



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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Sunset of the HHS Mandate

College Wins Permanent Protection in Religious Liberty Case

Marking the culmination of a four-year legal effort that went all the way to the United States Supreme Court, the U.S. government has agreed to a settlement that will permanently exempt Thomas Aquinas College from the so-called HHS Contraceptive Mandate of the Affordable Care Act.

“This is an extraordinary outcome for Thomas Aquinas College and for the cause of religious freedom,” says President Michael F. McLean. “It is a relief to know that the College can continue its 46-year mission of offering excellent Catholic liberal education without facing the threat of crippling financial penalties resulting from our commitment to the full teachings of the Catholic Church.”

Instituted in 2012, the HHS Mandate sought to compel all employers — even Catholic ones — to provide free contraceptive, abortifacient, and sterilization coverage to their employees. In 2013 the College and several co-plaintiffs represented by the Jones Day law firm challenged the mandate in federal court, citing the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. The litigation eventually made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in 2015 agreed to consider the lawsuit, as well as six others, in the consolidated case of *Zubik v. Burwell*. One year later the Court took the unusual step of vacating the lower court opinions and remanding the cases back to their respective courts of appeal, urging the litigants to come to an agreement.



Negotiations between the involved parties began in earnest earlier this year, following the change in presidential administrations. The settlement, signed by plaintiffs as well as representatives of the Departments of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services, was finalized on October 13 — the 100th anniversary of Our Lady’s Miracle of the Sun, witnessed by more than 70,000 people in Fatima, Portugal in 1917. “The timing of this agreement is truly providential,” says Dr. McLean. “So many friends of the College prayed so fervently, for so long, for this outcome.”

The agreement also came just eight days after the Trump Administration

broadened the religious-liberty exemptions of the original HHS Mandate, dispensing religious employers from the requirement to provide objectionable coverage in their health plans. “The broadened exemption was a welcome development,” says Quincy Masteller, Thomas Aquinas College’s general counsel. “This settlement, however, affords even greater protection to our religious freedom because it will be binding on future administrations.”

Under the terms of the settlement, the government concedes that the HHS Mandate imposes a substantial burden on plaintiffs’ exercise of religion and, as such, cannot be legally enforced against plain-

tiffs or their health plans. The government also agrees to treat plaintiffs as exempt from the mandate or any materially similar regulation in the future.

This favorable outcome, says Chairman of the Board of Governors R. Scott Turicchi, vindicates the College’s decision to challenge the mandate in court. “Thomas Aquinas College would not compromise its Catholic identity and instead took a stand for religious liberty,” he says. “This settlement agreement ensures that the College can continue its mission of Catholic liberal education, providing its students the intellectual, spiritual, and moral formation they need to take up positions of leadership in the Church and in society, in service to the truth.”

“We cannot begin to express the depths of our gratitude to Jones Day, both for its generosity and for the excellence of its legal representation,” says Dr. McLean. “We are also profoundly grateful to our co-plaintiffs, who fought steadfastly beside us, and to the many friends of the College — Board members, benefactors, alumni, parents, students, faculty, and staff — who neither wavered in their support nor encouraged us to compromise our faith. We are grateful to live in a country that has a rich tradition of protecting the free exercise of religion for all of its citizens. And, above all, we are grateful to God, on Whose providence we depend completely, both in good times and in bad.”

“Light in the Darkness”

College, Archbishop Coakley & Solar Eclipse Welcome Freshmen at Convocation 2017

On the morning of the first total solar eclipse to be visible across the United States in nearly a century, some 102 students, hailing from 3 countries and 26 states, matriculated as freshmen at Thomas Aquinas College — the Class of 2021.

The morning of August 21 began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, with the Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, S.T.L., D.D., Archbishop of Oklahoma City, serving as the principal celebrant and homilist. “Light shines in the darkness,” said His Excellency, referencing the day’s celestial phenomenon. “This place shines in a world that is experiencing a disturbing eclipse, not only of faith and reason but of common sense and human decency and ordinary virtue. This is what your unique education here at Thomas Aquinas is preparing you to be: light in the darkness, holy men and women.”

The College planned a larger than usual break between the conclusion of Mass and the Matriculation ceremony so that faculty, students, and their families could witness the eclipse (65 percent visible in Southern California). A large group formed outside St. Joseph Commons, where hundreds of pairs of darkened eyeglasses were made available for safe sun-viewing. “It was spectacular to watch the moon blot out the sun,” says President Michael



F. McLean. “And it was also spectacular, albeit in a rather different way, to see our tutors and Board members, all dressed in academic regalia, wrenching their necks and peering through plastic lenses to get a glimpse!”

The group then headed into the Commons for the Matriculation ceremony, the formal start of the academic year. Members of the Class of 2021 began their tenure as students when Director of Admissions Jon Daly called their names and, one at a time, they approached the dais, greeted Dr. McLean and Archbishop Coakley, and signed their names in the College’s registry.

In addition to welcoming the new students, the College introduced its newest tutors, Mr. Joshua Noble (’10) and Dr. Stephen Shivone. (See page 4.) With Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., leading them, the two educators made the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, as do all new Catholic members of the College’s teaching faculty. Dr. McLean then spoke to the Class of 2021 in his Matriculation Address. “The educational and spiritual life of the College is ordered to wisdom about the highest things,” he said. “In short, it is designed to deepen your knowledge and love of God.” (See page 2.)

When Archbishop Coakley delivered his remarks to the members of the new Freshman Class, it was once again in the language of ecliptic metaphor. “This is really, I think, a light in a dark place,” he said of the College. “The eclipse has passed by now, but we have work to do yet, I think, before the eclipse of Western civilization is complete and we emerge on the other side into the light of truth and goodness and beauty.”

To that end, Dr. McLean then proclaimed the start of the College’s 47th academic year, drawing the loud applause of the assembled students. Members of the faculty and Board of Governors then processed out of the Commons as all sang “Immaculate Mary” in joyful anticipation of the new year, now at hand.

From the Desk of the President

Friendship and Thomas Aquinas College

Note: Dr. Michael F. McLean presented the following address at Matriculation 2017.

Welcome to our incoming freshmen and to all of our returning students. We greet you all as friends and companions in the lifelong effort to acquire moral and intellectual virtue and to strengthen and nurture the theological virtues — the God-given gifts of faith, hope, and charity.

The consideration of friendship plays an important role in the education you are about to begin. Of central importance will be Aristotle’s discussion of friendship in his great *Nicomachean Ethics*, which you will study in the Junior Year. Greatly influenced by Plato’s image of the “ladder of love” in the Freshman Year’s *Symposium*, an ascent which culminates in the love of the beautiful itself, Aristotle distinguishes the types of friendship and the order among them, acknowledges the importance of friendship in a fully human life, and its crucial role in the acquisition and exercise of the virtues.

He notes the importance of friendship for the well-to-do, for the poor and those who suffer other misfortunes, for the young, for the old, for those in the prime of life, for parents, for offspring, and for the well-being of the state. “Friendship,” Aristotle says, “is not only necessary, but noble as well; for we praise those who have many friends.”

Without the benefit of Divine Revelation, he anticipates, too, the Church’s teaching about the complementarity of husband and wife and extols the type of perfect friendship that can exist between the spouses and in the family. This brief sketch is all we need to see why a consideration of friendship was important to Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and other pagan philosophers. St. Thomas himself relies heavily on Aristotle when he argues that charity, which St. Paul says is the greatest of the theological virtues, itself is friendship, and so reminds us that friendship is at the very heart of the Christian life.



You will find memorable images of friendship in many of the works of literature you will enjoy in your years here. You will soon be immersed in the *Iliad* and its depiction of the, in some ways, tragic friendship between Achilles and Patroklos. Later you will enjoy the friendship and escapades of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza as they undertake to right wrongs and pursue virtue in their own inimitable ways. In your senior year, you will experience a certain nobility and greatness in the friendships between Pierre Bezukhov and Andrei Bolkonsky, central characters in Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, and between Huck and Jim in Mark Twain’s great American classic, *Huckleberry Finn*.

“You will form wonderful friendships, both in and out of class, as you pursue a common curriculum, share common questions, difficulties, and principles, and a common desire to pursue the truth. You will learn from Aristotle that friendship ordered to virtue, as this community of friends is, is the most perfect form of natural friendship.”

Unparalleled in many respects will be the evocation of friendship which concludes Dostoyevsky’s magnificent *Brothers Karamazov*, which also awaits you in Senior Year. “I give you my word,” says Alyosha to the boys, “that I’ll never forget one of you. Every face looking at me now I shall remember even for thirty years.” “Ah, children, ah, dear friends,” Alyosha continues, “don’t be afraid of life! How good life is when one does something good and just!”

Friendship not only figures prominently in our curriculum but it is essential to the community we have established here as well. We believe learning and the pursuit of wisdom require cooperation, not competition, between students and tutors, and that working together in a spirit of friendship and charity to understand the greatest texts

and the greatest authors is the surest route to progress in the intellectual life. You will form wonderful friendships, both in and out of class, as you pursue a common curriculum, share common questions, difficulties, and principles, and a common desire to pursue the truth. You will learn from Aristotle that friendship ordered to virtue, as this community of friends is, is the most perfect form of natural friendship.

This is in no way to diminish the friendships you will naturally form — some of pleasure, some of utility, and some of virtue — as you enjoy the recreational and social opportunities provided by this community, as those of you on service scholarship will do as you fulfill your work responsibilities, and as all of you will do as you navigate the challenges and complexities of dormitory life together. As one parent said recently of their daughter after her time at the College: “Her faith has grown tremendously, and she has good Catholic friendships that will last a lifetime.”

Not to be overlooked, of course, are the friendships we hope you will form with our chaplains and, through their ministry, with Our Lord Himself. The educational and spiritual life of the College is ordered to wisdom about the highest things — in short, it is designed to deepen your knowledge and love of God. The study of Sacred Scripture, which you are about to undertake, is the foundation of the College’s work.

Examples of friendship abound in Scripture — consider Moses and Aaron; Elijah and Elisha; Naomi and Ruth; David and Jonathan; and Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. These, in one way or another, are models or images of the friendship between Christ and His apostles, Christ and His church, Christ and ourselves: “I no longer call you servants,” says Our Lord in the Gospel of John, “but My friends.”

