Late Classmate Inspires Prayers for the Unborn
Praying for and with Andrew “Kent” Moore (’14)

Lining the sidewalk outside the Planned Parenthood facility in Ventura, Calif., one Saturday in early September were some 180 Thomas Aquinas College students who prayed for — and with — their departed friend, Andrew “Kent” Moore (’14).

The gathering served to pay tribute to Kent as well as to continue his work. A tireless advocate of unborn children and their mothers, Kent spent countless hours outside this clinic and others, praying for an end to abortion. This summer, while teaching in India, he was struck and killed by an oncoming vehicle in Indiana. His death devastated by the news, they were also determined — determined to honor Kent in the way that they knew he would want to be honored: by serving Christ in this way.

“Kent” Moore (’14).

College students who prayed for — and with — Andrew “Kent” Moore (’14).

“Kent” Moore (’14).

Tom McLean. “We miss him greatly; yet we are also inspired by and grateful for his witness.”

United in Prayer

Early on Saturday morning after the first week of classes, Kent’s friends arose to decorate the cars — some 35 in all — that would form a makeshift caravan to take more than half of the Thomas Aquinas College student body to neighboring Ventura. They painted messages in his memory and in support of the pro-life cause on the windows. After morning Mass they met up in St. Joseph Commons and made the half-hour drive, joined by members of the faculty and their families as well as the College’s three chaplains.

There were no protests, no conflicts, and no angry words. A few passing drivers honked their horns in support. An elderly woman who was walking by in the prayers. A young couple that had approached the clinic gracefully accepted a brochure for a local pro-life pregnancy center. The event was quiet, peaceful, and prayerful — just like Kent.

“It was good to get us together and do something in memory of Kent, to make it hit home,” reflects Sarah Dufresne (’14). “He’s really gone, and he really died while he was walking across the country praying for all the unborn babies.”

 Adds Miss Dufresne, “I oftentimes think of John Paul II’s words addressing the youth, ‘Do not be afraid to go out in the streets,’ I think that there was a definite, holy boldness that we had as a college on Saturday, and I hope that continues.”

Memorial Mass

A month later, members of the Thomas Aquinas College community joined Kent’s parents and siblings for a memorial Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. “Kent walked in the way of the saints,” said College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J., who served as the principal celebrant and homilist. Speaking fondly of the young man’s kind- ness, his innocence, and his love, Fr. Buckley urged those in attendance to emulate his pursuit of personal holiness, particularly his compassion for the victims of abortion. “I’m sure that what we can do now for Kent,” he said, “is to become committed in the same way to the right-to-life movement that he was.”

“Go to the School of St. Thomas”
Bishop Cary, Welcome Freshmen at Convocation 2012

On Monday, August 20, 2012, some 102 students from across the country and abroad matriculated as freshmen at Thomas Aquinas College — the Class of 2016.

The morning began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, with the Most Rev. Liam Cary, the newly installed Bishop of Baker (Ore.), presiding. His Excellency, clad in red vestments, was joined at the altar by the College’s three chaplains, Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.; Rev. Hildebrand Garceau, O.Praem.; and Rev. Joseph Illi. Walking behind the clergy as they processed into the Chapel were members of the College’s Board of Governors and faculty, dressed in academic regalia.

In his homily, Bishop Cary urged the new freshmen to think of the College’s patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, “as a paraclete, perhaps with a small p” — that is, as an advocate or a champion. “We can find few others who are capable, even after all these centuries, of guiding us into the truth, the truth of the world, the truth of the City, the truth of our own life,” His Excellency added. “Study him carefully, you who are fortunate to be at this school that bears his name. Study him carefully with mind and with heart. And you shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free. … Go to the school of St. Thomas, and learn to breathe the Spirit of Truth.”

Following the Mass, students, faculty, and staff convened in St. Joseph Commons for the Matriculation Ceremony. There, members of the Class of 2016 formally began their tenure as students when Director of Admissions Jon Daly called their names. Each approached the dais, greeting President Michael F. McLean and Bishop Cary, and then signed the College’s registry. “In pursuing this education, we hearken to Our Lord’s command ‘to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,’” said Dr. McLean. “We are also prepared to assume our responsibilities as members of a democratic society.”

In addition to the new students, the College welcomed its newest tutors, Dr. Travis Cooper and Dr. Patrick Gardner. Standing beside Fr. Buckley, the two made the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity, as do all members of the College’s teaching faculty.

Bishop Cary then addressed the members of the Class of 2016, who hail from 4 countries, 25 states, and the District of Columbia. The new class brings the College’s total enrollment to 371, including 181 men and 190 women. Reiterating some of the themes from his earlier homily, His Excellency said, “I cannot say how much I envy you the opportunity to study under the aegis of St. Thomas. I would give anything to go back 30 years and start with this instruction. … I hope your years will be hopeful, and that you will absorb the great gifts of this wonderful master of the Christian life.”

With the freshmen thus prepared to commence their studies, Dr. McLean proclaimed the start of the new academic year, and the students — freshmen and upperclassmen alike — responded, in keeping with College tradition, with a standing ovation. Members of the faculty and Board of Governors then processed out of the Commons as they and the students sang “Immaculate Mary” in joyful anticipation of the new year, now at hand.
From the Desk of the President

Dr. Michael F. McLean’s Remarks to the Incoming Freshmen at Convocation 2012

Earlier this summer I had the opportunity to participate in seminars with friends of Thomas Aquinas College. It being a presidential election year, we decided to consider texts that would help us to reflect on some of the fundamental principles animating this country.

Among the texts we read were excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America, a work considered here in the Junior Seminar. In these excerpts, Tocqueville is concerned with religion and its essential role in American democracy. In a remarkable passage, he says that “religion is the first of America’s political institutions.”

“Religion’s principal advantage,” he continues, “is to provide clear answers to fundamental questions” — questions about God’s existence, human nature, man’s ordination to a supernatural life, and the nature of justice and human goodness — on religion and morality, and to provide a counterweight to the excesses of the materialistic culture. It is good for us to be reminded of the essential role religion plays in public life and, as a consequence, to reflect on the vital role that Catholic liberal education — the education you freshmen are about to undertake — plays in public life as well. Where religion is to be robust, faith must be robust. For without faith, there is no religion; and without Catholic education, there is no faith. Or, because faith is a gift, and because grace builds upon nature, perhaps it is better to say that without Catholic education, whatever faith there is, is liable to be feeble and unformed.

The Next Four Years

To those of you who are Catholic, I say, without hesitation, that the education you will pursue at Thomas Aquinas College will nourish and strengthen your faith. The education here is not undertaken from outside the Faith; it is not structured to criticize or challenge the Faith. Rather, it is undertaken from within the Catholic faith — in the words of our founding document, it is “faith seeking understanding.”

Our starting points in the study of theology are the principles, mysteries, and doctrines of our Catholic faith; our goal is to increase our understanding of these starting points, to the extent we can, and to deepen our knowledge and love of God.

