



# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

## SPRING 2011

VOLUME 39, ISSUE 2

## Exceeding Expectations

### College Ranked “Most Popular” Among Applicants and “Most-Loved” by Alumni

For several years, Thomas Aquinas College has ranked near the top of *U.S. News & World Report's* annual measure of “yield” — the percentage of applicants who, upon being admitted to a college, choose to enroll there. Although heartening, these findings have told only half of the story. While it is good to know that prospective students want to attend the College, what about students who actually do so? What becomes of their initial enthusiasm in the years after graduation?

This year the College has an answer to that question. In addition to ranking, once again, among the nation's best for yield, the College has also earned a “Top 10” ranking for alumni satisfaction. Thomas Aquinas is the only Catholic college in the United States to make this top tier of both categories.

“What these surveys indicate is very positive,” says President Michael F. McLean. “They suggest, first, that we are communicating the mission and unique nature of the College well to prospective students — they like what they see and they want to enroll. Moreover, their admiration for the College endures. They arrive with very high expectations, and they leave with those expectations fulfilled, and in many cases even exceeded.”

#### High Yield Admissions

In its 2011 survey *US News* ranks Thomas Aquinas College as the fifth “most popular” among all national liberal arts schools for yield, which the magazine calls “one of the best indicators of a school's popularity among students.” This high rate, says Thomas Aquinas College Director of Admissions Jon Daly, is evidence of the desirability of the College's program of Catholic liberal education.

“The decision about where to spend the next four years of their lives is one that most students do not make lightly,” Mr. Daly notes. “That those of our applicants who are admitted overwhelmingly choose to come here shows a real commitment on their part to classical education taught under the light of faith.”



The College's ability to attract and admit students who are a good fit for its program is borne out by its retention and graduation rates. Some 82 percent of Thomas Aquinas College freshmen return as sophomores (compared to 75 percent nationwide), and roughly that same percentage completes the program within six years (as opposed to 60 percent nationally).

#### Grateful Graduates

Given these trends it stands to reason that the College would also score well in terms of alumni satisfaction, which *U.S. News* measures by the percentage of graduates who support their alma maters financially. “Alumni school spirit can manifest itself in many ways — from sideline support at athletic events to networking with current students,” says *US News's* Katy Hopkins. But a more objective measure, she adds, “is the percent of graduates who give money back to their school.”

In its survey of alumni at more than 1,700 institutions nationwide, the magazine ranked Thomas Aquinas College as number 10 in terms of alumni-giving percentage. The College was the only Catholic institution to make the “Top 20” list.

“I often say that outside of the normal course of the Catholic life, and besides marrying my wife, the best decision I ever made was to attend Thomas Aquinas College,” says Jonathan Monnereau ('05), president of the Alumni Association. “The deepening of my faith, the unique education I received, the friendships established — all of these are invaluable gifts. These sentiments are shared by many other graduates. Recognizing the privilege and benefits of receiving such a unique and valuable formation, we alumni of the College are especially grateful to our beloved alma mater.”

The College is likewise grateful for the support of its alumni. “We think there is no better testament to the value of this program than the good works and holy lives of our graduates,” says Dr. McLean. “And we take it as high praise that our alumni are so loyal to the College. That so many would choose to contribute financially speaks to what a worthwhile investment they consider a Thomas Aquinas College education to be.”

## Have Great Books, Will Travel

### Connelly Family Hosts Off-Campus College Seminars in Tacoma, Wash.

“There have been so many times in the last 25 years that I have wished I could take some of my friends, or people I know who would have a kinship for this education, and bring them down to campus,” says Member of the Board of Governors Angela (Andersen '87) Connelly. But living more than 1,000 miles away in Tacoma, Wash., “that has been impossible.”

So Mrs. Connelly decided to do the next best thing: If she could not bring her friends and acquaintances to the College, she would bring the College to them. On March 31, she and her husband, Jack, hosted a reception for Thomas Aquinas College — complete with three simultaneous seminars led by members of the faculty — at their lovely Puget Sound home. Some 70 educators, priests, doctors, business leaders, and others from throughout the Pacific Northwest attended.

“It was just this incredible experience of bringing what's happening at the College to this community, and there was such a wonderfully positive response,” says Mrs. Connelly. Adds President Michael F. McLean, “We could not be more pleased with how the event turned out. We intend to offer more like it throughout the country in the future.”

#### Sampling the Socratic Method

On a cool Thursday evening, the event began with an hour for introductions and hors d'oeuvres, followed by the seminars, at which attendees got a small taste of Thomas Aquinas College's unique curriculum and pedagogy. Dr. McLean and fellow faculty members Dr. Paul O'Reilly and Mr. Tom Susanka led the discussions, modeled after the Socratic dialogues of the College's classrooms.

For the reading Dr. McLean and Mrs. Connelly selected “The Enduring Chill,” a short story by Catholic novelist Flannery O'Connor that all Thomas Aquinas College students read as part of their Senior Seminar. “It is a great introduction to Flannery O'Connor's fiction for Catholics and non-Catholics alike,” says Dr. McLean. “It points to her preoccupation with Catholic themes and to the activities of the Holy Spirit in the world,” he explains, noting that Miss O'Connor once wrote that “All of reality is the potential kingdom of Christ, and the face of the earth is waiting to be renewed by His Spirit.”

After the seminars, Dr. McLean, Matthew Zepeda ('85), and Mrs. Connelly's mother, Yvonne Andersen, spoke to the group about the College, its Catholic identity, and its unique academic program. “It was a very effective way to spread the word about what we do here,” says Dr. McLean, who over the course of his visit to the area also met with families of prospective students and arranged to record an interview with a Washington-based national radio broadcast, Sound Insight Radio. Several attendees who had previously been unfamiliar with the College expressed interest in encouraging their high school age children to apply, and others inquired about contributing to the College financially.

#### Ripple Effect

Beyond its benefits to the College, Mrs. Connelly sees the prospect of holding more such seminars off-campus as having a profound “ripple effect” on the communities that host them. “The educational experience offered at Thomas Aquinas College is a great gift even on a small scale,” she says, noting that some of the Tacoma attendees are considering forming a Flannery O'Connor



Member of the Board of Governors Angela (Andersen '87) Connelly confers with a guest at a reception for Thomas Aquinas College that she and her husband, Jack, recently hosted at their home in Tacoma, Wash.

book club. “It was a real gift to our community.”

At present, the College hosts two seminar weekends each summer which are open exclusively to members of the President's Council. In addition, Founding President Ronald P. McArthur puts on an annual seminar conference about the social teachings of the Church. (See ad, page 5.) But given the success of the Tacoma seminars, College officials seek to arrange more such events “on the road” for faraway friends, both old and new.

“There is no better way to show people what we do here than to let them experience it for themselves,” says President McLean. “We are grateful to the Connellys for their great generosity in putting on this event, as well as for their ingenuity in coming up with the idea. We look forward to doing it again — soon!”

# From the Desk of the President

## Dr. Michael F. McLean Looks Back on 40 Years of Thomas Aquinas College

Note: The following essay is adapted from remarks made at a reception for Thomas Aquinas College in Oakland, Calif., on March 10, 2011.

The number 40 holds particular significance in the Bible. There are at least 10 instances in the Old Testament and New Testament where 40 occurs, either in years or days. For example, it rained for 40 days and 40 nights, Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights, the Israelites wandered 40 years, Jesus fasted in the wilderness for 40 days and was seen on the earth for 40 days after His Resurrection, and each year we mark 40 days of Lent.

Scripture scholars associate a time period of 40 — whether days, months, or years — with a period of testing, trial, or probation; a period which always ends in restoration, revival, or renewal. And so, with this in mind, we consider Thomas Aquinas College, founded in 1971 and celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**40 years** ... since the College began as an idea in the minds of its seven founders at St. Mary's College — an idea of education taken from the great Catholic intellectual tradition and embodied in the College's founding and governing document, *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*.

**40 years** ... since those founders ventured out with no money, no campus, no students, no alumni, no reputation.

**40 years** ... since the College found its first home on a leased campus in Southern California and its second home in modular buildings an hour's drive north. In those 40 years, a beautiful campus has been built on a spectacular site in Ventura County, a campus inspired by the Mission architecture of California and St. Mary's, and crowned by Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, a church marked by beauty, permanence, grandeur, and tradition, and which is the spiritual center of campus life.

**40 years** ... since the pioneering first group of 33 courageous students enrolled in the College, not quite knowing what they were in for. In those 40 years we have grown our enrollment to 355 students from all across this country and many foreign countries as well. We have enrolled roughly equal numbers of men and women who pursue our demanding curriculum with energy and enthusiasm. The College's alumni now number over 2,000, with 1,500 graduates, a high percentage of whom are now pursuing a wide variety of professions and raising strong Catholic families. Many alumni women are in the religious life, and this spring we will ordain our 50<sup>th</sup> alumni priest in only 40 years of operation. From humble beginnings, the College is now sending leaders to the Church, the country, and communities everywhere.

**40 years** ... since we conducted our first classes, in the very first one of which a founder apparently asked, "Why is the *Iliad* a great book?" and was greeted with the answer "It's not ... it's a terrible book," but it's a book we are still reading with our students 40 years later, and one we have no plans to abandon.

