



# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2010

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 4

### Summer of Learning

#### Intellectual Life of College Continues After School Year Ends

After the last vehicle rolls off the Thomas Aquinas College campus following Commencement; when the residence halls, once teeming with students, grow quiet; when silence briefly replaces Socratic discourse in the classroom buildings, it may seem as though the intellectual life of the College has slipped into a summer's hibernation.

In reality, the intellectual life of the academic year has merely given way to a very different, albeit still vibrant, sort of intellectual life. Most of the students have left, but not all, and although their formal instruction has been suspended, their learning most certainly has not. Likewise, the summer offers educational opportunities for the College's various other constituencies — prospective students, faculty, alumni, and benefactors.

The academic year may have ended, but the Summer of Learning has only begun.

#### A Break from the Break

Some 80 students remained on campus during the summer, working full-time in jobs that are filled by many more students working part-time during the academic year. These student workers assisted in food preparation in St. Joseph Commons; they tended to the landscaping; they provided support to the College's administrators; and they cleaned and painted the residence halls. But what did they do for intellectual stimulation?

"These students need something to do this summer," thought tutor Kevin Kolbeck as the school year came to a close. "Work is not what life is all about." Then, he received multiple requests — including an unsigned note left on his office door — asking that he resurrect a discussion group he had led in the summer of 2008 on the works of Catholic novelist Flannery O'Connor. "I was happy to oblige," he says. "I thought the



Clockwise from top left: Participants in the Summer Great Books Program for High School Students hike in the Los Padres National Forest; Tutor Michael Augros leads colleagues in a discussion of Ptolemy; President Michael F. McLean and members of the President's Council consider Aquinas' Treatise on Law; Thomas Aquinas College Founding President Ronald P. McArthur (second from right) directs a discussion on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics

students would appreciate having an opportunity to come together and talk about important matters."

The weekly, evening seminars proved to be a welcome addition for the College's summer crew. "It's a way to continue that tradition we build during the year of reading great literature and being able to discuss it," says sophomore Nicholas Murphy. "It's just a very enjoyable, thought-provoking thing to do."

#### Foreseeable Freshmen

In mid-July, rising high school seniors from across the country and beyond descended upon campus to get a taste of the life — academic, spiritual, and social — of a Thomas Aquinas College student. As part of the two-week Summer Great Books Program for High School Students, they participated daily in the vigorous study of original texts through classroom conversations guided by members of the College's teaching faculty. "The high school program is our most effective recruitment tool," says Admissions Director Jon Daly.

"After two weeks at the College, most of the students want nothing more than to come back."

In their spare time, attendees enjoyed field trips to the beach, the Hollywood Bowl, the Getty Museum, and Santa Barbara. Daily Mass was offered throughout the duration of the program, as was spiritual direction from the College's chaplains. "It's always great fun to have the high school students here," remarks Mr. Daly. "They bring a lot of activity and enthusiasm to the campus, and they restore the hum of great conversations both inside and outside our classrooms."

continued on page 10

### Statements in Stone

#### Architect Receives Tucker Award for Work on Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel

When plans for Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel were first conceived more than 13 years ago, late Thomas Aquinas College president Thomas E. Dillon envisioned a building defined by four "marks": beauty, grandeur, permanence, and tradition. This vision informed the selection of the very stones that make up the structure — the many different types of marble that form the exquisite Chapel floor, the limestone façade that projects timeless durability, the Botticino columns that lift one's gaze and thoughts heavenward, and the stucco exterior that recalls both the California Missions and the Spanish Renaissance.

This stonework has attracted the attention of visitors to the College ever since the dedication of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel in 2009. This spring, it also garnered the recognition of the architectural and design industry when the Chapel's design architect, Duncan G. Stroik, received a prestigious Tucker Design Award from the Building Stone Institute.

Presented at a May 14 ceremony at Yale University, the biennial Tucker Awards honor those who have achieved excellence in concept, design, and construction through the incorporation of natural stone in building or landscape projects. According to the jurors who selected Mr. Stroik's design for the award, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel is "a magnificent building that successfully blends many sources of architectural

vocabulary. The detailing and material selections are amazing, particularly in the meticulous choice and use of stone types."

Mr. Stroik, an associate professor at the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture and principal of Duncan G. Stroik Architect, LLC, is a leading figure in the effort to restore the Church's long tradition of sacred architecture. In addition to his work on Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, he has designed the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wis., as well as a number of other churches, chapels, shrines, and Catholic educational facilities.

Mr. Stroik worked closely with Dr. Dillon and other Thomas Aquinas College officials in designing Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Looking back on those efforts, he has praised Dr. Dillon's attention to detail and his understanding of the importance of fine building materials. The late president "found time to do the things that mattered, such as visiting artists' workshops and traveling to Europe to pick out marble," Mr. Stroik remarked in a 2009 article in the journal *Sacred Architecture*.

The fruits of this collaboration are on display in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, which employs more than 20 different kinds of stone and marble, including Carrara marble for the altar and tabernacle, and Rosso Levanto and Rosso Laguna marble in the four



Architect Duncan Stroik and Thomas Aquinas College's late president Thomas E. Dillon at the 2009 dedication of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

shrines that surround the sanctuary. The Chapel has been praised in various Catholic, architectural, and secular news publications including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Architect Magazine*, *Adoremus Bulletin*, and *Traditional Building*.

"We are delighted by Duncan Stroik's work on our chapel, and we are very pleased to see him honored in this way," says President Michael F. McLean. "Most of all, we are grateful to him for helping to grace our campus with a truly glorious House of God."

# From the Desk of the President

## Dr. Michael F. McLean's Remarks at the West Coast Alumni Dinner

It is an honor for me to address you this evening; I am grateful for the opportunity.

I want to begin by thanking all of you for your prayers, expressions of friendship, and the support you have shown me and the College during this period of transition. In particular, I want to thank the Alumni Association for organizing the inaugural brunch in my honor the morning following the inauguration and for the lovely leather-bound *Enchiridion Officii* (*Handbook of Duties*) its members presented me at that event.

That book, which will be an ongoing inspiration and guide as I carry out my duties, is inscribed as follows: "The Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Association commends to you this *Enchiridion Officii* — a spiritual bouquet to strengthen you in your work, the wisdom of our patron for inspiration, and the founding document of our alma mater to reaffirm wisdom as the end of liberal education."

This inscription bears witness to the commitment of our alumni to the mission of the College — to the importance of prayer and of the spiritual life; to the primacy of St. Thomas in our program; to the College's adherence to his method and principal doctrines; and to the efficacy of the curriculum, pedagogy, and Catholic educational philosophy of the College.

### State of the College

Adversity reveals an institution's character and condition, as well as the depth of its support and the quality of its friendships. I want you to know that the response of the faculty, staff, chaplains, students, alumni, Board of Governors, and benefactors has been edifying throughout the period since Dr. Dillon's death.

One sign, among many, of the strength of the College is the work our faculty is doing this summer. Alumni tutors are leading classes on St. Thomas, Ptolemy, and the theory of evolution. These classes evidence the College's strong commitment to its patron and to the faculty's determination to improve instruction and the curriculum wherever necessary, consistent with the principles outlined in the College's founding document.

We are preparing for a fall visit from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which will conclude our five-year reaccreditation cycle, a cycle which has focused on the assessment of our writing program, language program, and senior laboratory. The reaccreditation process has been beneficial to the College and has involved, in one way or another, every member of the faculty. We are confident that our accreditation will be renewed.

### The Role of the Alumni

I share with the Board of Governors an interest in involving the alumni of the College in a more formal and organized way in the effort to reach our enrollment and financial goals. To this end, I have had discussions with President Jonathan Monnereau ('05) and other leaders of the Alumni Association, and we have begun to formulate plans to bring about this involvement.

Among other things, I hope you will put the College high on your list of charities and that you will form the habit of giving regularly. Having received encouragement from the chairman of the Board of Governors, I intend to include the Alumni Association in Board-level conversations about securing and advancing the College, welcom-



ing as we do your suggestions, advice, and constructive criticism. We will help in any way we can in developing the Alumni Association website to help the Association conduct its affairs more efficiently and to strengthen communication across the extended Thomas Aquinas College family.

### Forming Students

With regard to student recruitment and the challenges it presents, I want to convey to you my hope that Thomas Aquinas College will remain the college of choice for those of your own children who are able and willing to come.

Each year at graduation, the president, addressing the graduates, announces to all present — in language that is sometimes misunderstood — "I admit you each to the community of those who know to the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts." As an educational institution with an ordination to the truth, it is important that our graduates *know* something, and so the president proclaims that they do.

The College makes no claim, however, to have perfected this knowledge, nor does it proclaim that its graduates have attained perfect knowledge; hence, the qualification, "to the degree of Bachelor of Arts." Although the president's statement may sound arrogant, it is actually humble, as if I were to say that I know how to cook, at least to some degree. My point is this: just as our graduates leave with a certain degree of knowledge, so should we admit as freshmen those who are willing and able *to a certain degree*.

What degree is that? Without becoming too specific, let me just say that some amount of *wonder* is necessary for success here — but that we trust the tutors and the books to elicit and strengthen wonder; some amount of *intellectual ability and accomplishment* in the range of disciplines taught in our program is necessary for success here — but that we trust the tutors to help students see the principal ideas, arguments, and themes contained in each of their readings and to see how one discipline sheds light on another; some amount of *self-confidence and verbal aptitude* is necessary for success here, especially given the pedagogical approach of the College — but that we trust the tutors to provide the assistance needed to help students adjust to the challenges presented by class discussions.

