Honor Roll

College Gets High Marks for Catholic Identity, Academics, and Financial Aid

When the Association of College Trustees and Alumni graded 714 of the country’s major colleges and universities on the strength of their curricula, the organization gave its highest rating — an “A” — to only 2 percent of the schools surveyed.

That is just 16 campuses in the entire United States, and of those, only one received a perfect score: Thomas Aquinas College.

Unique among college-ranking organizations, ACTA focuses its evaluation on the substance of a school's mandatory courses and texts — the core curriculum. The association, founded by former chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Humanities Lynne Cheney, has identified seven essential areas of study for undergraduates — composition, literature, American history, foreign language, mathematics, science, and economics. The more of these areas of study required by a college or university, and the more substantive the readings, the higher the school's overall ACTA rating.

"Education of the Whole Person"

While 60 percent of the surveyed colleges and universities — including many of the nation’s most prominent public, private, and Catholic schools — earned grades of “C” or lower, Thomas Aquinas College was alone in ensuring that its students study all seven areas. The results of ACTA’s investigation can be found on the organization’s website (www.whatwilltheylearn.com), which allows for comparisons by name, region, or state.

“It did come as a bit of a surprise to find that we alone in the country are fulfilling ACTA’s paradigm core curriculum,” says Dean of the College Brian T. Kelly. “On the other hand, we aim not at vocational training but at the education of the whole person, an education that will serve as an intellectual and moral foundation throughout our students’ lives. As a result, our ‘core’ is our curriculum — an integrated, comprehensive, and Catholic education based entirely on the great books.”

The College’s unique academic program not only covers the seven key disciplines ACTA has identified, it orders them toward a rigorous study of philosophy and theology, culminating in the works of the Church’s Universal Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas. “Ironically,” Dr. Kelly adds, “even though our classical education is not vocational in nature, it prepares our alumni to enter the best graduate schools in the country and of those, only one received a perfect score: Thomas Aquinas College.

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“We are pleased, as always, with the College’s placement in these guides, and we consider it a good sign for the cause of Catholic liberal education,” says President Michael F. McLean. “Our students and faculty continue to demonstrate that a classical education, taught in the light of faith, can yield outstanding results by any reasonable measure.”

Marcus R. Berquist †
1934 – 2010

As this edition of the Thomas Aquinas College Newsletter was nearing completion, we received word that Marcus R. Berquist, a founder of the College and a member of the teaching faculty, passed away in the early hours of All Souls Day, November 2, from complications arising from lymphoma. In order to give proper attention to Mr. Berquist’s life and his great work on behalf of Catholic liberal education, we will postpone coverage until the next issue of the Newsletter in early 2011. In the meantime, we ask that you pray for the repose of his soul and the consolation of his wife, Laura, and their family.

Remembering Blessed Mother Teresa

College Commemorates Saintly Nun’s 100th Birthday, 1982 Visit to campus

As the world celebrated the 100th birthday of Bl. Mother Teresa on August 26, 2010, Thomas Aquinas College marked the day by honoring the woman who is both a beloved saint of modern times and one of the College’s most memorable Commencement speakers.

While touring the United States in 1982, Bl. Mother Teresa visited just three campuses: Harvard University, Georgetown University, and — at the request of her friend Rev. John Hardon, S. J. — Thomas Aquinas College. She served as that year’s Commencement Speaker and, like Fr. Hardon before her, received the College’s highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. (Like Bl. Mother Teresa, the late Fr. Hardon’s cause for canonization is currently under way.)

To commemorate the occasion of her 100th birthday during the first week of the academic year, the College scheduled a special mid-day Mass in Bl. Teresa’s honor in the Thomas Aquinas College’s chapel. The Mass, which was publicized beforehand in both local and national Catholic media, was open to the public and well attended.

College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.S., served as the principal celebrant, joined at the altar by Chaplain Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P.

"Keep the Joy of Loving Jesus"

During the Mass, enlarged photographs from Bl. Teresa’s 1982 visit stood within the sanctuary as well as in the loggia just outside the Chapel, where holy cards and transcripts of her 1982 Commencement Address were made available. "As Mother Teresa told the students in 1982, the fruit of love is action," said Fr. Buckley in his homily. "We must put our love for Jesus into living action. Strive to become, work to become, pray to become a poet in action."

In the course of a mere 20-minute, extemporaneous presentation, Bl. Mother Teresa’s 1982 address covered subjects as far-reaching as joy, suffering, the Eucharist, prayer, human dignity, abortion, and the great blessing of vocations to the priesthood or religious life. “Go forward with the joy and keep the joy of loving Jesus in your hearts,” the future saint proclaimed to the 1982 graduates. “And share that joy with all you meet, especially with one another and with your family.”

Online, the College posted videos from Bl. Teresa’s Commencement Address and from an on-campus press conference she gave later that day. The videos, as well as a transcript of her address, remained prominently displayed on the website’s front page through her Feast Day on September 5, and both are still accessible at www.thomasaquinas.edu.

College Commemorates Saintly Nun’s 100th Birthday, 1982 Visit to campus

Convocation 2010: College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.S., offers a benediction following the Matriculation ceremony. (See page 2.)
It is occasioned, at least in part, by the opportunity I had this summer to participate in seminars on the Natural Law with friends and benefactors of the College.

Imitating St. Thomas Aquinas’ dialectical approach, wherein he begins each article with an objection, problem, or position contrary to his own, our conversations on the Natural Law began with a consideration of late Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes’ The Path of the Law, an essay which had momentous influence on 20th century legal philosophy and jurisprudence.

The differences between Holmes and Aquinas are profound. Unlike St. Thomas, Holmes and his followers question the logical basis for the human law and, accordingly, any attempt to base the human law on the more fundamental precepts of the Natural Law. Unlike St. Thomas, who grounds the human law on the universal and self-evident precepts of the Natural Law, and who sees the law as a rule and measure of our habits and desires, Holmes and his followers stress the human law’s complete dependence on “the habit of the public mind” and assert that “no concrete proposition is self-evident, no matter how ready we may be to accept it.”

The debate between Holmes and St. Thomas is not trivial. The policies our nation adopts regarding marriage and the life issues, for example, depend in no small part on whatever legal philosophy prevails. Follow Holmes, and we go one way; follow St. Thomas and the Catholic Church, and we go another. Ideas do have consequences. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks to the importance of this debate when it says, “the Natural Law states the first and essential precepts which govern the moral life … and provides the indispensable moral foundation for building the human community [and] provides the necessary basis for the civil law with which it is connected.”

An Education in Citizenship

St. Thomas’ Treatise on Law is read in our junior theological tutorial. Holmes is not read, but some of his precursors are read in the junior seminar and elsewhere in our program. Reading and discussing texts like these is an education in citizenship because it helps us see the ideas and principles that shape the contemporary world and form the basis of the political movements, issues, and challenges we face today. Such texts also help us think about and better understand the questions faced by citizens of every time and place: questions, for example, about the nature of justice, about the best form of government, and the origin and limits of political power and authority.