In the first year, we undertake a careful reading of Sacred Scripture, trusting that God’s revelation is coherent, cogent, and life-giving. We know from experience that not every difficulty which Scripture presents will be resolved in this first year; but we trust that this first year will awaken in you a certain wonder about God’s revelation, inspire confidence in the deep unity between the Old and New Testaments, and kindle a desire to pursue energetically the more systematic theology of the second, third, and fourth years of our program.

Trust in the guidance and teaching authority of the Church, in the second year we undertake a careful study of the works of some of the greatest Fathers of the Church — most notably St. Augustin, St. Athanasius, St. Anselm, and St. John Damascene, among others. The works of these Fathers are great in their own right. Presupposing your acquaintance with Scripture, they will introduce you to profound reflections on grace: divine providence, the nature of the Church, the Incarnation, and the meaning and purpose of the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord.

Finally, trusting again in the authority of the Church and of the popes who have spoken in this regard, we undertake the scientific study of theology by considering carefully some of the most important parts of the Summa Theologica — on the nature of sacred doctrine; on God’s existence and attributes; on the eternal, natural, and human laws; on the Trinity, on the Incarnation; and on the sacraments. Our study of theology culminates in the contemplation of these central mysteries and doctrines of the Catholic faith, and assuming that this study has been enriched by the sacramental and devotional life provided by the College, brings us closer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and deepens our faith, hope, and charity.

A Preparation for Holiness and Citizenship

The ultimate end of Catholic liberal education and are what make this education worthy of pursuing for its own sake. In pursuing this education we hearken to Our Lord’s command to “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” If Tocqueville is right, however, in pursuing this education we are also prepared to assume our responsibilities as members of a democratic society.

It is good to reflect on the purposes of Catholic liberal education at any time. It is especially good to do so as we begin a new academic year, an academic year that is also a presidential election year, where so much is at stake for our country because of the challenges we are facing to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

It is important for all concerned — leaders and citizens alike — to recall the words of one of our modern popes, Pope Pius XII, who in his 1944 Christmas Message quoted Pope Leo XIII’s 1888 Encyclical Libertas, in which Leo wrote that “it is not forbidden to prefer temperate, popular forms of government, without prejudice, however, to Catholic teaching on the origin and use of authority…” adding that “the Church does not disapprove of any of the various forms of government, provided they be in se capable of securing the good of the citizens.”

The philosophical and theological formation you receive at Thomas Aquinas College helps you understand well this quotation from Pope Leo XIII, just as it helps you understand well the words of Pope Pius XII himself later in the same document when he explains the true meaning of the democratic ideals of liberty and equality: “that, before the State, everyone has the right to live honorably and under the conditions in which the designs and dispositions of Providence have placed him.”

In letters sent to the alumni, faculty, and staff of Thomas Aquinas College on July 29, 2012, Founding President Ronald P. McArthur announced that he will no longer be able to continue teaching classes at the College. “The prospect simply was not one of many ways,” Dr. McArthur wrote. But he promised that he will continue to pray “for the College, that it become even better, and that God will look upon the school with even more favor than He already has.”

On August 15, the Feast of the Assumption, Dr. McArthur underwent open-heart surgery. The initial reports were encouraging, with doctors remarking that the operation had gone better than they had expected. In the following weeks, however, there were setbacks, which, by God’s grace, prompted increased prayers on behalf of Dr. McArthur’s many friends at the College and elsewhere. As of late October, his condition has improved, and he has returned home, where he is now convalescing.

“Dr. McArthur is the founding father of Thomas Aquinas College, and he has long been our guide in this noble project of Catholic liberal education,” says President Michael P. McLean. “He is sorely missed in the classroom, where for decades he has enlightened students with his great knowledge and love of our curricula. He is missed, too, on the faculty, where he has been a model to the dozens of tutors, myself included, who have come here over the years to follow his example. And he is missed in the Commons, where he was a frequent visitor, and in all the places where we had grown accustomed to seeing his kind, cheerful smile and his larger-than-life presence.”

Dr. McArthur is adamant that, even though he has stopped teaching, his close relationship with the College will endure. “My years here have been memorable in many ways, and among those experiences that stand out in my memory are the friendships I have made with so many of you along the way,” he wrote in his letter to tutors, administrators, and staff at the College. “I think of your innumerable kindnesses to me, of the significant ways you have helped me, and of the Christian spirit which has been so visible in all the things you have done. While this will no longer be, we can continue to pray for one another.”

Dr. McArthur has requested that alumni “set aside time in your lives to pray for Thomas Aquinas College, that the Lord take care of it so that others will benefit as much as you have from the wisdom you have gleaned as students.”

The College, in turn, asks that its friends continue to pray for Dr. McArthur’s health and spirits, and for his family.
A Graduate’s Reflections: Madison Cox (’12)

A New Alumna Looks Back at Her Time at the College and Ahead to Her Future

Note: The following essay is adapted from comments made to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its May 11, 2012, meeting.

I am so delighted to have this opportunity to extend my thanks to you. I am delighted, too, that I have the opportunity to do so in the form of a story. I love a good story, and I may be partial, but I think this is a very good story, indeed.

The short version of the story is this: Thomas Aquinas College turned my life on its head.

Before coming to the College, I was a Protestant in her early 30s with a good job, great friends, and a wonderful church. Life was quite good, but I had the nagging sense that something was missing. I decided that I needed to pursue seriously my lifelong interest in teaching. Yet the idea of studying education itself did not appeal to me in the least. I wanted to find a school that believed in absolute truth, a place where I could study serious things, valuable in themselves, without the distractions arising from the moral and intellectual confusion common on secular campuses or the identity crisis now afflicting so many Christian institutions.

Somehow I believed that someone would hire me as a teacher if I just knew enough material worth teaching. Many people told me that I could never find work as a teacher without following the usual course. I brazenly ignored them and decided to study Aristotle and St. Thomas.

A Lesson in Evangelization

When I applied for admission to the College, I wrote an essay about the role of education in evangelization. I had hoped for a future in education specifically that I might make use of the scholar’s desire for knowledge to lead him to Jesus Christ, Truth itself. Little did I know that my tutors here would be evangelizing me.

I have seen over the years that our faculty is composed of extraordinarily patient men and women who understand that the truth has a compelling power all its own. To paraphrase the great 19th-century Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The truth is a lion. You don’t have to defend it; you just have to let it out of its cage.

In my freshman theology class, to cite one example, Mr. DeLuca never imposed a Catholic viewpoint on our discussions of Scripture. On the contrary, he simply encouraged a thoughtful consideration of the text. The students he was leading in that class included a Mormon, a Presbyterian, and an atheist. We had really good discussions. And Mr. DeLuca always dignified our disparate suggestions about the meaning of the text with his own thoughtful consideration. I had been learning Scripture since early childhood, so I was very surprised to discover that new questions about passages I thought I knew well were beginning to form in my mind, but I managed to continue, my mind mostly undisturbed by these questions for quite some time.

The Church Triumphant and the Church Militant

And here I’ll depart briefly from the written text to tell you a story — since we’re meeting in the library today — about a work-study position I had that contributed to this process that was beginning. I think, before I ever came to the College, I was assigned to work in the library, and the assistant librarian asked me to go into the autobiography section and painstakingly remove one volume at a time and inspect them closely to decide where they should be placed in the library.