As you well know, the authors of the great books are themselves great teachers, and the curriculum is ordered such that adequate preparation is given in earlier years for what comes in later years. Some students are able and effective teachers as well. In short, we should not underestimate the transformative power of our educational program, nor should we forget that plenty of help is available here. What we need are students who are able and willing to receive this help and who can make progress on the road to wisdom. After all, this is what we are about; this is the end for which God made us.

### In Conclusion

I will conclude by invoking the familiar quotation from Aristotle, which our newest alumni, the Class of 2010, chose as their class quotation: "We ought not to listen to those who exhort us, because we are human, to think of human things.... We ought rather to take on immortality as much as possible, and do all that we can to live in accordance with the highest element within us; for even if its bulk is small, in its power and value it far exceeds everything." This, too, is our church's call today — to "live in accordance with the highest element within us."

I am confident that you are doing this, and that in so doing you are bearing witness to your virtue, to your Christian faith, and to the goodness of the education which you have received.

## Alumni Dinners 2010

Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean and Alumni Association President Jonathan Monnereau ('05) were the guests of honor at the two annual alumni dinners — the first, on the East Coast, at St. Catherine of Siena Parish Hall in Northern Virginia on April 17; and the second, a West Coast affair, held on campus on June 19 (see photos below). Alumni vintner David O'Reilly ('87) provided fine wines for the occasions, and the College's director of alumni relations, Mark Kretschmer ('99), expertly prepared gourmet meals for both events.



## IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

### Frank S. Chavez

April 1, 2010

Father of Rev. Phillip Chavez,  
SOLT ('86), Stephen ('91), Monica  
(Stoutz '92), and Katherine ('97)

### Annabel Greaney

March 27, 2010

Member of the Legacy Society

### Daniel Ziglinski ('91)

May 15, 2010

Brother of Lisa (Macik '88)  
and Eric ('91)

### The Most Rev.

### Norman F. McFarland

April 16, 2010

Founding member of the  
Board of Governors

### Allen G. Browne

April 23

Benefactor; brother of the late  
Harry Browne, member of the  
Board of Governors

### Freda E. Daly

June 1, 2010

Grandmother of Jon ('99),  
Ruth (Slack '02),  
and Rebecca (Pfundstein '05)

### Mark Allen ('88)

July 14, 2010

### Samuel Joseph Abraham

July 28, 2010

Son of Kathlene (Caughron '98)  
and John Abraham ('98)

## Senior Reflections: Tim Cantu ('10)

### A Student Looks Back at His Time at the College and Ahead to His Future

*Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors on the eve of Commencement, May 14, 2010.*

I didn't really hit much turbulence in deciding to come to Thomas Aquinas College. That started more after I got here.

I come from a traditional Catholic background. I was home-schooled. My parents did not go here, but if you saw them and knew a lot about the College, you could easily think that they had. We go to Mass every Sunday and as often during the week as we can together, and religion is a big part of our life.

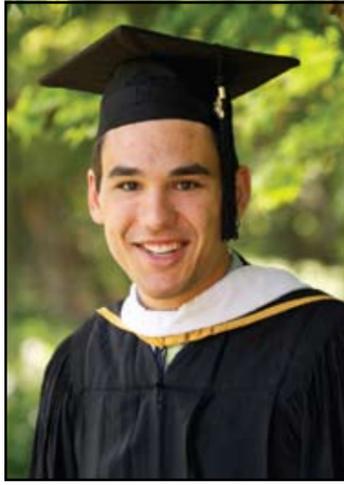
When I began looking at colleges, I was graduating from high school a year early; and I was interested in most of the small Catholic universities. Eventually, I narrowed my choice down to here and one other school. I attended the Thomas Aquinas College high school summer program, and I absolutely loved it. So I visited the other school, and I visited here during the school year. I loved both colleges.

The reason that I ended up choosing Thomas Aquinas College, however, was because — well, it's in Southern California, for one — but also because when I visited during the school year I felt tremendously welcomed by the students. People went out of their way constantly to talk to me. They came and sat with me when I was sitting by myself at meals. Everybody made me feel like I was already part of the community, which really had a huge effect on me and led me here.

I'm an extroverted person. When I arrived, I didn't really have too much difficulty adjusting to the seminar-style classes and the Socratic method. I enjoyed freshman year a lot. But during sophomore year I began to hit some turbulence. I suspect that's because the reasons I listed for coming here are probably not the ones that attract most people.

By sophomore year, I felt like I had been here for a long time and, having no sense of time, two years really did seem like a long while. Graduation didn't seem to be anywhere on my horizon. And generally I just didn't know why I was here. Why am I not at another school? What's special about this place?

That year I had the two best tutors I have ever had and most likely ever will have: Dr. Michael McLean and Dr. Thomas Dillon. These two men, more than any others, are responsible for my graduating from the College because — not through anything particular that they said to me or anything other than their actions — they showed me what the Thomas Aquinas College education is all about. They showed me how good it can be and how much one can gain from it. Even in my ignorance, I knew that I could not get that kind of education from any other school.



So by the end of sophomore year, thanks mostly to their influence, I decided, "Well, I still don't see graduation in my future, but I think I'll come back for the beginning of junior year and we'll see how things go. If I really don't like it, I'll leave."

I don't know if it's too early to say that that was the turning point in my life, but it was certainly one of the most important decisions I'll ever make. The curriculum junior and senior years made me understand, more than anything else really could have, how important it is to study the things that we do here, because of both the method and the material.

The material we study as juniors and seniors — many modern philosophers, people who have vastly influenced the world today — and the Socratic method help you to break down modern assumptions, to understand them, and to understand where they went wrong, if they went wrong. The experience I gained learning those things was absolutely essential.

A brief anecdote illustrates this so well. After the first semester of junior year, I went to a Christmas party back home, and one of my best friends from high school was

**"I said, 'Well, I was reading Descartes, and I was thinking about it on the way here' — and I shared an insight that I had just been considering. He got this stunned look on his face, and he said, 'You thought of that?'"**

there. He was attending one of the schools that I had considered instead of Thomas Aquinas College. Now, we had just read Descartes back at the College, and I said to him, "Well, I was reading Descartes, and I was thinking about it on the way here" — and I shared an insight that I had just been considering.

"Oh, who were you talking about that with?" he asked. "I wasn't talking to anyone," I answered. "I was just thinking about it." He got this stunned look on his face, and he said, "You thought of that?"

It wasn't until then that I realized that no other school could have taught me to do what Thomas Aquinas College has taught me to do. It was crystal clear to me at that moment. That, more than anything else I can say, illustrates how much the College has done for me.

After graduation I will be getting married in Boston to one of my classmates. And this fall I will be attending Notre Dame law school. After that ... well, I could do a lot of things. I am most interested in joining the Judge Advocate General Corps of the United States Air Force. I think that will best enable me to serve both professionally and in my personal life, giving me the best possibility of serving my country and my faith.

Thank you all so much for making this education possible. I know you do far more than just raise funds, and I think all the students are eternally grateful to you.

## Senior Reflections: Kathleen Gaffney ('10)

### "Looking at Everything in a New Light and with a Little Bit of Wonder"

*Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors on the eve of Commencement, May 14, 2010.*

Shortly before my junior year of high school, my older sister said to me, "Katy, are you going to college so you can get a job, or are you going to college so you can live your life?"

I was in the middle of an argument with her. She had graduated from Thomas Aquinas College in 2002, and I didn't want to go. She thought I should go, and that question floored me.

I thought college was little more than the place you go to after high school so you can get a job some day. I never really thought of it as anything else. And when you think about college as simply the place you go to get a job, Thomas Aquinas College is not what you're looking for.

So after that argument I started to think more about why, exactly, I was going to college. My parents urged me to attend the College's summer program for high school students in 2005, which I did, a little bit skeptically.

**"To my surprise, I discovered that the program here is practical — though not in the ordinary sense of the word. I'm not getting a set career out of this degree, but I am getting a foundation ... a great foundation for my life."**

At the summer program I was very impressed with the prefects, and I was inspired by my fellow summer program students. They had made being Catholic a part of their daily life. I had gone to a public high school, where I was lucky if my friends expressed any belief in God, let alone practiced an organized religion. So I was incredibly inspired by the students, and that motivated me to complete the application and then enroll at Thomas Aquinas College.

The curriculum here is great. The great books are amazing, and they teach you how to think. They teach you how to argue; they teach you how to read. You come away looking at everything in a new light and with a little bit of wonder.

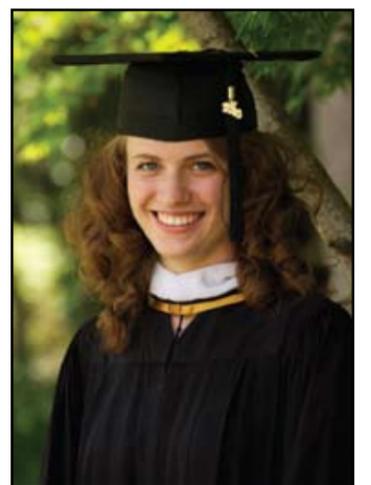
But when you read the great books, you really need to have some kind of support, and that's what the community here is. The community here is something in which we can take great pride. Because you can power through the great books on your own — if you have enough determination or brain power, you can definitely do that — but the College makes studying the great books so much easier by surrounding students with people who really care about the questions being asked. Not only about the answers, but about the questions.

When you're sitting around the table, talking to people, and everybody's asking questions, somebody's going to ask a question that you haven't even thought of before. There's always something that comes out of left field. It's an incredible experience.

