



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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Habemus Papam!

College Greet's Announcement of Pope Francis with Cheers, Prayers

News of the white smoke above St. Peter's first reached the campus of Thomas Aquinas College at about 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 13. The bells in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel began ringing shortly thereafter. Shouts of "Habemus Papam!" could be heard on the academic quadrangle, and students rushed for a place to take in the news.

Some descended upon the chaplains' residence, St. Ignatius of Loyola Hall — fittingly, it would turn out, given the election of the first Jesuit pope — to catch a glimpse of the Holy Father on television. Others went to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel for the mid-morning Mass, and prayed for him.

By the time the Pontiff emerged on the papal balcony, Mass had ended, and Loyola Hall was filled to capacity. Crowded around the television set, students occasionally turned down the volume to recite the prayer to St. Michael or to sing "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" and other favorite hymns. A group of young men proudly waved a Vatican flag, while others snapped photos of the joyous gathering on their cell phones. Those who could not fit into Loyola Hall waited anxiously in St. Joseph Commons, and when His Holiness Pope Francis greeted the world, the crowds in both buildings erupted with applause.

A few days later, video and images of the jubilant students in Loyola Hall were featured on the *CBS Evening News* as part of a story, "American Catholic Youth on Pope Francis." The story, shot entirely on campus, included interviews with two students and footage of the Chapel. "The humility that he shows is such a tangible example for young people," junior Andrea Florez told correspondent Carter Evans. "It helps us to take a look at the Church in a new way."



Top: Students eagerly await their first glimpse of Pope Francis while watching the news broadcast from St. Peter's Square. **Bottom:** Students cheer the new Holy Father.

A Time of Prayer

The election of Pope Francis marked the culmination of a busy time of prayer on campus that began with the news that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI — whose coat of arms is inlaid in the Chapel's marble floor — would renounce the Chair of St. Peter. In keeping with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' suggestion, and with the permission of Archbishop José H. Gomez, the College offered a special Mass in the depart-

ing pontiff's honor on the day before his resignation. "Our beloved pontiff goes into seclusion within 24 hours to contemplate the pierced side of Christ," Chaplain Rev. Joseph Illo said in his homily. "Let us pray for this man," he added, "who will renounce the papacy within a few hours, but does so in great hope."

During the interregnum, the College entered into prayer for the Church, Her cardinals, and the next Holy Father. Anonymous signs appeared around campus inviting students to participate in a one-day fast in support of the conclave, which many students joined. Meanwhile, Head Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., launched a novena — prayed by students, alumni, and friends of the College everywhere — asking the Lord to bestow courage and discernment upon the "selected oarsmen" who would soon "choose the new captain" for the Barque of Peter. The day after the novena came to an end, white smoke appeared above the Vatican.

On March 21, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel was the site of another special Mass, this one in celebration of the installation of Pope Francis. The choir loft, packed with excited student singers, filled the Chapel with the music of Hassler's *Missa Brevis*, and a portrait of the Holy Father stood in the sanctuary, just below the ambo, surrounded by gold and white bunting.

"The Thomas Aquinas College community rejoices at the election of Pope Francis, and we pledge our loyalty to the new Vicar of Christ and head of the Roman Catholic Church," said Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean. "We join with our fellow Catholics around the world in offering prayers of thanksgiving for our new Holy Father and in asking God to pour forth His graces and blessings upon Pope Francis as he begins his pontificate."

Year of Faith

Working with the Church to Ensure Fidelity in the College's Teaching

"American Catholics are becoming increasingly aware of the growing tendency of Catholic colleges to secularize themselves — that is, to loosen their connection with the teaching Church and to diminish deliberately their Catholic character. Catholic parents in particular are becoming alarmed at the effects that this secularization has or threatens to have on the intellectual and moral formation of their children. The colleges themselves display a growing inability to define themselves in such a way as to justify their continued existence as Catholic institutions."

Thus begins *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, the founding document of Thomas Aquinas College. Published in 1969, the "Blue Book" not only lamented the secularizing trend in Catholic liberal education, but presented a bold vision of "a liberal education which is undertaken in subordination to the teaching of the Church," and in which the Faith is "the light under which the curriculum is conducted."

A decade later, Bl. John Paul II ascended to the Chair of St. Peter with similar concerns about the state of Catholic higher education. Gradually the Holy Father proposed several reforms to Catholic colleges and universities. This process began with the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law; it continued by way of clarifications from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1989; and it culminated in Bl. John Paul II's 1990 Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

"The *mandatum* represents both a solemn duty and a great honor for our tutors. We are humbled and gratified to receive our bishop's formal recognition."

Together these documents provide a basis for reform and an anchor of stability, laying down norms for Catholic institutions of higher learning. They also offer three directives that Catholic colleges and universities must follow if they are serious about teaching in communion with the Church — directives that Thomas Aquinas College is determined to uphold.

Profession of Faith & Oath of Fidelity

The Code of Canon Law requires that "teachers in any universities whatsoever who teach disciplines which deal with faith or morals" make a Profession of Faith at the beginning of their term of office. The Church additionally requires these educators to swear an Oath of Fidelity. At Thomas Aquinas College, only practicing Catholics may teach theology, and all Catholic members of the faculty make the profession and oath.

"It is one of the highlights of our Convocation ceremony every year when a new tutor places his hand on the Bible and makes these profound commitments," says Dean Brian T. Kelly. Before the entire faculty, members of the Board of Governors, and assembled students, the

new tutors promise to "always preserve communion with the Catholic Church" and to "adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate when they exercise the authentic Magisterium."

The Mandatum

The Code of Canon Law further requires that "those who teach theological disciplines in any institute of higher studies have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority." Thus all members of the Thomas Aquinas College faculty who teach theology are required to submit written requests to the local ordinary, currently the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, stating that they intend to present the teachings of the Church faithfully in their classrooms and scholarship. To date, each of these tutors has received a favorable reply — formally known as the *mandatum* — acknowledging their intention to teach within the full communion of the Catholic Church, and calling on them to foster this communion as educators.

"The *mandatum* represents both a solemn duty and a great honor for our tutors," says Dr. Kelly. "As a faculty, we are committed to teaching in fidelity to the Magisterium, and so we are humbled and gratified to receive our bishop's formal recognition." Although the *mandatum* applies only to theology, the College strives to teach with the mind of the Church in all disciplines. "There is only one Truth," Dr. Kelly adds, "and we aim to serve Him in all that we do."

From the Desk of the President

The Truth Shall Set You Free: 45 Years after the Land O’Lakes Statement

Note: This article originally appeared in Legatus magazine.

The period of the 1960s was a time of great tumult in the United States, one that had devastating effects on the country’s institutions and mores. Its ravages could be seen perhaps nowhere more clearly than on college campuses. Truth gave way to skepticism and relativism, and expressions such as “free love” and “question authority” became the catchphrases of student life.

Catholic colleges were not immune to these influences. Venerable institutions that for many scores of years had faithfully passed on the intellectual patrimony of the Church began to adopt the diluted curricula, methods, and aims of their secular counterparts. Not only was campus life at many of these institutions succumbing to the permissiveness of the time, a longstanding commitment to Catholic liberal education was quickly disappearing.

“On these campuses, Catholicism is not simply an addition to an otherwise secular project. It is at the heart of their endeavors. They are proving that fidelity to the teachings of the Church is no impediment to academic excellence.”

In 1967, against this backdrop, Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, convened a group of prominent Catholic educators in Land O’Lakes, Wis. Their aim was to chart a new course for Catholic higher education in America, one that would resemble all too well that of their secular counterparts. The meeting resulted in a document entitled, “Statement on the Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University.”

Hoping to garner the kind of reputation for academic excellence enjoyed by secular institutions of higher learning, the statement declared, “The Catholic university must have a *true autonomy* and *academic freedom* in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself” (emphasis added).



Going even further, it stated that the Catholic university “should carry on a continual examination of all aspects and all activities of the Church and should objectively evaluate them.” In other words, where once the measure of the Catholic university was the Magisterium of the Church, now the Catholic university would not only be its own judge, but in an audacious upending of the tradition, it would also be the measure of the Church. Truly, this was a watershed moment for Catholic higher education in the United States.

Genuine Academic Freedom

Implicit in this declaration of autonomy was a deeply flawed understanding of the meaning of freedom. The teachings of the Catholic Church had for centuries been understood as a guide in the pursuit of truth, assisting those engaged in rigorous intellectual inquiry and bolstering their pursuit of knowledge about nature, man, and God. The Land O’Lakes Statement, however, asserted the opposite — that the truths of the Faith were instead an impediment to legitimate academic inquiry.

This notion captured the attention of the founders of Thomas Aquinas College, themselves professors at this turbulent time, and it galvanized their desire to found a new institution that would embody St. Anselm’s description of the Catholic’s quest for wisdom, “faith seeking understanding.” In 1969 they published what would become the governing document of a new college. Entitled *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Education*, it articulated an alternative view of the Catholic intellectual life, one that echoes Christ’s teachings that He “is the way, the truth, and the life,” and that the “Truth shall set you free.”

In a key section of the *Proposal*, our founders describe the Faith as a “light ... which illumines understanding and serves as an indispensable guide in the intellectual life.... Contrary to what is often assumed, liberal education does not take place in spite of or even apart from the Christian faith. Rather, the Christian student, because of his faith, can be liberally educated in the most perfect and complete way.” Thus reasserting fidelity to the teaching Church as its foundation, Thomas Aquinas College opened its doors in 1971.

From the Heart of the Church

In the years since, under the leadership of other courageous men and women, a number of additional faith-

ful Catholic colleges have sprung up across the country. Moreover, some existing institutions have undertaken to re-establish their Catholic identity. On these campuses, Catholicism is not simply an addition to an otherwise secular project. It is at the heart of their endeavors. Together they are proving that fidelity to the teachings of the Church is no impediment to academic excellence.

Buttressing these efforts is the encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, promulgated by Bl. John Paul II in 1998, which describes the complementary nature of faith and reason, “the two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.” *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, issued in 1990, elaborates on this theme and provides practical directives. This apostolic constitution, in many ways a rebuttal to the Land O’Lakes Statement, articulates the nature and objectives of a Catholic university, stressing “fidelity to the Christian message” on the part of faculty members.

