College Graduates Largest Class to Date
Australian Cardinal Presides; 80 Graduates Receive Diplomas

A t 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 10, Thomas Aquinas College held its annual Baccalaureate Mass in the academic quadrangle in front of the Guadalupe Foun- tain. Here, in the shadow of the nearly-completed chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, the College’s 80 graduating seniors, their families and friends, stu- dents, faculty, members of the Board of Governors, and benefactors gathered for the Mass of the Holy Spirit of- fered by the Archbishop of Sydney, Australia, His Emi- nence George Cardinal Pell. Feelings of nostalgia as well as of anticipation filled the air, as graduates and guests alike realized that the Class of 2008 would be the last class to begin its commencement exercises outdoors— and that the Class of 2009 would be the first to have its Baccalaureate Mass offered in the magnificent new chapel just yards away.

For now, though, all were content with the open-air arrangements for Mass, at which it was an honor indeed to be granted the presence of Australia’s leading prelate, George Cardinal Pell. As he explained, he made the long journey to Southern California simply to show his support for Thomas Aquinas College and its mission: “I have come because for years I have known about Thomas Aquinas College, and I value deeply the work that is being done here. My visit is a sign of my own personal support for…this marvelous work.”

Joining His Eminence at the altar for the Baccalaureate Mass were College chap- lains Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., Rev. Paul Rathery, O.P.; and Rev. Charles Willingham, O.Praem. Also concelebrating were priests from neighboring parishes. In his homily, Cardinal Pell spoke to the graduates of the importance of listening to and heeding the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the years ahead. (For the full text of his sermon, see page 5.)

During Mass, the College Choir, under the direction of Mr. Dan Grimm (’76), inspired the congregation with William Byrd’s Mass for Four Voices and various motets and hymns including Mozart’s Ave Verum Corpus and a contemporary work by alumnus Stephen Grimm (’75), This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made. Nathan Reyes was selected from among the graduating seniors to sing as a solo the “Prayer of St. Richard of Chicester” by Clifford Boyd: “O holy Jesus, most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother, may I know Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, and follow Thee more nearly.”

Following Mass and a short break, the procession of Board members, faculty, and graduates—all dressed in academic regalia—was formed and made its way to the Commencement site on the quad to the accompaniment of a brass quartet.

After welcoming everyone to the event, President Dillon called the Senior Class Speaker, Mr. Joseph Thompson (’08), to the podium to deliver his address.

In those remarks, Mr. Thompson spoke of the education he and his classmates had received, describing it as one that “would prepare us for wisdom” throughout the years to come. (For the full text of his talk, see page 3.)

A ceremony followed in which four new students were inducted into the Order of St. Albert the Great as a sign of the College’s gratitude for their magnificent generosity. Receiving from Cardinal Pell a bronze bust of St. Albert the Great were Mr. and Mrs. R. Scott Turiuchi; Mrs. Ann Noble Brown on behalf of her late brother and former member of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, Mr. Richard Noble; and Mr. Michael Cawley, Executive Director of the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation of Ardmore, Oklahoma, on behalf of the Noble Foundation. (See photos on page 12.)

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mr. James Wensley explained, “St. Albert the Great was not only a renowned scientist and thinker, but also the teacher, friend, and defender of St. Thomas Aquinas, who would come to be known as the Uni- versal Doctor and greatest theologian of the Church. Without St. Albert the Great, there would not be the St. Thomas that we know; likewise, without the Order of St. Albert the Great, there would not be the Thomas Aquinas College that we know…For these benefactors have made the needs of the College their own, and because of them the College is flourishing today.”

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Cardinal Pell Offers St. John Fisher as Example to Graduates

A Life Characterized by Wisdom, Learning, Courage, and Holiness

P resident Dillon, members of the Board, graduates, stu- dents, faculty, family, and friends: I would like to thank the College for the honor of be- ing awarded this Saint Thomas Aquinas Me- dallion. I am touched by the honor and the award, especially when I look at the list of pre- vious recipients.

Like your presi- dent, a number of you have said that I have come quite a distance.