To my surprise, I discovered that the program here is practical — though not in the ordinary sense of the word. I'm not getting a set career out of this degree, but I am getting a foundation. It's a foundation that's going to help me get a career at some point, and it's also a great foundation for my life.

I am graduating as a strong, confident Catholic. I know exactly what I believe and how I can defend it, and that's what I want to give to other students. So I am looking into becoming a youth minister for a parish in my hometown of Colorado Springs, Colo., because I want to be able to help other students ask the same questions that I was able to ask.

Thank you very much for making this education possible.



# Campus Update

## Recent Events and Happenings

### Board Appoints Two New Governors

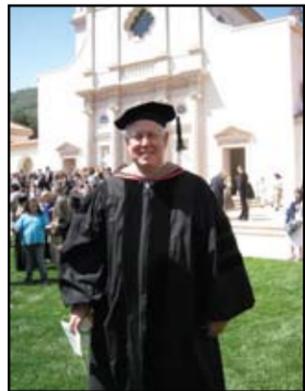
The College is pleased to announce the addition of two new members to its Board of Governors: Dr. Thomas Krause of Ojai, Calif. and Mr. Donald Swartz of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

The chairman of Behavioral Science Technology, an international consulting firm specializing in organizational culture and safety management, Dr. Krause is a longtime supporter of the College. He has been a member of the President's Council since 1990, and his daughter Christel (Kelsey) graduated from the College in 1991. "I think it's very important to American Catholicism that there is a place like Thomas Aquinas College. It is the only place of its kind in the U.S.," he says. "That's good for education and it's good for Catholicism. So as a



Catholic and as a citizen, I have at least two reasons to support the institution."

A semi-retired entrepreneur and real-estate investor, Mr. Swartz has had a strong relationship with the College dating back to the mid-1980s, at which time he was



convinced of the need to promote its unique academic program. With that goal in mind, he encouraged the College to start its Summer Great Books Seminars — now running well into their third successful decade. "I really love the mission of the College and that the College has been so dedicated and rigorous about maintaining it," he says. "Thomas Aquinas College is very strong and very stable, and I'm happy to be part of it."

### Requiem Mass

A Mass for the nearly 2,000 deceased governors, benefactors, friends, alumni, faculty, and staff of the College was offered April 30 in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Robed in the black vestments appropriate to the occasion, College Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., served as the celebrant. During the processional, Fr. Raftery carried a scroll, bound with black ribbon, bearing the names of all the members of the College community who have died since its founding in 1971.

He then placed the scroll on the altar, where it remained throughout the liturgy.

A joint choir, consisting of members of both the Thomas Aquinas College Choir and *Pro Musica*, a professional group based in Pasadena, sang the hauntingly beautiful *Requiem* by Maurice Duruflé. Graduate Dan Grimm ('76) directed the singers, while his brother Stephen ('75) accompanied them on the organ. This evocative music, which helped to set a fittingly reflective tone for the memorial, came courtesy of the St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series, endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Henkels.

### Board of Regents Announces New Chairman ...

Founded to help bolster fundraising and relations between Thomas Aquinas College and the surrounding Southern California community, the Board of Regents is a group of dynamic, local leaders committed to the College's mission of Catholic liberal education. Having served on the Board for four years, Scott Daily of Camarillo has recently been named its new chairman.

"For all of us who are in the local area, Thomas Aquinas College is such a blessing," says Mr. Daily, a business owner who manages a private portfolio of investments. "On the Board of Regents, we try to be a bridge between the College and its neighbors, because the more that local individuals and business leaders come to know the school, the more everyone will benefit." Mr. Daily credits much of the Board's success to his predecessor, James N. Scanlon. "Jim really established the Board and got things going," he notes. "He did a lot of foundational work, and it is now our duty to build on that foundation."



### ... and Hosts 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Classic

Chief among the Board of Regents' responsibilities is hosting the annual Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic at the historic Sherwood Country Club in Westlake Village, Calif. This year's event, held on May 24, was a great success, attracting scores of benefactors and well-wishing golfers, including His Eminence Adam Joseph Cardinal Maida, Archbishop Emeritus of Detroit, and NFL Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown.

The Classic benefits the more than 70 percent of Thomas Aquinas College students who rely on assistance from the school's student scholarship fund — some of whom were present to sing for and to personally thank this year's attendees. "They were charming and a



From the 2010 Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic: low team-net winners William Costigan, Jim Brown, K.C. Pierson, and Shadi Hanna

hit," says Board of Regents Chairman Scott Daily. "It was great for them to get up and tell the College's benefactors how grateful they are."

Among this year's attendees were Shadi Hanna of Long Beach and Dale Leibert of Moorpark, who were, respectively, the low-gross and low-net winners of the day. Mr. Hanna's foursome (pictured above) claimed low team-net honors, while the cup for low team gross went to the foursome of Steve Wood, Ed Castillo, Jim Hurst, and Robert Hurst.

### Remembering Dr. Dillon

Two weeks prior to the Requiem Mass for all the deceased friends of Thomas Aquinas College, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel hosted another memorial for one very dear friend in particular — late president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon — on the one-year anniversary of his death, April 15, 2010. That morning, the school's head chaplain, Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., led students, faculty, staff, and local friends in praying for the repose of Dr. Dillon's soul and the consolation of his widow, Terri, and their family. Following the Mass, at a buffet lunch in the coffee shop of St. Joseph Commons, College President Michael F. McLean thanked all those in attendance and expressed the great love and support of the entire community for the Dillon family.

### Classicists Tour Chapel

On Saturday, April 22, members of the Southern California chapter of the Institute for Classical Architecture came to Thomas Aquinas College for a tour of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, which had long captured their interest. The tour was led by an able guide, architect Domiane Forte ('00), who studied under the Chapel's design architect, Duncan Stroik, at the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture. Mr. Forte is also the son-in-law of late College president Thomas E. Dillon, who consulted with him frequently during the Chapel's design and construction phases.

The Institute's members were impressed by the design and workmanship displayed throughout the Chapel, and they appreciated learning about the classical nature of the College's curriculum. Many expressed an eagerness to return to campus on a Sunday so as to hear the Thomas Aquinas College Choir make use of the Chapel's magnificent acoustics.

### Allen Browne, RIP

The College bid farewell to a dear friend and President's Council member, Allen Browne of Las Vegas, Nev., on April 23. An avid big-game hunter and a lover of music, Mr. Browne's legacy at the College will live on in at least two prominent reminders: his hunting trophies, some of which decorate the halls of the Albertus Magnus science building, and the fabulous organ that he generously donated and which fills Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel with beautiful music. "It was always a delight to see Allen at our annual Great Books Summer Seminars," says Dr. McLean. "We miss him, and we keep his soul and his family's intentions in our prayers."

## Welcome, Archbishop Gomez!



Dean Brian T. Kelly and President Michael F. McLean recently had the honor of meeting the new Coadjutor Archbishop of Los Angeles, the Most Rev. José Gomez, at His Excellency's May 26 Mass of Reception at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

# Ordinations of Two Classmates Bring Total to 48 Alumni Priests

## Rev. Fr. Rhone Lillard, F.S.S.P. ('00)

On a Wednesday afternoon in late May, numerous Thomas Aquinas College tutors and alumni gathered in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel for a Mass offered by a priest who, only a decade earlier, was their student and classmate.

Just four days after his ordination, Rev. Fr. Rhone Lillard, F.S.S.P. ('00), had returned to campus to offer a solemn Mass in the extraordinary form. His visit was part of a homecoming tour that included trips to Nebraska, Oklahoma, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, Scotland, England, and Rome.

Fr. Lillard's real journey, however, had begun many years earlier.

### A Spiritual Voyage

“My path to the altar,” Fr. Lillard often says, “has been a long and winding one.” Raised in San Diego as the second of three children in an essentially agnostic home, “I didn't even know what Easter was until I was 13.”

At that time, while on a school trip to Washington, D.C., he encountered Evangelical sidewalk preachers who challenged his admittedly simplistic understanding of sin and salvation. Thence began a two-year sojourn into Protestantism and biblical inquiry that eventually led him to the Catholic Church at age 15, alongside his mother, who was returning to the faith of her childhood.

Still, his journey was far from complete. Distressed by the irreverence and the poor catechesis that were all too common in much of the Church at the time, Rhone found solace in the traditional liturgies of the Society of Saint Pius X. Young and still largely unformed, he “didn't understand many of the complexities” surrounding the origins and status of the Society, he acknowledges. Shortly after graduating from high school, and sensing a vocation to the priesthood, he entered an SSPX seminary, where he studied for four years.

### Filling the Foundation

“I received a good education at the seminary,” Fr. Lillard notes. “We had lots of philosophy, theology, and Latin, but I knew there were big holes.” Desirous of a liberal education that included mathematics, science, and literature, and mindful of the need to become intellectually well-formed before entering the priesthood, he left the seminary and enrolled at Thomas Aquinas College in the summer of 1996.



Rev. Fr. Rhone Lillard, F.S.S.P. ('00), raises the chalice at a homecoming Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

“I went to the College to fill in so many holes in my foundation,” Fr. Lillard recalls. “It was a time of strengthening my intellect and of forming critical discipline.” The intellectual growth, perhaps not surprisingly, also infused his faith. “The experience certainly helped me to discern more clearly the questions regarding the Society of St. Pius X,” he observes. Following his freshman year he returned to full communion with the Catholic Church.

After graduation, Rhone earned a master's degree in literature at the University of Dallas, but he never lost sight of his vocation. Drawn by his love of the traditional liturgy, he ultimately entered the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, a Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right founded by Pope John Paul II. Dedicated to the extraordinary form of the Mass and the sacraments, the Fraternity has as its superior general one of Rhone's fellow alumni, the Very Rev. John M. Berg, F.S.S.P., Class of 1993.