The Lord was pouring out graces in abundance. I wish I could share with you every one of the wonderful details. But in the interest of time, we’ll skip to my junior year, April 24, 2011, when I was received into the Church during the Easter Vigil. Our own Fr. Paul Raftery conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation, signing me Mary Magdalene. The joy of the occasion was so powerful that even my Protestant family members rejoiced.

Learning to Teach

With that matter settled, I was able to turn my attention more thoughtfully to the matter of my vocation as a teacher. One of the questions I entertained during my Thomas Aquinas College career was whether our discussion method could be adapted to younger ages. Imagine my surprise when I learned that it was already being done, and it was being done, moreover, by people who shared my philosophy of teacher preparation.

Thanks to fairly recent charter-school legislation, a modified form of a great books education has been brought to thousands of Arizona students in public schools. I learned that the organization responsible for this astonishing feat would be interviewing potential teachers here at the College. I was soon invited to fly to Arizona to give some teaching demonstrations at a couple of the charter schools in this consortium.

My first actual classroom experience was a revelation. Connecting with that group of ninth graders was one of the great joys of my life. I would never have imagined that my first time in the classroom would feel as natural as breathing. It caused me to appreciate my education in a whole new way. For I realized during that class that my tutors here had taught me not just how to learn; they had taught me how to teach.

The hardest part turned out to be choosing which grade level to teach. After lengthy prayer and deliberation, I decided to accept an offer to teach fifth grade at Archway Classical Academy in North Phoenix.

As I think about what all these years here at Thomas Aquinas College have meant to me, I am humbled and deeply grateful for the work you have done to make it possible for me and for my friends. It is work of eternal significance. May God guide you as you shepherd our school. Thank you.
College Welcomes Two New Tutors …
Dr. Travis Cooper

H e may have attended dances in St. Joseph Commons, slept in the men’s resi-
dence halls, participated in discussions about the great books, and attended Mass in the Chapel, but Travis Cooper was never actually a student at Thomas Aqui-
nas College. Although given the frequency of his campus visits and the number of friends and family members who were students at the College, there certainly were times when he felt, or wished, that he had been one, too.

A native of Palm Springs, Calif., Dr. Cooper earned his associate’s degree at St. Mary’s College, his bachelor’s at the College of St. Thomas More, and his master’s and doctorate in philosophy at the Catholic University of America. It was while at CUA that he came to know Thomas Aquinas College, well, first through his sister, Kathryn (’06), and then through her classmate — and his future wife — Bri-
ena (Dunkel ’06).

“I came back here whenever I could,” he says, recalling the long-distance courtship that reached from California to Washington, D.C. “During at least a dozen” trips to campus over many years, he was, he says, “astonished at the quality of the student life.”

In the College he saw a commitment to liberal education for its own sake which, in turn, fostered in its students a love of truth, a devotion to the Faith, and deep friendships. “I learned during my own experi-
ence, first as a student, and then as a teacher at another small Catholic college, that it’s not easy to establish a good, vibrant student life,” Dr. Cooper reflects. “I’ve always been amazed at how the College has managed to achieve that, and how wonderful it is to be a student here.”

Dr. Cooper remembers looking into a teaching position at the College after comple-
lishing his coursework at CUA, but instead married a teacher at another small Catholic college, that it’s not easy to establish a good, vibrant student life,” Dr. Cooper reflects. “I’ve always been amazed at how the College has managed to achieve that, and how wonderful it is to be a student here.”

This year Dr. Cooper is teaching Senior Seminar, two sections of Freshman Lan-
guage, and Sophomore Philosophy. He enjoys the interaction inherent in the Col-
lege’s use of the discussion method, a departure from the lecture-based teaching he has done in the past. “It’s more difficult than it looks,” he says. “Rather than planning beforehand exactly what you are going to say, you must chart where the conversation needs to go, and how to get it there. In class it takes constant, active awareness.”

Dr. Patrick Gardner

W hen Patrick Gardner was a high-school student in suburban Milwaukee in the 1990s, two classes captured his imagination: classical literature and econom-
ics. One offered a smattering of poetry, philosophy, and history; the other, a coher-
ent, analytical methodology by which to arrive at answers about the common good. Naively, he believed that he had to choose between the two.

“If there was one thing that was pushing me away from the literature, it’s that the arguments seemed too slippery,” Dr. Gardner recalls. “I wanted something sharper, something more logically rigorous.” So when Harvard University offered him admis-
sion, he enrolled, with visions of becoming “a hot-shot economist.”

Less than one semester into his freshman year, however, he discovered that modern economics was not what he had hoped it to be. “It was a lot of advanced math put to the service of undiscussed presuppositions,” he says. Fortunately, to fulfill a requirement, he had enrolled in a class in classics in Christian literature, where he discovered St. Teresa of Avila, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

“This is what I’m interested in,” he remembers thinking. “It is poetic and moving, but it is also an intellectually serious, rigorous reflection on what a human being is, how we know things, how we know about God.” His new yearning was to “read more Augustine and Aquinas and Thoma – neither is well repre-

sented in most secular philosophy or religion departments. So he sought them out, first in Har-
vard’s History and Literature program, and then at the University of Notre Dame’s Medieval Institute, where he studied under a renowned Thomist, the late Dr. Ralph McInerny.

During his time at Notre Dame, Dr. Gardner not only earned his master’s and doctoral degrees, but also met his future wife, Kate; and the couple welcomed the first two of their three sons. After Dr. Gardner completed his studies, the family moved to Austin, where he taught at the University of Texas.

Even though he had found beauty and intellectual rigor in philosophy, Dr. Gard-
ner still sensed that something was missing. “I had always loved math and physics, especially for their clarity and order of demonstration. I wanted to pursue them further in college,” he says. Yet amidst the disconnected departments of modern academia, he thought he had to choose between the so-called hard sciences and philosophical inquiry.

Not surprisingly, he was attracted to Thomas Aquinas College where, as a new tutor, he has been spared this dilemma. In addition to Sophomore Seminar and Junior Philosophy, Dr. Gardner now teaches two sections of Freshman Mathematics.

“Coming back to math and the so-called hard sciences as part of a coherent curricu-
um,” he says, “that’s the missing piece that I’ve been wanting all along.”

… and a New Chaplain
Rev. Joseph Illo

R ev. Joseph Illo was born not far from a college campus, in Chappaqua, NY, while his father was earning a doctorate in literature at Columbia University. Grow-
ing up as a faculty kid, he always lived near one college or another and enjoyed the spirited, intellectual atmos-

phere. As a young man he assumed that he, too, would spend his adulthood work-

ing on or near a college campus. Providence, however, would soon intervene to alter those plans — or at least to defer them.

When Fr. Illo was 10 years old, accompanying his mother as she delivered meals to shut-ins around the parish, he thought little of the frequent suggestion that he should one day become a priest. While an undergraduate at Pennsylvania State University, he delighted in serving the Catholic community through the campus Newman Center, but he interpreted this joy as a confirmation that he should become an academic, not as a calling to the priesthood.

