



# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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### Leadership and Continuity

#### Dr. Michael F. McLean Named Fourth President of Thomas Aquinas College

At its fall meeting on October 24, 2009, the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors appointed as the College's next president an experienced tutor and administrator who has served the College faithfully for more than three decades: Dean Michael F. McLean.

Dr. McLean joined the Thomas Aquinas College faculty in 1978 after completing his coursework for a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Previously, he served in the U.S. Peace Corps and the U.S. Coast Guard. He earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy at Saint Mary's College of California, where he was a student of Thomas Aquinas College's founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, and a classmate of late president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon. Dr. McLean succeeds co-founder and interim president Peter L. DeLuca, who took office last April after Dr. Dillon's tragic death.

Over the course of his 30 years at the College, Dr. McLean has served as assistant dean for student affairs, vice president for development and, since 2003, dean of the College and a member of the Board of Governors. "Michael McLean has been a superior teacher, a superior dean, and a successful vice president for development," remarked Dr. McArthur. "He is, therefore, not only qualified but competent and capable of the highest kind of leadership for the College today."

#### Comprehensive Selection Process

Perhaps unique in the United States, the Thomas Aquinas College bylaws require that the College's president be chosen from among senior members of the teaching faculty, so as to safeguard the institution's strong Catholic identity and its commitment to liberal education. "At the time of our establishment in the late 1960s," explains Mr. DeLuca, "when many Catholic colleges were wavering in their mission, we sought to ensure that our future presidents would be committed to implementing the College's founding principles in the classroom."

The process for choosing a new president began last summer, when a faculty nominating committee consulted with senior faculty members to determine suitable candidates. Two names were selected by the faculty committee and, in turn, delivered to a committee of the Board of Governors, which interviewed the candidates extensively.

This committee then recommended Dr. McLean to the Board's full membership, and the governors approved the appointment unanimously. "We on the Board look forward with great faith and optimism to the continued ability of the school to produce outstanding graduates under Dr. McLean's leadership," said Mr. R. James Wensley, chairman of the Board of Governors.



#### Champion of Catholic Liberal Education

An enthusiastic hiker, gardener, and lover of music, Dr. McLean is a longtime champion of Catholic liberal education. He is the co-founder of the Great Books Seminars in Ojai, Calif., and a former president of the board of directors of St. Augustine Academy in Ventura. He and his wife of 42 years, Lynda, are the parents of three children and the grandparents of four.

Upon being appointed, Dr. McLean said, "I am humbled and deeply honored. I appreciate the careful way in which the faculty and Board conducted the presidential selection process. I have a deep love for the College, for the faculty, and for the students and will commit myself completely to preserving the College's mission, purpose, and fidelity to the Catholic Church. Together with the Board and the faculty, and with God's help, I will work to ensure that the College continues to attract eager and diligent students and remains in its present strong financial condition."

Dr. McLean assumed the responsibilities of his new office at the start of the second semester. He will be formally inaugurated on February 13.

### "A Tribute to Dr. Dillon's Tireless Efforts"

#### Dan Murphy Foundation Makes Lead Gift in New \$7 Million Capital Campaign

In what is certainly the grandest tribute to Dr. Thomas E. Dillon to date, on December 1, 2009, the Dan Murphy Foundation of Los Angeles approved a \$2 million grant to Thomas Aquinas College in honor of the College's late president, who died in an automobile accident last spring. "The trustees of the Dan Murphy Foundation are pleased to make this contribution in memory of Dr. Dillon," says Richard A. Grant, the foundation's president, "in recognition of his great achievements on behalf of Thomas Aquinas College."



Richard A. Grant, president of the Dan Murphy Foundation, is shown here with Thomas Aquinas College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., touring Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel during its construction in 2007. The Dan Murphy Foundation has given the lead gift of \$2 million in a new capital campaign to complete all funding for the Chapel project.

According to Dr. Michael F. McLean, the College's recently appointed president, the grant will be used as a lead gift in the College's new capital campaign. The campaign will have as its primary goal the completion of all funding for Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, Thomas Aquinas College's glorious new House of God, which Dr. Dillon spent a dozen years laboring to make a reality. "The Chapel project was dear to Tom's heart," says Dr. McLean. "We are so grateful that the Dan Murphy Foundation would choose to honor him in this way, augmenting its initial \$10 million lead gift for the Chapel project."

The new capital campaign, slated to run for 18 months and raise \$7 million, will conclude on June 30, 2011. "During that time, officials of the College plan

to approach old friends and new, seeking major gifts for the Chapel project" says Vice President for Development John Quincy Masteller. As Mr. Grant observes, "It is hoped the foundation's grant will be an impetus to complete the College's capital campaign as a tribute to Dr. Dillon's tireless efforts in building the Thomas Aquinas campus. This beautiful chapel exemplifies Tom Dillon's devotion to the Roman Catholic Church and Thomas Aquinas College."

The Dan Murphy Foundation's extraordinary gift reflects its trustees' enduring commitment to the College's mission and their conviction that the College will continue to thrive in the years ahead. "The foundation's trustees make the contribution in the confidence that Thomas Aquinas College, under the leadership of new president Dr. Michael McLean, will attain new levels of academic excellence as an institution devoted to Catholic liberal education," says Mr. Grant.

Just as Dr. Dillon envisioned Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel as being the crown jewel of the

Thomas Aquinas College campus, the Dan Murphy Foundation's generous grant to complete funding for the Chapel has become the crown jewel among the nearly 300 gifts that have been given to the College in Dr. Dillon's memory. These smaller contributions have totaled close to \$250,000.

"In the history of the College, it is unprecedented to receive so many memorial gifts for a single person, let alone so many donations of such great value," observes Dr. McLean. "The Dan Murphy Foundation is leading the way in a beautiful, far-reaching effort among those who share Dr. Dillon's dedication to Catholic liberal education to fund the Chapel into which he poured his heart, while aiding the College to which he devoted his life."

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# “To Advance the Mission of the College”

## New President Dr. Michael F. McLean’s Address to the Students and Faculty

St. Joseph Commons, October 26, 2009

Thank you, thank you very much. I am deeply honored by this appointment and humbled as well. I look forward to my duties with some natural apprehension but also with a great deal of confidence. That confidence comes, in part, from the fact that this community prayed fervently throughout this process that God’s will be done and that the Board committee be guided by the Holy Spirit in its deliberations. I myself prayed fervently for the strength to accept whatever God’s will turned out to be. Because this community is so fervent and strong in its prayer life and faith life, I do have some confidence that this will be a good outcome, both for me and my family and for the College. And that is something I will rely on going forward.

I want to ask you for your continued prayer and support. I know I can count on it. This community is very strong. The faith here is very, very strong, and all of us working together, praying together, will ensure, I think, a successful outcome as we go forward.

I look forward to working closely with Mr. DeLuca to ensure an orderly transition. And at this moment I would like us all to express our appreciation to Mr. DeLuca for his leadership and guidance in this difficult period since Dr. Dillon’s death. So please join me in giving Mr. DeLuca a hearty ovation. (Applause.)

I want to express my deep gratitude to members of the faculty for the deliberate and prudent way they participated in this process. We formed a committee some months ago chaired by Mr. Nieto. Mr. Baer and Mr. Neumayr served on that committee. They heard the recommendations of most of the faculty, and they conducted their part of the process, I think, with great deliberation and great dedication and great love for the school. I want to say to them that their efforts were deeply appreciated and deeply respected by the Board of Governors, who received their report and then went on with their own deliberations.

I want to say that the Board committee, chaired by Mrs. Grant and consisting of five other Board members, conducted its work with a great deal of care and pru-

dence and love for the College. As part of the process I participated in an interview with them that lasted about three hours. I want to say that their questions were serious, they were intelligent, and the members’ love for the school was very evident through the process.

I had the good fortune to attend a Board meeting this weekend where that enthusiasm was palpable, where the members’ enthusiasm and love for the school was very much in evidence, where a number of Board members stepped forward and made significant financial contributions to the College just in the course of that one meeting. It will be a great consolation to me, and should be a great consolation to you and to all of us associated with the College, to know that we have a Board of Governors that is deeply, deeply committed to this school and will stay with us through this process of transition and on into the future.

The plan is for me to assume office formally at the beginning of the second semester in January. We are also planning an inauguration event for mid-February. So we’re looking forward to a great turnout at that event from you students and faculty. It should be a joyous occasion to celebrate not me, in particular, but the mission of the school and the effort to further that mission and extend this education to more and more young people in the future.

I want to say on a kind of personal note to you students that even though I will soon be leaving the Office of Dean, I want you to know that, just as I tried to do as dean, as president I want to make myself available to you. I want you to have no hesitation — students or faculty — to come and see me at any time with any question, any difficulty, any concern, any suggestion that you think might further our effort. So I want to maintain — even though I’ll have significant responsibilities off the cam-



Interim President Peter L. DeLuca and students applaud as Dr. Michael F. McLean addresses the community at lunch on the Monday following his appointment as the fourth president of Thomas Aquinas College.

pus — I do want to maintain a serious and significant presence on the campus. As best I can, I want to maintain cordial and productive relations with you students. So let’s make that work, please.