### Ordained to Ministry

After more than five years of study and formation, on May 22, 2010, Rhone Lillard knelt before the Most Rev. Fabian Bruskewitz, Bishop of Lincoln, Neb., at Lincoln's Cathedral of the Risen Christ, and received the Sacrament of Holy Orders. “I must admit,” the newly ordained priest says, “when I wake up in the morning, I still think, ‘Oh my gosh, I get to offer Mass!’” He is humbled by this sacred honor, and delighted that through his ministry he is able to serve some of the many people who have helped him along the way.

“Although my journey to the altar has been quite long and winding, the longer the journey became, the more apparent it became to me that I was by no means making it alone. It was only through the prayers and sacrifices of so many that I was able to make it,” Fr. Lillard remarks. “I have always prayed for my friends and benefactors, but prior to my ordination, my prayers were only the prayers of Rhone Lillard. Now, when I stand at the altar, I get to stand in the person of Christ, offering to the Father the True Victim on behalf of all these souls.”

It was especially heartening, Fr. Lillard adds, to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass at his alma mater. “To say Mass for all these people who have given so much to me, to repay them with the Holy Eucharist, was a tremendous consolation.”

Even so, he is quick to point out that in many ways his journey has only just begun. His first assignment is at a Fraternity parish, Our Lady of Fatima Chapel in Pequannock, N.J. “Now the work really begins,” he says, “and I really need people's prayers.”

## Rev. John Marie Bingham, O.P. ('00)

In the days leading up to his ordination, Rev. John Marie Bingham, O.P. ('00) received an unusual gift: his father's priestly vestments.

Growing up in Augusta, Ga., the son of an Episcopal priest — “a high church Anglican with a very sacramental sense about him” — John was the typical preacher's kid, adamant that the ministry was not for him. Around the time of the fifth grade, a friend asked whether he would follow

in his father's footsteps. “I said, ‘No, no, no!’” Fr. John Marie recalls. “But inside, it struck a chord.” So much so that on June 25, 2010, at the Church of St. Dominic in San Francisco, the Most Rev. Ignatius Wang placed his hands on John Marie Bingham's head and ordained him to the priesthood.

Nonetheless, there was some truth to young John's denial: After all, he did not become an *Episcopal* priest.

### Jumping In

In junior high, John's parents enrolled him in a Catholic school, the first hint, he says, that they were inching toward Rome. So was he: by the time John reached high school, he had become convinced that “when I was grown up and out of the house, I was going to become Catholic.”

He would not need to wait that long. During his junior year, his parents announced their plans to enter the Church, and John eagerly joined them. They were formally received one Sunday in the summer of 1993 at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Augusta, Ga., on a date that is easily remembered: July 4.

A few years later, when John was deciding where to go to college, his father passed along a *Los Angeles Times* article about a small Catholic school with a classical curriculum in Southern California. “I had already heard about great books programs, and I was fascinated with the idea,” Fr. John Marie says. “So, being a recent convert, when I heard about the combination of a great books school with a Catholic identity, I jumped.”

### Communal Study, Faith, and Action

“The culture at the College, the community was very formative for me,” Fr. John Marie remarks. “I saw joyful people living their Catholic faith, doing it to the best of their ability, and not being ashamed of it.” The studies, of course, were also edifying. “I was exposed to St. Thomas, really for the first time in a deep way,” he reflects. “The theology, the Scripture study, the St. Augustine and St. Thomas readings were extremely formative for me. They gave me a framework with which to view the world that I think is extremely valuable.”

Not coincidentally, John's four years on campus were a time of profound spiritual growth. “I was very richly rewarded at the College with the prayer life,” he says. He served Mass in the chapel and befriended the College's chaplains, including, at the time, a Dominican by the name of Rev. Bart de la Torre, O.P.

This communal, intellectual, and prayer life bears a certain fruit, Fr. John Marie observes, in the way Thomas Aquinas College students and graduates engage the world. “I think, for instance, of going often with so many people from the College to pray at the local abortion clinic,” he says. “It naturally overflows into the work that God calls us to as Christians.”

### Coming Home

Upon graduation, John returned to Georgia, where he set out to discern his vocation. “I visited a Benedictine monastery and a Trappist monastery. I visited the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal up in New York. I visited a French foundation,” Fr. John Marie laughs. “Every time, I would come back and be very, very content, but there was something missing.” He wanted the deeper community experience of a religious order balanced with active preaching and a robust intellectual life. This longing drew his thoughts to Fr. de la Torre and the Dominicans.

With the benefit of hindsight, the choice now seems obvious. The four qualities that Fr. John Marie most loved about the College — community, study, prayer, and apostolate — are also the four pillars of the Order of Preachers. “I think the four pillars of this Dominican life all played a role in my vocation because they are all there in the life of the College, in the things that the College emphasizes,” he says.

Those pillars will now be the foundation of his priesthood, beginning with his first assignment as a parochial vicar at Saint Dominic's Parish in Benicia, Calif. There he will be assisting another alumni priest, Rev. Fr. Michael J. Hurley, O.P. ('99), who is the pastor. But before taking up this post, Fr. John Marie had an especially meaningful homecoming Mass to offer one Sunday morning earlier this summer.

The place? The Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Augusta, Ga. The date? One that is easily remembered: July 4.



Rev. John Marie Bingham, O.P. ('00), offers a priestly blessing to Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean and his wife, Lynda, after the new priest's June 25 ordination at the Church of St. Dominic in San Francisco.

*“For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”*

—Isaiah 61:11



When one approaches Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, it quickly becomes evident that this is a place set apart. Just as the Chapel is the largest, most architecturally elaborate building on campus, its environs are the most finely manicured. The fragrant blossoms, dangling rose vines, and verdant shrubbery amid saintly statues, stately fountains, and terra cotta tiles convey an outer beauty that enshrines an inner good. These are sacred grounds.

Some 18 months after the Chapel’s dedication, the gardens have matured, completing the project with the unsurpassed artistry of God’s creation. The fruit of generous benefactors and the work of a dedicated student grounds crew, they provide a fittingly elegant setting for the crown jewel of Thomas Aquinas College.



*Befitting the plaza’s role as a place of welcome, a statue of St. Matthew, the first of the evangelists, stands at its head. It is in St. Matthew’s Gospel that we read Our Lord’s summon to hospitality: “And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same?” (Matt. 5:47). The statue, as well as the one of St. Thérèse in the south garden (see page 7), is a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mills.*



To the north of the Chapel lies St. Thomas Plaza, an estate gift from Dr. Emil J. Massa. The College’s place of welcome, it also serves as a spacious and charming reception venue for entertaining guests and benefactors. The grand fountain at its center is inlaid with a tiled pattern of a sunburst, the symbol of St. Thomas Aquinas.



## Planting Seeds

### Campus Landscape Supervisor Dave Gaston Cultivates Wisdom among Student Workers

“If someone gave me the choice of having professional help or student help, hands down I would take the students,” says Dave Gaston.

The College’s landscape supervisor for the past 12 years, Mr. Gaston relies on a crew of 35-40 students who work part-time through the College’s financial-aid program. “I love the students’ intelligence,” he says. “I love the way they have that hunger to learn about plants and to help in any way they can.”

For Mr. Gaston, overseeing the College’s grounds crew is about more than merely managing a labor force. He views his role as primarily instructional, complementing the learning that takes place in the classroom with an education that nourishes the body as well as the mind. “I think it’s great that our students study the great books, the literature, the philosophy and the theology,” he says. “But ours is also a nuts-and-bolts world, and the world meets no one half way. I want to help the students to be successful. So I’m always stressing time man-



agement, the necessity to be punctual, being credible, what it takes to be a good employee.”

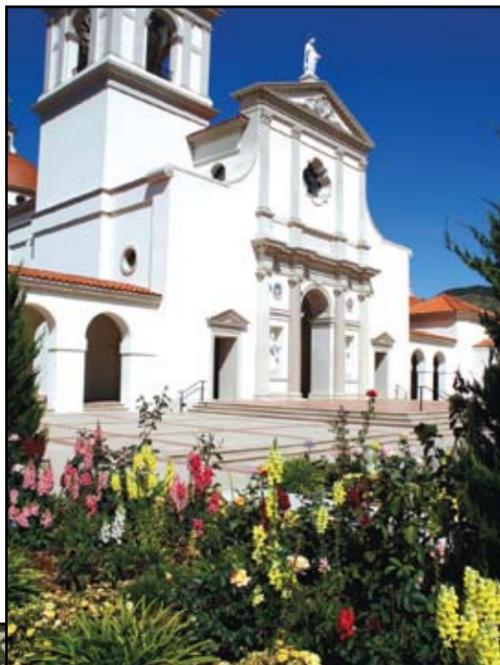
The students who have worked for him over the years are grateful for the practical skills and the life lessons — “Dave-isms,” as he jokingly calls them — that Mr. Gaston has imparted. “I knew *nothing* about gardening when I first started,” laughs Mary Rose Burns (’10), who worked on the grounds crew for all three of her summers as a student. “Now, when I pass a garden, I can pretty much name every plant and spot everything that needs to get done!” Through her experience, she says, she has also better learned “how to face problems, how to deal with problems, how to have a good work ethic, and how to understand what is expected of you in the ‘real’ world.”

Over the years, Mr. Gaston has developed a sophisticated operation to care for the campus grounds. Students not only serve as the workers; they are also the supervisors, with upperclassmen directing and passing on their skills to freshmen and sophomores.