“Yet the new Catholic institutions that have the Church’s teachings at their heart are providing an antidote not only for Catholic higher education but for our culture. Having been well-formed intellectually, morally, and spiritually, many of the graduates of these institutions are now teachers and professors themselves.”

Hope for the Future

Despite the Church’s guidance, 45 years after the publication of the Land O’Lakes Statement its false principle of “academic freedom” has become entrenched at many of our Catholic colleges and universities. Yet the new Catholic institutions that have the Church’s teachings at their heart are providing an antidote not only for Catholic higher education but for our culture. Having been well-formed intellectually, morally, and spiritually, many of the graduates of these institutions are now teachers and professors themselves. They are committed to passing on the great intellectual tradition of the Church to young people at their alma maters, in seminaries, and perhaps most importantly, at institutions that have yet to embrace the principles of *Ex Corde*. Our hopes for Catholic higher education — and for our country — lie with them.

A Family Affinity

Walter J. Conn Elected to Board of Governors

The Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors has elected to its ranks a new member with a familiar name: Mr. Walter J. Conn of San Marino, Calif.

The Conn family and the College enjoy a long-standing friendship dating back more than 20 years. It began in 1992, when one of Mr. Conn’s brothers, Rev. Thomas Conn, S.J., came to the College as a chaplain, a position in which he faithfully served until his death from cancer in 1997. During that time, Fr. Conn was an enthusiastic evangelist for Thomas Aquinas College, introducing it to all those he loved, including his brother James, who has been a member of the Board of Governors since 1995, and Walter, who now joins James on the Board.

“I got to know the College because Tom was so pleased about it,” recalls Mr. Conn. “He liked that it was so strongly Catholic, and that it taught people about life rather than about business or something else so narrowly



focused. He was very impressed with that, and he felt the College taught the Faith even better than some of the seminaries.” Inspired by his brother’s endorsement, Mr. Conn became a loyal benefactor of the College in 1993.

The son of Irish immigrants, Mr. Conn grew up in South Pasadena, Calif. He attended the University of Santa Clara through the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program, and upon graduating, entered the U.S. Army, where he served as a missile officer, first in San Francisco and then in Germany.

In 1963, having attained the rank of captain, Mr. Conn received an honorable discharge from the Army and decided to pursue a career in real estate. He took a job with Charles Dunn Co. in Los Angeles, and established what became one of the largest regional property management companies in Southern California. In 1995 he purchased the other divisions of Charles Dunn Co. and became its chairman. On April 1, 2013, he completed his 50th year with the company.

Mr. Conn and his wife, Donna, have three adult children, all of whom work with him at Charles Dunn, and two grandchildren. In addition to his work for Thomas Aquinas College, he serves on the board of the International Theological Institute, and he is a trustee emeritus

“Thomas Aquinas is doing a great deal of good for its students. It helps young people understand what is important in life and how to become better people through God’s teachings.”

of Gonzaga University. He sits on the boards of the Los Angeles Opera, the California Hospital Medical Center Foundation, the Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart, and various other organizations.

“We are very pleased and grateful to have another Conn on the Board,” says Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean. “Walter brings vast experience, a generous heart, and a proven love for the College that will be of great benefit to our noble cause of Catholic liberal education.”

For his part, Mr. Conn says that he is glad to continue his family’s tradition of service to the College. “Thomas Aquinas is doing a great deal of good for its students,” he says. “It helps young people understand what is important in life and how to become better people through God’s teachings. This is why I am pleased to be part of Thomas Aquinas College.”

The Paschal Triduum

Marking the Passion, Death — and Resurrection — of Jesus Christ on Campus

With nearly half of the student body traveling during Easter Vacation, the campus of Thomas Aquinas College grows quiet over Holy Week. After the final classes on Wednesday afternoon, the classrooms go dark. For a brief time, the work, the studies, the myriad activities that dominate campus life cease. Thoughts and hearts turn entirely to Our Lord, His sacrifice, and His ultimate triumph.

For those students who remained on campus this year, the College offered a three-day retreat entitled “Holy Week Liturgy and Life,” which included the complete Triduum liturgy as well as three conferences each day. Rev. Luke Mata, a priest of *Opus Dei*, served as the retreat master, leading the conferences between services in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. At all other times, silence was observed across the campus.

Mass of the Lord’s Supper

On Holy Thursday, the College’s head chaplain, Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., served as the principal celebrant at the Solemn Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper. In imitation of Christ’s service of the Apostles, Fr. Buckley washed the feet of 12 young men, recalling Jesus’ words in the night’s Gospel reading: “I have given you an example that you also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

After Holy Communion, a solemn procession of the College’s chaplains and acolytes brought the consecrated hosts for the next day’s Good Friday service to the altar of repose in the Chapel’s south transept. Students then followed, staying to adore the Blessed Sacrament, just as the Lord asked Sts. Peter, John, and James to remain with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest (Matt. 26:40).

Acolytes snuffed out the sanctuary lamp, confirming the absence of the Eucharistic Lord in the tabernacle, which was left empty and ajar. The altar, now stripped bare, stood between the Chapel’s shrine paintings, which were concealed throughout Holy Week with violet cloths. With these signs of the saints, the heavenly banquet, and the Blessed Sacrament thus removed, the Chapel became eerily barren in anticipation of Good Friday.

Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion

The Triduum Liturgy continued the next afternoon at 3:00 p.m., the hour of Our Lord’s death. Fr. Buckley, along with Fr. Luke and Chaplain Rev. Joseph Illo, entered the silent chapel, prostrating themselves before the altar. The congregation stood for a sung version of St. John’s Passion narrative. Choir Director Daniel Grimm (’76) took the part of the narrator, and his son Jack (’15) that of St. Peter and others. Student members of the choir repeated the words of the mob that clamored for Christ’s death, symbolizing the complicity of all men, through sin, in the Crucifixion. The congregation then prayed the Solemn Prayers for the Church and Her intentions, before receiving the Body and Blood of Our Lord, as poured out on the first Good Friday, in Holy Communion.

Students returned to the Chapel that evening for Stations of the Cross. With the sunlight fading, the building grew cold and dark, heightening the sense of desolation. Fr. Buckley walked through the Chapel’s wide aisles, joined by three acolytes — two bearing candles; one, a covered crucifix — and led the devotion at each of the Chapel’s century-old, travertine stations. *We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You, because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

On both Thursday and Friday evening, students came to the Chapel at 9:45 p.m. for *Tenebrae* (shadows, or darkness), a special celebration of the *Matins* and *Lauds* components of the Liturgy of the Hours. The ceremony involved the gradual extinguishing of 14 candles in the sanctuary, bringing the Chapel into complete darkness, followed by a loud bang, representative of the earthquake that followed Christ’s death. Then one last lit candle returned into view — a promise of the Resurrection — after which all departed in silence.

Easter Vigil

At 11:00 p.m. on Saturday, students, members of the faculty, and their families gathered on the Chapel plaza before a kindling Easter fire. Fr. Illo lit and blessed the Paschal candle and then, in solemn procession, brought it into the Chapel. As he made his way with the candle across the nave toward the sanctuary, he stopped three

times to chants of *Lumen Christi* (light of Christ), to which the assembly responded, *Deo Gratias* (thanks be to God). Members of the faithful illuminated their own, small candles from its flame, with the fire passing from one person to the next, gradually bringing light to the whole building. Junior Thomas Quackenbush then chanted the age-old words of the *Exultet*.

Soon thereafter, the candles were extinguished and the Chapel was dark once again, as lectors read Scriptural passages that spanned the course of Salvation history. Then, as the Choir sang the *Gloria* — which had been missing from the Liturgy throughout Lent — the lights came back on, and the bells rang out. The epistle and St. Luke’s account of the Resurrection followed.

This year, those attending the Easter Vigil were blessed to witness the entry into the Church of Abigail Retallick (’14), a student from Hot Springs, Mont. Miss Retallick, who had received instruction in the Faith from Fr. Buckley, took the name Mary Magdalene and received all three Sacraments of Initiation — Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. “Before coming here, I had said that I would never convert, but God blessed me immensely by leading me here and showing me how Christ’s teachings are being followed today,” says Miss Retallick. “I feel like I have become a part of a huge, wonderful family and that I’m ready to start my new life in Christ with all of the love and support of this community.”

Late Night Celebration

By the time the Vigil ended at about 2:15 a.m., students were tired but invigorated. They headed over to St. Joseph Commons for an Easter-morning celebration complete with feasting, dancing, and chocolate eggs.

The festivities, however, did not end there. After the last dance, a few hearty souls took to the hills surrounding campus for an early-morning hike. With the sun rising over the campus, they contemplated the glory of the Risen Son, delighting in the views of the surrounding mountains and oceans that attest to His glory.

Alleluia, alleluia, He is risen!
He is risen, alleluia, alleluia!



1. The washing of the feet at Holy Thursday’s Mass of the Lord’s Supper 2. Veneration of the cross on Good Friday 3. Stations of the Cross 4. The kindling of the Easter fire outside of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at the Easter Vigil 5. Abigail Retallick (’14) receives the Sacrament of Baptism at the Easter Vigil. 6. Students hold candles, representative of the light of Christ. 7. The post-Vigil celebration in St. Joseph Commons 8. An Easter sunrise hike in the hills surrounding campus

Campus Update

Recent Events and Happenings

College Joins Protest of HHS Mandate

“No other federal rule has so narrowly and discriminatorily defined what it means to exercise religious conscience, and no regulation has ever so directly violated plain statutory and constitutional religious freedoms.”

So declares an April 5 memorandum to the Obama Administration, signed by Thomas Aquinas College and 21 other Catholic institutions of higher education, formally protesting the HHS mandate that compels Catholic organizations to participate in the provision of contraceptive, abortifacient, and sterilization coverage to employees and their dependents.