His vocation only became evident to him shortly after his graduation from college, during which time Fr. Illo worked at Ignatius Press in San Francisco. While there he came to know the vocations director from the nearby Diocese of Stockton (Calif.), to which he applied and was accepted. He then went on to study philosophy and theology with the Dominicans in Oxford (Blackfriars) and Rome (the Angelicum), and finally as a seminarist at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Dunwoodie, NY.

On June 29, 1991 — the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul — Fr. Illo was ordained to the sacred priesthood of Jesus Christ. Since then he has faithfully lived out his calling as a diocesan priest, primarily by serving in par-
ishes, including St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in modesto, Calif., where he was pastor for the last 13 years.

Yet the desire to return to a college campus has endured, and it has come to fruition in his latest assign-
ment — as a chaplain at Thomas Aquinas College.

“I had been asking for permission for several years to be a Newman Center chaplain, or perhaps to work in a college or university,” Fr. Illo explains. “The Bishop kept saying, ‘Well, we need you in the parish,’ but finally he said, ‘OK, after your second term is done in your current parish, we’ll consider that.’”

Fr. Illo received his Ordinary’s permission last spring and promptly sent out inquiries to several faithful Catho-
lic colleges and one seminary, receiving offers from four of them. He ultimately opted for Thomas Aquinas Col-
lege, due in large part to its proximity to his diocese as well as an admiration he had formed for the school nearly three decades earlier. In 1984, shortly before entering the seminary, he had visited the College with his younger brother, who was thinking about applying. “I realized, but I didn’t pursue that,” he says, “I thought more of the Providence!”

Thus, after eschewing life on a college campus to follow God’s will, Fr. Illo now finds himself living and ministering on a college campus. Such is the band of Providence!
Formation Beyond the Home

Parents’ Association Profile: Hope and Keith Marotti

A Changed Kid

To the Marottis’ delight and surprise, the Summer Program gave them much more than two weeks’ respite. “Richard came back a changed kid,” says Dr. Marotti. “I think that was the first time in his life that he had been challenged and asked to think, and he really liked that.” Adds Mrs. Marotti, “He says he learned more in those two weeks than he had in the previous two years of high school.”

This began a transformation. “Richard would take a few more years to really get out of his rebelliousness,” says Dr. Marotti. “But we saw an immediate change in terms of his attitude and how he thought about things. You could tell that the Summer Program had had an impact on him, because he talked about it a lot.”

The Marottis were convinced that Richard should come back to the College for his undergraduate studies. “I was sold on it by everything I had read,” Dr. Marotti says. “I was convinced that the great books program would give him a strong foundation to do whatever he wanted to do. He would learn how to think, how to really use the skills of philosophy and rhetoric the way they were meant to be used.”

Richard, however, was not so sure. “He said he loved the Summer Program,” Dr. Marotti recalls, “but the school was too small, ‘too religious’ — blah, blah, blah.” So Richard — a National Merit Scholar — applied to, was accepted at, and was offered scholarships to numerous prestigious colleges across the country, and he visited a good many of them. Dr. Marotti prayed and fasted over Richard’s decision and — not coincidentally, he believes — Richard’s experiences of visiting other campuses proved unsatisfactory. “In the end, despite himself, he decided to go to Thomas Aquinas College.”

Dr. Marotti recalls visiting Richard during his freshman year and being impressed by the company he kept. “I took a group of the students out to dinner in Ojai,” he says, “and as I listened to their conversation, I thought, ‘This is a group of college freshmen, and I am the only one with a Phi D.B., but I am the stupidest one at the table!’”

Four years later, Richard graduated from the College as a member of the Class of 2003. Looking back at how far he had come since his teenage years, he told his parents, “Had you not sent me here, I might be dead right now.”

Like Dominos

In light of Richard’s experience — as well as their own, when they each attended the High School Summer Program for themselves — the Marottis’ younger children had no doubt about where they would go to college. “The rest fell like dominos,” says Mrs. Marotti. In short order all three matriculated at and graduated from Thomas Aquinas College.

Their daughter Rose (Lindsey ’05), a professional chef by training, is now a full-time wife and mother of two young girls in Las Vegas, where she lives with her husband, a fellow chef. The Marottis’ second son, Rev. Francis Marotti (’07), was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Kalamaazoo this past summer after completing his studies at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. (See story, page 6.) The family’s youngest, Marie (’12), graduated from the College this past spring with plans to enter nursing school.

As for Richard, in 2009 he earned a Juris Doctor degree from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, then left for a vacation of its own. “This is a group of college freshmen, and I am the only one with a Phi D.B., but I am the stupidest one at the table!”

magna cum laude, from the University of California Hastings College of the Law. He now lives with his wife and their two young daughters in Sacramento, where he is an associate at Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld, LLP, specializing in health-care law. “Richard is a lawyer,” his father laugh. “Given the amount of time he spent arguing with me, I take great pride in that. I probably was the first training that he ever had!”

Four Diplomas

For Mrs. Marotti, seeing her last child graduate from the College this spring was bittersweet. “I remember thinking, ‘Oh my gosh, I’ll never be at one of these graduations again,’” she says. “I was so sad to think that this is my last one. It all goes by so quickly.”

Yet that is the Marottis’ lone complaint about their children’s time at the College. “They just absolutely loved it there, and they made really good, lifelong friends,” says Dr. Marotti. “From a parent’s standpoint, it was probably the best formation they could have had once they left home.”

Today, proudly hanging in the Marottis’ living room are their children’s four diplomas from Thomas Aquinas College. “They’re not allowed to have them back until I die,” says Dr. Marotti. Further testifying to their loyalty to the College, the Marottis are longtime members of the President’s Council, the College’s financial backbone, consisting of hundreds of loyal benefactors who contribute $1,000 or more annually. “I have only wonderful things to say about Thomas Aquinas College,” he adds. “It is a fantastic place, and every parent should send their kids there.”
Jennifer Augustine Zeiler, O.P. (’00), at his ordination day, with his parents, Daniel and Mary, and the Most Rev. Cirilo B. Flores, Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego
Andrew Seeley, a member of the teaching faculty, had the privilege of representing the College at the ordination ceremony, and described it as “a beautiful experience of the communion of the Church, with probably 1,500 people in attendance.”

Looking back, it may not have come as much of a surprise to Fr. Auro or his family that he became a priest. “My mother has videos of me saying ‘Mass’ as a child,” he told the St. Louis Review. Yet few would have expected his ordination to take place in this hemisphere, let alone for the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

According to the Review, Fr. Auro was born in the United Arab Emirates, the child of Iraqi Chaldean Catholics who were visiting the United States, and then stayed when the first Persian Gulf War erupted in 1991. Raised in California, he was “intellectually uninterested” about his faith until a powerful conversion experience at the age of 17. From there began a spiritual and intellectual journey that brought him to various Catholic colleges, including Thomas Aquinas College, Christendom College, and the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. “Fadi had a very joyful spirit. He had this delighted smile on his face he would get during class,” recalls Dr. Seeley, who taught him Freshman Philosophy. “Fr. Auro said that his preparation at the College, the process of coming to clarity through careful reasoning and discussion, stood him in great stead as he went on to other places.”