Considerations of this sort begin, of course, in the freshman year. In Sophocles’ great tragedy Antigone, Creon articulates a political philosophy and a certain model of citizenship when he says, “There is nothing worse than disobedience to authority. It destroys cities, it demolishes homes, it breaks and routs one’s allies … the man the state has put in place must have obedient hearing to his least command when it is right, and even when it is not.” Countering Creon’s command to refrain from burying her brother, and bringing the question of the relationship between the human and divine laws into clear focus, Antigone says, “For me it was not Zeus who made that order. Nor did that Justice who lives with the gods below mark out such laws to hold among mankind. Nor did I think your orders were so strong that you, a mortal man, could over-run the gods’ unwritten and unfalling laws.”

In the Republic, Plato takes up Thrasymachus’ claim that “justice is the advantage of the stronger,” develops a general theory of justice, discusses the various kinds of political arrangements, and establishes an order among them. These questions are revisited by Aristotle in his Nichomachean Ethics and Politics, which are read and discussed in the junior year.

Again in the freshman and sophomore years, historians like Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, and Plutarch depict the strengths and weaknesses of various regimes and political leaders concretely and in great detail and trace the transition from monarchy to republic to tyranny. Poets like Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare put before us images of good and bad leadership, of the rise of cities and political cultures, and of the downfall of kings, princes, and others in authority.

Modern political philosophers like Machiavelli articulate what are sometimes called pragmatic political philosophies when they say, as Machiavelli does, that “a prince who wishes to maintain the state is often forced to do evil,” and “it will be found that some things which seem virtues would, if followed, lead to one’s ruin, and some others which appear vices result in one’s greater security and wellbeing.

Perhaps more realistic, however, is St. Thomas when he says in his work On Kingship that “the very temporal advantages for which tyrants abandon justice work to the greater profit of kings when they observe justice.” Other modern political philosophers (like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau), abandoning the robust sense of the Natural Law found in St. Thomas, articulate the idea of rights as the basis of political authority and citizenship, and the founders and founding documents of our own country help us understand how rights serve as the principles on which our own specific political arrangements are founded.

Other examples could be given, but let these suffice to make the point: ours is an education which will help to make you thoughtful, knowledgeable, and productive citizens. The specifically Catholic character of this education, and the preeminence in it enjoyed by Aristotle and St. Thomas, will help you see that our political arrangements should be ordered to the common good and that we are obliged to put our God-given talents to work for the sake of the common good.

The Work of Catholic Liberal Education

It is important in Catholic liberal education that we think deeply about the management of our temporal affairs and that we begin to cultivate the virtue of political prudence. Aristotle himself emphasizes this when he says at the end of the Ethics, as he is introducing the Politics, “He who wants to make men, whether many or few, better by his care must try to become capable of legislating, since it is through laws that we can become good.”

In conclusion, let me say that our discussion of citizenship would not be complete without making the point, if only briefly, that the political, as I have outlined it here, constitutes only part of our curriculum; that as essential as these things are, they are not the highest things. Last year’s graduating class, the Class of 2010, chose as its quasituation the famous remark made by Aristotle, again at the end of the Ethics: “We ought not to listen to those who exhort us, because we are human, to think of human things … we ought rather to take on immortality as much as possible, and do all that we can to live in accordance with the highest element within us; for even if its bulk is small, in its power and value it far exceeds everything.”

Echoing this thought, St. Augustine reminds us that we have only one foot in the earthly city. The most important work of Catholic liberal education, and of Thomas Aquinas College, is that carried out in its philosophy and theology tutorials and in its chapel and other places of prayer. This work helps to perfect our highest faculty and enables us to grow in wisdom. Accordingly, it, too, prepares us for citizenship — citizenship in the City of God and in the heavenly city to come.

Thank you.

Convocation 2010

1. President Michael F. McLean and Dean Brian T. Kelly lead members of the faculty from Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel after the opening Mass of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Thomas Aquinas College Choir sings at the Mass of the Holy Spirit.
3. Freshman Helen Maduka of London, England, a graduate of the University of Cambridge, is welcomed by Bishop Edward J. Slattery of Tulsa (this year’s Convocation Speaker) and Dr. McLean at the Matriculation ceremony.
4. Freshman Adrienne Grimm of San Dimas, Calif., signs her name in the College’s Register of Students.

From the Desk of the President

Dr. Michael F. McLean’s Convocation Day Remarks
Firmly Catholic, Faithfully Thomistic

Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Grocholewski, Affirm College’s Founding Principles

Founded amid the campus rebellions of the 1960s and 1970s, at a time when most Catholic colleges were jettisoning their religious identity and the Church’s intellectual patrimony, Thomas Aquinas College under took—according to the mind of Her Universal Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas— an ambitious mission: to restore Catholic liberal education. The College would embrace both a culture and a curriculum that were wholly Catholic. The academic program would be ordered to theology in precisely the manner in which the Church has for centuries prescribed —according to the mind of Her Universal Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas.

For 40 years, Thomas Aquinas College has held true to this vision, remaining firmly Catholic in its identity and faithfully Thomistic in its scholarly program. At the same time, the Church’s leaders have continued to uphold these ideals as the model for Catholic education. “This summer, His EminenceZenon Cardinal Grocholewski, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, restated the need for fidelity to the Magisterium in higher education, warning that “only the Catholic university that conserves its identity will have a future.” Meanwhile, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the pronouncement of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, that “the church has been justified in consistently proposing St. Thomas a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology.”

Such guidance from Rome, says Dean Brian T. Kelly, “emboldens us in the pursuit of the College’s founding mission.”

Cardinal Grocholewski and Ex Corde Ecclesiae

The Vatican’s top education official, Cardinal Grocholewski offered his comments in response to an interview with the Catholic News Agency commemorating the 20th anniversary of John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution on higher education, Ex Corde Ecclesiae. “The Catholic university that conserves its own identity, as was delineated in Ex Corde, truly has a future and will contribute to the good of society,” Cardinal Grocholewski said. Due to the modern prevalence of permissiveness and relativism, he added, there is a tremendous need for “the Catholic university that defends the truth, the objective truth.”

Over the years, the Cardinal Prefect has commend ed Thomas Aquinas College for doing just this—teaching young people how to give a rational account of the truths of their faith. For instance, in 2009 he lauded the College for being “steeped in Catholic tradition and in academic excellence,” and for providing an environment “where education is undertaken enlightened by the Catholic faith.” His Eminence also praised “the fidelity of Thomas Aquinas College to the Magisterium of the Church,” and wrote that the College “is lending a helpful hand to the Church to fulfill Her mission.”

“When it comes to the future of Catholic education, we are heartened by what Cardinal Grocholewski has to say,” observes Dean Kelly. “We are also humbled by his kind words about this college, and grateful for his tireless work in support of Catholic identity in colleges and universities throughout the world.”

Pope Benedict XVI on St. Thomas

The Holy Father’s comments on the importance of studying St. Thomas Aquinas came during a series of talks about some of the 33 Doctors of the Church, each of whom was the subject of one Wednesday-morning audience, save for St. Thomas, whose legacy called for three separate discussions. “Thomas Aquinas showed there is a natural harmony between Christian faith and reason,” Pope Benedict explained this past June. “At a time like ours of renewed commitment to evangelization, these fundamental arguments must never be lacking.”