The joint comments, organized by the Cardinal Newman Society and prepared by the Alliance Defending Freedom, were filed prior to the deadline for public comments about the Administration’s latest modifications to the mandate. The memorandum asks the Administration to exempt “*all* stakeholders with a religious or moral objection from being forced to provide, offer, pay for or *in any way* participate in a health insurance plan that covers or specifically triggers coverage of ‘contraceptives’ ... sterilization, and related education and counseling.”

The College has also submitted its own comment in conjunction with the statement, stressing “in the strongest possible terms” its “vigorous opposition” to the mandate.

“Central to the mission of Thomas Aquinas College is its fidelity to the teachings of the Church and its commitment to reflecting those teachings in its educational program,” writes President Michael F. McLean. “Thomas Aquinas College is also committed to maintaining a student residential community and a workplace fully in accord with the moral principles of the Catholic faith.”

Western Dominicans Visit Campus

Over the course of a weekend in February, Dominican friars from St. Dominic’s Priory in San Francisco, Calif., visited campus to meet with students who are contemplating religious vocations. (Approximately 10 percent of Thomas Aquinas College alumni pursue priestly and/or religious vocations, with 58 alumni priests currently serving in dioceses and religious communities throughout the world.) Among those visiting were two recent graduates of the College, Br. Thomas Sundaram (’09) and Br. Mason Peddemors (’12). The friars met informally with students throughout the weekend and also hosted a well-attended presentation, at which they described their vocational experiences and answered questions.

“We are grateful that Thomas Aquinas College kindly hosted us for a night and a day, and allowed us to share our vocation stories with the students,” said Br. Gregory Liu, O.P. “We were all impressed with the students’ dedication in searching for the Truth above all.”

Alumna Tutor Earns Doctoral Degree

When alumna Elizabeth Reyes (’03) joined the Thomas Aquinas College teaching faculty in 2011, she had completed her doctoral studies in literature at the University of Dallas, but not her dissertation. Since then, she has spent her summers and other free moments working on her thesis, “Ishmael’s Cetological Quest: A Progression of Imagination in Melville’s *Moby-Dick*.” She has now earned the title of doctor. In February, Dr. Reyes successfully defended her dissertation, with honors, at the Braniff Graduate School’s Institute of Philosophic Studies at the University of Dallas.

Dr. Reyes’ thesis brings together two of her passions:



Dominican friars from St. Dominic’s Priory in San Francisco, Calif., discuss vocations with students during their February visit to campus.

wildlife and literature. A lifelong lover of animals, when she was a student at the College, she was fascinated to explore this interest across the breadth of the College’s curriculum — studying Creation not only through the natural sciences, but also in literature, philosophy, and theology. Her senior thesis examined how animals can help lead man to God, a theme that has endured throughout her academic career, including her doctoral dissertation about Ishmael’s epic journey in pursuit of the great whale.

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

On the evening of Saturday, February 16, 2013, the St. Genesius Players of Thomas Aquinas College presented a production of William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in St. Joseph Commons, directed by seniors Molly McAlister and Megan McGuire. Photographs and video from the performance can be found online at thomasaquinas.edu/midsummer.

Links, Learning & More

Upcoming College Seminars and Events

The Seventh Annual Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic

thomasaquinas.edu/golf

JUNE
3

The historic Sherwood Country Club in Westlake Village, Calif., will be the site of the seventh annual Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic, hosted by the Greater Los Angeles Board of Regents. Designed by Jack Nicklaus, Sherwood is considered one of America’s premier golf courses. Professional players appreciate the challenges it offers, and amateurs and pros alike enjoy the sheer beauty of the course.

With various levels of competition, the Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic provides a delightful outing for golfers of all skill levels. Moreover, the event serves a good cause, raising funds for the 78 percent of Thomas Aquinas College students who need financial assistance to afford the gift of a Catholic liberal education. Capping off the Golf Classic is a reception in the Sherwood Club House, complete with a performance from the College’s student singers and an awards ceremony for the day’s winners.

Conference: “Philosophy and the Arts”

thomasaquinas.edu/SATS

JUNE
13-14

This summer a number of faculty members, graduates, and fellow scholars from across North America will participate in the annual West Coast meeting of the Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies. An international organization founded in 1974 “for the purpose of promoting friendship in the pursuit of wisdom,” the Society examines current issues of scientific or philosophic significance.

This year’s conference, which will focus on the theme “Philosophy and the Arts,” will feature lectures and question-and-answer periods with six scholars from across the country, including several alumni and tutors from the College.

Conference: “Faith and Religious Liberty”

thomasaquinas.edu/socialdoctrine

JUNE
14-16

Immediately following the Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies’ conference will be the fifth annual Conference on the Social Doctrine of the Church, sponsored by *The Aquinas Review*. Attendees will take part in a series of three seminars concerning the fundamental principles underlying the Church’s teachings on economics and social justice. The theme of this year’s conference is “Faith and Religious Liberty.”

The inspiration of Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, founding president of Thomas Aquinas College, tutor, and editor of *The Aquinas Review*, the seminars will examine relevant works of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Second Vatican Council. Conference attendees will split into small groups, led by members of the College’s teaching faculty, to analyze and discern the meaning of the texts. They will also come together for Mass, meals, and a lecture over the course of the weekend.

The 2013 Summer Seminars: Marriage & Family

thomasaquinas.edu/summerseminars

JULY
12-14

JULY
19-21

Each July, the president of Thomas Aquinas College hosts two Great Books Summer Seminar Weekends. These weekends take place on the College’s campus, nestled in the foothills of the Topatopa Mountains, just outside of Santa Paula, Calif. Attendees gain an inside look at the unique education the College provides its students, while enjoying good fellowship and forming lifelong friendships.

Under the guidance of the president, the dean, and senior faculty members, guests participate in a series of classroom discussions centered on timely and important themes. Between seminars they enjoy delicious meals served both indoors and outdoors. In addition, the Col-



Summer Seminar

lege’s chaplains offer daily Mass and confession in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

This year’s theme will be “Year of Faith: Marriage and the Family.” Cost is \$750 per person or \$1,200 per couple, including seminar, meals, lodging, and readings. (Space is limited. Priority will be given to members of the President’s Council.)

Seminar on Human Work

thomasaquinas.edu/napa

AUG
1

What is the spiritual nature of work? How does it affect the relationship between labor and capital? How should concerns about rising technology, threats to the environment, and globalization affect economic policy and decision-making? Such questions, which press upon our current political situation and will weigh heavily on the lives of Catholics in the Next America, lie at the heart of Catholic social teaching.

President Michael F. McLean and Vice President Paul J. O’Reilly will host a complimentary breakfast and lead a seminar about the meaning of *Laborem Exercens*, Bl. John Paul II’s 1981 encyclical on human work. The seminar will kick off the day’s events at the Napa Institute’s 2013 conference, Catholics in the Next America, in Napa, Calif. The seminar and breakfast are open only to registered attendees of the Napa Institute Conference.

Chaplain's View

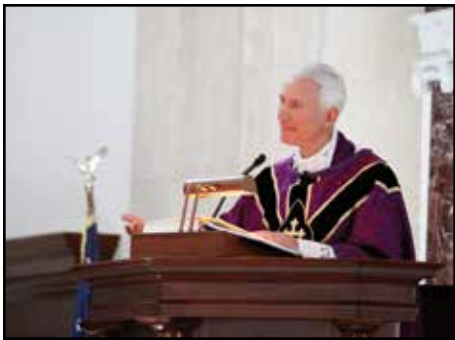
Restoring My Confidence in Marriage

By Rev. Joseph Illo

I was a parish priest for 20 years, and now I am a college chaplain. What's the difference? In the parish I prepared people for divorce, and at the College I prepare them for marriage.

In the parish, people generally don't come to the priest until they have a problem, and most of those problems are marriage problems. Some couples come with strong faith in God and solid hope for their marriages. Most, however, come for the last rites. Usually they've been living a "married singles" lifestyle for years before I see them. I would ask: "Do you pray the rosary together?" *No, father, we don't know how.* "Do you attend Mass on Sundays?" *No, father, we haven't gone to Mass for years.* "Are you contracepting?" *Not anymore — we don't sleep in the same bed.* "Have you seen a counselor?" *No, father, it's too late for that.*

I felt like asking them sternly why they disregarded the Church's precepts, and why they ignored Her wisdom, and why they didn't come to a priest sooner. But all I could do was comfort them as their marriage broke apart, and as they entered



into the dreary and painful desert of the divorced. They could still be saints, if they faced the ongoing trauma of custody battles, financial crises, and darksome loneliness by turning to God in prayer. Many do become saints precisely through the tragedies of divorce, in the way that widows and widowers turn to God. Nevertheless, "preparing people for divorce" greatly pains and discourages the parish priest.

At the College, on the other hand, most of the people I serve are under 21. They are too young to drink, but not too young to prepare for lifelong marriage. Courtship at the two dozen or so serious Catholic colleges in the United States is a major occupation, and rightly so. Not only does College afford them intellectual, social, and spiritual formation — it

affords an unprecedented pool of faithful and marriageable Catholics.

Interestingly, a significant percentage of students at these colleges have been called to the consecrated state. But living with authentically beautiful men and women anneals their call to virginity for the sake of the kingdom. For the rest, those called to the married state, a lifetime of happy marriage awaits them. They have only to follow the rules. They prepare for marriage by learning to pray alone and together, by sharpening their minds and



their bodies for the contests ahead, and by assimilating the patrimonies of art and science. No one expects perfect happiness in their marriages, and they know grave marriage problems are always possible. But the smiles and lightness of foot among these couples lift us all up.

In the parish, a priest can come to resent marriage preparation. Precious few engaged couples take their faith as seriously as they must to avoid divorce. As we witness their vows, we wonder how many will file for divorce within the decade. At the College, however, I have rediscovered the joy of marriage preparation. These young couples — witnesses to purity and joy — have restored my confidence in marriage. If we have despaired of the very nature of marriage (as is evident in the ludicrous push for homosexual "marriage"), we need look no further than these young people to be reassured.

Rev. Joseph Illo, a chaplain at Thomas Aquinas College, served for 13 years as the pastor at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Modesto, Calif. This story originally appeared on his blog, *From the Pastor's Lap-top*, frilloblog.com.

