



# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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# 45 Years Later

## When Archbishop Sheen Helped Launch Thomas Aquinas College



On April 25, 1970, almost 18 months before Thomas Aquinas College opened for its first academic year, its founders staged a major promotional dinner at San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel. Some 450 guests attended the event, at which the Venerable Fulton J. Sheen served as the keynote speaker. Pictured to the right are Dr. John W. Neumayr, founding dean; Archbishop Sheen; Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, founding president; the Most Rev. Joseph McGucken, Archbishop of San Francisco; and L. Brent Bozell Jr., founding editor of *Triumph* magazine.

Below is an excerpt from Archbishop Sheen's address, the full text and audio of which are available at [thomasaquinas.edu/sheen](http://thomasaquinas.edu/sheen).



**"If we are going to have a new Catholic college, then we are going to have to rediscover Christ. To meet the crisis of our time ... we must very closely combine philosophy and theology and not keep them as separate, as we have kept them for centuries."**

### **"The Restoration of the Catholic College"** By Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

#### **"Come to Me"**

I would go anywhere in the United States to talk about the necessity of a new kind of Catholic college, to re-examine our whole mission. One of the reasons why I believe we have been failing lately is because, since the Vatican Council, we went into the world — and the world also came into the Church. This has created a tremendous problem as to how the Church is related to the world.

The answer is quite clear in the Gospels, but we have not altogether followed it. The first word of Our Lord's public life was "Come." "Come to me, learn, absorb." The last word of Our Lord's public life was, "Go." "Go into the world."

First, we become completely absorbed with Him. Then He may send us on a mission. But today, since the Vatican Council, we're a Church made up only of "go, goes" without any "come, comes." We're losing our faith and our fire and our zeal.

We have been following very much the world, and it is fitting, then, that we talk about the kind of education that we would have in the future. I am going to mention three basic ideas, derived in great part from the moods, the spirit, and the movements of our times.

#### **Training the Will**

The very first suggestion we have for the regeneration of the Catholic college is *the return to the will*. We have been concerned principally with education — the training of the mind — but we have neglected almost entirely the training of the will. Why has the will been abandoned, and why must we again take it up? Whenever we drop

anything in the Church, the world picks it up. When the nuns took off long habits, the girls put on maxi skirts. When we dropped our Rosaries, the hippies put them around their necks. And when we began to drop discipline — the training of the will — the world picked it up.

Why is our society violent today? Our Blessed Lord commanded violence. The kingdom of heaven is won by violence. "Only the violent will bear it away" (Mt. 11:12). ... "I've come not to bring peace but the sword" (Mt. 10:34). Just as soon as we dropped violence to self, the world began to pick it up. There was no longer discipline, no longer character training, no longer any kind of cutting away at the seven concupiscences inside of the soul. So the world picked it up and turned violence against neighbor, against institutions, against government, against all of our traditions. About the only place that discipline is left in our American life is at West Point, Annapolis, the American Air Force Academy, and the professional football field. This is the state of character.

But the will is *not* the intellect. You see it even in our CCD training; we call it, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. See how it emphasizes the doctrine? But is that what Our Lord said? "Doctrine?" Our Lord said, "If you do my will..." you will know my doctrines (cf. Jn. 14:23). He didn't say, "If you know my doctrine, you will do my will."

So I say that Christian education will have to begin to try to restore the training of the will and to reintroduce again into education some kind of discipline which is the foundation of Christian character.

Our blessed Lord did not bring a cheap peace. As a matter of fact, God hates peace in those who are destined for war. That is why He said, "I came to bring a sword," not the sword that swings outward, [but] the sword that is pierced inward, against ourselves. This was the sword He brought. This is the essence of Christianity. And we are leaving it out of our schools?

#### **Rediscovering Jesus**

The second idea has to do with the strange phenomenon that is our "God is Dead" theology. This is merely a repetition of what Nietzsche said years ago: "Why is God dead?" "Because we killed Him." In our present order, we have men like Paul Van Buren, who say that we must have Jesus, but that He is not God; He is only a "word symbol." There is a revival in the theater, in literature, even in pornographic literature, and a great interest in Jesus, the "word symbol," started in part by Paul Van Buren. You read it is all right for a boy and girl to sleep together any time they want because "this is Jesus's love." Your revolutionists here, in this state, and in our own back East, argue that all revolt, all revolution, all destruction of property is justified by Jesus, the revolutionist. There is no Jesus of history; there is only the word symbol.

Now this is what is going on in the world. If we are going to have a new Catholic college, then we are going to have to rediscover Christ. To meet the crisis of our time and enlighten those who believe only in word symbols, we must very closely combine philosophy and theology and not keep them as separate, as we have kept them for centuries.

How will Jesus be presented? I think that we will present Him in the light of the word "transference," taken out of psychiatry, that we will speak of Christ in terms of physical transference, moral transference, mental transference.

First, physical transference. He was one, to quote from Isaiah, who took upon Himself all sicknesses and illnesses (cf. Isiah 53:4). And we know that the Evangelist speaks of Him as sighing and groaning (cf. Jn. 11:38). *Groaning*. There is a Christ who is not just a revolutionist but is taking on all of the ills of the world. This is the pattern for Christian living.

*continued on page 8*



# From the Desk of the President

## Old Friends and New

This year the College celebrates the anniversary of an event at which its mission and character were first introduced to the public. That gala dinner at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco was the culmination of careful thought and planning by our founders and their publication of the College’s founding document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*.

The evening was a great success: Not only were there 450 guests in attendance at the event, but the College was singularly blessed to have as its Keynote Speaker Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, renowned for his preaching and his work in radio and television. The holiness of the archbishop’s interior life exceeded the acclaim of his public life, so much so that in 2002 the Church opened his cause for canonization, declaring Venerable Fulton Sheen to have possessed and practiced the virtues to a “heroic” degree.



In his keynote address (see page 1) Archbishop Sheen enumerated a number of activities in which Thomas Aquinas College would engage, all of which he considered essential to a genuine renaissance of Catholic higher education: 1) training the “whole man,” both his intellect and his will; 2) rediscovering Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and putting Him “at the center of our learning;” and 3) passing on to our students the rich intellectual heritage of our past.

In the 45 years since, Thomas Aquinas College has striven to be true to these goals and, through the grace of God, has in fact produced a steady stream of graduates who are well formed intellectually, spiritually, and morally — young men and women who think with the mind of Christ, and love with His heart.

The College will always be grateful for the endorsement and inspiration that Venerable Fulton Sheen gave to us as we launched this new institution, and we rely now on his intercession in heaven.

We are thankful, too, for the encouragement and support we receive today from numerous leaders in the

Church both in the United States and abroad. I had occasion this past spring to call on members of the Curia in Rome, many of whom have traveled to our campus to serve as commencement speakers. I was happy to give them news about the College and to discuss with them issues of great moment for us such as religious liberty, marriage and the family, Catholic identity, and the upcoming Year of Mercy. I am deeply grateful for their counsel, their encouragement, and their friendship. And I cannot help but wonder if 45 years ago our founders could have dreamt that Thomas Aquinas College — established and administered exclusively by laymen — would be so thoroughly embraced by the hierarchy of the Church.

The College’s union with Rome — signified by the dome of our chapel, modeled after that of St. Peter’s — was palpable during this visit. May it remain a source of strength for the College and all the members of our extended community who through their prayers and generosity make our work possible.

## “We are Standing on Sacred Ground”

### Cardinal Lajolo Offers Prayers for College, Dr. Dillon

*Note: While visiting with members of the Church hierarchy in Rome, President Michael F. McLean and Governor Lloyd Noble had the privilege of attending a Mass offered by His Eminence Giovanni Cardinal Lajolo, President Emeritus of the Vatican City State. A friend of the College, Cardinal Lajolo visited the campus and presented a lecture in 2008. His homily is published in its entirety below.*

Clementine Chapel, St. Peter’s Basilica  
April 14, 2015

Dear Dr. McLean, Mr. Lloyd Noble, dear brothers and sisters:

We are standing on sacred ground. It is sacred because it has been consecrated with the blood of the first Roman martyrs and of the Apostle Peter.

Of the first Roman martyrs we have a moving testimony handed down to us through the writings of Tacitus, the great Roman historian from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, who was personally hostile to Christians. In Book XV of his work, the *Annals*, he describes how the Emperor Nero, in his megalomania, secretly set fire to the city of Rome so he could build a new one which would be more worthy of his name. Yet the citizens of Rome perceive immediately that responsibility for the devastating fire was Nero’s. The Emperor had to deflect suspicion. Tacitus writes:

“Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibylline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. [Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the fane and image of the goddess.] And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women.

“But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again

broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who confessed; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

“Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man’s cruelty, that they were being destroyed” (XV, 44).

This display of such inhuman cruelty is horrifying to us. Nero’s gardens, mentioned by Tacitus as the location where these first martyrs of the Church of Rome were killed, is where we are standing today. Here beneath us, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the first basilica in honor of St. Peter was built by Emperor Constantine. And in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the magnificent building we are in today was built.

The basilica was erected in honor of St. Peter because he, too — the first of the Apostles — gave witness of his faith here, with his life. The first great Church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, writes that Peter came to Rome where he “was crucified with his head downward, having requested of himself to suffer in this way” (*Ecclesiastical History* 3:1,2). Peter did not deem himself worthy to be crucified in the same position as Our Lord.

On the location of his crucifixion, the faithful erected a small shrine, of which the remnants can be seen in the excavations under the basilica. On its wall, an inscription is visible which reads ENI PETROS: *Here is Peter*. Therefore, this was the great legacy left to us by Simon, son of John, who — during the Last Supper — had declared to the Lord that he would lay his life down for him. The Lord then predicts not only Simon Peter’s denial but his martyrdom as well (John 13:37; 21:18).

In today’s Gospel we hear Jesus giving Simon, son of John, the name Peter and place him as the foundation of His church (Matt. 16:18). These words in Greek, the lan-

guage of the gospels, and in Latin, the language of the Church of Rome, can be read on the frieze above the arches of the basilica. This was the promise. After His resurrection Jesus fulfilled the promise by solemnly charging Peter with tending his flock (John 21:15). Peter, who lives in his successors through the Petrine office, therefore was given the task of the Good Shepherd — which is Jesus Himself — with all the authority given him by the Lord to fulfill this service.

We wish to thank the Lord today, who in our times has given His church shepherds that well serve Peter’s Office. Pope Francis carries out his service with the merciful heart of a good shepherd, with great humanity and understanding for all people, especially for those most in need of mercy. Today, we wish to demonstrate our closeness by praying for him.