Now, finally, this transition period lasts a couple of months, and so I thought I would maybe practice a little bit being president. So here’s a little practice. I’m going to practice a decree, okay? Are you ready? Here goes: *All of you students are campused!* (Laughter, applause.)

How’s that? Does that sound presidential? (More laughter and applause.)

Okay, here’s another one: *You are now uncampused!* (Cheers.)

How’s that, alright? Except, now, for those of you who at this time really *are* campused. And there are some of you out there ... (Laughter.)

Okay, so again, I thank you for your love, for your support. I deeply love the College. I deeply love the faculty. I deeply love the students. I will do my very best as president to advance the mission of the College. So I ask you again for your continued prayers and support. Thank you very much.

## Financial Relief for Families

### College Freezes Tuition Rate, Continues to Offer Generous Financial Aid

For both current and future students of Thomas Aquinas College and their families, the College’s Board of Governors has offered some relief from the ongoing economic recession. This past October, the Board announced a freeze in the tuition rate for the 2010-2011 academic year.

Even before declaring the freeze, Thomas Aquinas College had developed a national reputation for affordability. The Princeton Review lists the College among the “Best Value Colleges” in its 2010 guide. *U.S. News & World Report* calls the College one of the nation’s “Best Values,” and *Kiplinger’s* has named it one of the “100 Best Values” in private education. Tuition is \$22,400, significantly below the national average of \$26,270 (and climbing) for four-year schools. And Thomas Aquinas College does not have the hidden “fees” that drive up the cost of most colleges.

Moreover, Thomas Aquinas College offers a generous, need-based financial aid program that assists more than two-thirds of the students. “The College admits students regardless of their ability to pay,” says Director of Admissions Jon Daly. “And whatever part of the tuition and room and board the students and their families cannot reasonably afford, the College makes up.”

#### Economic Concerns

Given the state of the economy, many families are nevertheless concerned about tuition costs and believe — erroneously — that the cost of a Thomas Aquinas College education is beyond their reach. “We gathered through the admissions process that this was a real concern for many prospective students’ families in these uncertain times,” says Peter L. DeLuca, the College’s treasurer and vice president for finance and administration. “So we thought freezing tuition and room and board rates might help to allay those fears.”

These concerns extend to existing students and their families as well. Reflecting a nationwide

trend, 82 percent of this year’s freshmen require financial assistance — a 20 percent increase from last year — and some 5 percent of upperclassmen either have made new requests for financial aid or sought increased aid due to a significant drop in family income. “It only made sense,” Mr. DeLuca says, “to keep the price of tuition stable this year.”

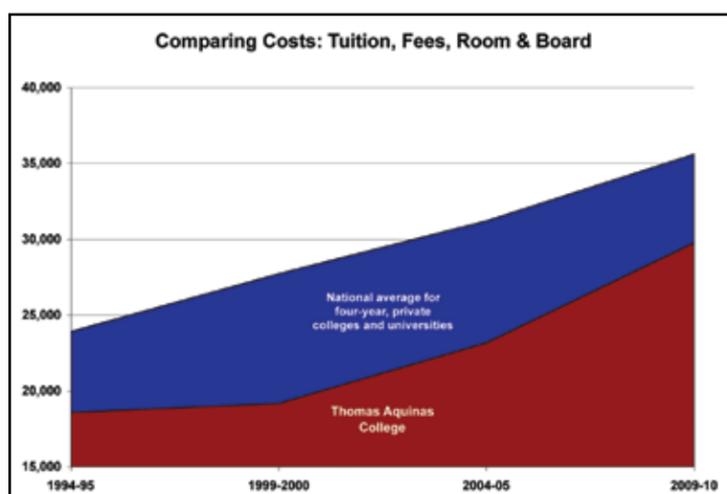
“No one should let finances deter them from pursuing a Thomas Aquinas College education,” says Director of Financial Aid Greg Becher. “The College stands ready and willing to help those with a demonstrated need.” The financial aid office will even make a preliminary estimate of the aid for which a family would qualify before a student is accepted.

#### Commitment to Affordability

Keeping the cost of a Thomas Aquinas College education affordable is a challenge, Mr. DeLuca notes, especially since most of the College’s alumni are still young, and the College has a smaller endowment than most older schools. “It is in keeping,

however, with the character of the College as a spiritual work of mercy. In the midst of trying economic times, we are determined to find the means to support those who want and can do our educational program without regard to ability to pay.”

Equally important, the College is blessed with faithful and generous benefactors who appreciate the value of genuine Catholic liberal education, not only for its direct beneficiaries, but also for the Church and society. “That the governors are willing to freeze tuition during these lean times is a reflection of their commitment to the mission of the College,” says Mr. DeLuca. “We are profoundly grateful for all of our benefactors’ generosity, and we are determined to continue to be good stewards of their gifts.”



Sources: *The College Board, Thomas Aquinas College*

# “A Labor of Love for Me and My Family”

## An Interview with New President Dr. Michael F. McLean

**Q: Thomas Aquinas College came into being when you were still a student yourself. How and when did you first learn about the College?**

**A:** I first became aware of Thomas Aquinas College, or at least of the plans for the College, while a senior at St. Mary’s College of California. As a columnist and former editor of the school newspaper, I had become interested in the ongoing faculty debates about the catholicity of St. Mary’s College and the question of how the college’s Catholic character should be reflected in its curriculum and faculty appointments.

I wrote some articles and conducted some interviews on these questions, and at some point I became aware that Dr. Ronald McArthur and others were talking about starting a college. I admired the positions that the St. Mary’s faculty who went on to found Thomas Aquinas College — Ron, Jack Neumayr, Marc Berquist, and Frank Ellis — were taking on the issues facing St. Mary’s, and I admired their commitment to genuine Catholic liberal education, to the great books, and to the discussion method of teaching.

**Q: Did this experience make you want to pursue a career in Catholic higher education?**

**A:** Yes, but that career was delayed for a while by my service in the Coast Guard. After being admitted into the graduate program in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, it became necessary for me to serve in the military. So Notre Dame graciously postponed my admittance until I completed my military obligation. My father served as an officer in the United States Coast Guard for 30 years, and it was an honor for me to enter Officer Candidate School in 1970 and commit myself to three years of active service.

That was a valuable experience. Serving for two years as a deck watch officer in the harsh weather and dangerous waters of Alaska, and for a year as a controller in a rescue coordination center in San Francisco, helped me develop confidence in my leadership ability. It also instilled within me the discipline necessary to see difficult and important matters through to a successful completion.

My first love was always philosophy, however, and I never wavered in my desire to one day teach in a program like that at Thomas Aquinas College. I had the good fortune to be taught by Frank Ellis at St. Mary’s College. Frank’s devotion to his students and his manifest love for the philosophic life inspired in me a desire to follow in his footsteps and become a teacher of philosophy myself.

**Q: How did you first come to join the Thomas Aquinas College faculty?**

**A:** I kept track of the College in the years following my graduation from St. Mary’s, mostly through my friendship with Dr. Ellis. I followed Tom Dillon to Notre Dame in 1974, and in 1978 I called Ron McArthur and asked if any positions were open at the College. He very graciously said that he remembered me and he encouraged me to apply, saying that the College was planning a move to Santa Paula and on growing to its full enrollment of 350 students. I did apply and, thankfully, was offered an appointment.

I might mention that my parents questioned my sanity when I first showed them the Ferndale Ranch in the spring of 1978, boasting that I had been hired by a college that was going to occupy the ranch’s property. I told them not to worry; Dr. McArthur had assured me the College would be fully developed in five years or so. As many people know, Ron has always been enthusiastic and strong in his faith about the future.

His estimate might have been off a little, but helping the College meet his expectations has been a labor of love for me and for my family. It has been a joy for me to be part of the College — to be able to teach intelligent and motivated students, to be among others committed to Catholic liberal education, and to have contributed in some small way to the College’s success during these past 31 years.

**Q: How has this time prepared you for the presidency?**

**A:** My 31 years on the teaching faculty have given me a good understanding of the College’s academic program and the relationships among its parts. My commitment to the College’s educational mission and my discipleship to Aristotle and St. Thomas have only deepened in my years here, and I have seen the joy that students experience as they come to understand better the deep and difficult matters considered in our curriculum.

In my opinion, these are the most important qualifications for the president of Thomas Aquinas College to possess. A sign of this is that the president of the College is required to continue teaching, at least part-time, while serving as president. I have every intention of fulfilling this requirement beginning in the fall semester of 2010. It will be prudent for me, however, to withdraw from teaching during the spring semester of 2010 so that I can make a successful transition into my new responsibilities.

