“Become the Saints for Whom the World is Waiting”
Mother Assumpta Long Challenges Graduates at Commencement Ceremonies

Celebrating its 40th Anniversary, Thomas Aquinas College held its 38th Commencement exercises on May 12, 2012. Under a bright blue California sky, 66 members of the Class of 2012 received their diplomas and hoods, as well as words of wisdom from a longtime friend of the College, Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P., foundress and prioress general of the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. “Be the joy-filled Thomists, the passionate lovers, the convicted thinkers of this age,” explains President Michael F. McLean. “This is a time to do so, for we hope that as our graduates go into the world, they shall be strong in faith, undaunted by Syracuse, rigid fools. Shock the world with your life, your enthusiasm, your ready smile. There is no such thing as a somber, sour-faced Thomist.” (See page 3.) Fittingly, the rest of the ceremony proceeded with much joy; as the seniors, one by one, received their diplomas to the cheers and delight of their assembled loved ones. The College also awarded Mother Assumpta and two of its founders, Mr. Peter L. DeLuca and Dr. John W. Neumayr, with its highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medalion. (See story below.)

“In her address, Mother Assumpta spoke eloquently about joy, and she brought a great deal of it to our campus,” remarked President McLean. “We thank her for honoring us with her presence, and we salute the Class of 2012.”

Commencement 2012
Video, audio, photo slideshows & more: thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2012

Faithful Founders
Mother Assumpta, Peter DeLuca, and John Neumayr Awarded College’s Highest Honor

The Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion is the highest honor conferred by Thomas Aquinas College, and eligibility for it rests upon a single criterion: fidelity. Neither fame, titles, nor offices are sufficient qualifications; the honor is reserved solely for those who, in the determination of the faculty and the Board of Governors, have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to God and His Church, as well as leadership in advancing the teachings of the Church.

“Nearly every year since our first Commencement in 1975, we have taken a moment during the graduation ceremony to pay tribute to the year’s Medallion recipients,” explains President Michael F. McLean. “This is a fitting time to do so, for we hope that as our graduates go forth from the College, they will emulate our honorees in their own lives.” At Commencement 2012 the College recognized three individuals for the significant roles they have played in founding institutions that are fortifying the faith and the culture. Mother Assumpta Long, O.P.; Mr. Peter L. DeLuca; and Dr. John W. Neumayr.

Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P.
Thomas Aquinas College’s 2012 Commencement Speaker, Mother Mary Assumpta Long, O.P., is the foundress of two religious congregations — the Sisters of Life, formed with the support of the late John Cardinal O’Connor of New York, and later, the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, established with the patronage of Mr. Tom Monaghan in Ann Arbor, Mich. Because of Mother Assumpta’s zeal for souls, her fidelity to Christ, and her tireless hard work, the congregation of just four sisters that she established in 1995 has grown in only 17 years to more than 100, including two alumnae of the College, with a third set to enter this fall.

In his homily Fr. Buckley reminded the graduates, “The problems, the challenges, the sufferings of life remain, but with hope they are looked at in a different way. Our hope is an openness to what God wills to do for us, to complete His dwelling in us, to resurrect our bodies after death. It is an openness to our future.” (See page 12.) Following the Mass, the Commencement ceremony took place on the academic quadrangle. Speaking on behalf of the Senior Class, James W. Thompson addressed the question that looms in the minds of graduates everywhere: “What are we to do with ... the rest of our lives?” While a Catholic liberal education prepares the student for any possible vocation or career, he said, “The way in which it will show itself the most is not in the greatness of mind, or even excellence of character, of its possessors, or in the charity with which they live their lives.” (See page 9.)

In her Commencement Address Mother Assumpta added that the graduates — who are both beneficiaries of a liberal education and disciples of St. Thomas — ought to live jubilantly. “Never underestimate the power of joy,” she said. “The world would like to portray you as somber, rigid fools. Shock the world with your life, your enthusiasm, your ready smile. There is no such thing as a somber, sour-faced Thomist.” (See page 3.)

Fittingly, the rest of the ceremony proceeded with much joy; as the seniors, one by one, received their diplomas to the cheers and delight of their assembled loved ones. The College also awarded Mother Assumpta and two of its founders, Mr. Peter L. DeLuca and Dr. John W. Neumayr, with its highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. (See story below.)

“In her address, Mother Assumpta spoke eloquently about joy, and she brought a great deal of it to our campus,” remarked President McLean. “We thank her for honoring us with her presence, and we salute the Class of 2012.”

Commencement 2012
Video, audio, photo slideshows & more: thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2012
For the bishops, Becket would not comply, and was killed by the knights in the Cathedral. At the time of his death, Becket was a saint, and was canonized by Pope Adrian IV in 1173. The murder was condemned by the Church, and a procession was organized to carry the body of Becket to Canterbury Cathedral. The procession was stopped by the bishop of Rochester, who was responsible for the conduct of the procession. The bishop was then killed by a group of knights, who were led by Becket himself. Becket was later canonized as a saint, and his feast day is celebrated on December 29. The murder of Becket has become a symbol of the struggle between the Church and the State, and has been the subject of many artworks and literary works, including T.S. Eliot's play "Murder in the Cathedral."
The Joy-Filled Heart of a Thomist
The Commencement Address of Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P.

Below is the prepared text of Thomas Aquinas College’s 2012 Commencement Address by Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P., Foundress and Prioress General of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. Audio of the address is available via the College’s website at thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2012.

President Michael McLean, Dr. Brian Kelly and members of the faculty; Mr. Jim Wendley and members of the Board of Governors; Fr. Cornelius Buckley and priests; President Emeritus, Dr. Ronald McAthur; Founders, Dr. Jack Neumayr and Mr. Peter Deluca; distinguished graduates, family, and friends:

It is an extreme honor for me to have been invited to give the Commencement Address in such an important year for Thomas Aquinas College because, in some sense, the history of the College has been my history. I have visited and kept up with its wonderful growth from a few small trailers to your beautiful sprawling campus today. This is all due to the faith, vision, and hard work of those who love the Church and believe Her mission would best be carried out by those equipped with the finest education a young Catholic could receive today.