Nature Morte Vivante

Student's Botanical Paintings Grace Science Hall

Hanging in the hall of the Albertus Magnus Science Hall are two new scientific illustrations of native plants, the handiwork of Mariana Langley ('14), a junior from Savannah, Ga. Earlier this year, while tending the campus grounds as part of her work-study job, Miss Langley noticed that senior tutor Dr. Thomas Kaiser had placed labels on the various plants around campus. That gave her an idea — and, in turn, a new work-study assignment.

"The idea of creating a botanical series was really a natural one," she explains. "While working in the gardens around campus, I daily discovered interesting and new subjects for my sketchbook. Reading Fabre and Goethe in my freshman Natural Science tutorial encouraged me to investigate more closely, more exactly, the plants I was finding." Her discoveries led her to approach Dr. Kaiser about creating scientific botanical illustrations for the College, and he readily agreed.

"Miss Langley's idea very much fit with one of my own," Dr. Kaiser recalls. "I had been working on a *flora* of the campus to go along with the freshman Natural Science class, so that when tutors take students for walks around campus, they can more easily identify the plants. We have numerous species that are closely related and are therefore hard to identify. I thought that if we could have scientific illustrations of those, where we could point out the differences, that would be very helpful."

Now instead of tending to the campus plant life, Miss Langley illuminates it, using pencil, pen and ink, and watercolor on paper. Her aim, as she describes it, is "to integrate empirical and descriptive exploration with decorative intent." This combination of scientific accuracy and artistic beauty makes her illustrations a good fit not only for Dr. Kaiser's *flora*, but also elegant decorations for the Science Hall.

The daughter of professional artist James Langley ('85), Miss Langley brings considerable experience to the botanicals project. Before coming to the College, she studied for one year at the Savannah College of Art and Design, where her father is an instructor, and where she served as his assistant on several projects. She has painted lettering samples for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in



New York City as well as a script for a painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe that the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter commissioned for its seminary chapel in Denton, Neb.

Yet the botanicals project is not quite like the others she has done before. "It is surprising how much methodical practice is needed to capture something of the vitality and spontaneity of a living thing," Miss Langley says. "Each painting requires several prior studies in the sketchbook: The initial sketches explore the details of the flower in a linear format, gradually incorporating color notes and nomenclature. Finally, an important part of the process is to see the subject within the simplicity and clarity of monumental iconic forms." Her renderings, she says, are made "in the school of" Giovanni Battista Ferrari, a 17th century Jesuit priest who published elaborately illustrated books on botanical subjects.

The first two of Miss Langley's paintings are already on display, with more to come over the course of her remaining time on campus. Her work in the studio, she says, complements her work in the classroom. "If knowledge comes through the senses, then drawing serves the intellectual project, since it investigates and then recapitulates nature in a specific and tangible synthesis," she explains. "Inspired by Goethe's empirical approach to the study of nature, I practice the art of drawing as a prelude to understanding nature and as a way to penetrate the surface appearances of things so as to discover their underlying structure."

The resulting illustrations, says Dr. Kaiser, "are as instructive as they are beautiful."

St. Vincent de Paul

Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

Highlights from the Last Quarter

- Periodically members of the Thomas Aquinas College teaching faculty present informal lectures, followed by question-and-answer sessions, on campus. These late-afternoon gatherings afford an opportunity for tutors to speak, usually on the areas of their expertise, and for other members of the community to benefit from their experience and wisdom. On February 6, **Dr. Elizabeth Reyes** presented one such tutor talk on the subject, "Home and the City in William Faulkner's 'Barn Burning.'"



- In honor of President's Day, on February 22, **Dr. Jeffrey Tulis** (above), a professor in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, delivered a lecture entitled, "Is the Presidency too Strong?"
- Dr. William H. Donahue**, director of laboratories at St. John's College in Santa Fe, N.M., spoke on the subject of "Kepler's Radical Aristotelianism" on March 15.
- The **Thomas Aquinas College Choir** performed its spring concert, featuring a selection of beloved operatic choruses, on April 12.
- The College invited **Dr. Scott Crider**, an associate professor of English at the University of Dallas, to present the final lecture of the academic year on April 19, "Figures Unethical: The Rhetoric of Marriage in *Macbeth*."

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

A Call for Conversion

By Michael Masteller ('13)

My own walk for life started before I had even left the campus of Thomas Aquinas College. For me, it was the sermon that one of our college chaplains gave Friday morning before we left that began this journey. We were celebrating the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, and in his homily, Rev. Joseph Illo compared our drive to San Francisco to St. Paul's trip to Damascus. He stressed that we should think of our journey as a pilgrimage, and that just as St. Paul was converted, we too should be converted and strive to make this a prayerful event.

Although there was no doubt about our mission — we were going to march for life and stand up for the rights of the unborn — I was glad Fr. Illo made this clarification. It is easy to participate in an external way; the internal participation is a bit more difficult. We were not going merely to enjoy the City, or to convert abortionists; we were embarking on a journey of prayer and penance to bear witness to the Truth — and hopefully to be changed by this experience.

With this goal in mind, we set off for San Francisco after classes in two buses, with many more students taking their own cars. Our drive went very smoothly. We amused ourselves with sleeping and watching *Star Wars* movies; to keep a balance in the force, we also prayed a Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet so as to remain focused on our mission.

We arrived in the city around midnight and all piled into the basement gymnasium of Saints Peter and Paul Church, which were generously opened for us to use as temporary dormitories for our weekend stay. One could not ask for a better location: Not only were we within walking distance of downtown and other popular parts of the City, we also had access to Adoration all night. After we got situated in the basement, many students went upstairs to the church to pray and to prepare ourselves for the Walk for Life the next day. It was very peaceful praying in the dead of night, and it was comforting to know that many people in various churches throughout the City were also praying throughout the night for the same cause.

Walking the Walk

The next morning we headed to St. Mary's Cathedral for the pro-life Mass. As we approached the cathedral, we could see that the whole block was surrounded with buses dropping off people for Mass. I was lucky to get a seat, for the Cathedral was packed to the walls, and many people had to stand in the back. As Mass began, the procession of priests and bishops stretched farther than I could see. The Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco, delivered the homily, focusing on the same theme that Fr. Illo had set out for us. The heart of the Archbishop's sermon was that the best way to convert and change people is through our own holiness, that it is only through changing our own hearts that

we will be able to change the hearts of others. I felt this was not a coincidence, and I began to see this idea of self-conversion as a theme for this Walk.

After Mass, we headed to the City Hall at Justin Herman Plaza, where the march would begin. When we arrived, there were already many people assembled; during the rally I heard mentioned that we were about 50,000 strong. All of us were encouraged by our numbers, but the best encouragement of all was when Pope Benedict XVI's representative, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Vigano, read a blessing that the Holy Father had given specifically for our march. As we got under way, Thomas Aquinas College students were given the honor of leading the Walk for Life, with the responsibility of keeping a good pace and formation. While in past years we had to worry about pushing through protestors, this year we had a fleet of police cars and motorcycles to pave the way for us down Market Street and through downtown.

Once the Walk got started, we began to sing religious hymns and patriotic songs, and with each one I felt that we were becoming more unified. After about 10 minutes we began to hear loud shouts, and in the distance we could see people gathering to protest our march. I braced myself, for having been in the Walk before, I knew what to expect from these protestors. As we drew closer, I could not help but feel a certain heaviness come over me. Having so much anger and hate being directed at you is not an easy thing, but we raised our voices in song, and with smiles, pushed through. There was a stark contrast between the wild ferocity and anger of the protestors and our calm peacefulness and prayer.

Our Lives as Witness

There was one protestor's banner that stuck out from all the rest. On it was written: "This walk hates women!" Naturally, my first response was to think: "That's a lie! Clearly we treat women better than you do!" Just then, though, the words of Fr. Illo and Archbishop Cordileone appeared in my mind. I knew that even though we might not commit abortions, we are not innocent of dishonoring women. We, too, are guilty and stand in need of conversion. Even if we might not be guilty of committing this sin of abortion, how many of us have neglected to defend women from being dishonored? For myself, I knew that I could be doing a better job at this, for it is usually through a lack of loving on my part that others are not brought to see the Truth.

I could not shake off this thought the rest of the day. I knew that what had been presented to me was more than a chance to participate in an annual Walk for Life. I was shown another way to be pro-life: to be pro-life with one's *whole* life. To walk once a year is not enough to relieve us of our obligation to fight abortion. Our lives must be a witness to the truth, the goodness, and the beauty that can be found in Christ's love. Yet for us to radiate all this, a greater conversion through prayer and penance is needed.

Later that night, I went with a group of friends to an Italian restaurant for dinner. As we were about to leave,

a man there asked us what group we were and why we were there. We told him that we were students from Thomas Aquinas College and that we had come to San Francisco for the Walk for Life. He responded by saying that he admired our courage for coming to such a rough city in order to stand up for the truth, and we could see that our actions had a deep impact on him. He told us that it is hard for him and others to stand up in such an aggressively secular city, and that he was strengthened by our example. He told us that he was filled with hope to see that there were still people who were willing to step up and defend life.

Looking back on the Walk, I cannot know what impact it had on the nation's attitudes about abortion, nor what kind of success it will generate for the unborn. But I know that our witness gave hope to others, and that change will come only when we allow the Truth to transform us. With God's grace we will prevail!

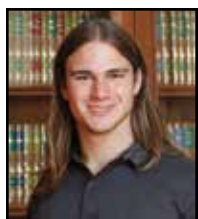
Mr. Masteller is a senior from Santa Paula, Calif. This story originally appeared on Zenit.org.



At this year's Walk for Life West Coast, students wore matching sweatshirts bearing the phrase, "In Memory of Andrew 'Kent' Moore, Class of 2014." Last summer, Kent, then a rising junior, participated in a Crossroads Walk Across America. Tragically, on the morning of July 20, 2012, he was struck and killed by an oncoming vehicle alongside a highway in Indiana. Since then, this shy, young defender of the unborn — who tirelessly prayed outside of abortion clinics when he was a student at the College — has become a hero to a generation of pro-lifers. In his honor, the Archdiocese of Washington asked the College to prepare a video that was featured at a youth rally prior to this year's March for Life in Washington, D.C.. The video is available via the Andrew Moore tribute page on the College's website, thomasaquinas.edu/andrew-moore.