**40 years** ... of providing students with a coherent and complete liberal education using the greatest books of our civilization and featuring rigorous and lively discussion classes. It is an education subject to the guidance of the teaching Church and ordered to



Catholic philosophy and theology, an education which helps students see the harmony between faith and reason and which deepens their knowledge and love of God.

**40 years** ... in which there certainly has been testing and trial, but during which the College has established a national reputation for academic excellence and has attained a position of leadership among colleges and universities. During this time Thomas Aquinas College has also prepared itself for a strong and successful future, committed to its mission and confident in God's goodness and in His providence.

So we can say, in keeping with the Scriptures, that over 40 years, the testing and trials notwithstanding, Thomas Aquinas College represents a restoration, renewal, and revitalization of Catholic education — for "with God, all things are possible."

## "Back to Our Roots" Mary and Bill McInerney Host Oakland Reception for the College



Although Thomas Aquinas College has always operated in Southern California, its roots are in the San Francisco Bay Area, where scholars at St. Mary's College of California first conceived of it in the late 1960s. It was thus fitting that this year's commemoration of the College's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary began "just over the hill" from St. Mary's at the Claremont Country Club, where longtime College friends Mary and Bill McInerney (above, right), hosted a reception in the College's behalf on March 10, 2011. Some 75 friends and alumni were on hand, including President Michael F. McLean and his wife, Lynda (left), and the Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone, Bishop of Oakland (center), who was the guest speaker for the event.



Please Join Us  
Saturday, September 17, 2011  
Thomas Aquinas College

# 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

5:00 p.m. Mass - 6:15 p.m. Cocktails - 7:15 p.m. Dinner

The Beverly Wilshire Hotel  
Beverly Hills, California

Dinner Committee Co-Chairs  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Grant

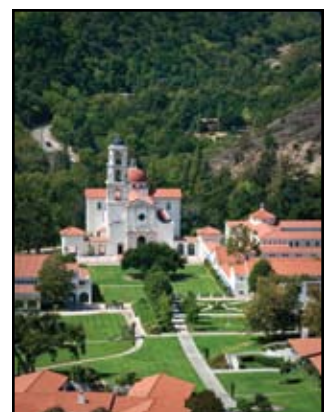
Honorary Co-Chairmen  
The Most Rev. José Gomez  
Cardinal Roger Mahony

Keynote Address  
Rev. Wojciech Giertych, O.P.  
Theologian of the Papal Household

Individual Seats: \$300  
Silver Table (10): \$4,000  
Gold Table (10): \$5,000



For ticket and advertising information, please contact  
events@thomasaquinas.edu



# Senior Reflections: John Haggard ('11)

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

*Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its February 11, 2011, meeting.*

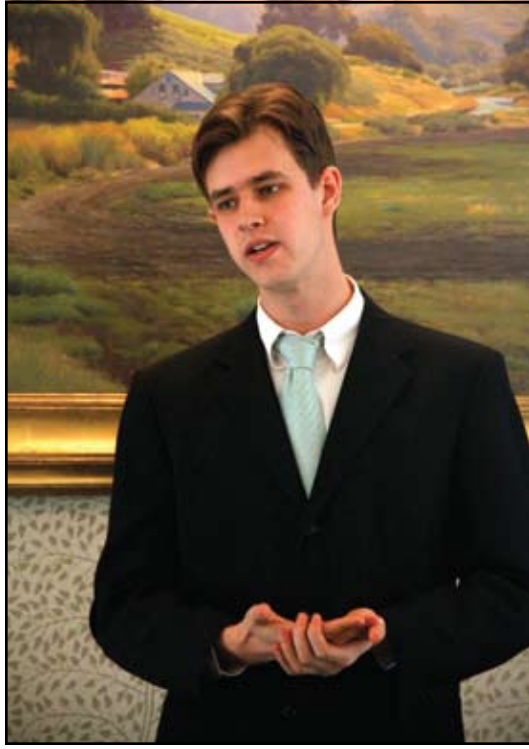
I am the fifth of six children, and all four of my older siblings attended the College. So throughout high school I assumed that I would come here, too. I remember my dad saying, "You can go to any other school, that's fine. Go to whatever school you want. I'm just not going to pay for any other school."

But I never actually wanted to go any place else. When I was in high school, what really attracted me to the College was the friendships my older siblings had formed here with good kids — kids who were virtuous, smart, and a lot of fun. In high school that really appealed to me, so I came to Thomas Aquinas College.

Of course, when I got here, I realized that there was much more to the school than friends. When you first arrive, you learn to think about things you already know. That sounds silly, but to give an example of what I mean, in freshman philosophy we read the *Meno*, which is a Platonic dialogue. And the question that Socrates asks is, "What is virtue?" I remember thinking, "Oh, yeah, I know virtue, virtue is ... Um, virtue is ... Wait, I *thought* I knew what virtue is!"

In math we ask, "What is a point?," which sounds simple until you are pressed to define it. "A point is ... er, what is a point?" You quickly realize there are so many things that you just thought you knew, but do not really know. So the classes get you thinking. Going through the whole program, the most valuable, formative texts we read are those of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas because they relate best to the truth and the way we think about it. These works really give you the ability to look at what somebody is saying and see the argument more clearly.

At one point we read Ludwig Feuerbach, a radically atheistic author who tries to make arguments for why God does not exist. But you see that the arguments are only convincing-sounding assertions. He is not making an argument, he is making statements designed to affect the reader emotionally. So you can learn to look at these sorts of statements and see that they do not really follow, and it brings a clarity of mind to be able to read a text that way.



As I said, I originally came to this school because I valued highly the friendships and the community life of the College, and I still do. The intellectual life here would not be possible without the community that we have. It is inspiring every day to be able to look around and see my fellow students striving to do the same thing I am doing, which is pursuing the truth, seeking virtue, and striving to live a good, Christian life.

What leads us in that effort is seeing the examples of our tutors. We see these men and women who really believe in what they are trying to do, devoting their lives to bring us students to the truth. They are so much a part of the community. They do not just come and teach a class and go home. They play basketball and different sports with us; they sometimes sing in the choir. I always feel that if I have any problems or questions, I can go and talk to any of the tutors, and they will help me out and make as many sacrifices as necessary.

The reason they are able to do this is the same reason that we students are able to do what we do, because the life of the school is so centered on Jesus Christ in the Church. You see that, visibly, just in the architecture on campus, how everything is ordered toward the Chapel, and the Chapel is the center of everything we do because Jesus Christ lives there. We have Mass four times a day and confession on demand. Jesus Christ said that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and we take Him at His word. We say, "OK, we will strive to learn Your truth and live Your life." I think that is what makes everything else possible.

After I graduate I am planning on pursuing a career as a film director in Hollywood, which is a very daunting undertaking. The reason why I am doing this is that we all are so influenced by the movies and the TV shows we watch and even the commercials we see. All of that influences us in so many profound ways. (I am writing my senior thesis about this, specifically, how stories affect people's souls.) And while the kind of knowledge one gets through a class is going to be more clear and concise than something one gets through a story, the vast majority of people do not go to classes and learn theology and philosophy — they work, then sit in front of the TV, and are influenced by what they see. Often such entertainment is used for evil, but I am going to try to use it for good.

I would not be able to do this, and persevere in such a daunting task, if it were not for the formation, both intellectual and spiritual, that I received from the College. And that, of course, would not be possible without all of the work that you, the Governors, put into the school. I am so thankful to you in ways that I cannot fully express here, but I want to thank you all and encourage you to keep doing what you do, because God will not be outdone in generosity.

*Mr. Haggard is from Chatsworth, Calif.*

**"Jesus Christ said that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and we take Him at His word. We say, 'OK, we will strive to learn Your truth and live Your life.'"**

# Senior Reflections: Molly McCann ('11)

## Student Grateful for Four Years' Intellectual and Spiritual Formation

*Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its February 11, 2011, meeting.*

It was an honor for me to be asked to speak today; I am thrilled to be here. I came to Thomas Aquinas College because my mother graduated in 1979, and both my parents were really enthusiastic about the school, as graduates are. Basically my entire education led up to the College, and as a child I hardly knew there were other schools out there!

In high school I started studying, and really fell in love with, the French language and medieval history. Toward the end of high school, senior year, I started becoming a little bit of a rebel, and I wanted to break the mold. I told my parents, "I'm not going to go to Thomas Aquinas College! I'm going to find a different school!" My mother, who was a skilled lobbyist before she settled down and became a mom, said, "Fine, all right, you go ahead, you find another school that you want to go to."

Immediately there was the lure of forbidden fruit, but I thought, "What if all of this is true? What if I end up missing out, while the rest of my family has this incredible education, and I am the one person in the family who does not?" So I spoke to my parents and we agreed that I would come for the first two years to see if this was something that I actually wanted to do, and if not I could withdraw and complete my degree somewhere else.

So I came to Southern California and to Thomas Aquinas College, and freshman year was fun. It was interesting, but I was still waiting to feel the effects of this "in-

credible education." When we hit sophomore year and really got into the philosophy and theology, I was just bowled over by Aristotle and all the different, incredible authors we were reading. By the end of sophomore year I felt like I was seeing more fully the intellectual richness, and I was hooked for the whole four years. There have been ups and downs since then — this is a rigorous school at times — but it has been such an incredible education for me.

