A Day of Welcome
Visit of Archbishop Miller Marks Start of New Academic Year

As members of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, faculty, and staff welcomed this year’s incoming freshmen at Convocation on August 24, they were joined by a distinguished guest of honor: the Most Rev. J. Michael Miller, CSB, archbishop of Vancouver, British Columbia; former secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education; and the College’s 2009 Convocation speaker.

As is customary, these exercises marking the start of the new academic year began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit. For the first time, however, this Mass was offered in the newly dedicated Chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, with Archbishop Miller serving as principal celebrant and homilist. “You are at Thomas Aquinas College because you are resolved to put your minds and hearts at the service of the sacred cause of truth,” the Canadian prelate told the freshmen. “But your undertaking will be fruitful only if you attend assiduously to your spiritual formation according to the mind of Christ.”

A Welcoming Ceremony

Just as the completion of the Chapel yielded a new setting for the Convocation Mass, so, too, did it improve the setting for the Matriculation ceremony that followed. Over the summer the College’s facilities department dismantled the temporary chapel that for nearly 30 years had occupied roughly one-third of St. Joseph Commons, resulting in a much needed, much larger dining area, a space that could now accommodate the dais and backdrop for this August occasion.

The Newcomers

The members of the Class of 2013 formally began their tenure as students when Director of Admissions Jon Daly called their names, and each approached the dais, greeting Mr. DeLuca and the Archbishop, then signing the College’s registry. The College also welcomed its newest tutor, Dr. Michael Augros, who made the Profession of Faith and took the Oath of Fidelity. With the College thus prepared to start the semester, Mr. DeLuca proclaimed the start of the new academic year, and the students responded with a loud, standing ovation — an annual occurrence met, for the first time, by the sound of bells ringing gloriously from the tower of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Gratitude

“We are very much appreciated Archbishop Miller’s visit of the College. It was an unforgettable experience. The Chapel bears splendid witness to the beauty of God and the unifying place played by theology in your curriculum. Above all, however, I enjoyed my time with the students at the seminar and tutorial I attended. How confidently, respectfully (and even wisely) they discussed and questioned one another!”

A Look at the Class of 2013
Full Contingent of 102 Students Make Up Freshman Class

With private colleges nationwide suffering significant declines in enrollment due to the state of the economy, it is both a blessing and an encouragement that Thomas Aquinas College has assembled a full class of 102 students for the Class of 2013. “We are very grateful,” says Director of Admissions Jon Daly. “This is a hopeful sign that even during tough times, people recognize the value of Catholic liberal education.”

Moreover, the slumping economy has in no way compromised the College’s admissions standards. Average SAT scores for the 52 women and 50 men who make up the Class of 2013 are in keeping with the College’s 10-year average and rate among the top 20 percent in the country. “The students this college attracts,” says Mr. Daly, “are willing to take up this unique kind of education, regardless of the economic climate.”

The Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2013 hails from five countries and 26 states, with about half of the domestic students coming from east of the Rocky Mountains. The ages of the incoming freshmen range from 17 to 26; more than 50 percent went to public or private high schools; and the rest were home-schooled. The group includes several non-Catholic, a veteran, a high school valedictorian, and a cancer survivor.

Second-Time Freshmen

Unlike most college freshmen, Scott Faley of Chery Chase, Md., has already earned a bachelor’s degree. In 2003, he graduated from Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., where he majored in political science. Although appreciative of his time at Williams, Mr. Faley graduated with the sense that his education to that point was somehow lacking. “I just became convinced,” he says, “that there is this tremendous good in truly liberal education that I had missed out on.” So he first applied and then enrolled at the College. “I really view the formation at Thomas Aquinas College as formation for life,” he says. “It is an education to be a free man. It is the best possible foundation, not just for further study in any given field, but for a life of service to one’s family, one’s church, one’s country.”

Now Mr. Faley gets to benefit from the College’s academic program, and his classmates get to benefit from the relative breadth of experience he brings to campus. “We very much welcome second-time students,” says Mr. Daly. “They tend to add a certain wisdom, maturity, and insight that enrich the entire community. We take it as a great compliment that they choose to be here.”

Summer Preview

“I wasn’t sure I would be coming here even a few weeks before I left for campus,” says freshman Christopher Sebastian of Livonia, Mich. “The problem was not whether Mr. Sebastian wanted to come to the College — he had decided that some time earlier — but whether he could. In March, he was diag... continued on page 4
In other subjects, the starting points are known through experience, but the kind starting points and proceeds by argument to other truths.

In sacred theology, the starting points are taken from Scripture and the Magisterium, even have a different kind of starting point. Each kind is held with a different degree of knowledge without an argument. In each subject there must be starting points. You do not edge. But this process cannot be an infinite regress. There must be some things that we can open up for you the truth about reality. And the truth about reality is what you are here to learn.

**Starting Points**

What does it mean for these books to “open up the truth about reality?” Is it that their authors will tell you the truth and you will believe them? Perhaps, in some cases, that will be the best you can do. But that is not what the College intends. It is not even what the authors themselves intend. The argument from authority is the weakest form of argument, and the authors of these books assume you will not give you as better argument. That is one of the reasons we call these books “great.” They do not just give you a string of assertions and ask you to accept them because the author is an expert. All too often, that description fits rather a textbook.

An argument takes you from something you knew already to some new knowledge. But this process cannot be an infinite regress. There must be some things that we can open up for you the truth about reality. And the truth about reality is what you are here to learn.

**Willing to Help**

The financial aid office assigns aid on the basis of need alone, awarding families whatever assistance is necessary to put the price of a Thomas Aquinas College education within reach. Further, the College is determined not to saddle graduates with excessive debt that could hinder the pursuit of their vocations, be it marriage or the priesthood or religious life, upon graduation.

“If students and families are willing to make a maximum effort to cover the cost of tuition through their own income and savings,” Mr. Becher explains, “the College stands ready and willing to help make up the difference. First, the College assists students in securing reasonable loans; then it provides additional support by way of on-campus service-scholarship jobs of 13 hours per week; finally, if need be, the College covers the remainder through direct grants.”

This approach, Mr. DeLuca observes, is in keeping with Thomas Aquinas College’s Catholic identity. “The first Spiritual Work of Mercy,” he explains, “is to instruct the ignorant. We would fall well short of this obligation if we educated only those who could afford the full cost.”

**Faith in the Faithful**

The question, then, is how the College will continue to honor its commitment to make tuition affordable for its families despite the current economic downturn. To this end, the College is appealing to the generosity of its donors to help meet the financial aid crisis.

“‘Our benefactors have always been faithful, helping us to answer whatever challenges come our way,’ says Mr. DeLuca. ‘We have little doubt that if we also remain faithful — faithful in our prayers, faithful to our generous friends, and faithful in our commitment to the families who depend on the College’s assistance — God, in His generosity, will provide.”
Relativism and the Crisis of Truth

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ccording to the Holy Father, among the major challenges to the Church of the 21st century is the massive presence of a relativism in society and in the halls of higher education. All too often relativism is not only the academic’s creed, but also that of the person on the street. Indeed, relativism has become a secular dogma. This “dictatorship of relativism” — a phrase from Cardinal Ratzinger’s homily before the cardinals entered the conclave and elected him pope — expresses society’s “profound crisis of truth.”

