



# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2013

VOLUME 41, ISSUE 4

## Campus Upgrade

### College Begins Construction on St. Gladys Hall, Renovation of St. Augustine Hall

With students away for the summer recess, the campus of Thomas Aquinas College has become a construction zone. The sounds of throttling jackhammers and roaring trucks have replaced the gentle murmur of Socratic discourse as the College begins work on its next classroom building, St. Gladys Hall, and the renovation of its first classroom building, St. Augustine Hall.

The two projects are taking place simultaneously, on opposite sides of the academic quadrangle. On the south side, adjacent to St. Bernardine of Siena Library and in the shadow of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, stands the site of St. Gladys Hall. In June, workers removed St. Patrick Hall — the last modular building on the quadrangle — to make room for the new structure. Since then, construction crews have been busily grading the land and installing the utility lines, and will soon begin pouring the building's footings.

Made possible by a magnificent gift from the Fritz B. Burns Foundation of Los Angeles, the new classroom building takes its name from St. Gladys, a 5<sup>th</sup> century queen, mother, and contemplative, as well as the patron saint of Fritz Burns' beloved wife, Gladys. Housing eight classrooms, St. Gladys Hall is designed to facilitate the small, seminar discussions about great books that are at the heart of the College's unique academic program.

Meanwhile, directly across the quadrangle, a construction crew has begun

overhauling the interior of St. Augustine Hall. After 20 years of constant use, the building was due for a renovation, which it is now receiving thanks to principal funding from the E. L. Wiegand Foundation of Reno, Nevada, and a generous gift from College Governor Dieter Huckestein and his wife, Cecilia. Workers have installed an arched corridor with mahogany wainscoting, removed the antiquated heating and ventilation system, and lowered the ceilings in the classrooms.

The improved St. Augustine Hall will also include new, insulated windows, which will reduce energy costs and — much to the delight of the College's students — open and close. When complete, the building will boast new carpeting, doors, chandeliers, and a pedestal for the statue of its patron, St. Augustine.

"I am delighted with how the work is coming along in St. Augustine Hall," says Mr. Huckestein, who chairs the Board of Governors' Campus Planning Committee. "It brings the building into beautiful harmony with the rest of the campus." Adds President Michael F. McLean, "We are profoundly grateful to the Burns Foundation, the E. L. Wiegand Foundation, and the Huckesteins for blessing us with facilities that will ennoble and inspire students and faculty for generations."

The renovations of St. Augustine will be complete before the start of the upcoming school year. Construction of St. Gladys Hall is scheduled to conclude in time for the 2014-15 academic year.



1-2. A construction crew grades the site of St. Gladys Hall, adjacent to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. 3. A renovated classroom in St. Augustine Hall, with lowered ceilings and new moldings 4. The newly arched corridor of St. Augustine, with mahogany wainscoting and wrought-iron chandeliers

## Walking for Life

### Undeterred by Tragedy, Three Students Join Crossroads Walks Across America

It was just one year ago that Andrew "Kent" Moore ('14), a rising Thomas Aquinas College junior, died after being struck by a passing vehicle on a Crossroads Walk Across America. One year later, the Crossroads pro-life pilgrimages continue, but much about them has changed: The walkers now wear fluorescent shirts to make themselves more visible. They no longer walk by twilight, and they have reduced their regular shifts from five miles to three.

What has not changed is the commitment and dedication of the young people who join these walks — three of whom are Thomas Aquinas College students. Among those participating in this summer's walks are Hannah DeRocher ('14) of Milford, Mich., who is walking the northern route from Seattle to Washington, D.C., and John Kurzweil ('15) of Camarillo, Calif., and Sophie Macik ('15) of Brecksville, Ohio, who are on the central walk that began in San Francisco and will also conclude in the nation's capital.



John Kurzweil ('15), Sophie Macik ('15), and a fellow Crossroads walker on the beach in San Francisco

For Hannah, it was largely Kent's example that led her to join the walk. "I had thought about doing Crossroads before, but I was unsure when I would do it. Then I heard Kent's story, and I thought, 'That's it. It's going to happen this summer,'" she recalls. "He was an inspiration, such a humble and prayerful witness to life."

Sophie did not know Kent well, but his story gave her an extra reason for joining

Crossroads. "Kent said that he was using the many long hours of walking to discern a vocation, and I thought that was a good idea," she says. "I have been praying and contemplating about entering the religious life, and things seem to be pointing in that direction." In July she took a week away from the walk to visit a monastery in Ohio.

Devastating though the news of Kent's death was to these students, it did not deter them from walking in his footsteps. "God is going to call you home when He calls you home," Sophie explains. "And Kent could not have been in a better spiritual position to die — he was literally fighting for what is good, for what is right."

If they have any fear, it is about what they may encounter along the way, as they walk through cities large and small and pray outside abortion clinics, joyfully proclaiming a message that many do not want to hear. "You have no idea what people's reaction will be," says John. Sometimes the response is pleasant — passersby who

supportively honk their horns or who give them bottles of water. Other times, the encounters are less cordial, such as the man in San Francisco who screamed in their faces for 15 minutes straight, or the motorist who tossed a 44-ounce soda at them from her car window. "It is an exercise of faith."

It can also be an exercise in suffering. After the first few weeks, the blisters give way to calluses, but the heat and the humidity only grow worse. The trials, however, serve as a reminder to trust more in God. "We're here for God to take our suffering and our prayers and do with them as He wills," says John. "We just have to stand back and let Him do it. We're not really doing it ourselves."

It also helps that, in moments of need, these students can rely on the intercessory prayers of their late classmate. "We pray the Rosary as we walk, and at the end, we always say, 'Andrew Moore, pray for us,'" observes Hannah. "It's kind of like he is walking with us."



# From the Desk of the President

## Dr. Michael F. McLean’s Remarks at the 2013 Summer Seminar Weekends

We thank you for your attendance, for your preparation, and for your participation in our conversations.

In light of the cultural and political developments occurring in America today, no one can doubt the timeliness of a consideration of marriage and the family during this Year of Faith. This consideration fits well, too, with the series of seminars we have done over the last few years. In 2010 we considered the natural law — an important starting point for our deliberation about moral questions — and in 2011 we considered conscience, that power within us that applies the natural law to particular moral issues we face in everyday life. Last year, we considered the “soul of America” and, among other things, the important role religion plays in preserving our country’s moral and political commitments. This year we are considering, in light of both the natural and divine laws, a particular moral and political issue of the utmost importance to the well-being of our country and its citizens.

I hope you can see that we are trying to put together our Summer Seminars in an organized way and, although we have not yet decided on a topic, I promise you that next year we will consider something as important and interesting as the topics we have considered since the beginning of our Summer Seminar program in 1990.

This year’s readings — *A Doll’s House*, by Henrik Ibsen; *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*, by Robert P. George, Sherif Girgis, and Ryan T. Anderson; and *The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, an Apostolic Exhortation, by Bl. John Paul II — take markedly different, though not unrelated, looks at the institutions of marriage and family.

When I mentioned to one of our graduates, who happens to be a Dominican priest, that we were reading *A Doll’s House* in our Summer Seminar this year, he commented that he had first read it in high school and “was really depressed afterward.” I don’t think the play is particularly appropriate for high school students, and there really is something very depressing



“The traditional or ‘conjugal’ view of marriage is solidly grounded in both faith and reason, despite the drumbeat to the contrary we hear from politicians, the courts, the media, and popular culture.”

and disturbing in a story which culminates in Nora’s decision to slam the door on her husband, Torvald, and their children; this, despite the fact that Torvald reminds her of her duties as wife and mother, and indicates his willingness to try to change himself and their marriage for the better.

In many school curricula in our time, *A Doll’s House* may, in fact, be the first and last word students hear about marriage and the family, which is itself depressing and disturbing. Our purpose in reading the play in conjunction with other writings about marriage is not to leave you depressed and disturbed. Rather it is to experience with you a masterful representation of what looks very much like a “revisionist” marriage, in the words of Mr. George and his colleagues. It is also a representation of what Bl. John Paul II sees as “shadows” for the family today — in his words, “a mistaken theoretical and practical concept of the independence of the spouses in relation to each other ... the growing number of divorces ... [and] a corruption of the idea and the experience of freedom, conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God’s plan for marriage and the family, but as an autonomous power of self-affirmation, often against others, for one’s own selfish

well-being.” *A Doll’s House* is not our final word about marriage by a long shot, but in providing an image of a certain sort of modern marriage, it makes for a thought-provoking beginning to our weekend’s conversations.

*What is Marriage?* offers a philosophical account and defense of traditional marriage — what the authors call the “conjugal” view of marriage. “Our argument,” the authors write, “makes no appeal to divine revelation or religious authority ... our argument for the structure and value of marriage is philosophical ... [and] supported by social science.” According to the “conjugal” view, marriage is a “comprehensive union” of body and mind, a union intrinsically ordered to the procreation of children and to domestic life, and consequently a union characterized by permanence and exclusivity.