**"The intellectual formation of the College and the spiritual formation have both really given me a foundation that I could not do without in the profession I seek in public policy."**

As I near the end of my four years here, I am planning on going to France and studying French a little more — I am looking for a job and work over there — because I gave that up to come to the College. I would also like to study some medieval history. Ultimately I intend to go to Washington, DC., and into public policy. Obviously we could use some rational and logical thinking there!

The intellectual formation of the College and the spiritual formation have both really given me a foundation that I could not do without in the profession I seek in public policy, where there is such a great need for moral surety and formation of the soul, and simply the ability to think through an argument. So my parents



were right, and their advice has paid off, both about the truth of this education and how beautiful it is.

That is really due so much to you. We students are not always thinking about the Board of Governors, but the time and energy you all put in to make this education possible for us have made possible my time here, which has been so important, so formative to my life. So I want to thank you. You are touching lives, and through the spiritual formation here, really touching souls. May God richly reward you. Thank you very much.

*Miss McCann is from Chesterfield, Mo.*

# Great Books & Great Works

## Board of Governors Member Maria O. Grant Leads Students on Tour of L.A. Museums

An ancient Greek sarcophagus bearing images from the life of Achilles. Two original Raphael paintings. Notes written in Sir Isaac Newton's own hand and personal letters from Albert Einstein. These are just a few of the historical and cultural treasures that some 40 Thomas Aquinas College students and tutors were able to see over the last year as participants in a four-Saturday tour of major Southern California museums, sponsored and led by Member of the Board of Governors Maria O. Grant.

"I have wanted to do an art tour for years, as we have access to some of the best museums in the world and do not cover art in the curriculum," says Mrs. Grant. "We had a terrific time."

The tour began last October in the Pacific Palisades at the Getty Villa, which is dedicated to the study of the art and cultures of ancient Greece, Rome, and Etruria. Joined by a curator, the group focused on forms from classical antiquity that have remained constant in art and architecture ever since. "At the College we read the great Greek and Roman works of literature, and at the Villa we got to see how those people lived," says sophomore Maxmilian Nightingale. "It's not just words on a page, but it was actually lived out, and it influenced a whole culture."

In November the group paid a visit to the main J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, where it focused on Renaissance and Baroque art. "We were all enthralled by the complementarity Mrs. Grant brought out between the appreciation of great art and the intellectual formation students receive at the College," says Dr. Christopher Deacaen ('93), a member of the teaching faculty. "We would see elements of the curriculum come alive each time we would see, say, Achilles or St. Mary Magdalene in a work of art."

In January Mrs. Grant hosted the group at the Norton Simon Museum, where she is a lecturer. She led her fascinated audience through an examination of art from the Baroque period up through the 1960s. The group viewed numerous great works, such as Rubens' portrait of St. Ignatius of Loyola. "It was fantastic to get to be there with Mrs. Grant, who knows so much about each piece," says junior Kelly Bulger. "You would stand there looking at a painting, and she would just come up and point out some detail you had missed, bringing the work into a whole new light."

Finally in March Mrs. Grant brought the College contingent to the Huntington Library in San Marino, where she serves as an Overseer. There they saw the largest traditional Chinese garden outside of China, crafted and installed by Chinese workmen. The group then split into two sections. Mrs. Grant led one through the American Art Galleries, where they studied the influence of European art on American artists; the other toured a History of Science exhibit led by the exhibit's curator, Dan Lewis. "The History of Science exhibit displays in physical forms, books and illustrations, many of the ideas and authors that the students read at the College," says Mrs. Grant. Adds Mr. Nightingale, "They had a me-

dieval edition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. You could read the text in Latin, and it was the same text we read here!"

In addition to covering all admissions and transportation expenses, the Grants provided meals for the group at three locations and hosted a luncheon at their home after the trip to the Huntington. "We are so grateful for the Grants' generosity, and it was wonderful to get to know them personally," says Miss Bulger. Mrs. Grant likewise appreciated her time with the students. "I particularly enjoyed relating to them as a tour guide, and not as a Board member. Their questions and comments were intelligent and insightful," she notes. "All in all, a delightful way to spend four Saturdays!"



Member of the Board of Governors Maria O. Grant shows a group of Thomas Aquinas College students and faculty members Peter Paul Rubens' portrait of St. Ignatius of Loyola at the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, where she is a lecturer.

## "Any Object, Adapted to its Purpose, Is Beautiful"

### Homily on the Solemnity of the Dedication of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel

By Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J.

Note: According to the Catholic Church's General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, the anniversary of the dedication of a church is to be celebrated as a solemnity within that community. As such, March 7 is doubly significant at Thomas Aquinas College, for it marks the date of the death of the College's patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, in 1274, as well as the Dedication of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel in 2009. Below is a transcript of the homily that College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., delivered at a Mass in honor of this year's Solemnity.



My first reaction to this Gospel (Luke 19:1-10, the story of Zaccheus), on the anniversary of the dedication of this church, was one of surprise. Why couldn't the liturgists have chosen something to do with Christ and the temple? There are many examples of this. Yet what is a temple, a church, in the New Testament? It has various meanings, but basically it is a place where God dwells. And if Jesus spent the night at Zaccheus', then that place was a temple.

But remember, also, that when Jesus went into the holy temple in Jerusalem and the Pharisees asked for a sign, he said "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it." He was not speaking of an earthly temple; He was speaking of his Body because in that human nature of His, God dwelled.

By our participation in the Divine Life, He dwells in each and every one of us as well. We are temples of the Holy Spirit. Isn't that why the body is sacred? Isn't that why we have reverence for it, for our own body and for the bodies of others?

Then, too, God also dwells in a special, unique way in this church, whose dedication we celebrate today. Here He dwells sacramentally, Body and Soul, in His humanity and divinity in the Eucharist. This is the reason why this church is the center of the campus, the still point of the turning Thomas Aquinas College world, to paraphrase T. S. Eliot.

If we keep this in mind, we can appreciate even more the question that Solomon asks in the first reading (1 Kings 8:22-30): "Will God really dwell with men on earth? Why the heavens and their own heavens cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built?" Such a question inspired Solomon to use all the means at his disposal to erect a beautiful structure. The same question inspired those chiefly responsible for erecting this Chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity. I think, particularly, of the

late Dr. Thomas Dillon, and of his wife, Terri, and of Mr. Peter DeLuca, and of Mr. Duncan Stroik.

Some day, when you have the time and the Chapel is quiet, respond to the inviting gesture of the statue of Our Blessed Lady at the top of the pediment in the face of the Chapel to come and contemplate the Chapel's structure and spirit. Like Solomon's temple, doesn't it enhance the presence of the living God? Isn't it a marvel of logic, like St. Thomas' *Summa* itself? Isn't it a solution of problems of geometry and physics that are discussed in math and lab classes?

By calculating the dimensions in the designs of pillars and tracing the curves at the arches, the designers proved the aesthetic law that any object adapted to its purpose is beautiful. This chapel is a Euclidean diagram clothed in beauty.

The second reading (Ephesians 2:19-22) adds one more dimension to the Chapel as God's temple of beauty. After describing Christ's redemptive act, Paul arrives at the conclusion that the gentiles are no longer strangers; they belong to Christ's Church. "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the prophets, Jesus being the cornerstone."

In other words, the head of the Church is Christ, and in His Church are assembled

the children of God who are to live as brothers and sisters united in love. Grace, faith, hope, charity, and the action of the Holy Spirit are the invisible realities that forge the links that bring together all of the members of the Church, which is something very visible, ruled by the successors of Peter, and by the bishops, and governed by laws, divine and ecclesiastical, which are to be obeyed.

Here again, then, we encounter another aspect of the law, that any object, adapted to its purpose, is beautiful.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



# The Gods in the Kitchen

## Why We Read Jean Henri Fabre

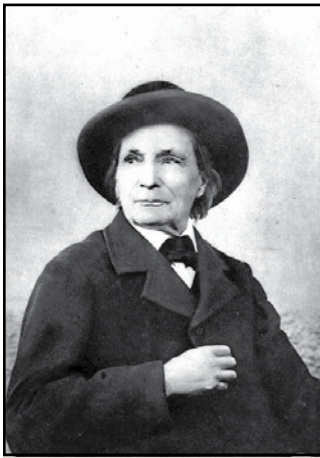
By Dr. Brian T. Kelly

Note: The following remarks are adapted from Dean Brian T. Kelly's report to the Board of Governors at its February 11 meeting. They are part of an ongoing series of talks in which Dr. Kelly explains why the College includes certain authors in its curriculum.

In his treatise on the *Parts of Animals*, Aristotle tells a story about the ancient philosopher Heraclitus. Heraclitus was warming himself by the stove one day and some nervous disciples hesitated to disturb him in such a domestic setting. But he urged them to enter, saying, "There are gods even in the kitchen."

It's a funny little snippet, but Aristotle wants us to learn from it. It is important not to become so high and mighty that we scorn the little and humbler things. For the one filled with the desire to know the truth this is especially important. When we turn our attention to the animal kingdom we cannot always be studying elephants and lions. Even those littlest of creatures that are not particularly pleasing to the eye can reveal the beauty of the inner workings of nature and the fingerprints of the Divine Architect.