**Q: The College’s policy of choosing its president from among its existing faculty is very unusual. What do you think are the virtues of this policy?**

**A:** The College’s policy that its president be chosen from among the Roman Catholic, permanently appointed members of its teaching faculty is stated in the College’s governing documents. My remarks about the issues facing St. Mary’s, and other Catholic colleges and universities in the late 1960s, anticipate the reasons for this provision. One of the ways in which a college or university can lose its focus and wander from its mission is if its leadership loses focus and wanders from the mission.

Wanting to guard against this as much as possible, the founders of Thomas Aquinas College wisely provided that the president be chosen from among the teaching faculty. This is perfectly in keeping with the unique character of the College’s program and pedagogy as well as with its commitment to the teaching authority of the Catholic Church and to the importance of St. Thomas in the Church’s intellectual tradition.

Everything done at the College is for the sake of, and proportioned to, the educational program and to helping students grow in intellectual and moral virtue. The College has been and will continue to be well served by selecting its president from among those most committed to and most knowledgeable about its fundamental mission.

**Q: But is a tutor necessarily well-equipped to be president?**

**A:** One might think that tutors could not possibly be qualified to serve as president.

Our history, however, shows that tutors can be successful presidents, and it is impossible to underestimate the important role that commitment to the academic program plays in a president’s success. There is also the reassuring fact that the presidential selection process was conducted prayerfully and with openness to the providence of God. I trust that God will bestow the necessary graces of office on me, as He did upon my predecessors, and as He doubtless would have done on whomever had been chosen.

**Q: What is your top priority as president?**

**A:** My top priority is to maintain the College in the strong condition in which it has been handed on to me. I am determined to continue recruiting students who are able and willing to pursue our program and who will thrive in our community; to appointing faculty devoted to our mission and capable of pursuing the entirety of our curriculum and helping students grow in wisdom and love of learning; and to maintaining the College’s present, strong financial condition.

Specifically, this means raising the funds necessary to provide financial aid to deserving students and their families, strengthening the College’s endowment, finishing the campus, and completing the funding of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel and its related infrastructure. We are deeply grateful to the Dan Murphy Foundation for its lead gift of \$2 million in this effort, made in memory of Dr. Dillon, and we are confident that the foundation’s gift will encourage others to contribute the remaining \$5 million necessary to complete the Chapel project. It is very important to me that in all of this I maintain a close relationship with our students and alumni, and that I work collegially and in a spirit of friendship with the faculty, staff, and Board of Governors.

**Q: How has the College fared since the death of Dr. Dillon?**

**A:** The presence of God has been felt on this campus since news of Dr. Dillon’s death first reached us. Grieving and in shock, the entire community gathered in the Chapel to receive the news, pray the rosary, and offer Mass for the repose of his soul and for the well-being of Mrs. Dillon. Shortly thereafter, over 1,000 dignitaries and friends of the College gathered for Dr. Dillon’s funeral, not much more than six weeks or so after he had led the dedication of the Chapel he worked so hard to bring to completion.

Shortly after Tom’s death, the Board appointed co-founder and vice president Peter DeLuca as interim president. Under Peter’s leadership, the College has fared very well, remaining steadfast in its pursuit of Catholic liberal education. Since my selection, Peter and I have been working together to ensure an orderly transition. The Catholic faith is strong in this community and in the extended Thomas Aquinas College family, and that faith has been much in evidence in the time following Dr. Dillon’s death.

**Q: What is the state of the College today?**

**A:** The College has remained strong even in this period of recession, a downturn which has placed an economic burden on the families of some of our students. The College has elected to implement a freeze on its tuition costs to help keep its education affordable. Its benefactors remain loyal and generous. And its alumni have undertaken a \$300,000 campaign to help with student financial aid. These are reasons to be confident as we go forward. Mrs. McLean and I have been edified by, and are grateful for, the outpouring of support we have received since the announcement of my appointment, and I earnestly entreat the prayers of all as I undertake my new duties.



# In Gratitude

## Board of Governors Salutes Former Chairman Maria O. Grant

In thanksgiving for her service as chairman of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors from 2003 to 2009, the College hosted a celebratory dinner in honor of Mrs. Maria O. Grant on October 24, 2009, during the Board's annual retreat. Below are excerpts from the various speakers' praise in her behalf:

**R. James Wensley**, chairman of the Board of Governors: "An exceptional woman and a model to all chairmen to come ... Maria steered our ship through some difficult waters, not the least of which was bringing Tom Dillon's dream for the Chapel to fruition."

**Peter L. DeLuca**, interim president: "I am really very, very happy to have the opportunity to express my own appreciation and the College's appreciation to Maria for her many years of diligent work as chairman of the Board of Governors. She really set a standard, and I can't tell you how great a contribution that has been to the College."



Senior Sarah Jimenez presents Maria O. Grant, former chairman of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, with a spiritual bouquet on behalf of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

**Carson Lind**, member of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2010: "I would like to thank Mrs. Grant on behalf of the students. My classmates and I realize that she was a key factor in leading the Board, and her leadership was a key factor in making the past few years for us possible."

**Sarah Jimenez**, member of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2010: "In appreciation for your dedication to Thomas Aquinas College,

we would like to present you with this spiritual bouquet, compiled from prayers from the alumni, students, faculty, and staff of the College. ... Many of these prayers will be offered in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel which, thanks to your leadership of the Board during your time as chairman, the students are able to enjoy."

**Jerry Panas**, philanthropy consultant: "We've worked with maybe 300-400 colleges and universities, and I've never known a chair with the dedication, the commitment, the devotion of Maria Grant. ... She knows exactly what she wants to achieve, but she always does it with compassion and a gentle hand — kind of a combination of a Jack Welch and a Mother Teresa. Maria, you can see the love that exists in this room for you."

**Rev. Marcos J. Gonzalez**, pastor of St. John Chrysostom Church in Inglewood, Calif.: "Pope Pius XI memorably said, 'Let us thank God that he lets us live among the present problems. It is no longer permissible among anyone to be mediocre.' Thomas Aquinas College is not a place of mediocrity. It has never been from its very beginning. A woman like Maria Grant is not a mediocre woman. These are the kind of men and women that we must be. These are the kind of graduates that this great college must produce, men and women who are far above mediocrity."



At the Board of Governors dinner honoring former chairman Maria O. Grant, from the left: Michael and Elena Cahir (the Grants' son-in-law and daughter), Rev. Marcos J. Gonzalez, Mrs. Grant, and her husband, Richard.

# Honoring Dr. and Mrs. Dillon

## Prayers for Late President and Gratitude for His Wife

Although it has been just over nine months since the death of Thomas Aquinas College President Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, among those who love him and share his commitment to Catholic liberal education, the prayers continue. In October, the College hosted two memorial Masses and receptions on the East Coast in Dr. Dillon's honor, and the community celebrated his widow, Terri, for her many years of faithful service to the College.



At the Washington, D.C., memorial Mass for late Thomas Aquinas College president Thomas E. Dillon: the homilist, Rev. John Thomas Mellein, O.P. ('99); the principal celebrant, Archbishop Pietro Sambì, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America; and interim College president Peter L. DeLuca and his wife, Kay.

### East Coast Memorial Masses

The inspiration of a dear friend of Dr. Dillon, Robert Monahan, the two East Coast memorial Masses provided an opportunity for friends and benefactors of the College who live far from campus to gather and pray together for the happy repose of Dr. Dillon's soul. The first Mass was offered on October 14 in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Some 75 hearty souls braved the day's heavy rains to attend, including Archbishop Pietro Sambì, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, who graciously served as the principal celebrant. Dr. Dillon's death was "a particularly significant loss for me," His Excellency said, "because of my affiliation with him in encouraging

his many efforts to continually enhance and promote the unique academic richness that Thomas Aquinas College provides within the context of our Catholic faith." The homilist for the Mass was, appropriately enough, one of Dr. Dillon's former students, Rev. John Thomas Mellein, O.P. ('99).

The next day, nearly 100 of the College's friends from the greater New York area converged upon Manhattan's beautiful Church of Our Saviour in Murray Hill for the second memorial Mass. The church's pastor, a longtime friend of Dr. Dillon and the College,



The Dillons' eldest son, Thomas M. Dillon ('91) and two of his five children present the gifts of bread and wine at the New York memorial Mass for Dr. Dillon.

Rev. George W. Rutler, served as principal celebrant and homilist. "Thomas Dillon was a walking compendium of wisdom, and the great work he accomplished in Thomas Aquinas College gave that wisdom a home in the hills of Santa Paula," said Fr. Rutler in his homily.

On hand for both events were various College officials and members of the Dillon family, including the Dillons' eldest child, Thomas M. Dillon ('91) who, with two of his five children, presented the gifts of bread and wine at both Masses. At the receptions following each, Mr. Dillon thanked the attendees for all their prayers, encouragement, and consolation, and Interim President Peter L. DeLuca spoke of the College's efforts to continue Dr. Dillon's work in the years ahead.