I have come because for years I have known about Thomas Aquinas College, and I value deeply the work that is being done here. My visit is a sign of my own personal support for the students, the faculty, for the College. I believed so much in what you were doing that, in fact, I tried to interest the Australian Catholic University. But unfortunately my Aquinas College was not a Great Books col- lege. I believed so much in what you were doing that, in fact, I tried to interest the Australian Catholic University in running a Great Books program within the university, but unfortunately I was completely unsuc- cessful in persuading a sufficient number of the faculty.

Students here—and I think they realize this—have an unusual advantage from their direct engagement for four years with the profound thinkers who have shaped our Western civiliza- tion. They have followed the traditional Socratic method of questioning and dialogue, and continued their search for meaning and truth in a learning institution which is committed explicitly to the Catholic faith. Faith and rea- son are offered for their acceptance or rejection as they rigorously examine the intellectual claims of these great authors, religious or otherwise.

I congratulate the Senior Class Speaker, Joseph Thompson, who spoke on their behalf. What he said boded well—very, very well—for the quality of the learning that they have undertaken here. So, I repeat that they—the graduates and the students here—are unusu- ally blessed and advantaged, because they have an ideal base for any professional course at all that they might now choose to pursue, any course whatsoever. And, of course, they have a wonderful base for married life.

St. John Fisher

A commencement ceremony is a happy time. Why then should I choose to speak of an obscure six- teenth century bishop from England, who spent his entire life in Rochester, which was the poorest diocese in England, and then so misjudged the political situation that he was executed by his king on some theological point of principle, without the support of even one of his fellow bishops?

St. John Fisher’s story is told simply. Born in York- shire in 1469, one of four children to a prosperous mer- chant, he went to Cambridge University at the age of 14 where he was introduced to the currents of intellectual

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Society and Its False Gods

Now that you have spent four years away from many of the distractions of the world, let me remind you that our own souls are rightly ordered, it is my distinct privilege, on behalf of the entire faculty and staff, to congratulate all you members of the Class of 2008 for having today successfully completed your studies at Thomas Aquinas College. Your achievement is substantial. To work through Aristotle, Augustine, Descartes, Newton, Einstein, and St. Thomas is not easy, and you are to be commended for your diligence and docility. You have spent four years studying the works of those who have thought most deeply about nature, man, and God, and you are becoming serious and accomplished thinkers yourselves.

Keep in mind that your advancement in learning at this college has been made possible by the sacrifices of tutors, the College’s benefactors, and, of course, to God Himself for the blessings you have received here.

Society and Its False Gods

Now that you have spent four years away from many of the distractions of the world, let me remind you that you are to be commended for your diligence and docility. By now you may have thought most deeply about nature, man, and God. You have spent four years studying the works of those who have thought most deeply about nature, man, and God, and you are becoming serious and accomplished thinkers yourselves.

Our civilization cannot finally endure without the virtues of piety, self-restraint, and generosity of soul.

Of course, there has always been sin in the world, and we must guard against being too quick to identify the sins of others lest we be too slow to recognize our own. Nevertheless, a change I’ve seen in my lifetime is that patience will intensify our charity and obedience. It is my constant hope that these virtues will be the mark of graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, especially charity and humility, understanding that the Christian life is to be ruled by appetite.

But we cannot be daunted—we must still strive for love of God and love of neighbor. We must make ventures of charity whatever the consequences. And we can take comfort in the second part of today’s gospel: If we do His will as best we can. I promise to pray, in turn, that God will bless you all, that He will keep you in His grace, and that He will guide you on your way.

Grow in the Love of God and Others

Our task as educated Christians is all the more difficult, however, because in our very effort to uphold reason and truth, we can easily become enamored of our own intelligence and think that our intellectual prowess and achievements are of our own doing rather than gifts from God. After all, if Lucifer, the “light-bearer,” can succumb to pride, how much easier must it be for us men, already weakened by original sin. Your own class quote from the First Epistle to the Corinthians is a helpful caution here. “And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge... but have not love, I am nothing.”

Be Marked by Charity and Humility

IView the world in the best light possible. Be Marked by Charity and Humility. For the love and respect you should have for one another and for the world around you, you should strive to be Marked by Charity and Humility. It is my constant hope that these virtues will be the mark of graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, especially charity and humility, understanding that patience will intensify our charity and obedience will intensify our humility.