Here at Thomas Aquinas College, in our first year natural science course, we turn to the study of biology and try to instill in our freshmen that openness to learning from the behavior of snakes and pigeons and termites. In this effort there is one figure who towers above the rest, and that is Jean Henri Fabre. He is most famous as an entomologist, but his interest in the world of nature was broad and voracious. He was not interested in mastering nature so much as in learning what nature had to teach. His attitude of wonder and docility led him to spend countless hours looking attentively at the world of little creatures. Occasionally his neighbors thought him quite mad when they saw him at the side of a country road staring at the ground, apparently at nothing, for hours on end. Charles Darwin referred to him once as "the inimitable observer."



Jean Henri Fabre

Why did he observe so carefully? He was blessed with a burning scientific curiosity. From his earliest days he wanted to see and understand for himself. He focused on the world of insects because he wanted to understand the workings of instinct and the demarcations of intelligence. This ultimately touches on the question of the human intellect and divine providence.

**"When we turn our attention to the animal kingdom we cannot always be studying elephants and lions. Even those littlest of creatures that are not particularly pleasing to the eye can reveal the beauty of the inner workings of nature and the fingerprints of the Divine Architect."**

It touches on human intelligence by default. The study of instinctual behavior helps us to understand practical deliberation by contrast. A careful study helps to avoid the kind of fuzzy thinking that attributes human intelligence to lower creatures.

Let me give an example. One of Fabre's contemporaries made observational experiments with burying beetles. He put a stake in the ground and tied a rodent carcass to the top of the stake. He reported that the burying beetle solved the difficulty by digging at the base of the stake. This caused the stake to topple, leaving the rodent flat on the ground so that it could easily be buried.



The conclusion drawn was that the burying beetle had the problem-solving intelligence of an engineer. Fabre was suspicious. For years he had lived on intimate terms with his friends the insects. He knew enough to suspect foul play. He painstakingly made his own careful observations and showed that the burying beetle will indeed dig at the base of the stake, but only if the carcass hangs along the stake and low enough to touch the beetle's back. If the carcass is elevated just a little higher, the beetle will not dig. If the carcass is hung low enough, but not along the stake, the beetle will dig, but only below the carcass. This fits with its universal instinct. It buries by clambering below and digging underneath the corpse. It digs in response to the weight on its back.

I also said that studying instinctual behavior can lead us to see divine providence. How so? The instinctive behavior of the insect tends to be ingenious in its economy, efficiency, and expertise. Witness the bees, who form the cells of their hive using the geometric form most conducive to saving space — the hexagon. Witness the cabbage caterpillar weaving its cocoon so that it is almost impossible to enter, but child's play to exit. Witness the languedocian sphex so surgically adept when it comes to numbing its prey, the ephippiger.

Fabre is moved to speak here of the "wisdom of instinct." But when anything departs from the usual situation, these remarkable insects are powerless to adapt. The sphex digs a grave and then stuns the ephippiger and drags it to be buried alive as food for its young. Fabre interferes at the tail end of the process and steals the ephippiger. The sphex is confused for a while but proceeds to carry out the remaining futile steps of the process, filling in the hole as though there were something in it to be buried. The process is brilliantly designed, but the insect, which carries out the plan, does not understand it. Fabre is moved here to speak of the "ignorance of instinct."

But how can this be that the action is wise and the agent is ignorant? Fabre says that such observations point to the workings of a divine architect. The sphex behaves wisely because it has been instructed to this by means of its God-given instinct. St. Thomas Aquinas uses the analogy of the archer and the arrow. The arrow flies true and hits the target because another, the archer, has directed it so. Indeed during our high school program we ask the students to read a chapter of Fabre together with Aquinas' fifth way, his proof that God exists from the governance of nature. There is an old saying that the devil is in the details. But here Fabre found God in a close study of the littlest and humblest of God's creatures. As Heraclitus would say "There are gods even in the kitchen."

Fabre, a man of little means, spent much time teaching and writing. He is especially known for his voluminous work, *Souvenirs Entomologiques*. A hallmark of his writing is clarity and flair. He wrote with a charming style that caused some in the scientific community to dismiss him and others to love him. His special ability to convey the beauty and order of God's creation led his student, Georges Victor LeGros, to label him "the poet of science." This accessibility and charm make Fabre especially proportioned to the beginner, but he can be read with delight by all. Many of his works are available online and can be read in small doses. There is a wonderful collection called *The Insect World of J. Henri Fabre* that we use. I especially recommend his chapters on the dung beetles and his gruesome account of the praying mantis.

## St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

### Highlights from the Last Quarter

- One Friday night each semester, the student body and teaching faculty gather for the All-College Seminar — simultaneous meetings of small groups (about 20 students, drawn from all classes, and two tutors) to discuss a pre-selected reading. This semester's seminar took place on February 4 and focused on St. Thomas Aquinas' examination of the contemplative life in the *Summa Theologiae*.

- On February 18, the College hosted its annual President's Day Lecture, featuring **Dr. William Mathie**, an associate professor specializing in political philosophy at Brock University in Ontario, Canada. Dr. Mathie spoke on the subject, "Lincoln's God."



Senior Monica Montanaro poses a question at one of this spring's lectures.

- **David Quackenbush** of the Thomas Aquinas College faculty delivered a lecture on March 18 entitled, "Charles De Koninck and the Philosophy of Nature."

- One week later, the College gathered on March 25 for the spring concert of the **Thomas Aquinas College Choir**, a performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*.

- The student-led choir **Chrysostomos** held its spring concert, "Hymns for Lent," the following Wednesday, March 30.

- On April 8, **Dr. Christopher Kaczor**, a professor of philosophy at Loyola Marymount University, spoke about St. Thomas Aquinas' commentaries on Aristotle.

## Third Annual Conference on the Social Doctrine of the Church



### "Just Wage/Just Price"

Opening dinner on June 24 through closing brunch on June 26, 2011

Registration fee — \$75 (meals included)  
Accommodations — \$15/night

Sponsored by *The Aquinas Review* and led by members of the Thomas Aquinas College faculty, the seminars will concentrate on the most fundamental topics that underlie the Church's teachings on social justice.

For a complete schedule of events and to register for the conference, please contact Mark Kretschmer at 805-421-5917 or [mkretschmer@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:mkretschmer@thomasaquinas.edu)

**A Saintly Visit**

The 12 round windows that encircle the dome of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel are representative of the 12 Apostles, and on March 3, some 89 feet below the dome, rested a relic of the “Apostle to the Apostles” — St. Mary Magdalene.

Known by this “apostolic” designation for her role in informing the disciples about the Resurrection, St. Mary Magdalene is also considered one of the first evangelists of Europe. According to tradition, she and her companions were imprisoned sometime after the Resurrection, then set adrift on a boat with neither oars nor provisions. Miraculously they came ashore on the coast of France near Marseille where, through their preaching, they converted the whole of Provence. St. Mary Magdalene then spent the last 30 years of her life in prayerful solitude while living in a mountain cave in Sainte Baume.

This spring, nearly 2,000 years after her death, a relic of this great saint, accompanied by Dominican caretakers, visited numerous churches throughout California, including Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. In her honor, a special Mass was offered in the Chapel, with the College’s Dominican chaplain, Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., joined at the altar by one of the French priests accompanying the relic, a major piece of St. Mary Magdalene’s tibia.



College Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., and freshman acolyte Jack Schuth escort a relic of St. Mary Magdalene to the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Later the Blessed Sacrament was exposed and placed in a monstrance so that students, faculty, and visitors could gaze upon the Real Presence of Christ in the physical company of one of his most faithful servants. The scene, with the Eucharistic Lord raised upon the Chapel’s white-marble altar and the relic of St. Mary Magdalene there below, called to mind that moment when she, with the Blessed Mother and St. John the Beloved, kept vigil with Him at the foot of the Cross.

“Having the relic of St. Mary Magdalene here was a great blessing for the College. She is one of the greatest of the saints in Heaven,” says Fr. Raftery. Noting that “people I have talked to have mentioned how they were moved on a very deep, spiritual level by the time they spent praying before the relic,” Fr. Paul observes that the visit, “was certainly accompanied by extraordinary graces for the College.”

**Association Affirms College’s Accreditation**

After completing an extensive process of review and evaluation, a commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges has reaffirmed the accreditation of Thomas Aquinas College for the next eight years. “The Commission once again commends the entire community at Thomas Aquinas College for the deep and abiding commitment to its mission and the model Great Books approach to undergraduate education,” writes WASC President Ralph A. Wolff. “The strongly held and shared values that guide the College create an atmosphere that supports student learning and intellectual development in a serious and rigorous way.”

The process by which colleges and universities are reaccredited in the United States is, by design, exhaustive and exacting. For the College, it began with a preliminary visit in the fall of 2008 and continued for more than two years, with the WASC commission interviewing various College constituencies, collecting extensive documentation, and working with College officials on targeted areas for improvement. As a result of the process, and in consultation with the commission, the College has created a Tutor Guidebook to bring greater articulation to the hiring and preparation of tutors; it has worked to add more laboratory opportunities to its studies of the natural sciences; it has updated its strategic planning for development; and it has taken steps to refine its methods for student assessment and evaluation.

“We are very pleased to have earned reaccreditation, and we appreciate the ways the process has encouraged us to re-evaluate our own procedures and, in some cases, improve them,” says President Michael F. McLean. “I am grateful to all who worked so hard during the accreditation cycle, especially the members of the teaching faculty who served on our various subcommittees. We are especially thankful to Dr. Kevin Kolbeck, who led this reaccreditation effort and has played a leadership role in accreditation since 1991, first as Dean and then as Accreditation Liaison Officer.” Special gratitude is also due, notes Dr. McLean, to Dr. Kolbeck’s wife, Michelle, “who provided invaluable assistance in helping the College with myriad details throughout the accreditation process.”