Finding Our Voices

By Zachary Reynolds ('14)



The cry began at the front of the line, where I walked with 12 other leaders of the Walk for Life West Coast. Soft at first, the noise swelled as it passed from person to person, growing in intensity and passion until a tidal wave of sound echoed back as a dull roar from the end of the line a mile and a half away.

The outburst was an encomium for those whose greatness we will never know; a memorial to those faces we will never see; a lament for those whose loss we will never fully realize. We were raising our voices for those who have no voice. And all the horror, grief, and frustration that had accumulated over the continual destruction of inarticulate innocents was contained in that outraged and anguished cry. Yet, for all its heart-wrenching emotion and passion, the cry itself was inarticulate — it too, in some fundamental way, was voiceless. This made me wonder, even as I contributed to the sound, “Is this all that we can do? Is this the extent of the power of my voice?”



One Sort of Preparation ...

Our preparations for the Walk began in earnest two weeks before the event, when my co-leaders and I surveyed our mountainous “To Do” list. In addition to the fundraising and organizational tasks, price changes were forcing us to find a new bus company; at the same time more students than ever before had signed up to attend, meaning we needed to procure a second bus. Our studies suffered, and free time became an alien concept. However, God didn’t merely open doors for us; He took down walls, and our preparation for the Walk went smoothly.

In quick succession we were provided with generous donations from individuals and local churches, a wonderful facility in San Francisco at which to stay, and two buses to transport students. When everything was accomplished, over 220 Thomas Aquinas College students descended on San Francisco — the largest group in the history of the College’s attendance.

Once all the participants assembled on Saturday morning to begin the Walk, our students were called to the head of the line. Two-thirds of the student body worked diligently fulfilling various tasks — carrying the banner, providing security, marshaling and organizing the crowds. Our job was to project an aura of calm self-possession and prayer while moving forward with a determination bred of purpose and conviction. It was at once a humbling and gratifying experience. It wasn’t until the Walk was over and everyone went their separate ways that I began to realize that this is what we are training for; this is why we are the students of Thomas Aquinas College.

... and Another

For the College’s students, participating in the Walk was a rare occasion to put our studies aside, however briefly, and engage the world on its terms. Although some Catholic schools push their students to be involved in political activism and provide opportunities for action, Thomas Aquinas pulls us away from the world and requests that we exchange our desire for activism for an absolute dedication to its academic program. The College blesses, but doesn’t promote, our trip to San Francisco: It leaves it to us to make the arrangements and fit the trip into our busy schedules. We still have to prepare for classes, which resume on Monday morning, no matter how late we return Sunday night.

For any who view the college years as a chance to expand and explore, this constraint can be frustrating. But rather than simply accepting the limitations and resigning ourselves to a self-inflicted fate, we ought to ask, “What is the purpose of the education we are pursuing?” There are, of course, the obvious, exterior answers: a truly liberal education, an opportunity for spiritual formation, and unique seminar-style classes led by an exceptional teaching faculty. However, as I pondered the development that has occurred over the years in me and my fellow students, I realized that there are many less obvious, interior alterations which run more deeply and are in some way more fundamental to the development Thomas Aquinas College seeks to induce in us.

Through our classes, lectures, and extra-curricular discussions, we encounter a variety of personalities and a significant divergence of ideas: No two people argue in the same way, and no idea is so menial or manifest that it doesn’t deserve a fair hearing. We have learned to release a selfish desire to be right, so that we are truly free to listen to others with respect and compassion. Everyone has validity. Everyone has value. Everyone has some measure of veracity. This understanding proved crucial on the front line of the Walk, where we encountered opposition, none of it civil, much of it profane. Strengthened by our time at the College, we were able to respect and value even the protestors, recognizing the right of the opposition to voice its dissent without feeling threatened.

The constant challenges made to our positions in the classroom also have taught us that our convictions must consist of more than simply *feeling* a certain way about a topic — we must know *why*. This perpetual question leads, ever gradually, to an activism born of conviction — a life in service to that truth which we so ardently pursue. Aristotle notes in his *Ethics*, “*It is the true arguments that seem most useful... with a view to life. For since true arguments are in harmony with the deeds, they carry conviction; hence, they prompt those who understand them to live in accord with them.*” Thomas Aquinas College seeks to produce young men and women who desire to put truth into action, truth which is not merely felt, but studied, known, and revered. It further seeks to prepare us to defend the truth, by means of reason, wherever it is challenged — whether in the classroom or on the streets of San Francisco.

Developing Our Voices

I have often wondered why, given the training we receive, the College doesn’t encourage us to be more active during our time here. After all, if our formation is so ideal, it seems that we ought to seek opportunities to practice the virtues we’re learning. Why wait until after graduation to become active in the world around us?

It seems to me there are two reasons why the school imposes these limitations. First, activism requires training — and training requires commitment. Extra activities are distracting and sometimes all-consuming; my own participation in organizing the Walk this year caused several days of poor class preparation and even some absences. There is also a necessary order of development: I must first determine my convictions, because I cannot be an activist if I lack true conviction as the motivation for my action. This is our time to prepare, to develop our thoughts, spirits, and hearts. This is our time to learn how to think, enable ourselves, and thus enable others. This is our time to learn to live in service of the truth. The College is not trying to keep us from the world, but to prepare us for it.

Second, Thomas Aquinas College’s seclusion offers students a unique opportunity to form our own characters. This goes beyond the strengthening of our spiritual lives and the peaceful opportunity to develop habits of virtue in a strong moral community. Through the College’s decision not to endorse extra activities, my participation in them becomes truly my own. I don’t take part in such events because they are convenient or because the school creates the opportunity. My activism is not as a TAC pro-lifer, but as Zachary Reynolds, who is being equipped to choose the pro-life position for my life and to live in conformity with that conviction.

In this respect, the school’s policy of limiting outside activities becomes its greatest strength; my pure commitment to my formation here produces my ability to lead and to act. Thomas Aquinas College is not merely a beginning from which one may fall away; rather, the education is a firm foundation upon which to build our lives.

Going to San Francisco each year is an opportunity to use the abilities we students are gaining, but one that doesn’t prematurely launch us. Experiencing the Walk for Life makes us excited for what we can do, but also creates hope for what we will do.

My musings came to an end while sitting in a small diner at the end of the day as I realized that there is more to our voice than an impassioned cry; that we are capable of so much more than mere noise. Through Thomas Aquinas College’s dedication to purpose and each student’s dedication to the education it offers, we are developing voices that are worthy of being heard and that will have something of value to say.

Mr. Reynolds is a junior from Alleyton, Tex.

In Memoriam

The Good Fight: John Wesley Blewett (1928 – 2013)

Nearly 500 people arrived on the campus of Thomas Aquinas College Saturday, February 16, filling the pews of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel to remember and to pray for the soul of John W. Blewett. A former vice president of the College who, for 18 years, oversaw the development of the campus, Mr. Blewett played a key role in the history of the College. He was famous for his reverence, his friendliness, and his determination — all of which were reflected in the day’s memorial.

The morning began with a requiem Mass in the Chapel, offered in the extraordinary form, and fittingly so, given Mr. Blewett’s love of the Tridentine Mass. Serving as celebrant was one of Mr. Blewett’s grandsons, the Rev. John Blewett, SJS, parochial vicar of Holy Cross Parish in Mazomanie, Wis., joined in the sanctuary by all three of the College’s chaplains and numerous visiting priests. The Thomas Aquinas College Choir and *Schola Cantorum* filled the Chapel with sacred music from the choir loft, while Mr. Blewett’s casket rested just outside the sanctuary under the dome.

A long caravan of vehicles then left the campus for a brief graveside service at Santa Paula Cemetery, where one of the College’s founders, Mr. Marcus A. Berquist, and its late president, Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, are also buried. The vehicles then returned to campus for a luncheon and memorial, where Mr. Blewett’s children, grandchildren, friends, and former colleagues shared memories of a man who was tireless in his devotion to God, in his care for his family, and his love of his friends.

The Fighter

When he was a college student, attending Seattle University on a basketball scholarship, Mr. Blewett was a fighter, diving for every loose ball and battling for every rebound. After his graduation in 1951, he would bring that same intensity to his work as a longshoreman, a



Then-Vice President John Blewett with Bl. Mother Teresa at the time of her visit to the College in 1982

sportswriter, a labor negotiator for the Kaiser family of companies, and ultimately as a vice president of Thomas Aquinas College.

As a testament to God’s providence, Mr. Blewett arrived at the College on October 7, 1980. It was the start of the third academic year on the then-new campus near Santa Paula, Calif. With just one permanent building, the College teetered on the verge of insolvency, and it was mired in a land-use conflict with local oil interests. What it needed was someone who could oversee a massive building project, operate on a razor-thin budget, and stare down a barrage of corporate lawyers and negotiators.

Enter John W. Blewett, 52 years old, with decades of business experience under his belt. With two daughters enrolled at the College, he understood both its predicament and its promise. “We can truly say of him, more than anyone else, that without his help we might not have been able to shape the campus as it is today,” says Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, the College’s founding president. “There was never anyone who could doubt his sincerity of purpose, and as such he remains an example for all of us who have undertaken the good fight.”

During his tenure, Mr. Blewett oversaw the construc-

tion of the College’s first classroom building, St. Augustine Hall; St. Bernardine of Siena Library; and three residence halls: St. Katharine of Alexandria, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and Bl. Junipero Serra. He also helped to formalize and establish the College’s admission process.

Yet his contributions to the College extended well beyond his work. While at the College, Mr. Blewett was a friend and father figure to many students, whom he came to know through late-afternoon battles on the campus basketball courts. “He inspired many to grow in faith, myself included,” reflects Eric Paget (’01). “A great man,” adds Franklin Salazar (’82) “and father of a wonderful family that I have often looked back on for guidance about what it means to live a full and Catholic family life.”