### Honoring Mrs. Dillon

During a formal dinner with members of the Board of Governors on October 23, the College presented a small token of thanks to Dr. Dillon's most loyal companion, confidante, and aide — his wife of 42 years, Terri. Throughout her husband's 18 years as president of Thomas Aquinas College, Mrs. Dillon served the College in innumerable ways. Moreover, despite an aversion to flying, she frequently traveled with him across the country and abroad on the College's behalf, where her friendliness proved invaluable to the president and to the College alike.

"You have been the College's greatest volunteer for 18 years," said Mr. DeLuca at the dinner, as he presented Mrs. Dillon with a pearl rosary bracelet. At that moment, the room erupted with booming, sustained applause, as everyone in attendance jumped to their feet and cheered for this generous and tireless — but all too often unsung — heroine of Thomas Aquinas College.



Interim President Peter L. DeLuca thanks Terri Dillon for her many years of faithful service to the College.

# Looking Back, Looking Forward

## Two Seniors Recall How Thomas Aquinas College Has Changed Them, Shaped Their Future

By Charlie Goodwin ('10)

By the time I was a skinny 14-year-old donning my helmet for the first day of freshman football practice at Loyola High School in Los Angeles, I had already been exposed to good books, beautiful music, fine art, and the theater. I had traveled all over the country and even out of it a couple of times. Most importantly, I had been baptized and raised in the Catholic faith. I did well in school and loved to sing, act, and play sports. I was what many would call “a well-rounded young man.”



Unfortunately, I didn't attribute these gifts to the One who had bestowed them. That is, I did not acknowledge them as gifts at all. In high school I lived mostly for myself, thinking that people liked me because I was great. As high school was coming to a close, I was faced with the decision of choosing what college to attend. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but the University of Southern California, football games, and beer sounded pretty good.

And yet, I couldn't get this little college up in Santa Paula out of my head. I had attended the Great Books Summer Program for high school students the summer before and had the time of my life. I loved the classes. I loved the tutors. I loved the other students. And I really loved the spiritual life. But the school was so small and different — and it didn't have a Division I championship football team. After much deliberation, and a little prayer, I decided to give Thomas Aquinas College a try for a year and defer my admission at USC, just in case I didn't like it.

In all honesty, I knew even then that I had to go to the College. I recognized that what was happening there was somehow right. It was so ... true! I suppose the great

**“I had attended the Great Books Summer Program for high school students the summer before and had the time of my life.”**

sign of this for me was the strong emphasis the College gave to the sacraments and the thriving spiritual life of its students. I somehow knew that Thomas

Aquinas College had what I needed. There was something good going on in Santa Paula, but I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was. I had to go and find out for myself.

I am most happy to say that that was the best decision I have made in my entire life. After three months at Thomas Aquinas College, I was sold. The classes were awesome. I was inspired by my classmates who really wanted to learn and my tutors who were so invested in guiding us to the truth.

The tutors here have been not only teachers to me, but real role models for my own life. They have led us students on a journey for truth. The farther I traveled on this journey, reading the Great Books and learning to discern the truth and falsity in arguments, the more I was amazed at the unity I found in all of the subjects we studied.

At Thomas Aquinas College, I learned that the world makes sense. It was so wonderful to discover that there is a real order in things and that I could understand it. In studying philosophy and especially theology, I began to see more and more clearly where all this order, this goodness, truth, and beauty comes from. In a word, my studies led me straight to God. My social life also pointed to God, as my dearest friends have always been edifying examples of persons striving for holiness. Of course our chaplains also, through their counsel and preaching, have led me to God. As a result I learned good habits. I started to frequent the sacraments, attending daily Mass, and going to confession often. Also, praying before the Blessed Sacrament became a daily habit.

During my time at the College, I learned what life is about. I began to see who God is and who I am in relation to Him. I learned that there is a better way to live life than to live for myself. I learned that I am not great, but God is great. I suppose these truths sound simple enough, but for me coming to know them was a big deal.

Thomas Aquinas College has changed my life by opening my eyes to see more clearly the Author of that life. I was never shoved or forced; I was merely taught the truth. And the more I understood the truth, the faster I ran toward my God. Because I learned to pray at the College, I was able to hear God when He called me to be His priest. I have been accepted to the postulancy at St. Michael's Abbey, and I plan to enter there in August.

When I came to Thomas Aquinas College, I certainly did not think I would become a priest. It was probably one of the last things on my mind. I am so thankful to the College for leading me toward God and for disposing me to receive this unspeakable gift from His hands. I know that I am not the only student whose life has been changed by coming to this amazing school.

*Mr. Goodwin is a senior from Pasadena, Calif. The preceding remarks were adapted from comments he made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors on October 24, 2009.*

By Kaitlyn Landgraf ('10)

Comparing myself now to the person I was — and the perspective I had toward education — four years ago, I can honestly say that the College has dramatically altered every aspect of my life: my faith, my academics, and my plans for the future.

As a senior in high school looking at prospective colleges, I thought Thomas Aquinas College would be the last school I would ever attend. I was accepted at Stanford University, and I fully planned to go there. I was not the least bit attracted by the prospect of a 350-student college in the middle of nowhere that taught the teachings of dead, “irrelevant” philosophers and enforced a dress code and curfew.

However, my perspective was completely changed when I visited both colleges as a courtesy to my parents, who were urging me to enroll at Thomas Aquinas College. When I observed classes at Stanford, I listened to professors present truth as an illusion: One person's reality may conflict with another person's reality, but both were accepted as compatible since there was no such thing as an objective truth. To posit this or absolute morality would be laughable. Such an archaic worldview was comparable to believing that the world is flat.

When I visited Thomas Aquinas College a few weeks later, I was amazed by the academic spirit that pervaded the campus. Instead of viewing truth as something relative and unattainable, the whole campus pursued knowledge with a zeal I had not observed anywhere else. There was no comparison to any other school I had visited. My decision was made: I had to attend the College.

In the three years I have been at Thomas Aquinas College, my perspective has broadened further. I am fascinated by the idea that faith and reason are compatible and that morality, instead of being a set of old-fashioned laws which have no relevance today, is essential to human nature and particularly important in today's society. I love discovering that my faith is not ridiculous but rather in accord with reason. For me, the education I have received here has been like an academic “boot camp,” preparing me to defend my faith to the world when I leave.

In this way, the College has also affected my plans for the future. As a senior in high school, I imagined that I would one day become a constitutional lawyer. Now, particularly because of the theology classes I have taken here, I plan to pursue a graduate degree in religious studies next year. I can therefore truly say that the College is giving me more than a degree: It is equipping me with the tools necessary to fight for truth and goodness and beauty.

*Miss Landgraf is a senior from Saratoga, Calif. The preceding remarks were adapted from comments she made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors on October 24, 2009.*



**“When I visited Thomas Aquinas College, I was amazed by the academic spirit that pervaded the campus. Instead of viewing truth as something relative and unattainable, the whole campus pursued knowledge with a zeal I had not observed anywhere else.”**

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# Worshiping God for His Own Sake

## Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Fuel “Vocations Boom” at Clear Creek Monastery

Sixty miles outside of Tulsa, near the small city of Hulbert, Okla., stands a Benedictine monastery where monks in black habits can be found chanting the Liturgy of the Hours, day and night, in Latin.

This is, as one might imagine, an unusual sight in this deeply wooded, rural area, where cattle vastly outnumber humans, and the population is only 3 percent Catholic. Yet over the last 10 years, “the Monastery,” as the locals have come to call it, has become a familiar, even honored place in northeastern Oklahoma. Its brothers operate a farm on their 1,000-acre property in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, from which they sell cheese and lamb meat. They also offer occasional instruction in Gregorian chant to curious neighbors and visitors.

Above all else, though, they pray.

They pray the Divine Office for about six hours a day in the crypt below the construction site that will one day become their permanent chapel. They spend another hour or two praying at Holy Mass, 30 minutes in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and an hour contemplating the words of Scripture (*lectio divina*). They pray for the needs of the Church, and primarily, they pray to glorify God.

**More than a third of the men who have entered Clear Creek Monastery since its founding are alumni of the College, and one in eight of the 81 Thomas Aquinas College alumni who are currently priests or seminarians are at Clear Creek Monastery.**

In many ways, Our Lady of the Annunciation Monastery of Clear Creek typifies both the recent renewal of the Church’s monastic tradition and the “vocations boom” experienced in many faithful communities over the last two decades. Founded in 1999 by 13 monks from the 900-year-old Abbey Notre Dame de Fontgombault in central France, Clear Creek has seen its numbers nearly triple to 36 monks.

Fueling this surge has been another authentically Catholic institution some 1,500 miles away, one also situated in an unlikely location: Thomas Aquinas College, just 70 miles north of Los Angeles. More than a third of the men who have entered Clear Creek Monastery since its founding are alumni of the College, who account for 10 of the community’s brothers. Correspondingly, one in eight of the 81 Thomas Aquinas College alumni who are currently priests or seminarians are at Clear Creek Monastery.