As the Pope noted, the preeminence of St. Thomas Aquinas is longstanding. St. Thomas was “a theologian of such value that the study of his thought was explicitly recommended by the Second Vatican Council in two documents,” he said. “Indeed, already in 1880 Pope Leo XIII, who held St. Thomas in high esteem as a guide and encouraged Thomistic studies, chose to declare him Patron of Catholic Schools and Universities.”

Mindful of Pope Pius XII’s 1923 declaration that the Church “has adopted his philosophy for Her own,” Thomas Aquinas College has been devoted to St. Thom as ever since its founding in 1971. “St. Thomas lies at the heart of our curriculum because his principles, methods, and chief doctrines are true in their own right, and are sure ways to a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith,” says President Michael F. McLean. “At Thomas Aquinas College, we pursue truth guided by our patron and namesake, as the Holy Father and his predecessors have continuously advocated.”

Cardinal Grocholewski and Pope Benedict’s recent remarks are “of one piece,” says Dean Kelly. “A wholly Catholic college will naturally submit to the Church’s educational recommendations, and those include looking to St. Thomas as the master. That might make Thom as Aquinas College more or less unique among Catholic institutions these days, but it is very much in keeping with the Church’s rich history of higher education.”

Campus Update

Recent Events and Happenings

On September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Most Rev. Robert F. Vasa, Bishop of Baker, laid hands on Joseph K. Levine (‘89) and conferred upon him the sacred rite of Holy Orders. Fr. Levine is now the College’s 49th alumnus priest.

The ordination took place at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Bend, Ore., where Fr. Levine served as a transitional deacon and where he is now an associate pastor. Among those on hand for the occasion were Thomas Aquinas College President Michael F. McLean and one of Fr. Levine’s Class of 1989 classmates, John Nieto, now a tutor on the College’s faculty.

“Thomas Aquinas College’s curriculum laid for me a very solid foundation of knowledge, preparing me well to exercise this fundamental office of the priest,” says Fr. Levine. “Fr. Vasa on campus, he adds, gave him “a living experience of Catholic community life, thereby preparing me both to stand before God at the altar and to minister to His people.”

Reflecting on the ordination, Dr. McLean said, “We thank God for the gift of our alumni priests. It is an honor each time I am blessed to witness one of these men an swer Christ’s call.” The president added that he enjoyed the opportunity to once again see Bishop Vasa, a good friend of the College who in 2005 served as the matriculation speaker and principal celebrant at the Convocation Mass.

Christianist Fund to High School Program

The Christianist, a Washington, D.C.-based philanthropic organization dedicated to forming future leaders for a free society, has made a $36,000 gift toward Thomas Aquinas College’s Summer Great Books Program for High School Students. The grant will pay the stipends of the 18 prefects who help administer the program — all students at the College — over the next two years. Thus, through Christianist’s generosity, the College will gain strengthened leadership experience while mentoring and overseeing a group of young people who, in turn, will deepen their faith, learn to seek the truth, and bring that truth to the world.

College in the News

Stift & Form: The Interfaith Journal on Religion, Art & Architecture: In a recent cover story about Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, author George C. Knight, AIA, writes, “Given the College’s history, its academic focus on the foundational texts of Western culture (especially those of its namesake), and its critique of the secular drift in Catholic educational life in America … it comes as no surprise that the College sought inspiration for its new chapel in the tradition of Catholic architecture in Europe.” The Chapel, he concludes, is “a seminal achievement in the ever nascent classical revival”.

The Chronicle of Higher Education: Writing about the 20th anniversary of Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution on higher education, Ex Corde Ecclesiae (see page 3), David House notes that “the landscape of Catholic higher education has changed appreciably in the past 20 years.” Specifically, he cites “the creation of new Catholic institutions rigorously faithful to Church teachings,” a trend which “began when Thomas Aquinas College, in California, was founded by laypeople in 1971.”
Recovering the Notion of a Received Liturgy

Excerpts from the Matriculation Address of His Excellency Edward J. Slattery

Note: The Most Rev. Edward J. Slattery, Bishop of Tulsa, was Thomas Aquinas College’s 2010 Convocation Speaker. The full text of his address is available on the College’s website at www.thomasaquinas.edu/news/newsletter.

I am honored to have been invited to share with you the excitement and the enthusiasm that come from beginning well the work of the Kingdom.

In saying that, I trust that no one will dispute with me that the real work of this college, that same work which should engage every Catholic institution of higher education, is not to produce technocrats, nor critics, nor informed consumers. The purpose of Thomas Aquinas College is to explore as fully as possible the effect of Christ’s Incarnation upon our humanity, and to do so with a living faith, so that that glory of God which St. Irenæus of Lyons calls “man fully alive” might be made manifest here in every lecture, in every class, in every friendship, and in every Holy Mass. To make manifest the glory of God in Christ is surely to build the Kingdom. That is what we begin with today at this particular moment, so let us begin well.

In considering the kind invitation extended to me by Dr. McLean, what caught and held my attention was the beautiful title which graces the chapel on campus here: Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity.

This new beginning is certainly a way of building up the Kingdom of God. I hope that we shall begin it well.

The Notion of a Received Liturgy

All of this leads me to an important consideration regarding the necessity of our receiving the liturgy from the Church rather than inventing it afresh Sunday after Sunday or having our liturgy committees cobble it together like industrious shoemakers. I would suggest that the most important thing we can do is foster an authentic liturgy, the most important thing we can do to implement the vision of the Second Vatican Council, is to return to the notion of a received liturgy, a liturgy which comes to us in place and properly arranged, without the need of our creativity or ingenuity to be successfully celebrated.

I know that in proposing the recovery of a received liturgy, I am calling for a fundamental shift in liturgical paradigms. And this is rather like offering myself as a foot soldier in the liturgical wars — not an enviable position to be in since foot soldiers make fine targets! But from the time I was ordained in 1966, I have felt in my heart that the liturgy as we know it today does not reflect adequately the teaching of Vatican Council II. The effects of that inadequate reflection can be seen now, 40 years later, in the challenges we face in every field from catechesis to ecology.

Mary is the great exemplar of the Christian liturgy. She received from God what He intended to give. She opened herself up to be loved by God and set no limits to that love.

In trying to articulate the sense of loss and dislocation that accompanied the abrupt liturgical break that took place in our liturgical celebrations in the ’60s, I am drawn to Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger’s analysis of the situation. Cardinal Ratzinger, now His Holiness Benedict XVI, described the principle which legitimized this break in our liturgical tradition as a hermeneutic of discontinuity. Those who accept this hermeneutic of discontinuity — and their number is still legion — show an overriding dislike of anything which may have come down to us from past generations.

Its Accompanying Theological Error

The theological error which accompanies this hermeneutic of discontinuity is the assumption that it is the Church’s role to create the liturgy, to make it new, to be the one to shape it. The liturgy is not created by the Church; it is received by the Church.