How this friendship with Christ is possible is a question for another day. That it is possible is clear from His words, and that you grow in this friendship is our greatest hope for you.

May God bless your years at Thomas Aquinas College, and may you keep the College ever in your prayers.

Thank you.



Aurora Farrell ('21) signs her name in the College's registry.



President McLean and Archbishop Coakley welcome Timothy McNeil ('21) at the 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. All names must be received by December 15.)

thomasaquinas.edu/christmas-novena



“Let Light Shine Once More in Our World”

The Convocation Homily of the Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, S.T.L., D.D.

Distinguished faculty members, members of the Board of Governors, benefactors, friends and, especially, my dear students of Thomas Aquinas College, it is indeed a joy to be with you. It is a great privilege to celebrate this Mass of the Holy Spirit, as we inaugurate and commence a new academic year, a new year of education and formation.

I have to admit, this has been kind of a “bucket list” thing for me, to come to Thomas Aquinas College. I followed the growth of the College for many, many, many years since I was an undergraduate myself at the University of Kansas. And, indeed, it’s a great pleasure to be here finally, to celebrate with such joy this wonderful occasion.

In a little while, an hour or two, Americans across the continent will be gathering for an extremely rare astronomical phenomenon: a solar eclipse, in some places a total solar eclipse. The sun will appear to be darkened for a time as the moon passes between the earth and the sun, casting its shadow over much of the earth’s surface. The last time such an event took place across the whole of the American continent was nearly 100 years ago, in 1918. Thousands, tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people will travel great distances today in order to experience this extraordinary phenomenon. It’s not like we didn’t see it coming. It was predicted long ago.

“One comes to Thomas Aquinas College to become a Catholic man, a Catholic woman, to become the person that God desires us to become, to magnify and glorify Him in a particular way that is uniquely yours, to discover, perhaps, your unique place in God’s plan, your personal vocation, what God has called you to.”

Perhaps it was an actual solar eclipse, coinciding with the moment of Our Lord’s death, that caused the darkness described in St. Matthew’s Gospel, where he writes, “From noon onward darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.” Perhaps. An eclipse of the sun is certainly an appropriate cosmic sign for the very moment when sin and death seemed to triumph over light and life. For three days, hope was eclipsed by despair.

The Resurrection, however, proclaimed Christ’s ultimate victory, the victory of life over death, the triumph of Divine Mercy over human sinfulness. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. This light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Perhaps we can meditate upon that when we see the earth darkened as the moon passes between earth and sun in just a little while. Life will be victorious.

Today we are celebrating this Mass of the Holy Spirit. We celebrate the beginning of the new academic year here at Thomas Aquinas College. I know you realize, better than I, perhaps, what a unique institution Thomas Aquinas College is. You chose it, you students and faculty members, staff members, for a reason. Thomas Aquinas College is unique in offering the type of Catholic liberal arts education that is offered here, a Catholic education in the liberal arts (to distinguish it from a professional education in the servile arts). Why does someone come here to Thomas Aquinas College? What does a liberal arts education offer? What is it for?



Mr. Dan Grimm ('76) leads the Thomas Aquinas College Choir at the Convocation Day Mass.



It is not primarily a professional training program. It is really an educational opportunity and process of formation geared toward educating men and women, human beings, the whole person. One comes here to become more of whom God created us to be, created in His image and likeness, becoming the unique individual and person that God desires us to become through faith, hope, and love, through the power of His grace at work within us to transform us. One comes to Thomas Aquinas College to become a Catholic man, a Catholic woman, to become the person that God desires us to become, to magnify and glorify Him in a particular way that is uniquely yours, to discover, perhaps, your unique place in God’s plan, your personal vocation, what God has called you to.

Perhaps God calls some of you to be religious. Perhaps God calls some of you to be priests. Perhaps God calls most of you to the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony, to live out your baptism as mothers and fathers and spouses. But God has called all of you to be saints. And ultimately I think that is why Thomas Aquinas College exists, to prepare you to become whom God has created you to be by His grace, by the redemption wrought in Christ Jesus, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of Baptism, and Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist — to become saints. All of us are called to holiness. All of us are called to be saints. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not overcome it.”

The world in which we live has experienced for some time a growing eclipse of faith and reason, but the darkness will not overcome it. Thomas Aquinas College is uniquely positioned and equipped, really, to let light shine once more in our world, in our society, in our communities, in our families, in our relationships. As you respond to God’s grace, allow the Spirit of the living God to enlighten your minds, to strengthen your will, to help you to grow in virtue, and to render you more docile to the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your lives, that you might become the saints that God has called you to be. Each one of you, each one of us, God has called us to holiness.

Light shines in the darkness. This place shines in a world that is experiencing a disturbing eclipse, not only of faith and reason but of common sense and human decency and ordinary virtue. This is what your unique education here at Thomas Aquinas is preparing you to be: light in the darkness, holy men and women.

Next month, in Oklahoma City, where I come from — a month from tomorrow as a matter of fact — we will have the privilege of witnessing an event that is perhaps every bit as rare as a total solar eclipse. It will be the beatification of the first American martyr, the first beatification of a U.S.-born Catholic priest, and he’s from, of all places, Okarche, Oklahoma. He was a martyr in Guatemala in 1981. The day of his death, it was as if the sun had fled; darkness descended upon the community where he ministered. When violent men broke into his rectory and threatened his life — and claimed his life — the people were heartbroken. The people were cast down. The people were desperate because their pastor had been taken from them.

Fr. Stanley Rother knew that his life was in danger. He had served there for many years, but under the political situation that came upon that part of Central America in 1980, things changed: Suddenly he knew that his name

was on a death list for no other crime than preaching the Gospel and serving his people. He had no ulterior motive than that, to be a shepherd of God’s people. In his last Christmas letter home, once he learned that his name was on a death list in December of 1980, he said, “A shepherd cannot run at the first sign of danger.” The bishop asked him to come home and discern whether he would stay or leave. He came back to Oklahoma for Christmas and stayed until Holy Week, but he discerned clearly that the Lord was calling him to be with His people. He returned, celebrated Easter with them, and on the night of July 28 he was murdered — martyred — in his rectory. The shepherd did not run.

It was Tertullian who said, at the end of the 2nd, early 3rd century, that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. That parish in Oklahoma had been established in the 17th century and had never yielded a single vocation; it had been without a priest for over 100 years. But since Fr. Rother’s death in 1981, there have been nine men ordained from that parish, and still many more in formation today. The light shines in the darkness, and often it is when the darkness seems to have eclipsed the light that that eclipse is about to give way to a rebirth of light, and truth, and goodness, and mercy.

I’m grateful, certainly, as the Archbishop of Oklahoma City, to have the privilege of witnessing the Church lift up for all of our veneration and imitation such a humble, simple man as Stanley Rother. An interesting thing about his life: He was once asked to leave the first seminary that he attended because he couldn’t pass the Latin requirement. But he didn’t give up, and his bishop believed in him and found another seminary that would take him and coach him and tutor him, and he was ordained a priest. Then he became a missionary to a foreign land where they didn’t speak English, either. And he went to Guatemala, where he mastered not only Spanish, but even the obscure Mayan dialect of Tz’utujil, which up until that time had been only an oral language. He was part of a team that, first of all, created a written alphabet for this language, and then translated the New Testament into Tz’utujil — this, the man who couldn’t pass elementary Latin in seminary.



Resident Assistant Jeannette Richard ('17) and head women's prefect Barbara O'Brien ('18) bring the gifts of bread and wine to the sanctuary during the Mass of the Holy Spirit.

We celebrate today the Mass of the Holy Spirit. Certainly it was the Holy Spirit at work in the life of Fr. Stanley Rother that produced such extraordinary fruit and enabled him to extend himself far beyond his human limitations and become all that God desired him to be. Today, as we celebrate this Mass of the Holy Spirit, we ask the Holy Spirit to fill us, to mold us, to guide us, to enlighten us, to anoint us, to form us as the saints for the mission that God has for each one of us. On this day on which we celebrate this Mass of the Holy Spirit, my prayer for each of us, and particularly for each of you, is that God may bring to perfection in you the work that He has begun.

Note: The Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, S.T.L., D.D., Archbishop of Oklahoma City, was the principal celebrant of the 2017 Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit.

New Tutors

College Welcomes Mr. Joshua Noble ('10) and Dr. Stephen F. Shivone

Mr. Joshua Noble

When he arrived at Thomas Aquinas College in 2006, Joshua Noble ('10) was unlike most of the other freshmen: He was 27 years old, a college graduate, an engineer — and an atheist.

Raised in a fundamentalist Protestant home in north-eastern Texas, he earned an engineering degree, and then worked for four years with the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program in Idaho. During this time, while debating Mormon missionaries, he first encountered critical biblical scholarship. “It undermined the fundamentalist biblical foundations of my faith,” he says, leading him to dismiss Christianity as intellectually unserious.

Nonetheless, he continued to seek “some kind of answer to the great philosophical and theological questions” that have intrigued man throughout time. He thus soon found himself drawn to Thomas Aquinas College, with its emphasis on philosophy and theology, as well as its great books curriculum and discussion-based classes. “I applied, got in, and sold everything I owned that would not fit into two suitcases,” he says, “then I made my way to campus.”

At the College he found his future wife, classmate Amy (Schneir '10), but not his faith. “I had this silly idea that if I investigated everything like a science problem, I could come to a clear, scientific decision about whether or not Christianity was true,” he says. “At the College, I came to recognize that that’s not the way I would ever come to a final answer, but I did come to see that the Catholic intellectual tradition is rigorous and intellectually serious.



That removed a lot of my roadblocks to faith.”

The Nobles married two weeks after their graduation, and two weeks later they departed for the University of Notre Dame, where Mr. Noble began a master’s program in early Christian studies. Soon thereafter, he experienced a profound moment of grace.

“I was sitting there, struggling with ideas about myself and sin, when on a whim I picked up a copy of St. Augustine’s *Confessions*,” he recalls. “I flipped through it for five minutes, threw it down on the bookcase, and said, ‘That’s it. I’m in.’ I was received into the Church three weeks later.”