This past January 28, the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, this college celebrated its 40th Anniversary. God is good! What a tremendous gift this school and the young people educated by you have been and continue to be to the Church. Yet I cannot help but think that, after wandering in the desert for 40 years, the Israelites commenced their battle for the Promised Land. After 40 days of fasting, Jesus commenced His public life, leading up to His “hour.” Today you, the graduates of 2012, enter the battlefield, commencing life in the world.

It is by the providence of God that you graduate in the wake of Pope Benedict’s call for the Year of Faith. To you the Church entrusts the Gospel as well as the challenge of making the Gospel lived and loved. The telos of these past four years of education was not so you could proudly clutch a diploma on a California summer’s day; it was so you could be Christ and bring Christ to the world.

You have spent these years encountering Truth. Of course the encounter with Truth is not only a relationship, but demands a response. Each one of you is invited by Christ to respond generously with his or her unique gifts. What will be the response of this graduating class?

Follow Thomas

You are blessed with the illustrious patron of St. Thomas Aquinas at this great institution. As you graduate, how can you continue to follow the example given to us in this Dominican patron? Everyone knows St. Thomas for his Summa Theologica, but who really was St. Thomas? Who was the man whose heroic virtue made him great in the heart of Christ and the Church?

We first glimpse St. Thomas’ magnificent sanctity in his youth. He came from a wealthy family (one of the seven noblest families in all of Europe) who believed in the importance of education. One cannot lead nations and influence cultures without a strong education. Hence, St. Thomas’ family sent him to the finest schools in Europe and planned a great future for their son.

Thomas wanted the good and worked diligently to make the most of the gifts he had been given. He studied hard. He worked hard. He put his whole self into his tasks. Yet at some point in his teenage years, Thomas felt the stirring of God deep in his heart. He realized that God had a plan for him, different from the plans of his own family. God wanted Thomas to consecrate his very life to Him, to follow Him as a Dominican brother. Once Thomas realized God’s will, Thomas was passionate about his vocation: He put God before any desire for worldly greatness.

As you may know, Thomas suffered for this dedication. His family bitterly opposed him, even going so far as to lock him up in a castle tower for an entire year. The people who should have loved him the most, and proven their support in times of trial, forced Thomas into uncomfortable situations. Who can forget the sending of a prostitute into Aquinas’ room to change his mind?

The Encounter with Christ

Today you graduates might reflect on your parents’ sacrifice. What has and will come from it all? For Thomas the fruit was an unwavering commitment to truth. Thomas would not yield when it came to pursuing, promoting, and living the good. His life had been captured by the beauty of Christ, and all else had to be properly ordered to this highest end.

We live in an age where commitment to truth is challenged. Simply consider the recent HHS Mandate, a policy whereby those who follow their religious convictions will pay steep penalties. Look at the way our media mock those leaders who live out their beliefs, portraying them as prejudiced, hard-hearted, and unenlightened. Not only is our commitment to truth challenged, but truth itself is called into question. Allan Bloom, author of The Closing of the American Mind, writes:

There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the students’ reaction: they will be uncomprehending. That anyone should not regard the proposition as self-evident astonishes them, as though he were calling into question 2 + 2 = 4.

It is no longer a probability; if you are passionate about your vocation, you will be persecuted and placed in uncomfortable situations. The world will look at you with incredulity when you stand up for your beliefs. How will you respond? Will you be the Thomists of our generation, unwavering in your commitment to truth?

St. Thomas Aquinas was brilliant, but he lived his knowledge in the utmost humility. He made a point to not only ponder the great ideas but to apply those ideas to the “real world.” One could say that Thomas lived more in reality than most of us do. After all, this is what it means to be a contemplative. In the words of Fr. Pierre Marie Emonet, O.P., “the contemplative is not one who discovers secrets no one knows, but one who is swept into ecstasy by what everyone knows.” Aquinas saw the beauty of life, and the beauty was translated into volumes of written commentary, into walking over 9,000 miles across Europe, into long hours of teaching, and into ordinary everyday conversations.

St. Thomas was not a hard-hearted individual, fleeing from the reality of life. He was a lover of life. We think of him as the author of the Summa Theologica, but let us not forget he also wrote the Summa Contra Gentiles. Thomas wanted to convert all men to Truth. He wanted to engage the world in a dialogue that would transform his culture. This desire led Thomas to take part in and to be aware of the issues of his day. Thomas didn’t seclude himself in his study; rather he was intensely involved in the most active elements of society, engaging the world in public debates and challenging the leaders of his day to standards of greatness. As he himself put it, “Knowledge of the Faith does not pacify; rather it stirs up.”

Aquinas was truly stirred up and he stirred up those whom he encountered. He challenged the world because of his passion for truth. He spoke calmly and fearlessly and was utterly devoid of any arrogant love for the limelight. During his process for canonization it was reported that even in heated disputes, he was always calm, humble, and never used large, affected words. Those of you who have witnessed or been part of a seminar know what heroic virtue lies behind that observation!

It is easy to rant and convey one’s opinion. It is easy to speak well when others are there to notice your achieve- ment. But to believe wholeheartedly in something and yet resist the urge to impose the truth on others, to merely propose the truth and to let truth itself convince, that is a lifetime achievement. Aquinas’ activism was a way of life marked by respect for all men, even those in error. He influenced others by his words as well as his demeanor.

One of the most striking elements of Thomas’ demeanor was his continual focus on truth. He never argued for the sake of winning; he argued to make truth loved and to make the good lived more fully. Yves Congar observed, “In his Summa aurem, [St. Thomas] wrote more than 3,000 articles, and in none of them, except here and there when he wished to retract some statement, does he speak of himself; there is not one of them that is not like a monument hiding in order to exhibit his God.” That is the humility which will ever turn the wisdom of this world. That is the model of what it means to engage the secular society.