In October, three recent alumni, Br. Patrick Carter (’05), Br. Peter Miller (’07), and Br. Robert Nesbit (’07), all of whom entered as postulants in 2007, made simple professions and began their novitiate at Clear Creek, the next step in an eight-year process that will, God willing, culminate in their ordinations to the priesthood in 2015. Six days later, another alumnus, Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B. (’00), was himself ordained in the crypt chapel by Tulsa’s bishop, the Most Rev. Edward Slattery. (See story, right.)

### “A Good Fit”

What accounts for the tremendous synergy between these two institutions? Lloyd Noble, a Tulsa businessman and a benefactor of both, says it is only natural that the College’s graduates would pursue their vocations within a comparably faithful religious community. “Both are very traditional in their values,” says Mr. Noble. “I think that’s why they’re a good fit.”

The College’s alumni monks also cite additional reasons for how their time at the College helped lead them to Clear Creek. One was the inspiration of tutor John Nieto (’89), who holds the monastery in great esteem and befriended many of the alumni when he taught them Gregorian chant in the College’s *Schola Cantorum*. Then there was the witness of the rest of the College’s faculty, particularly its founders. “It was helpful for me,” recalls Rev. Mark Bachmann, O.S.B. (’82), “to see men like Dr. McArthur and Dr. Neumayr, who were venerable scholars ... talk humbly about submission to the Church, about humility, things of God. That really made an impression on me as a teenager.”

Reflecting on his decision to enter Fontgombault after his graduation from the College in 1982, Fr. Bachmann observes that just as the College served as a stronghold



Representing Thomas Aquinas College at the October 25, 2009, ordination of Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B. (’00, pictured on left), tutor John Nieto (’89) is shown here visiting with several of the alumni monks — many of whom he directed in the College’s *Schola Cantorum* — in the Clear Creek Monastery courtyard.

against much of the tumult that troubled the Church at that time, so, too, did Fontgombault. “The turmoil made a young man like me uneasy, and I was looking for that stability, that doctrinal stability, that I could entrust my life to.” As Fr. Morey puts it, like the College, “Fontgombault has never disobeyed Rome. We are part of the Church; we are here to *serve* the Church.”

Yet beyond these similarities and the tendency for friendly institutional relationships to self-perpetuate, there are even greater explanations for why so many young men in Santa Paula have found their way to Hulbert. These explanations become all the more evident when one examines the extraordinary life of the Clear Creek monks.

### Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience

A typical day at Clear Creek Monastery begins well before sunrise when the bell rings at 4:50 a.m. After rising, the monks head to the dark, cold crypt chapel for lauds and matins. In choir and often on their knees, they spend most of the next two hours chanting the office according to the *cursus* laid out by St. Benedict in his Rule. Low Mass (1962 missal) immediately follows in the side altars that surround the crypt. After prime at 8 a.m., the brothers head to the refectory for a simple breakfast, which they eat in silence, standing at table.

Throughout the day, they return to the crypt or the chapter room six more times for High Mass and to pray the rest of the Office. In between, the choir monks (priests and seminarians) busy themselves with private prayer, study, contemplation, and manual work around the monastery, while the lay brothers tend to the farm and livestock.

Lunch and dinner are also simple affairs. The monks sit on backless stools and eat silently while listening to a reading from the Rule of St. Benedict or some other work of historical or spiritual significance. Recreation is limited to a half-hour walk six days a week and a longer, three-hour hike on Thursdays. The day ends with compline at 8:25 p.m., after which the brothers retire to their cells, usually at about 10 p.m. Silence is then observed until the end of matins the next morning.

Like all religious, Clear Creek’s monks take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which they honor rigorously. Most will rarely, if ever, leave the monastery, and visits from friends and family are brief and infrequent. The brothers do not have telephones, televisions, newspapers, or radios. They surrender all property upon entering the monastery, and any gifts received afterward belong to the entire community.

The monastic life is, suffice it to say, very much at odds with the acquisitive, self-seeking ideal of modern American society. It is, further, a career choice that many would likely dismiss as strange for well-educated young men such as these, who could easily prosper in any professional field. Yet the Thomas Aquinas College alumni who have given their lives to God’s service at Clear Creek Monastery seem to regard this vocation much more as a gift than as a sacrifice.

Each one can cite tangible benefits of his vocation that bring great joy and peace. Br. Nesbit, for example, acknowledges the hardship of missing his family, but adds that “the grace that comes from living a life like this is a good recompense for not having that contact.” He further takes delight in the extraordinary form of the liturgy, the prayers of the Church, and living in community. Br. Miller notes that “receiving the Eucharist every day has to be the greatest blessing.” And Br. Carter is grateful for the sacramental life and the opportunity for mental prayer, which, he says, is “something you don’t have in the world; either you don’t have time for it, or you’ve never heard of it.”

Nonetheless, the monks are careful to insist that the monastic life has its own value, distinct from any mental or spiritual benefits that may be derived from it. “Some things are worth doing for their own sake even if you don’t see external fruit of your actions,” says Fr. Morey. “God deserves to be worshiped for His own sake.”

### Know, Love, and Serve

This understanding is at the heart of Thomas Aquinas College’s academic program. As the College’s late president, Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, once wrote, “Liberal education is undertaken for its own sake, not for the sake of making or doing something in particular. Rather, it simply aims, in the long run, at understanding the truth about reality through a reflective consideration of the most important questions about nature, man, and God that all men face in every age.” By graduation, having spent four years carefully examining the works of the greatest minds of Western civilization, Thomas Aquinas College students have a profound appreciation for doing things “for their own sake.”



The Benedictine monks of Clear Creek Monastery, 10 of whom are Thomas Aquinas College alumni, walk.

The intellectual life of the College thus lends itself naturally to contemplation. It “makes your mind realize the value and the importance of the contemplative life in the broad sense ... the importance of the life of the mind and of the spirit, of prayer and studies,” says Br. Carter. As Br. Nesbit describes it, “The intellectual life of the College puts you in the current of the whole of Western thought, of Western culture, which was formed by the monastic life.”

And because the College’s curriculum is oriented toward theology, that is, knowledge of God, it tends to cultivate a deeper love for Him that is typically expressed through a greater desire to do His will. “What we learned about God in the curriculum — St. Augustine, the way he spoke about God, and St. Thomas’ treatise in the beginning of the *Summa Theologiae* — really set me toward this,” says Fr. Bachmann. “The College’s academic program is all ordered to theology, to God,” adds Br. Nesbit. “So when I was thinking ‘What am I going to do now?’ during my junior year, I prayed to know God’s will. And I thought, ‘Well, I have to give my life to God.’”

### “What Must Their Creator Be Like?”

Still, as instrumental as the monks’ academic experience was in deepening their faith and opening their hearts to their vocations, living on the Thomas Aquinas College campus in a tight-knit community of believers was, in many instances, even more transformative. “The College provides a really healthy climate, first of all from your peers,” says Fr. Bachmann, who remembers that his own faith was stirred as a freshman when he heard two of his classmates speaking passionately about Fatima. “I realized then that I’ve got to make a decision. I’ve got to be serious about what I believe.”

Fr. Morey recalls that around the time of his junior or senior year, “I found myself wondering: If I live surrounded by these people whom I love and admire and respect so much, and I was edified by them and their life and enjoy their company — some of the best friends I’ve ever had — *What must their creator be like?*”

“Truth is not the only transcendental,” Fr. Morey explains. “Like in the College’s motto (*verum, bonum, pulchrum*), there’s also the good and the beautiful in addition to the truth.... Yes, it’s the experience in the classroom setting and learning, but it’s also the smell of the orange blossoms on campus as it floats up the canyon in the spring, or playing beach volleyball in Ventura, or smoking cigars at Dr. Nieto’s, or eating burgers and shakes at In-N-Out, orange milkshakes at The Summit. These aren’t the noblest of all rea-

sons, but the multifaceted reflections that you see all around you, and they are good, beautiful, and true.”

“It was at the College when I began to take my faith seriously,” says Br. Nesbit. “The community life, all the people, the faculty, the staff — and the Mass — all that really helped.” Or, as Br. Miller simply puts it, “I certainly would not be here if it were not for the College.”

### Spiritual Symbiosis

Of course, the converse could be asked as well: Would Thomas Aquinas College be here — that is, would it have survived, let alone thrived through its first four decades — without the sacrifices, penances, and personal mortification of so many religious, including its alumni? Even liberal education as we know it would not exist today

“The intellectual life of the College puts you in the current of the whole of Western thought, of Western culture, which was formed by the monastic life.”

were it not for the yeoman efforts of monks who preserved the Western canon over the course of centuries. If Clear Creek Monastery has benefitted from an infusion of vocations from Thomas Aquinas College, how much more has the College benefitted from the monastery, its prayers, and its faithful service to the Church?

“The fruits of the monks’ sacrificial lives may be invisible to us in this life, but they are real,” says College President Dr. Michael F. McLean. “We are proud of the alumni at Clear Creek who so wholeheartedly take on the monastic life, and we are truly grateful. They bring great credit to the College, and even more importantly, they bring great glory to God.”



