ranging from public speaking to business.

When Sen. Lindsey Graham introduced the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, April was at his Capitol press conference. Not long thereafter, in advance of the Supreme Court's rulings on the Affordable Care Act and the redefinition of marriage, she prayed with hundreds of others just outside the building. “Although it is easy to be disappointed by politics and politicians in general, I saw a lot of good people in Washington working for Christian family values and life,” she reports. “That gave me a lot of hope.”

### Joseph Stack ('17)

Early in the summer between his Freshman and Sophomore Years, Joseph Stack was visiting campus when he mentioned that he wanted to find a summer job in venture capital or investing. A friend suggested that he contact Justin Schneir, senior vice president at Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. and a member of the College's Ventura Board of Regents. Mr. Schneir, who had previously spoken at one of the College's career panels, had encouraged students to contact him for job contacts or advice.



“I reached out to Justin, and he was more than happy to help,” Joe recalls. Mr. Schneir put Joe in touch with another of the College's regents, Dan Peate, owner of Peate Ventures and “chief evangelist” for Hixme, a startup health benefits company. “I explained my background and my interest in venture capital,” Joe continues, “and Dan made it happen.” For the past two years, Joe has worked part-time for Peate Ventures and Hixme during the academic year and fulltime during the summers. As an intern, he says, he has “worked in every department, doing whatever they need.”

Although Joe came to the College having already earned a bachelor's degree — he graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2013 with a concentration in international development — he credits the College with helping him get his start in venture capital. “The critical-thinking skills we develop here helped me to do a really good job during the interviews and afterward, enough so that they wanted me to come back.”

### Teresa Letteney ('16)

When Morgan Furore ('15) — a member of last year's graduating class who now works at the Independent Studies Institute (ISI) in Wilmington, Delaware — invited Teresa Letteney to participate in one of ISI's “Principles of Liberty” conferences, Teresa was intrigued. A senior



who is contemplating a career in education, she “was interested because they use the Discussion Method in their seminars, as we do at the College, and I thought it would be worthwhile to see how others put the method to work.”

Her pedagogical curiosity, coupled with the chance to spend one week in greater Philadelphia studying several original texts, led Teresa to apply for a spot at the all-expenses-paid conference, and she was accepted. For one week, she and some 60 other students from across the United States discussed political theory, with St. Augustine's *City of God*, Aristotle's *Politics*, Homer's *Iliad*, Genesis, the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* as their texts. “Although we study all these books at the College, the conference definitely focused more on politics than we do in the classroom,” Teresa observes.

The program, held on the campus of Bryn Mawr College, also included lectures, dinners with guest speakers, and a tour of Philadelphia that featured the city's downtown, its History Museum, and the Liberty Bell. “The conference was a great experience,” she says. “It was especially encouraging to meet so many other young people who share our commitment to pursuing the truth, either through education or through politics.”

### Charles Laubacher ('17)

“I really want to do something for my country,” explains Charles Laubacher of his decision to spend six weeks of his summer in the U.S. Marine Corps' Officer Candidates School in Quantico, Virginia. There he underwent a relentless regimen of intense physical exertion, sleep deprivation, and constant evaluation intended to induce stress — and he loved it, right up until the moment he suffered a stress fracture in his leg, midway through the program.



“That was very disappointing,” he says. “They really can't let you train if you have a broken leg, so they sent me home.” For the first 48 hours after his return, he thought back to the “candidate crud” — the arduous conditions, the pinkeye, the bronchitis — and wanted no more. By the third day, however, he found himself missing it. “I started thinking, ‘I wish I were back there. I'll never be challenged like that anywhere else.’” The Corps has invited him to try again in the summer of 2016, and Charles intends to take up the offer.

“A lot of people have asked me, ‘If you want a military career, why would you go to the College?’” he says. “The work here, though, is very helpful to the job of a Marine Corps officer, who has to think on his feet, make decisions, and think outside the box. He can't have a formulaic approach to doing something. The College has given me the skills to master whatever they throw at me.”