Over the next seven years he would earn his master’s degree, complete his coursework for a doctorate in biblical studies and, with Mrs. Noble, welcome three young sons. Their family now resides in Santa Paula, where Mr. Noble, in his first year on the faculty, teaches Freshman Language, Freshman Seminar, and Sophomore Philosophy.

Dr. Stephen F. Shivone

Although new to the faculty of Thomas Aquinas College, Dr. Stephen Shivone is by no means new to teaching. Over the last 15 years he has taught at the middle-school, high-school, and collegiate levels in Alaska, Texas, Arizona, and North Carolina. Most recently he served as an English professor and the assistant dean for academic affairs at Belmont Abbey College, where, he assumed, he would happily spend the rest of his career.

Yet when the opportunity to become a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College presented itself, Dr. Shivone



decided that teaching the great books within an integrated curriculum would be worth the burden of one more move — or even two.

“I have spent much of my career trying to figure out how I could create a program like this — and then teach in it,” he laughs. At Belmont Abbey he overhauled a four-class scholarship program to include only original texts, while also working on several other curricular revisions along the same lines. “I came to Thomas Aquinas College because it is, in my view, the best Catholic college in this country, and it is the best because it is based on the right principles, on a true understanding of what a college ought to be, both as a whole and in its parts; and the principles inform every aspect of the College.”

Dr. Shivone is himself the product of a Catholic liberal education, having earned his undergraduate degree at the erstwhile College of St. Thomas More in Fort Worth, Texas, where he also briefly taught. Although he studied graduate theology for one year at Austria’s International Theological Institute, he ultimately decided to earn his master’s and doctoral degrees in literature at the University of Dallas. “Literature teaches us important truths about reality,” he says. “The study of literature can lead to insight, because great literature sheds a kind of light on reality and human experience, while also shaping our emotions and imagination.”

He is teaching literature, among other subjects, in the Freshman Seminar section he leads this year, along with Sophomore Philosophy and two sections of Freshman Natural Science. His time on the California campus, however, may prove to be short-lived. Should the College receive approval from the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education for its proposed New England campus, Dr. Shivone, his wife, Mary Ann (Hastings '03), and their five children will move eastward in 2019.

“Top-Notch Education”

Secular & Catholic Guides Rank Thomas Aquinas College Among the Top in the Nation

The Princeton Review

The Princeton Review features Thomas Aquinas College in the 2018 edition of its annual guide, *The Best 382 Colleges*, which includes only about 15 percent of America’s 2,500 four-year colleges. Out of a maximum of 99 points each, the guide awards Thomas Aquinas College scores of 95 for academics, 94 for quality of life, and 99 for financial aid.



The guide also reports 62 ranking lists of “Top 20” colleges in various categories, based entirely on its survey of some 143,000 students. Thomas Aquinas College ranks No. 1 for “Most Religious Students,” No. 6 for “Great Financial Aid,” No. 8 for “Best Classroom Experience,” and No. 15 for “Lots of Race/Class Interaction.”

U.S. News & World Report

In the newly released 2018 edition of its “Best Colleges” guide, *U.S. News & World Report* places Thomas Aquinas College in the top third of the top tier of all American liberal arts colleges, one of only two Catholic colleges to rank so highly. The guide praises the College’s financial aid program, listing the school as No. 30 among the Top 40 national liberal arts colleges on its “Best Values” list and No. 5 among national liberal arts colleges for “Least Debt” at graduation — the only Catholic school in the United States to make either list.



The guide additionally ranks Thomas Aquinas College first in the country for the highest proportion of classes under 20 students (100 percent) and the lowest proportion of classes with more than 50 students (0 percent).

ACTA

The American Council of College Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) has released its annual report on the

curricular strength of American institutions of higher learning and, once again, Thomas Aquinas College is at the very top of the list.

On its “What Will They Learn?” website, ACTA posts evaluations of the major public and private colleges and universities in all 50 states — over 1,100 four-year institutions, with nearly 8 million undergraduate students among them. For the ninth time in as many years, ACTA has given Thomas Aquinas College a grade of “A” and a perfect rating.



By earning an “A,” Thomas Aquinas College falls among the top 2 percent of American colleges and universities, 24 schools in all, named to ACTA’s coveted “A List.” Moreover, the College is one of only four schools, or the top 0.4 percent nationwide, to earn a perfect score for the strength of its curriculum.

CNBC

To help families better manage the burden of college costs, in August CNBC published a list of “The Top 10 Colleges for Financial Aid.” No. 6 on the list was Thomas Aquinas College. “This small Catholic school is doing big things to combat student debt,” the business network noted. “There’s a substantial financial aid program, comprised of loans, work-study and grants, which is fully funded by contributions from private individuals and charitable foundations.”



One month later, CNBC followed up with a second list of 10 colleges where students “graduate with the least debt,” and Thomas Aquinas College was featured yet again. The list was based on data from more than 1,800 U.S.-based colleges and universities. “By cap-

ping the amount students borrow and keeping students on track to graduate in four years,” wrote author Abigail Hess, “Thomas Aquinas is able to limit the amount of debt that graduates hold.”

National Catholic Register

The *National Catholic Register* has selected Thomas Aquinas College as one of only 34 faithfully Catholic colleges and universities included in its “Catholic Identity College Guide 2017.” The guide is based on the schools’ responses to 10 questions which, the *Register* explains, are designed such that a “YES” answer reflects essential elements of the renewal of Catholic identity called for by Pope St. John Paul II’s 1990 apostolic constitution on higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Out of the Heart of the Church), its 2000 ‘Application to the United States,’ canon law and other relevant Church documents.” Thomas Aquinas College answers all 10 of the *Register*’s questions affirmatively.



WalletHub

The personal-finance website WalletHub has named Thomas Aquinas College No. 25 on its 2018 rankings of the 112 “Best Colleges” in the United States. The site also rates the College as No.1 for “faculty resources,” No. 5 in the West, and No. 9 for “career outcomes.”

To arrive at their findings, WalletHub’s analysts considered “26 key measures to determine where prospective students can expect to receive a top-notch education at the lowest price points.” Among these criteria are student selectivity, tuition costs, student-faculty ratio, and post-graduation median salary.



“Called and Chosen”

Students and Recent Graduates Appear in EWTN Movie about Fr. Capodanno

For three days last spring, seven Thomas Aquinas College juniors and three recent graduates donned the uniforms of U.S. Marines, representing heroes in order to tell the story of a man who may one day be a saint.

Servant of God Vincent R. Capodanno was a Maryknoll priest who, on September 4, 1967, gave his life while ministering to U.S. forces in the jungles of Vietnam. To honor the 50th anniversary of his death, EWTN produced *Called and Chosen: Father Vincent R. Capodanno*, a docudrama that catalogues the life and extraordinary sacrifice of this missionary who was affectionately known as the “Grunt Padre.”

Early last spring, the film’s writer and director, James Kelty, contacted the College, looking for “fit young men between the ages of 18–25” to play the roles of Fr. Capodanno’s fellow Marines in battle scenes to be filmed over Memorial Day weekend in Santa Clarita, California, about 40 miles from campus. Seven members of this year’s Junior Class — Tom Becher, Michael Dufresne, Ryan Kielas, Tom Macik, Hugh Mohun, Michael Sedler, and Brian Venegas — offered their services as actors, as did three recent graduates, Lawrence Donnelly (’17), Sean Phan (’17), and Joseph Teichert (’08). Another junior, Joe Daly, signed on as a production assistant.

“A Blessing in Disguise”

Using non-professionals to play the roles of Fr. Capodanno’s compatriots was not Mr. Kelty’s original plan, but it proved, he would later tell the *National Catholic Register*, to be “a blessing in disguise.” Initially he had sought to bring the veterans who served alongside Fr. Capodanno back to Vietnam to interview them at the site of the priest’s death. The director ran into “a major snag,” however, when the Vietnamese government denied the men’s visa applications. So he opted instead to re-create Fr. Capodanno’s battlefield heroics for the camera, staging the scene at a private ranch in Santa Clarita.

“A retired Hollywood executive told Mr. Kelty, ‘There’s this school not too far away from where you’re shooting. You may want to see if there’s any talent there for any extra roles,’” Joe Daly recounts. “So the director put an ad on campus for extras, but pretty much all of the guys who participated got much larger roles than originally planned. They ended up playing actual Marines who knew and served with Fr. Capodanno, several of



whom were on site during the shooting to provide guidance.” Michael Sedler was one of those students who, much to his surprise, found himself playing a significant role — that of Henry Hernandez, a Marine who comes to Fr. Capodanno for the Sacrament of Penance. “When I saw the ad for extra roles, I thought it would be a fun opportunity. As an extra, I would just sit in the background and get to watch this documentary be filmed around me,” he says. “I was a little hesitant when we were given more details about what we were actually going to do. Then I realized the significance — I will be playing the role of a real person — and the need to get it right, to help tell this important story well.”

The Grunt Padre

The 10th child of Italian immigrants, Fr. Capodanno was a military chaplain famous for his ability to connect with the enlisted men on a personal level, helping to bring many souls closer to Christ. “The veterans on the set all said that Fr. Capodanno was one of the boys,” says Michael. “He wasn’t standoffish. He didn’t use his rank or position to throw his weight around. He was very approachable. They all said that they were at ease around him, that he was very much one of them.”

Called and Chosen tells the story of the late priest’s life through a combination of documentary and re-enactment, beginning with his childhood on Staten Island,



New York, continuing through his missionary work in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and culminating in his two tours of service in Vietnam as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps. The film’s climactic scene depicts in vivid detail his last day: Despite being seriously injured in an hours-long ambush by North Vietnamese forces, Fr. Capodanno sprinted across a battlefield to anoint a wounded Marine. The enemy responded by opening fire on the unarmed chaplain, who suffered 27 bullet wounds and died while performing this final act of faithful and selfless service. One year later he would posthumously receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, and in 2002 the Church opened his cause for canonization.