## Year of the Priest

### Two Recent Ordinations Bring Number of Alumni Priests to 46

#### Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B. ('00)

It was during the fall of his junior year at Thomas Aquinas College that Joshua Morey first learned of Clear Creek Monastery: He came across a story about the newly founded community in *The Latin Mass* magazine. Upon seeing the cover photo of a monk and fellow alumnus, Br. Joseph Marie ('76), digging a hole at the Oklahoma monastery’s front gate, he remembers saying, “I don’t know what that place is and I don’t know why, but I need to go see it.”



The Most Rev. Edward Slattery, bishop of Tulsa, ordained Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B. ('00), on October 25, 2009.

So he paid the monastery a visit, and on September 8, 2001, he entered as a postulant, prepared to leave the world behind. Three days later, terrorists staged the dreadful attacks of 9/11. “Somehow you knew that you really couldn’t return to the world anymore,” he recalls, “because the world is not what it was three days ago.”

On the morning of October 25, 2009, in the monastery’s crypt chapel, the Most Rev. Edward Slattery, bishop

of Tulsa, placed his hands on Br. Morey’s head and ordained him to the priesthood. “Fr. Morey, I should like you to consider for a moment that this is the reason for which God has chosen to share with you the priesthood of His Son, Jesus,” His Excellency said during his homily. “Nothing that anyone can do will do more to further the progress of the world towards the end for which God has created it than the Mass which you offer morning after morning. You cannot imagine the depth of the world’s longing for the forgiveness you will offer it.”

Now it is the life work of Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B., to pray for that changed world he left behind eight years ago — and to bring to it the mercy of Christ it so desperately seeks.

#### Rev. Thomas Bolin, O.S.B. ('96)

When he was a freshman at Thomas Aquinas College, David Bolin first began to realize that he was called to the priesthood. It was a vocation he discerned, in large measure, in the classroom.

Through studying philosophy and, later, theology, he came to appreciate that “abstract argument was capable of strongly influencing my desires.” Thus he started to think of his future in more abstract terms. “Basically,” he says, he asked himself a simple question: “What is the better thing to do?” — and set his mind to do it.

That “better thing,” David concluded, was the priesthood. But by the time of his graduation in 1996, he was still unable to decide what sort of priest he should be — religious or diocesan — and where. So, while continuing his discernment process, he went to the International Theological Institute in Gaming, Austria, where he earned a master’s degree and a licentiate in sacred theology. In the summer of 2004, he at last entered the Monastero San Benedetto in Norcia, Italy, the birthplace of St. Benedict, where the 1,000-year-old monastery was recently refounded by a group of American Benedictines after a nearly 200-year absence.

Over the last five years, he has made his first profession and his final vows; he has also taken “Thomas” as his religious name. On October 31, 2009, he was ordained to the priesthood by the Most Rev. Renato Boccardo, archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, at the Basilica of St. Benedict in Norcia’s central piazza.

Two days later, Rev. Thomas Bolin, O.S.B., traveled to Rome, where he had the privilege of offering Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica for visiting members of his family and Thomas Aquinas College co-founder and tutor Dr. John W. Neumayr, who had represented the College at his ordination.

Fr. Bolin now lives in community at Norcia along with 14 other monks whose principal task — in addition to a comprehensive prayer life — is caring for the basilica. Recently appointed subprior, he organizes much of the life of the community, oversees its finances, and teaches Latin and Scripture to its novices. One can fairly say that he is fulfilling the desire he first experienced as a Thomas Aquinas College freshman some dozen years ago: “To serve God in the best way that I can.”



The newly ordained Rev. Thomas Bolin, O.S.B. ('96), blesses Thomas Aquinas College co-founder and tutor Dr. John W. Neumayr shortly after his October 31, 2009, ordination in Norcia, Italy.

## Legacy Society Profile: For the Boys

### Helene and Alphonse Calvanico Memorialize Two Late Sons

After more than a half-century of marriage that has produced four children, a successful family business, seven grandchildren, and a first great-grandchild due in May, Helene and Alphonse Calvanico of Staten Island, N.Y., are hardly in need of another legacy. Yet motivated by an abiding love, they are generously creating one — not for themselves, but for their late sons, Robert and Richard.

Since the beginning of this “mixed marriage” in 1953 (Helene’s family was Norwegian and Protestant, Alphonse’s was Italian and Catholic), the Calvanicos have had their share of trials and struggles. Their ethnic and religious differences aroused tremendous objections from their extended family, especially when Mrs. Calvanico entered the Church in 1961. Moreover, Mr. Calvanico, a retired engineer, has survived three separate bouts with cancer. But none of these hardships can compare with the tribulation of losing the two sons who, growing up, shared a room in the family home that Mr. Calvanico had built.

The third of the Calvanicos’ four boys, four-year-old Robert was shy, quiet, and loved his daddy fiercely. He would sit next to Mr. Calvanico at the dinner table, a position he cherished so dearly that “the boys could never bribe it away from him.” Two months before his fifth birthday, little Robert was struck with a malignant brain tumor. He died only two weeks later, on Christmas Eve of 1963.

For years, the Calvanicos struggled to overcome the grief of losing Robert. Their faith was their consolation, found especially in sharing the gift of the Mass together. “The pain gets easier,” Mrs. Calvanico says. “It has to, or you would go crazy. But it never goes away.”

More than 40 years after Robert’s death, Mr. and Mrs. Calvanico would experience that excruciating pain again in 2006 when their second son, Richard, died suddenly from a blood clot at the age of 49. A devoted father and husband who personally saw to it that his wife earned a college degree, Richard placed a high value on education. He was also deeply committed to his Catholic faith. “The guys at work used to call him ‘Fr. Rich,’” his mother jokes.

When the Calvanicos were looking for ways to memorialize Richard, Thomas Aquinas College seemed a natural choice. They had only recently come to know of the College through its quarterly newsletter, but they liked what they saw. “I was very impressed with the type of curriculum, but the biggest thing that got me was that the College was teaching the classics to its students,” Mrs. Calvanico says.

When the Calvanicos were restructuring their will after Richard’s death, they made a realization: “Robert wasn’t even in our will, and we wanted to correct that,” says Mrs. Calvanico. So they decided to divide their estate evenly by four: one quarter for each of their two surviving sons, one to be shared by Richard’s family, and the fourth — Robert’s portion — as a legacy gift to Thomas Aquinas College.

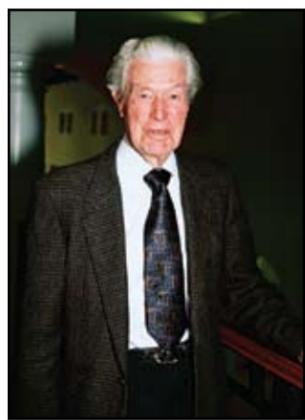
“Robert never got to go to school,” the couple explains, so it seemed fitting to honor him through an educational institution. They have opted to use their gift to create an endowment in Robert and Richard’s names that will support the financial aid needs of future students. “The Calvanicos have chosen a beautiful, a truly extraordinary way to honor their sons Robert and Richard,” says Thomas Susanka, the College’s director of gift planning. “They and their children will always be part of the College family, in our prayers and in our hearts. We will not forget.”



Legacy Society Members Helene and Alphonse Calvanico are creating an endowment at Thomas Aquinas College in memory of their late sons, Robert (left) and Richard (right).

## In Memoriam

### The Hon. William A. Wilson, 1914 – 2009



The Hon. William A. Wilson, the first U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See in 117 years and an emeritus member of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, died of cancer on December 5, 2009, at his home in Carmel Valley, Calif.

After earning a degree in mechanical engineering from Stanford University in 1937, Mr. Wilson married Elizabeth “Betty” Johnson in 1938. During World War II, he served as a captain in the Army Ordnance Corps. He worked for his family’s business, Web Wilson Oil Tools, eventually becoming president, until the company’s sale in 1960. From there, he had a successful career as a real estate developer, cattle rancher, and investor.

In the 1960s, the Wilsons struck up an enduring friendship with an actor named Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy. Bill became one of Mr. Reagan’s early supporters and advisers, and when the latter became governor of California, he appointed his friend to the state university’s Board of Regents. Upon taking office in 1981, President Reagan then appointed William A. Wilson as his personal envoy to the Holy See — a position that was eventually upgraded to ambassador in 1984 after Congress repealed an 1867 law forbidding the use of federal funds for a diplomatic mission to the Holy See. For five years, Ambassador Wilson represented the United States to the Holy See, dealing with the highest levels of the Church and the American government.

Introduced to the College by member of the Board of Governors Miss Rosemary Donohue, Ambassador Wilson was, he said, “attracted by the curriculum and could see it was educating students while maintaining a religious atmosphere.” He joined the Board in 1988 and chaired its finance committee. In 1998, he escorted then-College President Thomas E. Dillon and his wife, Terri, on a trip to Rome to meet Pope John Paul II, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and other Vatican officials.