“Revisionists,” on the other hand, view marriage as essentially an “emotional union,” with no intrinsic ordering to the begetting or raising of children, a union which need last only as long as the partners, no matter their gender or number, are comfortable with each other. After raising difficulties for the “revisionist” view of marriage, George and his colleagues argue that the “conjugal” view better explains thousands of years of marital tradition and is more conducive to the well-being of the spouses, the children, and society than is the “revisionist” view. They cite compelling social scientific research to support these claims.

Having considered Ibsen’s *artistic* representation of the “revisionist” view of marriage, and having considered George’s and his colleagues’ robust *philosophical* defense of the “conjugal” view of marriage, we turn to Bl. John Paul II for a profound *theological* meditation ordered to revealing what he calls “the complete truth about marriage and its deepest meaning.” Our late Holy Father stresses the need for “conversion of mind and heart” to root out the “negative phenomena” or “shadows” which plague marriage

and the family today, emphasizing that this conversion can only take place with the grace of God.

“Man is made in the image of God Who is love,” he continues, “...[so] man’s vocation is to love.” Accordingly, he says, “Marriage is interiorly ordained to fulfillment in Christ,” Who is the perfect embodiment of sacrificial love. Looked at with the eyes of faith, the self-giving love and fidelity characteristic of marriage makes it “an image and symbol of the covenant uniting God and His people ... and a real representation of the spousal covenant uniting Christ and His Church.”

Having concluded our consideration of marriage and the family on this edifying note, and recalling Bl. John Paul II’s insistence on “women’s equal dignity and responsibility with men” and his emphasis on the “duties of men within the family,” I think back to Nora and Torvald’s *Doll’s House*. As an advocate for conjugal marriage, I want to believe that Nora went off and became, in her words, “a reasonable human being;” that Torvald did the same, and that they eventually reunited in what Nora refers to at the end of the play as “real wedlock” — even if she does not yet understand the full import of those words. That is, a wedlock of the sort her friend Mrs. Linde describes where “there is complete understanding between” the spouses. Of course, I know the actual play ends with the slamming door, but I think somebody should write the sequel.

Whether or not things turn out this way for Nora and Torvald, we hope that this has proven to be a stimulating and rewarding weekend for you. We hope that you leave us with greater confidence that the traditional or “conjugal” view of marriage is solidly grounded in both faith and reason, despite the drumbeat to the contrary we hear from politicians, the courts, the media, and popular culture. We thank you again for helping to make this year’s Summer Seminars successful. We very much hope that you will join us again next year.



Scenes from the 2013 Summer Seminar Weekends: 1. Lunch in the campus coffee shop 2. Cliff Hackett and Andrei Volhontseff 3. Chaplain Rev. Joseph Illo with Karen Spencer 4. Students sing for the group on Saturday night 5. President Michael F. McLean proposes a toast. 6. Dr. Ron Connolly 7. Lisa and Bob Andrews with Dr. and Mrs. McLean 8. Judy Barrett and Berni Neal



# Campus Update

## Recent Events and Happenings

### College Names New Head Chaplain

When the academic year begins this fall, Thomas Aquinas College will have a new head chaplain: Rev. Joseph Illo. It is a job for which he is well-prepared, given his extensive pastoral experience, his work at the College over the last year, and his training at the hands of the College's outgoing and beloved head chaplain, Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.



"Having faithfully served the Church for more than 50 years and the College for the last decade, Fr. Buckley is taking a well-earned retirement from his administrative duties," says President Michael McLean. "Fortunately, he will remain active as one of three priests in the College's chaplaincy, and by God's grace, he will be with us for many more years to come."

"I have known Fr. Buckley for 30 years, dating back to when we both worked in San Francisco," says Fr. Illo. "He is a legend in my life, and he has brought all of his wisdom, humor, and orthodoxy to Thomas Aquinas College. The chaplaincy program here reflects that. I am very grateful to him for setting things up as they are, and I hope to be faithful to the vision here, just as he has been."

A priest of the Diocese of Modesto (Calif.) for 22 years, Fr. Illo served as the pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Church for 13 years before coming to the College in 2012. "In his time here, Fr. Illo has shown a great love for the College and the spiritual well-being of our students," says Dr. McLean. "He has invested himself in the life of the community — sitting in on sophomore seminars, leading kayaking and hiking trips and, most important of all, providing us with the sacraments of God's grace. He has been a true shepherd of souls, and we are grateful that he has agreed to become our next head chaplain."

Reflecting back on the year, Fr. Illo reports that the College chaplaincy is not altogether different from parish work, except that the congregation is younger — and keeps later hours. "We also place an extraordinary emphasis here on confession and spiritual direction, and that is a testament to how seriously our students take their faith," he says. "This is wonderful work, because you know you are preparing them for their adult lives and for life in heaven."

### Record-Breaking High School Program

A record number of rising high school seniors — 136 in all — descended upon campus in July for the annual Great Books Program for High School Students. This year's students hailed from 32 states and four countries, traveling from as far as Belgium, Argentina, and Hawaii to get a taste of the life — academic, spiritual, and social — of a Thomas Aquinas College student. As participants in the two-week program, they studied various original texts drawn from the College's classical curriculum, including authors such as Boethius, Euclid, Shakespeare, and St. Thomas Aquinas. They also engaged in thoughtful classroom conversations guided by members of the teaching faculty.

When not in class, this year's group enjoyed a wide



range of activities, including a hike in the neighboring Los Padres National Forest, basketball and volleyball tournaments, swing dancing, singing around a campfire, and dabbling with watercolors at the nearby painters' shack. They also enjoyed field trips to the beach, the Hollywood Bowl, the Getty Museum, and Santa Barbara. For spiritual fortification, there were two Masses offered daily in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, as well as Eucharistic Adoration, evening Rosaries, and nightly consecrations back in the residence halls.

"This year's students were bright, energetic, and a lot of fun to have with us," says Admissions Director Jon Daly. "We hope to see many of them again as members of the Class of 2018!"

Photos, video, and recaps from the various events of this year's Summer Program are available on the College's website at [thomasaquinas.edu/summerblog](http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerblog).

### An Afternoon of Song



Some 750 people from the greater Los Angeles area came to Ojai's Libbey Bowl on Sunday, April 7, for an open-air concert hosted by Thomas Aquinas College. On a glorious afternoon with perfect spring weather, two student choral groups took to the amphitheater stage — Chrysostomos and the Thomas Aquinas College Choir.

Directed by Thomas Quackenbush ('14), Chrysostomos opened the show with Palestrina's "Sicut Cervus" (Psalm 42), followed by a selection of European and American motets and hymns, many of which appear on the choir's recent CD, *Triumph Over the Grave*. The set ended on a fittingly triumphant note with William Billings' Easter Anthem: "The Lord Is Ris'n Indeed, Hallelujah!"

Next the Thomas Aquinas College Choir, directed by Daniel Grimm ('76), performed some of the world's best-loved opera choruses, including the "Habanera" from Bizet's *Carmen*, "The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves" from Verdi's *Nabucco*, and "Libiamo, libiamo" from Verdi's *La Traviata*. Several students heartily took on the role of soloists, delighting the audience with their spirited performances.

Finally the two choirs came together to close the event on a spiritual and patriotic note. The group first sang Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," and then led the audience in "God Bless America." Video and photos from the concert can be found on the College's website at [thomasaquinas.edu/libbeybowl2013](http://thomasaquinas.edu/libbeybowl2013).

### Alumni Dinner

Nearly 150 alumni of Thomas Aquinas College gathered on the College campus on Saturday, June 1, for the annual Alumni Association Dinner. The evening began with drinks and a festive meal on the academic quadrangle, followed by a talk from Dr. Thomas Kaiser ('75). The Association chose Dr. Kaiser, the first tutor to have taught every class in the College's classical curriculum, as this year's honoree.



Alumni enjoy dinner on the academic quadrangle by the Guadalupe Fountain.

"Teaching is not something I would have ever thought about doing before I came here as a student," Dr. Kaiser remarked. "But when you find out what you can learn, what the life of learning is like, and what it is like to live in a community with people who are really searching for the truth, who are virtuous, it is hard to imagine anything better than what we do. It really changed my life. I have never regretted the decision I made to teach here. It has been one of the joys of my life, and the 31 years I have been here have gone by very quickly."

To show its gratitude, the Alumni Association presented Dr. Kaiser with a bottle of wine, a gift card to an outdoor-supply store, and a "Tommy" — the Association's new, Oscar-inspired award, represented by a statuette of Rodin's "The Thinker." Said Director of Alumni Relations Mark Kretschmer ('99), "As alumni, we consider ourselves blessed to have once been students or classmates of Dr. Kaiser. It was wonderful to hear him reflect on the curriculum, our community, and their effect on him both as a student and later as a tutor. His talk — in keeping with the whole evening of good friends and conversation — was a reminder of so much of what we love about our alma mater."

### Alumnus Tutor Earns Doctoral Degree

When alumnus Joseph Hatrup ('01) joined the Thomas Aquinas College teaching faculty in 2006, he had already completed his doctoral studies in philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, but not his dissertation. He therefore spent most of his vacation and free time over the last several years completing this requirement



— a challenging task for a full-time college instructor and father of three young girls. His diligence, however, has paid off, and as a result, he has earned the title of doctor.