**Senior Thesis Defenses**

Eighty-one young men and women have recently completed an annual rite of passage at Thomas Aquinas College that in many ways marks the culmination of the students’ four years — the senior thesis defense.

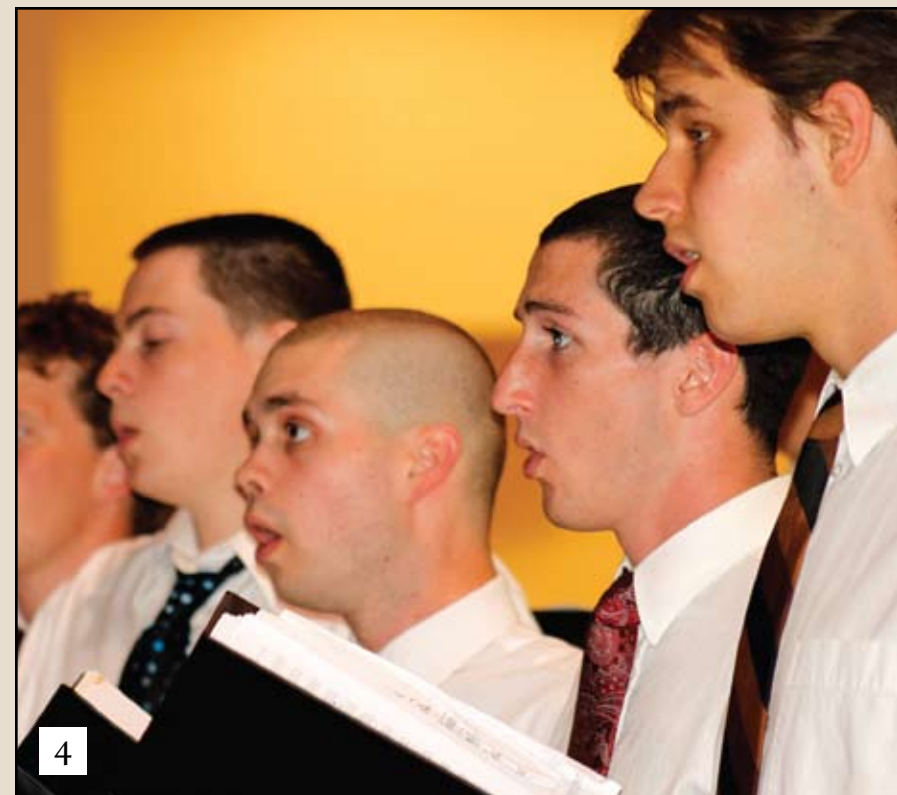
At the start of the academic year, each senior chose both a thesis topic and a thesis advisor, and for the next six months, worked on a 20- to 30-page paper that would demonstrate his or her ability to fashion logical, sound, and worthwhile academic inquiries. “The senior thesis provides an opportunity to pursue a deep question, the kind of question that the great minds have wrestled with, in a leisurely and reflective way,” says Dean Brian T. Kelly. The thesis topics are of each senior’s own choosing — “the only elective in our fully integrated program of studies,” Dr. Kelly adds, and can derive from any of the



Tutors Joseph Hatstrup, Michael Augros, and Karen Zedlick served as panelists for the thesis defense of senior Alexander Ogrodnick.



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It was a busy spring for the College’s musicians and thespians, highlighted by the following: 1. Nothing; 2. Junior Joshua Lo’s concert for accompanied cello in St. Bernardine of Siena; 3. Choir’s rendition of Gilbert and Sullivan’s Iolanthe; 4. A Lenten concert of hymns and music.

disciplines presented in the College’s curriculum.

The theses were due at the end of March. Then, over the next several weeks, each senior presented a 30-minute oral defense before a panel consisting of the advisor and two other members of the teaching faculty. In these discussions, the tutors listened to each senior’s defense and asked pointed questions, then recessed to decide whether the student would pass, fail, or pass with distinction. Given the amount of time taken to prepare the theses and the advisors’ oversight, failures are rare, as are marks of distinction, which are awarded only in instances of truly superior work.

“The defense comes after months of intense and semi-private focus on the question, and it can be something of a relief to talk about it with the panel,” says Dr. Kelly “It is also a ‘grown-up’ moment when the student takes public responsibility for the outcome of his investigation. In this way the defense is a very formative experience. A successful thesis and defense testify that the habits of reasoned discourse have begun to take root in the student’s soul.”

**Campus Living**

A website dedicated to college life, CampusGrotto.com, has ranked Thomas Aquinas College among the “Top 20” colleges and universities in the nation for the quality of its residence halls, “based on students’ rating of dorm comfort.” The ranking comes after the Princeton Review listed the College as having “dorms like palaces” in its 2009 guide.

The honor garners a chuckle from the College’s vice president for finance and administration, Peter L. DeLuca. “We certainly never set out to build ‘palatial’ residence halls, but we have always had student comfort in mind, as well as beauty, which predisposes us to what is true and good,” he says.



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g events: 1. The St. Genesius Players' performance of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About* Library, featuring works by Bach, Brahms, and Fauré; 3. The Thomas Aquinas College otets by the student-led chorale group *Chrysostomos*.

"But seeing that, in the early years, our students thrived while living in modular buildings, it is safe to say that the College's academic program and Catholic culture have had far more to do with its success."

Perhaps more notable than aesthetic accolades, however, is that of the 20 colleges and universities to make the "Top Dorms" list, Thomas Aquinas College has the lowest tuition rate, the lowest room-and-board fees, and the lowest total costs for students and their families. "We are committed to keeping the campus beautiful," explains Director of Admissions Jon Daly, "but we are also committed to keeping our education affordable," noting that numerous college guides have also praised the College for its generous financial-aid program.



St. Monica Hall

### College Advises USC Chapel Project

Although a secular institution, the University of Southern California has roughly 10,000 baptized Catholics among its student body. "We have more Catholic students than Notre Dame," says Rev. Lawrence Seyer, pastor of Our Savior Parish and director of campus ministry at the USC Caruso Catholic Center. In the interest of serving this population, Fr. Seyer and fellow Catholic Center officials are building a new campus chapel — a project for which they have sought the advice of officials at Thomas Aquinas College.

On March 25, a group from USC, including Fr. Seyer and several architects, traveled to Santa Paula to consult with some of the College employees and contractors most involved in the design and construction of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. "Having completed and dedicated our chapel

only two years ago, we were a valuable resource for them," says Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca. "We are excited about their project, and we were glad to offer our assistance."

Over the course of their visit, the USC officials inquired about the challenges and pitfalls of constructing a traditional house of worship on a college campus. They asked questions about matters ranging from art and acoustics to timelines and fundraising. "We all enjoyed our visit," says Fr. Seyer. "Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel is quite a work of art; it really adds to the grandeur of the College, and brings a sense of majesty that you expect on a college campus." Our Savior Church at USC is due to be completed and dedicated in December 2012, and like Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel before it, its cornerstone has been blessed by Pope Benedict XVI.

### Art and Sciences

As the teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Albert the Great has always been the object of a special devotion on campus. The science building is named for him, and just outside it stands a bronze statue in his likeness, a tribute to the College's Order of St. Albert, which honors the College's most generous and devoted benefactors. Now hanging inside the building is another tribute to this Doctor of the Church — an oil painting, artist unknown, dating back to the year 1800.

The portrait is a gift of Mrs. Mary Alice Isaacson and her son, Rev. Fr. James Isaacson, S.J.C. ('88), associate pastor at Chicago's St. John Cantius Parish. "We are very grateful to Mrs. Isaacson and to Fr. Isaacson for gracing us with this beautiful painting," says College President Michael F. McLean. "It is a wonderful expression of their great love for and generosity to the College, which have endured over many years. And for many more years to come, this portrait will serve as an elegant reminder to all who pass by on their way to and from class of the Church's Universal Patron of the Natural Sciences."



### Save the Date: Monday, May 23 — 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Classic

Sponsored by the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Regents, the annual golf classic presents an opportunity for golfers to support the College's financial aid fund while playing 18 holes on one of the premier courses in the United States. The event takes place at the world-class Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, Calif., which was designed by Jack Nicklaus and hosts the PGA's annual Chevron World Challenge. This year's Golf Classic takes place on Monday, May 23. It includes lunch for all golfers and a celebratory reception afterward, at which winners will be announced and awarded prizes.

There are still openings available for both participants and sponsors for this year's Classic. For more information, please contact Heather Tiffany at 805-421-5922 or htiffany@thomasaquinas.edu.



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# Carpe Veritatem

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

Note: On Sunday, January 30, 2011, Thomas Aquinas College hosted a Mass for the Unborn in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Students from the pro-life group at the University of California, Santa Barbara, joined their peers at Thomas Aquinas College for the occasion, followed immediately by a gathering in St. Joseph Commons. Below is the text of the homily that Deacon Chris Sandner of St. Mark's University Parish delivered at the Mass.