Retirement and Beyond

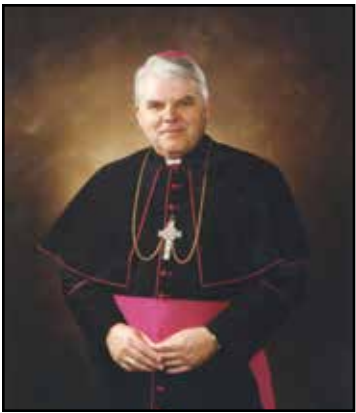
After his retirement from the College in 1997, Mr. Blewett remained active in behalf of the Church. He served for several years as the president and CEO of the Wanderer Forum, and then as the managing editor of *The Latin Mass* magazine. As always, he was a strong advocate for the unborn, faithfully praying and counseling outside of local abortion clinics. He also continued on as an emeritus member of the College’s Board of Governors, regularly attending meetings and campus events.

Mr. Blewett and his wife of 62 years, Barbara, were blessed with seven children, three of whom are alumni of the College: Katharine Masteller (’82), Margaret Wall (’82), and Paul (’85). To date, four of their 28 grandchildren also have gone on to attend the College: Joseph DeTar (’11) and Mary Colette (’11), Michael (’13), and AnnaMaria Masteller (’16).

“John loved this school. He gave his heart and soul to this school. For that we will be forever grateful,” says President Michael F. McLean. “The repose of his soul will remain in the prayers of this college community going forward, now and forever.”

“A Voice in the Wilderness” — The Most Rev. John M. D’Arcy (1932 – 2013)

A longtime friend of Thomas Aquinas College from afar, the Most Rev. John M. D’Arcy, Bishop Emeritus of Fort Wayne–South Bend (Ind.), had planned to make his first visit to campus this summer. Alas, God called him on another journey instead. After a brief bout with brain and lung cancer, Bishop D’Arcy died on February 3, exactly 56 years after offering his first Mass after his ordination to the priesthood in 1957.



“I look forward to this special day and to visiting your campus,” the Bishop wrote last year, accepting President Michael F. McLean’s invitation to serve as the College’s 2013 Convocation Speaker. “I hold you and your college in high regard.” Says Dr. McLean, “Bishop D’Arcy was a fine man and a faithful priest. We are sorry for his loss and sorry that he will not be here for Convocation; but he will be in our prayers, and we are confident that he is praying for us, too.”

The son of Irish immigrants, Bishop D’Arcy was born and raised in Boston, thus explaining this Midwestern prelate’s Massachusetts accent and his lifelong love of the Red Sox. He entered the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Boston at the age of 25, serving as a parish priest and a teacher at St. John’s Seminary in Boston until his ordination as an auxiliary bishop in 1975.

During his time in the Archdiocese, which would become ground zero for the priestly abuse scandals, Bishop D’Arcy was notable for his defense of children in the Church. In 1984, years before the scandal garnered

serious media or episcopal attention, he wrote a prophetic letter to his superior, Bernard Cardinal Law, then the Archbishop of Boston, strenuously objecting to the transfer of an abusive priest. Twenty years later, the U.S. Bishops’ National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People heralded Bishop D’Arcy as “a voice in the wilderness” for his role in bringing the abuse crisis to light.

In 1985, Bl. John Paul II named His Excellency the Bishop of Fort Wayne–South Bend, the diocese that includes the University of Notre Dame. During that time, Bishop D’Arcy developed a friendship with Thomas Aquinas College by way of numerous alumni who attended Notre Dame for graduate school, some of whom later returned to the College as members of the teaching faculty. “I have met some of your undergraduate students at Notre Dame,” Bishop D’Arcy once wrote in a letter to Dr. McLean. “They are strong in their faith and in their devotion to learning. You and your college deserve great credit for this.”

One of those students was Thomas Aquinas College Dean Brian T. Kelly who, after graduating from the College in 1988, earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in medieval studies at Notre Dame. “As a graduate student I was blessed to have Bishop D’Arcy as my local ordinary,” says Dr. Kelly. “He was a true pastor; he cared nothing for public acclaim but only for the souls placed under his care. He was a humble and cheerful man.”

As in Boston, at times during his tenure in Fort Wayne–South Bend, Bishop D’Arcy was compelled to take unpopular stands on behalf of the Church and Her people, doing so with strength and humility. Most notably, in 2009 he led 82 other American bishops, archbishops, and cardinals in protesting Notre Dame’s decision to grant President Barack Obama an honorary degree, despite the president’s public support of legal abortion.

“Bishop D’Arcy prudently and courageously stood up for the beauty and the truth of Church teaching,” reflects Dr. Kelly, “even in the face of strong public pressure.”

He was, above all else, a priest — a shepherd and protector of souls — a duty he considered his greatest blessing. “Over everything, I am grateful for the gifts of the Holy Priesthood,” the Bishop wrote in his last public statement to the people of Fort Wayne–South Bend. “I never felt worthy of it. I thank God with all my heart that I was appointed by Christ through the Church as shepherd of our beloved diocese.”

IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

Dr. Lazlo Ambrus – January 28, 2011
Legacy Society Member

Dr. Milka Ambrus – September 12, 2012
Legacy Society Member

Eileen Ivers – February 25, 2013
*Mother of Maureen Coughlin (’79),
Loraine Hoonhout (’81), Marian Hartzell (’82),
Jessica Langley (’85), and Sr. Maria Basilea (’88);
grandmother of Therese Ivers (’03); Bernadette
(Coughlin ’05) Bergen, Mary (Coughlin ’07)
Shields, and Pat (’11), Bridget (’13), Ben (’15),
and Dominic Coughlin (’15); Clare Hoonhout
(’08); and Edward (’12), Catherine (’13)
and William Langley (’15)*

Arthur P. Lenzen – February 27, 2013
*Father of Paul (’86), Monica Claahsen (’88),
Agnes (’90), Agatha Poteat (’90), Lucy (’92),
and Andrew (’94); grandfather of Kathryn (’12)
and Anne Claahsen (’14)*

A Pilgrim, and a Pioneer, Heads Home: James L. Barrett (1927 –2013)

The College mourns the loss of a dear friend and the former Vice Chairman of its Board of Governors, James L. Barrett, who died March 14, surrounded by family and loved ones.



A graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles, and Loyola University Law School, Mr. Barrett served on a submarine for two years during the Korean War. When he left the Navy in 1951, he began practicing law in Los Angeles, and in 1959 opened his own firm, which quickly expanded. At its peak, Barrett, Stearns, Collins, Gleason & Kinney had 26 attorneys and specialized in shopping-center development.

In 1972 Mr. Barrett left his law practice and purchased an abandoned vineyard in Napa, launching a new career as a vintner. Only four years later one of his Chateau Montelena chardonnays stunned the wine-drinking world by besting nine prestigious French counterparts

at a Paris blind testing. That event, chronicled in the book *Judgment of Paris: California vs. France and the Historic 1976 Paris Tasting that Revolutionized Wine*, is still widely regarded as the defining moment in the history of American wine, and Chateau Montelena Winery is still acclaimed as one of the world’s best.

With his wife, Judy, Mr. Barrett began supporting Thomas Aquinas College in its early, “pioneer” days. “We got into a sacred Conestoga wagon and set across the plains for the promised land,” he once joked. Soon after becoming the College’s second president, the late Dr. Thomas E. Dillon and his wife, Terri, visited the Barretts, and a close bond was instantly formed. “We became blood brothers,” Mr. Barrett remarked, noting that he and Dr. Dillon collaborated in many ways to help firmly establish the College.

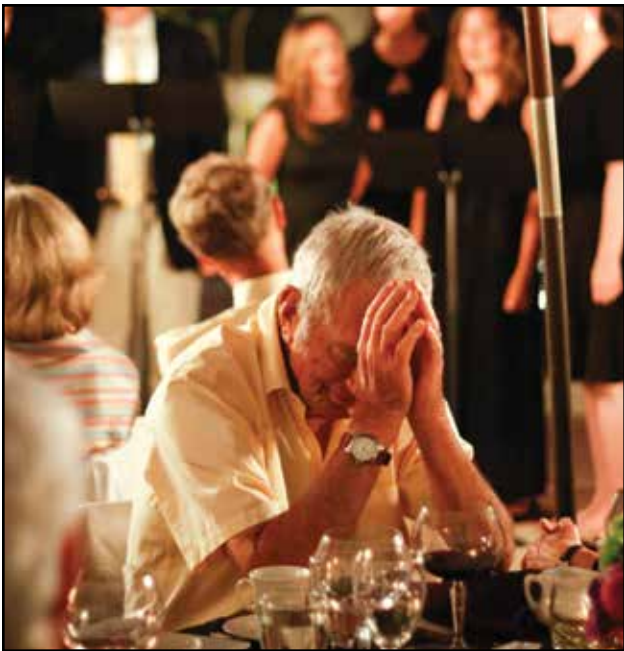
The Barretts first became members of the College’s President’s Council in 1987. Over the years, they gave generously to the annual scholarship fund as well as to the construction of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. In 1992 Mr. Barrett joined the Board of Gover-

nors, serving as vice chairman from 2004 to 2008, and retiring in 2010, at which time he was named an Emeritus member. In gratitude for their decades of extraordinary generosity, in 1998 the College honored Mr. and Mrs. Barrett by inducting them into the Order of St. Albert the Great.

“For us, Thomas Aquinas College is a spiritual, cultural, and intellectual oasis in a cultural wilderness,” Mr. Barrett once said. “We have tremendous confidence in the bright, articulate young men and women that are, and will be, graduating from here. These are young men and women committed, morally and spiritually, to fighting for the good of our society and a sound Catholic Church in America.”

“It is not an exaggeration to say that Thomas Aquinas College might not be here today, were it not for Jim Barrett,” says President Michael F. McLean. “He and Judy have been extraordinarily generous to the College with their time, their counsel, and their financial support. We already miss him greatly, and we pray for his eternal rest and the consolation of Judy and the family.”