In April, Dr. Hatrup traveled to the Center for Thomistic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Tex. There, he successfully defended his dissertation, "Form and Predicability in Aristotle's *Categories* and the Middle Books of the *Metaphysics*."

"A widely received view about these works is that they contain doctrines of substance that are contradictory in principle and which therefore show significant changes in Aristotle's thought," Dr. Hatrup explains. "I argue that these two doctrines of substance, though different, are compatible with each other and not contradictory in principle. I hope the dissertation will help to demonstrate the unity and consistency of Aristotle's thought and principles, especially as regards logic and metaphysics."

The dissertation received unanimous approval of the Examining Board, which subjected Dr. Hatrup to two rounds of vigorous questioning. Dr. Edward Macierowski, an external reader on the committee and a professor of philosophy at Benedictine College, remarked: "Hatrup's dissertation is not only a recognizable masterwork of a young philosopher, and so a convincing sign that he deserves the doctoral degree, but also the dissertation should be revised and submitted as soon as possible to publication at a major academic press."



# Student Reflections

## By Rebecca Bessette ('14)

*Note: Miss Bessette is a senior from Upland, Calif. The following is adapted from remarks she made to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its spring 2013 meeting.*



My path to Thomas Aquinas College began in grade school. I went to a small private elementary school in Upland, Calif., two hours southeast of here. The program was academically intense, but not exactly liberal — that is, freeing. The teachers worked to form the children in virtue and a true intellectualism, but many of the families had a utilitarian approach to education. Often it seemed like we were studying hard just so that we could score well on tests ... so that we could get into the best high schools ... so that we could get into the best colleges ... so that we could get into the best law schools and medical schools ... so that we could make the most money — and thereby be happy.

This approach to education went hand-in-hand with a more worldly and materialistic culture. In grade school, I was the weirdo who watched black-and-white movies, listened to oldies music, and didn't swear. I remember being distressed one time after receiving some mockery from friends. I remember crying to my mom, saying, "Why do people think it is bad to be good? I just don't understand!"

### Knowledge for its Own Sake

In February of my eighth-grade year, I discovered St. Monica Academy, a small Catholic school in Pasa-

dena in the classical tradition. I am sure many of you have heard of St. Monica's since the headmistress and several of the teachers are Thomas Aquinas College alumni. I attended St. Monica's for high school, and it was there that I found a new approach to education. At St. Monica's, we asked the question, "Why?" We pursued knowledge for its own sake.

It is no surprise to me now that this approach to education went hand-in-hand with a truly Christian culture. It was, finally, good to be good. The culture was Christ-centered and focused on faith and family.

This experience prepared me for Thomas Aquinas College. St. Monica's made me think about the purpose of education and how true faith ought to create a unique culture and inform everything we do. My freshman year at the College was both a natural transition from my high school and a new beginning. I had the sense of starting over, and found myself immersed in a community and culture of faith and love.

### Truth and Love

However, there was one large bump along my way at the College. A few weeks before my sophomore year, my mother was diagnosed with Stage IV kidney cancer. We knew the disease was fatal, but I decided to return to school and go home to visit Mom on the weekends. My mom died in October of that year, and I was back in the classroom two days after the funeral because I had already missed so many classes in the weeks prior to her death.

At school, I was distracted and found it almost impossible to focus on the readings. I was slogging through the school year and became discouraged. I became resentful

of my studies since they seemed so distant from my life. I remember telling myself, "I don't need truth right now. I just need love."

In recent months, I have come to see the absurdity in my thinking. Thomas Aquinas College is not about filling my mind with particular truths. It is not about packing in as much information as possible. The point of the College is to make my whole being more receptive to truth itself, which is Christ. And Christ is where I find love. I cannot have love without truth, or truth without love. Far from being opposed, they are both found in the one person of Christ.

Even though I may not be able to get as much out of the curriculum as I could under normal circumstances, I know that this is the best place for me. The education and community here at the College are satisfying some part of my soul's fundamental needs for truth and love in a way that few other institutions could.

### The Fire of the Holy Spirit

After life at the College, I hope to work for the Church in some capacity. I like to get things done; I have something of a passion for planning. I would love to put my skills to work in a diocese or in a parish school. Whatever I end up doing, though, I am so excited to enter the world with the fire of the Holy Spirit, and help invigorate whichever parish community I may find myself in.

On behalf of the entire student body, I would like to say thank you to all you members of the Board of Governors of the College for all your hard work and dedication to the success of this program. We appreciate your sacrifices so much, and you are in our prayers.

# Tutor Enrichment

## For Members of the Faculty, Summer is a Time of Learning

For five weeks every summer, the members of the teaching faculty of Thomas Aquinas College become students once again.

Starting one week after graduation, the tutors return to campus for thrice-weekly, 90-minute morning seminars — a chance to deepen their understanding of the curriculum and to prepare for the upcoming academic year. At the same time, they also engage in various other scholarly pursuits designed to enhance their teaching. This summer, the tutors undertook a wide range of studies that examined faith, natural science, logic, and Catholic liberal education.

### The Tutor Summer Program

"The Tutor Summer Program is a great time for us as a faculty to draw together and to consider important subjects," says Dean Brian T. Kelly. At their morning sessions, in the classrooms where they usually teach, the tutors engage in discussions led by one or two of their peers.

This summer there were three sections: In the first, Dr. Anthony Andres led participants in the study of a text on logic by the late Msgr. Maurice Dionne, a philosopher who taught several of the College's founders at the Université Laval in Quebec. "This first section was exclusively for the newer members of our teaching faculty," says Dr. Kelly. "We thought that was appropriate so as to help form them and to enable them to spend time with each other."

In the second section, Dr. Sean Collins and Dr. Richard Ferrier led an examination of the work of two 19<sup>th</sup> century scientists, James Clerk Maxwell and Michael Faraday, in the field of electromagnetics. "This was an important inquiry, because we are ever-mindful of refining our natural science courses. To that end it is helpful to have more of our tutors able to reflect on the nature and importance of electromagnetism. Since the College's students read Maxwell's Treatise on Electricity and Mag-



*Tutor Dr. John Nieto presents a talk, "A Study of Film," at the annual West Coast Meeting of the Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies.*

netism in their senior natural-science tutorial, we tried to get tutors who will teach that class — either this year or in the near future — to participate in this section."

Finally, complementing the section on natural science was one on faith, led by Dr. Glen Coughlin and focusing on relevant portions of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. "With this being the Year of Faith, it seemed appropriate to study the notion of faith in that context," says Dr. Kelly.

### Afternoon Seminars

Tying together these inquiries into natural science and faith was an afternoon seminar that explored the relationship between the two. There were two texts for the seminar, the first an essay by the late Catholic philosopher Charles De Koninck, and the second a 1988 letter from Bl. John Paul II to Rev. George V. Coyne, S.J., director of the Vatican Observatory.

To keep the seminar a manageable size, the faculty broke into two groups led by President Michael F. McLean and Senior Tutor Dr. Thomas Kaiser. "We planned this seminar with a view toward thinking more deeply about the importance of modern science in dialogue with faith and about the unity of natural science,"

says Dr. Kelly. "De Koninck, for example, makes clear that because wonder about the natural world does not stop with abstract generalities, the lover of wisdom wants to know nature all the way down to the most minute detail."

Additionally, the College hosted a seminar about its founding document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, for members of both the teaching and the administrative faculties. Dr. McLean again led one of the groups, as did one of the College's founders, Peter L. DeLuca. A fellow founder, Dr. John W. Neumayr co-led a third group with Dr. Kaiser. "We hold seminars on the 'Blue Book' periodically," says Dr. Kelly. "They help us to deepen our understanding of our own founding principles and to renew our common commitment to the mission of the College."

### Aristotle & St. Thomas

"It is worth noting that in the middle of the Tutor Program was the annual West Coast Conference of the Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies," says Dr. Kelly. "Although the conference is not formally part of the Tutor Program, the College sponsors it, and we rearrange the program schedule so that tutors can attend it. It very much complements the work that we are doing in terms of providing the tutors with intellectual enrichment."

At this year's conference, scholars from across the United States and abroad gathered on the College's campus for a two-day event, focused on the theme of "Philosophy and the Arts." Among the speakers were five alumni and tutors of the College. Lectures included topics such as, "Is Beauty a Distinct Transcendental According to St. Thomas Aquinas?" and "An Aristotelian Account of Music's Influence on the Passions." (Audio from these talks is available at [thomasaquinas.edu/sats2013](http://thomasaquinas.edu/sats2013).)

"These were all wonderful events," says Dr. Kelly. "For our own benefit as faculty members, and for that of our students, we always keep growing in the understanding of the truth that underlies our course of studies."



# Great Books and Holy Orders

## Rev. Nathaniel Drogin, O. Praem. ('01), Becomes College's 59<sup>th</sup> Alumni Priest

"I believe that Our Lord, in His wisdom and mercy, had been calling me to follow Him more closely from a young age," reflects Rev. Nathaniel Drogin, O. Praem. (Peter Drogin '01). "But I often was deaf to His voice, and even strayed many times far from Him and His law."