“*Called and Chosen* stands out as a really special production for me, and what made it so special was the participation of the students of Thomas Aquinas and the Marine veterans. The survivors of the real battle of 50 years ago met the young men who humbly and reverentially were to assume their identities. You witnessed a tremendous mutual admiration and respect. Several of the vets had tears in their eyes. They saw their younger selves in these young men. And I know the young men were awed to be in the presence of real live heroes.”

— James Kelty, director

For the student performers, re-enacting these moments — especially with the counsel of the veterans who knew and served with Fr. Capodanno — made all the more tangible the greatness of the priest’s heroism and the depths of his love. “It became so much more real, being able to talk with people who remember these events,” says Michael.

“*Called and Chosen* stands out as a really special production for me, and what made it so special was the participation of the students of Thomas Aquinas and the Marine veterans,” says Mr. Kelty. “The survivors of the real battle of 50 years ago met the young men who humbly and reverentially were to assume their identities. You witnessed a tremendous mutual admiration and respect. Several of the vets had tears in their eyes. They saw their younger selves in these young men. And I know the young men were awed to be in the presence of real-life heroes.”

Extras to the Rescue

Although *Called and Chosen* is a film about a Catholic priest made for a Catholic television network, most of the professional cast and crew members who worked on the production, including James Hutson, who played Fr. Capodanno, were not Catholic. “There were a couple of scenes, such as when Fr. Capodanno says Mass for the Marines, or hears confessions, when the crew weren’t entirely sure how they were supposed to proceed,” Joe says. “But we were more than happy to jump in and help!” Several members of the College contingent are acolytes in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel,

and as such were able to offer their expertise on matters liturgical.

They also, rather unexpectedly, ended up lending their voices to the effort by singing the music that plays during the movie’s closing credits.

“That came about right after we wrapped up shooting,” Joe explains. “The guild that is sponsoring Fr. Capodanno’s cause for beatification took everybody out to dinner — all the veterans, the director, the actors and production assistants — to this nice little family-owned Italian restaurant. After dinner was over and we were going back to the car, the TAC guys just started singing, right there on the street, ‘The Parting Glass’ and another Irish tune or two. That kind of blew the director away — it was definitely something he hadn’t expected.”

Not long thereafter, Mr. Kelty got in touch with the students and asked if they would be willing to sing for the closing credits. “So a few weeks later, we all came up to a recording studio in Santa Barbara, and we recorded the Naval Hymn, ‘Eternal Father, Strong to Save,’” says Joe, who prepared the arrangement (two tenors, a baritone, and a bass).

For Mr. Kelty, it was these kinds of moments — the revivification of the past, a shared sense of brotherhood among students and vets — that made *Called and Chosen* uniquely meaningful on both a professional and personal level. “Put that together with the story we were telling, of a courageous priest who gave his life for his fellow Marines ... there are just no words to describe the experience,” he says. “It was a whole lot more than a film shoot.”

Note: Called and Chosen: Father Vincent R. Capodanno aired for several nights on EWTN in August and September. It is now available for purchase on DVD through the EWTN website.

IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

Thomas T. Janeroux, Jr. — May 25
Legacy Society Member

John Doran — June 18
Husband of Barbara (Nacelewicz ’81) and father of Kathleen (’19)

Francis Lee Jacquette
August 4
Legacy Society Member

Rev. Gerald Buckley, O.P.
August 15
Brother of College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.

Louise Durnan
September 20
Mother of Timothy Durnan (’91)

Conrado M. Saturnino
September 7
Father of Conrad (’88), Legacy Society Member

Patrick Hart — September 29
Member of the Legacy Society, President’s Council, and Orange County Board of Regents

Theodore R. Kretschmer
October 10
Father of Stephen (’92), Elizabeth (Berquist ’93), and Mark (’99); President’s Council Member

George Letteney
October 24, 2017
Father of tutor Michael (’88); grandfather of Anastasia (Blain ’13), Anthony (’14), and Teresa (’16)

“What I Did Over Students Share the Gift of their Education

Jose Guardiola ('19)

“It’s a really weird story,” admits Jose Guardiola, about the novel he began writing during his freshman year. “It’s about two people who — well, they’re going through psychological problems — without knowing each other, they simultaneously imagine the same imaginary friend.”



Weird or not, Mr. Guardiola’s novel was compelling enough to merit his acceptance — as the only undergraduate among just 13 students — in a summer writing workshop at the University of Iowa, home of one of the nation’s top-ranked creative-writing programs. For three weeks, the students and their professor, bestselling novelist Lan Samantha Chang, scrutinized and refined their works. The rigorous process, Jose believes, strengthened both his writing skills and his novel, *When Venus Passes Through Virgo* (“Virgo signifying the Virgin Mary, and Venus the temptation to turn inwardly”).

Shortly before departing for Iowa City, however, Jose learned that the apartment which he had planned to rent there was no longer available. So he began a desperate search for other accommodations, eventually landing the temporary position of live-in intern at a Catholic Worker home. There he lived with two homeless families, helping them to get back on their feet and opening the home on weekends to feed the hungry.

“I didn’t know I loved serving the poor,” he says, “but that made me really appreciate it.” The experience also complemented his time in the writing program, he observes. “It gave me a broader perspective, and helps me to write about broader topics that I wouldn’t have even considered before.”

Elizabeth and Theresa Gallagher (both '18)

Last spring, shortly after twins Elizabeth and Theresa Gallagher submitted their applications for the Augustine Institute’s City of God Summer Seminar, they received some discouraging news. “We each got an email back,” says Theresa, “and it said, ‘Thank you for applying, but just know that only 12 students will get in to the program — and only one per college.’”



The sisters tried to take the news in stride. “We agreed that if one of us weren’t accepted, we would be happy for the other,” Theresa continues. “But to our amazement, after about a month or so, we got an email saying that we both got in!” They both perceived Divine Providence at work.

And so there were *thirteen* students at this past June’s full-scholarship program, including the two Gallaghers from Thomas Aquinas College. In a series of seminars and talks, Elizabeth, Theresa, and their peers studied Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue*, the Rule of St. Benedict, and excerpts from St. Augustine’s *Confessions* and *City of God* — examining each work with an eye toward Pope St. John Paul II’s call for the New Evangelization.

“We discussed evangelization in the medical language of diagnosis, prognosis, and regimen,” explains Elizabeth.

“You’ve got to *diagnose* and see what are the spiritual illnesses or weaknesses in the world today. Then, you look at the *prognosis* — where will this problem take us if left untreated? And finally you need to devise a *regimen*, as in a remedy or solution.”

The program, they say, has confirmed their desire to pursue Master’s degrees in theology after they graduate this spring.

Patrick Nazeck ('19)

Deep in the Mojave Desert, some 100 miles northeast of Bakersfield, California, the U.S. Navy maintains its Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, where it conducts research, flight tests, and systems analysis at a site larger than the state of Rhode Island. Among the 7,500 active military, civilians, and contractors working at the facility this summer was junior Patrick Nazeck, an engineering intern with the Navy’s Pathways program.



This summer marked Patrick’s second in the program, although this time he opted for a different kind of work. “Last year my job was more clerical and analytical,” he says. “This year my job was more hands-on, working with people, and it involved the actual testing of weapons systems. I would build metal targets, or pick them up after they were blown up, and move cars around the testing areas. We did a lot of tests with remote-controlled vehicles and drones.”

For next summer, Patrick has applied to the U.S. Marine Corps’ Officers Candidate School. “Because I aim to enter the Corps after graduation, I wanted to work this past summer with some of the systems that I hope to work with in the future,” he says. “It was good to see the work that so many people are doing to help us get to where we need to be with technology. I didn’t realize how much manpower is needed to perform these tests that are crucial for our advancement.”

Maria Pentico-Rodriguez ('21)

When visiting Taiwan for a family wedding in 2015, Maria Pentico-Rodriguez met members of a local religious community, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, who invited her family to help them in their work. After returning home and contemplating the offer, Maria — who by then had been admitted to Thomas Aquinas College — deferred her admission for a year so she could return to Taiwan for three months with her mother and brother.



Once there they encountered some true human-rights horrors. The Sisters minister to workers, primarily Vietnamese, who are lured into the country with promises of easy riches, only to then find themselves trapped under an impossible debt — the fees for their relocation, compounded by usurious interest charges — and unable to escape wretched workplace and housing conditions. The Sisters also provide spiritual consolation to Vietnamese women who were imported into the country as mail-order brides and who, with their children, are often trapped in abusive homes.

During her time in Taiwan, Maria worked with the Sisters as they tended to the migrants’ spiritual life and provided whatever material or legal assistance they could.

“The amazing thing is, when you talk to these migrant workers — they have everything so tough, so difficult — they are the most joyful, kind, and welcoming people I have ever talked to,” she says. “I would love, someday, to do more missionary work,” she adds. “But I would love even more to do whatever He calls me to, and right now, that is to be here at the College.”

Marie Bryant ('18)

Last spring, when the National Christian Foundation (NCF) was considering whether to give Thomas Aquinas College the site of its proposed New England campus, one of the Foundation’s governors, Emmitt Mitchell, paid a visit to the campus in Santa Paula, California. After attending Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, and again the next morning at breakfast, he encountered then-junior Marie Bryant. Impressed by these meetings, Mr. Mitchell promptly offered Marie a job.



“He said, ‘I would love to hire you,’” she recalls. “And I said, ‘Well, I would love to be hired!’”

Thus, this past summer, Marie spent one month in Kansas City — site of NCF headquarters — followed by another in Northfield, Massachusetts, working for The Moody Center. Named for the 19th century Protestant evangelist D. L. Moody, the Center, which Mr. Mitchell now heads, shares the property on which the College hopes to establish its branch campus, contingent upon the approval of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.

In Kansas City, Miss Bryant performed market research for a video project designed to help pastors better administer their churches. In Massachusetts, she scanned and catalogued thousands of Mr. Moody’s documents, which the Center plans to publish in an online archive. “Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell immediately adopted me into their family,” she says of her time in Missouri, and in Massachusetts, she delighted in getting to know the College’s new neighbors. “People had lots of questions about what we do,” she says. “I gladly shared, and they seemed captivated!”