Historians generally refer to the period of time between the stoning of St. Stephen in roughly 35 A.D. and the Edict of Milan in 312 A.D. as the Age of Martyrs. For these 300 years, with the exception of a couple of periods of relief, those who chose to believe in one God and put their faith in the teachings of Christ knew only persecution. Those among us today who are not yet 45 years old, whether they have thought about it or not, already know this experience because it is unlikely that they have any memory at all of a world without legalized abortion and the public persecution and scorn toward those who argue against it.

Martyrs will always serve as examples of courage, even for the non-believer, but especially for anyone who wishes to know the truth that is Christ. Through the most difficult personal struggles, and usually in opposition to what is easy and comfortable, it is the martyr who concludes that the legitimate needs of others is reason enough to act, boldly and openly. The patron of this college, whose feast you celebrated two days ago, argued that martyrdom is a real virtue when its reason is bound by truth and justice is the effect.

As Catholics we should constantly ask ourselves: For what purpose was I born? And when that question is properly answered, then the next question is impossible to avoid, "For whom will I live?"

### The Walk for Life West Coast

Just eight days ago many of you here this morning gathered with thousands of others to attend Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption in San Francisco. And with a singular voice against the gravest assault on humanity in the modern age, you laid before God your deepest hopes and fervent prayers that the practice of abortion would come to an end.

Families from all over California came with their young children. And there were so many students, too, from Stanford, Loyola, Fresno, to name just a few. While we sat waiting for the entrance procession to begin, a pretty large group entered the church and took up a pretty large space just across the aisle. They all had on identical grey-hooded sweatshirts. Printed on the backs, and in perfect Latin, no doubt, was the phrase *Carpe Veritatem* ("Seize the Truth!").

Immediately we knew — Thomas Aquinas College! Of course! What other school would have produced students who would have thought about the issue of life that deeply? Who else could have gotten it exactly right? For the rest of the day in whatever direction one looked one could see dotted amidst a crowd of more than 40,000 people, stretched out in a mile-long testimony to the sanctity of life, those grey sweatshirts. What a sight! And what a testimony to the work of this college and the impact it is having in the world.

### Seize the Truth, or Seize the Day?

Some years ago a movie was released wherein the central character was a popular new teacher in an Ivy League prep school who used a similar but slightly different Latin phrase to motivate his students. *Carpe Diem*, he would encourage them, "Seize the Day." No matter what the root of their troubles or how severe their difficulties, whether with studies or parents or established school traditions, this young and very modern teacher pushed his students to break with the thinking of the past, to challenge rightful authority, and to assert their personal view of the world.

The message was clear enough. The solution to real problems comes when the highest priority is given to one's own instincts and impulses. The movie was quite popular, and soon enough you couldn't go anywhere without finding coffee cups and pencils and yes, even sweatshirts, printed with the phrase *Carpe Diem*.

One can either seize the truth, or one can seize the day.

One can either reach for the eternal and universal truth that underpins all creation — and which reveals the real meaning of Christ's example — or one can reach for the mere momentary, fleeting, inwardly focused and therefore empty of any meaning at all.

These same two choices are laid at our feet in today's Gospel (Matt. 5:1-12). Christ could not be more clear. He is telling us that our very real fears will never be vanquished in our lifetime, but rather that the hopes of every person for true peace and real joy, which are common to all men, will be known one day. Christ urges us to put our trust not in ourselves but in Him, to look beyond the mere moment and where real injustice is found, to go there and put ourselves to work.

There is no question that the world is at a crossroads. Just a half century ago it seemed as if the world had suddenly turned into itself on the false belief that self-interest was the highest virtue. Since that January 38 years ago, which we acknowledge this morning, 50 million abortions in the U.S. alone have already been performed, roughly the same number that takes place every year all around the world. Europe continues to torture all logic in an effort toward full adoption of euthanasia as a universal civil

right. Right here in California, in the midst of the largest budget deficits in its history, when hospitals and schools are being closed for lack of proper funding, our neighbors and fellow citizens voted to spend \$6 billion on embryonic stem cell research. Another empty promise. Another impulsive grasp for the moment.

### The Age of Martyrdom

It is the historian who will need to correct the record because the age of martyrdom has not yet ended. Not by a long shot. As long as the human person in the form of the unborn child remains the target of those who cannot tell between the moment and the truth, martyrs will be needed. In his reflections on the Beatitudes, Bl. John Henry Newman referred to persecution as the "appropriate badge" of the Church. And if the Church must wear Her badge in every age, how can we avoid ours?

Suffering and sacrifice may be the outward signs of the martyr, but in today's Gospel Christ promises peace and real joy to anyone who will make sacrifices on account of the weak and the innocent. To sacrifice by defending the most innocent provides one's own life with meaning, and it is through suffering on account of others that one's own spirits are lifted the highest.

Today's Gospel promises nothing in the way of what might please the senses, but to those who desire lasting joy and eternal peace it points the way forward to a new age of martyrs. The martyrs of the future will not hold back to debate the finer points of the law or to accumulate even more data that will prove the point; instead they will move, they will move toward the battle and not from it; they will race toward the sound of a crying child, to the elderly and the sick; and always, always, they will trust in God's ultimate mercy.

Like those in earlier times who accepted death because of their faith, and like those in every age since who put their own fortunes at work in the cause of truth, it will be left to us to pick up where they left off. And yes, even like those who wore those grey sweatshirts and marched for the unborn one week ago, we cannot be afraid to be known for what we are or to firmly and clearly claim what we believe. Because when the truth is finally in our sight, we must seize it and never look back.



## Walk for Life West Coast 2011

On the weekend of January 22, 2011, to mark the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, more than 200 Thomas Aquinas College students headed to the Bay Area, some by bus — courtesy of Chairman of the Board of Governors Jim Wensley and his wife, Germaine — and others by car. Once there, they helped lead the way through the streets of San Francisco in the seventh annual Walk for Life West Coast. Students prayed the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, sang hymns and songs of praise, and peacefully bore witness to the Culture of Life with some 50,000 fellow walkers.

Roughly two-thirds of Thomas Aquinas students have attended the Walk every year since its inception in 2005, and over the years, they have increasingly taken on leadership roles within the event. This year, for example, the event marshals selected Thomas Aquinas College students to act as lead security captains along the route and to serve as personal escorts to dignitaries such as Rev. Frank Pavone (of Priests for Life) and Abby Johnson (author of *Unplanned*).

Says Ralph Desimone of the West Coast Walk for Life Organizing Committee, "I cannot overemphasize how critical a role the students of Thomas Aquinas College have played over the past seven years."





# Faithful Physician

## Alumni Update: Diocese, Peers Honor Dr. Francis J. Milligan, III ('85)

Following a medical tour of duty in the United States Army that brought him to Somalia and Haiti and earned him nominations for two prestigious national awards, Dr. Francis J. "F.J." Milligan, III ('85) relocated to the relatively sedate locale of Bow, N.H., in 1996. Now, after more than 15 years of family practice in the Granite State, he is being honored yet again.

In March the Diocese of Manchester and the Guild of Catholic Health Care Professionals presented Dr. Milligan with the first annual Saint Martin de Porres Award for being a physician who "demonstrates care for the whole person — mind, body, and spirit — and reflects the love of God in caring for the sick." The Guild noted that Dr. Milligan is "known to make house calls and is willing to pray with dying patients and their families," while praising him as "a physician who lovingly acts according to his Catholic faith and always shows respect for human dignity from conception to natural death."

### The Catholic Doctor

For Dr. Milligan it goes without saying that the Faith would inform the practice of the Catholic physician. "The application of the medical arts requires an individual doing it, and so morality is always involved," he says. "The consistency of that morality requires a personal attempt to increase in holiness and follow Our



Dr. Francis J. Milligan ('85) poses with the Most Rev. Francis J. Christian, Auxiliary Bishop of Manchester, upon receiving the St. Martin de Porres Award.

Lord. And the Catholic Church has numerous teachings that are helpful to the individual, both in terms of their spirituality and in their understanding of what is moral. Teachings such as those on contraception, end-of-life decisions, and euthanasia are particularly helpful in the struggle of being in medicine in this time."

Honoring those teachings, however, can be trying when there are, as Dr. Milligan describes it, "very strong currents away from not only moral medicine, at times, but even *true* medicine." On controversial issues of health and morality, the Catholic physician must on occasion stand alone. Among his peers, he risks ostracism in a profession that prizes collegiality and, due to government and financial pressures, increasingly demands conformity.

Nonetheless Dr. Milligan's refusal to sacrifice neither his medical nor his moral judgment has blessedly not compromised his standing among his patients or within the medical profession. "A lot of my patients, whether or not they share the Catholic religion with me, appreciate the fact that my 'belief system' makes me consistent. They know at least they're getting honesty in what I say," he reflects. And this spring his colleagues at Concord Hospital awarded him with the title of Senior Fellow in recognition of his ongoing contributions to the medical community.

Although he attributes this warm reception, above all, to grace, Dr. Milligan acknowledges that he may have avoided controversy in his professional life by always being up-front about his Catholic faith. "Coming out of the Army I was very clear in my applications and in my curriculum vitae about who I was," he explains. "'Pro-life' and 'not prescribing contraception' were all over everything," thereby preempting potential conflicts that could have otherwise arisen over time.

### Training and Formation

Moreover, Dr. Milligan credits his four years at Thomas Aquinas College for giving him the analytical skills and the strength of character to break from conventional wisdom when necessary. "My training at the College helps me to look morally and logically at certain changes being made within medicine and have some confidence to not go that way," he says. "What we study, but more importantly the *method* with which we study at Thomas Aquinas imbues the student, and therefore the person, with the ability to pursue the truth and try to remove emotion from it. So you can be confident about what you know, even if you are the only one saying it."