Indeed, if God was calling young Peter Drogin to the priesthood, Peter was not hearing the message.

One of 12 children, growing up in the small town of New Hope, Ky., he never imagined that he would one day become a priest, let alone a monk and a scholar. "In high school we had been introduced to some philosophy and the great works of literature, but I was not really the academic type," he observes. "I enjoyed working on cars and was thinking of attending a technical school to be trained as a mechanic."

That plan changed when he shared his goals with an older friend who was then a student at Thomas Aquinas College. The friend suggested that a liberal education could benefit anyone, regardless of one's career choice. "He did not discount the idea of becoming a mechanic," recalls Fr. Drogin. "He just said something that made me realize that being a mechanic would be even better if I came to the College first."



### Learning to Love Wisdom

Still, when he arrived at the College as a 17-year-old freshman, Fr. Drogin was more interested in enjoying his newfound independence and making friends than in his studies. "The pursuit of wisdom," he admits, "was not on the top of my priorities." Yet slowly the works he read in preparation for his classes, and the conversations that took place within those classes, began to affect him.

A few readings in particular would profoundly alter his life's trajectory. Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* enkindled in him a yearning for knowledge, and St. Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* convinced him of the need to learn, defend, and teach the truths of the Faith. Most formative of all was studying St. Augustine's *Confessions* in Sophomore Seminar, which married Fr. Drogin's newfound love of truth with a desire to do God's will.

"After reading the story of St. Augustine's conversion, I knew that I could not claim to know and love God without following His commands," says Fr. Drogin. "Our Lord was teaching me that without that commitment, all the syllogisms, all the proofs, all the 'knowledge' were just shadows. Without real surrender to Him, there was no rest." This desire to do God's will soon transformed his attitudes and behavior. "I began to get more serious about studies," he says. "I began to pray more and attend daily Mass. Most of all, my friendships improved, and I began to change my habits."

### Hearing God's Call

When he sought to give more of his life to God, Fr. Drogin at last heard the call that he suspects had been there all along. "By junior year I was thinking about the priesthood," he says. "I had found rest in prayer and in reading Sacred Scripture, and I wanted to pursue that for the rest of my life."

The passion for wisdom that he had developed at the College would lead him to pursue his vocation with the Norbertine Fathers at St. Michael's Abbey in Orange, Calif. "What attracted me to St. Michael's was, most of all, the community life," Fr. Drogin says. "There I met priests

who understood what I had been introduced to at the College. They came from diverse backgrounds and educations, but all of them manifested a thirst for wisdom. In many ways I saw St. Michael's as the completion of what I began at Thomas Aquinas College. I met men who were trying to become saints, and I wanted to join them."

On Saturday, June 22, Fr. Drogin received the Sacrament of Holy Orders at Mission Basilica in San Juan Capistrano, Calif. He is now the College's 59<sup>th</sup> alumni priest, and the fifth at St. Michael's, where four other alumni are priests and another four are seminarians or novices. Ordaining Fr. Drogin was the Bishop of Orange, the Most Rev. Kevin Vann, J.D., D.D., who will preside at the College's Convocation exercises on August 26.

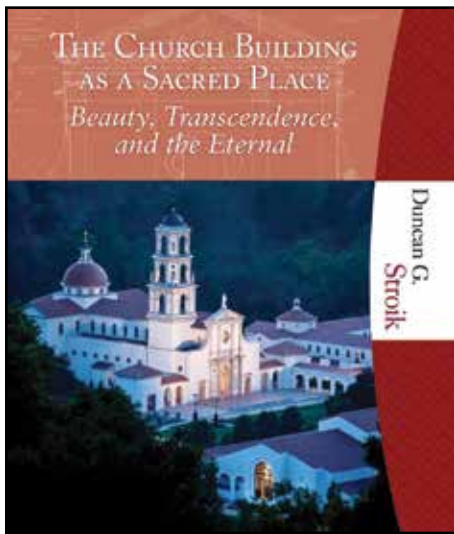
During his first two months as a priest, Fr. Drogin has been busily working on his thesis for a master's degree at the Cardinal Bea Center for Judaic Studies of the Pontifical Gregorian University. He expects to receive a permanent priestly assignment in the fall. In the meantime, he enjoys the life of a priest living in community. "We work together. We play sports together. We have meals in common," he says. "Most importantly, we worship God together."

## Praying a Church

### Book Review: *The Church Building as a Sacred Place* by Duncan G. Stroik

By Domiane Forte ('00)

*The Church Building as a Sacred Place: Beauty, Transcendence, and the Eternal*  
by Duncan G. Stroik  
Liturgy Training, 2012, \$75.00, 192 pp.



*Editor's Note: The design of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel was the product of an extensive collaboration between the building's architect, Prof. Duncan Stroik of the University of Notre Dame, and the building's patron, late Thomas Aquinas College president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon. As the son-in-law of Dr. Dillon and a former pupil of Prof. Stroik, Domiane Forte ('00) had a unique opportunity to witness this collaboration. He also contributed to the project, most notably by designing the Chapel's sanctuary furniture.*

A graduate of both Thomas Aquinas College and the Notre Dame School of Architecture, Mr. Forte is the principal of Forte & Associates, an architectural firm based in Santa Paula, Calif., and chairman of the College's Greater Los Angeles Board of Regents.

We are now in the third generation of what is optimistically called the "new renaissance" in classical architecture. The last 100 years have not been good to the decoration of our urban landscape, our houses, our civic buildings, and most certainly, our churches. Duncan G. Stroik has been a leader in the return to classical principles of design for over two decades, and has done much through his writing, teaching, and designing to help

our culture regain its culture.

In his first full publication, Prof. Stroik has brought together a series of articles that are, on the surface, a concise and immensely useful point of reference for building committees, pastors, architects, patrons, benefactors, and the general public alike.

This is not to say that the book's central thesis is merely a practical one, in which good advice is put forth for the project team in the form of recommendations about designing, funding, and building a Catholic church. While his book is full of such information, Stroik has instead chosen as his primary goal to make the case that building a proper *Domus Dei* is an act of prayer. Upon reading his words, one cannot but be brought to the conclusion that designing a church is identical to the act of painting an icon, or as it is more accurately called, praying an icon. We are, or ought to be, reminded of the Prayer of the Iconographer by Dionysius of Forna:

*Enlighten and direct my soul, my heart and my spirit. Guide the hands of Thine unworthy servant so that I may worthily and perfectly portray Thine icon, that of Thy mother and all the Saints, for the glory, joy, and adornment of Thy holy Church.*

It is from this point of view that one can understand how Stroik comes to some of his seemingly anachronistic beliefs, such as, "the design of the church building begins with the altar, then moves to the tabernacle, and then flows from them." If one considers design as prayer, as Stroik does, then the design of the altar would naturally come first and be the exemplar for the rest of the building.

Stroik regularly cites Holy Scripture, works of the Church fathers, Conciliar documents, Canon Law, and pertinent directives. He also considers the USCCB's documents *Built of Living Stones* and *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* to support his arguments, although he is not above criticizing perceived inadequacies. (A whole chapter is devoted to the analysis of *BLS* and *EACW* and the unfortunate realities of their implementation.) These constant reminders from the Church's voice not only ground the book with a proper theological foundation, but help drive home the central theme of prayer.

There is a danger in carrying this theme of the prayed icon too far, since the overabundance of artificial or contrived symbolism can obscure the natural signification of iconographic symbolism.

This is, it can be argued, the tendency of Abbot Suger and Bishop Durand, writing in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, respectively. Durand poetically pronounced that "a church building is built of the living stones of the faithful, with Christ as the door, bishops and doctors as the piers of the nave, and preachers as the protecting beams of the roof." This apparent contrivance of symbol is only understood within the context of prayer: It is, as Stroik puts it, the difference between the spiritual and material Church that gives us understanding of the building.

It is noteworthy, as Stroik points out, that while many prior works on church architecture — most specifically *BLS* and to some extent *EACW* — have a tendency to refrain from illustrating any of the Church's patrimonial heritage, *The Church Building as a Sacred Place* is finely illustrated with many examples of historic and current art and architecture. The author does not shy away from using his own work, in the literary heritage of Palladio himself, to illustrate his text. These illustrations not only help support the arguments, but also help bring a vocabulary of culture to the reader.

It is this reading of the book that makes it recommendable on many levels: for pastors thinking of additions or new construction to know what to expect, for architects and designers to reclaim the position of liturgical design consultant, and for the general public to not only learn more about their Church's patrimonial history, but for use as a guide to the prayer of reading a church building.



One might assume that, during the summer months, there would be few if any students on the campus of Thomas Aquinas College. After all, the sequential nature of the College’s curriculum does not allow for summer school, and classes do not resume until the end of August. What reason would students have to stick around?

Yet were one to visit the campus, one would find them everywhere: on the quadrangle, in the dining commons, and in the administration building. Roughly a quarter of the students do, in fact, stay on campus for the summer — not to study, but to work.