“Jim was surely an Irishman who kissed the blarney stone. A man with a great sense of humor but also a driven man regarding those causes he believed to be important. Thomas Aquinas College was one of his passions. He was always a dedicated and very involved Board member. He would never hesitate to express his views to the Board and provided valuable counsel. Often he would call me a few days after a Board meeting to add emphasis to his views expressed at the meeting, The welfare of our school was ever on his mind. I will miss him.”
– R. James Wensley
Chairman of the Board of Governors



“Jim Barrett was a man of faith, a pursuer of the truth, full of fun and laughter, and a true friend. He was a leader, a gifted and talented man concerned with supporting good causes. Jim had great interest in the intellectual life and was a generous benefactor to Thomas Aquinas College. My late husband, Tom, and I considered Jim and Judy Barrett to be the dearest of friends. Tom and Jim were true comrades. Tom had such respect, love, and gratitude for all the many ways Jim supported him and his endeavors during his tenure as president of Thomas Aquinas College. They had so much fun together, even while engaging in noble pursuits. It was a real delight for me to be in their presence. These two dear friends are now with God in Whom love and friendship reign forever. May the Lord make His face to smile upon Jim and give him peace. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. Thank you for everything, my dear friend, Jim Barrett.”
– Terri Dillon



“Jim Barrett was my dearest friend, We called each other ‘soul mates.’ We first met 25 years ago at a Summer Seminar at Thomas Aquinas College and immediately took to each other as brothers. The impression I’ve had of him over the years was that of a very devout and devoted Catholic who gave generously of his time, energy, and financial worth to the Church. His wife, Judy, became a dear friend of my wife, Carol, and the four of us were inseparable at every seminar or meeting. Every year we would consult with each other about which of the two seminar weekends we planned to attend so we could be together.
“Jim’s heart was in everything he did, from winemaking to tennis-playing to organizing great endeavors on the Board of Governors of his beloved college, Thomas Aquinas College. I, for one, will miss his radiant presence and intimate discussions of everything from philosophy to writing his book, *A Pilgrim’s Journey*, which occupied him the past year or two. I know that Jim is in heaven asking the saints and angels about theological mysteries that I used to discuss with him. Dear friend, please send me a vibe of their answers, because I know you wouldn’t have allowed them to get off easily!”
– Henry Zeiter, Member of the Board of Governors

“Jim Barrett was not only one of the most generous men I ever met, but beyond this he initiated his own generosity. He supported the College handsomely and always made discussions of his support relaxing experiences. All this was done in the spirit of the Gospels: We needed his support in order for our school to survive, and he was bound by that very Gospel to offer it in a spirit of equality. I have for this reason never forgotten Jim, but one could go on at much greater length about the other virtues surrounding his generosity. I thank God I met Jim Barrett. He has been for me an anchor in those parts of my life that have touched upon the support of Catholic institutions. Though in later years I did not see Jim very much at all, it was yet a pleasing thought to think that he was among us in our pilgrimage. I can’t help but think that God will reward him and take him to the eternal life he so lived for.”
– Dr. Ronald P. McArthur
President Emeritus



“Jim was a submarine commander at heart. With a glint in his eye and a smile on his face, he had no qualms about clearly expressing his opinion, whether it be about Shakespeare, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, or Jack Daniel’s. He was never pretentious. His straightforward manner, his sense of fun and humor, and his firm faith in God made him a person to be listened to, and in doing so one’s mind was often opened to a new point of view.
“As evidenced by his years of committed service to the College as a governor, Jim was a compassionate and generous man who worked and fought for what he believed in. The history of Thomas Aquinas College would look very different without Jim and Judy’s dedication and friendship.”
– Maria Grant
Member of the Board of Governors
– Richard Grant
President, Dan Murphy Foundation

Turning on the Light

Reflections on the High School Great Books Summer Program

by Kathleen Sullivan ('06)

I still remember so vividly, even though it was the summer of 1999, when I went to sleep one night thinking, “This is it. This is where I am going to college.” It was about the fifth or sixth day at Thomas Aquinas College’s Great Books Summer Program, and I was excited to be there, but I wasn’t too aware of the unusual purpose of the College.



I attended with my older sister, and went about the days having fun, making friends, thinking about my upcoming year of high school, but not really trying to understand the program itself. In fact, I hadn’t spoken in my class yet, content instead just to listen and follow the conversation of the rest of my peers as they animatedly discussed the readings in our daily seminar sessions. I was intrigued by the works we read, and had many thoughts on them, but did not have the confidence to present them out loud. What my classmates said seemed fine to me, and so I sat, and thought, and listened.

However, all that changed one evening after dinner when I was chatting with a friend on the steps by the Our Lady of Guadalupe fountain. A summer program worker and current student at the College stopped by to say hello, and asked us how we thought the program was going. I blurted, “Great! It’s so beautiful here, I love California, and I love how everyone is so friendly and faithful and fun to be around.” He replied, yes that’s true, but what about the program?

Oh. The program? He then sat down with us and asked a question: Tell me one thing that is important in your life? I replied, “My family.” And his response was, why? With that came a shrug and initial hesitation; but with more questions, the added comments of my friend, and the wheels of my mind thinking and turning things over in various perspectives, I came to a deeper realization and understanding of my immediate answer. I had discovered a new perspective on my family, and not just them, but on families in general, and their importance and impact on human nature, society, life, and even the afterlife. I had discovered a truth that took hold and stayed with me.

It was quite the conversation, one that took us to curfew, and one that I was surprised I had contributed to so much. As I went back to the residence hall and settled into sleep, the thoughts still whirling in my head, I came to that realization as clear and vivid then as it is now, “This is it. This is where I am going to college. This is what I want to do.” I wanted to think, to discover the truths of things, to reason and reflect on what matters in our lives, to understand the world around me from a perspective unhindered by another’s bias or predetermined mindset. I wanted to grapple with the questions that man has always grappled with, and to learn the answers as best I could. I had realized that education was not about the amount of knowledge learned, but about how it was learned. I wanted to take control of that knowledge, guided by the wisdom of Thomas Aquinas College’s tutors, the insights and fresh perspective of my peers, and by the faith of my Catholic beliefs.

And so I did. I’ve been in school practically all my life; I’m currently finishing up my doctorate in graduate school. My undergraduate years at the College, however, were the four most challenging and the four most rewarding years of them all.

After that conversation it took me a couple of more classes before I gathered my courage to enter into my class conversation. Once I did, it was the light turning on again. This was how school should be! To be responsible for my learning, to develop my critical thinking skills, to learn how to effectively communicate, to read and dis-

cuss these texts without the filter of an editor was all in my grasp. I wanted to skip the rest of high school and enter Thomas Aquinas College right away. Yet I returned to high school with a new perspective on education, and found myself more frequently raising my hand to ask questions or propose comments. An education is not passive; it is active, alive, and all within reach at a college such as Thomas Aquinas, where to be liberally educated is to be truly free.

Being a Prefect

Over the years, I have been blessed to take part on the other side of Thomas Aquinas College’s Summer Program, working as a prefect to help with the running of the program, but more importantly, to help the high school students understand the program. Many students came from a mindset similar to my own at that age: unsure of the purpose of studying the great books, unfamiliar with the meaning of liberal arts, and uncertain of presenting their own thoughts in a seminar class. Slowly but surely, as the days passed and as their friendships deepened and the texts became more intriguing, it was wonderful to see their minds take charge, jumping into the discussions with animation and resolve.

“Discussing a Shakespearean tragedy over chicken and mashed potatoes with eager young minds as if the only thing that mattered right then was discovering the truth of this particular interpretation ... such is an everyday occurrence at Thomas Aquinas College. Truth matters, and it should be shared. It is so exciting to see those high school students discover it, discuss it, and delight in it.”

I remember one of the students coming up to me after a class on *Macbeth*, saying, “Kathleen! I just made an awesome point about Lady Macbeth and the prophecy in class! Look, here ...” and he pulled out his text, pointed out the passage in question, and began explaining his insight with enthusiasm as I followed along, questioning and commenting on his assessment. It was especially rewarding because I remember this student groaning earlier in the day because they had to read an entire Shakespeare play in one afternoon. We made a point of sitting at the dinner table together so that we could continue the conversation with other students.

Discussing a Shakespearean tragedy over chicken and mashed potatoes with eager young minds as if the only

thing that mattered right then was discovering the truth of this particular interpretation ... such is an everyday occurrence at Thomas Aquinas College. Truth matters, and it should be shared. It is so exciting to see those high school students discover it, discuss it, and delight in it.

I remember another time helping a student work her way through a Euclid proposition. It was a difficult proposition, and it took some time, but the moment when the light turned on — the moment when she saw how the steps logically followed to the conclusion — that moment is the best. It takes me back to my childhood days of begging my parents to “Watch me! Watch this!” since the desire to have a companion in good things never diminishes. That one student made me smile as she sighed in relief, turned to me, said joyfully, “Now watch this!” and demonstrated the proposition she had mastered, not through memorization but through rational thinking, with finesse and confidence. Once again, when truth prevails, a light shines forth.

It’s almost miraculous how lives can be changed in just two short weeks, and I’ve been blessed to witness such changes:

- seeing a student who had questioned the existence of a higher being actually attend Mass;
- watching a group of boisterous boys become responsible men as they banded together to carry a wheel-chair bound student up the steep hiking trails;
- seeing students forgo recreation time in order to do extra Euclidean propositions just “for the fun of it”;
- watching students gather to do a read-through of a play with all the dramatic flair of a professional performance; they had decided to do this of their own accord, a sign that they recognize there are goods in and of themselves, and that it is worthwhile to pursue them;
- seeing a student wrestle a desire to attend a technical school with his desire to attend a liberal arts school, as he came to understand the immense worth that a school like Thomas Aquinas College has, a value that goes far beyond the salary of a job;
- seeing a student’s goodbye note on the board, saying she realized she only wants to attend a school that truly cares about her education and can’t wait to return;
- hearing the beauty and mastery of musical performances as students share their talents at open-mic night and the spontaneous jams initiated on the outdoor patio, and recognizing that such an education creates a joy-filled community;
- watching friendships form, friendships that will last, and do last, beyond those two weeks;
- seeing the tears they shed on the last day as they realize they are leaving something true and good and beautiful.