It was in the Eternal City that, thanks to the introduction of his spiritual adviser, Fr. Auro first made the acquaintance of a good friend of the College, His Eminence Raymond L. Burke, Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura and the College’s 2010 Commencement Speaker. Cardinal Burke was, at the time, the Archbishop of St. Louis, and at his recommendation Fr. Auro applied to the Archdiocese.

Fr. Bolin should consider becoming a priest in the diocese where he was then residing — Vienna. “That suggestion clicked,” Fr. Bolin says. He took the priest’s advice and, on June 15, 2012 — the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus — received the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The experience of actively pursuing his vocation and trusting God to work out the details — as opposed to remaining idle until presented with explicit, divine direction — was a radical shift from how Fr. Bolin had conceived of discernment in his youth. Thus inspired, he wrote and published a book in 2008 about his vocational insights. Paths of Love presents a practical, theologically rigorous account of three distinct traditions of vocation, those of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and Bl. John Paul II.

Paths of Love eventually found its way into the hands of the director of the National Office for Vocation of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, Rt. Rev. Christopher Jamison, O.S.B., who saw it as providing a much-needed addition to recent efforts to increase the number of vocations in the West. This summer Fr. Jamison organized an international seminar in England about the theology of vocation, with Fr. Bolin serving as one of the invited speakers.

Meanwhile Fr. Bolin serves as an assistant professor of dogmatic theology at the ITI and — more importantly, he would note — a professor of religious. As the lone priest at one of three churches that comprise a single, large parish 10 miles south of Vienna, he is primarily responsible for tending to the spiritual needs of the thousands of families in his pastoral care. Bountifully, his prayers for a vocation have been answered.
Pray Every Day to do God’s Will

An Interview with Mother Mary Assumpta Long, O.P.

Mother Mary Assumpta Long, O.P., is the Foundress and Princess General of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, in Ann Arbor, Mich. She served as the College’s Commencement Speaker this past spring, at which time she granted the following interview.

The Holy Habit

Q: We are so grateful to you for coming to our campus for Commencement, for the reflections you shared with us in your Commencement Address, and for your exhortations to our graduating seniors. We were all also affected by the sight of you in your beautiful habit. Can you speak about why it is important to you and your sisters that you wear the Dominican habit, and what effects the wearing of it has?

A: We learn from canon law that the religious habit is a witness to our poverty in our consecrated life. In reading the documents of the Church, we learn that we should have an identifiable sign so that people will know that we are religious. It is not worn for personal glory; rather, it is the greatest witness we have that we belong to the Lord. It is also a way to help to make Him known and loved, particularly to young women who might be willing to give their lives to the Lord.

As far as its being a witness to poverty, it is poverty; when you think about it, that we are not concerned about what we are going to wear. I think it is a great relief: I can go to the slums of Calcutta or the slums of the United States, or I could go to the White House, and wear the same thing.

Q: Have you been to the White House?

A: I have. I had the privilege when Pope Benedict XVI was here. President Bush had a dinner in his honor, and I was invited to attend. I have been privileged. And I have never had to worry about what I am going to wear.

The religious habit is such a positive thing. Just yesterday when I was traveling, I was approached by someone who wanted to speak with a religious; someone who would maybe listen to them and understand. In a habit, you represent more than yourself. You represent, I think, the Church; you represent someone who is dedicated to the Lord and who maybe has an open ear, an understanding heart, and advice.

Growth of a Congregation

Q: At the time of the founding of your congregation, you had just four sisters, and now there are well over 100. That’s remarkable growth in 15 years. What accounts for it?

A: One thing is that we have a marvelous vocations director. Not only does she travel to give talks at colleges and universities and other gatherings, but she walks the walk with these young women, helping to show them what God’s will is for them. She will tell some, ‘You ought to get married;’ or ‘You ought to look at another community.’ We are not in it for you; all we want is for a young woman to do God’s will, in whatever that is. We will be the first to say you need to get married, or you need to look at the Missionaries of Charity, for instance, or another community.

Discerning a Vocation

Q: What are the qualities you look for in young women? What makes them suited to the life of your congregation?

A: First of all it is important that they are living a spiritual life. The culture makes it challenging, and there are young ladies who may have had experiences which would impact their ability to enter religious life. It is essential for a young woman to be able to live the life in freedom and happily, and unfortunately there are some wounds which may be an impediment. We certainly listen and work with them to assist them in their discernment.

We also look for those who would be able to live in a community, those who have a lot of give and take, who have a spirit of the vows, who understand the vows. We have an excellent formation program, where they study the vows, Church documents, Catechism, and Scripture.

Q: What goes into your sisters’ formation, and how many years of formation do they receive before their final profession?

A: Before final vows there are eight years in community life. There are typically three years of formation when they first enter, and then they go to the university to get a teaching degree. At the same time they are still being formed, because it takes years. The truth is that formation never ends; we are in formation the rest of our lives.

Q: What is the charism of the Dominican Sisters of Mary?

A: Since we are Dominicans, we imbibe the charism of the Order, which is grounded in Truth and teaching and preaching of the Truth.

Flowing from the Dominican charism is an emphasis on Marian devotion and the Eucharist. St. Louis de Montfort was a Third Order Dominican, and we make our total consecration to Mary using the de Montfort formula. Additionally, as a community we have Eucharistic adoration daily.

Q: You served as the first president of the Forum of Major Superiors, founded under the auspices of the Institute for Religious Life. Can you tell us about that?

A: Yes. The Forum of Major Superiors was established in 1986, under the auspices of the Institute for Religious Life. It served as an alternative to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. As you know, they have just had a visitation and have been asked to implement a number of reforms over the next five years.

Some Advice

Q: What advice would you give young women, or women of any age, about discerning a vocation?

A: I think the best thing they can do is to pray every day to do God’s will — say three Hail Mary’s every day that you will do God’s will. A sister advised me of this when I was young, and I must have done it. It leaves you open and able to pray that you will do God’s will, not our will. I think you cannot lose that way, because God knows us better than we know ourselves. If you feel called to religious life, make sure to make a retreat. That usually resolves it: Some women say this is not for me, and some are attracted. But maybe their children will have virgins.

For example, one of my sisters and I were very close. She always wanted to get married and have a family, and I was always attracted to religious life. As I look back, I can see that that was the beginning of my vocation. I loved the sisters who taught us, and if they asked me to stay after school, I would have scrubbed floors. I think that was the beginning of my vocation and yet I didn’t know it at the time.

Q: But you didn’t feel drawn the way your sister was to motherhood?

A: No, not at all. You know, the irony of it was that they talked to her about religion but they never talked to me. The sisters, the chaplain — they all talked to her. My sister was wonderful and good, a great student. But it was so interesting because I knew she had a vocation to married life; she always wanted to get married.

Q: This has been a very quick visit for you. But you have traveled quite a number of times to our campus — since our earliest years. What is the good you see here at Thomas Aquinas College? What do you think the College does for the Church?

A: I think it is a special gift from the Holy Spirit to raise a place like Thomas Aquinas College. I think the question might be better put by saying, ‘What if there was no Thomas Aquinas College?’