### Kathleen Murphy ('16)

“It was a total adventure,” says Kathleen Murphy of her five weeks in Italy this summer, where she worked for *Insieme*, a program that offers summertime English instruction to Italian schoolchildren. “English is the language of commerce in Europe, so families really want their children to learn it,” she says. “They start English in kindergarten, but many families want to supplement that with summer lessons.”



Kathleen's adventure began in the alpine village of Novazza, where instructors from around the world met for training. “We were given binders with two weeks' worth of lesson plans and a suitcase with all the supplies we would need for games and crafts, and then we went off on our way.” She then traveled to Chioggia, just south of Venice, where she taught a dozen students, ages 7

through 13, at a Catholic school. When those two weeks were over, she continued on to Verese, where she taught a class of 20 middle-schoolers.

“Many of the people involved were connected with the Catholic organization Communion and Liberation,” Kathleen says. “There were so many faithful people. It was amazing to encounter the Faith as practiced in another culture. Our host families would make dinner for us every night, and we would sit and talk for hours.” The experience of meeting new people “was probably the best part — just the conversations with people who have had vastly different lives and who have grown up in a very different culture.”

### Ben Macik ('17)

For his first three to four weeks as a Type 2 firefighter in Montana this summer, Ben Macik trained in first aid, CPR, defensive driving, and proper chainsaw use. “We also did a lot of maintenance work before the fire season started,” he adds, “thinning out the forest and getting sections ready for burning. Then fire season hit, and we were spinning after that.”



What followed were 10-16 hour workdays, six days a week. Whenever a new fire was discovered — usually the result of lightning strikes — Ben and his crew would rush to the scene, sometimes via trucks on forest roads, other times by foot or helicopter. “We would start by digging lines around the fire to prevent it from spreading. Then we would put in a fuel break and make a little barrier. If we had water — say from a lake, or creek, or river — we would start pumping water on the surrounding terrain, trying to make it less flammable.”

On his rare off hours, Ben relaxed at a bunk house for seasonal firefighters, working out and reading *Don Quixote* for Junior Seminar. In total, he devoted nearly the full three months of his summer to fighting forest fires, an experience that he hopes may open the door for urban firefighting positions after he graduates next year.

### Annalisa Tombelli ('16)

A year ago, Annalisa Tombelli's home parish, the Church of the Resurrection in Lansing, Michigan, launched a 40 Days for Life campaign with the goal of shutting down an abortion clinic through prayer. “Through God's grace, we succeeded,” says Annalisa. The owner leased the building to the parish, which displaced the abortionist. The church, in turn, converted the site into parish office space and the New Life Center, “a wholesale center for life-giving ministries that are faithful to the Church,” including pro-life counseling, NFP training, abortion-recovery programs, and a prayer chapel.



This past summer Annalisa worked to get the site fully operational. “My goal was to facilitate the transition of the space into a multifaceted clinic,” she explains. “I was more on the business end of things, creating a database to help us stay in touch with the women who came in seeking help.”

Although her job at the New Life Center was full-time, Annalisa also began an ongoing internship with the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, whose executive director is College tutor Dr. Andrew Seeley. “I collect information on about 50 schools across the nation, such as their ACT and SAT scores, the colleges to which their students have been accepted, and the primary methods of classical education that they employ,” she says. “The purpose is to record and organize that information so that schools that are interested in attempting classical education can see its success and not be intimidated about trying it out for themselves.”



# In Memoriam

## William C. Grimm, 1927 – 2015

After hearing the prayers of his loved ones, who surrounded him at his bedside, William C. Grimm passed away on the evening of June 15, 2015, his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday. Over the last 45 years, he, his wife Irene, and the large, beautiful family they have raised have played an indispensable role in the history and culture of Thomas Aquinas College.

“A couple of hours before Dad died, there was a German chocolate cake, a banner, a birthday song, and sweet music at the party in his room, followed by the Rosary, the Chaplet, and prayers for the dying,” says his daughter Michele Loughman (’81). As another daughter, Angela Lessard (’85), put it, “It seemed appropriate. There was a lot of joy in that room despite the fact that he was leaving us.”