For perhaps even a majority of people, seeking truth is considered a hopelessly impossible, even naive, undertaking. They will accept as true only what can be experienced. These views, which assuredly you must challenge, diminish the authority of human reason and produce, the Pope thinks, “a terrible schizophrenia... which has led to the coexistence of rationalism and materialism, hyper-technology and unbridled instinct” (Benedict XVI, Angelus; January 28, 2007).

Dear freshmen: If you are going to fulfill your mission in the Church as students of Thomas Aquinas College, of being men and women able to give an account of the faith you have received, you are going to have to meet this crisis of truth head-on by arguing convincingly, with passion and respect, that the truth can be pursued and, to a limited but real extent, attained by the human mind and communicated to others.

You must do what St. Thomas did in the 13th century. He was always ready to receive the truth wherever it is found. Just as he succeeded in establishing “a fruitful confrontation with the Arab and Hebrew thought of his time” (Ibid), so must you, with a similar wisdom bequeathed by the Holy Spirit, be able to argue convincingly that the search for truth is the only quest which satisfies the human intellect and heart. St. Thomas and his teachings are a sure beacon which helps you grasp that Christianity claims to tell the truth about God, the world, and man and presents itself as the religion of truth.

Faith and Reason

Closely related to the crisis of truth, another challenge awaits you, one which John Paul II considered the greatest challenge of our age: the growing separation between faith and reason, between the Gospel and culture. You can face this crisis with serenity if you take the Angelic Doctor as your master. He is the Church’s “Common Doctor,” and his explanations about the relationship between faith and reason belong to the patrimony of the Catholic faith itself. In his great encyclical on the renewal of philosophy in light of St. Thomas, Pope Leo XIII wrote:

Clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason from faith, while happily associating the one with the other, (Thomas) both preserved the rights and had regard for the dignity of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its height, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas (Aeterni Patris).

It is the genius of Thomas — in the face of the rather different answer offered by the Fathers, owing to their historical context — to have highlighted the autonomy of philosophy, and with it the laws proper to reason, which enquires on the basis of its own dynamic. He gave a new emphasis to the specific responsibility of reason, which is not to be absorbed by faith. Thomas was writing at a time when Aristotle’s philosophical works became accessible in their entirety, and the Jewish and Arab philosophies presented themselves as the continuation of Greek philosophy. In this new environment, Thomas clearly saw that Christianity was obliged to argue the case for its own reasonableness.

Consequently, for Thomas, these two dimensions, faith and reason, should not be separated or placed in competition; rather, they always go hand in hand. "Both the light of reason and the light of faith come from God, (Thomas) argued; hence there can be no contradiction between them” (John Paul II, Fides et Ratio, 43).

Pope Benedict on Thomas

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philosopher and a theologian, Aquinas offers "an effective model of harmony between reason and faith, dimensions of the human spirit that are completely fulfilled in the encounter and dialogue with one another" (Benedict XVI, Angelus; January 28, 2007). In a brilliant lecture prepared for the University of Rome, La Sapienza, continued on page 10

St. Thomas Aquinas: Master and Guide

The Matriculation Address of His Excellency J. Michael Miller, CSB

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efore offering a few remarks, I would like to express my gratitude to Thomas Aquinas College for the unique role it is playing in the landscape of higher education in North America. Not a large institution in terms of the number of students and faculty, you nonetheless have been at the forefront of renewal, offering a Catholic liberal education which not only has changed the lives of its alumni but also has modified the course of a great many other institutions which have been influenced by your pedagogical method of tutorials and seminars and your rigorous curriculum, which aims to bring unity to the intellectual life.

In the Archdiocese of Vancouver we have many graduates of the College who are making enormous contributions to our particular church as artists, teachers, professionals, and parents of families — and I am extraordinarily grateful for their gifts honed here with such care.

After so many years of admiring the College from afar, it is good to be here on the campus. This is truly a Catholic center of learning because it reverberates with the ecclesial life of faith, a faith which unfolds the richness of reason and is given fervent expression liturgically, sacramentally, and through prayer, acts of charity, and a passion for justice.

This year begins with a significant difference since one of the great and visionary men who guided the College with such integrity, vision, grace, and hope is no longer with you. I was in Ireland, at the very meeting which Dr. Dillon was to attend, when news reached us of his tragic accident. It was a great loss for you and for Catholic higher education. All too often relativism is not only the academic’s creed, but also

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Relativism and the Crisis of Truth

that of the person on the street. Indeed, relativism has become a secular dogma. This “dictatorship of relativism” — a phrase from Cardinal Ratzinger’s homily before the cardinals entered the conclave and elected him pope — expresses society’s “profound crisis of truth.”

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The Making of a Thomas Aquinas College Freshman

Orientation Prepares New Students for Campus Life

The new freshman arrives at Thomas Aquinas on the Thursday before Convocation, not knowing where he will live, who will be his roommate, or what his class schedule will look like. By the following Tuesday, these questions have all been answered, and he is mastering Euclidean definitions, performing essays on Eusclenastes, and debating the finer points of The Iliad — all in the company of new friends he already holds dear.

Just what happens during these days of transformation?

“It is a time of great grace,” says Jon Daly, the College’s director of admissions who also arranges the freshman orientation program. “The freshmen tend to arrive very excited and also a little nervous, but by the first day of classes, they are ready to go.”

Socials and Soirées

In order to facilitate friendships and forge class unity — thereby creating an optimal learning environment — the students’ first weekend on campus consists of multiple social gatherings. Thursday night begins with a barbecue dinner at which freshmen and their families meet the faculty, followed by a student ice cream social in St. Joseph Commons.

There, in addition to coming to know their classmates, the new students can acquaint themselves with the evening’s hosts — the prefects and student activity directors, who serve ice cream for the freshmen, then join them at their tables for conversation. “The prefects are the freshmen’s first guides, introducing them to the campus and to the College itself,” says Mr. Daly. “Throughout the day, they have been helping the freshmen move into their rooms and get settled in. So it’s nice for everyone to be able to relax that evening and get to know each other better.”

For Friday’s social there is a casual “evening soirée” on the academic quadrangle. Joining in the festivities are the College’s three chaplains, Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J.; Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P.; and Rev. Charles Willingham, O.Praem, who formally introduce themselves to the new students. Then, when the evening cool breaks the summer heat, the crowd heads over to the basketball courts for two highly competitive games: the freshman women vs. their prefects, followed by a men’s match.

Finally, for Saturday night’s social, the new students return to the quadrangle for comedic ice-breakers, a team trivia game, and various teambuilding competitions. At last, the evening ends with a movie, which is, fittingly, a classic — The Maltese Falcon.

Readings and Dialogues

There is more to orientation, however, than socializing. A significant portion of the weekend is dedicated to preparing freshmen for the classroom discussions that define Thomas Aquinas College’s pedagogy. On both Friday and Saturday, the new students meet for “practice” seminars with their tutors and the classmates who will be in their “sections,” or class groupings, for the semester. “The idea behind these seminars,” says Mr. Daly, “is to help the students become comfortable with the discussion method prior to the start of classes.”