One First Step to Resolve the Problem

I would like to suggest one simple change by which we might begin to recover the sense that the liturgy is something we receive, rather than something we create. I do not propose this as the most important or essential change toward this end, but merely as one change, one step, one movement away from the chaos of created liturgies toward the proper vision of the Council.

What I would like to propose is that we recover the sung introst at Mass… that is a question that antiphon and psalm. In the Catholic liturgical tradition, these are unique compositions in which a scriptural cento is set to a singular piece of music. The melody explores and interprets the text of the cento, while the composition as a whole illuminates the meaning to be discovered later in the readings of the day.

These sung intros have been an integral part of the Latin Rite, and remain so in the extraordinary form, where the schola or choir chants the more difficult antiphon and the congregation sings the psalm. This gives the faithful both the chance to listen and respond, practicing, in effect, the basic elements of the Mass, listening and responding, listening, for example, to the Word of God as it comes to us in the readings, and then responding to the Father’s invitation by offering to Him the obedience of Jesus.

Unfortunately these antiphons have never been set to music in the Novus Ordo. For 40 years they have sat, lonely and forgotten, at the top of each page in the Sacramentary unable to be sung, until even the memory of the sung introit has passed away.

Yet there are changes afoot and reason to hope. The introduction of the new translation of the Roman Missal, now certainly set for the First Sunday of Advent of next year, gives me reason to anticipate a new beginning here. Faithful to the spirit of the Latin text and with an accurate translation into a consciously sacred style of English, the new Missal points to a rediscovered seriousness in the way America celebrates her liturgy and perhaps a greater appreciation as well of the elements of liturgy which have been discarded these past 40 years.

Perhaps with this new seriousness, and given the need to compose new chant melodies to accompany the new translations, this may well be the time when liturgists will begin discussing the meaning of a received liturgy, when composers might make their first attempts to set these antiphons to a simple English Plain Song, and when publishers might begin to produce worthy and dignified liturgical books.

I hope that we shall begin it well.
Galileo and the Harmony of Faith and Reason
Tutor Christopher Decaen (’93) Addresses Myths and Meaning of Celebrated Conflict

No single rule, he added, can be devised to preclude or resolve in advance any future such conflicts. Instead, Dr. Decaen advised, prudence, judgment, and — above all, “the Magisterium Herself, who is guided by more than the greatest of human wisdom” — must direct our thinking. In making this claim, Dr. Decaen cited Galileo’s own words: “With regard to these judgments I have had occasion to consider several things, and I shall set them forth in order that I may be corrected by those who understand more than I do in these matters — for to their decisions I submit at all times.”

Questions and Answers
The Galileo affair, Dr. Decaen says, has interested him ever since his days as a student at the College. “Like everyone else, I had imbibed the common legend that we’re all told, that Galileo was essentially beaten up by the Church,” he says. “But I was provoked to look into it when I was a sophomore here, because in math we read Copernicus’ On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres, which is dedicated to Pope Paul III. I remember thinking at the time, ‘What is the father of heliocentrism doing dedicating his book to the Pope? Isn’t it true that the Church hated this idea?’”

And so Decaen began an inquiry that culminated nearly 20 years later in Dr. Decaen’s presenting a lecture on the subject at his alma mater. “The College’s academic program really lends itself to this kind of conversation,” Dr. Decaen says, “because our students are studying all the relevant disciplines — the mathematics, the astronomy, the philosophy, and the theology. They are reading the actual works by the actual authors, and therefore can engage the issues substantively, without relying on hearsay to form their opinions.” At his lecture, Dr. Decaen distributed a handout of direct quotations from the key source materials.

Because the Galileo affair looms large in any contemporary discussion of the relationship between faith and reason, says Dr. Decaen, “it is important that our students be able not only to refute some of the common myths, but also to learn from the real lessons it contains.”

Note: Audio from Dr. Decaen’s lecture and a transcript can be found on the Thomas Aquinas College website, www.thomasaquinas.edu.
Amid family reunions, summer jobs, and simple recreation, Thomas Aquinas College students often use the weeks between Commencement and Convocation to expand their minds, to serve others, and to plan for their futures. Below is just a small sampling of how some students spent the most recent summer break.

Physician-in-Training: Cara Buskmiller (’11)

Since high school, Cara Buskmiller has sensed a calling to the practice of medicine. “It's always been something that has interested me — the science, the talking with people,” she says. She notes that there is much “unfinished work in women's health; for instance, the frequent prescribing of contraception when there's absolutely no need for it, the abortions. I felt asked to enter medicine and help close the gaps, when there's absolutely no need for it, the abortions.”

In high school, Miss Buskmiller also determined that she wanted to attend Thomas Aquinas College because of the strength of the academic program — even though the uniform, classical curriculum does not allow for some of the electives that are prerequisites for medical school. So, like many medically minded students before her, she decided to earn these credits during her summer vacations.

Thus, this past summer the mornings for Miss Buskmiller began, when possible, with early Mass at her family's church in Dallas. She then went to work in a local doctor's office — taking patients' vital signs, recording their medical histories, drawing blood, and contributing to two scholarly research projects — until 3 p.m. From 4 p.m. until 9 p.m., she attended a microbiology class at the University of Texas, followed by some late-night studying, before going to bed and repeating the cycle again the next morning.

Although applying to medical school might have been simpler had she gone to a more conventional college, “I would absolutely come here again,” Miss Buskmiller says. “I have spent nearly four years learning how to pick out problems, how to talk with people, and how to think, which is extremely important in learning how to diagnose and how to communicate with patients.” She also sees the spiritual formation at the College as vital to her future plans. “Without realizing what my life is for, I don’t think I could be happy in medicine, because very often you can't do everything for people. But because I know that life is for Christ, disappointment will be easier to bear.”

Well-formed and well-prepared, Miss Buskmiller is now in her senior year at the College, grateful for her summer experience and busyly applying to various medical schools for the fall. She has been granted five interviews thus far.

Serenity Under Fire: Joseph O’Brien (’11)

While college students often think of summer as a chance to recover from the demands of the academic year, senior Joseph O’Brien opted for a very different sort of break. For six weeks, he participated in a program designed to deprive him of sleep, to keep him physically exhausted, and to put him under constant stress. For the second consecutive summer, Mr. O’Brien took part in the United States Marine Corps’ Officer Candidate School — six weeks of intense examination to determine if a candidate is qualified physically, intellectually, and mentally to lead young men and women into battle.

“There's a big focus on leadership and thinking through problems,” he says. “They tell you do something, but they leave it up to you to figure out how to do it. The idea is to be able to look at a problem, figure out how to handle it, and be able to carry that out under pressure.”

Candidates are graded on the basis of leadership, physical fitness, and academics. Having graduated from the program successfully, Mr. O’Brien lived up to the challenge.

Mr. O’Brien learned about OCS from three friends, all recent Thomas Aquinas College graduates who have pursued commissions in the Marine Corps. The nature of the College’s academic program make Thomas Aquinas students a natural fit for OCS, he says, noting that the “critical thinking skills definitely transfer over.”

When not at OCS, Mr. O’Brien earned part of his tuition for the upcoming academic year by working at a sawmill in his hometown of Crofton, Ky. A senior, he is in the process of applying for a commission in the Marine Corps upon graduating this spring.