“Bill Wilson was a very generous, very good friend to Thomas Aquinas College,” said Peter L. DeLuca, who was serving as the College’s interim president at the time of Ambassador Wilson’s death. “He was always committed to doing whatever he could to advance the College and its mission.”

Mr. DeLuca represented the College at Ambassador Wilson’s funeral Mass, where various family members spoke of his love for the College. “Just days before he died,” said Mr. DeLuca, “Bill received a Thomas Aquinas College Christmas ornament that we had sent him in the mail. Knowing how much he cared for the College, his family chose to include the ornament among the personal items they enclosed in his casket.” Ambassador Wilson has been laid to rest beside Betty, who passed away in 1996. The couple are survived by their 2 daughters, 6 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

## St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

### Highlights from the 2009 Fall Semester:

- The **Most Rev. J. Michael Miller, CSB**, archbishop of Vancouver, B.C., and former secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, delivered the College’s 2009 Convocation Address entitled “St. Thomas Aquinas, Master and Guide.”



- **Dr. Steven Long** of the Department of Theology at Ave Maria University spoke on the theme “On Nature and Grace.”

- Students and faculty participated in the semi-annual **All College Seminar**, discussing Leo Tolstoy’s *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* — a favorite of late president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon.

- The **2009 Fall Concert** featured a selection of Baroque chamber music.

- **Dr. Pamela Kraus** of St. John’s College in Annapolis, Md., delivered a lecture on Descartes’ *Regulae and Discourse*.

- **Dr. Andrew Moran** of the Department of English at the University of Dallas lectured on Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

- The **2009 Advent Concert** featured the Thomas Aquinas College Choir.

## IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

**Marie F. Lee** – October 7, 2008  
*Benefactor and Legacy Society member*

**Patricia Marie Brockman** – August 21, 2009  
*Benefactor*

**Mary Bryce** – October 5, 2009  
*Sister of member of the Board of Governors  
Dr. Henry J. Zeiter*

**Lucian J. Meyers** – November 1, 2009  
*Benefactor and Legacy Society member*

**Regis J. Schaefer** – November 13, 2009  
*Benefactor*

**Joseph G. Hurley** – November 18, 2009  
*Benefactor*

**The Hon. William A. Wilson**  
December 5, 2009  
*Benefactor, emeritus member of the  
Board of Governors*

**Rt. Rev. Ladislav K. Parker, O. Praem.**  
January 3, 2010  
*Recipient of the 1997  
Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion*

# Nothing is Impossible for God

## Homily of Deacon Chris Sandner at the Regional Mass for the Unborn

Note: As part of Respect Life month, on Sunday, October 18, 2009, Thomas Aquinas College hosted the Regional Mass for the Unborn in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Hundreds of guests from throughout the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles attended the Mass, including members of the pro-life group at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Students from both colleges served as lectors, acolytes, and in the choir, then gathered after the Mass for fellowship in St. Joseph Commons.

At the request of the Most Rev. Thomas J. Curry, who could not be present, Thomas Aquinas College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., was the principal celebrant at the Mass, joined at the altar by his fellow College chaplains as well as Rev. John Love of St. Mark's University Parish in Santa Barbara and Deacon Chris Sandner, Respect Life coordinator for the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region. Deacon Sandner delivered the homily, which is reprinted below.



Deacon Chris Sandner, Respect Life coordinator for the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, delivers the homily at the October 18 Regional Mass for the Unborn in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

When our cause is the truth, and the mission is clear, then fear cannot take root within us.

Now I ask you, who could have predicted, or even imagined, what seven individuals would have founded in the cause of truth — their mission to make the Catholic faith the very lifeblood of a college education. No one would deny that Aristotle and Shakespeare and Euclid should have a place somewhere in a college curriculum, but really, in this day and age, should Aquinas and Augustine and Athanasius take center stage on a college campus? Well, they not only should, they have. And while this college may be small in numbers, her cause remains the pursuit of truth, and her mission in pursuit of that truth is all so clear to us. Now because of their efforts, these graduates are taking that Catholic faith which they learned on this campus into every profession and discipline around the world. Because, after all, nothing is impossible for God.

We are so fortunate to be here this morning in this magnificent chapel, and together we will now recommit ourselves to that same cause of truth — with a mission that is slightly different but just as clear.

In 1995, when Pope John Paul II issued his landmark encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, he addressed it not just to bishops or to priests or to Catholics, but to all people of good will. *The Gospel of Life* spells out for the whole world why every human being, without exception, is inherently valuable to the world — by virtue only of conception. Pope John Paul wanted us to understand where the human being fits into the universe, what are the reasons for man's existence, and what are his obligations to the truth and to each other?

The Pope went on to very forcefully challenge each of us to confront the harsh reality of a culture — and what that culture is doing to itself — whenever it redefines the human being in terms of a social efficiency or personal convenience. He wanted to know in what ways the human is being undervalued. How is human life under attack?

### Trusting God More

In our first reading (Job 42:1-3, 12-17), we learn that complete trust in God is the heart of our own salvation. For his whole life Job had taken quite a beating. His health impeded him, and his friends turned on him. The more he tried to understand the world that God had placed him in, the more he seemed to suffer. When he had finally had enough and there was no place else to go, Job made the decision to simply submit himself to God's will fully and without question. Then finally, for the first time, Job experienced happiness, real happiness — not because he understood God better, but because he finally trusted God more.

How timely this lesson is. In fact, it's the lesson of all time, and especially at this time in history when it seems that everywhere we turn mankind is developing new

and insidious ways to devalue his neighbor. In the process, whether he intends to or not, he is also diminishing himself. By denying the unborn child the right to live, our culture is creeping ever so closely to the abyss, where already the care of the elderly and the legitimate needs of our neighbors are fast becoming the prerogative of an accountant or the government official.



Students from Thomas Aquinas College and the University of California, Santa Barbara, sing in a joint choir from the Chapel's choir loft.

Our reading from the Acts of the Apostles (17:26-28) reminds us that we are all truly God's children and that we are here for a purpose. We are not born *with* a purpose, we are conceived *for* a purpose. And no matter how much we develop our skills, advance our science, or develop our intellect, no matter how many years or days of life that we are given, our true purpose is to seek and to know God. And in a world that seems increasingly incoherent, we must find the resolve to feel our way through the fog toward God. Although *we* may be in doubt, *God* isn't.

From our gospel (Lk. 1:26-28), it's clear that God had already chosen Mary for a specific mission. His plan for her was already set, just like it is for you and me. As best she could, Mary had to decide to either accept the role that God had placed in front of her or to refuse it. *Of course* she had doubts. *Of course* it made no sense to her. *Of course* she would endure the stigma of an unwed pregnancy. But in the face of everything, this model for all women embraced all that God had placed before her, her suffering as well as her joy. In the end she, too, experienced the happiness that God wanted her to have — not because she understood better, but

because she trusted God more.

Today you and I are challenged in this same way. Neither Job nor Our Lady for whom this chapel is named were ever passive observers of the world in which they found themselves, and neither are we to become passive in the face of what *we* are witnessing. To protect the weakest before the strongest, and the most innocent first of all, we must acknowledge at least the possibility that God is asking us to play a role and to make a difference.

Yes, that will mean that we will have to confront anyone who commands us to remain silent in the marketplace of ideas. No matter how many there are or how loudly they oppose us, our commitment to the weak and to the innocent must find its voice in order to influence the culture that we are in.

### We Must Do Our Best

You and I ask for nothing more than to increase human decency and to be guided by the power of real love. We must first and always do our best to convince those who care too little for the unborn child that their self interest is no virtue. A culture that relentlessly discourages and denigrates the old as well as the unborn denies to both their rightful place in which to live a complete and natural life. And it must be taken on.

We must vigorously explain, simply and forcefully, that every unborn child has a purpose that is just as great and just as necessary as the oldest among us, and that the value of human life can never be measured in years or wealth.

We will never stop grieving deeply for the unborn children who will never take a first breath — not only because of the manner or the means by which their lives came to an end, but because they, more than any of us, are truly the purest of all. Even the unborn child yet to take that first breath affects each of us. The mere sight of an expecting mother reminds us all that there *is* a tomorrow. With each new baby comes the promise that somehow God's intentions will one day become the intentions of all people of good will. Every child brings hope, and every child brings joy to the world. And each child is God's alone.

The good news is that we are in the right place at the right time in history, and we are in the right fight. Be encouraged and have heart. Your presence today testifies not to a fear of the abyss, but to your courage and your desire to accept the world that God has placed you in, that you have something quite powerful to say to those who choose ignorance instead of truth.

For us there can be no other choice in the matter. We are here to serve the least among us, to protect the unwanted, and to reach into the darkness to grab hold of the desperate and the lonely. For as long as we take breath we must continue to lean into the winds and to push our fellow man ever forward toward the truth of his own existence — one inch at a time if need be. We will do it in order to protect the sanctity of all human life, but especially the life of the unborn child. And we will. Because for God, nothing is impossible.



Thomas Aquinas College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., receives the gifts of bread and wine at the Regional Mass for the Unborn.