The readings for the seminars, which freshmen receive when they arrive on campus, are the same used every year: “Learning in Wartime” by C. S. Lewis; “Liberal Education and Freedom” by the late tutor Rev. Thomas A. McGovern, S.J.; and “Liberal Education and the Humanities” by College founder and tutor Marcus R. Berquist. “We want the texts to be fresh in the students’ minds when they meet to discuss them,” explains Mr. Daly. “And we want them to put their strong study habits to use during that first busy weekend.”

Thus, by the first day of classes, the freshmen have gained a good sense of what the life of a Thomas Aquinas College student entails — the discipline that careful reading demands, the listening and active participation required for a productive classroom discussion, and the camaraderie and fellowship that will shape their lives for the next four years.
The Return of Dr. Michael Augros ('92)

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thought the son of a philosophy professor, Michael Augros took little interest in the subject until he was 18 years old. One of his teachers at Merrimack High School (N.H.) tried to organize a debate on abortion, but scrapped the plan when he could find only one student — Mike — willing to argue the pro-life side. Thence followed several outside-the-classroom conversations that whetted the senior’s appetite for argumentation. So Mike approached his father, a member of the philosophy department at St. Anselm College, who in turn introduced him to Plato.

“I read through all of Plato,” Mike recalls, “but I wanted something more definitive than I was getting.” His father then recommended the works of Plato’s most famous student: “I read the opening of Aristotle’s Metaphysics.” Mike continues, “and that’s when my fate was sealed. I knew I wanted to do this for life.”

A gifted artist, Mike passed up an offer to attend the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design, opting instead to study at St. Anselm. During his freshman year, however, he was disappointed by his inability to find classmates who shared his zeal for intellectual conversations. “But I had this teacher,” he pauses, “Paul O’Reilly” — a 1984 Thomas Aquinas alumnus who would go on to join the College’s faculty in 1989. “He saw my frustration and recommended that I apply to Thomas Aquinas College.”

After completing his freshman year at St. Anselm, Michael became a freshman again, enrolling at the College in 1988 along with his younger sister, Hélène (Froula ‘92). “I really flourished here,” he says, recalling his love for the curriculum, the enduring friendships that he formed, and the opportunities he had to deepen his faith. “I was made for this program. It was everything I was hoping it would be.”

Upon graduating in 1992, Michael traveled east to undertake graduate studies at Boston College. There, he was reacquainted with an old friend from high school, Amy Desroisers, with whom he would soon fall in love and then marry just one year after completing his doctoral work in 1995.

That fall, Dr. Augros returned to his alma mater, where he would spend the next three years as a tutor, a time which was professionally fulfilling but personally challenging. “I never wanted to leave teaching here,” he says, but adapting to life on the West Coast proved difficult for his family, especially for his wife, who was a new convert to Catholicism. “I never wanted to leave teaching here,” he says, but adapting to life on the West Coast proved difficult for his family, especially for his wife, who was a new convert to Catholicism.

“I wanted to live in the College, but I realized my family needed me to be somewhere else,” Dr. Augros says. When an offer to teach at a Legionaries of Christ college in California this past summer and now teaches junior lab, sophomore math, and sophomore theology. “I’m having conversations with students outside of class,” he smiles — a passion he first discovered as a high school senior more than 20 years ago. “This is where I fit.”

The College in the News

Curriculum, Chapel, Dr. Dillon, and Students Garner Headlines

Pacific Coast Business Times

“College Has Tools for Making Business Leaders,” reads the headline in the August 14-20 edition of the Pacific Coast Business Times. The article that follows examines the ways that liberal education prepares well-rounded graduates to thrive not only in one discipline. “Thomas Aquinas College may have the key to educating better employees for companies everywhere,” the article begins. “The Santa Paula school’s uncommon curriculum and learning structure set it apart from other liberal arts colleges. But most important to employers, graduates are trained in sparking discussions and handling ethical issues.”

“EWTN Live”

Thomas Aquinas College’s president and communications manager appeared on the EWTN television network for the September 30 edition of “EWTN Live” with host Rev. Mitch Pacwa, S.J. The show highlighted Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, featuring video footage from the Dedication Masses in March and Pope Benedict XVI’s blessing of the Chapel cornerstone in 2008. Noting that many colleges “draw attention to themselves through their sports teams,” Fr. Pacwa credited Thomas Aquinas College with instead “doing it through orthodoxy in the classroom and in the new architecture visible on campus.”

Legatus Magazine

The cover story of the September 2009 issue of Legatus Magazine, the flagship publication of the national organization for Catholic business leaders, spotlights the College’s new chapel and offers a memorial to late president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon. “Dillon, a Legatus member who joined the Thomas Aquinas faculty in 1972, shepherded the College through a period of growth that included the addition of nine buildings among them the chapel, library and science building,” writes reporter Judy Roberts. “He raised nearly $100 million and gained national recognition for the College’s Great Books program.” In an accompanying editorial, editor Patrick Novecosky reflects, “Each person was created by God. Each person was created for God. Tom Dillon lived that reality, and the world is a better place for it.”

Ventura County Star

A front-page feature story in the August 25 edition of the Ventura County Star featured a spectacular photo of the Most Rev. J. Michael Miller, C.S.B., archbishop of Vancouver, offering the Convocation Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Just above, the headline proclaims, “Staying Faithful to its Teachings.” The ensuing story observes that “Thomas Aquinas College is not your typical modern university,” and that it is “attracting national attention through its strong financial aid and strong academics.” The article further reports that “Thomas Aquinas stands out among Catholic colleges because Catholicism plays such a major role in its identity and curriculum.”

Sacred Architecture

Duncan Stroik, the design architect for Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, penned a moving tribute to late president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon in the June 2009 issue of Sacred Architecture, the journal of the Institute for Sacred Architecture. “Behind every great building and its architect there is a visionary patron,” writes Mr. Stroik. “Someone who thinks big, takes risks, raises funds, and above all recognizes the significance of architecture.” Dr. Dillon was, he adds, “like most patrons … an incredibly busy man, but he found time to do the things that mattered, such as visiting artists’ workshops and traveling to Europe to pick out marble.” The architect and the patron, says Mr. Stroik, worked “in the spirit of co-authors,” and the “length of the nave, the heavenly light from the clear windows, and the simple color palette … all flowed from (Dr. Dillon’s) vision for the church and his own character.”

Orange County Register

In its June 3 edition, the Orange County Register featured a profile of Nicole Madroz, the co-valedictorian at JSerra Catholic High School in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., and now a member of the College’s Class of 2013. Noting that Miss Madroz graduated with a 4.7 GPA, the article quotes JSerra Principal Tom Waszak as praising her “devotion to furthering the gospel message through service.” Asked where she sees herself in five years, Miss Madroz replied, “I will have finished college with a liberal arts degree, and I will probably be working to earn money for graduate school. During college, I will hopefully have gained a better sense of how I can use my intellectual talents in a career that truly builds up society.”

Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., administers the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity to the College’s newest tutor, Dr. Michael Augros.
Choosing the Right College 2010-11

In the early 1970s, as many eminent Catholic colleges began to detach learning from the Church’s traditional principles, a small group of scholars in California formulated a new vision for liberal arts education. This vision, which takes into account numerous social criteria, including “the prevalence of religious practice,” is the perennial category of “Most Religious Students.”