I just thank God there is a place where young people can go and they know without a doubt they are going to get the Truth, the teachings of the Catholic Church, orthodoxy. It is like a breath of fresh air to know there is some place where parents can send their children without concern or worry that they are going to lose their faith. Parents agonize over sending their children to college.

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Start your online shopping experience from the College’s Amazon Gateway page, and Amazon.com will pay an average of 7.5% of the purchase price to the College — at no extra cost to you!

President Michael P. McLean; Chaplain Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.; and Mother M. Assumpta Long, O.P., at Commencement 2012
St. Thomas Aquinas needs no introduction. He is our patron and mentor, our muse and our intellectual master. We love to talk about him and his decisive role in the construction and execution of our curriculum. From master. We love to talk about him and his decisive role in the development of universal education. (Foster, p. 110).

St. Thomas Aquinas said that all of his writings seemed “like straw compared to what has now been revealed to me” (The Life of St. Thomas Aquinas, Foster, p. 110).

Today I want to address three aspects of St. Thomas’ spirituality: his commitment to truth, his life of prayer, and his humility. Any attempt at an accurate portrait of St. Thomas the man must in some way address these three themes.

St. Thomas’ Spirituality

St. Thomas saw that all being, and thus all truth, flows from God’s creative hand. He lived in wonder and in a dogged pursuit of the truth, not merely because it is natural to desire knowledge, but also because all learning is drawing closer to God. This devotion to truth can be seen in his daily schedule. Many witnesses at his canonization inquiry testified that, aside from prayer, his time was almost completely devoted to study. There are famous stories of Thomas lost in contemplation, insensitive to his surrounding, even when at table with the king of France. He longed for, pursued, lived truth. Once while praying in the Dominican chapel in Naples, a friend from Paris named Romano walked in to speak with him. Romano revealed that he had died two weeks earlier but had been allowed to visit to reward Thomas’ merits. Thomas recognized an opportunity when he saw one, so he proceeded to quiz Romano on the mechanics of the beatific vision. He knew that the knowledge to God’s truth can only be seen in his rejection of all deliberate falsehood, and in the submission of his writings to the correction of the Church.

Thomas’ love of truth and his great learning and wisdom were organically linked to our second theme, his life of prayer. He advanced far in learning partly because he was intelligent and well-educated, but mostly because he pleaded so earnestly with God to illuminate him. Bernard Gui, one of his earliest biographers, reports that “he never set himself to study or argue a point … without first having recourse inwardly — but with tears — to prayer for the understanding and the words required by the subject. When perplexed by a difficulty, he would kneel and pray and then, on returning to his writing or dictation, he was accustomed to find that his thought had become so clear that it seemed to show him inwardly, as in a book, the words he needed.” (p. 37).

In one extreme case Thomas was stumped by a difficult passage from Isaiah. For several days he prayed and fasted begging God to shed some light on the mind of the prophet. One night he stayed up late praying in his cell. From outside his secretary, Reginald, heard him conversing with what sounded like two other voices. When the voices grew quiet Thomas called to Reginald and proceeded to dictate a clear and thorough interpretation of the passage. After much and intense entreaty, Thomas admitted that the two voices were those of Sts. Peter and Paul, sent to answer his prayer.

Bernard says, “In Thomas the habit of prayer was extraordinarily developed; he seemed to be able to mind God as to if the body’s burden did not exist for him” (p. 36-7). Thomas did not turn to prayer only in time of need; he lived his life in constant communion with God. He was especially mindful of God’s presence in the Holy Eucharist. Each morning he would say one Mass and attend another before turning to his scholarly activities. Many witnesses for his canonization tell of this daily practice and of the tears he would frequently shed at the reception of God’s body and blood. At other times he could often be found in the chapel with his head resting on the tabernacle. His love for Christ in this sacrament is manifest in his Eucharistic hymns, especially O Salutaris Hostia, Adoro Te Devotus, the Pange Lingua, and the Tantum Ergo. These are still some of the most beautiful hymns ever written, and they flowed from the heart of a man who is often caricatured as living among dry abstractions.

His heart was full of Christ. There are many beautiful stories about Thomas that show his heart to be full of Christ. He became quite fearful in thunderstorms but would remind himself that “God came to us in the flesh, He died for us and rose again.” (p. 53). So he knew where to turn when things got tough.

When he had completed his treatise on the Eucharist, Thomas brought the text and placed it at the foot of the crucifix. An old lay brother,Dominic of Caserta, saw Thomas deep in prayer gazing at the crucifix and “heard a clear voice say these words: ‘You have written well of me, Thomas; what do you desire as a reward for your labours?’” (p. 42-3). Thomas replied: “Nihil nisi te,” which means, “Nothing except for you.” This attitude can also be seen at the very end of his life when he was given Holy Communion for the last time, and he exclaimed, “I receive you” O price of my redemption and food for my pilgrimage. For your sake I have studied and toiled and kept vigil.” (p. 53).

Our consideration of Thomas’ constant life of prayer and communion with Christ leads us to our third theme, his humility. Bernard says that ‘Thomas’ humility was a reflection of his desire to imitate the Master, to be Christ-like in all things (p. 48). You have heard of the man who was proud of his humility. Thomas was just the opposite. He was honest enough to know that he was humble, but he attributed this to a gift from God, and gave earnest thanks for being preserved from conceit.

Submission to God and One Another

I would like to finish with two brief stories. Once when Thomas was visiting the Dominican House of Studies in Bologna he was wandering the grounds of the priory deep in contemplation. Now the prior had given another visiting brother permission to take the first man he should meet as his helper for the day. So when he bumped into Thomas, he immediately put him to work, completely unaware of whom he was ordering around. Because Thomas was slow of foot, he suffered many hard words, always without protest. When others witnessed this they rushed to inform the visitor of Thomas’ identity. The visitor was mortified at his mistake and profusely apologized. But Thomas gently reminded them that the only way to perfection must be obedience. He added that “if God … had humbled himself for our sake, should not we submit to one another for God’s sake?” (p. 49). Years later when Thomas was lying ill on his deathbed at Fossanova, it was very cold and so the monks carried logs in to keep a fire burning to help him stay warm. Thomas became distressed and was heard to say several times, “Who am I that the servants of God should wait on me like this?”

St. Thomas Aquinas, patron of our school, keep us humble, prayerful, and in love with God’s truth.

St. Vincent de Paul Lecture and Concert Series

Endowed by Barbara and Paul Henkels

Highlights from the Last Quarter

On August 24, tutor Dr. Michael J. Letteney presented the year’s opening lecture, “History and Catholic Liberal Education.”


Members of “The Symbiosis Ensemble” performed string trios by Mozart and Haydn at the September 28 Fall Concert.

One Friday night each semester, the student body and teaching faculty gather for the All-College Seminar — simultaneous meetings of small groups (about 20 students, drawn from all classes, and two tutors) to discuss a pre-selected reading. The fall semester’s seminar took place on October 12 and focused on T.S. Eliot’s Murder in the Cathedral.

Text and audio from select lectures and concerts are available at thomasaquinas.edu/lectures.