Mr. and Mrs. Grimm are the parents of 17 children, 14 of whom are alumni of the College; the grandparents of 136, 52 of whom are students or alumni; and the great-grandparents of 69 (and counting) great-grandchildren, all still too young to matriculate.

“Bill and his Irene were just beautiful teenagers when they committed themselves absolutely to a life of unswerving fidelity and devotion to each other and to the children they welcomed with complete generosity and trust in God,” writes daughter Anita Zepeda (’79). “The permanence of their marriage, our happy childhoods, and

our eternal happiness were their main concerns. We knew it and we felt it like a warm blanket or, at times, a hair shirt, or like the ground under our feet: we were the most important things in the world to them.”

A longtime resident of Pasadena,

Mr. Grimm learned about Thomas Aquinas College in 1971, just months before the start of its first academic year. According to his son Dan (’76), Mr. Grimm was so enthused about the prospect of a local, authentically Catholic college that he drove four of his children from the family home in Pasadena to the College’s original campus in Calabasas. What followed was an impromptu interview that quickly turned into an audition.

“Dad thought we would have a better chance of getting in if we sang,” explains Dan. The Grimms, gifted musicians all, had been singing sacred music together for years. “So we lined up in the foyer of the building and we started singing.”

At the College’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner in 2001, Founding President Ronald P. McArthur admitted that, at first, this spontaneous performance concerned him. “When we were about to open our doors in 1971, a Mr. Bill Grimm pulled up with a number of his older children,” he said. “As we talked with him, he mentioned that these young people had a choir, and I remember thinking to myself, ‘This is all we need: some crazy choir singing rock music!’”

He need not have worried. With the College’s founders — “who were all there in shirtsleeves,” Dan recalls — looking on, the Grimm Family Singers opened with Palestrina, immediately allaying Dr. McArthur’s concerns. The founders were delighted by what they heard.

When the College first opened months later with two Grimms in its Freshman Class, “we were the choir,” says Dan. Said Dr. McArthur: “At the first Christmas party, what was the entertainment? Bach, Handel, Gregorian Chant.... It set the tone for the whole college in entertainment; there was a level of intensity and a level of taste in great music and liturgical music right from the beginning. Now, who would have thought, with only 32 students, there would be such an accomplished group, such a talented group, right at the beginning of the school? Yet



there was, and that has stayed with the school to this day.”

Indeed, it still remains. Dan Grimm is the director of the Thomas Aquinas College Choir, and over the last 44 years, dozens of Bill Grimm’s descendants have blessed the College with their voices and their talent.

“One of William Grimm’s genial insights was the value of Thomas Aquinas College before it had even opened its doors,” reflects Rev. Bart de la Torre, O.P., who served as a chaplain at the College from 1995 to 2002. “His proved a fateful commitment not only for his family but for the College ... He deserves many prayers from us who love the College.”

Over the decades the Grimm family has been supportive of Thomas Aquinas College in many ways. In the early years Mr. Grimm expended considerable time and effort helping the College to procure equipment for its natural science laboratories. He and Mrs. Grimm were also famous for welcoming students at a party in their home each fall when the College was still at the Calabasas campus.

“It is hard to imagine what Thomas Aquinas College would be today without Bill Grimm, his children, and his many grandchildren, who — as students, alumni, parents, benefactors and, of course, singers — have given so much, not just to the College but to the community that it has engendered,” says President Michael F. McLean. “We thank God for that day Bill first visited our campus and for the many blessed days that have followed. We pray for the repose of his soul and the consolation of Irene and the entire Grimm family.”