Michael Williams ('18)

For the third consecutive summer, Michael Williams worked for the Napa Institute, helping to organize its annual conference of Catholic leaders at the Meritage Resort in Napa, California. Yet over the three years, the nature of his position has changed. “Originally I was hired as an office intern,” Michael explains. “Then they learned that I had some sacristan experience, which is needed at a Catholic conference of this magnitude.”



Although primarily a forum for prominent Catholics to discuss issues such as economic justice, beauty and the arts, and faith and reason, the Napa Institute also aims to provide a retreat of sorts for its more than 500 attendees, including some 50 priests and prelates. “If you include all the private Masses, there were 92 Masses in four days,” says Michael, and he played a role in nearly all of them. “I was in a cassock pretty much all day, just making sure everything was going smoothly.”

His efforts on behalf of the conference, however, began months earlier and continued throughout the summer. “Working from home, I assembled the readings, put together all the Mass programs, collected the Mass intentions, and made sure that all the prelates were scheduled and that we had all the supplies we needed in the chapels,” he says. He was honored, he adds, to serve for successors to the Apostles such as the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, the Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone, the Most Rev. Charles Chaput, and the Most Rev. Robert Morlino.

Summer Vacation”

and Plan for their Futures

Siena Hsu ('18)

For two weeks in July, Siena Hsu woke up early each morning in her aunt's apartment in the Bronx, took a subway to midtown Manhattan, and then another to Queens, where she arrived, about an hour and a half later, at Grand Central Atelier. At its studios she worked for hours at a time on the most minute details of her art. “I spent the entire first week drawing an ear,” she says. “And I barely finished in time!”

A classical realist art school, Grand Central Atelier offers instruction in traditional methods of figurative drawing, painting, and sculpture. The pedagogy, says Siena, reminds her of the College's approach to the great books. “This school is really steeped in the truths that have been passed down through the ages through all these different movements in art,” she observes. “They see the value in preserving this legacy, and that just went hand in hand with what we do at TAC.”

Her 13 fellow students came from across the country and the world. Some were fellow undergraduates; others were professionals looking to refine their craft. “They were very different people in terms of faith and educational background from my peers at the College, and yet there was still a strong similarity,” Siena recalls. “All the students were there because they recognized something true, good, and serious in what was being offered in this program. That reminded me of when I first found TAC. What struck me about the students was that same quality.”

Siobhan Heekin-Canedy ('18)

Having spent the summer of 2016 in Russia as part of a State Department-sponsored language immersion program, Siobhan Heekin-Canedy opted to spend the summer of 2017 working for “the other side,” as she puts it. Rather than merely partaking in such programs, she helped organize them as an intern in the State Department's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, where she worked in the Sports Diplomacy Division. “My division ran programs that were based in sports,” she says, “trying to harness the universal power of athletics to transcend cultural barriers.”

It's a position for which she is well qualified. Before coming to the College, Siobhan was a top-ranked ice dancer who competed in the 2014 Olympic Games, an experience that took her all over the world. Her projects at the State Department this summer included creating a social-media campaign in advance of Olympic Day and vetting grant applications from international sports organizations.

“Within my first five days I probably read through 800 pages of grant applications,” she says. “Having the ability to read and synthesize huge quantities of information in a short period of time, and then to go to a meeting, sit around a table, and discuss the merits — my experience at the College was definitely helpful in that regard!”

Her time in Washington has confirmed her desire to pursue further work in global relations. “I've applied for a Fulbright Scholarship to Russia next year, and I'm also applying to several graduate programs in international affairs. So we'll see what happens next!”

Sofia Barrantes-Hernandez ('20) & Jorge Moncada Hernandez ('18)

During most of the summer, Sofia Barrantes-Hernandez worked in the Admissions Office, assisting with the “background work,” as she describes it, of bringing new students to Thomas Aquinas College. So it was an exciting change of pace



when she served on the frontlines at City of Saints, a three-day youth event that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles sponsors each summer on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles.

At the conference Sofia and fellow student Jorge Moncada Hernandez manned a booth, where they interacted with many of the 1,000 attendees, mostly high school students, answering questions about the College and its program of Catholic liberal education. “It was awesome,” says Sofia. “Talking to people about why I came to the College, about what our classes are like, about the spiritual life — it made me fall in love with the program all over again.”

“A lot of the students didn't know about the College, so it was brand new to them,” says Jorge. “When we explained what we do — the Discussion Method, the great books, that we're fully Catholic — they seemed very interested. It was a blessing to be able to introduce them to something that will, I hope, be a blessing to them, just as it has been to me.”

Among the highlights of their time at City of Saints, Sofia and Jorge report, was getting to visit with the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, who expressed his support for their work and that of the College.

Stephanie Hammett ('18)

“I first got interested in Italian when we read Dante during Sophomore Seminar,” says Stephanie Hammett. “I have also always loved opera, and much of opera is in Italian, so I really wanted to learn the language, and I wanted to spend time in Italy.” This summer she was blessed to do both while living in Florence, where she studied Italian in intensive tutorials at the Michelangelo Institute.

In just two months Stephanie went from being an Italian-language neophyte to achieving near-proficiency. “I can understand and read Italian pretty well,” she says, “although actually speaking it back is a lot more difficult.” More important, she is able to put her knowledge to use in reading Dante, whose treatment of intercessory prayer in the *Inferno* is the subject of her Senior Thesis.

“Dante's Italian is kind of antique Italian, so there are a lot of words in it that are different, and it's also poetic. It's kind of like trying to read Shakespeare as a beginning English student,” she says. “But it's still a great experience, and it gives me insights into the text that I would miss if I were only reading a translation.”

After graduation Stephanie hopes to put her newfound knowledge of Italian to use in opera singing, a beloved pastime from high school that she has put on hold while at the College. She intends to apply to music school to study classical voice.

Sanjay Adhikari ('18)

In the summer of 2016, Megan Youngblood ('18) had such a positive experience at one of the Independent

Studies Institute's “Principles of Liberty” conferences that she encouraged her classmate Sanjay Adhikari to apply for the following summer. A senior who is contemplating graduate studies in philosophy, math, or science, Sanjay was intrigued. He liked the idea of spending a week discussing political theory with college students from across the U.S.

So he completed the application and, shortly thereafter, received word of his admission. At the end of July, he traveled to Portland, Oregon, for the all-expenses-paid conference, held on the campus of Lewis & Clark College. For the next seven days he attended lectures and seminars about various works of political import, all dealing with matters of economics, freedom, and law.

“The theme of the conference was ‘Traditions of Liberty in America,’ and to prepare we read four books by 20th century thinkers,” says Sanjay. “We read Friedrich Hayek's *Constitution of Liberty*, *Ideas have Consequences* by Richard M. Weaver, Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, and *Witness* by Whittaker Chambers.”

As a native of Nepal, he says it was particularly instructive for him to learn more about the United States' recent political history, which complemented his reading of America's founding documents in Junior Seminar. “I learned a lot from the books and from the discussions, as well as from the lectures,” he says. “It was very productive in terms of the intellectual life, so it was time well spent.”

Zoe Appleby ('18)

Over the course of her first two summers as a college student, Zoe Appleby plied her love for art at a museum just a few miles from the Thomas Aquinas College campus. This past summer, however, she was able to go somewhat further afield — 6,000 miles further afield — for a six-week program at the Rome Institute of Liberal Arts.

One of only 16 students chosen for the program, which is taught by professors from great books colleges across the U.S., Zoe spent her mornings in the Eternal City in seminars and lectures about Plato, Vitruvius, Dante, Apuleius, and Hegel, followed by afternoon visits to the many fine museums in the area. She also managed to squeeze into her daily schedule an optional two-hour class in Italian.

The beneficiary of a generous Institute scholarship, Zoe lived in the San Pietro apartments, “about half a block from St. Peter's Square,” she notes, which she passed, daily, along with the Ponte Sant'Angelo and the Pantheon on her walk to class. Her only complaint was that her time in Rome — and her visits to the museums — couldn't have lasted longer.

“This summer was a great opportunity for me to see if art history was really something I could devote my life to, and I found that I could,” says Zoe. “I plan to go into art history either in the baroque era or the northern renaissance era, with a view toward either an academic career, teaching at college or university and publishing, or curatorial work.”



Alumni Updates

Graduates Put Faith in Action

Dr. Pia de Solenni ('93)

Less than a year after being named the Theological Consultant to the Office of Bishop in Orange, California, Dr. Pia de Solenni ('93) has been appointed as chancellor of the Diocese — the highest and most senior position available to the laity.



“Pia is an inspirational and well-respected theologian and has proven herself a thoughtful and humble leader within our Church,” said the Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange. “We are blessed as a diocese to benefit from her expertise, passion, and faith. I look forward to the many gifts that she will continue to bring to bear in service to the people of Orange.”

As chancellor, Dr. de Solenni plays a central role in supporting Bishop Vann’s organizational and ministerial efforts in the nation’s 12th largest diocese, with over 1.3 million Catholics. She serves as lead administrator/secretary of the Curia, official archivist, record keeper, and Bishop Vann’s strategic and theological advisor.

After graduating from the College, Dr. de Solenni earned a Sacred Theology Baccalaureate from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*) and a Sacred Theology Doctorate, *summa cum laude*, from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. In 2001 Pope St. John Paul II awarded her the Prize of the Pontifical Academies for her groundbreaking dissertation, an analysis of feminist theories in light of St. Thomas Aquinas’ teachings.

“It is a tremendous honor to serve the Diocese of Orange as Chancellor,” says Dr. de Solenni. “I am very grateful to Bishop Vann for his confidence in me and for giving me this opportunity.”

Dr. Peter Kwasniewski ('94)

Alumnus author Dr. Peter Kwasniewski ('94) has penned a new book about the sacred liturgy that has drawn praise from many corners, both at home and abroad.



A professor of theology and philosophy, an instructor of music, and the choirmaster at Wyoming Catholic College, Dr. Kwasniewski — who is also a professional composer and cantor — writes frequently on matters pertaining to the liturgy and sacred music. In *Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness*, he examines the sanctity and grandeur of the traditional Roman liturgy, which, he argues, must play an essential role if there is to be a new springtime in the Church.