As a result, he can reliably make the sound medical decisions for which he has been recognized by both his diocese and his peers. "The well is poisoned very deep," he says of the current state of medicine. "Without the training I had at Thomas Aquinas College, I don't know that I would even be able to taste the difference" between the good water and the bad.

When he is not tending to his medical practice, Dr. Milligan tends to his family and his parish. He and his wife, Germaine (Durocher '88), are the parents of 12 children, ages four to 21, all of them home schooled. Although Mrs. Milligan handles the teaching duties, Dr. Milligan does his part by supporting the home-school basketball team. He also teaches seventh-grade catechism at his church, serves on the parish council, and helps out at a local soup kitchen.

Incorporating the Faith into his medical practice comes every bit as naturally as incorporating it into his personal and family life, says Dr. Milligan. "I could not separate my faith from who I am. To me, being a doctor is being a Catholic doctor."

# Paying It Forward

## President's Council Profile: Rose (Teichert) and Dan Grimm (both '76)

Among the earliest members of the Thomas Aquinas College President's Council were two of the earliest members of the College's alumni, Rose (Teichert) and Dan Grimm (both '76). The couple remembers being invited to join the Council — the College's financial backbone, consisting of hundreds of loyal benefactors who contribute \$1,000 or more annually — by Founding President Ronald P. McArthur at the time of its creation.

"We thought the College was a huge blessing for us, and we wanted it to be there for others," says Dan. "We weren't even thinking of our kids at the time."

Nonetheless their children would eventually become beneficiaries of this generosity. Of the seven, five have gone on to graduate from the College, one is currently a student, and the youngest will enter this fall. The Grimms' relationship with the College is very much a family affair, and always has been.

Concerned about the direction of Catholic education, Dan's father, Bill Grimm, was thrilled when he first learned about the College in 1971, just months before the start of its first academic year. He loaded four of his 17 children into the car and drove from the family home in Pasadena to the College's original campus in Malibu Canyon. What followed was an impromptu interview that quickly turned into an audition.

"Dad thought we would have a better chance of getting in if we sang," explains Dan, a marriage and family counselor at Stillpoint Family Resources in West Hills, Calif. His family, gifted musicians all, had been singing sacred music together for years. "So we lined up in the foyer of the building and we started singing Palestrina." The College's founders — "who were all there in shirtsleeves" — Dan recalls, were delighted by what they heard.

When the College first opened months later with two Grimms in its freshman class (the next two, including Dan, would have to wait a year), "we *were* the choir," says Dan. The family's musical influence over the College has never abated. Dan began leading the choir when he served as the College's director and later vice president of development from 1993 to 2001, and he continues to do so.

Another member of the College's early choir was Mrs. Grimm, who would meet her future husband on the very first day of their freshman year in 1972. Despite having



already earned a bachelor's degree at a prestigious university, Rose was drawn to the College by its classical curriculum and its determination to honor the teachings of the Church. The contrast between her two college experiences was profound.

"I had experienced an education consisting mostly of lectures, and it was a little hard to see the point, when we could get the same information out of a book," says Mrs. Grimm, a home-educator for 28 years and now a teacher at Saint Augustine Academy in Ventura, Calif. At the College, where learning takes place by way of Socratic dialogues, "you had to take an active part in your education. ... We gained a lot of confidence in our own minds. We learned that we did not have to rely on others to know what a text says."

The couple married shortly after graduation, and as the years passed, there was little doubt where their children would go to college. "I know so many big, loyal Catholic families where the culture just tore them apart, and it's largely because when the kids went away to college, everything they had learned from their parents was undermined by their college education," says Dan. Such was decidedly not the case at the College, which, he says, bolsters students' faith with the full force of the Church's intellectual tradition. "After my parents' own faith," he observes, "my biggest influence was Thomas Aquinas College."

In gratitude for that gift, the Grimms have been loyal members of the President's



President's Council Member Dan Grimm ('76) leads the Thomas Aquinas College Choir.

Council throughout the years. Yet their primary motive for supporting the College remains, as always, making sure that it will be around for future generations. With their ninth grandchild on the way, that is as compelling a reason as ever.

For more information about the President's Council, please contact Robert Bagdazian, director of development, at 800-634-9797 or [rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu).

## In Memoriam

### William Thomas Huston, 1927 – 2011

William Thomas Huston, a captain of the Southern California business community, a tireless champion of Catholic education, and a longtime friend of Thomas Aquinas College, died peacefully on Wednesday, March 9, at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles.

Born in Nebraska, Mr. Huston's family later moved to Ohio, where he would attend Akron and John Carroll universities before serving in the Navy during World War II. After the war he graduated from the University of Notre Dame School of Law, then worked for the FBI and in private practice. In 1954 he married Susana Dolores Watson, and for more than 40 years he would lead the Watson Land Company, one of the region's oldest and most influential real-estate and development companies. During that time he served terms as president of the California Chamber of Commerce and director of the Statewide Economic and Job Development Committee.

Throughout his life Mr. Huston was a steadfast supporter of Catholic education at all levels, from elementary to graduate schools. He was a trustee and the second president of the Catholic Education Foundation as well as a board member of the National Catholic Education Association. He also served on boards and committees for numerous Catholic educational institutions, including Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy, St. Bede's and St. Francis High Schools, Santa Clara University, Loyola Law School, Santa Clara Law School, Loyola Marymount University School of Business Administration, Pepperdine University, and the University of Notre Dame Law School.

Notably Mr. Huston was a good friend to Thomas Aquinas College as well, particularly in its earliest days

as it struggled for financial viability. "The College owes a lot to Bill Huston," says Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca. "In his capacity as a trustee of the Louisa Watson Trust, he was one of our earliest benefactors. He secured for us \$35,000 to \$50,000 per year for scholarships for the first 10 years or so of our history. At that time, that kind of help was absolutely essential."

Mr. Huston's generosity to the College continued throughout his life. For the last 20 years he and Mrs. Huston were loyal members of the College's President's Council. The couple also made a major contribution to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Among his many awards and honors, Mr. Huston was inducted into the Pontifical Order of the Knights of Saint Gregory in 1994. The following year he received the Cardinal's Award for his support of Church-related projects and causes in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. And in 1997 the National Catholic Education Association presented him with its highest honor, the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award, in recognition of his significant contributions to Catholic education.

A devoted husband and father, Mr. Huston is survived by his wife of 56 years, their 8 children, and 18 grandchildren. "Bill's contribution to Catholic education in Southern California is truly inestimable, and his generosity to the College will never be forgotten," says President Michael F. McLean. "We pray for his eternal rest and for the consolation of Sue and their family."



## In Memoriam

### Felix S. McGinnis, Jr., 1918 – 2011

Felix S. McGinnis, Jr., was involved with Thomas Aquinas College from almost the very beginning. He joined the Board of Governors in 1974, only three years after the College's founding. He served in that capacity for 27 years until his retirement in 2001, at which point, by resolution of his Board colleagues, he was granted emeritus status in honor of his many years of exemplary work.



Born in Los Angeles in 1918, Mr. McGinnis grew up in San Francisco. He attended St. Ignatius High School and the University of San Francisco, where he obtained a degree in chemistry. For 25 years, he was the president of Southwestern Portland Cement Co.

During that time he became involved with the Leonardt Foundation of Los Angeles, a charitable foundation that provides assistance to various hospitals, colleges, universities, clinics, and homes for the aged. After his retirement, Mr. McGinnis joined the Foundation fulltime, eventually going on to serve as its president.

Throughout that period and to this day, the Leonardt Foundation has faithfully contributed to the College's annual fund. Likewise Mr. McGinnis consistently gave to the College personally as well. "Felix's support, especially during the early years of the College, was so important for us," says Vice President for Finance and Administration Peter L. DeLuca. Adds President Michael F. McLean, "The College will forever be in debt to those who, when there was barely a College to speak of, dedicated their time and resources to help make genuine Catholic liberal education a reality. Felix was a good friend when we needed one most."

In addition to his work for the College and the Leonardt Foundation, Mr. McGinnis served on the advisory board of the Los Angeles (Maryvale) Orphanage and as a director of International Life Services. He was honored as a Knight of Malta, a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, and a Knight of St. Gregory.

Following a brief illness, Mr. McGinnis passed away in Westlake Village, Calif., on April 13. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Barbara, and their two sons — one of whom, Felix McGinnis III, is a graduate of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 1984 — and six grandchildren.

"I became an early supporter of Thomas Aquinas College," McGinnis once said, "because I could see it was offering a clear, sound, Christian education of exceptional quality that was aimed toward truth — something

### IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

**Beth Norris**  
December 27, 2010  
*Mother of Patrick ('78)*

**Cecilia Josephine Emrich**  
January 13, 2011  
*Daughter of Shandra (Jaloway '95) and Andrew ('93)*

**Dan Geis**  
February 4, 2011  
*Son of benefactors Norma and Edward*

**William Huston**  
March 9  
*Friend and benefactor*

**James Durocher**  
March 19  
*Father of Germaine (Milligan '88) and Maurice ('92)*

**John Patrick Wagner**  
March 19  
*Brother of Michael ('04)*

**Dr. Bernard Hodgkinson**  
March 23  
*Friend and Legacy Society member*

**Scott Harding**  
April 2, 2011  
*Superintendent for HMM Construction, which built St. Thomas Hall and Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel*

**Robert J. Monahan**  
April 7, 2011  
*Friend and benefactor*

**Felix S. McGinnis, Jr.**  
April 13, 2011  
*Emeritus Member of the Board of Governors*

that was, and is, in great contrast to the confusion elsewhere in American higher education. It's been a pleasure to see it flourish over the years and I've been privileged to be a part of it."