Intellectual Backpacking: Catherine Connelly (’11)

One winter day during her junior year, Cath- erine Connelly of Tacoma, Wash., spotted a flier on the bulletin board in St. Joseph Commons advertising the “Christ My Future” summer program at the International Theological Institute in Trumau, Austria. Already considering graduate work in theology, the class seemed an ideal opportunity to explore post-graduation plans — as well as to spend time in one of Europe’s most beautiful settings, just outside of Vienna.

After being accepted as one of only a dozen students in the international program, Miss Connelly headed to Austria for three weeks this summer, one for travel and two for studies at the ITI. There, she took classes in (English) on charity, justice, mercy, Christian culture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church led by various distinguished Catholic scholars. “It was really great to have just finished studying Aristotle’s Ethics my junior year and then to study more about the virtues,” she says. “I had a good foundation to delve even more deeply into the text there.”

The program’s attendees were also able to take advantage of the surroundings and local history. Miss Connelly visited centuries-old churches, took in an operetta, and enjoyed a tour of Stift Heiligenkreuz, a local Cistercian monastery. “I had no previous knowledge of German,” she recounts, “but it was fun to try to speak the language as much as I could and learn as much as I could.” Enthused by the experience, Miss Connelly plans to apply to a master’s program at the ITI as well as to a few other theology and philosophy programs in the United States.

Summer Schools: Colin O’Keefe (’12)

Joining Miss Connelly at the International Theological Institute was junior Colin O’Keefe, for whom Trumau, Austria, was just one destination among many on a busy summer of travel and studies. Back in the U.S., Mr. O’Keefe drove about 15,000 miles in between multiple academic conferences, visiting friends and relatives, and getting in some hiking and fishing.

“Broadly speaking, my three areas of interest are politics, philosophy, and theology,” says Mr. O’Keefe. “So, naturally, he used his time to explore all three. First came a weekend seminar entitled “Liberty and Current Issues,” hosted by George Mason University’s Institute for Humane Studies in Fairfax, Va. Next, he headed out to Bozeman, Mont., for another weekend seminar, this one held by the Property and Environment Research Center, which considered property-right solutions to various environmental problems. Then, after a two-week visit to his home in Spring Green, Wis., he traveled to Austria for two weeks at the ITI.

His first two years at Thomas Aquinas College prepared him well for the intellectual demands of this summer itinerary, Mr. O’Keefe says, which, in turn, whetted his appetite for his next two years at the College — especially junior- and senior-year studies of modern political philosophers and the American founding documents. “In many of my late-night discussions with students and faculty,” he observes, “I found myself wishing that I had read more of what I will read in my remaining two years here.” After a great summer, he is ready for the new semester.
Mentoring in the Inner-City: Mary Colette Masteller ('11)

Just a few minutes’ walk from downtown Chicago stands the Metro Achievement Center, a nonsectarian facility affiliated with Opus Dei, where inner-city girls can receive the educational and moral support that might otherwise not be available to them. For the second year in a row, senior Mary Colette Masteller of Santa Paula, Calif., spent her summer there, mentoring teenage girls through Metro’s “Transition into High School” program.

As an administrator and a counselor, Miss Masteller organized field trips and led architectural walks through the city; she delivered character-formation presentations on purity and self-worth; and she also served as a personal adviser to three girls, meeting with them individually every week. “Some girls don’t even have a family base to work off of at all, but they can find support and consistency at Metro,” says Miss Masteller. “We love them so much, and the girls know that.”

Her three years at the College, she says, have given her “a greater appreciation for anything beautiful in this life,” which she was eager to pass along to the girls in her care. “One of the most incredible things you can ever teach people is to love themselves, to see the beauty in themselves, and to love the world around them,” she adds. “I found that the enthusiasm I have developed at the College really helped me to inspire the girls to see more beauty in life.”

Her time at Metro has fueled her passion for education. “Being in that classroom, I found it very fulfilling to be with those girls,” Miss Masteller remarks. “I now want to go into teaching just to find those girls in the inner-city who are searching for truth, and to be able to give to them what’s been given to me.”

On the Road Again: Elizabeth ('11), Sean ('13), and Patrick ('14) Wood

Following the 2009-10 academic year, Elizabeth, Sean, and Patrick Wood set sail on a cruise to Bermuda — but the trip was more than a vacation. The Woods are members of Celtic Spring, a family Irish music and dancing troupe that has toured internationally for more than a decade, including a performance at World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008. In May, they spent a week aboard a Holland America ocean liner as performers on an Irish music cruise that was only the beginning of a tour that took them to 12 states and 3 countries. And the tour itself was only one part of a summer full of service and learning.

After the cruise, Elizabeth, a senior, traveled from the family’s home in Ojai, Calif., to Pennsylvania, where she took a weeklong class on Pope John Paul II’s thoughts regarding marriage and family taught by renowned theologian Michael Waldstein, a graduate of the College’s Class of 1977. Next, she went to Oregon, where she helped lead a retreat for the Youth Mission for the Immaculata. The study and the time spent sharing the Faith should aid her in her post-graduation plans, which will likely include graduate work. “I am interested in evangelization,” she says. “My passion is to be able to help people see the beauty of marriage and family. That is such a problem in our culture these days.”

Meanwhile, brothers Sean and Patrick took part in a week-long mission trip to Haiti that focused on building houses, delivering clothes and medicine, and promoting a pro-life message.

Step by Step: Rebecca Wycklendt ('12)

When Rebecca Wycklendt of New Berlin, Wis., saw a poster last December seeking volunteers to “Walk for Life,” she thought, “Oh, they want me to walk 5 or 10 miles on some random Saturday, like the sort of pro-life work I was doing in Ventura.” Then she took a closer look: “It said ‘Walk Across America,’ and they had the map showing the routes literally all the way across America.” Inspired, she applied, was accepted, and eventually spent most of the summer between her junior and senior years trekking across the United States.

Accompanied by an RV carrying supplies, Miss Wycklendt, roughly a half-dozen fellow students, and a chaplain walked day and night, usually in 15-mile shifts, five days a week. On weekends, they spoke at local parishes, raising support for a culture of life and money for their journey. Collectively, her team walked all 3,200 miles of the southern route from Los Angeles — passing through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, the Carolinas, and Virginia — to Washington, D.C. They experienced 110-degree days and 55-degree nights in the desert, thick southern humidity, and both applause and aspersions from the people they encountered along the way.

The walkers attended Mass daily and prayed rosaries for the unborn as they walked. To their knowledge, at least two babies’ lives were spared through their intercession and witness. “There were definitely some days where it got very hard to keep walking,” Miss Wycklendt recalls. “There would be nights when I would finish speaking at a parish church around 8:30 or 9:00 o’clock, and then an hour later I would find out that I was scheduled to go out and walk the entire night long. But it was amazing how God would always give us what we needed.”

Sharing the Fruits of Contemplation: Emily Barry ('11)

For Emily Barry of Port Washington, N.Y., the summer began with a trip to Boston University in June, where she was a fellow at the Fund for Theological Education’s annual conference. The nonnondenominational fund, which exists to support undergraduate students looking to become theologians or to go into active ministry, provided stipends for 40 select students, of whom Miss Barry was the only Catholic woman.