High Marks for Thomas Aquinas

Princeton Review: College True to its Founding

At this time of year, the various college guides publish their annual editions, which, although imperfect measurements of goodness or worth, do, in their own way, reflect the value of authentically Catholic, truly liberal education in the world today. As Interim President Peter L. DeLuca, one of the College’s founders, recently put it, “When we founded Thomas Aquinas College 38 years ago, we had in mind to do the very best kind of Catholic liberal education first and foremost for the benefit of students. But we also had a secondary goal in mind: We wanted to demonstrate that, without compromising either the Catholic character of our institution or our unique academic program, we could show that it is viable in the modern age. The College’s high rankings in the various guides, both secular and Catholic, indicate that we are achieving that goal. We have not compromised our institution or our program and yet we are being widely recognized as offering an excellent education.”

The Princeton Review’s compilation of The 371 Best Colleges, 2010 Edition contains 62 “Top 20” lists based on nationwide surveys in which some 122,000 students rated their schools on criteria ranging from faculty and cost of living to social life and campus food. According to these surveys, Thomas Aquinas College’s reputation for academic excellence and the faith and honesty of its students continues to flourish. Meanwhile, students report being highly pleased with the financial aid the College extended to their families.

“Most Religious Students”

Among the various “Top 20” rankings featured in The 371 Best Colleges is the perennial category of “Most Religious Students.” Traditionally, the Mormon Brigham Young University has topped this list, but this year the first-place designation went to Thomas Aquinas College, based on students’ reports about the seriousness of their faith and the regularity of their religious practice.

“The sacraments on campus is of capital importance,” says Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., noting that the Mass is offered four times each day in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, and confession is available both before and after each one. Students also take part in many other voluntary devotions, such as Eucharistic adoration and nightly rosaries, that provide an abundance of grace and can lead to vast spiritual growth over the course of four years.

Campus Morality

The Princeton Review reports that “No one cheats.” Moreover, the College ranked ninth on the Review’s list of the country’s most “Stone-Cold Sober Schools” (based on minimum hours of alcohol plus extensive time spent studying) and seventh in the U.S. on the “Future Rotarians and Daughters of the American Revolution” list, which takes into account numerous social criteria, including “the prevalence of religion.”

Although such titles are cheeky and perhaps, in light of the broader cultural climate, intended to be deprecating, Thomas Aquinas College students wear them “as a badge of honor,” says junior Emily Barry. “If you’re a serious Catholic trying to live the Christian life in fidelity to the Gospel, then there’s something attractive about a community that’s always growing together and focusing on the opportunity to live the Faith and be formed in a life of virtue. Most college campuses can’t provide that,” she adds.

Given the students’ moral convictions, especially as they pertain to contentious political issues relating to abortion, euthanasia, and marriage, it should come as little surprise that the College ranked No. 16 in yet another category — the “most conservative students” list. Yet it would be a mistake, argues Interim President DeLuca, to infer that either the intellectual or the moral life of the College is motivated by politics. “The truths of reason and of the Faith precede and transcend any politics,” he says. “Our aim is not to train liberals or conservatives; it is to form lovers of truth.”

Forbes: “America’s Best Colleges 2009”

Whereas most college guides create separate rankings for liberal arts colleges and universities, Forbes combines them into a single list of 600, or the top 15 percent, of the highest esteem for the College’s academic program, U.S. News also recognizes Thomas Aquinas College among all liberal arts colleges for its affordability and the generosity of its financial aid program. The guide lists Thomas Aquinas College as one of the nation’s “Best Values,” rating it 32nd out of the top 40, and 45th of the top 50 institutions in terms of the “Least Debt” carried by its graduates.

U.S. News: “America’s Best Colleges 2010”

In the latest edition of its annual report, “America’s Best Colleges 2010,” U.S. News & World Report ranks Thomas Aquinas College in the top tier of American liberal arts colleges. The College is one of just four Catholic institutions to be ranked among the magazine’s top 100.
Newman Guide: College a Model for Catholic Campuses

Featuring a stunning photograph of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel and Thomas Aquinas College students on its cover, the second edition of The Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College, published by the Cardinal Newman Society, recommends only 21 “faithful Catholic colleges in the United States.” Of these, it recognizes Thomas Aquinas College as being “the first of the new Catholic colleges launched after the onset of the crisis of Catholic higher education in the late 1960s,” crediting the College for often serving “as a guide for these institutions.”

What makes Choosing a Catholic College unique within the college guide genre is that it is distinctly Catholic. The Cardinal Newman Society, which is committed to restoring and enhancing genuine Catholic higher education nationwide, places an emphasis in its reviews on qualities that are largely ignored by its secular counterparts, such as fidelity to the Magisterium, a dynamic campus spiritual life, morally healthy student living conditions, and a sound core curriculum.

Great Books Oasis

While there are several solid Catholic colleges that successfully reflect the Catholic intellectual tradition, “The Newman Guide” singles out Thomas Aquinas College for having “built a national reputation for its rigorous Great Books approach as well as a ‘discussion-style class format and a curriculum that emphasizes…St. Thomas Aquinas.’” The guide’s enthusiasm for the College’s academic program is matched by its regard for the College’s tutors. “Among (the College’s) many strengths,” it says, “is an impressive faculty of… well-rounded academics.”

Vibrant Spiritual Program

Describing Thomas Aquinas College as “the first of the new orthodox Catholic colleges after Vatican II,” “The Newman Guide” goes on to note that the College’s founding document, A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education, was in many ways ahead of its time. The Blue Book’s commentary about the perilous state of Catholic education was, according to the Cardinal Newman Society, “as much a prediction as an acknowledgment in 1969.”

Noting that too many colleges in the United States have, sadly, forsaken their Catholic identity and stopped trying to maintain fidelity to the teaching Church, “The Newman Guide” compliments Thomas Aquinas College for its faithfulness and the faith of its students. “There are four Masses daily offered by three non-teaching chaplains who are of the Dominican, Jesuit, and Norbertine orders,” the guide notes; “students also participate in an evening Rosary and Eucharistic Adoration and frequent opportunities for confession.” It also celebrates the campus’ new crown jewel, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, which, it says, “enhances an already vibrant spiritual program.”

Finding that there “have been no questionable speakers on campus,” “The Newman Guide” says “Thomas Aquinas College reflects a strong public witness to the Faith.” As just one example, it points out that roughly two-thirds of the student body participate in the annual Walk for Life West Coast — “about 400 miles away.”

A Wide Following

Eliciting the findings of the various secular college guides, “The Newman Guide” comments on the high value of a Thomas Aquinas College education relative to its price. “The price for this nationally recognized education is well below the average for private colleges in California,” the guide reports, while acknowledging that the College maintains “this high quality of education… without accepting federal or state government support.”