As you leave the beautiful confines of our campus and head out into the world for greater challenges under the protection of your class patron, St. Michael, may He be with you always.
Senior Class Speaker Characterizes the Class of 2008

Joseph Thompson (’08) Exhorts Graduates to Continue Growing in Wisdom and Charity

Good morning. On behalf of the Class of 2008, I would like to welcome to our commencement His Eminence Cardinal Pell, the chaplains, all priests and members of the religious, the Board of Governors, President Dillon, all faculty and staff, and all of our friends and family.

The Heart of Our Accomplishment

For those of you who only know in general what the past four years here entailed for us as a class, allow me to briefly summarize our accomplishment. Of course, you may be familiar with the general outline of courses and texts, and the prestige of their authors. You may also be familiar with the Catholic reputation of the College and its living Catholic community made up of young people who are pious and sincere. But these characteristics provide only an incomplete notion of the College and, in particular, our class.

Yes, the aforesaid are certain molds that support the College’s philosophy, and every student who completes four years here takes part in these. But each class, and indeed each student, is imbued in different ways according to the particular disposition that marks them. In order to complete this summary, then, it would be useless to tell you about things said in books. To get at the heart of our accomplishment, I want to give you a sense of the manner and mode of our time here, the ways in which we dig deeply into questions and ideas, as well as into the Christian life, in private and in public.

The character of our class was not so subtly hinted at during the first tutorials in which most sections came out with all guns blazing, overzealous and eager to jump in and get in over our heads. In my own section, I witnessed this quickly happen. But a tenacious vivacity and ardent thoroughness served us in staying afoot, and soon we were equipped to press onward, slightly more carefully.

Alongside this intellectual beginning, a strong affection was being formed among a plethora of unique individuals. We had always heard about what the College social life would be like, but I don’t think anyone was prepared for the characters who first congregated here four years ago. But amiable from the start, we have developed friendships and established a community of kindness and joy.

Moving through the curriculum, we were faced with more serious fare, replacing milk with meat. Soon issues gained new relevance and began to hit closer to home. Predestination, the soul, scepticism, and the like became pressing matters for some, while others took these in turn, tarrying with these questions and wisely storing them in their hearts.

The questions got harder, but we dug deeper, not ignoring the difficulties posed by Hume, Kant, Hegel, Newton, Einstein, and Nietzsche. We recognized the important questions behind each subject, never discounting the insight of these authors and their contemporaries. We asked ourselves: Is there such a thing as an honest philosophy? These questions did not bear on important as the questions they posed: In what way do we know that we know? What is the field of activity in the world? How much should we credit our knowledge to our beliefs? Is there such a thing as an honest philosophy? These questions did not bear on us lightly, but neither did they crush us under their weight.

At the end of these four years, we are much like we were at the beginning. Our zeal is still alive, and our minds are still open to knowledge. I hope this gives you a better idea of what these four years have meant to the Class of 2008.

A Preparation for Wisdom

So, if there was any expectation at the start of a comprehensive exhaustion of the problems and solutions in the Western world, starting from the Ancients to the present day, producing an infallible certainty about things deep in our souls, then we have certainly disappointed you. For this is not what we have accomplished. But neither was it ever our goal.

If on the other hand, you expected that this education would cultivate wonder in us, making it flower and unfold from the outset, and that this education would prepare us for the ability to oversee and judiciously account for many things with prudence, patience, and silence—then you will be pleased to hear that we have not disappointed you. For we confess that we do not know so assuredly. But we confess that we do not know so assuredly. But we use for wisdom—which requires the ability to oversee and judiciously account for many things, making it flower and unfold from the outset, and that this education would prepare all of our friends and family.

Antecedent probability may have a real weight and cogency in these sciences, which it cannot have in experimental science, and a mature politician or divine may have a power of reaching matters of fact in consequence of his peculiar habit of mind. Surely sciences there are in which genius is everything, and rules all but nothing.