“The opportunity to have a chance to have the university teach about the Church,” she says. “People would say things to me like, ‘I’m so sorry you can’t be a priest; you’d be a wonderful priest,’ and I would respond, ‘Actually, I don’t think so, and I can tell you why!’”

The following month, Miss Barry was an Honors Fellow at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute’s conference, “The Idea of a University,” in Annapolis, Md., where students contemplated works by such authors as Allan Bloom and R. John Henry Cardinal Newman. For much of the time, the fellows discussed what would constitute the ideal college, gradually arriving at the consensus that such an institution would consist of Socratic dialogues about great books. At that moment, the professor invited Miss Barry to tell the group about just such an institution — which she just so happens to attend.

Between conferences, Miss Barry worked in the Thomas Aquinas College admissions department. A senior, she plans to study theology at graduate school in the fall — where, no doubt, she hopes to once again be an advocate for her faith and a champion of her alma mater: “Having studied here,” she says, “having studied sacred theology and philosophy, having studied Scripture, having studied the Church Fathers, having studied St. Thomas — and being able to give an intellectual account for why the Catholic Church teaches what it does — really is a remarkable privilege.”
Becoming Eucharistic in Our Whole View of Life

An Interview with the Most Rev. Edward J. Slattery, Bishop of Tulsa

Q: You have suggested that reforming the liturgy is key to revitalizing society. Could you elaborate on the connection?

A: Our Holy Father Benedict XVI said that if we want to reform the Church we have to reform the liturgy. The liturgy needs reformulation. People need to know that the Mass doesn’t belong to them. It is a gift from God. It is our salvation. And you go there humbly. Moreover, if you’re going to ask people to make sacrifices—whether it is in marriage or whether it is in your community—it is going to end up being, at best, humanitarian unless Catholics are truly converted to becoming Eucharistic in their whole view of life.

And they are not going to do that if they presume that the liturgy belongs to them and they can do whatever they want with it.

Q: We have Mother Teresa on our minds because her 100th birthday recently took place, and she was our Commencement Speaker in 1982. (See page 1.) She and her sisters spent hours before the Blessed Sacrament. That makes the difference, doesn’t it?

A: Right, because Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity are genuinely Eucharistic in their whole mentality and their whole view of life. That affects how they relate to people in ways that they don’t even know. This Eucharistic mentality gives them a credibility and makes them attractive. Mother Teresa was very attractive to the public because she was genuine, and she was genuine because she was a Eucharistic Catholic, in a Eucharistic religious.

Joy comes from being in love. When you are in love you are happy to make sacrifices for the one you love. Well, when you love everybody, like Mother Teresa did, she was always happy. Even though on another level she suffered great loneliness, she understood that love is not a feeling. In her love for the Eucharist, as well as for all the people she encountered, especially the poor, she realized that love is a commitment, and that her whole life was about love.

Q: It was stunning to learn that she experienced the dark night of the soul for so many years—she, someone who just emanated joy. How could that be?

A: But that’s consistent with so many of the saints, St. Ignatius of Loyola, for example. He dealt with consolation and desolation quite a bit in his spiritual exercises. Consolation and desolation come and go. God only gives consolation. He never gives desolation. Desolation comes from the devil. But Our Lord allows it for a reason—a reason that one’s consolation will be even greater in heaven. But even in this life, those who are serious about becoming saints must realize that it is not about consolation and desolation; it is about love, which is a commitment. It is not about feeling. Love is not in the emotions. Love is in the will.

Q: You spoke in your Matriculation Address (see excerpts, page 4) about wanting to reintroduce the sung introit into the Mass. Is the introit equivalent to what we call the “opening prayer,” or has it been lost entirely?

A: No. The opening prayer—or the collect—is the prayer of the whole people, which the celebrant offers to the Father, in persona Christi. We call it the “collect” because, well, in a sense the celebrant ‘collects’ all the individual prayers and unites them with the prayer which Christ Our Lord offers to the Father.

The introit is a sung prayer, usually taken directly from the Scriptures or perhaps slightly paraphrased, which is used to set the tone and the theme for the Mass. Each day’s Mass, or each week in Ordinary Time, has its own proper text, and the music would interpret the text and allow it to speak to the listener. We don’t use the word “introit” much any more, because, in the ordinary form of the Mass, the word introit has been paraphrased as the “opening antiphon.” This conveys the idea that it is a sung antiphon for the beginning or opening of the Mass, but unfortunately while the texts of this opening antiphon appear in the Sacramentary, they have never been officially set to music. Several scholars worked on the project, but their efforts were never widely known or used.

I believe this was because everywhere in America parishes adopted the “four hymn structure” for Mass. In place of the opening antiphon we sing an opening hymn, and repeat the mistake at the offertory and for the communion processional. The antiphons which the Church proposes for our meditation have been dumpped—an accurate if inelegant word—for hymns which are remarkable only for the banality of their sentiments.

Q: We have Teresa on our minds because her 100th birthday recently took place, and she was our Commencement Speaker in 1982. (See page 1.) She and her sisters spent hours before the Blessed Sacrament. That makes the difference, doesn’t it?

A: We believe that the people that you are talking about—younger, married couples with children who are attracted to the extraordinary form—may have had bad experiences in their parishes with regard to the liturgy. For some reason or other they have found that it didn’t resonate with their hearts.

People instinctively understand that the worship of God is serious business which demands our highest level of spiritual effort. In place of that, people often find our parish liturgies characterized by a kind of in-sipid casualness. In the hands of some celebrants, the liturgy becomes an invisible catechetical or social-action lesson. Some parishes seem afraid to allow the people any opportunity to pray in silence. The con-gregation is inundated with talk: themes announced before the opening, short homilies offered before the readings, and at various, inappropriate times throughout the liturgy, plus of course a longer homily after the Gospel. There are announcements to be made, and perhaps a fervenero from the choir director about how nice it would be if more people sang.

People in the pews can be talked to death! So perhaps when they went to the extra-ordinary form they were able to pray because in the extraordinary form there’s silence, there’s space to allow the word of God to penetrate the heart.

Q: And yet it is sometimes claimed that the extraordinary form allows for no participation.

A: Nonsense. No one who understands the meaning of the Mass could rightly claim that the extraordinary form of the Mass precludes the participation of the people. Of course it doesn’t! The Church presumes that the congregation is aware of the meaning of the Mass, and that each person who participates is actively and consciously offering himself or herself to the Father in union with Christ. That’s the same whether one talks about the ordinary or the extraordinary form of the Mass.

The difficulty is that since the mid-1960s our participation in Mass has been taken to mean simply and exclusively external activity, to be busy doing something, singing, reciting, offering a sign of peace, reading, distributing Holy Communion, welcoming people at the door.

These are all very laudable and in some ways necessary tasks, but the one necessary thing—as our Lord reminded poor Martha—is not to be busy but to be attentive. That attentiveness requires the higher part of man—the mind and the heart—and hence is of greater dignity than our actions, rather than our busy-ness. Perhaps this is a kind of reflection as to where we are in the United States. People are just busy all the time. Even when they pray, they’re busy.