In the conclusion of its nine-page review, “The Newman Guide” says “In some ways, Thomas Aquinas College stands by itself among Catholic colleges.” The author attributes to the College “an impressive intellectual rigor… matched by a commitment to orthodox Catholicism,” adding that “this combination has attracted a wide following” that extends not only “around the country” but has also “become international.”
President’s Council Profile: Dr. Thomas Krause

California Businessman Finds Success in Hiring College’s Alumni

For 22 years, President’s Council member Dr. Thomas Krause has actively supported Thomas Aquinas College as a benefactor, a parent, and perhaps most notably, an employer. The chairman of Behavioral Science Technology, an international consulting firm specializing in organizational culture and safety management, Dr. Krause regularly hires the College’s graduates — and with great success. A native of Northern California, Dr. Krause learned of the College around the time he started practicing psychology in the nearby city of Ojai in the 1970s. “Hearing about the curriculum locally caused me to be interested because I knew I had never read all those books, even though I had a PhD in a social science,” he says. Then his sister-in-law Leslie Hidley (’86), enrolled as a freshman in 1982 and “had a really wonderful time,” confirming his positive first impressions.

When his daughter Christel (Kelsey ’91) was nearing graduation from high school, Dr. Krause and his wife, Cathryn, were determined to send her to the College. “She had been accepted at a really good school, an Ivy League-kind of college, and that’s where she wanted to go,” Dr. Krause recalls, but Christel agreed to give the College a try. During her time on campus, she “got taken with the curriculum,” as well as with the Faith, converting in her freshman year.

“No one of us were Catholic at that time,” Dr. Krause observes, “but most of the family is now,” including Dr. and Mrs. Krause, who were received into the Church three years ago. “Christel’s conversion had a big influence on me in so that it caused me to rethink things I hadn’t thought about in a long time.”

Enthused by Christel’s learning, in 1990 Dr. and Mrs. Krause joined the President’s Council — the College’s financial backbone, consisting of hundreds of loyal benefactors who contribute $1,000 or more annually. As a token of gratitude, the College invites Council members to its Great Books Weekends each July, which the Krauses enjoyed immensely. “It was those early seminars that really got us interested; it was having the actual experience of reading and discussing those books,” Dr. Krause remembers.

Eager to get a further taste of such an education, he went on to earn a master’s degree in liberal arts through a program at St. John’s College in Santa Fe, N.M., where he has been a member of the Board of Visitors and Governors since 2001.

When Christel and her friends began graduating from the College, Dr. Krause began hiring alumni for his company. He soon discovered that these liberally educated men and women made for exemplary workers, chiefly for three reasons: First, through reading political philosophy the College’s graduates acquire a proper sense of citizenship. “A good citizen is someone who understands the overall objectives of the organization and works hard to accomplish them,” he says. “It’s almost rare these days to find someone that gets the idea of organizational citizenship. It’s an idea that’s almost lost in the modern culture.”

Second, Dr. Krause finds that because of their knowledge of the Socratic method, the College’s alumni are uniquely adept at solving problems and working cooperatively. “If your task is to, say, lead a discussion with a client, you need to have some familiarity with what a discussion is and how a set of issues gets approached,” he explains.

Finally, Dr. Krause notes that the graduates’ thoughtful study of philosophy prepares them for the modern economy, where intricate and impersonal relationships, often far-removed, can complicate ethical decision-making. “What the employer is looking for is an employee that gets that (complexity), is willing to examine it carefully, and behaves in a way that’s consistent with an ethical standard,” he says.

“When you’re looking to hire someone, you’re looking for someone you think of as a good person, someone who will be a good colleague,” Dr. Krause adds. “It’s very hard to tell when you interview people who’s going to be like that because everyone is trying hard to look like that…. So, knowing that (an applicant) went to a college like Thomas Aquinas gives you a kind of direction that goes in a positive way.”

Dr. Krause’s experience — as both a parent and an employer — has sustained his generosity toward the College over the years as a member of the President’s Council. “I think it’s very important to American Catholicism that there is a place like Thomas Aquinas College,” he says. “It is the only place of its kind in the U.S. That’s good for education and it’s good for Catholicism. So, I think in two reasons to support the institution.”

In Memoriam: Dr. Harry Gray Browne, 1929 – 2009

In the early morning hours of August 28, Thomas Aquinas College lost a member of its Board of Governors and one of its dearest friends, Dr. Harry G. Browne, who died in his sleep, unexpectedly but peacefully, at his home in Sparks, Nev. A graduate of Yale University and Cornell University Medical College, Dr. Browne was vice president of Therapeutic Antibodies, Inc., in New York; a clinical assistant professor of pathology at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine; and a specialist in tropical medicine. His passion for travel and foreign languages led him to conduct research and open businesses worldwide, including in Mexico and Egypt. A lover of ideas and words, Dr. Browne debated in debate and wrote a number of short stories, often set in North Africa. He is survived by his wife, Jean, as well as five of their six children and 10 grandchildren.

“Harry Browne was a man of great intellect, deep faith, and extraordinary generosity,” says Thomas Aquinas College Interim President Peter DeLuca. “He was always a proud spokesman and ambassador for the College, wherever his journeys took him.”

A scientist and physician with a profound devotion to Christ and His church, Dr. Browne embraced the harmony of faith and reason to which Thomas Aquinas College aspires. “Truth is important — in the spiritual and the material realms,” he remarked in 2004. “In the scientific world, all too often, truth is cast aside in favor of hard, cold facts. But to be a good scientist, you can’t reject one type of truth or one type of knowledge. If you do, you’re going to start with a potentially weak premise and probably not know how to check your conclusions as you go along. The practical sciences necessarily depend on theoretical knowledge. A doctor of medicine like myself should be the type of person that is very interested in philosophy, reality, religion, and even revelation.”

The son of an early benefactor and member of the Board of Governors, Margaret Gray Browne, Dr. Browne faithfully continued his family’s tradition of supporting the College. After Mrs. Browne retired from the Board in 1983, her colleagues elected Dr. Browne to replace her, a position he held from 1985 until his death.

A generous benefactor, Dr. Browne was a member of the President’s Council since 1976 and was inducted into the Order of St. Albert the Great in 1998. He was a regular participant at the College’s Summer Weekends for President’s Council members, and he helped host receptions and golf tournaments on the College’s behalf. Just four days before his death, he was on campus for Convocation and a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors.

In 2007, Dr. Browne was overjoyed when his son John Douglas Browne II (Doug), a successful entrepreneur and farmer, enrolled at the College at the age of 41. Tragically, Doug was forced to leave the College after only a few months due to a struggle with kidney cancer, which claimed his life one year later. Many of his fellow members of the Class of 2011 joined Dr. Browne and other members of the Browne family for an on-campus memorial Mass last winter.

On Friday, October 2, the College likewise held a memorial Mass for Dr. Browne in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
D ear faculty, administrators, staff, students, and friends in Christ:

The Eucharist we are now celebrating inserts this community of Thomas Aquinas College into a millen-

nial tradition of institutions of higher learning in the West that have invoked the Gift of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of a new academic year. It belongs to the very nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of nature of a college dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the love of wisdom that it calls upon the guidance of .