Some 6,000 miles from Wyoming, the Most Rev. Athanasius Schneider, O.R.C., Auxiliary Bishop of Astana, Kazakhstan, has described *Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness* as “a precious book” that “demonstrates masterfully the perennial theological, spiritual, and ritual meaning of the liturgy of the Mass.” Indeed, His Excellency continues, the work “constitutes a valuable contribution on behalf of the authentic renewal of the sacred liturgy and of its practice in the Church of our days.”

Closer to home, Gregory DiPippo reviewed *Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness* for *National Review* magazine. The book, he wrote, not only makes an eloquent case for the Traditional Latin Mass, but also shows “how the old Mass can inform the new Mass.” The Church’s history, he adds, “suggests that it will recover much of its lost beauty and transcendence and rediscover its true self,” and Dr. Kwasniewski’s “most recent contribution to that end hastens the process admirably.”

Jane Neumayr Nemcova ('98)

In September, *Legatus* magazine published a “Catholic Higher Education” issue that featured a profile of Jane Neumayr Nemcova ('98), vice president and general



manager of global services for machine intelligence at Lionbridge, a global language services provider.

“In the rapidly developing field of artificial intelligence,” writes author Brian Fraga in the profile, Mrs. Nemcova “is playing her part to ensure that ethics will influence the emerging technology.” A mother of three children and holder of three master’s degrees, Mrs. Nemcova is the daughter of Thomas Aquinas College co-founder Dr. John W. Neumayr. At Lionbridge she specializes in linguistic support for machine learning and artificial intelligence, employing her expertise in the language localization industry throughout the world.

“Her field is extremely technical,” observes the *Legatus* profile, but “it was her classic liberal arts and philosophy education at Thomas Aquinas College ... that gave her the intellectual foundation to make sense of how future technology will impact human societies.” Indeed, studying the great books under the light of faith “has turned out to be an invaluable asset for a business career.”

Says Mrs. Nemcova of her undergraduate education, “It’s very important for the future,” given current technological trends. “Artificial intelligence is going to put a lot of pressure on people to learn how to learn. I think Thomas Aquinas provided an outstanding education for that.”

Patrick Mason ('03)

At their Supreme Convention in August, the Knights of Columbus elected Patrick Mason ('03) to their national Board of Directors. At 36 years old, he is the board’s youngest member.



Mr. Mason’s tenure with the Knights began nearly a decade ago, when, as a freshly minted attorney, he joined his local council in Gallup, New Mexico. Much to his surprise, he soon found himself elected chancellor, the council’s third-highest position. Then, when his council’s grand knight was tragically killed by a drunk driver, and its terminally ill deputy grand knight entered hospice care, Mr. Mason — still only in his 20s — became the council’s leader.

By God’s grace, the council thrived, attracting new, younger members, and earning the prestigious Star Council Award from the Knights’ Supreme Council. Mr. Mason then began representing his council at regional and national conventions and, in short order, was elected state advocate for the Knights in New Mexico. He then proceeded to work his way through the organization’s ranks, culminating in his election, just one year ago, as the Knights’ state deputy for New Mexico — the highest state-level position within the Catholic fraternal organization.

In his leadership of the organization, Mr. Mason has often found himself drawing upon his formation at the College. “Being able to pull from my knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful, and being able to communicate the ideas that I found and developed at Thomas Aquinas College, has really helped me,” he says. “If it weren’t for the strength and faith that the College gave me, I don’t think I would be doing this.”

Rose Carlman ('17)

Less than two years after completing her first marathon, Rose Carlman ('17) ran her tenth in October, this time for a cause dear to her heart.



“It was amazing!” she writes of the race, which she ran to raise funds in memory of Luke Dunn, a 17-month-old boy — and the son of a longtime family friend — who died of a malignant liver tumor in 2015. “It’s so rewarding to run for charity,” she says. “It really motivates me and helps me to focus on others. The whole experience

has been eye-opening about how one act of kindness, one race, can raise awareness and spark charity not only in myself but in others as well. It’s been such a positive endeavor, and I’m grateful to be able to put my running to good use.”

Miss Carlman completed the Hartford Marathon in less than three hours — 2:59:07 — setting a new personal record, and besting most of the competition. Among the 56 women in her age bracket (20–24), she came in first place, while also achieving the 11th fastest time among all 684 women and 48th place among all 1,618 runners, both male and female. Since running her first marathon during her sophomore year, she has competed in nine more, including the Boston Marathon, the world’s oldest and most prestigious 26.2-mile annual road race.

After graduating from the College this spring, she began working in the specialty running/triathlon business while also interning in the equine industry. She has recently been accepted into a the Master’s in Leadership and Management program at the University of LaVerne.

Alumni Religious

It has been a busy few months for many of the Thomas Aquinas College graduates who are pursuing religious vocations!

First, two alumnae sisters made their final professions, taking lifelong vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience: On July 25 **Sr. Maria Jerome (Alma '11) Poelman, O.P.**, made her final vows as a member of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Then, on October 7, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, **Sr. Sophia of the Holy Eucharist, OSB** (Gina Marie Eid '08), made her solemn vows as a member of the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of the Apostles, in Gower, Missouri.



Credit: Helena Heffernan
Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P., prioress general of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, with Sr. Maria Jerome (Alma '11) Poelman, O.P., on the occasion of Sr. Maria Jerome's final vows.

Meanwhile, two other graduates have made their first, or temporary, professions: On the morning of August 8, the Feast of St. Dominic, **Sr. Maria Johanna (Barrett '14), O.P.**, made her first profession as a member of the Dominican Nuns of Summit, New Jersey. Less than a month later **Br. John Winkowitsch, O.P. ('04)**, made his as a Western Dominican Province friar.

Finally, three more graduates have taken the first step in religious life — the postulancy — entering religious communities to begin formal discernment. On September 8, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, **Sean Wood ('13)** and **Sebastian Lemmon ('14)** joined the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in the Bronx, where, by God’s grace, they will take up a life of service to the poor on the streets of New York City. And on November 1, the Feast of All Saints, **Molly O'Brien ('03)** entered the Abbey of St. Walburga, a community of contemplative Benedictine nuns in Virginia Dale, Colorado.

The Healing of Memory

An Interview with Dr. Dawn Eden Goldstein

Note: Dr. Dawn Eden Goldstein is an assistant professor of dogmatic theology at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut. She is the first woman to have received a doctorate in sacred theology from the University of St. Mary of the Lake. She also holds a licentiate in theology from the Pontifical Institute of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. In addition, Dr. Goldstein is a noted author under the name Dawn Eden. Her works include Remembering God’s Mercy, My Peace I Give You, and The Thrill of the Chaste. She lectured at Thomas Aquinas College on September 8, the birthday of the Blessed Mother.

Your own story is profound. You were born into a Jewish family, suffered abuse as a child, wrote for a rock music publication, and after a brief time as a Protestant, became a Catholic. How did this happen?

As someone who grew up in a Reform Jewish household, was abused, and who was an agnostic for many years, the theology of suffering was of great importance for me in coming to Christianity — first as a Protestant, and then to the Catholic faith; it enabled me to find meaning in suffering.

I first discovered this theology of suffering through G. K. Chesterton. I was doing an interview in December of 1995 with Ben Eshbach, a member of a rock band called the Sugarplastic, and I asked him what he was reading. He said a G. K. Chesterton novel, *The Man Who Was Thursday*.

I had never heard of Chesterton, but I read the book, and unlike many — including Chesterton himself — was

charmed by the way he breaks the conventions and takes something that was a fairly conventional spy novel and turns it into an odyssey. What Chesterton proposes at the very end comes as a kind of shock — that God has personal knowledge

of suffering. God has a personal, interior experience of suffering.

Now that I am a dogmatic theologian, I can qualify that in all kinds of ways, saying, “Well, Jesus only suffered in His human nature; He didn’t suffer in His divine nature.” But we have to say that, inasmuch as Jesus’ human nature is hypostatically united in His person to His divine nature, within God there is the memory of suffering.

St. Paul speaks of his own trials as “making up for what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ.” On the face of it, it seems odd to speak of Christ’s suffering as lacking anything. Can you explain St. Paul’s remark?

It can indeed seem like an odd thing to say something is lacking in Christ’s suffering, and this is why Protestants, in particular, really wrestle with Col. 1:24. They will often try to ascribe it to a kind of superstition — that there is a quota of Messianic woes — and that, therefore, a certain amount of suffering has to be filled before Jesus will come back. That is not the Catholic understanding.

If we take what St. Paul says in context — “Therefore I rejoice because in my flesh I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ” — he is not speaking of himself personally, nor is he speaking of any superstition with respect to Messianic woes. He is using “I,” but he is speaking in an instructive, didactic manner to his readers saying, “You are a member of Christ’s body. Our head, Christ, is in heaven, but the body remains on earth. And the body, the body of Christians, of the Church, still suffers.”

Now, St. Paul would be the first to say that Our Lord Jesus Christ’s sufferings were sufficient to redeem the whole world, as the Church has taught. This is in St. Thomas, and I’m sure it’s in many writings before him



Dean John Goyette with Dr. Dawn Eden Goldstein on the evening of September 8, when Dr. Goldstein presented her lecture, “Within Thy Wounds, Hide Me: Redemptive Suffering and the Eucharist.”

as well: One drop of Jesus’ blood was enough to redeem the whole world. But Christ in His human nature, inasmuch as He entered history and lived His earthly life, could only suffer in one body, at one point in time. In His members, though, He continues to suffer until the end of time, until the Second Coming. And just as Christ’s suffering in His earthly life was redemptive, so the suffering of Christ in His members is co-redemptive; it cooperates in Christ’s redemption. This should encourage all of us because it gives to our own finite suffering an infinite worth in Christ.

Another way to say it is that Christ has suffered *for* us, but He has not yet suffered *in* us. This is why, I believe it was said by Chiara Lubich, the founder of Focolare, that any time we feel any suffering we should give it to God immediately, because Jesus Christ took ownership of all human suffering on the Cross. All human suffering rightfully belongs to Him.

So when we suffer, we are cooperating in what is already His?

Yes, that’s right. Of course we have to be careful because we don’t want to simply explain away suffering. We don’t want to deride or ridicule people who are still suffering after Christ has risen. We don’t want to accuse people who are suffering of lacking Christian joy.