Q: You have written lately about offering Mass ad orientem (i.e., priest faces the tabernacle, not the congregation). Would you discuss your thinking on that?

A: Well, first of all I would like to say that both orientations are acceptable. The advan-tage of ad orientem is that it is more capable of expressing how the Church understands the meaning of the liturgy. It offers. In celebrating the Mass “to the east,” the priest and the people face the same direction. It becomes clearer that the priest is at the head of the people, as Christ is the head of the Church. United as the whole Christ, we offer to-gether the Sacrifice of our redemption. It is easier to grasp this when the priest is facing the same direction as the people and not facing them. When the priest faces the people, it makes it seem that the priest and the people are in a constant conversation about God rather than engaged in a prayer to God.

I think celebrating Mass ad orientem also relieves the priest of the burden of hav-ing to be creative and inventive in his celebration, that is, of having to “play up to” the congregation. In the same way, Masses celebrated ad orientem can free the congregation from the liturgical “four hymn structure” and let the people be better introduced to the Scriptures and to the liturgy as a whole.

In my matriculation address, I pro-pose that we begin to recover a sense that the liturgy is a received, rather than created, worshop by beginning to recover the entrance antiphon which the Church provides us.
A t the age of 34, having already earned a black belt in taekwondo and seeking a new outlet for physi- cal exercise, Chris Oleson decided to take up Brazilian jiu-jitsu. "It’s a form of submission grappling, and it’s the most intelligent martial art I’ve ever encountered," he says. "There are all sorts of sweeps, counter, and revers- als. It’s like living, fast-paced human chess.”

Six years later, that sort of agility ought to serve him well as the newest tutor at Thomas Aquinas College. Indeed, 22 years worth of grappling — with challenges both intellectual and spiritual — seem to have prepared him for just this moment.

Growing up, Dr. Oleson was “unchurched,” as he puts it, until his senior year in high school when he em- braced evangelical Christianity. With his conversion came a newfound love of the intellectual life. “All of a sudden, reality was much more mysterious and inter- esting than it had been before,” he recalls. Inspired by a history course he had taken in his senior year in high school, he enrolled at the University of California, San Diego, as a classical studies major.

Studying ancient Greece naturally led him to an- other discipline for which he would soon develop a pas- sion — philosophy, which he added as a second major during his sophomore year. And just as Chris’ spiritual conversion deepened his intellectual life, his intellectual life would soon lead to a deepening of his spiritual con- version.

Through his involvement in a campus Christian group, Chris met his soon-to-be bride, Rachel. The couple married shortly after their graduation and moved to New Haven, Conn., where Chris would study for a master of arts in religion at the Yale Divinity School. There, attending an evangelical Episcopalian church, the Olesons came to appreciate sacramentality and liturgy, which — coupled with Chris’ theological studies — helped nudge them to- ward the Catholic faith.

After Yale, Chris en- rolled in The Catholic Uni- versity of America to earn a doctorate in philosophy. During that time, he began to experience two compet- ing pulls — one toward the Anglican ministry, the other toward the Catholic Church. With Rachel expecting the first of the couple’s six children, he was determined to resolve this conflict. “I want our baby to be baptized in the church where I think I should be for life,” he remembers thinking.

With class out for the summer, Chris spent the next six weeks “doing nothing but reading encyclicals, con- ciliar documents, and books by Catholic apologists.” He also discussed the matter at length with elders at his Episcopal parish. Within a few months, drawn by a love for the Eucharist, he and Rachel would come into full communion with the Catholic Church. Once again, his spiritual conversion would have profound intellectual implications.

Upon completing his doctoral studies, Dr. Oleson took up an associate professor of philosophy at the North American campus of the Pontifical Univer- sity Regina Apostolorum, a Catholic seminary in Thorn- wood, N.Y. On his first day, he met a professor who was an alumnus of Thomas Aquinas College, Dr. Michael Augros (’92). The two quickly became friends and intel- lectual companions. Through Dr. Augros’ influence, Dr. Oleson says, he began “a years-long pursuit and study of St. Thomas and the objective meaning of things in light of Thomistic philosophy.”

Over the course of their 10 years together in New York, the Oleson and Augros families would form a close bond. So there was much sorrow, especially among all the children, when Dr. Augros left his seminary post in 2009 to become a tutor back at his alma mater. It is likewise with great joy that Dr. Oleson now follows Dr. Augros’ lead by joining the Thomas Aquinas College fac- ulty. Coming to the College, he says, provides him and Rachel with an opportunity to return to Southern Cali- fornia and reconnect with family and old friends, while enabling them to “teach in the sort of program for which all his grappling, both intellectual and spiritual, has well suited him.”

“Looking back at my whole intellectual trajectory,” he reflects — his early interest in the Western intellectu- al tradition, which begat a zeal for philosophy, theology, and the Catholic Church, culminating in a discipleship to St. Thomas Aquinas — “I see what a good fit the Col- lege is for me.”

Dr. Oleson is happy to trade the lecturing he did at the seminary for the Socratic method employed in the College's classrooms. “It is more demanding because when you're giving a lecture, you control it; but when you're leading a seminar, it has a life of its own,” he says. “You have to constantly be attentive to what the students are articulating. You have to keep on top of the conversa- tion and steer it in a profitable way” — kind of like liv- ing, fast-paced human chess.

“It is much more mentally draining,” the new tutor smiles, “but it’s also much more stimulating.”

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The Dio...
Helping to Restore Catholic Liberal Education: Mary and Bill McInerney

Mary and Bill McInerney of Oakland, Calif., first started dating when the two were attending separate Bay Area Catholic colleges in the late 1940s. Introduced to him by her cousin, Mary enjoyed Bill’s great sense of humor. She was delighted when he was elected as her college’s student body president, in no small part because as a perk of office, he was invited to social events at neighboring Catholic campuses — and so was she, as his date. The couple remembers Saturday-night dances followed by late-night hamburgers and milkshakes, then meeting up again the next morning for Sunday Mass.

“It’s a completely different atmosphere at Thomas Aquinas College in the way the students conduct themselves, in the way they study, in the fact that it’s truly a Catholic school.”

“...and they know where it is and how they can get there,” says Mrs. McInerney, “but over a period of time the monks and their nascent College would seem to be Clear Creek Abbey, the attribute that to the presence of the monks. The monks


Renewed Hope

Over the years, the McInerneys have paid close attention as the College has grown, both in size and in reputation, while remaining true to its founding ideals. “It’s a completely different atmosphere at Thomas Aquinas College,” says Mr. McInerney, “in the way students conduct themselves, in the way they study, in the fact that it’s truly a Catholic school.” The entirety of the College is ordered to the Faith, his wife adds. “The symmetry and the serenity of the campus is beautiful. You feel like everything there is headed toward the Catholicity of the College.”

Above all, though, the McInerneys have admired the students and graduates they have met on their regular trips to campus. In 2009, they came for the dedication of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel and enjoyed seeing “all the alumni — fathers and mothers of four, and five, and six children, little babies — don’t tell me that doesn’t absolutely impress a grandmother!” says Mrs. McInerney. “To see all these wonderful families, you know there’s hope for our church; there’s hope for our country.”