The Spirit of Truth

In this morning’s first reading (Ex. 36:24-28), the Prophet Ezekeiel, a witness of one of the most tragic ages the Jewish people lived through—the destruction of the Kingdom of Judea and its capital, Jerusalem, fol-

lowed by the bitter exile in Babylon — prophesied a great change of fortune. He became a herald of hope for a distraught people. After their purification through trial and suffering, the dawn of a new era was about to break forth, a time which would be marked by the people’s re-

cognition of a “new heart” and a “new spirit”: “I will give you a new heart, and place a new spirit within you, tak-

ing from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts” (Ex. 36:26). This “new spirit” given by God to His people will be His Spirit, the Spirit of God Himself.

The life-giving Spirit that brought creatures to life at creation is insufficient on its own to reach the destiny God has planned for it. The law of Moses pointed out ob-
ligations, but could not change the human heart to fulfill them. A new heart and a new spirit were needed, and that is precisely what God offers us through the Redemption accomplished by Jesus. The Father removes our hearts of stone and gives us hearts of flesh like Christ’s, enlivened by a new spirit, the Holy Spirit, who sustains us, moves us, and guides us toward the light of truth and pours “God’s love ... into our hearts” (Rom. 5:5).

Since Pentecost, the prophesy of Ezekeiel is now fullfilld and every time the mind and heart are filled with the Spirit of Truth sent by the Father. We pray fervently this morning that it will be fulfilled in this glorious Chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity today and throughout the coming academic year.

The Living Water

In the Gospel (Jn. 7:37-39), Jesus invites His listeners who are thirsty to come to Him and drink. The water of Jesus is the Holy Spirit. On the feast of Tabernacles Jesus promised to quench humanity’s spiritual thirst with this Spirit: “Rivers of living water will flow from within him who believes in me” (Jn. 7:38). The Creator Spirit transforms our stony hearts, emptying them of darkness and filling them with divine light and life, wisdom and joy.

The Holy Spirit’s presence in the Church and in individual souls in the state of grace is a permanent indwelling, dynam-

ic and creative. Those who have drunk the Water of Jesus will have within themselves “a fountain of water that leaps up to provide eternal life” (Jn. 4:14).

The Holy Spirit changes the lives of those who wel-

come Him, renewing the face of the earth and transform-

ing all creation. The Font of Life is our inner teacher and, at the same time, the strong wind that blows the sails of the bark of Peter to the shore of the heavenly Jerusalem.

“Remaining faithful to the Lord Jesus (whom Mary presents to us), you are being internally prepared to commit yourselves intensely to intellectual work, to the pursuit of truth, illuminated by the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

St. Paul and Christian Wisdom

I would like to remind you of what the Apostle wrote about wisdom, that wisdom which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul speaks of the “wisdom of the Cross,” a wisdom opposed to the so-called wisdom of this world. He contrasts these two wisdoms, with only the former being true, while the latter is “foolishness.” This contrast of the two wisdoms is not the difference between theolog-

y on, on the one hand, and philosophy or science on the other. Rather, for Paul, it is a matter of two fundamental attitudes. The “wisdom of this world” is a way of living and of viewing things apart from God, the following of dominant opinions, according to the criteria of success and power. “Divine wisdom,” on the other hand, con-
sists in following the mind of Christ; it is Christ and His life-giving Spirit who open to us the path of truth.

Dear students, you are at Thomas Aquinas College because you are resolved to put your minds and hearts at the service of the sacred cause of truth. But your un-

dertaking will be fruitful only if you attend assiduously to your spiritual formation according to the mind of Christ: “Have in you the mind that is in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). In order to know and understand spiritual things, it is necessary to be spiritual men and women. If you are of the flesh, with a stony heart, inevitably you will fall into foolishness, even if you study a great deal, acquire scholarly habits, and become what St. Paul calls a “master of worldly argument” (1 Cor. 1:20). For such people, the Cross is only a scandal and folly. The Apostle says so with impressive force: “The message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (1 Cor. 1:18).

So Paul invites you — the faculty and students of Thomas Aquinas College — to go beyond the wisdom of this world to the deeper wisdom of the Cross. It reveals “the full power of God’s boundless love, for the Cross is an expression of love, and love is the true power that is revealed precisely in this seeming weakness” (“Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, October 29, 2008).

Learn then, dear friends in Christ, from the Spirit you have received, that the highest wisdom is that of the Cross. Paul’s teaching confirms Jesus’ own words when He blessed the Father and affirmed: “You have hidden these things from the wise and clever and revealed them to babes” (Mt. 11:25). The “wise” of whom Jesus speaks are those whom Paul calls the “wise of this world.” Only the “babes,” those who accept “the message of the Cross” (1 Cor. 1:18), can become truly wise.

The wisdom of the Cross is a light that illuminates the whole meaning of human life. For this reason, St. Augus-
tine rightly speaks of the Cross as the chair of the Divine Teacher. It is from this chair that we receive the sublime revelation of God’s plan and of His love for us. The lim-

lits of merely human wisdom are expanded by faith in the God-Man nailed to the Cross and raised to life in the glory of the Resurrection. Embrace, therefore, this cathedra of true wisdom, the Cross, from which Christ draws all things to Himself. He who was Himself thirsty on Golgotha quenches the thirst of those who contempt-

uate His face and offers them the “rivers of living water,” of true wisdom, as a gift of His Spirit. This is not an anti-intellectual attitude, a turn-

ning away from reason and toward a facile fideism. St. Paul does not denigrate the use of reason. Nor does he undervalue the human effort necessary for the pursuit of knowledge. What St. Paul denounces is a worldly wisdom steeped in human pride. Following Jesus, the Apostle opposes the type of arrogant intellectualism in which a person, even if he knows a great deal, loses sen-

sitivity to truth and the freedom to open himself to the wonder of the divine plan of salvation.

“Societas Spiritus”

O n Mary’s lap sits the Wisdom of the Father, that is, Jesus the Christ. He continues to send us the Spirit, transforming this college into what St. Augustine might call a “societas Spiritus,” a community of the Holy Spirit, where you gather together to study, ponder, and contemplate the wonders of God, the human person, and the good and holy life. Remaining faithful to the Lord Jesus (whom Mary presents to us) you are being internally prepared to commit yourselves intensely to intellec-
tual work, to the pursuit of truth, illuminated by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

As we continue our Eucharistic sacrifice, let us once again implore the Lord that He will guide the begin-

ning of your work this academic year, direct its progress, and bring it to a fruitful conclusion. Gathered under the maternal protection of Our Lady, let us pray: “Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful at this college of yours, and kindle in them the fire of your love!” Amen.

His Excellency J. Michael Miller, CSB, the archbishop of Vancouver, British Colombia, was the principal celebrant at the Thomas Aquinas College 2009 Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit.

The Most Rev. J. Michael Miller, CSB, incenses the altar of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel during the Convocation Mass of the Holy Spirit.
College Hosts Summer Studies
Alumni Study Social Teachings; Benefactors Gather for Seminars

The greatest challenge for Catholic colleges and universities today is to be faithful to the teachings of the Church, even in the midst of a declining culture — to be a sign of contradiction in a society that with each passing year grows more and more decadent. — Thomas E. Dillon

On June 12, nearly 30 alumni and guests, representing 17 graduating classes from 1976 to 2008, gathered on campus for a two-day series of seminars. The conference was hosted by The Aquinas Review and facilitated by The Review’s editor and the founding president of Thomas Aquinas College, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, along with College faculty members Dr. Anthony Andres, Mr. Steve Cain, and Dr. John Nieno. Convened to examine questions regarding social justice and economics, it included select readings from Wendell Barry, a 20th-century social critic of modern industrial society; the Politics of Aristotle; St. Thomas Aquinas’ Summa Theologiae, concerning fellowship and charity in the polity; and finally, readings by Charles De Koninck regarding the nature of the common good.