This antecedent probability that Newman mentions has its foundation in the trustworthy, great tradition of thought concerning these subjects, a tradition with which we are now familiar. Inquiry in these subjects requires an intuitive mind that can take up thoughts in trust concerning their content and cogency and relying on the soundness of its [the mind’s] judgment.

This is the mark that I see in our class. Our inquiry begins appropriately with receptivity, doing our best with what is given us, and looking out for aid from any quarter, as Cardinal Newman says. With generous trust, we follow the lead of those who have come before in order to see where they will take us. It is marvelous to me to see this quality of mind in our class, which gives itself over to—or holds back from—these things based on the intuitive movements of the soul. This quality bespeaks wisdom, and it will be more marvelous to see how our love of her will move us toward greater and more beautiful things.

Now, it may sound like I am calling our class geniuses—but that’s because I am. However, here I don’t mean that we are wunderkinds or prodigies. Rather, I want to emphasize that which qualifies us for entering into a community of those who know, and that the way we gain a title like “genius,” has little to do with what propositions we hold and the like and has a lot to do with how we approach the problem of knowing.

To be a knower is not to have amassed a surplus of synthesized concepts. It is to have the ability and disposition to work well with the character of your soul and to capitalize on those antecedent possibilities in order to eventually reap matters of fact.

A Gift to Be Recalled and Relived

At this new beginning, then, let us keep in mind that we do not yet know all we have experienced here. Our limited treatment of these subjects does not give any of us the right to say that we know them strictly. But neither have we been cheated, nor did we achieve less than we ought to have after running the course. For we have been given such a gift as to be recalled and relived in practice and in contemplation. Yet that press us on toward the application of good insights and the development of germinating ideas. This, too, should be the mark of our faith, which grows in the exercise of charity and kindness, strengthened by the hope of final and eternal illumination.

Finally, in light of that hope which will bring us together again, let me impart words to you that have resonated deeply within us before, reminding us of our past experiences, recommending our ongoing duty, and assuring us of our promised inheritance. Dear friends, let us first of all, and for all, be kind, then honest, and then let us never forget one another. I say it again: I give you my word that, for my part, I will never forget any one of you. Each face that is looking at me now at this moment I will remember, be it even after 30 years. And certainly, we shall see, and gladly; joyful-ly tell one another all that has been.
**Commencement Address**

Continued from page 1

Differences with King Henry VIII

Even in his early years he clashed mightily with the new King Henry VIII, who wanted to take the money his grandmother, Lady Margaret, had bequeathed for the development of new colleges at Cambridge; this greedy king had wanted to use it for his own purposes.

We all know that Henry wanted his first marriage to be annulled, that this was refused by Rome, so that he responded by declaring himself to be head of the Church in England. After careful study, Fisher emerged as Cardinal Wolsey, then Lord Chancellor, to preach at an open air rally outside St. Paul’s Cathedral in London against Luther, when Luther’s books were publicly burnt in 1526. Henry VIII was so pleased with Fisher’s two-hour address delivered in English (which was then a primitive language, quite some years before Shakespeare, and not spoken outside England) that he ordered it to be translated into Latin so that it could be read and understood in continental Europe.

This united front—Henry and the Catholics—was fated to live in a violent time of change, which laid the foundations for England’s rise to greatness and indeed the foundations of our contemporary English-speaking world.

Martyrdom

Henry was regularly extravagant, and he was short of money from the beginning. In a masterstroke he commandeered the wealth of the monasteries not just for himself, but for many of the local nobility. In other words he locked most of the establishment behind him with significant financial encouragement!

In those days when there was little effective separation of powers and no freedom of speech, Henry would not tolerate public opposition. In April 1534, Fisher was confined in the Tower of London, and the case against him proceeded slowly. In May 1535, Pope Paul III created him a cardinal in the hope of saving his life. Henry VIII wasn’t one bit impressed by that, declaring that Fisher would not have a head on his shoulders to wear the cardinal’s hat. No head, no hat!

On June 22nd of that year, Fisher was executed by beheading, rather than being hanged, drawn and quartered, a remission which wasn’t due to his age or office, but to his poor health. They were frightened that if they dragged him through the streets, he would die before he got to the execution spot. Despite his frailty, he announced in a loud voice that he was dying for the faith of the Catholic Church.