The message we bring to the world is not ourselves. Humanity’s hope is not a new program or governmental mandate. Only an encounter with Christ will bring about the change people long for. That is not to say we won’t establish organizations or charters — I hope the gradu- ates of 2012 will find many such institutions — but our focus will be different. For the Christian, charity is not a program but a Person to be loved. Fixing the economy is not about more money but about promoting human dignity. Establishing justice is not making a world of conformity where everyone is the same, but allowing each individual the freedom to flourish and reflect God. Such change only occurs with God at the center of our endeavors. The world is saved by Christ alone, and the Christian
The Power of Joy

Today, graduates, you are being sent out into a confused world. Do not be afraid to engage the secularism, the consumerism, the relativism of modernity. You have been surrounded by goodness, you have been immersed in beauty, and you have encountered truth. These are the tools with which a Thomist lives life to the full. These are the tools with which a Thomist better the lives and longings of all around him.

This noble vocation is brought to fulfillment in both the extraordinary and the ordinary moments of life. Aquinas confronted error before great professors of his time as well as through the lived witness of his everyday actions. Aquinas didn’t merely preach truth; he reached out in truth and charity to others. He smiled at people and took the time to get to know those around him. During St. Thomas’ process for canonization it was reported as common opinion that everyone “believed the Holy Spirit was truly with him for he always had a happy countenance, sweet and affable.”

Never underestimate the power of joy. The world would like to portray you as somber, rigid tools. Shock the world with your life, your enthusiasm, your ready smile. “Do they know about your deep friendships, your active compassion, and your love for this world? Do they know of your love for the Blessed Virgin Mary? If they do not, how can you call yourself a Thomist?”

A true Thomist is often found outside the confessional because a true Thomist is always seeking happiness and genuine friendships. If you wish to be a follower of Aquinas, go out among the nations and spread the Gospel to a world undergoing “faith fatigue.” He challenged us to learn how to move the hearts of men who seem to have had enough of Christianity. The Pope asked us to reflect on how faith, as a living force, could become a reality today.

Perhaps you read the address. Perhaps you caught how our Holy Father highlighted young people as an answer to the fatigue of modernity. You were the ones he called upon to awaken the worldly and to break through the “whatever” attitude of so many searching people. In so doing, Pope Benedict spoke of this era as the age of Eucharistic adoration and sacramental confession. Truly, then, this is the age of Thomism, for the great lovers of Aquinas’ life were the Blessed Sacrament and the saving power of the Cross. It was for this reason that St. Thomas risked everything he was.

Pope Benedict calls confession the “sacrament of joy rediscovered.” The Christian life is not easy, and at times we fall. It is in these moments that the Cross becomes our Exultet of the Easter Vigil. No man is abandoned to his sins or ought to be defined by his past mistakes. “The experience of sin, which is the refusal to follow God and an affront to His friendship, brings gloom into our hearts.” This is not the will of God for us. God wants us to be happy. On the Cross Christ reached out to save us. In the sacrament of confession, the same restoring grace is offered.

Aquinas frequented the sacrament often. His words are simple: “In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so, in the spiritual life, a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.” He further speaks of confession at the sacrament of true friends, the means by which we reconcile ourselves with Christ after pushing Him away. When one is estranged from a friend, how great is the joy of forgive- ness. Never forget the humility that values friendships. A true Thomist is often found outside the confessional because a true Thomist is always seeking happiness and genuine friendships. If you wish to be a follower of Aquinas, go out when you will rediscover this joy.

Everyone knows a Thomas Aquinas College graduate can think; do they know about your deep friendships, your active compassion, and your love for this world? And to welcome 2nd Lt. Bulger into the ranks of Marine Corps officers over the past few years. Fittingly, it was one of those fellow alumni officers who presented 2nd Lt. Bulger with his commission. Three years ago, only hours after his own graduation, Robert Mohun (’99) stood on the stage at the foot of the academic quadrangle to accept a commission as a Marine Corps officer. Three years later, Mr. Mohun — now 1st Lt. Mohun — returned, once again, this time to administer the oath and to welcome 2nd Lt. Bulger into the Corps.

In preparation for this occasion, 2nd Lt. Bulger spent much of his past two summers in Quantico, Va., at the Marines’ Officer Candidates School. There he underwent rigorous training and evaluation under deliberately stressful conditions. The purpose of these trials, according to the school’s mission statement, is to ensure that candidates “possess the moral, intellectual, and physical qualities for commissioning, and the leadership potential to serve successfully.” Clearly he passed muster, as evidenced by the delegation of Marines who came with 1st Lt. Mohun to present 2nd Lt. Bulger with his commission from the President of the United States. 2nd Lt. Bulger took his oath amid bursts of applause and cheers of “saw-w!” Then his parents, Dr. and Mrs. Kyran Bulger of County Tipperary, Ireland, proudly affixed single gold bars to his midnight-blue coat.

One of the greatest minds the world has ever known — the saint whose name this school proudly bears — was above all a Eucharistic lover. To him we owe the beautiful liturgy of Corpus Christi and a clear articulation of the sacrament of the Eucharist. To him we owe the example of a life of wisdom surrendered at the feet of Eternal Wisdom, an enormous intellect great enough to bow in adoration before his God. God knows the world needs thinkers and intellectuals. We need wisdom and knowledge. Yet, in the words of St. Catherine, “Upon knowledge follows love.” Love changes the actions and hearts of men.

As you graduate today, the world applauds your hard-earned knowledge with formal recognition. I beg you to go further. If you haven’t done so already, fall in love. Fall in love with Christ, with His church and with our faith. Live lives of passionate romance and heart-felt conviction. Now that you know the Truth, risk everything for the joy of following Him.