Divided Loyalties

The McInerneys first learned of Thomas Aquinas College in the late 1960s through their friend John Schaeffer, a founding member of the Board of Governors. “When we were at John and Jane’s house, they would almost invariably have someone over from the College,” Mr. McInerney remembers. “John’s enthusiasm about the College was appealing to us, and as a consequence we became more involved.”

Nonetheless, Mr. McInerney found himself “in a very difficult position.” As former president of his own college’s alumni association, his loyalties were increasingly split between the school he had attended and the nascent one he was coming to admire. Yet this tension dissipated as his alma mater sadly went the way of so many Catholic institutions in the 1960s and 1970s, gradually shrinking its fidelity to the Magisterium and teaching of the Catholic faith.

“It wasn’t all in one fell swoop, but it was one thing after another,” Mr. McInerney recalls. “I became slowly disenchanted.” Seeing the schools they had loved fade “was very painful,” says Mrs. McInerney, but the pain was eased by the establishment of a new college that they could support without reservation, not out of blind loyalty, but out of a sincere belief in its mission. As time went on, “We became more attached to Thomas Aquinas College,” says Mr. McInerney, and a decades-long friendship took root.

President’s Council Profile

Mary and Bill McInerney are amazing in their generosity to the students of Thomas Aquinas College,” says Robert Bagdazian, the College’s director of development. “For 40 years, they have been devoted President’s Council members. We could not ask for better friends.”

For more information about the President’s Council, please contact Mr. Bagdazian at 800-634-9797 or by e-mail at rgbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu.
Peace be with you.” These are the first words that Jesus spoke to the apostles who were huddled together in the upper room for fear of the Jews. They were afraid. They had no idea what the future would hold for them — for all was lost, Jesus the Master was crucified, and now they huddled together in fear — not unlike some of you right now, who are beginning a new school year, especially the freshmen. You’re wondering. What surprises are ahead for me? Will I succeed? All of us have many questions every day because we do not know the future.

And so I am here primarily for the purpose (as I would go anywhere) to give you hope. That is the voca- tion of a bishop — to give people who are struggling to live the Christian life hope. And hope requires that you surrender your life to Jesus Christ, and He will take care of you. This is what we believe, and I am here to remind you to do that, to surrender your life to Jesus Christ.

From Palm Sunday to Good Friday

What I would like to do, in contemplating the Gos- pel (John 20:19-23), is to go back a few days be- fore this Gospel event occurred. Let’s go back to Good Friday for just a moment. As you know, on Palm Sunday people were praising Christ because they were beginning to believe, or they did believe, that He was the Messiah, the one that was promised for centuries. What happened between Palm Sunday and Good Friday? How is it that we received notions. There were three qualities that the Mess-iah was to have: The first quality was that the Messiah would have power, and Jesus, over a period of three years, was able to speak in a way that He could reveal divine truths in human language.

And finally, the Messiah was to be holy — a holy man. Jesus was certainly holy. He went to the temple and synagoge. He prayed. He talked about God all the time. He was powerful. He was holy. And He was so holy that people followed him all the way to Jerusalem. So what happened?

God is Love

Jesus was about to reveal the identity of God, which no one knew yet. The identity of God is love. And so He was arrested for claiming to be equal to God. He was ar-rested and persecuted and executed for telling the truth about Himself. This is the revelation of the New Testa- ment — that the Messiah was not only to come from God, but the Messiah is God Himself. God Himself would come to save us.

So Jesus came, and now they were going to dispro-ve or test Him because God can’t die. “If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross and then we will be- lieve!” He could have — He didn’t. So you see, He shat-tered everyone’s concept of God to that point. They were willing to accept one who was powerful, wise, and holy. But they were not about to accept someone who was powerless as Jesus was on the Cross, foolish for hang- ing on the Cross, and a criminal. So everything went in reverse, upside down.

The most important statement in the Gospel of St. Mark comes from the mouth of the centurion who, at the foot of the Cross when Jesus died, says, “This was truly the Son of God.” So it is on the Cross, not the Res-urrection but on the Cross, that Jesus reveals the identity of God as love. Something that none of us would have expected. No one expected it, but that’s who God is.

Of course when He rose from the dead, a change took place. He was no longer limited to time and space. And He appeared to the apostles not to point His finger at them and to chastise them for not having faith, but to forgive them and to give them the power to forgive sins. His first words were “Peace be with you.” I say again, “Peace be with you,” and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Christ called the Holy Spirit upon them and gave them the power to forgive sins. They were probably wait- ing to be yelled at, chastised, but Jesus forgave them and gave them the power to forgive sins.

Recommending to the Person of Christ

So on this first day of the school year, we recommi-d ourselves to the person of Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. The Messiah is God himself, and He leaves us with a great gift — the gift of Himself in the Eucha-rist. Mass is celebrated every day all over the world, but it is the same sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. He died and rose from the dead. Our salvation is offered to us every single day. And because now Jesus in His flesh is no lon-ger limited to time and space, He can appear to us and will appear to us at He wishes — in His flesh, and so He appeared behind the closed doors, locked doors. There He was and then He vanished. He appeared to Mary Magdalene. At first she didn’t recognize Him until He decided she should recognize Him, and she did. And so on.

On the road to Emmaus, He walked with these men, these disciples, and they didn’t know Him at first. They sat down to break bread, they recognized him, and He vanished. So you see what will happen to you and to me after we die if we die faithful, in the state of grace. We will be resurrected from the dead and we will leave time, which is beyond our experience. We don’t know what that is like. That’s for philosophers to talk about and fig-ure out. We base our lives on the promise of Jesus that He will take care of us in death, and that when we rise from the dead we, like Christ, will be made like Him. We will be no longer limited by time and space. That is be-yond our experience, but that’s our faith.

This is the hope that I give you as I come here to Thomas Aquinas College on the first day of the school year. I come here to pray for you and to give you hope — hope in Jesus Christ who comes upon all of you by sending His Holy Spirit.
1. Tutors celebrate a correct answer in their annual game of Trivial Pursuit against the students. 2. Members of the Senior Class defend their ground — and try to stay out of the mud pit — in a fall tradition, the all-school tug-of-war. 3. Student acolytes lead an All Souls’ Day procession past St. Joseph Commons. 4. Students take to the volleyball courts after class. 5. A rare overcast day does little to dampen the enthusiasm at Freshman Beach Day. 6. Children of alumni vie in the annual cardboard-boat race at Alumni Day 2010. 7. That evening, old friends gather for a barbecue dinner on the soccer field just below St. Bernardine of Siena Library.

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

Thanksgiving break ............................................... November 25-28
Advent Choir Concert .............................................. December 3
Christmas Midnight Mass ....................................... December 24
Christmas Morning Mass ....................................... December 25
Start of Second Semester ......................................... January 10
St. Thomas Day Lecture: Dr. John Boyle .................. January 28
University of St. Thomas 7:30 p.m.
“St. Thomas and the Bible”