Cardinal Pell blesses the diplomas presented to him by President Dillon.

Students here—and I think they realize this—have an unusual advantage from their direct engagement for four years with the profound thinkers who have shaped our Western civilization.

Thomas More, the layman and martyr, Fisher’s contemporary, the best lines, is a more interesting personality and more humorous, and has gained much more publicity through the play and then the film, A Man for All Seasons. So, I want to redress this balance.

The Insight of Wisdom

St. John Fisher is remarkable for many reasons, but one might begin with a group of new graduates by reminding them that he was truly wise. I was very pleased to hear earlier what Joseph, your Class Speaker, had to say about wisdom. We know that wisdom is not coterminous with learning or acquisitiveness! Wisdom brings insight, the ability to analyse and devise new syntheses, something akin to Cardinal Newman’s criterion for an educated person, which is the ability to recognize the relative value of different truths. Wise people can evaluate public opinion, identify what is central, discard what is irrelevant, and downgrade what is secondary.

Cardinal Fisher was the only bishop to resist Henry, to acknowledge publicly that the issue wasn’t merely a disputed annulment case, it wasn’t just another quarrel with Rome, which would soon be over to enable the situation to return to normal. But many, many people believed those two things.

In fact, the rejection of the crucial role of the Papacy split the universal Church and set in train the destruction of Christendom. The subjection of the Church also opened the way to a royal despotism being exercised with fewer checks and balances.

A Life of Learning

A second point we should notice is that John Fisher was not only a learned man, but one who continued to study and learn throughout his life. In middle age he settled down to study Hebrew and Greek (not with an enormous amount of success, indeed with cunning!) with and answering the new challenges thrown up by the Protestant rebellion.

He was also a patron of learning, like the benefactors of this college and many other colleges, like the members of the Board of Thomas Aquinas College. As Chancellor at Cambridge University he worked to attract the funds necessary to bring leading scholars from abroad and to introduce the new learning of the Continental Renaissance, the rediscovery of the ancient classical authors in Greek and Latin, as well as the study of Hebrew for the Old Testament scriptures. He also played a major role in the establishment of Christ’s College and St. John’s College, new foundations at Cambridge, which are still thriving today.

An Example of Courage

St. John Fisher exemplifies also the importance of courage, of a principled integrity, a determination to speak the truth whatever the consequences. Courage is not universal, and every adult here knows that; indeed it is rare and wonderful, especially when the penalties, such as torture and execution, are extreme.

It is marginally easier to be courageous in a crowd, not merely because courage is infectious, but because friends, family, and intellectual allies are great helps in times of trial, bolstering morale and providing reassurance on judgments and tactics.

We should remember that Fisher and More were almost alone as they took their stand. As we have mentioned, no English bishop supported Fisher, and there was no family support whatsoever for More, not even from Meg Reper, his favorite daughter. They thought he was exaggerating the importance of the issue and was throwing away everything that they had for a mistaken point of view.

So, if courage is “grace under pressure,” the pressures were not sufficient in Fisher’s case to destroy the resolve of this sick, elderly bishop.

It might also be useful to state the obvious, even here at Thomas Aquinas College (and it’s certainly not only useful, but it is necessary to make this point in Australia), and point out that Fisher and More (indeed the martyrs on both sides of the Reformation) did not die

reform then springing from the Renaissance on the continent. In 1491 he was ordained a priest, gained his M.A., and was elected a fellow of Michaelhouse.

An appointment which was to prove crucial for his later career occurred when he became confessor to Lady Margaret Beaufort, the devout mother of Henry VII. Probably as a result of her patronage, he was appointed Vice chancellor of Cambridge University in 1501, and in 1504, at the age of 35, he became Chancellor at Cambridge, an office which he held for the rest of his life.

there was a scandal. But Fisher was prepared to die for the Catholic truth embodied in the papal office and not for the personal qualities of its office holders.

Most historians have now abandoned the view that Catholicism in England on the eve of the Reformation was weak and corrupt because Henry and his Protestant successors had to wage a bitter struggle for generations to strangle Catholic life.