Below is the complete list of Mr. Grimm’s children and grandchildren — 66 in all! — who have attended Thomas Aquinas College:

### William C. Grimm — June 15

Father of Stephen (’75), Paula Kaiser (’75), Danny (’76), Marya Krestyn (’76), Jess (’77), Patti Kaiser (’79), Anita Zepeda (’79), Michele Loughman (’81), Angela Lessard (’85), Serena Mohun (’87), James (’89), Ernie (’94), Leon (’95), and Peter (’96)

Grandfather of Genevieve (’05), Michael (’06), Paula (’08), Matthew (’10), Adrienne (LaFave ’14) Grimm; George (’03), Anna (’04), Maria (Foster ’09), Francesca (’13), and Elizabeth (’17) Krestyn; Tommy (’00), Theresa (Faulk ’00), Sarah (’02), Maria (Kuebler ’03), Nicholas (’06), David (’09), Charlie (’10), Annie (Kuebler ’11), Damian (’12), Rebecca (’15), and Joanna (’15) Kaiser; Elizabeth (Grimm ’98) Forrester; Wendy-Irene (Zepeda ’99), Bill (’02), Thérèse (Obagi ’04), Daniel (’06), Rosie (’10), Augusta (Thompson ’12), and Jack (’15) Grimm; William (’03) and John (’07) Kaiser; Lucy (’03), Joe (’04), Henry (’06), Edmund (’08), Stephen (’09), Ramona (’11), Martin (’13), Leon (’14), and Elena (’18) Zepeda; Thomas Loughman (’18); Mariclare (Forsyth ’14), Madeleine (’16), and Serena (’18) Lessard; Robert (’09), Margaret (’10), Catherine (’13), George (’14), and Hugh (’19) Mohun; Seamus Blackwell (’15); and Jane (’13) and Arthur (’16) Grimm

## IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

### James J. O’Hara

December 25, 2004

*Legacy Society Member*

### William J. Kaffer — May 12, 2013

*Legacy Society Member*

### Brenda Roscoe (’89)

November 5, 2014

*Graduate*

### Marietta Barron

December 23, 2014

*Legacy Society Member*

### Mary Ophelia O’Hara

February 17, 2015

*Legacy Society Member*

### Virginia A. Thorpe — March 6, 2015

*Legacy Society member*

### Aleen Schreiber — March 19, 2015

*Legacy Society Member*

### Billy Davis Shaneyfelt

May 13, 2015

*Father of David (’81) and Samuel (’86); grandfather of Monica Conklin (’11)*

### “Dory” J. Stodola — June 11, 2015

*Legacy Society Member*

### Bridget Louise Nazeck — July 6, 2015

*Daughter of Rosie (Kretschmer) and Jacob Nazeck (both ’05)*

### Lawrence Stuart, M.D. — July 7, 2015

*Father of Karen Kelly (’88); grandfather of Grace (’12) and Thomas (’16) Kelly; President’s Council member*

### William S. Martin, Jr. — July 22, 2015

*Benefactor*

### Jeff Burnham — August 2, 2015

*Son-in-law of Annette Langley (’79)*

### Imogene Leon — August 7, 2015

*Grandmother of tutor Jared (’03) and Christopher Kuebler (’04)*

### Robert Sundberg

August 8, 2015

*Brother-in-law of College Business Manager Michael Collins*

### Camille A. Palmer — August 23, 2015

*Legacy Society Member*

### Rev. Richard L. DeMolen

August 30, 2015

*Legacy Society member*

### Mary Ann Kaffer

September 24, 2015

*Legacy Society Member*

### Charles “Jerry” Sullivan

October 12, 2015

*Father of Kerry (Lawlor ’81) and Lori (Murphy ’88); grandfather of Kathleen (Maddeford ’06), Teresa (Hodgins ’08), and Tom Lawlor (’13); and Brian (’14), Kathleen (’16) and Jack Murphy (’19)*

### Joseph Vega — October 28

*Benefactor*



# “At all Times and in all Places, God Draws Near”

## An Interview with Sr. Regina Marie Gorman, O.C.D.

**The foundress of your community, Mother Maria Luisa Josefa of the Most Blessed Sacrament, was a very holy woman whose cause for canonization is now open. Would you tell us a little about her?**

If you have watched the movie *For Greater Glory*, which tells the epic story of the Catholic persecution in Mexico in the 1920s, the dates, time, place, geography, people — those same dates mark the beginning of our community of sisters.