At the same time we want to pray for all those who are being distressed by so much hatred, by so much war, by so much spilling of blood, who need to be comforted, who need mercy, love, and peace.

Let us also pray for the governors, the faculty and staff, the students and families of Thomas Aquinas College, so they continue to grow in knowledge and grace. May the Lord guide their important mission, so that they always give witness to the light which Jesus Christ brought to humanity — with the humbleness and courage of the first Roman martyrs, of Peter and the Apostles, remembering the courageous witness they have left for us.

A special prayer for Mr. Scott Turrichi and his wife, Lannette, who is ill. He could not be in Rome with us today, so as to be with his wife. They are both present in our prayers.

In closing, tomorrow is the anniversary of the passing of Dr. Thomas Dillon. We pray for him and remember him with affection; he left an indelible mark in the College’s mission. May the Lord reward His faithful servant. Amen.



College Governor Lloyd Noble, Giovanni Cardinal Lajolo, and President Michael F. McLean in the Clementine Chapel, near the tomb of St. Peter



# College Update

## Recent Events and Happenings

### “Gathering of Theologians” with Archbishop Gomez

Four members of the Thomas Aquinas College teaching faculty — dean Dr. Brian T. Kelly and tutors Dr. Katherine M. Gardner, Dr. Jared P. Kuebler, and Dr. Paul K. Shields — participated in a gathering of theologians at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels Conference Center, hosted by the Most Rev. José H. Gomez, on March 20.

For this, the second such gathering in two years, Archbishop Gomez invited theologians from colleges and universities throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, including all four Catholic institutions — St. John’s Seminary, Loyola Marymount University, Mount St. Mary’s College, and Thomas Aquinas College.

“Archbishop Gomez is one of four American bishops who will participate in the Synod on the Family in Rome in October,” explains Dr. Kelly. “So he asked us to help advise him in order to prepare him for his participation.”

The gathering began with the Archbishop’s opening prayer and welcome, followed by small discussion groups of about six scholars each. “We considered five questions in all, with a focus on how to talk about issues relating to the family in a constructive way — how can we promote the treasure of knowledge that the Church has about these issues and still reach out to people who are in difficult situations,” says Dr. Kelly. The full group then discussed the smaller groups’ findings before reconvening for a reception and dinner at the Archbishop’s residence.

“It was a day to build bridges between the Archbishop and the theology teachers in the Archdiocese,” says Dr. Kelly. “It was a very good event in that way, and it will bear fruit over the years.”



### Students Lead the Way at Walk for Life 2015

More than 200 Thomas Aquinas College students helped lead the way through the streets of San Francisco on January 24, 2015 — in remembrance of the 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* — for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Walk for Life West Coast. Peacefully, and in stark contrast to the taunting and heckling of pro-abortion protesters who lined parts of the route, they walked, they sang hymns, and they prayed the Rosary for abortion’s many victims, both mothers and unborn children.

The group traveled by both chartered bus and private car for nearly seven hours to take part in what has become a College tradition. Joined by two of the College’s chaplains, several tutors and their families, and dozens of Bay Area friends and alumni, the students marched two miles from Justin Herman Plaza through Fisherman’s Wharf to Marina Green.

Roughly two-thirds of Thomas Aquinas College students have attended the Walk every year since its founding in 2005, and over that time they have increasingly taken on leadership roles within the event. At the request of the Walk’s organizers, the College’s students once again directed traffic and crowds as they navigated their way through the city’s streets. The organizers also asked a large group of the College’s women to lead the march, carrying a banner that proclaimed, “Abortion Hurts Women.”

That evening, a good friend of the College — Rev. Joseph Illo, a former chaplain who left at the end of last

year to form an oratory at San Francisco’s Star of the Sea Church — offered Mass for the students and then hosted them to a barbeque dinner. Then, the following morning, the students made the 375-mile trip back to campus, tired, but grateful for the opportunity to bear witness to the Culture of Life.

### Paschal Triduum

Over the course of the Easter Triduum, Thomas Aquinas College students spent their time in retreat, practicing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius under the guidance of a Jesuit retreat master, Rev. Raymond Gawronski, S.J.

“We begin with Creation, and then move through the Fall, the Incarnation, the life of Our Lord, His passion, death and resurrection,” says Fr. Gawronski, a visiting scholar at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, California, and a professor at St. Patrick’s Seminary in Menlo Park. “It’s always Christocentric, always centered on Christ and His life, and it’s always a working out of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, who is the patron of all retreats in the Church.”

The retreat consisted of five conferences that took place between the liturgies and rites of the Holy Triduum — the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, Tenebrae, the Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion, and Stations of the Cross — culminating with the Easter Vigil late on Holy Saturday night. Per College tradition, the students followed the vigil with a party in St. Joseph Commons and a sunrise hike in the hills surrounding the campus.

### St. Thomas Day

On January 28, members of the Thomas Aquinas College community celebrated the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas with a fitting combination of prayer, scholarship, and fun.

The day began with an early Mass in the Dominican rite, in honor of the College’s patron, with one of the school’s two Dominican chaplains, Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., serving as the celebrant. Later that morning, the College’s head chaplain, Rev. Hildebrand Garceau, O.Praem., offered Mass in the ordinary form, with the St. Thomas Day lecturer, Rev. Romanus Cessario, O.P., serving as the homilist. “Thomas Aquinas lives as the Common Doctor,” said Fr. Romanus, a professor of theology at St. John’s Seminary in Boston. “Catholics need a common doctor. The unity of Catholic faith requires that those that study sound philosophy and orthodox theology help others to see things correctly.”

That afternoon students and members of the faculty gathered in St. Joseph Commons for the St. Thomas Day Lecture. Fr. Romanus spoke for an hour on the subject, “Mediated Religion: Aquinas on the Sacraments,” and then spent another hour or so answering students’ questions. After dinner, the day culminated with a beloved campus tradition, Trivial and Quadrivial Pursuits, a campus-wide quiz show famous for its extravagant costumes and over-the-top displays of creative gamesmanship.

### Campus Blood Drive

On March 3, in between Don Rags sessions, Thomas Aquinas College students made their way over to St. Augustine Hall for a campus blood drive. United Blood Services set up a makeshift clinic in one of the classrooms, and students dropped by throughout the day to give blood.



### Othello



On the evening of March 21, the St. Genesius Players of Thomas Aquinas College presented William Shakespeare’s *Othello* in St. Joseph Commons. A brief video and slideshow from the performance are available at [thomasaquinas.edu/othello2015](http://thomasaquinas.edu/othello2015).

The medical technicians warmly thanked students for their donations, rewarding them with points that could be exchanged for t-shirts, movie tickets, or DVDs plus the customary juice boxes and cookies. The blood drive is a semi-annual event, held at the midpoint of each semester during Don Rags week.

### College Singers Help Launch Local Little League Season

On consecutive Saturday mornings in early March, a group of Thomas Aquinas College students and a recent graduate sang the National Anthem at the opening ceremonies for the Santa Paula youth baseball and softball leagues.

“The B-Shop Boys,” the College’s barbershop quartet, helped kick off the events by treating hundreds of children and their families to “The Star Spangled Banner” sung in four-part harmony. Beforehand, the singers — director Giorgio Navarini (’17), Joseph Montanaro (’14), Richard Varadan (’16), and John Parker Wilmeth (’15) — warmed up their vocal cords, and the crowds, with such songs as “The Lion Sleeps Tonight,” “For the Longest Time” and, of course, “Take Me Out to the Ballgame.” Introducing the group and serving as emcee for the Little League ceremony was College tutor Dr. Andrew Seeley.

“It was wonderful to see the College represented in these events, which mean so much to the families in our community,” says Director of Admissions Jon Daly — the father of three Santa Paula Little League players and secretary for the league’s Board of Directors. “Thomas Aquinas College has been sponsoring the league for years, and we’re honored to participate in any way we can.”

### Senior Theses

Each year, starting in the fall and continuing well into the spring, the Seniors of Thomas Aquinas College labor to create what will be the culmination of their four years of academic effort — the Senior Thesis. Based on a subject of each student’s own choosing, and drawing from the College’s classical curriculum, the thesis represents its author’s effort to apply his or her education to a matter of scholarly and personal importance.

After months of hard work, members of the Class of 2015 submitted the final versions of their theses on the evening of Saturday, March 16. Starting at 6:00 p.m., College Registrar Mark Kretschmer met students in the tutors’ lounge of St. Thomas Hall to collect the final drafts, which were due no later than 11 p.m. This strict deadline led to a high-energy evening — in unseasonably hot weather — with Seniors feeling the stress of final editing and proofreading before the deadline.

One by one, the Seniors arrived, flash drives in hand, to turn in their work. At 10 p.m. Dean Brian Kelly and Resident Assistant Sarah Dufresne met them on one of St. Thomas Hall’s balconies for hamburgers and refreshments. With a sense of relief and exhaustion, the Class of 2015 celebrated its members’ latest achievement, delighting in good food and conversation until a late hour.



# Leading by Example

## From Devotionals to Museum Tours, Governors Support College's Students in Myriad Ways

Although charged with fundamental responsibility for the College's operation, the members of Thomas Aquinas College's Board of Governors have never regarded their responsibilities as *limited* to governance. Ever since the College's founding, governors have supported the College in numerous other ways, beyond the many hours of *pro bono* service they donate each year.

"Our Board members are among our most loyal and generous benefactors," says President Michael F. McLean. "They are deeply committed to supporting our annual fund, and they are tireless in devising ideas for introducing the College to new friends, assisting our students, and beautifying our campus." Below is a list of various initiatives that members of the Board of Governors have recently undertaken to enhance the life of the College.

### Career Networking

At last year's Career Forum, Chairman Scott Turicchi, president of j2 Global, Inc., and his wife, Lannette, president of Falling Upwards Productions, spoke to students about how to conduct a job search and prepare for employment interviews. Joining the Turicchis on the dais were Governor Berni Neal, an entrepreneur and philanthropist, and her husband, Rob, president of Hager Pacific Properties. At *this* year's Career Forum, Governor Donald Swartz, president of Quest Property Corporation, and his wife, Rita, recently retired director of development for the Little Sisters of the Poor in San Pedro, likewise shared key lessons from their professional experience. And the Office of Career Advisement has already begun making plans for its *next* career event in the fall, which will feature yet another of the College's governors, Steven A. Walsh, retired chief investment officer of Western Asset Management Company.