We want to understand that, in fact, although there is by definition no pleasure in suffering, there is a profound joy that the sufferer has access to. But it’s different from what we normally mean by joy. The joy we are talking about when we speak of rejoicing in suffering is the joy in feeling Christ’s compassion, that Christ is with us in our suffering and, in a certain sense, suffering with us. Of course, He is not suffering any more historically, because His suffering ended with His death. But Christ’s suffering on the Cross has eternal effects. And He is not present to me as someone who is unacquainted with suffering; He is present to me as someone who remembers what it was like to suffer.

In Jesus’ memories now of His suffering, He doesn’t remember it under an overall filter of the pain; He remembers it under the overall filter of love. He did feel pain, but it was all out of love of the Father, and love of us in the Father. So if I am offering Jesus my own memory, including all my memories of pain, He can teach me how to see my own pain through this filter, this lens of divine love.

Are you saying that, through union with Him, we can go back and retrofit how we suffered in the past?

Yes, I am. Despite the subtitle that my publisher gave to it — *Remembering God’s Mercy: Redeem the Past and Free Yourself from Painful Memories* — it is not so much about being free from painful memories as it is about repurposing painful memories, because we still have the memories; and in a certain sense, we don’t want to lose

them because they are part of God’s providential design for our lives. But we do, as you said, need to retrofit those memories. What I find very beautiful as a survivor of traumatic stress, who suffers from PTSD, is that we don’t have to call up every individual memory in order to retrofit it. All we need to do is acknowledge our woundedness to Christ and offer Him our heart that is wounded. Then this wound in our heart becomes the crack through which the light from Christ’s own glorified light can enter and purify us.

This is an ongoing process. Some people have described the experience of healing from traumatic memories as being like traveling on an upward spiral. Because of the nature of a spiral, as we travel upward, we will keep going back over the same memories. But every time we go back over them, we are at a higher level, seeking to identify: ‘Where is this lack of forgiveness? Is it a lack of forgiveness of the person who hurt me? Is it a lack of forgiveness of myself? Is it a lack of forgiveness of God, Who in His perfect will, ordained that I should suffer this?’

You talked about our woundedness, and the light of Christ entering through our wounds. Does that help to explain why God allows evil to touch us, so that we can admit how much we need Him?

Yes. What you’re touching on is the *felix culpa*, the happy fault. This is something that is not understood by people of other faiths. They have trouble understanding why God chose to permit us to be broken so that we could be healed.

I can’t claim to understand the whole plan. That’s part of the joy we will experience in heaven, where we will see how, yes, God could have made the world a different way; He could have given Adam and Eve perfect union with Him without their ever sinning. But this is the way that most shows His glory and enables us to love Him at a higher level than we would had we not experienced Jesus Christ going all the way down to the depths to raise us up.

“All we need to do is acknowledge our woundedness to Christ and offer Him our heart that is wounded. Then this wound in our heart becomes the crack through which the light from Christ’s own glorified light can enter and purify us.”

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Yes. It is strange and dangerous to be in a position of speaking as an authority on suffering, and in that regard, there is one thought I would like to leave you with.

After I wrote my book, *My Peace I Give You*, I heard that Fr. Arne Panula, a priest of Opus Dei and the director of the Catholic Information Center in Washington, D.C., was diagnosed with prostate cancer. At that time, I was working on my licentiate on the Catholic teaching on redemptive suffering. So I thought, “I’ll go visit Fr. Panula, and I’ll comfort him by telling him about this great Catholic doctrine.”

So I went see him, and I started to say, “Well, you know that you are in union with Christ as you suffer.” And he said to me — not with the least bit of resentment but with almost a childlike transparency — “Yes, I know that. But it’s still hard.” He wasn’t trying to shut me up. But that shut me up.

Pope Francis says every time he speaks about suffering that the only proper response to suffering is silence. Not the silence of not doing anything, but the silence of listening to the person and being present for the person.

So, with everything that I’ve been saying in this interview, with everything that I claim to be an expert on — none of that takes away the fact that, as Fr. Arne said, suffering is hard. Suffering is something before which our mortal flesh must keep silent.

“It is as if we are Being Brought Back to the Beginning”

An Interview with the Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, S.T.L., D.D.

Note: The Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, S.T.L., D.D., Archbishop of Oklahoma City, was Thomas Aquinas College’s 2017 Convocation Speaker.

You were appointed Archbishop of Oklahoma City in 2010. What is distinctive about your archdiocese?

Oklahoma is the Bible Belt, and I like to tell people that we are the belt buckle of the Bible Belt. Catholics are about 5 percent of the population, so we are a tiny minority.

On the other hand, religious practice in Oklahoma in general is very, very high. I’ll never forget my first Saturday night there. I was watching the late news, getting ready to go to bed. They were doing the last weather report, and right before signing off they said, ‘Now tomorrow morning, when you get up for services, you’ll need to grab a coat because it’s going to be cold out.’ Everybody gets up and goes to church on Sunday!

So we Catholics are a very small part of that overall Christian community. But the people of Oklahoma are very respectful of faith, religion, and religious practice, and Catholics are very highly regarded. We wield an influence greater than our numbers would lead one to expect, in terms of Catholic healthcare and our Catholic schools and Catholic Charities. We provide many services to people, especially the vulnerable. So I think people understand that we, as Catholics, are playing above our weight class.

Do you have certain goals or a particular focus for the archdiocese?

We went through a process a few years ago in which we engaged in listening sessions all around the Archdiocese to assess the landscape, formulate a vision, and implement that vision. The mission, very simply, is from the Gospel: Go make disciples. It’s really all about the need to evangelize, not just to maintain buildings and structures. We are called to mission. But we need to equip our Catholic people to go make disciples. So we have been reorganizing our archdiocese and the curia, and putting our resources in place to support that mission, for example, strengthening our departments of evangelization and catechesis.

We are also cultivating a culture of vocations. And we have been spending a great deal of time these last few years preparing for the beatification of Fr. Stanley Rother. He is the first American-born martyr and priest ever beatified. This will be a wonderful occasion of grace and renewal for the church in Oklahoma and the United States. I hope it will help stimulate vocations to the priesthood as we are able to lift up Bl. Stanley Rother as a model of priestly holiness.

As you might know, a steady 10 percent of TAC alumni enter the priesthood and religious life. What advice do you have for students here at the College who are discerning their vocation?

I discovered my own vocation through the cultivation of good, wholesome friendships. So my advice would be to create such friendships, spiritual friendships. Also, students must make time for prayer; it doesn’t just happen. Especially they need to understand prayer is being in relationship with the Lord, being in friendship with God, cultivating that friendship, spending time together. We make time for those people in our lives that are important to us; we have to make time to be with the Lord. So I would encourage young people to develop a certain pattern, rhythm, and order to their prayer life: time for Mass, Confession, reading the Scriptures, cultivating a devotion to Mary, praying the Rosary, and, if possible, seeking spiritual direction. It’s not going to happen unless we make it happen, unless we are making ourselves available to the Lord to hear His voice. We have to learn how to be quiet, which is pretty hard these days. We have to disconnect from social media, at least periodically, to hear the still small voice of the Lord.



In your Convocation homily and your Matriculation remarks at the College, you spoke about your experience in the Integrated Humanities Program at the Pearson School at the University of Kansas. Though it was short-lived, its alumni are impressive: Among them are Bishop Conley in Lincoln, the Abbot of Clear Creek Monastery, and yourself. There were also many conversions among the Pearson students. What accounts for this?

The glib response would be grace, but that’s the true response. I think it was a time of grace, a very privileged time. We were being exposed to wisdom and beauty and goodness and truth, things we were not being exposed to elsewhere.

The quality of friendships that developed within this community and around our professors invited a sense of wonder through poetry, star-gazing, and many other extracurricular events. Never for a moment did I feel that there was proselytizing going on; rather, we had permission to search and to seek the truth. It was through those things that the Lord really began to touch hearts. I don’t want to underestimate the importance of the curriculum. It was very important, but it was really the relationships, I think, that had the most profound effect. They were relationships we could trust in; these were teachers who truly loved their students, who loved what they were teaching, and who believed what they were teaching was true. And they lifted up the beautiful for us. We were being drawn in by those things: by the true, the good, and the beautiful — and the real.

I remember Dr. Frank Nelick, a retired naval captain, and an English professor. A very salty man. One of his not infrequent refrains was, “Rocks are hard, and water is wet.” Because many of us were so insulated from the real world around us, they really had to hammer that, to demonstrate to us that real things mattered. The curriculum and lectures stressed this, but so also did the extracurricular activities.

We also had poetry readings and things of that sort, and through these we found a level of relating to one another as friends that was far more noble than what our peers and classmates were doing at the Wagon Wheel Café down the street, or at the local bars. Though we were known to visit those places, too!

In the end, with the program being dependent on funding from a secular, public, state-funded university, the program did not survive. Thankfully, though, the fruit continues to be produced and multiply through succeeding generations.

Last year there was an attempt made to have a black mass in Oklahoma City. Would you recount what happened?

Thanks to the brilliant legal counsel that we received from the law firm of Busch and Caspino, it did not happen. Their strategy was simple: If the Satanists claimed to have a consecrated host, which they planned to desecrate in a black mass, the only way they could have obtained it was by disreputable means, illegal means, and they were, in fact, in possession of stolen property. The judge found quickly and swiftly in our favor and ordered that the Satanists return the host.

They never completed the black mass in the sense of actually desecrating the host, but they went ahead and performed their Satanic ritual at the civic center without

it — which was awful enough. But we were spared of anything sacrilegious.

What effect did this have on your diocese?

I was aghast when I first heard this was being threatened. Earlier that spring, as you might recall, there had been a threat of a black mass at Harvard University, but it never happened because of the public outrage. But when I started raising the question locally in Oklahoma, I was surprised and disappointed that there wasn’t more outrage. Unlike Boston, with its residual Catholic culture, it required a bit of education for us. We began to engage some of the local ecumenical leaders to get them to work with us.