Let the Church boast of the graduates of this College as its martyrs of the 21st century. You will fearlessly profess truth, even unto death, to those who deny, ridicule, or simply do not believe. You will do this in imitation of Jesus who took on the form of a slave and suffered death that all men might have life. For God's sake, for the sake of mankind, go out among the nations and spread the good news. The Word became flesh. May He be incarnate in you. Don’t be content to be mere intellectuals, mere scholars and teachers; be intellectuals bearing Christ into, oftentimes, an empty, hungry world. Be the joy-filled Thomists, the passionate lovers, the convicted thinkers of this age. Do this and you will become the saints for whom the world is waiting, loving, and living in Joy. Thank you. May God bless you.

Semper Fidelis 2012
Alumnus Presents Graduate with Marine Corps Commission

At the start of this year’s Commencement Exercises, Noel Bulger, a member of the Class of 2012, led attendees in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. His classmates have chosen this honor because of his patriotism and his profound sense of duty — both of which would be on display just a few hours later.

After the graduation festivities were finished, Mr. Bulger returned to the stage at the foot of the academic quadrangle for a role that was not a part of the ceremony. Surrounding his family and his classmates, he became 2nd Lt. Bulger, accepting his commission as a member of the United States Marine Corps. He is the sixth Thomas Aquinas College alumnus to join the ranks of Marine Corps officers over the past few years.

Fittingly, it was one of those fellow alumni officers who presented 2nd Lt. Bulger with his commission. Three years ago, only hours after his own graduation, Robert Mohun (’99) stood on the stage at the foot of the academic quadrangle to accept a commission as a Marine Corps officer. Three years later, Mr. Mohun — now 1st Lt. Mohun — returned, once again, this time to administer the oath and to welcome 2nd Lt. Bulger into the Corps.

In preparation for this occasion, 2nd Lt. Bulger spent much of his past two summers in Quantico, Va., at the Marines’ Officer Candidates School. There he underwent rigorous training and evaluation under deliberately stressful conditions. The purpose of these trials, according to the school’s mission statement, is to ensure that candidates “possess the moral, intellectual, and physical qualities for commissioning, and the leadership potential to serve successfully.” Clearly he passed muster, as evidenced by the delegation of Marines who came with 1st Lt. Mohun to present 2nd Lt. Bulger with his commission from the President of the United States. 2nd Lt. Bulger took his oath amid bursts of applause and cheers of “saw-w!” Then his parents, Dr. and Mrs. Kyran Bulger of County Tipperary, Ireland, proudly affixed single gold bars to his midnight-blue coat.

“‘The Marine Corps calls for a quick mind in a dynamic environment,’ says 2nd Lt. Bulger. ‘Thomas Aquinas College prepares you for that (in the classroom), so that you are able to think on your feet. That’s something I’m definitely going to use in the Marine Corps’.”
The Class of 2012 and Senior Thesis Titles

Joshua Altic
Eureka, California

Matter Desires Man:
An Argument That All Corporeal Creation Is Ordered Toward Man by the Material Principle

Kelly Margaret Bulger
Toomevara, Tipperary, Ireland

Perfect Love of Neighbor Through Self-Love in the Dialogues of St. Catherine of Siena

Kathryn Rose Claahsen
Plano, Illinois

Healing the Fractured Story
JOSEPH ANTHONY DOMINIC ANDRES
Santa Paula, California

“He for God Only, She for God in Him”: An Investigation of Eve’s Temptation in Milton’s Paradise Lost

Noel Kyran Bulger
Toomevara, Tipperary, Ireland

Vive la Différence:
The Genius of Gender and the Natural Order
LIBERTY ANN BRITTAIN
Tempe, Arizona

Soul Equivocation: Whether the Soul Is an Equivocal Cause of Cellular Life Outside the Body
PETER ANTHONY ASPER
Front Royal, Virginia

The Higher Men:
How Ayn Rand’s Ideal Man Falls Short of Happiness
CONOR MICHAEL BOPP
Omaha, Nebraska

An Inquiry into St. Thomas’s Question on Obedience
ALICE MARY BULGER
Toomevara, Tipperary, Ireland

The Love That Purifies:
The Importance of Aristotelian Catharsis to Dante’s Journey in the Purgatorio
The Class of 2012 and Senior Thesis Titles

The Veiled God of Till We Have Faces
THERESA LEE MADISON COX
Nashville, Tennessee

"But I Have Called You Friends, Because All Things Whatsoever I Have Heard of My Father I Have Made Known to You": How the Incarnation Has Allowed for a Deeper Friendship with the God of Aristotle
LISA MARIE SORIANO CRUZ
Las Vegas, Nevada

On God's Causality and Man's Freewill
JULIANNE RAGNHILD DALEY
Orange, California

"No Mere Empty Commemoration of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, but a True and Proper Act of Sacrifice": A Comparison of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Roman Rite According to the Encyclical Mediator Dei
MARIE SUZANNE DONOVAN
Mequon, Wisconsin

The Purpose of Stories
NATHAN THOMAS DUNLAP
San Jose, California

The End of Medicine
JACOB EMERSON ELFINK
Marshall, Missouri

"O, That Way Madness Lies": A Treatment Concerning the Effect of the Study of Nature on Technology
CHRISTOPHER THOMAS ELLEFSON
Fort Wingate, New Mexico

Men and Women: Intellectually Complementary for the Sake of Wisdom
ANNE ELISABETH FISHER
Houston, Texas

"We Shall See Him As He Is": A Consideration of the Beatific Vision Contrasting the Positions of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Bonaventure Bagnoregio
MADELINE MARIE FLANDERS
Muscatine, Iowa

Contraception and the Quest for Self-Discovery: An Exposition on the Opposition of Birth Control and the Natural Law
MARK DANIEL FORRESTER
Fallbrook, California

The Molding of a Noble Character in Jane Austen's Emma
THERÈSE MARIE EMMA FOX
London, Ontario, Canada