The amount of Summer Program students who return to the College for a visit, who apply to the College, who attend and graduate from the College, is a sign of the worth of those two weeks. In a short time, students come to realize one of the vital necessities in life — we are given the gift of reason, and with that comes the responsibility to develop it and use it.

In the great books program, by encountering the original thoughts and minds of the thinkers of the past, these young students are both enabling their minds to think rationally and training their minds to communicate clearly. Freeing themselves from the shackles of ignorance, especially in the faith-filled atmosphere of the College, these young students become more aware of their purpose in life, become more certain in their hope for a life eternal, and become more eager to live a rational, moral, and ethical life — to live the good life.

Kathleen Sullivan ('06), a doctoral student in literature at the Catholic University of America, has served as a prefect for the College’s High School Summer Program for each of the last eight years. To learn more about the Summer Program, see www.thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram.



Miss Sullivan (left) leads students in the College’s High School Summer Program on a hike in the Los Padres National Forest.

From Philosopher to Physician

Alumni Profile: Caroline Johnson, M.D. ('97)

There is no such thing as a typical day on the job for Caroline Johnson, M.D. ('97). As an internist, she is likely to confront any number of illnesses and maladies, and as a traveling physician, she is likely to do so just about anywhere.

Sometimes she volunteers for the St. Vincent de Paul Society, providing pro-bono care to patients in her home city of Phoenix. Occasionally she puts in shifts in the pediatric unit at a local urban medical center. Most of the time, however — about 30 weeks out of the year — she is on the road, completing round-the-clock shifts that can range from 7 to 21 days at remote hospitals across the United States. As a member of the Rural Physicians Group, she serves small communities that are unable to maintain their own, permanent medical staffs, and instead import physicians for brief, intensive stays.

“Usually the hospital will have an emergency-room doctor, but for everything else, it’s me,” says Dr. Johnson. “It can be anything from an infection of the skin to someone coming in with pain in the chest. In extreme cases, we can airlift a patient elsewhere, but for the most part, we don’t have the benefit of a specialist. I can’t call in a gastrointestinal doctor to come see a case of liver disease. It’s up to me. I have to be prepared for situations I could not possibly have expected.”

A Work of Mercy

Looking back, Dr. Johnson now sees the College’s program of liberal education as ideal preparation for a medical career — but that is not why she enrolled some 20 years ago. It was not the four years of natural science or the breadth of the classical curriculum that appealed to her, but the College’s students. “They were very outgoing, very friendly, very genuine,” she recalls of a trip to campus while in high school. “They were the first and most poignant example of what I was going to get into.”

Dr. Johnson entered the College in 1993 with her brother, Benjamin, who went on to marry a classmate, Brigit (McNally '97), and is now a father of four and a lieutenant colonel in the United States Marine Corps. Reflecting on her and Benjamin’s time on campus, Dr. Johnson says, “It solidified and blossomed the bud of faith for us both.” Four years later, she left the College with — she thought — a strong sense of what she wanted to do with her life: study philosophy. “I had applied and was accepted to the *Angelicum* in Rome, with a long-term plan to go into education,” Dr. Johnson says. “But the Lord kept leading me, by way of little signs in my life, suggesting that He had something else in mind for me.”

What that “something else” was first became apparent shortly after graduation, when she and her brother paid a visit to Rev. Thomas Conn, S.J., a beloved chaplain at the College who was then dying of cancer. They were blessed to be with Fr. Conn at his deathbed, witnessing his passing into eternal life as well as the corporal works of mercy administered by those attending to him. “I remember watching his nurse,” says Dr. Johnson. “She had this nice, practical approach to medicine. That really stuck with me.”



A Change of Plans

In short order, Dr. Johnson abandoned her pursuit of philosophy in order to become a physician. She returned to her childhood home in Western Canada and enrolled at the University of Victoria, where she completed the prerequisite courses to apply to medical school. Although she could have pursued her study of medicine more quickly had she taken the prerequisites as an undergraduate, Dr. Johnson does not begrudge the great books curriculum she studied at the College. “If I had to do it over again 100 times, I would not do anything differently,” she insists.

“In this life, there’s really only one goal, and that’s to get to Heaven at the end and to serve God here. To do that you need to prepare — no matter whether you are a ditch-digger, a garbage man, or a neonatologist — you have to have the proper formation, and you cannot get that in modern medicine today,” Dr. Johnson says. “They can teach you the science. They can teach you the techniques. They can teach you the latest breakthroughs. But they cannot teach you the love of God through the soul of another person. They cannot teach you Christian charity. They cannot impress upon you that this corporal work of mercy is what it is.”

Dr. Johnson’s experience at the College proved invaluable not only for her personal and spiritual formation, but also for the medical-school admissions process. “When I was applying, the schools looked at me as a nontraditional student, in large part because of the classes I had taken, and they loved it,” she says. “They told me that to my face, ‘We wish we had more students like you because you have a different perspective that we cannot teach.’”

Medical School and Beyond

In 2002, as she was preparing for her first year of studies at Rush Medical College in Chicago, Dr. Johnson underwent a routine physical examination that resulted in a shocking discovery — a malignant ovarian tumor. “That led to treatment and surgery and all the other stuff,” she says, but remarkably, it neither deterred nor delayed her plans.

“The Lord obviously wanted me to go through with medical school, because He gave me the extra strength;

and I didn’t have to take any time off or have any special accommodations, which I was really grateful for,” she says. She did, however, begin her first year at Rush with no hair, and she endured a full year of cancer treatment alongside her studies. By her second year, the cancer was in full remission, and a full head of curly hair had returned.

To her surprise, the workload at medical school was less difficult than she had feared it would be. “I found that studying through medical school was much easier than anything I did at the College,” she says. “When you go through four years of liberal education, your brain forms these pathways that are then there forever. It conditions your brain in order to amass more information.” Not wanting to be constrained by a narrow specialty, she opted for a combined specialty of internal medicine and pediatrics, owing to her love of children. She subsequently became Board Certified in both specialties.

After graduating in the top third of her class, Dr. Johnson was offered residencies at several prestigious universities, including Yale, Baylor, and the University of Southern California. Yet she chose a four-year program that operated through four separate hospitals in Phoenix — one serving veterans, one children, a private general hospital, and a public one — because of the diversity of experiences it offered. She then worked briefly as a hospitalist in Phoenix after completing her residency in 2010. She joined the Rural Physicians Group the next year.

A Country Doctor

“We tend to think of under-served patients as mostly being in inner cities, but residents of rural areas can be under-served in their own ways,” Dr. Johnson says. “They often don’t have access to routine medical care; they may have to travel miles and miles and miles just to see a doctor. Their symptoms can go undiagnosed — and untreated — for a long time.”

Hers is a profession of limits. Sometimes there is no cure for what ails a patient, or sometimes the patient is unwilling to make the difficult decisions that getting healthy requires. Thus it is often the responsibility of the internist to speak hard truths, but with love. “Being able to deliver bad news or disagree with patients when I think what they are doing is going to harm them is crucial. You need to be able to talk to them directly, truthfully, clearly,” she says. That part of her practice reminds her of the “training” she received around the classroom tables at the College, engaging her classmates in Socratic dialogues. “That process of trying to convince others of the truth of what you see, and present it in a way that’s accessible, it comes home very strongly in medicine.”

Above all, though, it is her faith that enables her to embrace both the limitations of medicine and the demanding schedule her career imposes. While serving in rural hospitals, she steals away for daily Mass as much as possible, and finds herself constantly in prayer as she goes about her work. “If I were unable to put on the lenses of faith, I think I would burn out, or be embittered, seeing so many cases of people destroying themselves through their choices. I have to remind myself that I am just here to make things a little bit better, and maybe be a witness.”

When she is not traveling, she shares a home with her sister Katherine ('06), a nurse in Phoenix. She also occasionally gives talks to area medical students, advising them about the medical profession, and reminding them of their purpose as physicians. “Our society can put men on the moon. We can make fancy phones and computers. But the human body is a mystery to us and always will be,” she says. “As doctors, we need to have a basic recognition of who we are in relation to God and the world, and a sense of humility.”

Calling to mind a lesson she first learned at Fr. Conn’s bedside, she notes, “Although there is much we cannot do, there is also so much we *can* do. It is our gift to help others in their suffering.”

Because the future needs the wisdom of the past ...



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Please contact
Tom Susanka, Director of Gift Planning
tsusanka@thomasaquinas.edu
805-421-5928



CAMPUS LIFE



1. The women of Thomas Aquinas College square off in the annual "Powder Puff Bowl," a friendly game of flag football. 2. Students celebrate St. Patrick's Day with green garb, Celtic music, and Irish dance. 3-4. There were kilts and bagpipes, and the tossing of stones and cabers, at the campus Highland Games in March. 5. Students perform in the Spring Schubertiade in St. Bernardine of Siena Library. 6. CBS News correspondent Carter Evans interviews Martin Zepeda ('14) as part of the network's March 17 story, "American Catholic Youth on Pope Francis." 7. Students enjoy one last pre-Lenten night of music and feasting at the Mardi Gras dance.

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

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

* Schedules may vary; if traveling from afar, please call in advance to confirm.

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

Calendar of Events

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

Commencement, Cardinal DiNardo Presiding	May 11
Alumni Association Dinner	June 2
Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic Sherwood Country Club.....	June 3
West Coast Meeting of the Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies thomasaquinas.edu/SATS	June 13-14
Fifth Annual Conference on the Social Doctrine of the Church thomasaquinas.edu/socialdoctrine	June 14-15
Summer Seminars 2013 — The Year of Faith: Marriage and the Family thomasaquinas.edu/summerseminars	July 12-14 & July 19-21
Summer Great Books Program for High School Students thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram	July 21-August 3
Seminar: "On Human Work" At the Napa Institute 2013 Conference.....	August 1

805-525-4417 • www.thomasaquinas.edu

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