Mother Luisita was born in 1866 in Atotonilco, Jalisco, Mexico. She wanted to be a Carmelite nun, but her father, in very good faith, arranged a marriage for her when she was 15 years old to a physician twice her age. Together, they started a hospital for the poor. Their marriage was a happy one, but after 14 years, her husband died.

Mother Luisita continued to run the hospital, but in her heart she still longed to be a cloistered Carmelite. Eventually, in 1921 she and the holy women who had been helping her in her work received permission to be active Carmelites. The persecution of Catholics was increasing at that time, so her focus was to continue to do whatever good that she could do, for this person, at this moment.

By 1924 all of the sisters had dispersed and were hiding in the homes of courageous believers. Some of the sisters were caught and spent time in prison. Seeing that this was no way to form a community, Mother Luisita and two sisters came across the border in 1927. They were welcomed by Archbishop Cantwell of Los Angeles who asked them to work with the tubercular daughters of immigrant families.

**Is this how your community began its healthcare apostolate?**

Yes, and since then our apostolic service has grown. Today we serve God’s people in healthcare, education, and retreats. At this time we provide elder care from independent living through palliative care, preparing people for heaven, preparing them to see Jesus. We also provide childcare from six-week-old infants through pre-school; education from kindergarten through high school; and we have a retreat house, which is where our motherhouse and novitiate are. Our Lord has truly blessed us.

We are grateful to be able to live together in community. We are grateful to be able to wear the habit in a country that permits us to do so. Even though providing healthcare is a challenge because our government does not appreciate the privilege and need to care for our elders, our sisters are grateful to be called and to serve.

**The charism of your order is to unite the contemplative spirit of Carmel with the active life. How does that play out, practically speaking?**

It plays out in an attitude, an awareness that in every single moment God speaks with us, that at all times and in all places, God draws near. I listen for His voice. I am present to Him in prayer as much as I am when I am with the elderly, the child, the retreatant, with a person in the grocery store. I am looking for His face and I am listening for His voice — at all times. That only happens if I am praying regularly before the Blessed Sacrament. Each day, in addition to attending Mass, we chant together the divine office, the morning, evening, and night prayer of the Church. We make at least an hour of meditation. Each afternoon, we make a holy hour before Our Lord exposed in the Blessed Sacrament, and pray our Rosary in community.

**How do you cultivate vocations in young women?**

We have two programs. One is for young women to serve for two weeks with the sisters to learn what it is that we do in all our apostolates. The other is our series of “Come and See” retreats. The beauty of these retreats is that they are very authentic; they are not about us selling ourselves to the participants. As Carmelites, our primary purpose is to foster the interior life, first, our own, and

then that of anyone we meet, helping them to become more attuned to what Our Lord is doing in their lives. Yes, we do show the young women our life, trusting that they will take this information back to prayer and see if “the shoe fits.” But we do not try to coax them, to recruit them. This would be hurting them. We simply ask them to ask Our Lord where He wants them to be.

That is our great commitment. In fact, that is how the sisters were with me. They taught me and inspired me to love Our Lady, to want to be near Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. We encourage the young girls who come to avail themselves of the sacraments, and we teach them how to prepare for confession and for Holy Communion. That will last throughout their lives. What happens with a young girl who does not have a vocation to the religious life? Chances are she will be our friend for the rest of her life. So the relationship will still be there, the communion. We are building the Body of Christ. If a young woman finds her vocation, then this is success.

**Though this attitude to vocations seems “hands off,” you nevertheless have many vocations.**

Yes, we do. God has blessed us. The vast majority of women are in their mid- to-late twenties. We never have had huge numbers, maybe three to five each year. What is beautiful about this, though, is that we do not have an age dominance in our community because we have always had a steady number. Now Our Lord seems to be attracting more women, and the women, by and large, are staying; they are persevering. Of those that do not stay, 98 percent of them are friends for life. They feel this was a very positive and life-giving experience, and they want to share it with their children.