### Cultural Education

Throughout the academic year, groups of 25 Thomas Aquinas College seniors and tutors enjoyed educational tours of three of Los Angeles's finest art museums, guided by an expert docent — Governor Maria O. Grant. In February Mrs. Grant took a group to Pasadena's Norton Simon Museum, where she is a Museum Educator. Earlier in the year, she also brought groups to the Getty Center and the Getty Villa in Los Angeles.

The tours, which focus on works of art that bear a connection to the books that students read in the College's classical curriculum, have become something of a College tradition. Mrs. Grant first began leading the trips in 2010. As she says, "We have access to some of the best museums in the world."

### Campus Upgrade

When the College began construction of its newest classroom building, St. Gladys Hall, in the summer of 2013, it also refurbished its original, 20-year-old classroom building, St. Augustine Hall. The renovations were made possible by a grant from the E. L. Wiegand Foundation of Reno, Nevada, and a gift from one of the College's governors, Vice Chairman Dieter Huckestein, and his wife, Cecilia.

Over the course of the summer, work crews outfitted St. Augustine Hall with fresh carpeting, a modernized heating and cooling system, elegant lighting fixtures, new ceilings, and a pedestal for the statue of the building's patron, St. Augustine. The renovations also included an arch and mahogany wainscoting for the central corridor, new windows and doors, five custom-made discussion tables, and sturdy bookcases to house collections of the great books. Thanks in no small part to the Huckesteins' generosity, the College's original classroom building is today as beautiful as the new one that sits across the quadrangle, contributing to the consistency and order of the campus.

### Spiritual Enrichment

On Friday evenings this past Lent, weather permitting, members of the Thomas Aquinas College community walked to the campus's lower drive to pray the Stations of the Cross at the College's recently completed *Via Dolorosa* — a gift of Governor Robert Barbera. Surrounded by oak trees and redwoods, the Stations' 14 scenes each contain a statuary tableau — e.g., Our Lord with Simon of Cyrene, Our Lord meeting His mother — housed in a shelter of Mediterranean columns supporting Spanish-tile roofs. Ever since their completion last spring, the Stations have become a popular place for prayer on campus, not only during Lent, but throughout the year. Motivated by his own longstanding devotion to the Stations of the Cross, Mr. Barbera proposed erecting the walkable *Via Crucis* on campus. In addition to providing the funding for the project, he also helped select the statues, design the shelters, and arrange for the Stations' installation.



### The Walk and the Web

Every year since the inaugural Walk for Life West Coast in 2005, the students of Thomas Aquinas College have made the 375-mile trip to San Francisco to bear witness to the Culture of Life. Aiding them in this annual pilgrimage has been Governor R. James Wensley and his wife, Germaine, who sponsor a large passenger bus to help students make the trek to the Bay Area. As a result, the Walk's organizers have been able to rely on the consistent presence of some 200 Thomas Aquinas College students each year, entrusting them with various leadership responsibilities, such as directing traffic and crowds through the city's streets.

The Wensleys have also played a key role in the College's communication efforts by funding the design of the current Thomas Aquinas College website, which formally launched on July 21, 2011. The website has proved invaluable for attracting applicants, generating online donations, and expanding the College's reach. Over these last four years, traffic to [thomasaquinas.edu](http://thomasaquinas.edu) has increased by more than 500 percent, and online giving has more than doubled. In December the site earned a prestigious Interactive Media Award for achieving "the highest standards of excellence in website design and development."

## Championing the College, Coast to Coast

### Boards of Regents Host Events in Washington, San Francisco, and Orange County

In metropolitan areas across the United States are groups of well-organized, faithful Catholics who have made it their mission to promote Thomas Aquinas College within their communities. These are the College's Boards of Regents, goodwill ambassadors who help to introduce the school to new friends and benefactors. The College established its first board, serving Ventura County, in 2004, and since then sister boards have formed in the San Francisco Bay Area, New York City, Orange County, Sacramento, and Washington, D.C. The Boards have been active this past year, hosting the following events:

### Wisdom in Washington

On April 19, some 18 members of the Washington, D.C., Board of Regents gathered at St. John the Beloved Church in McLean, Virginia, for a seminar about the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis. College President Michael F. McLean and Vice President Paul J. O'Reilly led the 90-minute discussion, which was followed by an hour-long reception. Among the attendees were the Board's chaplain, Rev. Paul Scalia, who is the Bishop's Del-

egate for Clergy for the Diocese of Alexandria, and Mary Ellen Bork, Catholic writer and wife of the late Supreme Court nominee Robert H. Bork. "It was a very successful seminar," recalls Dr. O'Reilly. "These sort of events are very powerful because attendees leave not only with a deeper understanding of the day's readings, but also of the work and mission of the College."

### A New York Priest in San Francisco

Residents of San Francisco had a chance to meet and listen to one of New York's most renowned priests, thanks to the San Francisco Board of Regents, which invited Rev. George W. Rutler, S.T.D., to speak at the Olympic Club at Lakeside on May 20. The pastor of the Church of St. Michael in Manhattan, Fr. Rutler hosts a weekly television program that is broadcast internationally via EWTN. A member of the College's Board of Visitors, he was the College's 2001 Baccalaureate Mass homilist.



"San Francisco is, in a sense, where the College got its start," says Dr. O'Reilly. "So we are always glad to return and revisit our roots, and we cannot imagine a better reason to do so than to benefit once more from Fr. Rutler's wit and wisdom."

### The Natural Law in Orange County

At the other end of California, the Orange County Board of Regents sponsored an event of its own — a May 30 seminar for some 50 participants about St. Thomas Aquinas's treatise on the Natural Law — on the campus of the Diocese of Orange's newly acquired and refurbished Christ Cathedral. Once again, Drs. McLean and O'Reilly led the discussion, which focused on connections between law, nature, reason, and the human good. The Orange County Board hosted a similar seminar last November. "We are grateful to Christ Cathedral for providing us with such a fine setting for our seminar, and we are grateful to the Orange County Board of Regents for hosting a truly fruitful and engaging event," says Director of Development Robert Bagdazian. "We hope to do this again soon!"



# Summer Learning & More

## Upcoming Seminars and Events

**Conference: “Virtue and Friendship”**  
[thomasaquinas.edu/SATS](http://thomasaquinas.edu/SATS)

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

This year’s conference, which will focus on the theme “Virtue and Friendship,” will feature lectures and question-and-answer periods with six scholars, including several alumni and tutors from the College. The talks will be given in the mornings and afternoons, and the conference will close with a Thursday dinner in honor of the speakers.

**Conference: “Happiness, the Common Good, and Political Society”**  
[thomasaquinas.edu/socialdoctrine](http://thomasaquinas.edu/socialdoctrine)

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

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

**JUNE**  
**18–19**

**JUNE**  
**19–21**

**The 2015 Summer Seminars**  
**“Choice and Moral Responsibility”**  
[thomasaquinas.edu/summerseminars](http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerseminars)

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

Under the guidance of the president, the dean, and senior faculty members, guests participate in a series of classroom discussions centered on timely and important themes. Between seminars they enjoy delicious meals served both indoors and outdoors. In addition, the College’s chaplains offer daily Mass and confession in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

This year’s theme is “Choice and Moral Responsibility.” After examining Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, participants will discuss passages from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and St. Thomas Aquinas’s writings on grace and human action. Cost is \$750 per person or \$1,200 per couple, including seminar tuition, meals, lodging, and readings. (Space is limited. Priority will be given to members of the President’s Council.)

**Seminars: Sacraments, Grace & Free Will**  
*Napa Institute Conference*  
[thomasaquinas.edu/napa](http://thomasaquinas.edu/napa)

Christ acts through the Sacraments, and so the Catholic Church is thoroughly *sacramental*. But if God’s grace is sufficient, and if Christ’s death on the Cross satisfied for man’s sins, why does man need the Sacraments at all? St. Thomas Aquinas considers these questions and others in the *Summa Theologiae*.

**JULY**  
**10–12**

**JULY**  
**17–19**



Scenes from past Summer Seminars — Participants work together to distill meaning and truth from the selected texts; student singers perform at an outdoor dinner party; chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., joins the group in making a toast.

In the first of two seminars, participants will look closely at St. Thomas’s analysis and, in so doing, come to the heart of the Church’s teaching about the role of the Sacraments in salvation. Then, in the second seminar, participants will consider the Church’s teaching about grace and free will by examining a brief set of excerpts from St. Thomas’s *Summa Contra Gentiles*. The goal will be to better understand and defend the reasonableness of the Church’s teaching about the mysterious cooperation between divine grace and human freedom.

President Michael F. McLean and Vice President Paul J. O’Reilly will host both seminars, as well as a complimentary breakfast, at the Napa Institute’s 2015 conference, Catholics in the Next America, in Napa, California. The seminar and breakfast are open only to registered attendees of the Napa Institute Conference.

## Liberal Education in the Workplace

### College Hosts Series of Career Talks & Workshops

“One of the many blessings of a liberal education is that it prepares our graduates to pursue any line of work or studies,” says Director of Student Services Mark Kretschmer. “The key is that they take time to discern what they are being called to do, and that includes networking with professionals, including our alumni, to research various fields and to explore their options.”

To that end Mr. Kretschmer arranged several events throughout the academic year with alumni and friends of the College from a wide range of professional fields. The events allowed students to explore some of the professional opportunities open to them, to ask questions, and make contacts that will serve them well as they make plans for life after graduation. Below is a summary of the various career-related events that the College hosted this past semester.

#### Business & Technology

“As you think about how to discuss your education with others in the marketplace, don’t be bashful,” attorney Justin Alvarez (’97) advised a group of Thomas Aquinas College students at a February 8 Career Panel. “I think we are rightfully trained to be humble people, and that makes it difficult for us to sell what God has given us as our gifts. But humility is acknowledging the reality of the gifts we have been given, then conveying that reality to others. And that creates opportunities for us to do great good in the world.”

Joining Mr. Alvarez on the dais were two other panelists with deep connections to the College: James Bemis, the father of Marisa (Bemis ’04) Lane and a principal at Montague DeRose and Associates, LLC., a California-based financial advisory firm; and Nathan Haggard (’99), a systems engineer at Apple, where he manages the



Catholic television host and producer Daniel Rabourdin talks with students who are considering careers in TV and film.

company’s technical relationship with some of its largest enterprise customers, such as Disney, Amgen, and Toyota.