# Root, Teem with Natural Beauty



To the south of the Chapel is the St. Thérèse Prayer Garden, named for St. Thérèse of Lisieux, "the Little Flower," whose statue stands in its midst. With its private alcoves and benches separated by lush landscaping, the garden conveys the intimate sense of a cloister. A gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Barbera, it is a popular site for students to pray and study.



The various plants, vines, bushes, trees, and flowers that surround Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel and St. Thomas Hall were kindly donated by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Norman, owners of Norman's Nursery in Pasadena, Calif.



Adjacent to St. Thomas Plaza stands Our Lady of New York, a replica of a statue that appears in Manhattan's St. Patrick's Cathedral. A reminder of Thomas Aquinas College's warm, longstanding relationship with the Archdiocese of New York, the statue is a gift of the Honorable and Mrs. William P. Clark.

Mr. Gaston has also organized his workforce into specialized departments: The irrigation unit programs, monitors, and repairs a highly complex system of electric valves, irrigation heads, and timers. A spraying squad scours the campus for signs of weeds and repels them with selective herbicides. Gardeners are assigned to plant, prune, and weed at every residence hall. A mowing corps mans the various tractors and mowers that groom some 10 acres of manicured lawns. A contingent of trimmers and edgers keeps trees, bushes, and walkways neat.

There is also a lower-campus team that maintains the Doheny Hacienda and the College's three ponds, as well as one worker whose sole responsibility is tending to the potted plants and flowers both inside and outside all the buildings. The grounds crew additionally operates a cutting garden to grow fresh-cut flowers for the Chapel and on-campus events; it composts grass trimmings; and it makes woodchips from downed trees and branches. The students are even responsible for training Rusty, the campus dog, who wards off rose-munching deer.

"I can't imagine studying the College's classical curriculum without being in such a beautiful place and without doing some kind of physical work," says Miss Burns. "It gives me so much more of an appreciation of what the nitty-gritty of life is about: go-



ing out and using your muscles and digging a trench and coming to lunch actually hungry. Working on the grounds crew gives you the active life to complement the contemplative. It's just *healthy*. It's just so good."

When he was a student at the University of California, Los Angeles, Mr. Gaston studied political science, but while working at a construction job shortly after graduation, he discovered landscaping. After completing a horticulture program at Santa Barbara City College, he designed gardens in the area before eventually coming to the College in 1998. Upon arrival, he was delighted when then-President Thomas E. Dillon and Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca told him, "Whatever we do here, we want it to be beautiful."

In other words, Mr. Gaston was free to landscape the campus in a way that was bright and cheerful, or, as he puts it, "to get a 'wow' factor in there for people."

At that, he has certainly succeeded. "Beauty helps to elevate the mind to contemplate the true and the good," says President Michael F. McLean, "and Dave and his student workers provide us with an abundance of it on our campus."



# Reckoning With Rousseau

## Dean Kelly Explains How Even Bad Books Can Still Be Great

By Dr. Brian T. Kelly

*Note: The following remarks are adapted from Dean Brian T. Kelly's report to the Board of Governors at its May 14 meeting. They are part of an ongoing series of talks in which Dr. Kelly explains why the College includes certain authors in its curriculum.*

At the last Board meeting, former Chairman Maria Grant proposed that I should say a few words at this meeting about why we read someone we dislike. I was struck by this as a very perceptive question. Why do we read the “bad guys?”

I remember speaking to a young man in 1984 who expressed disgust at Thomas Aquinas College because we read Karl Marx. He indicated he would never support an institution that promoted the founder of communism. From a certain angle I could see his point: why should we, as educators, give someone a platform unless he is going to use it to speak truth? Why ask students entrusted to our care to read an author who will try to convince them of something fundamentally false? Do we not run the risk that we will lead them into error? In the little time given to making the best possible beginning on the road to wisdom, it would seem to make more sense to read only the wisest and best authors. So why include the “bad guys?”

### The Enlightenment's *Enfant Terrible*

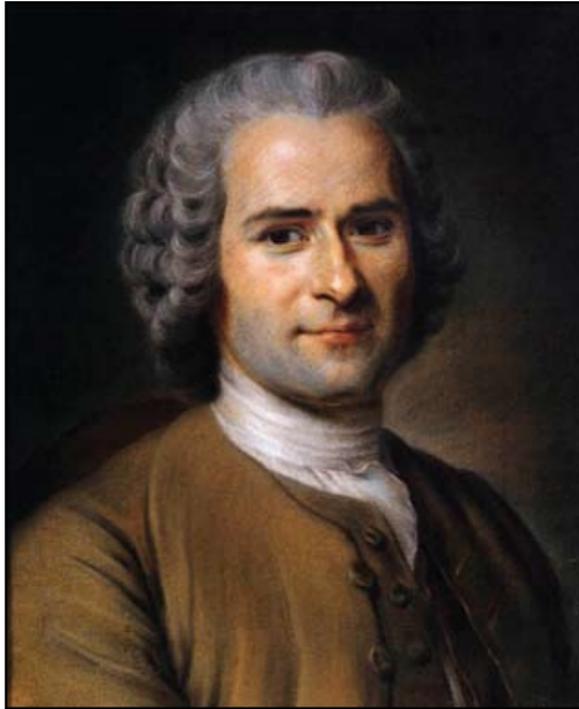
In this context Mrs. Grant suggested that I look especially at Jean Jacques Rousseau. Now Rousseau is an amazing character in the history of philosophy, politics, and even music. Because of his accomplishments in these diverse fields we might be tempted to call him a Renaissance man, but we would more appropriately call him an Enlightenment man. He lived an unsettled life in France and Switzerland in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. His works were widely read and explosively controversial.

And he certainly fits the “bad guy” description. This is manifest in our time from the writings of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, but also from the effects his thought has had on the world. (See “Truth and Freedom” by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, 1996.) Rousseau teaches important concepts that are fundamentally opposed to what we hold and wish to pass on to our students.

We recognize, along with St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle before him, that man is essentially a social and rational being. Man is superior to the brute beasts because he has the gift of reason. He can come to understand the world around him, and to know, in some way, God as the source of all that is good. And further, man is only able to be fully himself in a community of friendship. We also believe that man is naturally good, but is corrupted by sin and elevated by grace.

In his groundbreaking *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Rousseau rejects all of this. In this treatise he proposes that man is naturally good, but in the same way that a cow or a donkey is good. Man, in the state of nature, gives no thought to anything other than his hunger and thirst and his physical desires; he is not really a rational animal. In one striking text Rousseau says that “the man who meditates is a depraved animal” (*Discourse*, part one). Natural man eats what is at hand and sleeps wherever and whenever he grows tired. Since nothing belongs to him or anyone else there is no such thing as injustice. So man in all his goodness cannot be guilty of any transgression until he develops some notion of private property. But somewhere along the line man was corrupted in stages. He was first corrupted by marking off a plot of land as belonging to himself. He was further corrupted when he began to exercise foresight and to formulate words and speech. When he developed arts and sciences his corruption was so far complete that man could never hope to be restored to the goodness of nature.

Notice that on this view man is not naturally social, but only retains his natural goodness when he avoids human ties. And while Aristotle and Aquinas recognize the goal of human life and existence in the divine gift of rea-



son, Rousseau claims that man has lost his natural birth-right by developing his reason. This position is striking and alarming. He seems to propose that it is tragic that we have separated ourselves from a merely animal existence.

“Even though we passionately disagree with this view, we ask our students to read it and to take it seriously. Why?”

### So Why?

But even though we passionately disagree with this view, we ask our students to read it and to take it seriously. Why?

On the surface there are some easy but important things to say. Rousseau matters because he had a large effect on the world in both its thinking and the unfolding events of history. He is one of the bright lights of the Enlightenment which pushed modern man toward deism and away from Christianity. His developments in political philosophy helped to produce good and bad fruits, as it both influenced the founders of our nation and helped to stir France into an ugly and deeply anti-religious revolt. His influence has even been cited in the animal rights movement and the hippie communitarianism of the 1960s and early '70s. Without understanding Rousseau it is very difficult to understand the world around us, or even ourselves as children of the modern world.

Furthermore, if we think about his account of the natural man, it is clear that he is answering some of the greatest questions that can occupy our minds: what is man? what is his purpose in life? These are timeless questions. These are questions that we have to address if we aim at liberal education. But still, why not stick with the authors who answer these questions in the way that we think best?

This touches on a fundamental principle of our pedagogy: we learn best when we take into account different and opposing arguments. We do not make good judgments, intellectual or practical, when we avoid conflict. This is a very general claim. It lies at the heart of our legal system, where a good ruling is deemed to rest on a vigorous prosecution and defense. A good CEO knows this and urges advisors to speak their minds freely rather than be “yes men.” We all recognize this principle when we sit down to make “pro” and “con” lists. When the Church considers a candidate for canonization, She appoints a “devil’s advocate” to make sure that all sides of the question are duly weighed. Our patron and model, St. Thomas Aquinas, took this principle so much to heart that he began to address every issue by first developing strong arguments opposed to the correct answer.

So Rousseau is in fundamental opposition to us; it is important that our students not shy away from this but

rather take it head on, reading and savoring his words and ideas, not lightly dismissing him, but examining the merits of his claims and arguments.

It should be obvious that such an approach places a tremendous confidence in our students. We trust that sober and careful reason is not lightly led astray, especially when it is bolstered by the blessing of Faith. Thus class does not begin with the tutor instructing the students that Rousseau is badly mistaken. Rather, we examine his arguments, in his own words, in the context of a serious discussion and with the Faith as a guiding light.