# Making a Difference — One Student at a Time

## Brian T. Kelly ('88) To Succeed Dr. McLean as Dean of the College

When 20-year-old Brian Kelly attended his sophomore philosophy class at Thomas Aquinas College in 1985, he never imagined that his tutor would one day be the College's president and that he would one day be its dean.

Twenty-five years later, however, Dr. Michael F. McLean, then a young member of the teaching faculty and now the newly appointed president, has named Dr. Kelly to succeed him as dean of the College. The selection, made after extensive consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee for the Selection of the Dean, numerous conversations with members of the faculty, and much deliberation, was approved unanimously by the executive committee acting on behalf of the College's Board of Governors.

"Dr. Kelly has served the College ably as a tutor since 1994," says Dr. McLean. "I am confident that he and I will work well together and that he will be successful in his new position."

After graduating from the College in 1988, Dr. Kelly earned a master's degree and a doctorate in medieval studies at the University of Notre Dame, where he studied under renowned Catholic philosopher Ralph McInerney, an emeritus member of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors. During that time, Dr. Kelly worked as a research assistant at Dr. McInerney's Jacques Maritain Center and as a teaching assistant. He also was awarded a prestigious Bradley Fellowship.

Upon completing his graduate work, Dr. Kelly returned to his *alma mater* as a member of the teaching faculty. "Coming back to the College was a kind of a natural fulfillment of what I saw as important," he recalls. "It was important to learn the truth." His homecoming was also something of a dream come true. "I always saw the position of a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College as the best job in America because you get to



pursue the truth in a way that is very fulfilling to the soul, with good people, and with people who already have a sense as to where the truth lies," he says. "And I thought it was a way that I could make a difference in the world — one student at a time."

Over the course of his nearly 16 years as a tutor, Dr. Kelly has served as assistant dean for student affairs, taught in the Great Books Summer Program for high school students, and served on a number of faculty committees, including the admissions and instruction committees. "Dr. Kelly has a solid understanding of the workings and the principles of the College," says Dr. McLean. "He is fully committed to its mission and to the College's discipleship to Aristotle and St. Thomas."

Dr. Kelly grew up in Indiana and Illinois along with 13 older siblings, including his brother Rev. Brendan Kelly ('85), now a priest in the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb. It was while a student at the College that Dr. Kelly first met his wife, Karen (Stuart '88) — a classmate in Dr. McLean's sophomore philosophy section. The couple live in Santa Paula with their six children, the oldest of whom, Grace, is currently in her sophomore year at the College.

As dean, Dr. Kelly supervises the College's program of Catholic liberal education, assigns tutors to their classes, and is responsible for the general welfare and discipline of the students. He chairs the instruction and curriculum committees and oversees a wide range of College programs, from student activities and alumni relations to the chaplaincy and faculty hiring.

"I am not sure what to expect," he candidly admits of his new job, "but I know that we have extremely good leadership, an extremely good faculty, and some very wise minds for me to lean on for advice and support."

## Regrouped and Reenergized

### Regents Meet on Campus, Welcome Newest Members

As ambassadors for Thomas Aquinas College throughout Southern California, members of the Board of Regents typically do their good work beyond the campus gates. But on Saturday October 3, the Regents came together on campus to regroup, reenergize, and welcome their newest members. "This was a chance for us to set the agenda for the work of the Regents over the next year," said Vice President for Development Quincy Masteller, "as well as to thank them and honor their willingness to support the College."

The gathering began with a meeting in the College's Executive Conference Room with Mr. Masteller and Interim President Peter DeLuca, during which time the Regents' spouses were treated to a tour of the rare books in St. Bernardine of Siena Library. Afterward, both groups met for a late-afternoon Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at which College Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., was the celebrant.

During his homily, Fr. Raftery praised the Regents, who are appointed by the Board of Governors, for their generous service to Thomas Aquinas College. Active in their local communities and professions, the Regents are well-positioned to represent the College in Ventura and Los Angeles counties. In addition to raising awareness about the College and cultivating new friends on its behalf, the Regents also generously support the school's student financial aid program through various fund-raising events, including the annual Golf Classic held at the Sherwood Country Club each spring.

Following Mass, the College hosted a cocktail party for the Regents and their spouses in St. Thomas Plaza, the courtyard that lies between the Chapel and the faculty building. For dinner, the party moved to "The Dumb Ox," a private dining area in St. Joseph Commons that takes its name from the nickname once given to the College's patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, by his classmates.

Much of the evening was dedicated to welcoming the College's newest Regents. "We are proud to have these new members join the Board," said Mr. Masteller. "They are all committed to making Thomas Aquinas College — which is nationally recognized for its academic excellence — even better known here in its own backyard." The new members include:

#### Gordon Huckestein

Mr. Huckestein is the chief executive officer of MRaine Industries, a manufacturer and distributor of premium cardiology equipment based in Ventura and San Diego. After earning his bachelor's degree in business at the University of San Diego, Mr. Huckestein went on to earn a master's in business administration from California State University, Northridge. Gordon and his wife, Deena, live in Oxnard with their two small children. They are members of the Catholic Charities Ventura Board and the Downtown Buenaventura Mission School. The Huckesteins are also active in organizing charity and political events that promote Catholic principles and teachings throughout the county.

#### James A. Latty

A Catholic business leader with world-wide strategic experience at public and private companies, Dr. Latty holds a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology as well as a doctorate, also in chemical engineering, from the University of California, Berkeley. As a registered professional engineer, Dr. Latty has taught courses at Berkeley, the University of Southern California, and Webster University. He has been granted seven

U.S. patents. Dr. Latty is an active supporter of Catholic education at all levels — parish, high school, and college — and he served for nine years as the president of St. Edward Parish School in Dana Point, Calif. Jim and his wife of 39 years, Cathy, have four children and reside in Westlake Village.

#### James L. Tierney

Mr. Tierney is the chief operating officer of InterPrint, a printing and marketing communications firm in Los Angeles. He is also a founder of Pendleton Capital, a private equity investment firm which, like Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, Calif., shares its name with Major General Joseph Henry Pendleton, the late U.S. Marine Corps general. Notably, Mr. Tierney is himself a former Marine Corps artillery officer, having served in units in the First Marine Division and around the world. At the rank of captain he commanded a company of 500 Marines. Mr. Tierney earned an *artium baccalaureus, cum laude*, from Harvard University and a master's degree in business administration from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He serves on the Board of the Foundation of Moorpark College. Jim and his wife, Kendra, have been married since 2001 and live with their five children in Northridge.

*Fourth Annual*  
**Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic**  
*Sherwood Country Club*  
*Thousand Oaks, California*  
*Monday, May 24, 2010*



Presented by the Board of Regents of Thomas Aquinas College  
Proceeds to support student scholarships  
For more information, please contact Quincy Masteller at  
qmasteller@thomasaquinas.edu or 805-525-4417



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## CAMPUS LIFE



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1. During Advent, Thomas Aquinas College students collected 40 crates of non-perishable items for a Rotary Club-sponsored effort that delivered food baskets to some 450 needy Santa Paula families on Christmas Eve. 2. Players from the College's intramural flag-football league compete in a first-ever exhibition match against a visiting team from John Paul the Great University on November 15. 3. Members of the Thomas Aquinas College Choir sing during the annual Advent Concert. **Scenes from the Annual Christmas Appreciation Dinner:** 4. Daniel Lendman ('06) and Alyssa (Yaklin '10) Lang perform a Mozart duet. 5. Members of the College's Board of Governors from left to right: L. Scott Turricchi, Chairman R. James Wensley, and former chairman Maria O. Grant. 6. From left to right: Lynda and Michael McLean, the new president of Thomas Aquinas College, with friends of the College Claire and J. R. Smeed. 7. Terri Dillon, wife of late College president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, and the Honorable William P. Clark, co-chairman of the College's Comprehensive Campaign.

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

#### Weekdays

7:00 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)  
11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)  
5:00 p.m. (Ordinary Form)

#### Saturdays

7:30 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)  
11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)

#### Sundays

7:30 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)  
9:00 a.m. (Ordinary Form)  
11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)  
4:15 p.m. (Ordinary Form)

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

### Calendar of Events

St. Thomas Day Lecture: Dr. Lawrence Feingold, Ave Maria University  
"The Crucified Christ and the Beatific Vision" ..... January 28

All College Seminar ..... February 5

Inauguration of Dr. Michael F. McLean as  
fourth president of Thomas Aquinas College..... February 13

Mardi Gras Dance..... February 13

Lecture: Rev. David Meconi, S.J., St. Louis University  
"St. Augustine on Deification" ..... February 26

Solemnity of the Dedication of  
Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel ..... March 7

Lecture: Dr. Giuseppe Mazzotta, Yale University  
"On Dante's Comedy" ..... March 12

Presentation: Barrie Schwartz, Documenting Photographer, Shroud of  
Turin Research Project "Science and the Shroud of Turin" .... March 17

St. Genesius Players Student Production ..... March 20

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