Dr. McArthur explained why The Aquinas Review decided to sponsor this conference at this point in time, says, “We noted that most Catholics had no real grasp of the social doctrine of the Church. How then, we thought, could Catholic laymen exercise their role as Christians in the evangelization of their society without understanding the linesmanship of a good society in our time? So, we thought, there should be a conference in which we could begin the study of the social doctrine we need to know.

The timing of the event could not have been more fortuitous, directly anticipating the release of the Holy Father’s latest encyclical, Caritas in Veritate, in which he states:

“The risk for us is that the de facto interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development. Only in charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more human and humanizing value.”

The conference was also a response to a request made of the College’s late president, Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, by the president of the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Renato Raffaele Cardinal Martino. After having attended, at Cardinal Martino’s request, the international meeting convened in Mexico City in 2005 to promulgate the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Dr. Dillon had received a letter from Cardinal Martino expressing his desire that Thomas Aquinas College help in some way to advance the understanding of the Church’s social doctrine. When, therefore, Dr. McArthur discussed his thoughts for this conference, Dr. Dillon was happy to endorse it.

Although this summer’s seminar did not explicitly examine the Church’s teachings on social justice, it served as a preamble to that discussion, defining the precepts and first principles upon which that teaching is built. This first conference marks the beginning of what one hopes will be a fruitful dialogue among alumni, friends, and faculty of the College. Says Dr. McArthur, “We intend to have a similar conference yearly and hope that many more alumni and friends will attend as we go along.”

Pope Benedict describes St. Thomas’ understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology, between reason and faith, by using the classical formula adopted by the Council of Chalcedon to describe the relationship between Christ’s human and divine natures. Philosophy and theology, he said, must be interrelated “without confusion and without separation.”

“Without confusion” means that each of the two must preserve its own identity. Philosophy is a quest carried out by reason with freedom and responsibility; but it must recognize both its limits and its greatness. For its part, theology draws upon a treasury of knowledge, divine Revelation, that always surpasses it, the depths of which can never be fully plumbed through reflection. Balancing “without confusion,” there is also “without separation.” Philosophy does not start again from zero with every thinking subject in total isolation, but takes its place within the great dialogue of historical wisdom, which it accepts docilely and develops creatively. In its pursuit, philosophy, the use of reason, cannot exclude what religions, and the Christian faith in particular, have given to humanity as signposts for the journey. The Holy Father observes that St. Thomas thinks that human reason, as it was, “breathes”; it moves within a vast open horizon where it can express the best of itself. If, instead, “a person reduces himself to thinking only of material objects or those that can be proven, he closes himself to the great questions about life, himself, and God, and is impoverished” (Benedict XVI, Address at the University of Regensburg, September 12, 2006). Such a person has divorced reason from faith, rendering assunder the very dynamic of the intellect.

Following Thomas, Pope Benedict is convinced that it is urgent for contemporary thinkers “to rediscover anew humanity’s openness to the light of the divine Logos and to re-establish a causation which is Jesus Christ, Son of God made man” (Benedict XVI, Angelus, January 28, 2007). God who has revealed Himself as Logos, creative Reason and, as Logos, has acted and continues to act lovingly on our behalf. “In the beginning was the Word,” the Logos, and “the Word became flesh” (Jn. 1:1,14). The divine Logos, eternal Reason, is thus the origin of the universe, and this same Logos was united once and for all with human nature, the world and history, in Christ.

Because God is Logos, He is Reason. “And this is why our faith is something that has to do with reason, can be passed on through reason and has no cause to hide from reason” (Benedict XVI, Address to the Swiss Bishops; November 9, 2006). Moreover, this Reason is not merely a mathematics of the universe nor first cause that withdrew after producing the Big Bang. Rather it has “a heart such as to be able to renounce its own immensity and take flesh.”

As students of Thomas Aquinas College, you are called to bear witness to the dignity of human reason and its capacity for knowing reality. Faithful Catholics have no fear of reason, but have trust in it. Just as Grace builds on nature and brings it to fulfillment, so faith builds on reason.

I urge you, then, to develop the capacity for a dialogue between faith and reason, between religion and science. Engage the stimulating confrontation between faith and reason that aims to recover the harmonious synthesis achieved by St. Thomas and other great Christianthinkers, a synthesis frequently challenged by many currents of modern philosophy. By doing so, you not only make it possible to show your contemporaries the reasonableness of faith in God, but you can also demonstrate that “the definitive fulfillment of every authentic human aspiration rests in Jesus Christ” (Benedict XVI, Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; February 10, 2006).

Obedience to Truth in Humility

Dear freshmen: You know that you are privileged to be able to pass four years here at Thomas Aquinas College. This privilege brings with it an enormous responsibility: to yourselves, to your families — present and to come — to your country and, above all, to Christ and His church. I urge you to seek obedience to the truth in humility. For this you will need purification of intellect and will, of mind and heart.

But you also cannot be silent before the grandeur of God, for His greatness dwarfs our words. Think of the last weeks of St. Thomas’ life. In these days, he no longer wrote; he no longer spoke. His friends asked him: “Teacher, why are you no longer speaking? Why are you not writing?” And he said: “Before I have seen now all my words appear to me as straw.”

Fr. Jean-Pierre Torrell, a great expert on St. Thomas, tells us not to misconstrue these words. Straw is not nothingness. Straw bears grain of wheat, and this is its great value. It bears the ear of wheat. And even the straw of words is worthwhile since it produces wheat. Your task, dear faculty and friends, is to ensure that your straw, watered by a life of contemplation and integrity, may truly bear the wheat of God’s Word.

His Excellency J. Michael Miller, CSB, the archbishop of Vancouver, British Columbia, was the Thomas Aquinas College 2009 Matriculation Speaker.
From Rome to Vancouver
An Interview with His Excellency J. Michael Miller, CSB

Q: In your Convocation Address you spoke to our students about making St. Thomas Aquinas their intellectual master. Can you talk about what that means and how one remains free even when he has a master?

A: It seems to me one of the great ways in which we do make St. Thomas a master is to appreciate the freedom that he actually brought to the study both of philosophy and theology in his own time — I mean his use of Aristotle and his willingness to engage both Arab and Jewish thinkers.

St. Thomas had an understanding that the truth brings with it freedom, not the suppression of questions. He didn’t pull things off the table a priori. There was nothing narrow. St. Thomas was a man who raised the question and then made a determination, which is a method that we can continue to use.

Of course, the genius of St. Thomas, the Common Doctor, is that he so well formulated so many properties of the Faith. But to have an intellectual master does not mean that one simply repeats or parrots St. Thomas and his theorems; it’s more about a Thomistic way of going about it. “To have an intellectual master does not mean that one simply repeats or parrots St. Thomas and his theorems; it’s more about a Thomistic way of going about it.”