### Sound Judgment

I should point out that our method has the added benefit that it is open to learning even from those who are mistaken or misguided. This takes us a little past the “good guys/bad guys” labels.

Here, for example, when we judge that Rousseau has erred, we want to see why he went astray and what truth is mixed in with his error. He suggests that the development of the arts and sciences is a corruption of man’s natural irrationality. I think this is gravely wrong, but are there limits to the integrity and benefits of such developments? Is every advance in science and technology a good? Could Rousseau have had in mind the development of gunpowder and the flintlock musket, for example, as a scientific advance which did not in every way advance the cause of human well-being? In our own time we might ask about developments in cloning, or germ warfare, or reproductive technology.

By reading the great books our students are presented with vigorous and sometimes conflicting arguments about the greatest questions. They are in a better position to make an understanding judgment because they have examined the issue from all sides. So to say that we should not read an author because he is wrong is like the judge saying the accused is guilty so the jury should not hear his defense.

## St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

### Highlights from the Last Quarter

- Dr. Andrea Falcon, a professor of philosophy at Concordia University, delivered a lecture entitled “Aristotle and the Limits of Natural Science” on April 16.
- On April 30, the *Pro Musica* choir of Pasadena joined the Thomas Aquinas College Choir in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel to sing Maurice Duruflé’s *Requiem* at a **memorial Mass** for the souls of nearly 2,000 deceased benefactors, friends, alumni, faculty, and staff of the College.



- His Excellency Archbishop Raymond L. Burke, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura delivered this year’s Commencement Address, “Humility, Trust, and Abandonment to Divine Providence,” on May 15. The text of his address is available on the College’s website at [www.thomasaquinas.edu/newsletter](http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/newsletter).

# Alumni Profile: Pioneering Parents

## Married Classmates Blaze Trails in Catholic Education

By the time he arrived at Thomas Aquinas College as a freshman in 1993, Owen M. Sweeney, Jr. ('97) was 25 years old. He already had attended college, had worked at a radio station in the Caribbean, and was eyeing a career in politics.

Still, he was utterly unprepared for Euclid.

"I was scared to death," he says of his first mathematics tutorials, overwhelmed by the geometrical propositions that he feared he might be called to demonstrate before the class. So he was relieved when, for the first proposition, his tutor summoned to the chalkboard another freshman ("one Regina Aguinaldo," as he remembers it). But that relief proved fleeting.

"She went through that prop like a typewriter," Owen says, still in awe some 17 years later. "It was just incredible. One row, then one row, then one row, and — boom! — Q.E.D." Owen looked across the table in distress to his friend Adam Guy ('97), and the two, in unison, pantomimed the "slit-across-the-throat signal," he reminisces, meaning, "We're dead. We're never going to make it out of this place."

Fortunately, the reports of Owen Sweeney's death were, as Mark Twain might have described it, greatly exaggerated. Although his first semester was, in Owen's words, "an intellectual boot camp" and he was at times "very close to leaving," he persevered. "It was the best thing I ever did," he now says, adding that at the College, "I got an incredible education and I learned how to practice my faith."

It was also at the College that he would meet the woman whom, two years after graduation, he would marry — one Regina Aguinaldo ('97).

### A Parental Passion

It is only fitting that Regina and Owen Sweeney, now approaching 11 years of marriage and living with their six children in Sterling, Va., first encountered one another in a classroom. Because in addition to the work of raising a family, the couple has made education its passion.

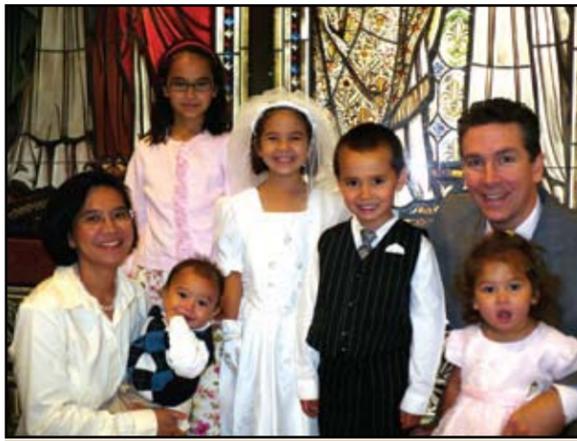
Regina and Owen are members of a small group of parents at their local parish, St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Great Falls, Va., who have become pioneers in the world of parochial schooling. In 2004, working with their pastor, they helped to form Siena Academy, one of only a few Catholic Montessori parish schools in the country.

Academically serious, faithfully Catholic, and educationally dynamic, Siena Academy has since swelled to an enrollment of 150 students plus a waiting list of others seeking to join its ranks. (Several families have even relocated to the area to send their children to the school.) Initially serving only children aged three to six, the academy has rapidly expanded to include an elementary program, a toddler section, and "mommy-baby" sessions for the youngest of children. Only six years after its founding, Siena Academy is establishing a reputation for excellence.

### Looking Back

Although Owen may have not been fully prepared when he first arrived at the College, he well knew why he had enrolled. He was drawn by what he saw as the "depth of seriousness of the curriculum and how people practiced their faith" on campus. Regina, on the other hand, may have arrived primed for Euclidean geometry, but she came for admittedly less considered reasons. The youngest of three Thomas Aquinas College alumnae, she was simply following her older sisters' lead.

"Looking back," Regina now reflects, coming to the College was "the best thing that could have happened to me. By the time I was a few months into freshman year, it was the only place I wanted to be." She appreciates not only the knowledge, the deepened faith, and the lifelong friendships she acquired at the College, but also the overall formation of character that now serves her well as a mother and educator. "One of the things I'm most grateful for," she observes, "is the attitude the College instills toward learning, an attitude of not being afraid to try something that most people would say is difficult, and instead working through it."



Regina (Aguinaldo) and Owen Sweeney (both '97), pictured with children Catharine, Peyton, Madeleine, Owen III, and Caeli

After graduation, Regina moved back to her home state of Arizona, while Owen served a fellowship with the California State Senate in Sacramento. About a year later, once again following the lead of one of her sisters, Regina moved to Virginia. Eventually Owen would find work as a lobbyist in the nation's capital and also move to Virginia, where the Sweeneys settled after their wedding — providentially, they believe. "I am completely convinced that the reason we were moved out here was to become familiar with Montessori," Owen says, noting that he has declined job opportunities elsewhere so as not to remove his children from the school he helped to found.

### A Re-flowering of Catholic Education

It was their educational experience at Thomas Aquinas College — coupled with a unique set of circumstances at their parish — that led the Sweeneys into the unexpected business of founding a school. Those circumstances began to unfold in 2002, when the Montessori Catechetical and Cultural Institute (MCCI) opened an Atrium — a Montessori-based catechetical program that emphasizes tactile, hands-on methods for teaching children about the Faith — at St. Catherine's.

Owen was skeptical at first. "I thought, 'Oh, those Montessori schools,'" he laughs, "the kids can do *whatever* they want." The reason for this impression, Regina explains frankly, is "because the hippies basically took over the Montessori movement in the '60s in the United States," even though its foundress, Maria Montessori, was a committed Catholic who envisioned sound catechesis as the pinnacle of her methodology.

To their great surprise, Regina and Owen were immediately struck by what they saw as similarities between the authentic application of this pedagogy and the education they so loved at the College. "Oh my gosh, it's so Thomistic! It's so Aristotelian!" Regina remembers thinking. "This can become a kind of a re-flowering of true Catholic education!" She later learned that Pope Benedict XV, after hosting a private audience with Dr. Montessori, requested that her books be placed in the Vatican Library.

The Sweeneys' experience is, in this regard, not unique. Alumni of the College frequently try to replicate, as much as possible, elements of the Thomas Aquinas College curriculum or pedagogy in their children's educations. For this reason, many alumni families choose to home-school their children; others have opted for alternative schools with age-appropriate great books curricula; and others still have found success in traditional parochial or public schools. Their methods may vary, but what unites all these families is a love of truth and a passion for critical, independent learning.

At Thomas Aquinas College, "You're put into a classroom, and everybody is told to read the text," says Owen. "Through the proper environment, i.e., the questions asked, the tutor puts you in a situation so that you learn on your own, you teach yourself, the students teach themselves within that prepared environment of a classroom."

It is this notion of the "prepared environment" that he and Regina especially value about the Montessori

program, where children are surrounded with academic materials and encouraged to learn at their own pace. "It's freedom within limits," he remarks.

"It fits with Aristotle's whole idea of appealing to the senses, of learning through the senses," says Regina. As Owen puts it, "If it were not for having studied Aristotle and St. Thomas and getting that early glimpse of how humans come to know, I don't know if we would have been able to recognize in Montessori that continuity."

### Becoming Founders

Seeing how their oldest daughter responded so positively to the parish's catechetical program and the way it enlivened her faith, the Sweeneys began to long for a full Montessori curriculum for their children. Yet they also longed for an education that was wholly Catholic, and there were no schools in the area that could meet both needs.

Fortunately, their church had some yet-unused school facilities on its grounds, and the pastor was eager to put them to proper use. One Sunday after Mass, he announced that he was looking for volunteers to help start a school on the site. Owen, along with a few other interested parents, responded. In short order, the pastor named him to the nascent school's founding committee and he was subsequently elected its chairman. Meanwhile, Regina joined the MCCI's executive board.

As chairman of the Siena Academy founding committee, Owen was soon thrust into the hitherto unfamiliar world of school administration. "I was the point of contact between the parish and the diocese and Fairfax County and Great Falls — everything," he recalls. "I had to make sure the school was in compliance with the appropriate zoning statutes. I had to manage the paperwork and financial documentation. We had to determine tuition rates and tuition assistance, even design school uniforms, the logo, and the crest."