Throughout June, July, and most of August, students can be found painting the residence halls, tending to the flower gardens, or doing clerical work in the admissions, development, and business offices. They serve as sacristans, landscapers, cooks, and technicians. The administrative work of the College continues through the summer, and student workers are vital to that process — as they are throughout the year.

### Partners, not Customers

“During the summer, we hire a student work force to perform the important maintenance tasks that we cannot get to during the school year,” explains Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca. “Those workers also serve as full-time stand-ins for the 267 students in the College’s Service Scholarship Program, who work 13 hours per week throughout the academic year in exchange for a reduction in their tuition bills.”

“It has been the College’s commitment, ever since its founding, to never turn away a qualified student on the basis of financial need,” says President Michael F. McLean. “Through the generosity of our President’s Council members and other benefactors, we have been able to uphold that commitment by maintaining a robust financial-aid program, of which our Service Scholarship Program is an essential part.”

Students and families who qualify for financial aid at Thomas Aquinas College must first make a maximum

effort to pay for as much of their tuition, room, and board as they reasonably can. This effort, explains Director of Financial Aid Gregory Becher, includes taking on “a modest amount of student-loan debt,” currently capped at a total of \$16,000 over four years. After that, students contribute to the cost of their education by working part-time during the academic year. Most of the students receiving financial aid fulfill this obligation through the Service Scholarship Program. The College covers any remaining need through grants.

“We do not think of our students as customers, here to purchase a product or service,” says Dr. McLean. “They are our partners in the project of Catholic liberal education. Employing students wherever possible, instead of outside workers, helps to make tuition more affordable for all, and gives the students a better understanding of what it takes to run the College.”

### Labor & Gratitude

A rising sophomore who works on the grounds crew, Kevin Cotugno (’16) finds that his participation in the Service Scholarship Program makes him more grateful. “Doing this job, I can see how much work it takes to keep the College going,” he says. His classmate Valerie Schippers (’16), an assistant in the Admissions Office, agrees, saying, “I appreciate my education all the more because I am working for it.”

Sometimes students work in the same department for all four years at the College, learning the ropes as underclassmen, then supervising others by senior year. Other times, however, students will move from job to job over the course of their academic career, depending on the College’s needs and their own interest.

Sarah Crowell (’16), for example, worked in the kitchen during her freshman year, and this fall hopes to serve as a laboratory assistant, maintaining the natural-science labs and preparing them for experiments. Having been involved in various facets of the College’s operation, she feels a sense of responsibility for its fortunes, and takes pride in its appearance. “Because it is students who



maintain the campus, we have a real sense that this is our space,” she says. “It is our place to maintain, and it is up to us to decide what kind of image we want to present as a community.”

Although students are not guaranteed what sort of work assignments they will receive, they can petition for specific positions. “When possible, the College matches students with jobs that make the best use of their particular experience or talents,” says Business Manager Michael Collins. Those with a gift for



## Praise for Thomas Aquinas College’s Financial Aid Program

### The Princeton Review

- Highest possible rating for financial aid
- One of only 10 colleges nationwide to be named to the Financial Aid Honor Roll
- “Best Value Colleges”



### U.S. News & World Report

- Top 25, “Least Debt” among graduates
- Top 40, “Best Value Colleges”



### Kiplinger: “100 Best Values in Private Colleges”

- Top 10, Best Values in Private Colleges Under \$20K (net)
- Top 100, “Best Values in Liberal Arts Colleges”





# of Learning

## Tuition Affordable for College's Students



in her sophomore year. “I cleaned a lot of drains,” she smiles. “But I knew I was doing something that helped the College and improved the quality of life here a little bit. Drains weren’t backing up any more. I could see first-hand the effects for the good of everyone here.”

### Building Community

Indeed, for many of the students, participating in the Service Scholarship Program is akin to doing chores for their families back home. It is a way to contribute to the well-being of the group, and also to repay, in some small measure, the efforts of others — be it parents or the College’s benefactors — whose sacrifices make their Catholic liberal education possible.

“It is kind of like giving back to the College,” says Rebekah Hall (’15). A sophomore grounds-crew member, Rebekah can often be spotted caring for the plants in the area around the Our Lady of Guadalupe fountain. “I just love being able to plant seedlings and watch them grow,” she says. “It’s sustaining the campus that we live on.”

Katherine Guilford (’15), who cleans residence halls, says that the Service Scholarship Program fosters a sense of interdependence. “It makes you realize that you are not on your own. You are not responsible for just yourself, but you are responsible to and for other people,” she says. “You are part of a community.”

This sense extends across the entire student body. “We all recognize that our fellow students are integral to keeping our education going,” says Jesse Blacklock (’14), who serves as a painter. “You cannot help but care more for the orderliness of the school because someone you know is the one maintaining the Commons area, or the dorm. It’s not just some vague person, it is a friend of yours who is doing all this cleaning. So you are more sure to respect the grounds and the campus.”

### Complementing the Education

This heightened sense of community, Jesse notes, facilitates the discussions that are at the heart of the

Thomas Aquinas College education. “Everyone is working to keep the school functioning. Everyone has this common goal, and people depend on each other,” he says. “This established sense of community helps people to resume *outside* the classroom the conversations they were having *inside* the classroom.”

Still, balancing a full course load with a part-time job can be a challenge. “It’s tough,” admits Nicholas Van Hecke (’16), who assists with data entry in the Admissions Department. “But it also forces me to be better focused and more organized. I know, for example, that I need to get in all my office hours on the weekdays, which means that I have to be disciplined about doing more schoolwork on the weekends. When there is a lot of work to do, the time goes by fast, but we can always find a way to get it done.”

Moreover, the hands-on skills developed on the job complement the intellectual skills developed in class, while also providing valuable experience that students can draw upon in their future pursuits. “Just as the curriculum gives us a very balanced, well-rounded education that lets us reach new intellectual heights, the work gives us life experience,” says Sarah. “These are skills you can use as a mother or as a working professional — interpersonal skills, learning how to work under a supervisor, using computers, cooking. These experiences contribute to the balanced education that we are striving for here.”

The Service Scholarship Program also has the virtue of allowing the College to provide more financial aid, but even so, honoring the College’s commitment to need-blind education is expensive. “Every year it is a struggle to raise the funds we require for financial aid,” says Dr. McLean. “It is a daunting task, but we think it is worth it.”

“I’m just really thankful that the Service Scholarship Program exists,” says Sadie. “It helps my family afford this education, and I get to do work that clearly benefits everyone here.”

woodworking, for example, might find themselves doing carpentry. The IT department looks for students with an aptitude for computers, just as the audio-visual crew recruits workers who know how to man a camera or set up a microphone.

Not all the jobs are glamorous, and most are in the kitchen or with the maintenance crews, but all are important. Sadie McCafferty (’15) spent her freshman year working in facilities maintenance before shifting over to the development office



## Why Thomas Aquinas College Refuses Government Funding

Whenever discussing the College’s financial-aid program, it is important to make one point clear, lest there be any confusion: Thomas Aquinas College neither seeks nor accepts any direct, campus-based government funding.

The reason for this longstanding policy is simple: The College seeks to preserve its autonomy and Catholic identity. Although students may, on their own volition, receive government-guaranteed loans and individual tuition grants for which, as citizens, they are eligible, it is they — and not the College — who apply for and directly benefit from such aid. As such, these loans and grants in no way subject the College to invasive or injurious regulation.

To remain independent of direct government funding, the College gratefully relies on the sacrifices of its parents and students and the great generosity of its benefactors.





# Topping the Charts with Truth, Goodness, and Beauty

## An Interview with Sr. Mary Josefa, OSB (Kathleen Holcomb '07)

For six weeks last year, the number-one album on Billboard's Classical Music Chart was, delightfully albeit surprisingly, a collection of sacred music sung by a community of Benedictine nuns. Two of those nuns, Sr. Mary Josefa, OSB (Kathleen Holcomb '07), and Sr. Sophia Eid, OSB ('08), are alumnae now serving with the Benedictine Sisters of Mary, Queen of the Apostles, in Gower, Mo. The sisters topped the charts with their first album, *Advent at Ephesus*, and have recently released a second, *Angels and Saints at Ephesus*.

To promote the sisters' new album, Sr. Josefa recently conducted a rare interview with a representative of the Cardinal Newman Society, in which she spoke about her experience at Thomas Aquinas College and about the role of liturgy, sacred music, and Catholic identity in higher education. That interview is reprinted in its entirety below, with the permission of the Cardinal Newman Society.



**Congratulations on the new album. Is such beautiful music part of everyday life at the Priory? What does it mean that contemplative sisters are topping the music charts?**

Yes, thanks be to God. We are blessed with beautiful music every day, principally at the recitation of the Divine Office (some of the Gregorian chant on the CDs are hymns that we sing in the course of the liturgical year during the Office), but also for our daily Mass at which we use both chant and polyphonic pieces. We often bring music to our recreations, especially during festive seasons such as Christmas and Easter, and we also enjoy learning special pieces to sing for feast days, especially as a surprise for Mother Prioress.