Says President McLean, "The entire College community offers its prayers for the repose of Felix McGinnis and the consolation of his family. We pray that God will reward him richly for the kindness and generosity he showed over the course of his earthly life."

May his soul and those of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

## THE FUTURE NEVER NEEDED THE PAST MORE THAN IT DOES TODAY.



For information about a legacy gift to Thomas Aquinas College, please contact Tom Susanka, director of gift planning, at [tsusanka@thomasaquinas.edu](mailto:tsusanka@thomasaquinas.edu).

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.*

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE  
*California*



# Meet the Principal

## Alumni Profile: Brenna Scanlon ('06)

“I can come back from a meeting where I am completely encompassed in fundraising, or development, or looking for donations,” says Brenna Scanlon ('06). “And then there’s a little tiny first-grade hand knocking on my back door because he wants to recite the prayer of the month — for candy.”

Such is all part of a day’s work for Miss Scanlon, principal of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish School in Oxnard, Calif., where she oversees a staff of 23 and more than 300 students, from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. In her second year on the job, following a quick promotion after just two years as a classroom teacher, she has had to master a wide range of professional duties from finance, to facilities, to curriculum, to marketing, development, parent relations, human resources — and helping young children learn to say their prayers.

“We started a program here this year where each month the kids have a different prayer to memorize, and once they have memorized that prayer they get to come say it for me for a piece of candy,” she explains. “That has really helped, because then they come to my office for a *positive* reason. They are excited that they have learned this new prayer, and they promise that they will bring it home to their families.” This sweets-for-supplcations program is just one small part of a larger effort to bolster the Catholic identity and spirituality of a century-old Archdiocesan school.

### A Change of Plans

It was only 10 years ago, when Brenna, then 17-years-old, had to be brought kicking and screaming to the Thomas Aquinas College High School Summer program. A soccer standout at La Reina High School in Thousand Oaks, Calif., she had set her sights on playing at a Division I school, and the start of the College’s two-week program for rising high-school seniors coincided with a major tournament at which a prospective coach was coming to watch her play. “I cried the entire way up to the campus,” Miss Scanlon recalls, repeatedly asking her mother, “How could you do this to me?”

Two weeks later, when her mother returned to pick her up at the end of the program, “I started crying again,” says Miss Scanlon, only it was “more like happy tears” this time. “I said, ‘I have to go there; I think I have to go there.’”

The sudden turnaround was brought about by a realization. The Summer Program marked “the first time I was ever introduced to the idea of knowledge for the sake of itself, and that was totally enlightening for me,” Miss Scanlon says. She also recalls the great sense of tranquility she experienced there. “I remember lying down at the end of the day and thinking, ‘I feel so at peace. My day was so properly ordered: I went to Mass; I participated in these great classes; I had great, meaningful conversations with the people in the program; we had rosary at night; there was benediction after the 5:30 Mass. I felt a sense of peace and order about my life that I had not experienced before.’”

When word got out that Brenna was foregoing her dreams of Division I athletics for a Catholic liberal education, there was some confusion among her peers. “My soccer friends would say, ‘We heard you’re not playing next year; you’re entering the convent,’” Miss Scanlon laughs. “I said, ‘No — kind of — but not completely.’”

Upon arriving on campus as a freshman that fall, Brenna discovered that while the College’s culture was not quite monastic, it was conducive to deepening her faith and cultivating virtue. “There was a lot of positive peer pressure to be good and to do your reading and to get to daily Mass and to get to confession regularly,” she recalls.

Inside the classroom, she was challenged and strengthened by the College’s classical curriculum. “It teaches you how to think, and to think clearly and to think logically,” says Miss Scanlon. Further, the classroom conversations “taught me to be collaborative, be-



Brenna Scanlon ('06) leads students in their morning prayers outside Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Oxnard, Calif.

cause even though you’re coming to truth on your own, it is with other people around you, so you are processing what you are learning and you are discussing it.”

### Our Lady’s Call

Yet even by the time of her graduation in 2006, Miss Scanlon had not considered a career in education. She first entertained the prospect of law school, and then contemplated event planning, but changed her mind after a brief legal internship and a job with a caterer convinced her that neither was her calling. On the side, she had taken a coaching position with her high school soccer team and volunteered to administer an adult catechetical program through her parish. The net effect of

“I really feel strongly that I am where I am today as a result of my education at Thomas Aquinas College. That experience has helped me step into a leadership position, knowing how to be collaborative and to look to those around me to help make good decisions for the school.”

these two activities — the time with young people and helping believers come to better understand their faith — made her seriously think, for the first time, about the possibility of teaching.

After taking a few teaching courses at a local university, in 2007 she sent out applications to Catholic high schools, promptly finding employment with Santa Clara High School in Oxnard as a religion and math teacher. At the same time she enrolled in a series of weekend courses for working teachers through Loyola Marymount University. Within two years, she had earned a master’s degree in secondary education and an offer to become the chair of her school’s religion department. A promising career as a high school teacher was in the making — until God intervened with another plan.

Because of her success in her first two years at Santa Clara, when the principal’s position became available at one of the high school’s feeder schools, Our Lady of Guadalupe, officials encouraged Miss Scanlon — then only 25 years old — to apply. “I was very reluctant because I loved — I absolutely loved — my teaching position,” she recalls. “I was very torn, but I thought, ‘This is Our Lady’s school. At the College there is such devotion to Our Blessed Mother, and I think the College helped me grow closer to her. So I thought, ‘How can I say no when her school is asking?’”

For the past two years, Miss Scanlon has answered that invitation, taking on whatever challenges it entails. Among her top priorities since coming to Our Lady of Guadalupe has been solidifying the school’s Catholic identity. “There has been a real need to make sure that our schools are Catholic, first and foremost, and working on moving these children and their families toward

holiness,” she says.

To that end she has incorporated monthly, school-wide rosaries, as well as weekly Mass and adoration, and she begins each day with two prayer sessions — one with the faculty, the next with the student body. Each month, the students focus on developing a different virtue as well as learning a new prayer, for which they earn their triumphant visit to the principal’s office. “Society really affects our families and can impede children from growing in their faith,” Miss Scanlon observes. “So we try to keep this environment as a kind of safe haven for families who are trying to raise their children Catholic.”

It is this commitment to nurturing the spirituality of the school community that most impresses Rev. Roberto Saldivar, M.Sp.S., the pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. “Most principals are concerned with the administrative and academic aspects of a school — which

Miss Scanlon is — but she is also very concerned with the spiritual aspect, and that makes her even more valuable,” he says. “She is a fast learner, she is very enthusiastic in what she does, and she is very committed.”

### Blessings of Collaboration

Running a school, Miss Scanlon points out, is a team effort. To succeed, she must work cooperatively with her pastor, her teachers, her administrative staff, and her students’ parents. These busy, fruitful interactions cause her to think back to her Socratic conversations at the College.

“Those four years of sitting around those tables have helped me feel so comfortable in faculty meetings, in any type of meeting forum, because you get completely used to setting out a goal or objective and communicating and working through it and trying to arrive at truth together,” she says. “I really feel strongly that I am where I am today as a result of my education at Thomas Aquinas College. That experience has helped me step into a leadership position, knowing how to be collaborative and to look to those around me to help make good decisions for the school.”

Making good decisions for the school, in turn, means making good decisions for the education, welfare, and spiritual health of the 300 young souls entrusted to her care each day. For this privilege and responsibility, vividly brought to life with each small visitor to her door, Miss Scanlon is both humbled and grateful.

“When I pull myself away from the administrative sense of the job and interface with innocent, holy young children, they remind me of charity and what we are really here for,” she says. “It is a huge blessing to constantly be surrounded with little children who say the funniest things and who are so joyful.”





## CAMPUS LIFE

1. Junior Kathryn Claahsen paints a tribute to late College founder and tutor Marcus R. Berquist. 2. Students walk through the arcade alongside St. Bernardine of Siena Library. 3. Three seniors strike up a game of pool in St. Joseph Commons. 4. Escaping the heat one spring Saturday, two students give logrolling a try in one of the campus ponds. 5. A Socratic conversation continues, well beyond class, on a campus bench. 6. Two musicians perform at "Soul Butter," an annual concert featuring student and alumni talent in Ojai's Soule Park. 7. Junior Nicolette Sutherland consults with tutor Dr. John Nieto between classes.

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

#### Weekdays

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

#### Saturdays

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

#### Sundays

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

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

### Calendar of Events

5 <sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Classic .....	May 23
Tutor Summer Program.....	May 23
West Coast Alumni Dinner .....	June 11
Conference on the Social Teaching of the Church.....	June 24-26
Summer Seminar Weekend #1.....	July 8-10
Summer Seminar Weekend #2.....	July 15-17
High School Summer Program.....	July 24 - August 6
Convocation .....	August 22

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