By Dr. Brian T. Kelly

Note: The following remarks are adapted from Dean Brian T. Kelly’s report to the Board of Governors at its May 13 meeting. They are part of an ongoing series of talks in which Dr. Kelly explains why the College includes certain authors in its curriculum. The full series is available at www.thomasaquinas.edu/whyestudy.
Good Things Come in Threes
How Susan and Mike Murray Triple Their Gifts to Thomas Aquinas College

When Mike Murray retired from a 25-year career in management at ExxonMobil in 2006, he and his wife, Susan, were eager to support higher education in some way. It was an opportunity to do good that they could not pass up.

As an ExxonMobil retiree, Mr. Murray qualified for the company’s matching-gifts program, which will triple any gift he makes to an eligible institution of higher learning. For the Murrays, the program offered a simple way to maximize their giving.

“My wife and I wanted somebody to be able to take advantage of the ExxonMobil matching program,” he says. To make their choice, the couple reflected on the experiences of their son Sean, a graduate of the College.

“A Decent Education”

After graduating from high school in 1991, Sean Murray enrolled at the University of Texas (UT) to study electrical engineering. While there he learned about Thomas Aquinas College through his local Catholic church. Intrigued by the College’s great books curriculum, Sean decided after two years to leave UT and restart his undergraduate education as a freshman at Thomas Aquinas College.

Although Mr. Murray had never heard of the College, he was at peace with his son’s decision. “I didn’t have a strong opinion, as long as it wasn’t a third-rate school,” he laughs. “Sean was a National Merit Scholar in high school, so he needed to go somewhere where he would get a decent education. He convinced me that he would get that at Thomas Aquinas.”

Soon Mike would come to see that his son was getting much more than just that. “A couple of times a year I would have to go to Los Angeles for business, so I would drive up to campus and see how he was doing,” he recalls. “I liked the structure and the discipline both in the curriculum and in the campus life,” he adds. “I appreciated the fact that there was a focus on education. You don’t go to Thomas Aquinas to goof off.”

Reflecting on his own education at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Mr. Murray notes, “I was trained at one of the best engineering schools in the country, and we studied Pascal and Descartes, but not their original writings. I suspect it was a lot easier the way we did it than the way the College does it. The College’s way is more difficult, and probably a better education.”

Sean graduated from the College in 1997, and three years later graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law. He is today a partner at the intellectual-property firm of Kobbe Martens in Orange County, Calif., where he lives with his wife, Robin (Kretscher ’99), and their four children.

A Perfect Match

Sean’s experience at the College convinced the Murrays that it would be a worthy recipient of their — and the ExxonMobil Foundation’s — support. “There are way too many colleges that are involved in trying to teach people what to think instead of how to think. But at Thomas Aquinas College, where you learn through the Socratic Method, that’s teaching you how to think. That, frankly, is a real plus,” Mr. Murray says.

Discussions with Sean and Robin also convinced the Murrays that the College would put their gifts to good use — namely, financial aid. “Our children all had their college tuition paid for them because we were successful in the corporate world,” Mr. Murray reflects. “But there are smart people whose families don’t have that kind of money, and they need some help to go to a good school like Thomas Aquinas. We want to help people like that out.”

Although the ExxonMobil Foundation does not allow gifts to be designated for a specific purpose, virtually all private, unrestricted contributions to Thomas Aquinas College fund the school’s financial aid program. In keeping with its Catholic mission, the College is committed never to turning away a student on the basis of financial need. Every year the generosity of benefactors such as the Murrays helps the College to keep that commitment, ensuring that more than 70 percent of its students receive some form of necessary assistance.

For the last five years the Murrays have given the College generous gifts which the ExxonMobil Foundation has then tripled. “People don’t realize that the ExxonMobil Foundation has given away $450 million since it was started,” Mr. Murray notes. “It probably gives away $40 million to $50 million a year.”

“We’re grateful to the Murrays, both for their kind- ness to the College and for having the wisdom to take advantage of the ExxonMobil Foundation’s exceptionally generous matching-gift program,” says Tom Susanka, the College’s director of gift planning. “Many corporations match the charitable giving of employees, former employ- ees, and their spouses. But most of our benefactors who are eligible never take advantage of the opportunity, and that is a shame. They are missing out on a benefit they have worked hard to earn, one which could do wonders for the institution that they have so graciously chosen to support.”

Mr. Susanka explains that many are unaware that they are eligible for matching-gifts programs, but this problem is easily remedied. “We have a matching-gifts search engine on the College website,” he says (thomasaquinas.edu/match). “Just type in the name of your current or past employer, and it will tell you not only if you are eligible, but if so, how to start having your gifts matched.”

That one small step could do a world of good. Just ask Susan and Mike Murray.
On Convocation Day (August 21, 2012), the Most Rev. Liam Cary, Bishop of Baker (Ore.) served as the principal celebrant at the Mass of the Holy Spirit and the speaker at the Matriculation Ceremony.

Q: You were ordained a bishop just this past May. What was your reaction to the news of your appointment?

A: It was a complete shock. The Apostolic Nuncio called and said, “The Pope has named you the Bishop of Baker. Do you accept?” I said, “Well, yes.” It was as if Pope Benedict was sitting across the table from me, because it was he who chose me and asked the nuncio to ask me. If I were to say no I would be saying no to the Holy Father. I thought of the sacrificer that he has made in his life — that he has served for so long and that he was ready for a well-deserved retirement. But that was denied him, and now he serves to the end. So how could I say no? To say no would have been to say, “I have a better path. I thought about it, and my path is better than the one you are asking me to follow.”

Q: Dr. McLean mentioned in his introductory remarks at Convocation that yours was a “late vocation.” Can you describe your journey to the priesthood?

A: There are really two stages to my vocation. The first one was when I was just a boy. My pastor was my father’s best friend, and he was at the house all of the time. My grandmother, my aunts, my uncles all revered this man, and this was the center of family life. So from a young age I was at ease with the thought of being a priest. It felt right to me. It didn’t have to; other people have had great conflicts. But I always wanted to be a priest. Even after I left the seminary I always said that I was still going to be a priest someday. But I put it off because I wanted to get more experience outside of the seminary.

The second stage in my vocation came many years later. When I got involved in my parish, I discovered that this is what I need to be doing. The desire to do more just flowed right into going back in to the priesthood.

I have often thought that, had I been ordained in the normal course of events, I might have done a lot of damage to people. It was the 1960s, and I was very much a child of my times. As it was, though, I had the chance to think my way through all of that without being in the spotlight, so to speak. When I went back to the seminary in the 1980s, it was with a different mind. My only regret is being ordained at the age of 45 is that I wasn’t able to do more service as a priest.

“Aafter about 10 years, I went to Chicago to attend the Mass said by Bl. John Paul II there. This had a profound influence on me, as it did on many lay people and priests. It was then that I started to study the whole issue of contraception from a different perspective. I realized that I had been wrong and that the Church was right. And I figured if the Church could withstand the pressure of the world on something like this, then I could trust the Church on virtually anything. This is a kind of proof of the Lord staying with the Church.