That contemplative sisters are making CDs that top the music charts indicates a desire in society for contemplative music: music that expresses truth, goodness, and beauty; music that brings peace (which St. Augustine aptly terms "the tranquility of order," so absent from the hectic pace of modern lifestyles); music that ultimately draws the listener to the source of all these, to God Himself.

**Were you drawn to sacred music in high school or even earlier? How did music impact your formation as a young Catholic?**

I was drawn to sacred music when I was still quite young; I remember that my favorite tapes as a 7-year-old were recordings of the Trapp Family Singers, whose repertoire included sacred as well as folk and classical music.

From that age through high school, I studied classical piano and often learned hymns and other sacred music for keyboard. As a student at Thomas Aquinas College, I sang in the College Choir and there was able to sing the *a capella*, polyphonic music that I had enjoyed as a child.

This exposure to sacred music throughout my education helped to form my faith by teaching me love and reverence for sacred things through the beauty of music.

**Why did you choose to attend Thomas Aquinas College?**

I chose to attend Thomas Aquinas College because it integrated classical and Catholic education. I was fascinated by the liberal arts program, with its consideration and discussion of original sources, introducing the student to the perennial questions with which mankind has always grappled. I was further drawn by the Catholic identity of the school, which orders this program of studies to lead the student from the contemplation of created truth to the contemplation of God Himself.

**What was your experience of the liturgy and sacred music while at the College? Did it help in the discernment of your vocation?**

At Thomas Aquinas College, I was introduced to the Latin Ordinary Form of the Mass, often accompanied by the Gregorian *Schola* or the *a capella* polyphonic choir. The use of the liturgical language made a great impression on me; I found that I preferred to pray in the language of the Church. Both at TAC and later at the ITI, I often would join groups of other students to chant the Divine Office in Latin, particularly the Office of Tenebrae during Holy Week. This love for chanting the Office in Latin eventually became one of the principal factors in discerning my religious vocation. I realized that if I decided to become a religious, especially a contemplative religious, then this would be the way that I would want to pray. Through Latin and the ancient chants, I was able to enter into the mind and heart of the Church and pray with Her voice.

**Is reverent liturgy important to a Catholic education? How does it relate to the academic life of a high school or college?**



Reverent liturgy is indispensable to a Catholic education. The purpose of Catholic education is to lead the human person to know and love the highest things — truth, goodness, and beauty — and to know and love their ultimate source, God Himself. The liturgy places the person in direct contact with God and so must be faithful in expressing as much of His truth, goodness, and beauty as possible.

Reverent liturgy relates to a school's academic life because it forms the students' faith in invisible realities and teaches them the loving contemplation of the truths that they are studying.

**Many Catholic colleges have become increasingly secular. How did Catholic identity at Thomas Aquinas College help to strengthen your faith, and play a role in your vocation?**

At TAC, I was blessed to be part of a community that was really unified and ordered by its Catholic identity. I attended daily Mass and Rosary with my teachers and fellow students; the chapel was the central point of the campus, and teachers and students always would stop on the way to or from class for a visit; everyone acknowledged senior theology as the culminating point of the curriculum to which all the other classes were ordered. In these and countless other ways, I experienced a community that recognized that the invisible realities are more real, more important than the visible ones. Naturally, this greatly nourished the inclination that I had had to religious life since I was young. Many of my fellow students were also drawn to religious life as a result of the strong Catholic community and contemplative program of studies, and having peers considering a vocation really strengthened my own.

For more information about the Sisters of Mary, or to purchase their albums, go to [benedictinesofmary.org](http://benedictinesofmary.org).

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



## Help shape the future with a legacy gift today.

Please contact  
Tom Susanka, Director of Gift Planning  
[tsusanka@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:tsusanka@thomasaquinas.edu)  
805-421-5928



# The Church as a Source of Wisdom

## Why We Study Papal Encyclicals

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 10, 2013, meeting. They are part of an ongoing series of talks in which Dr. Kelly explains why the College includes certain authors in its curriculum. The full series is available at [www.thomasaquinas.edu/whywestudy](http://www.thomasaquinas.edu/whywestudy).*



Thomas Aquinas College is a great books program, but in a brief sequence near the end of Senior Seminar, we ask the students to read and discuss several Church documents as a way to introduce them to an authoritative source of Church teaching. Here our Catholic character leads us to depart a little from the great books model. We may be a great books program, but we are a Catholic program first and foremost. In order to orient ourselves most fruitfully toward wisdom and to live the intellectual life in an authentically Catholic way, we must submit our minds to the Church.

When you ask the founders why we make room in the Senior Seminar for encyclicals, they speak of the importance of being properly disposed to the Magisterium. They also stress the need for our students to get at least a taste of how the Church addresses the kinds of questions that we discuss in our classrooms, and how the Church reacts to powerful intellectual movements.

*Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, for example, is a response to a range of different developments captured under the heading of “modernism” — which seems in some ways to spring from the influence of thinkers such as Hegel and Kant. The social encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* pick up the thread of the conversation arising out of reading a host of political and social theorists including Adam Smith and Karl Marx. *Aeterni Patris* helps to explain the importance of taking St. Thomas as a guide and patron, and therefore helps to explain why the College exists. *Humani Generis* achieves at least two important ends: It shows the openness of the Church to scientific inquiry with regard to evolution — while laying

down the limits that Faith imposes — and also explains the authoritative character of encyclicals. *Lumen Gentium* is a document of Vatican II explaining the “inner nature and universal mission” of the Church, the mystical body of Christ.

### Answering Possible Objections

This is, admittedly, a very short list, and many great and momentous encyclicals are not included. Where is *Humanae Vitae*? Where is *Fides et Ratio*? Generally we have found that time is fleeting. Four years may seem capacious, but it has proven impossible to squeeze in everything great and worth reading into that period. We do what we can to make a good start, and we are content with that. But a sign of how difficult it is to make this selection is the frequent disturbance of this list; we have tinkered before and may well tinker again. It is hard to argue against the giant thunderclap that was *Humanae Vitae*, and it is hard to conceive that Bl. John Paul II will remain off the list for many more years.

It is also true that we don't read anything here that was written very recently. There are several reasons for this exclusion. First, we try to connect the documents with the texts and issues that we have been wrestling with in our classes. Since this is a great books program, that tends to mean that encyclicals from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century will be more in continuity with the students' other readings than those from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Second, with a limited time for such reading, you have to pick and choose. Papal encyclicals tend to lean very heavily on earlier documents — as one can see just by looking through the footnotes of any current encyclicals. So if you have to choose between Leo XIII on social teaching or John Paul II, the choice is a little like choosing between reading chapter one or chapter two. If you have time to read only one chapter, it is better to read the earlier chapter. Reading chapter one prepares you for reading chapter two, and hopefully whets your appetite to do so. This approach fits better with our insistence that we are trying to make a good beginning.

A third reason is the test-of-time principle which is used to help discern the great books. It is hard to know which books are great until you see what books are still

widely read and studied after many years. Dr. Spock's book on childrearing sold a lot of copies and had a large impact when it was published, but is anybody reading it now? The same principle applies to the question of encyclicals and other Church documents. They are all authoritative, so we cannot choose on that basis, but some more than others withstand the test of time or are foundational in important ways. *Rerum Novarum*, for example, is perhaps the most important foundational document on Church social teaching in centuries.

There are two benefits that also come from reading documents that predate us. They help to remove us from the language and environment of our own time, and therefore push us to understand current teaching in a broader context. Church teaching is mostly not new, but it is often expressed in new ways. If we only educate ourselves by reading what is current, we might tie our understanding too closely to the way that it is expressed.

Just as it can be helpful to us to see how the Faith is proposed by missionaries in foreign lands, so also it can expand our understanding to see how it was proposed in the past. Reading older documents is also a concrete way to gain an appreciation for the continuity of the Faith. In looking at these encyclicals, we find the same Church. Doctrine develops and the mode of expression changes, but the mystical body of Christ persists.

### An Authoritative Source of Wisdom

Even though we may vary which encyclicals we select, we will always maintain the practice of reading Church documents at the end of Senior Seminar, so as to open our students more fully to the Church as a source of wisdom. We hope that they take this moment the way they should take the whole program, as a beginning. We hope they will thirst for more and will take the time to catch up, to read the important encyclicals of John Paul II, and Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis.

I want to close by reminding you of one thing about our patron. When St. Thomas was dying, he submitted all of his writings to the correction of the Church. In turning to some representative Church documents at the end of Senior year, we hope to remind our students of the importance of this kind of intellectual humility.

## In Memoriam

### Olga Sibbel Orellana, 1917 – 2013

It was mid-July of 1971, and the founders of Thomas Aquinas College were finally able to secure funding for the first academic year, set to begin in September. That meant they had about 60 days to prepare and furnish a campus — and to find a freshman class. “The big push in those two months was to recruit some students,” recalls Peter L. DeLuca, a founder and vice president for finance and administration. “We were running out of time.”