#### Career Strategies Workshop

On February 21 Mr. Kretschmer presented a Career Strategies workshop about job discernment, networking, résumé and cover-letter writing, and interview preparation. Stressing the need for students to devise a plan of action for their job searches, Mr. Kretschmer urged those in attendance to make the most of the education they have received. “Much of the workshop was dedicated to helping our students demonstrate just how much they have to offer potential employers,” he said. “It is exciting for me to see how able and confident they are, and how eager they are to share the fruits of their education in the marketplace.”

#### TV & Film

Catholic television host and producer Daniel Rabourdin visited the campus on February 24 to offer practical

advice and encouragement to students who are considering careers in film and television. An independent producer with a master’s degree in Thomistic philosophy from La Sorbonne, Mr. Rabourdin has hosted and produced more than 25 reality TV shows and documentaries with EWTN Studios. His most recent production took him to his native France, where he shot *The Hidden Rebellion*, a docudrama about the persecution of Catholics in the Vendée during the French Revolution, which is now in its final stages of post-production.

#### Law

Five years after his graduation from Thomas Aquinas College, Tim Cantu (’10) returned to campus on March 1 to offer advice to students who hope to pursue careers in law. An attorney with Pepple Cantu Schmidt PLLC, Mr. Cantu works with the firm’s Clearwater, Florida, and Seattle, Washington, offices. After graduating from the College in 2010, he attended Notre Dame Law School, graduating in 2013. His presentation covered topics ranging from law-school admissions to the LSAT and the legal job market.

#### Psychiatry

Delivering the final career talk of the semester was Dr. Michael Ferri (’00), clinical director of adult services and admissions at Rolling Hills Hospital in Franklin, Tennessee, and an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. After graduating from the College in 2000, Dr. Ferri earned an M.D. at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. In addressing students, he focused on the various paths they can take to establish careers in psychology or psychiatry, and offered tips for applying to medical or graduate school.



# Who Designed the Designer?

Note: In May Ignatius Press published *Who Designed the Designer? A Rediscovered Path to God's Existence* by Dr. Michael A. Augros ('92), a graduate of Thomas Aquinas College and a member of its teaching faculty. *Who Designed the Designer* is a direct, concise antidote to the "New Atheist" arguments against the existence of God. The book draws upon universal principles to demonstrate the logical necessity for an intelligent, uncreated first cause of the universe. In so doing, it relies heavily on the works of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, placing a renewed emphasis on great minds that have thus far received little attention in the ongoing public debates about theism, intelligent design, and evolution. The result is a profound yet highly accessible investigation, beginning with the world as we encounter it and ending in the divine mind.

The passage below is adapted from Chapter 6 of *Who Designed the Designer*, "The Ear of Whittaker's Daughter."

## "The Harmony of the Beautiful and the Intelligible"

Here is an odd fact: The universe is beautiful. It is beautiful not only overall, as a grand entirety; it is beautiful in nearly all its parts. Not only a galaxy, but speckish earth, is beautiful. Not only the whole panorama of life, but the elegance of one lone eagle in its flight stirs the soul. Not only the outwardly sensible appearances, but the intelligible laws and relations inherent in the structure of the world — in a solar system, in an isolated star, in a snowflake — excite our fascination and wonder. The hardheaded physicists themselves, even the atheists among them, are frequently moved by nature's graces to abandon their accustomed *modus operandi* and to adopt instead the language of the poets, as if on fire to win for nature new admirers.

This is surely a very odd fact. It is as if the whole universe turns out to be just as one would have hoped, or rather much better. What were the odds?

Charles Darwin saw that he could not hope to explain the beauty of most animals by his principles. To insist on the sufficiency of his principles, then, he had to deny the reality of beauty, which is just what he did. If it seems an "odd fact" for the whole universe to be revolving around

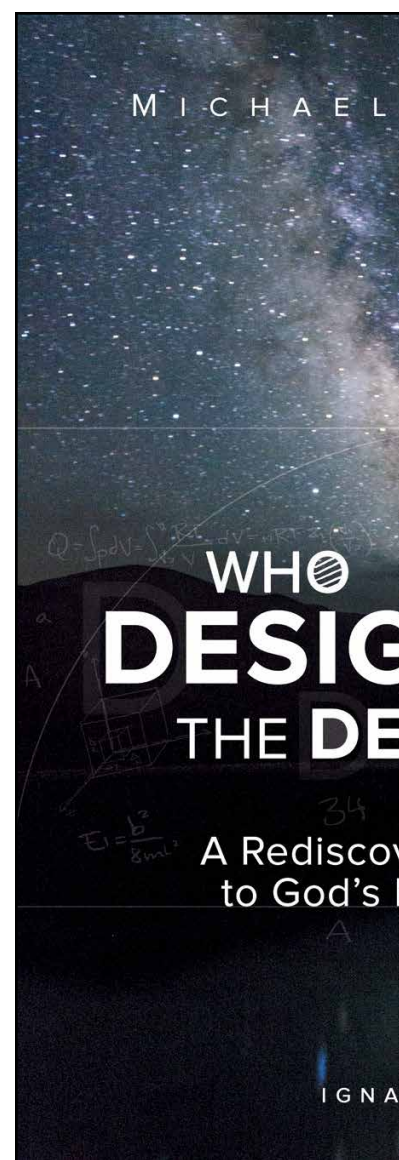
us at the center, perhaps one can explain this by denying it is a fact: the motion we so easily attribute to the heavens actually belongs to ourselves. Likewise, if it seems an "odd fact" for the whole universe to be so pleasing to us to behold, both with the eyes and ears and also with the mind, perhaps one can explain this by a similar Copernican revolution: Is the beauty we so easily attribute to the universe perhaps nothing else than our subjective reaction to it, some side-effect of our own evolution? Is beauty something unreal, merely a subjective human response to a world which is not really beautiful at all?

Not likely. For beauty to be something real, no more is required than for us to admit that certain realities are such as to please the human eye or the human mind in the mere beholding of them. It has long been popular to say that beauty exists only in the eye of the beholder, witness our disagreements about what is beautiful out there. But our disagreements are usually about subtleties and about human things like faces and fashion and art, where our other feelings tend to cloud our judgments. When it comes to the beauty of the world, however, we humans agree far, far more than we disagree.

"It is simply incredible that any tale of utility told in terms of natural selection could be an adequate explanation of the beautiful."

The human eye and human mind have pronounced preferences. They do not find all things equally beautiful, and universally find some just plain ugly. Few have praised the tapeworm for its aesthetic qualities, disgusting to contemplate both in appearance and in its manner of making a living. It is well adapted for its line of work, like other organisms, and there is a sort of elegance in the coordination of its parts for the benefit of the whole — a magnificent piece of engineering, one might say. But it is still a nasty sight. We are not, then, simply programmed to gape in awe at everything we see.

Nor are we usefully drawn to beautiful things, so that the attraction could be neatly explained by natural selection. Poison dart frogs are magnificent. They even look good to eat. In



## An Interview with Dr. Michael A. Augros ('92)

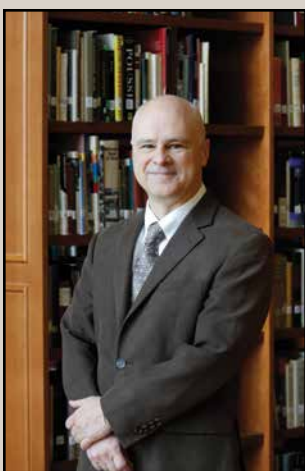
**There are already many "God exists" books out there. What made you decide to write one more?**

Most of the popular "There is a God" books right now are science-based, making "fine-tuning" arguments from astrophysics, or "irreducible complexity" arguments from biochemistry.

My book is different. It does not ignore science, but it does not *found* its argument on science. My book is an elaboration of Romans 1:20, in which St. Paul says that the wise among the gentiles are without excuse for denying certain attributes of God because the evidence for those things is all around them. That statement does not seem to be talking about, say, biochemical arguments for the existence of a Designer. It refers to evidence that is around us in a more tangible way, and that is the sort of evidence I wanted to consider in this book.

There are also some popular, philosophically reasoned "God books" out there, but mine differs from those as well. First, it is the development of a *single* argument. It is linear. Most of the other philosophical books will give you several different arguments for the existence of God — plus arguments about the immortality of the soul, or the nature of marriage, or euthanasia. They present a whole worldview, whereas my book is more tightly focused.

Those books also tend to be written as a response to the new atheism movement, spearheaded by Richard



Dawkins and his book *The God Delusion*, which came out in 2006. I completed the first draft of my book in 2003. So this is not a response book or an attack. Its prime motivation is that this sort of project is worthwhile in its own right. It is something beautiful.

**You have written the book in such a way that its premises are all drawn from observations that readers can verify for themselves. Why?**

Science-based arguments begin from painstaking observations and theories developed by great authorities who are world-renowned experts. There is an obvious advantage to that approach, and I do not disparage the science-based books — I regard ours as complementary projects. But the layperson, and even a scientific reader, is going to have to accept many of the premises in science-based arguments purely on the basis of authority. There are going to be premises in the argument that the reader simply has to trust, has to *believe* to be true.

The corresponding advantage to my book is that the arguments that it develops, which come from thinkers such as Aristotle and Aquinas, begin from statements that anyone can verify from ordinary experience — such as, "A cause can't give what it doesn't have," or "If something acts upon itself, it must be distinguishable into a part that's acting and a part that's being acted upon." So readers need not trust somebody else's assertions.

**Please explain the title, *Who Designed the Designer*.**

The question is not my own invention. It is a catchphrase. Christopher Hitchens asked that question, and it expresses a problem that Richard Dawkins has formu-

lated perhaps better than anybody else. In recent decades a lot of people have been arguing that there has to be a designer behind the world of nature, especially animate nature, living things, because they are so astonishingly complicated, and complexity of a certain kind requires a designer.

An opponent, like Richard Dawkins, objects something like this: "Your designer sounds like he has to be pretty smart if he can design the world of living things. He must have a brain, and it must be the most complex brain that there is. So, by your own principles, he needs a designer himself, and therefore you have explained nothing and you are stuck in an infinite regression."

That makes sense if you are thinking about a human mind. Our thoughts are so weak that each one enables us to understand only one thing distinctly, such as "eagle," or else many things without seeing the differences among them, such as "animal." To understand many things in their details we therefore have to change our minds and think about one thing, then another, and then something else. This requires a certain complexity of thought. But if we assume that the designer has a human mind or even a brain, we are anthropomorphizing. And we see even among ourselves that it is not the wiser mind that takes more words to explain something — the wiser and sharper mind can say more with fewer words. Our students here at the College learn that a demonstration, although it is a very short argument, causes greater understanding of things than an induction made from a great number of instances. The supreme mind should therefore be the simplest of all, understanding all things in all of their richness and diversity, without any complexity on the part of its own thought. Our students also learn from Boethius that the mode of knowledge does not have to agree with the mode of the thing known — it is possible to have a present understanding of past things, an unchanging understanding of changing things, and a simple understanding of complex things.