In the fall of 2004, Siena Academy opened its doors, and as the school has grown and taken on a professional staff, the founding committee has disbanded. Having helped to get the school established, the Sweeneys now remain involved mainly in their roles as parents. Their four oldest children — Catharine (10), Madeleine (8), Owen III (6), and Caeli (3) — are all students at Siena. Peyton (2) will start the toddler class in the fall, and newborn baby Julia will doubtless be next. Regina currently serves as vice president for MCCI.

In a reversal of roles, it is now one of Regina's older sisters who is following *her* lead: Bernadette (Aguinaldo) and her husband, Joe Goyette (both '95), have moved their family to Sterling, Va., to be closer to Siena Academy. At Siena, "You don't have the traditional rows of desks and chairs where children have to sit and just listen and take in information," says Bernadette, likening the experience to the classes at Thomas Aquinas College. She finds that the academy has made her children more independent and confident, that "they're much more willing to take on things."

Active learning can have that effect on people. Just ask Regina and Owen Sweeney, who — some 10 years after taking on Euclid's first proposition — took on the creation of a whole new kind of school.



The Sweeneys' 6-year-old son, Owen, participates in the hands-on catechetical program through Siena Academy in Great Falls, Va., which the Sweeneys helped to found.

# President's Council Profile: Jean and Michael Maiuri

## Faith and Reason Lead Couple First to Church, then to College

When new friends first learn about Thomas Aquinas College, they are most often attracted to either the spiritual life on campus or the College's reputation for academic excellence. Usually it takes some time before they see how, in the life of the College, one informs the other: how a curriculum ordered toward the highest truths about nature, man, and God inclines one toward deeper faith, and how the truths of the Faith illumine all facets of learning.

In this respect, Jean and Michael Maiuri of Torrance, Calif., were like most visitors when they came to the campus three years ago. Mrs. Maiuri, a lifelong Protestant working her way toward the Catholic Church, was drawn by the vibrant spirituality. By contrast, Mr. Maiuri, a fallen-away Catholic finding his way home again, was intrigued by the College's classical curriculum.

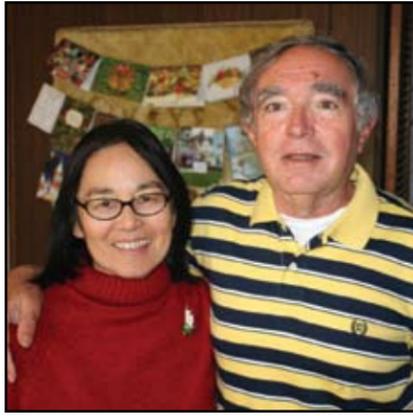
Together they recognized in Thomas Aquinas College the twin virtues of faith and reason — the “two wings, on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth,” as Pope John Paul II famously wrote in his 1998 encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*. These two wings would carry the Maiuris into the Church, and have sustained their profound friendship with the College as members of the President's Council.

### Choosing a Legacy

“I had read about Thomas Aquinas College 15 or 20 years ago, and it always interested me,” reflects Mr. Maiuri, a retired electrical engineer. “I admired how the students can explain how great scientists made their discoveries because the students actually perform those same experiments, rather than just reading about them in a book.” Sometime around 2002, the Maiuris briefly visited the campus while passing through the area. They picked up some literature, and not long thereafter, they became benefactors.

“We want to leave a legacy behind when we're no longer here, and the students here will be such a legacy,” says Mr. Maiuri, noting the good work of Thomas Aquinas College alumni in so many fields and vocations. “That's a legacy that you can't improve on.”

With that end in mind, the Maiuris were a natural fit for the President's Council. Consisting of members who give \$1,000 or more each year, the Council raises most of



the \$4 million required to provide financial assistance to the more than 70 percent of Thomas Aquinas College students whose families could not otherwise afford the cost of tuition. Thanks to the generosity of the President's Council members, the College has never had to turn away a qualified applicant because of financial need.

### A Faithful Discovery

As a small expression of gratitude, the College invites President's Council members to the campus every July for its Summer Seminars. In 2007, the Maiuris attended their first such weekend, which only enhanced their regard for the College.

Just as Mr. Maiuri had first come to appreciate Thomas Aquinas College for its emphasis on reason, at the Summer Seminar, Mrs. Maiuri — then still a Protestant, although already enrolled in RCIA classes — was taken in by the heartfelt examples of faith she witnessed among students, faculty, and fellow benefactors. “I was just so struck by how devoutly the Catholics received the Eucharist and recognized the presence of Christ. That was a witness to me,” she recalls. “The people were also very warm and very friendly; we found the place so inviting.”

The experience “helped me on my journey toward the Catholic Church,” says Mrs. Maiuri. After a year of catechetical instruction and attending Mass with her husband, who had returned to the Faith, she was received into full communion in 2008.

### Reconciliation

In addition to their loyal, regular support of the College, in 2007 the Maiuris were moved to make an extraordinary gift of spiritual significance, contributing the funds for the south confessional in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Having spent many years outside of the Faith, the couple have a heightened awareness of the need for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. “To me, it represents the forgiveness and mercy of God,” says Mrs. Maiuri. Adds Mr. Maiuri, “With that sacrament, you can enter into the Eucharist with all of your sins forgiven, so that was an important sacrament for us.”

With the infectious zeal of converts, the Maiuris plan to remain faithful members of the President's Council. “There are literally thousands of ways to support organizations within the Church, and you have to pick and choose the right ones,” says Mr. Maiuri. “We love the College and will continue to support it.”

“We are humbled by the Maiuris' generosity,” says Robert Bagdazian, the College's director of development, “and we are inspired by their faith, which renews our own.”

For more information about the President's Council, please contact Mr. Bagdazian at 800-634-9797 or by e-mail at [rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu).

## Summer of Learning continued from page 1

### Graduates' Studies

On the weekend of June 4-6, the College hosted the second annual Conference on the Social Doctrine of the Church, sponsored by *The Aquinas Review*, with more than 40 alumni and guests representing 16 graduating classes from 1976 to 2003. Attendees, some traveling from as far away as Hawaii, Michigan, and Virginia, took part in a series of three seminars concerning the fundamental topics underlying the Church's teachings on economics and social justice.

The inspiration of Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, founding president of Thomas Aquinas College, tutor, and editor of *The Aquinas Review*, the seminars examined three readings: Aristotle's treatment of commutative and distributive justice in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, St. Thomas Aquinas' writings on usury from the *Summa Theologiae*, and Hilaire Belloc's *The Servile State*. Assisting Dr. McArthur in facilitating three separate discussion groups were five of the College's tutors: Dr. Tony Andres, Dr. Michael Augros, Mr. Daniel Factor, Dr. Greg Froelich, and Dr. John Nieto. In addition, on Saturday night Dr. Nieto presented a lecture about the origins of money, the workings of the modern financial system, and the moral pitfalls therein.

The annual conferences are, in part, a response to a request from Renato Raffaele Cardinal Martino, prefect emeritus of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, who in 2005 asked if the College would help to advance the understanding of the Church's social doctrine. “Given the great interest and need for seminars like this,” says Dr. McArthur, “we very much look forward to our third conference next year, and we hope many more friends and alumni will join us.”

### Lifelong Learning

For the tutors at Thomas Aquinas College, the Summer of Learning began the week after graduation,

with thrice-weekly, 90-minute morning seminars that continued through the end of June. “It is important that our tutors never cease to be students,” remarks Dean Brian T. Kelly. “For our own benefit and for that of our students, we must grow in the understanding of the truth that underlies our course of studies.”

This year, eight tutors who together studied a sequence of texts about quantum physics in the summer of 2008 reconvened to examine a sequence on the theory of evolution. The remainder of the faculty then divided into three groups: one focused on St. Thomas' writings on the Trinity, another on the sophomore mathematics program (astronomy), and the third on Aquinas' *Treatise on Law*, specifically the limits of human law in relation to the divine law.

At their morning sessions, meeting in the very classrooms where they usually teach, the tutors engaged in conversations led by one or two of their peers. “The summer program is an opportunity for us to advance,” adds Dr. Kelly, “especially in our discipleship to St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle.”

### An Aristotelian Assembly

On June 17-18, a number of faculty members participated in the annual West Coast meeting of the Society for Aristotelian Studies, an international organization founded in 1974. The symposium, which the College has hosted for several years running, focused on the theme “Aristotle's Theology.” It featured lectures followed by question-and-answer periods from six scholars from across the country, including several alumni and tutors from the College.

“Not only were there more attendees than usual this year — many coming from far away — but, more importantly, the talks themselves had great depth and penetration into a topic that is frequently misarticulated,” says Dr. Chris Decaen, a Thomas Aquinas College tutor and

the Society's West Coast representative. “Aristotle's arguments for the existence of a First Unmoved Mover, and his account of the nature of this Being, were defended, appropriated, and developed by St. Thomas Aquinas. So it is crucial to us as Catholics to study them carefully.”

### Weekends of Wisdom

Each July, Thomas Aquinas College invites members of the President's Council — the backbone of the College's financial-aid fund — to one of two Great Books Summer Seminar Weekends. At these weekends, President's Council members get an inside look at the unique education that they so generously help to make available. They attend a series of classroom discussions of great books led by the College's president, dean, and other senior members of the teaching faculty. Between seminars, attendees also enjoy delicious meals served both indoors and outdoors on the campus, as well as daily Mass and confession offered by Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., who serves as chaplain for the events.