Those Whom He Called Came Freely: An Argument That the Doctrine of Predestination Does Not Contradict Man's Free Will
DAVID XAVIER FREER
Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Through Things Seen: How the Beauty of Nature Leads Man to Love of God
AUGUSTA MARIA DEIRDRE GRIFFITH
Ojai, California

"To Justify the Ways of God to Men": A Defense of John Milton's Character Portrayals in Paradise Lost
THOMAS JOSEPH GUYNAN
Schuyler, Nebraska

The Friend Is Another Self: An Exposition on the Highest Friendship
JAMES ROYAL HEFFERNAN
Springfield, Illinois

"Tyrant, Show Thy Face!" Identity in Macbeth
AMANDA KATHLEEN HUDSON
Richardson, Texas

"A Poem Begins in Delight and Ends in Wisdom": How the Poetic Arts Benefit Man Through Their Cathartic Effect
IAN CURTIS JOLIAT
Waterbury, Connecticut

The Man Who Would Be King: A Defense of Shakespeare's Macbeth as an Aristotelian Tragedy
MARIA GRACE KELLY
Santa Paula, California

"Until Natural Death": A Philosophical Argument Against Euthanasia Based on the Relationship of the Common Good to the Private Good
KAYLA KERMODE
Maple City, Michigan
The Class of 2012 and Senior Thesis Titles

Waking Love and Life: How Captivating Natasha Became a Real Woman and Fulfilled Her End in Tolstoy’s War and Peace
CHRISTINA SION KINNEY
Aliso Viejo, California

"Imaginatio Est Dominus Falsitatis": An Account of How the Imagination Causes Error in the Speculative Sciences
PHILIP DOMINIC KNUFFKE
Fresno, California

Are We All Created to Be Miserable? An Investigation into How Relationships Form Emotional Habits
REBECCA ANNE KRETSCHEMR
New Paltz, New York

“Are You Jacob Marley?” The Apprehension of Substance Considered
EDWARD LANGLEY
Houston, Texas

The Natural Course of Things: Whether Production and Free Exchange Dispose Men to Strive Towards Virtue and Present an Understanding of the Common Good
ZACHARY THOMAS LEBOLD
Kansas City, Missouri

On the Performer’s Role in the Production of Music, or A Defense of the Proper Dignity of the Performer against Boethius
JOSHUA YANHAN LO
Houston, Texas

A Heart for the Head: On the Obedience a Wife Owes to Her Husband
BRIDGET ANNE LYNCH
Poway, California

“He Was Simply an Early Lover of Mankind”: An Analysis of Alyosha Fyodorovich in The Brothers Karamazov
THOMAS JUDE MALONE
Phoenix, Arizona

When No Man Was His Own: On Theatre’s Ability to Move Men Toward Virtue As Represented in Shakespeare’s The Tempest
MARIE HELEN FRANCIS MAROTTI
Kalamazoo, MI

How Aristotle’s Discussion of Contemplation in the Ethics Leads to the City
RACHEL TERESA LILLIAN MATHIE
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

Love and Creativity in Goethe’s Faust
LOUISE MILTON
Mesa, Arizona

Speech: The Significance of True Speech for Society
ANNA ELIZABETH O’BRIEN
Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

Whether There Is Any Equivocation by Reason That Is Not Properly Called Analogy
COLIN EDWARD O’KEEFE
Spring Green, Wisconsin

Plato’s Symposium and the Philosophy of Eros
SEAN MICHAEL STEWART O’NEAL
Monroe, Michigan

Deciphering Dante’s Love
ANDREW JAMES O’REILLY
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

“Music That Falls Strangely on the Ear, Music That Is Different”: A Consideration of Contemporary Music and Why It Is Good for Man
MICHAELA ELIZABETH PAPE
Boise, Idaho

Tocqueville and Aristotle on Friendship and Self-Interest
MASON HAYES THOMAS PEDDEMORS
Lapeer, Michigan

“Omnia in Mensura, et Numero et Pondere Disposuit”: A Critique of Isaac Newton’s First Law of Motion
ROBERT ANTHONY PFEIFFER
Waterford, Wisconsin

The Loss of an Essential Nature: An Examination into Whether Modern Philosophy Degrades Human Dignity
FIONA MARIE PUDDEWA
Locust Grove, Oklahoma

Love God and Despise Man: A Defense of a Christian Message in Gulliver’s Travels
KATHRYN ANN RAINNEY
Kansas City, Missouri

“For Reason Made Gulliver a Miserable Man but Not a Man of Faithlessness and Falsehood”: An Examination of Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels
LOUISA JOLANDA SCAMPERLE
Tempe, Arizona

When No Man Was His Own: On Theatre’s Ability to Move Men Toward Virtue As Represented in Shakespeare’s The Tempest
MARIE HELEN FRANCIS MAROTTI
Kalamazoo, MI

Speech: The Significance of True Speech for Society
ANNA ELIZABETH O’BRIEN
Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

Whether There Is Any Equivocation by Reason That Is Not Properly Called Analogy
COLIN EDWARD O’KEEFE
Spring Green, Wisconsin

Plato’s Symposium and the Philosophy of Eros
SEAN MICHAEL STEWART O’NEAL
Monroe, Michigan

Deciphering Dante’s Love
ANDREW JAMES O’REILLY
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

“Music That Falls Strangely on the Ear, Music That Is Different”: A Consideration of Contemporary Music and Why It Is Good for Man
MICHAELA ELIZABETH PAPE
Boise, Idaho

Tocqueville and Aristotle on Friendship and Self-Interest
MASON HAYES THOMAS PEDDEMORS
Lapeer, Michigan

“Omnia in Mensura, et Numero et Pondere Disposuit”: A Critique of Isaac Newton’s First Law of Motion
ROBERT ANTHONY PFEIFFER
Waterford, Wisconsin