# A Rediscovered Path to God’s Existence

by Dr. Michael A. Augros (’92)



fact, many of the most beautiful animals and plants are also the most deadly. The humble potato, by contrast, is very useful indeed, but that lumpy tuber provides little inspiration to painters. Thundering cataracts, even were they not deadly, are not particularly useful for us to stare at. Rainbows even less. It is simply incredible that any tale of utility told in terms of natural selection could be an adequate explanation of the beautiful. It could only sweep beauty under the rug. Besides, all of that is fable-making. It is much more honest to take the beauty of the universe for a reality than to try to dismiss it as a subjective quirk of the human brain in order to safeguard the sufficiency of our preferred ideas. If someone is an ardent admirer of the form of the tapeworm, he might well be the subject of a quirk, if not mental illness. If someone shrugs off the

stars with indifference, we safely label him a trousered ape.

If we face the odd fact of beauty, it is only natural to wonder what is its cause. It is not just our good luck. It nearly permeates the world and its fabric. And the beauty of a single thing

consists in a million ingredients cooperating toward an overall pleasing effect. One tiny detail gone wrong can wreck the whole thing, like an otherwise beautiful face missing its nose. Why is beauty just about everywhere? Most things are beautiful, both in particular, and in their mid-scale and large-scale associations. But if all things were beautiful without exception, we might think it was a condition of existence — nothing can *be at all* without being beautiful. Instead, not all species of animals and plants are beautiful. It is almost as if most of them are, in order to make the world as a whole beautiful, but just enough of them are not, in order to make it clear that the beauty is an added grace, and not just *de rigueur*.

The intelligence of the first cause harmonizes very nicely with our oddly beautiful world. What other kind of cause, if not an intelligent one, could be intent on producing beauty as such, rather than as a side-effect or an accident? The beauty of the world is the signature of an intelligence — of someone’s taste and generosity, one might say. It is so much underscored by our experience that the word “cosmos” comes from the Greek for “adornment.” If its beauty were not produced by a mind that delights in things seen, then it would not truly be an adornment. And then it would not be what it seems. And that would make the beauty of the world an ugly thing after all — an illusion.

Richard Dawkins demonstrates much good taste in his admiration for the beauty of the universe. But he feels no need to explain it. In *The God Delusion*, when he takes “the argument from beauty” to bits, he considers only the beauty of certain manmade things, such as sonatas and paintings and sonnets. He is quite right to say that the musicians, the painters, and the poets are causes of these beauties. But he does not offer any reason to suppose they are the first and only causes of them — is the human

mind itself, for instance, due to any external cause? And not just a past-existing cause, like natural selection, but a presently existing and sustaining action? And why are natural things, not just paintings and poems, beautiful? Could paintings and poems be beautiful if the natural things from which they draw inspiration, and which they represent in myriad ways, were ho-hum? These questions did not occur to him, it seems. On one of the first pages of his book, he quoted his departed friend, Douglas Adams, asking:

Isn’t it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?

Presumably this is meant to resemble an argumentative question: “Isn’t it enough to see that the universe is beautiful without having to believe that there is some sort of unusual intelligence responsible for it?” Well, frankly, no.

Composite beauty, ephemeral beauty, surpassable beauty, beauty which did not need to be and yet came to be, which requires many things to go right and which disappears when any one thing goes wrong — all that sort of beauty is unintelligible and incapable of existing on its own. And that is the only sort of beauty we ever find in our universe. It bears every sign of being an effect, a work — one might even say, an *expression*.

On the other hand, perhaps Adams’ remark is not meant to be an argument, but just a bit of scolding along these lines: “What sort of spoiled children are we, not to be content with the beauty of this garden we call the universe, but who would rather look for something more beautiful and amazing still? Such ingratitude!” Hm. I don’t know. It seems to smack more of ingratitude not to bother wondering whether there is anyone to be grateful *to*.

**Primarily this book makes the case for the existence of God, but is it fair to say that, in a secondary way, it also makes the case for philosophy as a useful discipline?**

Absolutely. That was in part why it took so long to finish the book, because it was really doing two things. It was making a case for the existence of God, but because I was going to do that through philosophy, I had to rehabilitate philosophy for a general readership at the same time.

There are a lot of quack philosophers out there who play mind games and do not pretend to be doing more than that. Philosophy is also often regarded as merely linguistic analysis or analysis of science, as if other people do the work of trying to understand reality, and philosophers just sit around talking about what those people are doing. That is not the original understanding of philosophy, and it was important to demonstrate that this was not that kind of book. There are certain questions that philosophy can address that empirical science cannot, and I am trying to re-establish that in some way and show what that means.

**You state that, for the most part, you are re-presenting the arguments of Aristotle and St. Thomas. Why should readers not just go directly to those sources?**

Well, I’m hoping that some will eventually! But if you begin by picking up Aristotle and Aquinas, and you have no training in philosophy, good luck understanding them. They have a foreign vocabulary, a foreign worldview, and they are assuming many things on your part. The *Summa Theologiae* is ostensibly written for beginners, but St. Thomas’s understanding of a “beginner” is someone who has already gone through formal training in all of the liberal arts and philosophy, and who has carefully read all of Scripture, and possibly the Church Fathers. If you lack this

preparation, you are likely to misunderstand what St. Thomas has to say.

This book also makes use of personal anecdotes and the like, and that is something that you would never find in Aristotle or Thomas. A book written for a wide audience needs to be more engaging to the imagination and, to some extent, the emotions. I wanted to show that everyday goings-on in life can be illustrative of universal principles, or can prompt us to think and wonder philosophically.

Also, while the works of St. Thomas and Aristotle implicitly contain the answers to the difficulties with theism posed by modern philosophers, they do not respond to them directly. The same is true for questions that arise from modern science. In writing this book for modern audiences, I tried to address Aristotle and Aquinas’s arguments to these more recent concerns. So the book is not simply a summary or a rerun!

**The passage on beauty, excerpted above, stands apart from your book’s otherwise sequential narrative. What was your reason for including it?**

I set out to show that, from things readers can know or verify for themselves, we can determine that there must be an intelligence behind the natural world. Once we can see that, we can explain many other things about the natural world, such as beauty, without having to go through arguments from them separately to the existence of a first cause that is intelligent.

I wanted readers to see that there are many different philosophical paths to this first being, not just one. Many different trails converge on this first intelligence. The evi-

dence for God’s existence is, in some ways, all around us, and we see it all the time.

**You write often about your students. What role did they play in helping you create this book?**

One of the reasons I say that I don’t think I would ever quit teaching, even if I won the lottery, is because I continue to learn by teaching. My students help me to see where their minds are when they come to me, and how the books that are so familiar to me look to them, or how jargon can create false (even humorous) impressions among readers unfamiliar with the vocabulary of my discipline. Without my students I don’t see how I could know these things. You cannot just sit in a room and deduce what is going to be pedagogically effective and what is not. You need experience for that.

**Do you have any other projects in mind for the future?**

I am currently writing a book about the soul. In *Who Designed the Designer*, God figures prominently, and the soul is implicitly there, but in the background. The reader may start to wonder, “If God has an incorporeal mind, maybe our mind is incorporeal, too, and it can exist without the body,” but that is secondary. In the next book the order is reversed. The immortality of the human soul is what is prominent.

That’s the idea. I started on it when I submitted *Who Designed the Designer* to Ignatius Press in 2013, so I have been working on it for a few years now. As usual my students are helping me with it, and also my father and one of my brothers, who give me very helpful feedback without which I don’t think I could write a book.



# Lifelong Learning

## Book Review: Reflections on the Art of Living by Henry J. Zeiter, M.D.

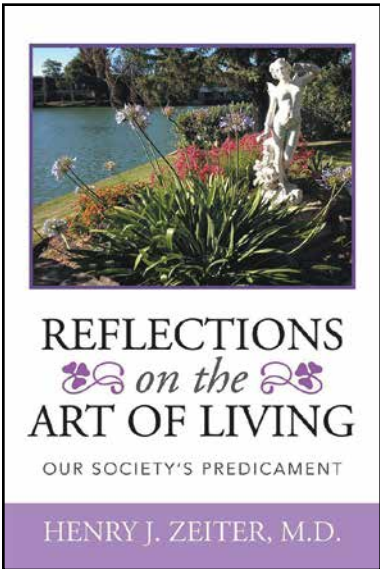
*Reflections on the Art of Living: Our Society's Predicament*  
by Henry J. Zeiter, M.D.  
Xlibris, 2015, 300 pp.

By Dean Brian T. Kelly

*Reflections on the Art of Living* is a remarkable collection of essays of various kinds and formats on a wide variety of topics. It is, as our author says, “a meal with many entrees.”

The book is written by noted ophthalmologist, Henry Zeiter, a member of Thomas Aquinas College's Board of Governors, and poses many of the perennial questions: What is happiness? How does beautiful music shape our sensibilities so powerfully? Why does God allow tragic suffering? Why is everyday life so challenging? It also gives us some less urgent but nonetheless interesting musings in answer to the question, “Why do sommeliers speak in such a snooty fashion?” In *Reflections on the Art of Living*, Dr. Zeiter opens up for his readers great vistas of literature, philosophy, history, mysticism, and even medicine and art. The last two he combines to fascinating effect in his essay, “A Study of Psychotic Art.”

There are numerous highlights in the central section of the book that focus on literature, history, philosophy, and politics. Among them is a penetrating and sympa-



out the past 2,000 years. Indeed, Henry Zeiter is a loyal son of the Church.

Also notable is his essay on the origins of philosophy, which is remarkably complete. So, too, is Dr. Zeiter's treatment of the teachings of Aristotle, one of the primary thinkers studied in the College's curriculum.

Born in Lebanon, Dr. Zeiter displays throughout the book his grasp of the issues endemic to a very troubled part of the world. The reader will enjoy his application of Swiftian satire to Middle East politics.

thetic analysis of highly strung novelist James Joyce. The author's treatment of the Golden Age of Spanish literature is also quite illuminating and puts in high relief one of the main themes of the book: the many ways that the Catholic Church has been a blessing to mankind through-

The last section of *Reflections on the Art of Living* reminds the reader that Henry Zeiter is a man of science, as he delves into the origins of modern medico-pharmaceutical chemistry as well as the importance of vision for driving.