A: Well, there were all kinds of arguments about universals. There was also the terrific argument about whether mendicant orders and the Dominican way of life were legitimate. So we sit St. Thomas wasn’t simply a man abstracted, but a lot of his work was in fact driven by the ecclesiastical situation in which he lived.

And that is what we have to do. The Lord has given us a particular time to live in the Church. He didn’t give us 300 years ago. He didn’t give us 800 years ago. And He didn’t give us 1,300 years from now, either. He gave us this time. That is His gift, and we can’t complain. This is the time out of which we work, because this is where souls are now, where their salvation is being played out. We can not just keep a refuge in the past nor pretend that we are arrived at a future that we might imagine.

Q: While we are talking about St. Thomas, would you comment about the place of reason in the life of faith?

A: Our way is not the Protestant way — to mine Scripture and become sort of fideists, separating faith and reason. Our intellectual tradition is the praeambula fidei: that faith is, obviously, not a problem for reason, but that it is reason enough. It is sort of this is the greatest single contribution that Catholics make, because the Protestant tradition of Christian education just does not have the appreciation for reason.

This is one of the things, I think, on which Pope Benedict is much stronger even than John Paul II. I mean, he just insists on that over and over again. It is important because otherwise faith is a matter of will, which is actually a terrifying thing, for we would then have a capricious universe.

It would be like children who have been abused. They tell you that whatever they did, they never knew if they were going to be hit or not. Most parents are consistent, so children can know that if they do this, they will be punished. But a child in an abusive home does not know when he will be punished. He lives in a terrifying and ultimately psychologically damaging world. And to think that God could be like that! You would be simply, just simply subservient to capriciousness. Instead, as I mentioned in my Convocation Address, we are able to “give a reason for the hope that is in us.” You know, each pope has his own quote. That quote of St. Peter is going to be Pope Benedict’s quote!

Q: How would you describe your experience working in the Roman Curia?

A: It was really quite wonderful to be there, and I admired the fellows who do it for a lifetime because it’s very ascetic. Rome is quite hierarchical. Some of the qualities that we would associate with good management — fast turnarounds, efficiency, widespread consultation — are not typical Roman practices. And initiative has never been the gift of the Roman seat of the Church; rather, the Roman See has always been the guardian of right thinking. The ministry of Peter is not the ministry, particularly, of innovation. It is a safeguarding ministry. Therefore it needs to move slowly. And so we can’t apply to it the same criteria that we would use for another kind of bureaucracy. But we are not used to that kind of a system.

My first assignment in Rome was at the Secretariat of State, as a minor official, where there were seven or eight of us. You got off the elevator in the Apostolic Palace — the Secretariat of State, of course, is the only branch that is actually in the Apostolic Palace — and if you turned to the left, you went down to the doors that went to the Pope’s apartment. But we didn’t ever turn to the left; we always turned to the right! We would walk down those magnificent corridors decorated with frescoes of the world in 1570 — very wonderful. Then we would go behind the second set of doors where people who don’t work there don’t go, and you find the coffee machine and metallic grey desks. It looked like army equipment from the 1950s.

I learned that the system worked. I didn’t have much responsibility in that job, but I came to appreciate why things are slower in the Vatican. It is not the same thing as other bureaucracies.

Q: You were later appointed Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

A: Yes. That was a very different job. There I was responsible for the day-to-day running of the Congregation, which is one of the Vatican congregations dating from the reform of 1588. We had three sections. The first was the seminaria section, which oversees the 110,000 seminarians in the world, both diocesan and religious, except for seminarians in mission lands that fall under the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Then we have the section on ecclesiastical faculties and Catholic universities, or higher education. The Holy See issues in its own name university degrees, and has done so from the beginning. Of those there are about 250 faculties of theology around the world. Those are regulated by an apostolic constitution called Sapientia Christiana, and the Holy See is the guarantor of their academic excellence.

And lastly, the Congregation oversees the other 1,300 Catholic institutions of higher education which are regulated by Ex Cordis Ecclesiae.

Q: Would you tell us about the Archdiocese of Vancouver?

A: Vancouver itself is a very secular city, which is probably induced — this is a strange thing to say — by the fact that it is so beautiful a place that it can feed neo-paganism. And, in fact, it has. Catholics have never, therefore, been a dominant force and have built up a world that has never been fully engaged qua Catholic in the wider culture. We built our own schools, and we have a very strong Catholic school system. Our system is quite different. My other assignments were not in the same way.

C: Vancouver differ from your previous assignments?

A: At it is very different. My other assignments were not pastoral in the same way. I didn’t have the direct care of souls, the direct cura animarum. So this is very wonderful — but frightening. One has a vision of the bishop leading his flock to the Heavenly Jerusalem. It’s easy to say. But if you are the one who must lead, then you say to yourself, “Am I leading? In the right direction?” Actually, in the end you do have to have a little of Pope John XXIII in you say, “it’s your Church, Lord. I’m going to bed.”

I don’t ever remember being so aware of people praying for you. People often ask for my prayers, and I say, of course, “I’ll pray for that.” But I will also say, “Pray for me.” And they will answer, “Oh, but we pray for you every day,” or they will say, “at every Mass.” Or somebody will come and say, “We always offer a decade of our rosary for you.” I am really kind of caught up with the wonder of prayer. They’re not offering prayers gratuitously. I think they know that in order to carry out the responsibility given, they have to do this. That is very humbling.

Imagine a world enlivened by the wisdom of Socrates, Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare, and St. Thomas Aquinas himself. . .

Help shape the future with a legacy gift today.

For information about a legacy gift to Thomas Aquinas College, please contact Tom Smolka, Director of Gift Planning, at tsmolka@thomasaquinas.edu.
On September 22, the students, faculty, and staff of Thomas Aquinas College surprised founding president Dr. Ronald P. McArthur on his 85th birthday with cake and a rousing rendition of “Happy Birthday to You” during lunch in St. Joseph Commons. Photos: 1. Dr. McArthur waves to students as they sing in his honor. 2. Librarian Viltis Jatulis presents Dr. McArthur with a hand-made sash she ordered from her native Lithuania which reads (in Lithuanian), “We are greeting you on the occasion of your 85th birthday.” 3. Interim President Peter L. DeLuca joins students in their cheers. 4. Dr. McArthur offers his words of advice to the student body.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekdays</th>
<th>Saturdays</th>
<th>Sundays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)</td>
<td>7:30 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)</td>
<td>7:30 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)</td>
<td>9:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. (Ordinary Form)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 p.m. (Ordinary Form)</td>
<td>9:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)</td>
<td>11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)</td>
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</tbody>
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* Schedules can vary; if traveling from afar, please call in advance to confirm.

Calendar of Events

Lecture: Pamela Kraus, PhD, St. John’s College:
“On Descartes’ Regulae and Discourse” .......................... October 30
Halloween Dance ..................................................... October 31

Lecture: Andrew Moran, University of Dallas:
“On Hamlet and Othello” ........................................ November 20
Turkey Bowl ............................................................ November 21
Thanksgiving Dinner .............................................. November 22
Advent Concert ..................................................... December 4
Christmas Dance ................................................... December 5
Final Examinations ............................................... December 12-18