The Loss of an Essential Nature: An Examination into Whether Modern Philosophy Degrades Human Dignity
FIONA MARIE PUDDEWA
Locust Grove, Oklahoma

Love God and Despise Man: A Defense of a Christian Message in Gulliver’s Travels
KATHRYN ANN RAINNEY
Kansas City, Missouri

“For Reason Made Gulliver a Miserable Man but Not a Man of Faithlessness and Falsehood”: An Examination of Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels
LOUISA JOLANDA SCAMPERLE
Tempe, Arizona
### The Class of 2012 and Senior Thesis Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Consideration of the Supreme Court and How It Judges the Law</td>
<td>Matthew Schmidgall</td>
<td>Portland, Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Good Man Is Hard to Find: An Investigation into the Tragedy of Macbeth</td>
<td>Kellie Don Schramm</td>
<td>Olds, Alberta Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It Is Their Right, It Is Their Duty”: A Defense of the American Notion of Rights</td>
<td>Luke Andrew Thomas Seely</td>
<td>Santa Paula, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why the Mind Still Matters: How to Understand the Mind in Light of Modern Science</td>
<td>Stephanie Rose Simia</td>
<td>Hobart, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Nomine: Dry Grammarians in Thirst of Truth</td>
<td>Bernadette Marie Teichert</td>
<td>Oak View, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Consideration of the Supreme Court and How It Judges the Law</td>
<td>Matthew Schmidgall</td>
<td>Portland, Oregon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do What Feels Right: Duty versus Character in the Moral Systems of Kant and Aristotle</td>
<td>Clare Ann Smillie</td>
<td>Helena, Montana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Substance of Space: An Examination of Extension in Physics</td>
<td>Ryan Jon Thomas</td>
<td>Corcoran, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The House Did Not Fall, Because It Had Been Founded on the Rock”: A Refutation of Spinoza’s Account of Faith</td>
<td>James Walter Thompson</td>
<td>Amherst, New Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Uneasy Lies the Head That Wears a Crown”: An Investigation of Shakespeare’s Character Hal Under the Criteria of The Prince and On Kingship</td>
<td>Jack Martin Thomas</td>
<td>San Juan Capistrano, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free”. An Investigation of Whether Rousseau’s Notion of Liberty Is a Common Good</td>
<td>Avery Motiejunas Upchurch</td>
<td>Prescott, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Will You Stay with Me; Will You Be My Love?” An Investigation of Personal Presence in an Age of Social Media</td>
<td>Shannon Marie Williams</td>
<td>Edmonton, Alberta, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supposing Wisdom Is a Woman, What Then? Finding Christ in the Old Testament Wisdom Literature</td>
<td>Mary Rose Wise</td>
<td>Fredericksburg, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tradition of Veiling Women in the Church</td>
<td>Lauren Theresa Witzaney</td>
<td>Denzil, Saskatchewan, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Redemption of Achilles: Et Verbum Caro Factum Est”</td>
<td>Rebecca Marie Wycklendt</td>
<td>New Berlin, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Patron
St. Michael the Archangel

### Class Quotation
“If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world on fire!”

— St. Catherine of Siena
By James W. Thompson (’12)

Freedom and Unity
The 2012 Senior Address

F
or Buckley, Mother Assumpta; dear faculty; members of the Board; friends and benefactors of Thomas Aquinas College; parents, relatives, and friends; and my beloved classmates:

During my years here at Thomas Aquinas College, I have on many occasions felt myself burdened with great responsibility, such as during exams or when writing and defending my senior thesis, as I am sure you have as well. I have always approached such occasions with some misgivings about whether I was up to the task; but never as much so as now. Before my accountability was only to myself, since all my efforts, however important the occasion, represented myself and no one else; but today I am faced with the task of representing not only myself but all of you, my classmates, a task that is as grave a responsibility as it is a great honor.

And I know that this is a responsibility that I must, in some measure, fail to fulfill. For, while in God all perfections are brought into one, in His creatures they cannot be so united, but just as each other out just as the material bodies of those creatures do when attempting to occupy the same space. And so I am quite unable to present at once all the different and often contradictory perfections of you, my classmates. I cannot bring together the abstract rationality of Phil Knutti and the impassioned exuberance of Bridget Lynch, the inspiring self-confidence of Colin O’Keefe with the earnest humility of Marie Donovan, or the intense studiousness of Josh Altic. (And our classmates. I cannot bring anyone to now I have used many metaphors and figures of speech, I assure you that I speak simply, precisely, and literally when I say that I love you all, my dear classmates, and simply, precisely, and literally when I say that I love you all, my dear classmates, and

A unity that we did not share when we first came together here as freshmen; indeed it does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that we were as far from it then as we were distant in time from this day.

We all remember our first classes, where we set off in search of truth like knights-errant, forging bravely into the wild on our solitary quest (a quest which enjoyed by all without suffering any diminution. The first step is the realization that this end cannot be reached without help. And while we may at first be answer, then with those who stand in the way of our train of thought and cause it to come to a screeching halt, we will later forgive the delay and count it a blessing when we realize that the particular track we were running along so merrily would have led us over a cliff.

Next comes the discovery that the good to be had is not in the reification of our own opinions, but in coming to possess something new; not in making our personal opinions a public good merely by sharing it with others, the goodness of it growing rather than diminishing with each new share claimed. And, as Aristotle says, in every community among those with a common end there is not only justice but friendship as well.

This is what brought us together as a class, this common striving for a good and the common enjoyment of it. The oneness that we have does not come simply from coming and going together to the same classrooms or matriculating at and graduating from this school in the same years, but can truly be called a friendship.

“...This is what brought us together as a class, this common striving for a good and the common enjoyment of it. The oneness that we have does not come simply from coming and going together to the same classrooms or matriculating at and graduating from this school in the same years, but can truly be called a friendship.”

A friendship that we may have seemed to many of our friends and relatives to be as illusory and foolhardly as the exploits of Don Quixote.