But the most personal section of the book comes at the beginning. Here the author shares several reflections on moments of great loss. There are eulogies for his brother Edmond and his father, Youssef, whose poems and essays will delight the reader. There are also his thoughts on the death of Dr. Tom Dillon, the second president of Thomas Aquinas College and a dear friend of Henry and his wife, Carol.

As the reader makes his way through *Reflections on the Art of Living*, it will become apparent that the author has never seen his education as over-and-done-with. On the contrary: Henry Zeiter has continued throughout his life to read, to listen, to reflect ... and to write.

## Archbishop Sheen *continued from page 1*

There is also moral transference of guilt. Imagine a judge on a bench. He has his son before him who is guilty of murder. He sentences the son to death. That is justice. Then the judge steps down and says to his son, “I will take that punishment on myself.” That is the moral transference that Christ does for all of the guilt of mankind.

And then thirdly we will present Him against all who are using the “Jesus symbol” — we will present Him in mental transference. We have today a world of darkness.



Archbishop Sheen with the co-chairmen of the kickoff dinner: Alessandro Baccari and John E. Schaeffer

He took that darkness onto Himself. We had to have somebody who would understand Sartre, Camus, Nietzsche — all the agnostics, all the skeptics, and all the people who have lost their faith. He allowed all of these clouds to pass over Him and cried out, “My God, my God, why, why has

Thou abandoned me?” There was a moment when God was almost an atheist — when God asked “Why?” of God.

This is the Christ who has to be re-presented to the people today who have reduced Him to a symbol. This is the approach that the new school has to take — instead of the sociological approach, counting the number of people who ride through red traffic lights, and because 51 percent drive through we say, “Driving through red traffic lights is moral.”

## The Rich Heritage of the Past

There is one other idea. It is our relationship to the past. We are not to be adorers of the past, but it is a terrible thing for any man to suffer from amnesia. It is an awful thing for the human race to suffer amnesia. There is a heritage, and the new college pledges to develop that heritage.

Look at the rapidity of war, great wars, that have changed the world and our modern history: The interval between the Napoleonic and the Franco-Prussian War was 55 years. Between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I was 43. Between World War I and World War II was 21. Fifty-five, 43, 21 — and at a time when man had all the material conditions for happiness.

It costs so much more to kill a man than it used to. It took only a club when Cain killed Abel. Lamech, who was the first sword-maker and the first polygamist — it would have cost him a sword. It has been figured out that Julius Caesar spent 75 cents to kill a man on his campaigns; Napoleon, \$7,000; World War I, \$21,000; World War II, \$210,000; the Vietnam War, changing the unit, cost \$1 million an hour.

We just cannot be too concerned with the present without looking back into the past. Our world is simply in danger from man. And if we are just going to be concerned with sociological currents, we are going to miss the fact that we can be under the wrath of God. And it seems that that is part of the business of a Christian education.

## The Truth Will Win

My good people, I am very serious about the subject of education. I was a professor for 25 years. I know something about it. I believe if we are going to save ourselves, we must train the whole man — not only his intellect, but also his will.

Secondly, we must get back to the only subject that there is in all the world that can give us peace, and that is Christ, and to make Him the center of our training.

Thirdly, you will have an education that will bring to us the rich heritage of the past.

We do not know what the future holds — whether the battle will be bloody or un-bloody. We only know that the world is beginning to polarize, and the good are becoming better and the bad are becoming worse. Whether swords will be used, we do not know, and whether they will be sheathed or unsheathed, we do not know.

There is only one thing that we do know: That is, that if truth wins, we win! And if truth ... Ah, but truth can't lose!



Archbishop Sheen, President McArthur, and Archbishop McGucken

## St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

*Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels*

### Highlights from the Last Quarter

- On January 16, **Dr. David R. Arias**, a member of the College's teaching faculty, presented the semester's opening lecture, “St. Thomas on the Plurality of Forms.”
- To mark the celebration of its patron's feast day on January 28, the College invited **Rev. Romanus Cessario, O.P.**, a professor at St. John's Seminary in Boston, to deliver the lecture, “Mediated Religion: Aquinas on the Sacraments.”
- One Friday night each semester, the student body and teaching faculty gather for the **All-College Seminar** — simultaneous meetings of small groups (about 20 students, drawn from all classes, and two tutors) to discuss a pre-selected reading. The spring semester's seminar took place on February 6 and focused on the short story “Father Sergius” by Leo Tolstoy.
- In honor of President's Day, on February 20 **Dr. Daniel J. Mahoney**, a professor of political science at Assumption College, delivered a lecture entitled, “Lincoln and the Moral Foundations of Democracy.”
- Dr. Mark Blitz**, the Fletcher Jones Professor of Political Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College, spoke on March 27 on the subject, “The Relevance of Plato: *The Republic*.”
- The College gathered on April 26 for the Spring Concert, in which the **Thomas Aquinas College Choir** performed select arias, duets, and choruses from eight great operas.
- Periodically members of the faculty or chaplaincy present on-campus “tutor talks,” informal lectures followed by question-and-answer sessions. These late-afternoon gatherings afford an opportunity for the speakers to discuss some topic of interest to them and to share their thoughts with other members of the community. On January 21 **Dr. Phillip D. Wodzinski** gave one such talk, “Music, Culture, Politics: Aspects of the Hymnal.” On February 11 **Dr. Christopher Decaen** spoke on the subject, “Why the Burning Bush?” Finally, **Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.**, presented the final tutor talk of the semester, “Ignatius of Loyola: Don Quixote in the Flesh,” on March 11.

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



# A Mother & Scholar in California’s Gold Country

## Alumna Profile: Dr. Lane (Smith ’04) Scott

“I was in my dress and getting ready to leave,” recalls Lane (Smith ’04) Scott, describing that woeful day in 2011 when she *almost* got her Ph.D.

After spending three years completing her coursework and another four writing a dissertation, she had made the six-hour, 400-mile drive from her home in Angels Camp, California, to Los Angeles to defend her dissertation at Claremont Graduate University. Then the phone rang.

It was her adviser. “He said that the department chair had not actually bothered to read my dissertation until the night before, and then determined that I had an incomplete understanding of the subject,” she sighs. The defense was canceled. “Dissertation defenses *never* get canceled. Everyone knows that once the defense is scheduled, you’re golden. It was mortifying — unprecedented. I was in my dress and on my way to the campus, and instead of being done I had to write an entirely new dissertation.”

Over time she has come to regard that moment as a blessing. “The truth of it is, I had not done as good a job as I could have,” she admits. She had plenty of excuses. She had written her 300-page treatise on libertarianism and natural law in the dark, early hours of the morning, and late at night — whenever she was not tending to her babies (Marion, now 7, and Winslow, 5) or the family farm and its “rotating menagerie” of animals. “I didn’t do the best that I could have, and God dropkicks you when you do that.”

In 2013, after many more late nights and early mornings, plus the birth of her third child (Fulton, now 4), she completed a second dissertation. This one, about the political thought of Austrian economist/philosopher Friedrich Hayek, received great acclaim from the review board and earned her a doctorate in politics and policy. “I don’t know how I did it,” Dr. Scott reflects. “God saw me through with a lot of work and a lot of heartache.” The ordeal was good preparation for the life she leads today — as a scholar, a pundit, a rancher, a wife, and a Catholic homeschooling mother.

### Intellectual Journey

Growing up the second of four children in northeastern California gold country, Dr. Scott was, in her words, a “wishy-washy Union Congregationalist” who found her way to the College “by fluke.” A public-schooled teenager, she had set her heart on Stanford, but her father — an atheist with a strong sense of the natural law — spotted an ad for Thomas Aquinas College in *National Review*. At his suggestion, she agreed to attend the two-week high-school summer program. There she encountered the work of Jean Henri Fabre.

Dr. Scott recounts the scene: It was the first day of the program, and she was in Dr. Kaiser’s section, discussing Fabre’s detailed descriptions of the metamorphosis of a caterpillar. The subject, so small, had implications so vast, opening her eyes to “the miracle of the natural world,” and demonstrating “that things have a nature, and they consistently achieve the end of their nature.”

That day, she knew where she would go to college. “I had never had a chance to think about such things before,” she says. “I walked around thinking, ‘I am so happy here.’ I ended up applying to Thomas Aquinas College and nowhere else.”

At the Easter Vigil during her Sophomore Year, she entered the Catholic Church. “My conversion was actually a selfish inclination,” Dr. Scott observes. “I looked at how people at the College acted, the way they treated each other, and the strength of their families, and I wanted those things for myself. It wasn’t a difficult deci-



Dr. Lane (Smith ’04) Scott with her husband, Sage (’05), and their four children: Ambrose, Fulton, Marion, and Winslow

sion. I already believed in God, and after carefully going through the whole of the Bible in Freshman Theology, the truth of the Church’s claims became obvious.”

By Junior Year, “I felt, intellectually, like I was in a kind of paradise. I was so in love with the program,” she says. The only downside was that Senior Year would soon arrive, and she began to dread the prospect of graduation. “I wasn’t ready for it to all be over. It was like a party that I didn’t want to end.” In an attempt to keep the party going, she opted for graduate school, enrolling at Claremont’s School of Politics and Economics.

“I felt prepared for the graduate school program, but more than that, I had an advantage that my classmates did not: I still believed that one ought to study things without cynicism, to read authors as if they were telling the truth,” Dr. Scott says. “Among my very intelligent, very well-educated colleagues, there was a sense that there was not really a truth to find, or that to get to the heart of the matter you had to find the hypocrisy of the authors’ character and their lives. And when you’re constantly doing that, as a learner, you don’t allow yourself to discern the truth because you have preemptively disqualified anyone who may have something to teach you.”

By contrast, studying the great books at the College had prepared her to consider texts critically, but at face value. “That ability to go through life without ingrained cynicism enables you to spring toward the truth and toward knowledge without any of the obstacles we can put in our own way,” she notes. In 2006 she earned her master’s degree and began coursework for her doctorate.

### The Country Scholar

That summer she married a fellow Thomas Aquinas College graduate, Sage Scott (’05). Sage had taken an entry-level sales job at a national furniture company, and the couple “worked like crazy people and lived like paupers in East L.A., scrimping and saving so we could eventually get out of there and buy land.” A series of promotions eventually gave Sage, now the company’s vice president and general manager of hospitality, the flexibility to live anywhere on the West Coast. In 2009 the Scotts returned to Lane’s native Angels Camp, where they purchased a nine-acre farm.