It was a tough sell. Despite lofty aspirations, both academic and spiritual, the College had yet to receive accreditation and was struggling to remain solvent. For potential students, there was no guarantee that, four years later, there would still be a college from which to graduate.

In this moment of need, the College sought the aid of several prominent Catholic women in Southern California — a group that would come to be known as the Women's Auxiliary of Thomas Aquinas College. The Auxiliary hosted Sunday-afternoon teas in Beverly Hills, Pasadena, Bakersfield, and the San Fernando Valley, inviting Catholics of college age or who had college-aged children. “It was largely from those teas that we formed our first class,” says Mr. DeLuca.



Olga Orellana with her son Roberto ('82)

One of the Auxiliary's members was Olga Orellana, who remained a loyal champion and benefactor of the College until her death on June 5 of this year.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Mrs. Orellana moved to Los Angeles with her family when she was a teenager. She earned a liberal arts degree at Stanford University in 1939. Shortly thereafter, while traveling with her parents and a sister in Mexico City, she met her future husband, Carlos Rafael Orellana, and they would be blessed with 5 children, 14 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren.

“Mrs. Orellana and the other women in the Auxiliary were very enthusiastic about the College, and determined to make it succeed,” says Mr. DeLuca. After helping the College recruit its first class, they turned their attention to development, hosting annual fundraisers throughout the region including, most famously, a luau at the home of Gladys and Fritz Burns.

Among the students whom Mrs. Orellana helped to bring to the College was her second son, Roberto ('82), and four grandchildren, Rafael ('07), Gabriel ('08), Helena ('11), and Regina ('16). She was also a member of the President's Council, and contributed generously to both the financial-aid fund and the construction of Sts. Peter and Paul Residence Hall.

“Olga was a longtime friend and early supporter who played a vital role in making this college a reality,” observes Mr. DeLuca. “In gratitude, she will remain always in our prayers.”

### IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

**David Ellis ('83)** – May 7, 2012  
*Brother of Sabrina Bjornstrom ('79)  
and Jennifer Tenney ('85)*

**Elizabeth Gould** – December 17, 2012  
*Friend*

**David J. Hickey** – April 11, 2013  
*Benefactor; father of Jamie Baugh ('92)*

**Christine Allen** – May 7, 2013  
*Sister of David ('10)*

**Susan Bujnak** – May 16, 2013  
*Benefactor; mother of Danielle ('95),  
Stephanie Ward ('07), and Sasha ('09)*

**Paul J. Conn** – June 1, 2013  
*Benefactor; brother of James and Walter,  
members of the Board of Governors, and  
late chaplain Rev. Thomas Conn, S.J.*

**Olga Sibbel Orellana** – June 5, 2013  
*Benefactor; mother of Roberto ('82);  
mother-in-law of Mary (Kern'81); and  
grandmother of Rafael ('07), Gabriel ('08),  
Helena ('11), and Regina ('16)*

**Jervis Ernest “Bud” Larson** – June 18, 2013  
*Grandfather of Ian ('10)*

**Elena Grant Cahir** – June 22, 2013  
*Daughter of College Governor  
Maria and Richard Grant*



# Ambassadors to the World

## Boards of Regents Expand, Host Events in Washington, San Francisco & Los Angeles

For more than 40 years, Thomas Aquinas College has both drawn students from and sent graduates to communities throughout the United States. It has also formed a nationwide network of friends and benefactors. The College therefore now boasts a substantial, thriving “diaspora” of alumni and other champions who bear witness to the virtues of Catholic liberal education in homes, schools, workplaces, and churches across the country.

Enter the Thomas Aquinas College Boards of Regents. Regents serve as the College’s ambassadors, making known its influence and good works within their own communities, while at the same time inviting new members into the fold.

The first Board of Regents, active primarily in the Greater Los Angeles Area, was formed in 2004, but as the influence and reach of the College have grown, the desire for organization in other regions has arisen. Therefore, within the last year, the College has established three new boards — in New York, Washington, D.C., and Northern California — with more planned for the near future. Already, the boards have worked diligently to raise the College’s profile and introduce it to new friends, sponsoring recent events in Alexandria, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento.

### Vinum & Veritas in Virginia

On April 21, the Washington, D.C., Board of Regents hosted its inaugural gathering at Gadsby’s Tavern Museum, a 200-year-old establishment that was once the center of politics, business, and society in early Alexandria, frequented by such patrons as Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Lafayette. Some 115 Regents and their friends attended the event.

The evening consisted of two parts: First, alumnus vintner David O’Reilly (’87) organized a wine-tasting, featuring select bottles from his Owen Roe Winery in St. Paul, Ore. Then the invited speaker — Rev. Paul Scalia, the Bishop’s Delegate for Clergy for the Diocese of Alexandria — delivered a talk entitled, “The Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI.” The Pope Emeritus has served a vital function in the history of the Church and our time, said Fr. Scalia, by “calling attention to the need to integrate faith and reason, and not to be limited to the scientism of the modern world.”

“Fr. Scalia gave an excellent talk in what was really the ideal location,” said College President Michael F. McLean. “We enjoyed good company, conversation, and drink in the very spot where some of the nation’s founders — and authors in the College’s curriculum — once did the same.” Added Rolfe Kratz (’97), Chairman of

the D.C. Board of Regents, “Between alumni and other friends, the College has developed a strong community in the Washington, D.C., area. We all enjoyed the chance to come together, to share, and to build a better understanding of the College. We can’t wait to do it again; it was truly a success!”

### San Francisco: Back to Our Roots

One month later, the Northern California Board of Regents and James P. Conn, a member of the College’s Board of Governors, hosted some 100 friends and benefactors at San Francisco’s Olympic Club at Lakeside. The gathering began, like the Alexandria event, with David O’Reilly conducting a wine-tasting. It then continued with a talk by Msgr. Steven Otellini, pastor of the Church of the Nativity in nearby Menlo Park, about the social criticism of Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman. “We are very grateful to Monsignor for his remarks and for his friendship,” said Dr. McLean.

The Archbishop of San Francisco, the Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone, was the guest of honor and praised the College for the important work it is doing in the Church and the nation today. “We were honored to have His Excellency with us,” said Dr. McLean. “Thomas Aquinas College has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the faithful in San Francisco, dating all the way back to its founding in San Rafael. So it was most fitting that their shepherd would be with us for this occasion.”

“The Northern California Board of Regents are delighted to have made new friends for the College through the Olympic Club event,” observed Chairman of the Northern California Board of Regents James Fahey (’94), who spoke of the shared commitment that united all those in attendance. “The College provides what the world needs most today: classical liberal education. The formation students receive at Thomas Aquinas College gives a reason for hope in troubling times.”

### Los Angeles: The Seventh Annual Golf Classic

Sherwood Country Club in Westlake Village, Calif., was the site of the seventh annual Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic, hosted by the Greater Los Angeles Board of Regents on June 3. The Classic benefits the more than 70 percent of Thomas Aquinas College students who rely on assistance from the school’s student scholarship fund.

Forty-one golfers participated in this year’s event, which was followed by a clubhouse awards ceremony and reception. President Michael F. McLean and some of the

College’s students were on hand at the reception to thank the attendees, and Greater Los Angeles Board of Regents Chairman Domiane Forte (’00) presented awards to the day’s winners.

“A beautiful day, a world-famous course, new and old friends — the same nagging slice,” joked Mr. Forte after playing 18 holes. “This year’s Classic was a great event, solidifying ties to the school — and ensuring lower back pain for all.”

### Answering Atheism in Sacramento

Following the success of its May event, the Northern California Board of Regents hosted a second gathering on June 21 at the Sacramento Catholic Forum. At a luncheon lecture, Thomas Aquinas College Vice President Paul O’Reilly spoke on the subject of “The New Evangelization in an Atheistic Age.” Rebutting the charges that outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins has leveled against the Faith, Dr. O’Reilly drew upon the works of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, particularly Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, to expose some of Dawkins’ fundamental misunderstandings about the relationship between science and faith.

“The Church Fathers anticipated today’s atheists’ arguments and provided a resounding rebuttal against them,” noted Chairman of the Northern California Board of Regents James Fahey (’94). “While largely unknown in the current debate, they provide powerful arguments against the new atheism. Dr. O’Reilly’s presentation was an invaluable tool to engage in the New Evangelization in this Year of Faith.” Audio from Dr. O’Reilly’s address can be found at [thomasaquinas.edu/sacramento-forum](http://thomasaquinas.edu/sacramento-forum).

### Looking Forward

“I could not be more pleased with the work of our Boards of Regents,” says Dr. O’Reilly, who is the College’s liaison to the boards. “In three months, they have put on four great events. That is a testament to the energy and effort their members have put into getting the boards operational and active. We are grateful for all they have done and all that they do.”

Not to be outdone, the New York Board of Regents is hard at work planning its next event, which it hopes to host in Manhattan this fall. Meanwhile, three additional Boards are currently in the formative stages in the Pacific Northwest, Orange County, and the Midwest. If you are interested in joining one of the Boards of Regents, please contact Dr. O’Reilly by e-mail at [poreilly@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:poreilly@thomasaquinas.edu) or by telephone at 805-525-4417.