People are still very much confused about the teaching. I think it is very important for us to recover a way of speaking about it that makes it clear that it is by no means an oppressive teaching, but rather one that is ultimately liberating. The fact is that contraception is the surest way to increase the suffering of women and to free men from any kind of sexual responsibility.

Q: In your homily you spoke of four cautionary prophecies that Pope Paul VI made if the teachings of Humanae Vitae were not followed. One was that there would be a coercive use of reproductive technologies by governments, especially on the poor. Could you say more about that?

A: Yes, that is in fact being done by governments elsewhere, in Latin America, China, India. Here in the United States we have the HHS contraceptive mandate, and on this issue the Church has taken a stand against the world. There is an effort here to drive the Church into complete privacy. It is as though it is inconceivable that anybody would object to the mandate, as though objections to it can’t be taken seriously.

Meanwhile we have all this evidence of family breakdown and the pauperization of women, single women who are left with children to care for when men abandon them. That is the surest way to be poor in the United States is no critique of the heroic efforts of women to raise children on their own. This is heroism of the first degree. The problem is that people are getting poorer, and it might just be that contraception has something to do with that.

I think these kinds of connections need to be made not only as Catholic Christians but as American citizens concerned about the future of our democracy and our government.

Q: The Holy Father has declared a Year of Faith starting in October. Do you have suggestions about how the faithful might profit from this occasion?

A: Faith is a real challenge in the world today, steeped as it is in secularism and relativism. We put our faith and our lives in a Man who was crucified, and in the people who associated with Him through time. This is no small thing. But we can take the significance of this for granted, especially when times are peaceful. When we start to realize, though, that there are threatening alternatives, it makes us wonder. During this Year of Faith, we should ponder certain questions. What is it we believe? What do I believe? How do we come to faith? What are the stages of believing?

By contrast it would be very helpful to think about the loss of faith, especially in our time. What brings about the loss of faith? How does one recover it? What is the role of prayer in faith? What is the role of hope? What is the relationship between faith and hope? What is the relation between faith and charity?

Frederick Ozanam of the St. Vincent De Paul society says, “Put your faith under the protection of charity.” This suggests to me that if you want to believe more deeply, or if perhaps you have lost your faith and you are recovering it, the best way to do so is to devote yourself to the service of the poor in charitable work.

Q: When you accepted Dr. McLean’s invitation to visit our campus for Convocation, you said you had known about the College for sometime and that you “thought we were doing something right” here. Now that you have spent some time here and visited classes, what do you think?

A: It starts with the physical location. Just to walk every day amidst such beauty — the terrain is beautiful, the buildings are beautiful, and the campus is ordered and tranquil, everything is in the right balance — it gives a certain peacefulness to life. Then there is the centrality and prominence of the Chapel, which is a statement in itself that everything is ordered to the glory of God.

I have also been very much impressed by the joyfulness of the students. I visited classrooms and saw them really attend to these great works of the Western tradition, and engage them directly — not through a filter of textbooks and bullet points. And they engage each other directly, too, and learn how to articulate their thoughts with respect. The classroom setting is not some huge lecture hall, but small, rather intimate rooms with large round tables that gather everybody in. What struck me, too, is the very companionable relationship the students have with their teachers. They are sitting right there at the same level with them and prompting them with questions, not flooding them with information.

To be able to do all this over a four-year period — I think this would be, in itself, a wonderful education. All of this seems to be very, very desirable, and I was quite impressed. It has certainly been a joy for me to be here.

Q: On YouTube there is a video of a sermon you gave on the 40th anniversary of Humanae Vitae, in which you allude to having first received that encyclical less than you do now. Is that right?

A: That’s an understatement of the first order! I remember precisely when I learned about it. I was working in San Francisco in the summer of 1968 at Pacific Gas & Energy, and while on a lunch break, I noticed a newspaper headline saying, “Pope Says No to Birth Control.” I was very disappointed because I had been led to believe there was going to be a change in the teaching. Like so many other people, I resisted the teaching, thinking it was ultimately going to change.

After about 10 years, I went to Chicago to attend the Mass said by Bl. John Paul II there. This had a profound influence on me, as it did on many lay people and priests. It was then that I started to study the whole issue of contraception from a different perspective. I realized that I had been wrong and that the Church was right. And I figured if the Church could withstand the pressure of the world on something like this, then I could trust the Church on virtually anything. This is a kind of proof of the Lord staying with the Church.

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People are still very much confused about the teaching. I think it is very important for us to recover a way of speaking about it that makes it clear that it is by no means an oppressive teaching, but rather one that is ultimately liberating. The fact is that contraception is the surest way to increase the suffering of women and to free men from any kind of sexual responsibility.

Q: In your homily you spoke of four cautionary prophecies that Pope Paul VI made if the teachings of Humanae Vitae were not followed. One was that there would be a coercive use of reproductive technologies by governments, especially on the poor. Could you say more about that?

A: Yes, that is in fact being done by governments elsewhere, in Latin America, China, India. Here in the United States we have the HHS contraceptive mandate, and on this issue the Church has taken a stand against the world. There is an effort here to drive the Church into complete privacy. It is as though it is inconceivable that anybody would object to the mandate, as though objections to it can’t be taken seriously.

Meanwhile we have all this evidence of family breakdown and the pauperization of women, single women who are left with children to care for when men abandon them. That is the surest way to be poor in the United States is no critique of the heroic efforts of women to raise children on their own. This is heroism of the first degree. The problem is that people are getting poorer, and it might just be that contraception has something to do with that.

I think these kinds of connections need to be made not only as Catholic Christians but as American citizens concerned about the future of our democracy and our government.
1. Children of alumni speed across one of the campus ponds during the annual Cardboard Boat Race at Alumni Day 2012. 2-3. Members of the Senior Class welcome the new freshmen with a joint-class trip to the beach and then, that evening, a dance outside under the stars. 4. Students enjoy a homemade slip-and-slide at the Fall Barbeque. 5. The sun begins to set while students hike in the Los Padres National Forest at the women's campout. 6. Chaplain Rev. Joseph Illo offers Mass at the men's campout. 7. Freshmen participate in an ice-breaker during Orientation.

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

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<tr>
<th>Weekdays</th>
<th>Saturdays</th>
<th>Sundays</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.**</td>
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<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
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<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
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* Schedules may vary; if traveling from afar, please call in advance to confirm.

** The First Mass of each day is offered in the extraordinary form.

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Calendar of Events

For more information, please see www.thomasaquinas.edu/calendar

Lecture: Dr. Jeremy Holmes (’99)
Academic Dean, Wyoming Catholic College..............................November 16

Thanksgiving Recess .............................................................November 22–25

Advent Concert: Bach’s Mass in B Minor
The Thomas Aquinas College Choir ........................................November 30

Christmas Vacation .................................................................December 15 to January 6

St. Thomas Day Lecture
Rev. Michael Sherwin, O.P. .....................................................January 28

Lecture: Dr. Jeffrey Tulis
University of Texas at Austin ..................................................February 22

Lecture: Dr. William H. Donahue
St. John’s College, Santa Fe, N.M. .........................................March 15

Easter Recess ............................................................................March 28 to April 3