But perhaps not truly solitary. For the most significant encounter during these early days was not the expected meeting with the great minds of the works we were studying, but with the other students who were on the same mission as we were and seemed to see think themselves just as well equipped for it as we were.

Granted, we had known that there would be other students besides us (this was the discussion method, after all), but we had most likely expected to encounter a polite and responsive audience for our own thoughts and insights, listening with rapt attention and only replying with affirmation and support. But what we met was something quite different; something not made of such malleable stuff as we had expected; something with its own shapes and motions, inexplicably resistant to our attempts to direct it; something wiggling and kicking and very much alive.

Such were the minds of our fellow students, inexorably resilient and unconscionably at odds with ourselves and each other, and not through any malice but quite by natural necessity. For living beings, unlike the inanimate materials of an artificial edifice, cannot be united simply by being forced together; and far more is required than local proximity to make them truly one. Nor can this come about by the strongest of them forcing the others to follow its will (as many of us may have been attempting to do during these early days, whether we intended to or not), since this would be to buy unity at the price of life.

Rather, union must come from something higher than all and yet common to all, a good which they strive for together and cannot attain alone, and which can be

Not the name liberal suggest more the breaking of bonds rather than the binding together of a society.

“I will attempt to answer your question, “I respond. “But in so doing I must take a cue from Aristotle and abandon the dialogue format since it is inefficient and it’s losing its novelty.”

The objector was, indeed, correct in saying something to the word “liberal” while trying to determine the good of the education we have received here over the last four years. The word, of course, means free, and therefore seems to beg further qualification; the natural question is “free from what?”

Does a liberal education give us what Socrates was always seeking to give to his students (or help them to recollect for themselves), a freedom from misconceptions about our own knowledge of the world, eventually coming to the realization that we were wrong? Or is it an even more radical shaking of our foundations, showing us that there is not absolute reality, as Nietzsche and his fellow moderns would have it, and granting us the greatest and most terrible freedom of all: to make the truth of what we will?

Surely it cannot be either of these if it is to be a good. For the former, the shattering of our complacency and the clearing away of our false opinions so that we can see to our own ignorance, is but the beginning of something good. It makes room for real knowledge, but is of no value if we stop with it, just as one does not level a building unless he means to erect a better one in its place; no one simply takes joy in the rubble. A sense of wonder at the inconceivability of the truth with our power of knowing it is sometimes appropriate and necessary, especially in such subjects as theology (or perhaps Mr. Quackenbush’s Senior Natural Science class), but is not, simply speaking, our goal. And the idea that the truth is something we attain by some kind of effort, and not simply by finding any good at all unless it be a kind of self-reflection — a worthy achievement to be sure, but not a resting place unless we believed that we ourselves were the greatest things there were to be known; only if we believed that we ourselves were God. And if I am looking for a good on account of which we, the many, can be united by pursuing it, it cannot be this total self-absorption, which would draw us into ourselves and more completely away from one another than the bitterest conflict.

So it might seem impossible that any act could be simultaneously freeing and uniting. In pursuing a liberating education are we not all like lines radiating out from the same center each in our own different direction, growing ever further apart? And yet it may in fact be possible to two parallel lines as it might seem. Perhaps the surface which we are traveling on is in fact a sphere, and all the radii which appear to be fleeing each other by one who sees the world as flat will in fact come around to meet again in the same point. Perhaps our inability to see that something can be both liberating
ing and conjunctive is from a similar lack of the proper perspective, and we should take a further removed point of view by looking at the nature of men in general, how they are united and divided, and in what way they are free.

A Response

The way in which men are divided from each other, at least most obviously, is by their corporeal nature, their limitation to each other, at least most obviously, is by material circumstances which they have ordinarily enabled them to afford it to all who sought it, regardless of whether faith in the generosity of donors, the College has been able to provide its education to all who sought it, regardless of whether their particular financial situation would have ordinarily enabled them to afford it or not. Without this liberality, as well as the immeasurable support of my own parents, of course, I, along with many of us, would not be here.

We seek the same transcendence in the incredible accomplishments of our student choir, or those who come together to put on a dance or formal dinner, who, entering with little previous experience and expecting no material reward, have been able to bring forth creations of such remarkable beauty that they call to mind the miraculous building of the Ark of the Covenant by the unskilled laborers of Israel. Or in the seemingly limitless availablility of the tutors to provide answers and assistance to the students, much of it outside of the classroom hours for which they are hired. The fact that each of the groups that I have mentioned would most likely protest that they were only doing what was expected from them is but a sign of the fact that here the extraordinary is commonplace.

A true liberal education will touch every part of whatever life the one who possesses it chooses to live. And the way in which it will show itself the most is not in the greatness of mind, or even excellence of character of its possessor, but in the charity with which they live their lives. For whenever we were taught something during our time here, whether by a tutor, a fellow student, or the author of a work, it was not by our teacher dazzling us with the brilliance of his intellectual superiority, but by his charity in helping us to ascend to an equal level, making that superiority no more.

And what can be more free than to love all our fellow men, regardless of their place or character, with a love that overcomes all obstacles and unites inexpressibly and yet without coercion? This, ultimately, is the fire of which St. Catherine speaks in our class quote, with which we are to ignite our class; this is how we can ultimately be united not only as a class or a school in our study of the true and the good, but as children of the self-subsuming True and Good; this how we can rise together and converge in eternity.

And so, onwards and upwards, Class of 2012, and may God bless you and speed you on your way.
I you are what you should be,” begins the quotation from St. Catherine of Siena that the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2012 has chosen as its own, “you will set the whole world on fire.”

The Thomas Aquinas College’s Class of 2012 has been described as a class that “set the whole world on fire.” This is the spiritual ideal to which the Class of 2012 aspires as its members leave the campus to embrace the vocations, occupations, and apostolates to which Our Lord is calling them. The graduates are determined to set the world ablaze spiritually, as further evidenced by their choice of a valiant class patron, St. Michael the Archangel.