“I don’t know how to raise good sons in the city,” she explains. “I’m not saying it can’t be done, but I don’t know how to do it, because I’m from the country and I only know how men are raised here.” Two friends from her graduating class, Aleyna (Farrell) and Brendan Wicke (both ’04), have since bought a five-acre farm two miles up the road, “and we do the country life together.” The two mothers also collaborate to homeschool their combined 9 children.

When she is not teaching subtraction or literally going after lost sheep, Dr. Scott continues her work as a scholar and writer. She is a visiting fellow at the Independent Women’s Forum, where she writes about food policy, wage laws, and the status of women in the world. She also has done some development work for the Pacific Research Institute and copyediting for the *Claremont*

*Review of Books*. Meanwhile, the Scotts and fellow alumnus Matthew J. Peterson (’01), are developing a media and public-policy center to house a blog and a series of podcasts exploring literature, history, and authentic Catholic community and culture.

As for how she manages the competing demands of farm, family, homeschooling, and professional work, Dr. Scott looks back to those long nights and early mornings when she twice wrote her doctoral dissertation. “To help us achieve excellence in any vocation — religious life, marriage, whatever — God will slowly strip away the things that are not necessary,” she says. “In grad school, I went through much of that weaning when I still had only one child. So, by the time I had two or three, and my motherly vocation really got challenging, I had already given up time-wasting habits like watching TV; and I had become accustomed to getting the laundry and housework done as fast as possible. All moms have to do that eventually, but I was forced to do it early. That was a blessing.”

“What do I have that Thomas Aquinas College hasn’t given me, in some way, other than my life itself?”

### Pioneer Spirit

Another blessing, she has discovered, is getting to practice the Faith in a remote area, even though there is little in the way of a supportive Catholic culture. “In some sense, living in rural California is like living in a spiritual wilderness,” she notes. “Sage and I are really grateful that, over these last 10 years, we have been able to go out and make a life here. We feel like pioneers.”

For encouragement, the Scotts look to the early days of Thomas Aquinas College. “We are constantly inspired by the thought of what the College’s founders did,” says Dr. Scott. “They were *real* pioneers. They left their respectable jobs and cocoons that the world looked on favorably. They chose to risk becoming laughing-stocks because they knew that they had more to give. They knew that they needed to go out into the proverbial wilderness and make something new with the knowledge that they had and, miraculously, they succeeded. Whenever we start to wonder, ‘Wow, what are we doing here in the middle of nowhere?’ we try to think of them.”

Her “hero,” she says, is the College’s founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur who, as a member of her Senior Thesis panel, advised her to pursue graduate studies at Claremont. “I was pregnant when he died in the fall of 2013,” Dr. Scott remembers. A few months later, the family welcomed their fourth child: Ambrose McArthur Scott.

Naming their son for the late president was just a small gesture of gratitude, Dr. Scott says, for all that Dr. McArthur — and the college he founded — have done for her. “What do I have that Thomas Aquinas College hasn’t given me, in some way, other than my life itself?” she asks.

“It was because of my experience at the College that I became Catholic, and then so did my mom and my sister, Colleen (’11). It was my time at the College that led me to pursue the intellectual life in graduate school. Contacts from the College have helped Sage and me find every job we have ever had. The College gave me my closest friends, my husband and, by extension, my children. I don’t have anything good to which Thomas Aquinas College is not, in some way, instrumental. It has made all the difference for me.”

As Dr. Scott sees it, the many gifts of her education carry with them a mandate. “We alumni have the example of the founders to go out and try something radical, to go and do something that hasn’t already been done,” she says. “It is up to us to go out and bring Catholicism to a new group of people, to rope them in and let them flourish in the fullness of the Faith.”



Dr. Scott with her sister, Colleen Smith (’11), upon earning her doctorate at Claremont Graduate University



# In Memoriam

## Jane D. Schaeffer, 1922–2015

After a long illness, Jane Dempsey Schaeffer died peacefully in her sleep at her home in Santa Paula, California, on Sunday, January 25. She and her husband, John, were among the College's earliest benefactors, and their five daughters are all graduates of the College: Martha Long ('76), Anne Forsyth ('81), Mary Richard ('82), Joan Waxtein ('85), and Laura Langley ('89). In addition, seven of their grandchildren are either alumni or current students: Jane ('11) and Michael ('14) Forsyth; John ('13), Carmel ('15), and Jeannette ('17) Richard; and David ('15) and Aaron ('16) Langley.



Born to Martha McAuliffe and Denis J. Dempsey on June 9, 1922, Mrs. Schaeffer grew up as a fourth-generation San Franciscan. After completing eighth grade at Star of the Sea parish school, she went on to graduate from St. Rose Academy. She received her B.A. from Dominican College of San Rafael in 1943. She then taught English at the Katherine Delmar Burke School (Miss Burke's) in San Francisco and later worked for *Time* magazine in the city.

On December 27, 1952, she married John Edward Schaeffer, and the couple moved to Westlake and began raising their family of five daughters. Mr. and Mrs. Schaeffer were among the founding members of Our Lady of Mercy Parish. After returning to the city, they were daily communicants and active members of St. Cecilia Parish for over 40 years. Mrs. Schaeffer worked for many years

with various charitable groups in San Francisco — the Little Children's Aid Society, St. Elizabeth's Home, and the Little Sisters of the Poor. She was also an active member of the Women's Auxiliary for the Society of California Pioneers.

The Schaeffers were instrumental in the beginnings of Thomas Aquinas College, where Mr. Schaeffer was a founding member of the Board of Governors. They wholeheartedly supported the College and were proud that all five of their daughters and five of their grandchildren have graduated from the school. "John and Jane Schaeffer were among those very few who first helped us," Founding President Ronald P. McArthur once remarked. "They were, for months, the main financial support of our earliest efforts: were it not for them, the College would never have come to be. And it was all done with lively affection and touching charity."

Adds Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca, "The Schaeffers' home and John's office became a kind of base for the College in Northern California after we had opened our doors in the southern part of the state. Jane and John welcomed us when we were weary travelers, they hosted events on behalf of the College, and they gave us encouragement in our efforts. They believed strongly in the mission of the College and supported it vigorously."

In 2004 the Schaeffers left their beloved San Francisco and relocated to Ojai, where Mr. Schaeffer died in 2005. Jane then moved to Santa Paula. She is survived by her devoted daughters and sons-in-law and 22 loving grandchildren.

"I have fond memories of time spent with Dr. McArthur at John and Jane's lovely home in San Francisco," says President Michael F. McLean. "We were honored to have the Rosary and Funeral Mass for Jane on campus, and we will continue to keep her eternal rest and the consolation of her family in our prayers."

# A Legacy of Generosity

## In Memoriam: Virginia Thorpe, 1922–2015

One day in March, Director of Gift Planning Tom Susanka received some extraordinary news: Virginia Thorpe, a longtime benefactor who had recently passed away, had left nearly the entirety of her irrevocable trust, some \$1.5 million, to Thomas Aquinas College.

"The gift came as a great surprise," says Mr. Susanka. Miss Thorpe had made periodic, modest gifts since 1994, but as far as anyone knew, she had no direct connection to the College. Neither she nor any members of her family was a graduate. She had never visited campus or met with College officials.

"When we called to thank her for her gifts, we would usually get an answering machine," says Mr. Susanka. On a few occasions, though, the calls went through. "She was a chemist, and she expressed great interest in our natural science program. Once a student called to thank her, and she encouraged him to study hard."

In 2011, when College Counsel Quincy Masteller tried to arrange a visit with her in her home city of East Lansing, Michigan, he learned that she had entered into the late stages of Alzheimer's disease and was no longer accepting visitors. Around the same time, her annual gifts to the College ceased.

According to her published obituary, Miss Thorpe was born in 1922 in Traverse City, Michigan, and earned a bachelor of science degree in chemistry from Michigan State University. She joined the Michigan Department of Agriculture and worked as a chemist in the Feeds and Fertilizers Laboratory, eventually assuming the supervision and training of many chemists and technicians while aiming for excellence in the analytical process. In 1978 she was named a Fellow of the Association of Official

Analytical Chemists in recognition of her many contributions to the profession. She retired in 1988.

Miss Thorpe devoted the remainder of her life to her many hobbies and activities, including duplicate bridge and photography. Her love of taking pictures led her to visit more than 35 countries throughout the world. She was also a longtime member of her local parish, which is named, providentially, St. Thomas Aquinas.

A former neighbor, Barbara Brochu, brought her the Holy Eucharist every Sunday. When she learned that Miss Thorpe was ill and had no one to oversee her care, Ms. Brochu also agreed to serve as her legal guardian. "She was a very bright woman," Ms. Brochu recalls. "She was a lady that really got on in the world of men, earning degrees and prestigious positions in the field of chemistry in a day when women didn't do those things." Yet Ms. Brochu did not know Miss Thorpe well and sadly, it seems, there are few surviving who do. Miss Thorpe was predeceased by her parents and never married or had children.

She will, however, not be forgotten. "Although we cannot thank Miss Thorpe personally for her great generosity to Thomas Aquinas College, we will pray for her eternal rest every day at Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, as we do for all members of our Legacy Society," says Mr. Susanka. "May her soul, and those of all the faithful departed, rest in peace."



## IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

**Rose L. Perkins** — June 16, 2014  
*Legacy Society member*

**Rev. Msgr. John Hughes** — January 8, 2015  
*Benefactor*

**Mary Therese Barr** — January 24, 2015  
*Mother of Noreen McCann ('79);  
grandmother of Jack ('09), Molly ('11),  
Maggie ('13), Martin ('16), and  
Patrick ('17) McCann*

**Jane D. Schaeffer** — January 25, 2015  
*Wife of late Governor John E. Schaeffer;  
mother of Martha Long ('76), Anne Forsyth ('81),  
Mary Richard ('82), Joan Waxtein ('85), and  
Laura Langley ('89); grandmother of Jane ('11) and  
Michael ('14) Forsyth; John ('13), Carmel ('15), and  
Jeannette ('17) Richard; and David ('15)  
and Aaron ('16) Langley*

**Ronald G. Connolly, M.D.** — January 26, 2015  
*President's Council member*

**Katherine Griffin** — January 29, 2015  
*Legacy Society member*

**Philomene Augustine Ragni**  
February 18, 2015  
*Son of Jorge Ragni ('91)*

**William Quinn** — February 12, 2015  
*Legacy Society member*

**Charles E. Rice** — February 25, 2015  
*Benefactor*

**Dr. John J. McAndrews** — March 2, 2015  
*President's Council member*

**M. Stanton Evans** — March 3, 2015  
*Member of the Board of Visitors*

**Rev. Gerard George Steckler, S.J.**  
March 5, 2015  
*Chaplain, 1982–1993*

**Richard T. Walsh** — March 5, 2015  
*Father of Cathy Walsh ('80), benefactor*

**David Halpin ('79)** — March 6, 2015  
*Husband of Natalie (St. Arnault '80); father of  
Rose ('06) and Margaret Tannoury ('08)*

**Virginia Thorpe** — March 6, 2015  
*Legacy Society member*

**Louise A. Schmitt** — March 22, 2015  
*Wife of former tutor John Schmitt;  
mother of Julia Six ('81), Nicholas ('82),  
Sr. Mary Juliana, O.Cist. ('86), Stephanie Langley ('89),  
Carl ('90), Samuel ('92), and Clare Metilly ('94);  
grandmother of Peter ('09), David ('15), and  
Rebecca ('15) Six; Rose ('13), Sarah (Wood '14),  
Margaret ('16), and Anna ('17) Langley; Madeline ('15)  
and Benedict ('17) Schmitt; and Grace Metilly ('17)*

**Frederick Olson** — April 1, 2015  
*Legacy Society member*

**Ellen Littlejohn** — April 11, 2015  
*Benefactor*

**Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.**  
April 17, 2015  
*2001 Commencement Speaker,  
Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion Recipient*



# Under Fire: Preaching the Gospel in San Francisco

## An Interview with Former Chaplain Rev. Joseph Illo

*Note: After serving for two years as a chaplain at Thomas Aquinas College, Rev. Joseph Illo departed last summer for San Francisco, where, at the invitation of Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, he is now the pastor of Star of the Sea Church and a co-founder of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Fr. Illo graciously accepted the College's invitation to return to campus for this year's Commencement ceremonies, where he served as the principal celebrant and homilist at the Baccalaureate Mass.*



**When you left here a year ago, it was to create the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, a community for secular priests in San Francisco. How is the Oratory coming along?**

The oratory is progressing nicely. We started with two men, myself and Fr. Patrick Driscoll, and we are now up to four, having accepted two candidates; and we have several other inquiries as well. We are still in the aspirancy phase, and we are hopeful that we will soon be entering a three-year canonical probation, after which we would be erected as a clerical association of pontifical right.

**What has the experience been like at your new parish, Star of the Sea?**

It has been quite different from pastoring a parish in the suburbs, as I did in Stockton, or a smaller venue. San Francisco is a big city, with a defined culture that is not always in sync with the Church. So it is a challenge, first to understand that culture, and then to be accepted in it. This is one of the wealthiest cities in the country, and it arguably has the highest base of education. Software giants are moving here, and there is a lot of money to be made. In this kind of climate, there is a temptation to think that we can determine our own lives in every aspect because we have the education, the money, and the power to do so. People can come to believe that they have not much use for religion, which makes it challenging to evangelize. Any effort to bring about a more traditional approach to religion in San Francisco is going to meet with a certain opposition. We have made some tactical mistakes — not getting to know the lay of the land as well as we should have before making certain changes.

**Are you referring to the controversy that erupted over Star of the Sea's altar-server program?**

That is part of it. We are the only parish in San Francisco that offers the Latin Mass every day, and there is a kind of split in the community between those who go to the Latin Mass and those who go to the English Mass. We wanted to bring the two groups together, to unify the parish, and we thought that having a single altar-server program would help. Well, there are no altar girls in the extraordinary form. Also, if you look at the program from the Congregation for Divine Worship, the 1994 document *permits* altar girls, but says that altar-boy programs should always be promoted as a source of vocations to the priesthood. So, three months after our arrival at Star of the Sea, we



Fr. Illo offers Mass at Star of the Sea Church.

decided to train only boys going forward, which in retrospect was too much, too fast. We did not imagine that this shift would be met with so much controversy. At the time, there was no roster or schedule for children serving at the altar; Masses were mostly being served by elderly men and women. Nobody complained about the change until two months later — the night before the Walk for Life West Coast, when CBS arrived with their cameras and made it the first item for the evening news. Looking back, we should have thought this through better and more strategically. That was our mistake, but on the other hand, I think that no matter how or when we did this, we would have gotten some explosive reactions.

**Has the controversy finally subsided?**

Yes and no. Archbishop Cordileone has said that how we administer our altar-server program is our call, and he permits all-male altar-server programs in his archdiocese. Ours is the only parish out of 90 in San Francisco that has an all-boys program, and the Archbishop assures us that there is room for that in this archdiocese. Yet the altar-server question is only part of a larger controversy. Some rather vocal people (not from the parish) have read my blogs, where I have articulated traditional positions on the nature of marriage, the life issues, and the liturgy, and they are calling for my removal. As I said, we have made our own errors, too. We inadvertently gave a class of children who were preparing for their first confession an examination of conscience that was made for adults, and one of the items had specific language pertaining to the Sixth Commandment. Obviously we should never have done that, and we removed the pamphlets as soon as it came to our attention.

**“Any effort to bring about a more traditional approach to religion in San Francisco is going to meet with a lot of opposition.”**

**Archbishop Cordileone is under fire for his efforts to require teachers at Catholic high schools to uphold Catholic teaching. Has that controversy affected your parish?**

Ours is an elementary school, so we do not have the same issue of contracts. What is an issue for us, though, is parishes' authority to direct the curriculum and the Catholic dimension of the schools. Because parish schools have tended to operate somewhat independently of their parishes for some time now, it can be an unwelcome surprise when a pastor wants to be more hands-on, even in terms of curriculum development or spiritual practices. At our school, only 40 percent of the students are Catholic, and very few go to the parish. My wish is to bring the school and the parish closer together.

**Did you ever imagine that you would encounter so much opposition?**

I did not expect this level of aggressive pushback from those outside the parish, but the parish herself is flourishing. I am told that we had a greater attendance at the Triduum Masses this year than we have seen in 10 years. We exceeded our Bishop's annual appeal goal in a single weekend. Our weekly holy hours and men's fellowship are well-attended. So there is definitely growth here, but you would not know that from reading the newspaper. With the country's culture seemingly following in the direction of San Francisco's, what lessons have you learned that the rest of us should know in the years ahead?

One can get the feeling that the culture is turning upside down in terms of gender questions, sexuality



Fr. Illo visits with students at the 2014 Walk for Life West Coast in San Francisco.

questions, and the identity of the human person. It may seem like that in San Francisco, but I think that most of the people of this good city are reasonable and even God-fearing. Those who control the media, the academy, and the government — the ones calling the shots — seem to be postmodern, and they are portraying this image to the rest of the country. It does seem like America is following this line of thought, and that can be most discouraging. I fight real discouragement on a daily basis and spend more time in prayer than I ever have. One of our more involved parishioners told me that her personal and family prayer life is deeper now than it has ever been. Against what seems like a tidal wave of postmodernism, we must turn to God in prayer even as we fight these cultural battles. We are working to develop perpetual adoration in the parish, and we offer confessions at every Mass. We have also begun to keep the church open all day, and we installed more light and heating units to make it a brighter and more welcoming place to pray. The only recourse we really have is prayer and the Sacraments.

**Has working in this climate heightened your appreciation for the sort of priestly community that the oratory seeks to create?**

That is a good point. I did not really understand the oratory until I came here. I think most diocesan priests want some form of community, but on our own terms, more as a comfort. Yet now I can see that if we do not band together as priests, if we do not have common prayer, we may not even exist in the future. I don't think I could go on without this common prayer life. The community here has provided a lot of support as we go through these terrible struggles. I now see the necessity, especially if you are facing these sorts of culture wars, to have the support of common prayer, the support of the community. We are discovering what it is to be an oratory.

**What insights has your experience — first at the College and now at the oratory — given you about fostering vocations to the priesthood and the religious life?**

Thomas Aquinas College tends to attract serious, educated Catholics, so it is going to generate a good number of vocations just by virtue of its constituency. The College reinforces and deepens students' faith through beauty, truth, and goodness, giving young men and women something to aspire to, even on a supernatural and otherworldly plane, which is what the consecrated vocation is. We are attempting to do the same thing here. We have to be unequivocally clear about fidelity to Church doctrine, morality, and liturgical observance. That is what attracts people to pursue the priesthood and religious life, but it also has to be based in prayer. We have been praying as a community twice a day together, morning and evening, before the Blessed Sacrament, saying our Rosaries together, and making retreats. If we do not develop ourselves as a community of prayer, first and foremost, then nothing else will work.





## CAMPUS LIFE

1. Chrysostomos, a student choir directed by John Parker Wilmeth ('15), offers "Lent and Easter Meditations" at its Palm Sunday concert in St. Gladys Hall. 2. The women of Thomas Aquinas College meet on the campus fields for the annual "Powder Puff Bowl" — a friendly game of flag football. 3. Student musicians perform in the Dumb Ox Café at "Open Mic Night." 4. Seniors present Great Books: The Musical, at Chez Martin, the end-of-the-year dance they host for underclassmen. 5. Students celebrate Mardi Gras with a Venice-themed dance in St. Joseph Commons. 6. Campers pose during a women's campout in March. 7. Head Chaplain Rev. Hildebrand Garceau, O.Praem, prepares to lead the procession to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel on Palm Sunday.

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

Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays
7:15 a.m.**	7:15 a.m.**	7:15 a.m.**
5:20 p.m.		9:00 a.m.

\* Schedules may vary; please call in advance to confirm Mass times.

\*\* 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)

West Coast Meeting of the Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies <a href="http://thomasaquinas.edu/SATS">thomasaquinas.edu/SATS</a> .....	June 18–19
Seventh Annual Conference on the Social Doctrine of the Church <a href="http://thomasaquinas.edu/socialdoctrine">thomasaquinas.edu/socialdoctrine</a> .....	June 19–21
Summer Seminars 2015 — Choice and Moral Responsibility <a href="http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerseminars">thomasaquinas.edu/summerseminars</a> .....	July 10–12 & July 17–19
Summer Great Books Program for High School Students <a href="http://thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram">thomasaquinas.edu/summerprogram</a> .....	July 19–August 1
Seminar: "Sacraments, Grace & Free Will" Napa Institute 2015 Conference <a href="http://thomasaquinas.edu/napa">thomasaquinas.edu/napa</a> .....	July 30–31
Freshman Orientation.....	August 20–23
Residence halls open for returning students .....	August 22
Convocation The Most Rev. Thomas Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix, presiding .....	August 24

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