We had holy hours in our parishes leading up to that day. Parishes were praying the Prayer to St. Michael. We ended up having a public Holy Hour at a nearby church on Sunday afternoon right before the black mass was scheduled to take place. I preached; we sang hymns; and then we had a solemn procession through the neighborhood with the Blessed Sacrament. Well over a thousand people came out and joined in that. My strategy was not to give the devil his due, not to focus attention on what they were doing at the civic center that afternoon, but to lift up the Eucharist and say, “This is what we believe in.” And “Jesus is Lord, and He is present here among us.” It galvanized our Catholic community with a sense of pride and elevated the profile of the Catholic Church in the public eye in a way that was ennobling, such that non-Catholics came to say, “Maybe these Catholics aren’t so bad. Maybe they’re Christians, too.” So the overall effect was very positive. It was really a wonderful, graced time to teach, preach, to bear witness to what it is that we Catholics stand for and what we believe — and Who we adore.

“My strategy was not to give the devil his due ... but to lift up the Eucharist and say, ‘This is what we believe in.’ And ‘Jesus is Lord, and He is present here among us.’”

There seems to be a rise in Satanism and demonic behavior. What do you think accounts for it?

There is a rise of atheism, of people rejecting God. The ironic thing is that, even though they reject God, Satanism has become fashionable in popular culture, in young people in particular, because there is still this unexplainable fascination with things occult. Denying God doesn’t make God unreal, obviously, but I think it renders people vulnerable to other influences.

The Evil One has many different ways to get into our imagination, into our soul, into our mind, and I think pornography, so commonplace, is a huge part of that. This is tied to the rejection of the truth of marriage, and the perversion of human sexuality. Gender theory ideology, denying God as our creator (“male and female He created them”) and assuming that role ourselves, taking God’s place to define what we are — these are all Satanic influences; these are Satanic approaches and seductions, which our society and culture are embracing hook, line, and sinker.

So what is the way back?

I think we are facing a culture which is every bit as pagan as the culture of the Apostolic times. What I think is called for, therefore, is a whole new evangelization. We need to evangelize the culture; we need to evangelize just as the Apostles began to do on the day of Pentecost. We must pray for a new Pentecost, to kindle in our hearts the fires of Divine Love and to empower us, to send us on a mission to proclaim Christ and to bear witness to Christ throughout the whole world. It is as if we are being brought back to the beginning, to start anew.

The Sacramental Veil

St. Thomas Aquinas on the Eucharist as Spiritual Food

By Dr. John J. Goyette
Dean, Thomas Aquinas College

Note: The following remarks are adapted from Dean Goyette's report to the Board of Governors at its May 12, 2017, meeting. They are part of an ongoing series of talks about why the College includes certain texts in its curriculum.

St. Thomas Aquinas is famous for his writing on the Eucharist. He wrote several Eucharistic hymns we use almost exclusively for Eucharistic adoration: “Panis Angelicus,” “Pange Lingua,” “O Salutaris Hostia,” and “Tantum Ergo.” He was commissioned by Pope Urban IV in 1264 to compose the celebratory Mass and the divine office for the newly instituted feast of Corpus Christi. Three hundred years later, the Council of Trent used St. Thomas’ treatment of the Eucharist as a basis for its own doctrinal formulations. Indeed, Thomas is so well known for his writings on the Eucharist that, in addition to the title “Universal Doctor” and “Angelic Doctor,” he is named the “Doctor of the Eucharist.” At the College, we spend the last two weeks of Senior Theology studying St. Thomas’ treatment of the Eucharist from the *Summa Theologiae*.

There are, of course, many profound elements of Aquinas’ teaching about the mystery of the Eucharist. He discusses the purpose and fittingness of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the supernatural and miraculous conversion of bread and wine into the true body and blood of Christ (which is called “transubstantiation”), and the miraculous suspension of the accidents of bread and wine after the consecration. There is much to think and ponder about the Eucharist, but I would like to focus on just one element of Thomas’s teaching, the Eucharist as spiritual food.

In John 6, Jesus stuns His followers by saying: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.” The disciples begin to question. Jesus says, even more shockingly:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him (Jn 6:53-56).

“The Eucharist is called the ‘bread of angels’ because it is a foretaste of heavenly fellowship and spiritual eating that the angels enjoy, and we look forward to in the life to come.”

The disciples begin to doubt: “Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, ‘This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?’” (Jn 6:60) “But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, ‘Do you take offense at this? ... It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life’” (Jn 6:61-3). According to St. Thomas, Jesus explains that His words are to be taken according to a spiritual meaning, rather than a material meaning. “Our Lord said that he would give himself to them as spiritual food, not as though the true flesh of Christ is not present in this sacrament of the altar, but because it is eaten in a certain spiritual and divine way” (Commentary on John, #992).

What is the difference between spiritual food and material food? Material food restores the strength and vitality of the body by changing into the one who eats it, whereas spiritual food nourishes by changing the person who eats it into Christ Himself. When we eat Christ, we



do not physically tear His body with our teeth, and digest Him in some kind of cannibalistic ritual. It is rather we who are changed by what we receive: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 20:20). To be clear: St. Thomas is not calling into question the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but explaining what being fed by His true body and blood means. Spiritual eating is nothing other than being united to Christ by faith and charity. This is the proper effect of the sacrament of the Eucharist.

But doesn’t the recipient of the sacrament materially eat the body of Christ when he takes the host into his mouth and physically chews it up? The answer is no. What I chew with my teeth are the appearances of bread, that is, the “accidents” or “properties” of the bread. Christ Himself is invisibly present under the accidents of the bread, but not in a manner that is subject to the actions of my teeth, or the digestive powers of my stomach. Indeed, the Christ that is present substantially under the accidents of bread and wine is Christ’s glorified and impassible body that is in heaven. It would be neither possible nor praiseworthy to eat Christ materially. Indeed, it would be an abomination. Hence, we eat Christ spiritually under the sacramental sign, the material eating of the appearances of bread. Just as the water of baptism is the external sign of an interior cleansing of the soul from sin, so the physical chewing of the host is an external sign of an interior and invisible eating which is nothing other than being united in friendship to Christ Himself Who is in heaven.

But the pouring of the baptismal water, and the consumption of the sacramental species of bread and wine, are not merely signs or symbols of some spiritual reality. If they were mere signs or symbols, there would be no difference between what the Catholic Church teaches about the sacraments and the Protestant understanding of the sacraments as mere symbols. The water of baptism is not only a sign of spiritual cleansing, but also an instrument of divine power producing the interior effect. And the accidents of bread and wine are not merely a sign of spiritual food, they provide the sensible medium through which Christ makes Himself really and truly present, the sacramental veil beneath which is His body, blood, soul, and divinity.

Understanding the nature of spiritual eating helps us to see why St. Thomas calls the Eucharist the “bread of angels.” Since the angels are united to Christ in perfect charity and in the beatific vision, St. Thomas says that they, too, eat Christ spiritually, and do so in a higher and more perfect way. Indeed, our own spiritual eating in the sacrament of the altar is ordered toward the more perfect spiritual eating that the angels enjoy. The Eucharist is called the “bread of angels” because it is a foretaste of heavenly fellowship and spiritual eating that the angels enjoy, and we look forward to in the life to come.

Near the end of St. Thomas’ life, after completing his treatise on the Eucharist, he was seen praying in the chapel at the Dominican Friary in Naples. His confreres saw him lifted into the air, and heard a voice coming from the crucifix saying, “Thou has written well of me, Thomas, what reward will thou have?” He replied, “Nothing but you Lord.”

St. Thomas Aquinas, pray for us.

St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

Highlights from the Last Quarter

- On August 25 **Dr. Steven Cain**, a member of the College’s teaching faculty, presented the year’s opening lecture, “Friendship and Liberal Education.”
- Dr. Dawn Eden Goldstein**, an assistant professor of dogmatic theology at Holy Apostles College and Seminary, spoke on September 8 on the subject, “Within Thy Wounds, Hide Me: Redemptive Suffering and the Eucharist.”
- On September 22 **Dr. Thomas Osborne**, a professor of philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas, delivered a lecture entitled, “Francisco de Vitoria (d. 1546) on the Law of Nations and the Natural Partnership of Different Peoples.”
- Periodically members of the faculty or chaplaincy present on-campus “tutor talks,” informal lectures followed by question-and-answer sessions. These late-afternoon gatherings afford an opportunity for the speakers to discuss some topic of interest to them and to share their thoughts with other members of the community. On October 11, tutor **Dr. Paul K. Shields** gave this year’s first tutor talk, “The Astronomy of Genesis 1.”



- 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 13 and focused on T. S. Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*.
- Classical guitarist **Paul Galbraith**, a Grammy Nominee and *Billboard* Top Ten Artist, performed at the Fall Concert on October 27.



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



CAMPUS LIFE



1. Students ... 2. ... and members of the faculty don darkened glasses to observe the solar eclipse on Convocation Day. 3. Competitors battle at the net during this fall's Class Volleyball Tournament. 4. Students relax after ascending to the peak of Topatopa Bluff at a fall campout led by Head Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., and Tutor Emeritus Dr. Carol Day. 5. Donors roll up their sleeves for the semi-annual campus blood drive in St. Augustine Hall. 6. Thanks to the past year's rains, children are able, once again, to enjoy the annual Cardboard Yacht Race at Alumni & Parent Day. 7. Resident Assistant Jeannette Richard and Dr. Day lead a women's campout in early November.

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

| Weekdays | Saturdays & Civic Holidays | Sundays & Holy Days |
|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 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 confirm Mass times at thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes.

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

Calendar of Events

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

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| First Semester Examinations | December 9–15 |
| Christmas Vacation | December 16–January 7 |
| Lecture: Dr. Christopher Decaen Tutor, Thomas Aquinas College | January 19 |
| Seminar: St. Thomas Aquinas on God's Justice and Mercy Legatus Summit, Orlando, Florida thomasaquinas.edu/legatus-summit | January 25 |
| Presidents' Day Lecture: Dr. Mary Nichols Professor of Political Science, Baylor University | February 23 |
| Student Performance: The St. Genesius Players Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> | March 5 |
| St. Thomas Day Lecture: Dr. Duane Berquist Emeritus Professor of Philosophy Assumption College | March 7 |

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