1. Rolfe Kratz (’97), Chairman of the D.C. Board of Regents, welcomes attendees to Gadsby’s Tavern Museum in Alexandria, Va. 2. Thomas Aquinas College Vice President Paul J. O’Reilly speaks on atheism in Sacramento. 3-5. Scenes from the 2013 Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic at Sherwood Country Club. 6. Guests at the Northern California Board of Regents’ event at San Francisco’s Olympic Club at Lakeside 7. The Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone, Archbishop of San Francisco, addresses the group there. 8. Alumni vintner David O’Reilly (’87) presents a wine-tasting.



# Reflections of an Alumna, Parent, and Governor

## An Interview with Angela Connelly ('87)

**Q: Would you please describe your relationship to Thomas Aquinas College?**

**A:** My initial relationship began as a student. I attended from 1983 to 1987, and it was one of the greatest gifts of my life to be a student here. I have nine children now, and my oldest is a graduate of the College also; she is getting a master's degree in theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. Hopefully, there will be more coming in the next years.

For the past three years, I have also had the wonderful blessing of being part of the Board of Governors. I would say in general that it is one of my life goals to promote Thomas Aquinas College and introduce others to this amazing education.

**Q: How did you first hear about the College, and what attracted you to it?**

**A:** When I was in sixth grade in Anchorage, Alaska, I knew a family who was sending many of its children down to Thomas Aquinas College. I moved away, but when it came time to discern where I was going to go for college, a priest I met in Anchorage would continually say, "Just apply to Thomas Aquinas College." At the time, I had a real passion for journalism and had received scholarships. But on Fr. De Dominico's advice, I filled out the College's application.

I fell in love with the education just with that process, and everything else kind of faded away. There were not a lot of essay questions out there on most other college applications, yet Thomas Aquinas College wanted to know who I was, did I want to learn, and about the role my faith played in my life. It was substantially different from any other application process that I had been through.

**Q: What was your experience as a student?**

**A:** If I were to describe it in one word, it would be "feast." There was an "indulgence" on every level — grappling with the eternal questions feeds your mind and your soul, and the community was so amazingly faith-filled.

Growing up I always felt somewhat different from my peers. Whether at public school or Catholic school, they didn't really embrace their faith, or even really know it well. But when I came to the College, my peers were authentically loving their faith as we were learning it. And we were not limited by any artificial barriers. The tutors were our fellow sojourners. In their humility they walk with their students. There is such a lesson in that for the students; and we learned from their example, their humility, and their true passion to know.

Even though students at the College pursue truth for its own sake, I think the education has a tremendous practical effect. It is like the feast, to use my analogy again: First, you *consume* the feast, but then you *digest* the feast, and you *absorb* the feast, and that is a lifelong process. I realize it all the time.

In addition to the strong spiritual life of the College, there is an incredible sense of the natural, of the natural law, and of the relationship between grace and nature. Every single day I see a manifestation or a practical application of that relationship. I think so much un-peacefulness in the world is a forgetting of that connection and of the good of nature and the natural law that is imprinted in each one of us. If we listen to that natural law, with that comes joy and peace. If only all people could have the gift, as we do, of recognizing that beautiful connection between nature and grace.

**Q: Could you give an example?**

**A:** Yes. You hear so often that in order to be strongly pro-women you have to see abortion as a good thing. But this is an obvious case of dissonance between the good of nature and of the natural law. And the fruit of abortion is a lot of anger and pain and hurt, not only for the child but for the women. I wish women could fully realize the gift



**“Our graduates do not fit into one mold. They go into a wide variety of professions — and some into priesthood or religious life. Yet they all carry with them the same first principles. This love of the true, the beautiful, the good, and God — all our graduates take this with them from the College.”**

of life, that even in hard situations it is a gift, a beautiful gift of life. It is natural and it is good. Children tether us to nature. They remind us that it's getting down in the dirt, and there's a beautiful rawness. They tether us to what is real and what is natural.

**Q: What did you do after graduation?**

**A:** Well, I ended up marrying Jon Syren, from that family I had known in Alaska. We dated while here at the College and graduated together in 1987. We were blessed with two children while Jon was in medical school at the University of Washington.

During his third year at UW, Jon was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. For me this was an opportunity to apply my education from Thomas Aquinas College in one of the most tangible ways. When everything is taken from you, and when you are in crisis, you know what the priorities are. You have a heightened sense of what is truly real, and what is truly important. What we had studied at the College, what we had feasted on, were the eternal things. And the highest things do not pass away.

Even though it was a time of complete surrender, of giving up everything not only for Jon ultimately, but for myself and for my little children, there was a pervading sense of God, and the Communion of the Saints, and the realization that the veil is very, very thin.

When Jon died, it was one of the most beautiful experiences I have ever had. I saw the effect that our education at the College had had on him. It was absolutely beautiful. And there was a ripple effect on the entire medical community and all that knew him and watched him suffer — in a way so beautifully, not dismayed or broken by it. His suffering was so faith-filled that it was just triumphant.

After Jon's death, when I felt tiny and broken and knew that there was nothing I could do, I yet had an incredible sense of the presence of God, of being taken care of.

I had to go out on my own and develop a job. I had two little children. So using the College as a model, I developed a program in my parish for young adults between the ages of 18 and 38. We read encyclicals and had amazing discussions, and I had some speakers come in as well.

I found such a thirst for this among these young adults — to discuss, to wrestle with ideas, and to really own the Faith. One of my students (I like to call him my student) was Jack Connelly. He was such an interesting

young man, an attorney with a deep faith. Although he had not had the benefit of a Thomas Aquinas College education, he nonetheless had read many of the great books. This was a real sign to me, that on his own he had chosen to read these books. It immediately told me, here is a like soul. God is so good. When Jack and I married, he adopted Catherine and Joseph, and we have had seven more children since then.

**Q: As an alumna and a member of the Board of Governors, you are a real ambassador for the College. How do you go about sparking interest in the College?**

**A:** I bring it up a lot. Somehow, all roads lead back to Thomas Aquinas College. One thing that we have really enjoyed doing is occasionally hosting seminars led by Dr. McLean and Dr. O'Reilly. These have been just delightful. We had 70 people come one evening. There is such a thirst for what the College does. It is embedded in everyone to find joy in learning together in a Socratic way.

There are also opportunities to talk about the College. People are always very interested because it offers such a unique experience, one that resonates with them immediately. When you explain that you have classes of only 15 students, that you don't have textbooks, that you get to be in conversation with the original authors of mathematics, the sciences, and the greatest works ever written, that there are no lectures, that instead there is this participative, engaged experience of learning — everyone loves the idea.

I think the newly formed Boards of Regents are also very exciting. These are groups of alumni and non-alumni, putting on events together to promote the College in their various regions of the country. I would like to see 25 regional boards!

Our alumni, too, are making a tremendous impact, and I tell their story. Through them the College has developed a reputation that reverberates, even up in Washington State where I live now. Our alumni are known not only for the inspiring way they are raising their families, but even more, I think, for the way they are transforming the culture.

Our graduates do not fit into one mold. They go into a wide variety of professions — and some into the priesthood or religious life. Yet they all carry with them the same first principles. This love of the true, the beautiful, the good, and God — all our graduates take this with them from the College. And while they give this gift, of course, to their own families, they are also planting this good in all of their various professions and communities. I really think what they are doing can and will transform the world.

### The Hon. William P. Clark† 1931 – 2013

As this edition of the Thomas Aquinas College Newsletter was going to press, we received word that the Hon. William P. Clark passed away in the early hours of August 10, 2013. A longtime friend and benefactor of the College, Judge Clark served as Secretary of the Interior and National Security Adviser under President Reagan, and previously as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of California. In order to give proper attention to Judge Clark's life and his great work and philanthropy, we will postpone coverage until the next issue of the Newsletter in the fall. In the meantime, we ask that you pray for the repose of his soul and the consolation of his family.





## CAMPUS LIFE



Scenes from the 2013 Great Books Program for High School Students: 1. Students enjoy dinner during a trip to Santa Barbara. 2. A day at Rincon Beach 3. Volleyball on the campus athletic fields 4. Students take a dip after hiking to the “Punch Bowls” in the neighboring Los Padres National Forest 5. A trip to the Getty Museum in Los Angeles 6. Discussing the great books 7. Open-mic night in St. Joseph Commons

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

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

\* Schedules may vary; please call in advance to confirm.  
\*\* The First Mass of each day is offered in the extraordinary form.

### Calendar of Events

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

Opening Lecture: On Liberal Education John Baer, Thomas Aquinas College .....	August 30
Fall Concert: Symbiosis Ensemble.....	September 13
All-College Seminar.....	October 4
Alumni Day.....	October 12
Lecture: Rev. Robert Barron Word on Fire Catholic Ministries .....	October 18
Vice President Paul O'Reilly Lecture at UCLA: “Does Religious Faith Delude Reason?” .....	October 24
Vice President Paul O'Reilly Seminar at UCLA: Readings from the <i>Summa Theologiae</i> .....	October 28

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