“Young people ... are looking for something radical. They do not want to give their lives to something mediocre and comfortable. All of them, in some way or another, have been touched by Christ, and they want more.”

**How much of a draw for young women is your fidelity to the teachings of the Church?**

I think it is a draw, but young people very often cannot put words to it. Very often they are not even aware that there are some who are not in alliance with the Church. What they are looking for is clarity of identity, and what they perceive is that we know what we are about. We know where we are going and how we are going to go there. They are also looking for something radical. They do not want to give their lives to something mediocre and comfortable. All of them, in some way or another, have been touched by Christ, and they want more.

**What is your role as vicar general of your order?**

The role of the vicar general is to give support to the superior general. The main responsibility of Mother is service to our sisters who have given their lives to be one with Christ. They do this through their personal prayer, their personal life, and through their apostolates, their service, their corporal and spiritual works of mercy. My job is to assist Mother by being vigilant and ensuring that our sisters have the support and formation they need in order to fulfill the goal of Carmel. The first focus is always the sisters’ well-being.

At the moment, Mother Judith also has me working on our plans to build a “neighborhood of care” for elders — for our laypeople who will receive excellent healthcare in an environment that brings them close to God. We have many sisters who are gifted, licensed, and certified in healthcare, and we know the strength, the beauty, and the healing of living in community. So we are creating a community of elders where they are needed, wanted, cherished and well cared for. We will have a small



*Sr. Regina Marie Gorman, O.C.D., vicar general of the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles, served as Thomas Aquinas College’s 2015 Commencement Speaker.*

amount of independent-living apartments, a large number of assisted-living units, and a significant number of skilled-nursing units.

With the many hours our sisters have spent before the Blessed Sacrament, they know there is a very thin veil between this life and eternity — and there is nothing we need fear. We want to companion the elderly, and the entire family, as their loved one — their mother, father, husband, or wife — prepares to go home to God. It is a beautiful gift to be able to journey with people during this sacred time of life.

**In what ways have you and your sisters marked this Year of Consecrated Life?**

There can be no renewal of religious life without prayer. So at the beginning of the Year of Consecrated Life, the sisters did a “Prayer Drive” through our website and our Facebook page. The goal was to get 10,000 people to commit to praying for vocations throughout the world for nine days, and 12,000 people actually committed!

Throughout the year we have had a series of open houses, “Come and See” events, and opportunities to serve and to pray with the sisters. We also held a “Sisters Appreciation Dinner” at our retreat house, inviting every community, every sister, in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to come to our house. We notified our friends and asked them to contribute, promising the prayers of the sisters in return for their appreciation. Restaurants kicked in, and we had a “Taste of the Town.” We had a showing of the movie *Little Boy*, and each sister received a small gift. All this was possible because of the laypeople who wanted to show their appreciation for religious.