This determination is all the more apparent in the plans and goals that these new alumni have set for themselves in the months, years, and even decades ahead. Whether as lay people or as religious, as surgeons, scholars, or servants, with plans firmly in place or still in the early stages of formation — members of the Class of 2012 are determined to be what they should be, according to God’s unique calling, so as to “set the whole world on fire.”

**Medicine**

“My time at the College has taught me how to think for myself and not necessarily be persuaded by what other people are telling me to be true,” reflects Anne Fisher, who is taking prerequisite courses for medical school at San Francisco State University. “I think that is valuable in medicine, especially in the current medical climate.” Gabriel Duda is likewise completing his prerequisites, with plans to enter medical school within the next year. Seeking to care for the human psyche, Shannon Williams will pursue a doctorate in psychology. Other members of the Class of 2012 — including Kelly Bulger, Julianne (Dailey) Flathers, David Freer, Augusta Grimm, Rebecca Kretschmer, and Marie Marotti — have set their sites on nursing.

Mary Wise has also decided to go into nursing, with an emphasis on critical care, for reasons that are both personal and inspiring. This past year her brother Matt (06) died after a lengthy hospitalization resulting from pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. For Miss Wise, spending time at her brother’s bedside opened her eyes to nursing. “I enjoy being busy, on my feet, in an active environment where the number-one priority is serving and aiding people,” she says. “I suppose you could say that realizing nursing as my lifelong career path was my brother’s gift to me.”

**National Service**

Three members of the Class of 2012 have opted for careers of a civic nature. On Commencement Day, the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, and America’s Canon Law Program, which includes a two-year master’s degree in theology followed by three years of training to acquire a license in canon law.

**Arts & Entertainment**

“The purpose of the artist is to convey a message, to try to speak to the truth and the dignity of the human person,” says Katherine Claasen. “That is something I’ve been able to see in a very holistic, integral way here through the program.” Miss Claassen hopes to refine her talent for painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago this fall. Nathan Dunlap is taking a job as an animator for a video-game company, with hopes of one day making films. A violinist since the age of seven, Michaela Paape intends to obtain a master’s degree in music.

**Philosophy and Theology**

Given the emphasis on philosophy and theology in the College’s curriculum, it is no surprise that at least a few graduates each year go on to study these disciplines at the graduate level. Edward Langley has received a full scholarship and stipend to pursue doctoral studies in philosophy at the Catholic University of America, and Mark Forrester will be studying moral and Thomistic theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. As of publication, Joshua Altic was still entertaining offers to study philosophy at the University of Dallas — or physics at Baylor University — while also contemplating law school.

**Engineering**

Building on his four years of mathematics at the College, Robert Pfeiffer will enter the electrical-engineering program at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. “Having investigated the principles of math and science at the College will be really helpful in studying the more advanced, modern math and science,” he says, “as will having a good philosophical foundation.”

**Marriage**

During their time at the College several members of the Class of 2012 were blessed to discern vocations to the marital state. “The College prepared us very well for marriage,” observes Collin O’Keefe, who wed Stephanie Simia (08) the weekend after Commencement in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. “Here we had the opportunity to meet each other in a very spiritual environment and to grow together in the Faith as we came to know each other both in love.” That same weekend three other couples were also married in the Chapel: Bernadette (Teichert) and Edward Langley, Madeline (Flanders) and David Freer, and Anna (Dunlap) & Dominic O’Reilly (10). Four weeks later Julianne (Dailey) married her high school sweetheart, Steven Flathers, in Orange, Calif. Three more weddings involving this year’s graduates are planned for later in the summer.

**Priesthood and Religious Life**

It is always a special joy at the College when a graduate answers God’s call to a priestly or religious vocation. Some 10 percent of the College’s alumni are priests and/or religious, including 55 men who have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Often these vocations are discerned a few years after graduation, but not always. Among this year’s graduates Mason Peddemors is the first to answer the call. On August 14 he will enter the Western Province of the Dominican Order to prepare for the priesthood.
We have lived together for four years. And with someone, united in friendship, this is the beginning of closeness, to live with someone closely. After today you will go your separate ways, but that relationship will perdure. You can see manifestations of it during alumni week, when former roommates, dorm-mates, classmates (and dare I say, onetime dating partners) come together and celebrate what they remember as the good old days, shed now of the dark side that they endured together.

The first reading in our Mass tells us something about the closeness that comes from living together. It tells that God lived among His chosen people, even hinting at the presence of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. God said, “I will take you away from the nations, gather you from all the foreign lands, I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you.”

But Jesus alone will tell us how far this friendship of God for man extends. He tells us that God truly makes your heart His dwelling place, that the two of you live together in a much closer union that you can possibly achieve by living with anyone else. “Whoever loves me to together in a much closer union that you can possibly achieve by living with anyone else. “Whoever loves me will keep my word,” Jesus tells us in the Gospel, “and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our dwelling in us, to resurrect our bodies after death. It is an openness to our future.

The problems, the challenges, the sufferings of life remain, but with hope they are looked at in a different way. As St. Paul says, “If God is for us, who is against us?" You become part of the life of the Trinity itself. Think of the Persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — dwelling within you, a relationship analogous to, but much deeper than, the relationship of special friends, of roommates, of classmates, of lovers. Just as talking with and sharing with a friend or a lover is a desire for intimacy, so prayer is the desire to be one with God, despite the immense distance that separates you, a finite creature, from Him, the Almighty Creator.

As a practical consequence of this intimacy, I encourage you to be men and women of hope. Hope is the virtue of what we are now, that is, men and women of faith and charity, but it is also what we shall be. Our hope is an openness to what God wills to do for us, to complete His dwelling in us, to resurrect our bodies after death. It is an openness to our future.

For the full text and audio of Fr. Buckley’s Baccalaureate Mass homily, see www.thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2012.