The theme of this year's seminars was the Catholic Natural Law tradition and one of its modern opponents, the doctrine of legal realism, from which many of the attacks on Catholic teachings derive. Attendees read both *The Path of the Law*, a brief but influential essay written in 1897 by Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and part of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Treatise on the Law*.

“It is vital for educated Catholics to be familiar with the Natural Law tradition if they are to understand Church teaching and respond more effectively to the unrelenting attacks the Church faces today,” says College President Michael F. McLean. “And this year's summer seminars provided a terrific opportunity for learning about that tradition, as well as an occasion for good fellowship and the start of many lasting friendships.”

# Justice in the Service of Charity

## An Interview with Archbishop Raymond L. Burke

As Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura in Rome, the Most Rev. Raymond L. Burke holds the highest judicial office in the Church after only that of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, who elevated him to the post in 2008. Archbishop Burke is the first non-European to head the tribunal and the second-highest ranking American prelate in the Roman Curia. On May 15, 2010, His Excellency graciously served as Thomas Aquinas College's Commencement Speaker and the principal celebrant and homilist at the Baccalaureate Mass.

**Q: What are your primary responsibilities as Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura?**

**A:** The Supreme Tribunal is both a tribunal — in the strict sense of the term — and it is the department of justice in the Church. Basically the function is to safeguard for the Holy Father the right administration of justice. Now I say that our service is very humble. We're not involved in the great works of the Church in terms of works of charity or education or so forth, but our work is essential because you cannot talk about exercising charity or exercising any other virtue if you are not first of all just.

**Q: How is running a congregation different from your earlier work as the ordinary of a diocese?**

**A:** In one sense, it is not different. It is all pastoral care. In other words, you are caring for souls. In another sense, it is radically different because when you are the bishop of a diocese, you are caring for souls directly as a shepherd of the flock, and you are exercising directly the pastoral office on behalf of souls. Whereas as prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, I exercise my pastoral care on behalf of the Holy Father. I am acting, in a certain sense, as his vicar in the administration of justice.

**Q: How much of the work of the Signatura concerns marriage annulments?**

**A:** The oversight of the Church tribunals throughout the world — the function of the department of justice — concerns chiefly marriage nullity. "Declarations of nullity" is really the correct term, but the term "annulment" is the term most often used. It has an unfortunate connotation because it gives the impression that the Church is annulling something that exists, whereas the Church's understanding is that it is declaring that the marriage *never existed*. Even though the people lived in good faith, thinking they were married, some essential requirement of marriage was absent. They sincerely believed themselves to be married and then, with time, discovered that in fact their marriage was null.

**Q: There seem to be so many declarations of nullity. Many people wonder, are they all legitimate?**

**A:** In our day perhaps there are more marriages that are annulled because people form erroneous ideas about marriage. For instance, the exclusion of children by a positive act of the will would render a marriage null. And the exclusion of the indissolubility of the marriage would render it null if it was done by a positive act of the will. There may be more people who do that today.

The family is the first cell of the life of the Church, and it is through the bond of marriage that new members of the Church are brought to life in cooperation with God. So we want to make sure that in every respect the tribunals are honoring and safeguarding a valid marriage, and we do not want to be in a situation which has sometimes been described as "Catholic divorce," where a different name is given to what is in fact a recognition of divorces. So that is a big responsibility and one that is very much weighing on our minds in the Apostolic Signatura.

**Q: Is that concern especially acute in these times, when the surrounding culture is so hostile toward marriage and children?**

**A:** There was a time when the Church stood up for the indissolubility, the fidelity, the procreativity of marriage, but so, too, did society. But now we live in a society in which these truths about the married are not upheld. There is an illusion today, a stubborn refusal to understand human sexuality, male and female, particularly its procreative dimensions.

This illusion has contributed to the anti-life mentality. I once used the phrase that contraception was "the port of entry" for the whole abortion mentality because once sexual activity is not respected as procreative, if you don't succeed in its not being procreative by contraception, then you move to abortifacients or direct abortion itself. And the fact of the matter is that a number of the so-called contraceptives are really abortifacients. In other words, they destroy a fertilized egg by not permitting it to be implanted in the womb and continuing its development.



Archbishop Burke poses with graduate and aspiring canon lawyer Daniel Quinan ('10) at this spring's Commencement.

**Q: Abortion is often treated as a religious matter, but is it not more fundamentally a question of Natural Law?**

**A:** St. Thomas said the respect for human life was the first precept of the Natural Law; Natural Law being to do good and to avoid

evil. What is the first way you do good and avoid evil? You respect human life. You do not take innocent and defenseless human life.

It is sad now that, when you read about the country's founding documents, you will note on the life issues very little reference is made to the Declaration of Independence. Why? Because it is in the Declaration of Independence that that phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" appears. Sadly, the phrase is not repeated in the Constitution, so people try to make the claim that the Constitution does not protect the right to life. But in fact it has to. Inasmuch as it is a valid legal document, it has to rest on the natural moral law. It cannot rest on itself alone. You cannot have a positive law that is not rooted in the natural moral law. Otherwise you have an arbitrary situation where the law is whatever the strongest element in society says it is.

**Q: What counsel do you have to offer the faithful in light of the horrible scandals afflicting the Church?**

**A:** There are few things more evil than the violation of the trust between a priest and a member of the flock. That trust is sacred. It is a trust which is predicated on the relationship of the individual member of the faithful and Christ the Good Shepherd. And these violations of trust were, in the most horrible ways, perpetrated upon children and young people. The Holy Father was right to say that this is "filth" and it has to be eliminated from the Church. When he was Cardinal Ratzinger — I can say this personally, that in the late '80s and in the early '90s when I was working at the Signatura — he pushed for a very hard line on these cases. So that is the number one thing.

The number two thing in addressing accusations of sexual abuse is we have to avoid a kind of moral panic, by which because of the horror of this evil, we presume that any priest who is accused is automatically guilty. These kind of things require that the most thorough investigation be made, an investigation that protects the rights and the dignity of everyone involved. And so in bringing to light the horror of these crimes and insisting that they need to be eliminated from the Church, and that every precaution has to be made so that they never happen again, we cannot then fall into moral panic whereby the only reality we see in the Church now is sexual abuse of minors by the clergy. That leads to a kind of mentality that is not healthy and can actually lead to some grave injustices.

**Q: In addition to heading the Apostolic Signatura, you also serve on the Congregation for Bishops. Could you please describe your work there?**

**A:** The Congregation has what are called members — cardinals and archbishops and bishops — I do not know what the total number is, maybe 25 or so. Usually every other Thursday we meet and we study four or five cases: dioceses that need a diocesan bishop, a coadjutor, or an auxiliary bishop. We are given in advance, in a strictly confidential way, a summary of the situation and pertinent documents. Then we're asked in that session to express our mind, that is what we recommend to the Holy Father, who appoints every bishop.

**Q: You have been very generous to the College over the years, attending many key events and serving as this year's Commencement speaker. From what springs this great affinity?**

**A:** Well, I think that the number one thing is that the College is predicated on obedience to the Magisterium, to the Roman pontiff, and that is the guiding light in the same way it was for the Angelic Doctor, Thomas Aquinas, your patron. That is the guiding law, the guiding direction of the College, and everything else fits in there.

And that is not a narrowing factor. In fact, it expands the education here to the widest possible degree to seek all truth. When one is faithful to the Magisterium, then one has the possibility to seek the truth in its integrity, not according to personal interests or personal convictions. That is the heart of the matter, that one undertakes one's education fully in Christ and in His church, knowing that is what is going to really permit you to come to the deepest understanding and knowledge of things.

I wish that certain aspects of this year's graduation ceremony could simply be broadcast throughout the whole country, so Catholics would see that this is possible — to have a truly Catholic education. You should be able to hear in every Catholic university in the country a senior address like that young man gave here. It was so natural for him, and he was as full of conviction as he could be.





## CAMPUS LIFE



1. President's Council Member Frances Morehart shares a laugh with College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., during a cocktail party at a Great Books Summer Seminar Weekend. 2. President's Council Member Sieglinde Connolly listens on while former vice chairman of the Board of Governors Jim Barrett offers an observation during one of the seminars. 3. Dr. Joan Kingsland of Mater Ecclesiae College delivers a lecture, "Aristotle's God and Christian Ethics," at the annual West Coast meeting of the Society for Aristotelian Studies, which the College hosted. **Scenes from the Summer Great Books Program for High School Students:** 4. The end-of-the-program dance 5. An intramural soccer match on the campus fields 6. Tutor John Nieto presents an informal talk, "On Art and Beauty." 7. After a hike to the College painter's shack, Summer Program students dabble in watercolors.

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

#### Weekdays

7:00 a.m. (extraordinary form)  
11:30 a.m. (ordinary form)  
5:00 p.m. (ordinary form)

#### Saturdays

7:15 a.m. (extraordinary form)  
11:30 a.m. (ordinary form)

#### Sundays

7:15 a.m. (extraordinary form)  
9:00 a.m. (ordinary form)  
11:30 a.m. (ordinary form)

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

### Calendar of Events

Lecture: Dr. Catherine Zuckert.....September 10  
University of Notre Dame  
"The Platonic Dialogue and Socratic Philosophy"

Fall Concert: Thomas Aquinas College Choir .....September 24

Lecture: Dr. David Solomon..... October 1  
University of Notre Dame  
"Issues in Bioethics"

Alumni Day..... October 9

Halloween Dance .....October 30

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE  
10,000 North Ojai Road  
Santa Paula, CA 93060-9622

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



805/525-4417  
www.thomasaquinas.edu