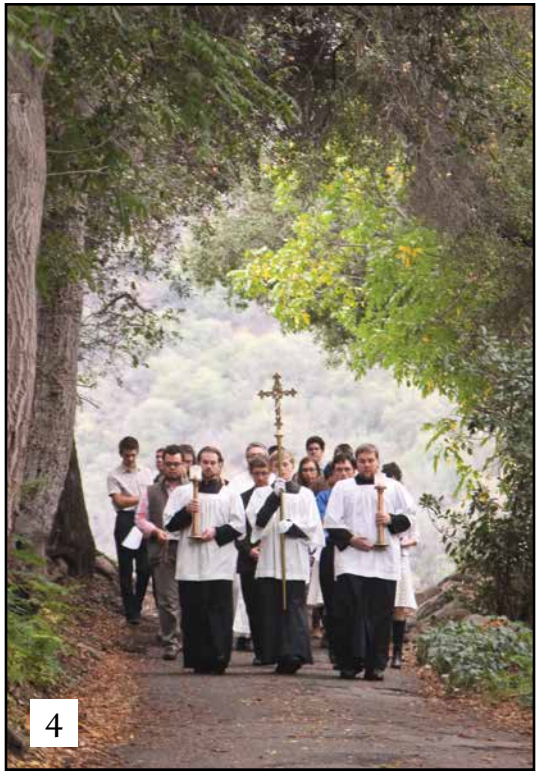
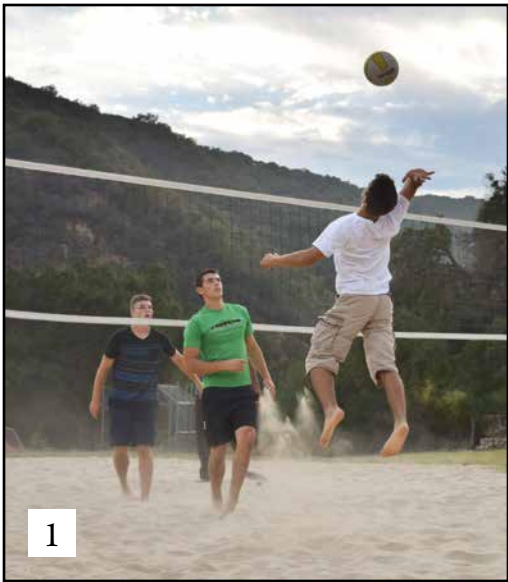
We have also made a CD of the sisters’ singing called *Lean into the Wind*. It came out last spring and was very favorably reviewed in the *Wall Street Journal*. In fact, the *Journal’s* music critic told us that he typically starts critiquing music within about four measures. He said about our CD, however, that for the first time in many years, he allowed the music “to wash over” him, that though there is no value placed on the quality of joy out there in the music world, that was the very hallmark of our sisters’ singing.

**What are your impressions of the College?**

When I was delivering my address to the students, I was struck by the clarity of their eyes. When they came up to receive their diplomas, they all had such a look of purity, of confidence, of clarity — every single one. These are not things learned in a “manners” class. They come from something deep within them. The inner poise and confidence and humility in their eyes was absolutely stunning.

*For more information about the Carmelite Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Los Angeles, please visit: [carmelitesistersocd.com](http://carmelitesistersocd.com). For more information about their “Neighborhood of Care” for the elderly, please visit [santa-teresita.org](http://santa-teresita.org).*





# CAMPUS LIFE

1. Students practice volleyball on the College's sand courts. 2. Sophomores welcome members of the Class of 2019 at a Saturday-night dance in the Burns Plaza behind St. Gladys Hall. 3. Classes battle one another in the tug-of-war at this fall's All-College Picnic. 4. Acolytes lead a Rosary procession to the campus grotto on September 15, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. 5. Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., visits with several students and a fellow Dominican, Rev. Michael Hurley, O.P. ('99), pastor of St. Dominic's Church in San Francisco, who returned to his alma mater to present a vocations talk. 6. Tutor Dr. Christopher Oleson (center, bottom) poses with students at the College's first-ever "Spearshake Festival," a college-wide spear-throwing contest. 7. Members of the Senior Class take the freshmen on a welcome trip to the Ventura beach.

## 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; please see [thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes](http://thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes) for more details.

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

## Calendar of Events

For more information, please see [www.thomasaquinas.edu/calendar](http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/calendar)

Christmas Dinner .....	December 6
Christmas Vacation .....	December 19–January 10
Lecture: Dr. Glen Coughlin Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College "Charity in St. Thomas" .....	January 15
Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas .....	January 28
St. Thomas Day Lecture: Rev. Thomas Joseph White, O.P. Associate Professor of Systematic Theology Dominican House of Studies.....	January 28
All-College Seminar.....	February 5
Presidents' Day No classes/office holiday .....	February 15
Presidents' Day Lecture: Dr. John Agresto President Emeritus St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico .....	February 19

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