Fisher became the best-known defender of Catholic doctrine, and he was selected by Cardinal Wolsey, then Lord Chancellor, to refuse to take the oath of kingly supremacy. More said that he was much more influenced in his decision to accept the argumentation of Christendom. The subjection of the Church also opened the way to a royal despotism being exercised with fewer checks and balances.
Discerning the Holy Spirit

The Struggle against Evil

The Task Ahead

A Model of Holiness

for conscience's sake, i.e. for the inviolability of personal conscience or the primacy of conscience. This is a contemporary way of speaking where public tolerance of different points of view is often regarded as the supreme virtue. However, in every circumstance we need to coop-
rate because no one has all the gifts, and each individual has different gifts in different measure, as we heard in the first reading.

There are many images for the Spirit at work, such as the streams of living water coming from the Temple in Ezekiel, or the life-giving waters streaming from the throne of the Lamb in the Apocalypse. Another image for the graduating class is the spring of clear water which fills, for example, the pools behind the Hacienda. Your class is not the mighty Mississippi River, but it is like that spring pouring out good and pure and clear water which fills, for example, the pools behind the Hacienda. Your class is not coming from the Temple in Ezekiel, or the life-giving waters streaming from the throne of the Son of the Father, Jesus our leader and Savior. In good times, the fruits exist in abundance, but when the spirit of evil strengthens, these fruits are in short supply. However, in every circumstance we need to cooperate.

The Struggle against Evil

Everyone at this Mass of the Holy Spirit acknowledges the reality of evil. Everyone acknowledges the psychology of sin—what we’re up against—because we are all sinners.

Peer pressure can be fierce, whether we are young or whether we are old. Alcohol, drugs, and promiscuity can seem attractive escapes for every generation, and advanced age is no certain protection. Long journeys start with small steps, and bad habits capture our wills. Apathy is poisonous, but individual courage and leadership inspire others, like a snowball rolling down a hill. That will be your task, in a thousand different ways in the years ahead, to inspire that courage and enthusiasm.

When the Holy Spirit first came upon the timid disciples at Pentecost, they were transformed, filled with the spirit of courage. Peter, the up-country Galilean who had denied Christ three times, supported now by the Eleven, went out and preached to the Jewish visitors to Jerusalem from many nations that Jesus the Nazarene whom they had crucified was back from the dead, raised to life, and freed from the pangs of Hades. Three thousand were on that occasion converted and baptized (Acts 2:1-41).

May God give us all the courage and wisdom to refuse compromise and balance with the forces of evil, and to struggle mightily against them with our message of love and faith and hope.

The Task Ahead

There is an old tag which says that the role of young people is to bring fire into the Church, while, as you know, we elders ensure you don’t burn it down! This is true, even as we admit that young people must have room to make their own mistakes, because the Holy Spirit is not like a totally destructive bushfire, but like the ever-burning bush which fascinated Moses in the desert (Ex 3:1-6), like the flame of love. It is interesting, though, even when we are confronted with bad downturns, really bad times, what looks like catastrophe, that in Australia we have some native seeds that will only generate and germinate after there has been a bushfire!

The Spirit is always moving amongst people, and especially amongst young people, if He’s given half a chance. And this is happening more and more around the Catholic world—I think the English-speaking Catholic world, in particular—as young Catholic leaders realize what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, Our Lord. Your enthusiasm, your competence, your confidence are invigorating for priests and bishops, and all the bishops and cardinals. I can vouch for that, and I thank you.

The Spirit is calling you to turn towards the Triune God of Father, Son, and Spirit, as you turn your faces out to the world, to your future. The Spirit is calling you all to pray, sacrifice, and obedience, to service, to be disciples of love.

May each one of you hear and heed this call. Come Holy Spirit!

Gaspar Bataz of Pomona, California, and Matthew Maxwell of Temecula, California, were chosen to be lectors at the Baccalaureate Mass.

He was noted for the devotion he exhibited during the celebration of Mass, uniting himself with Christ's self-offering on the Cross. He had a replica of the severed head of John the Baptist on the altar in his episcopal residence, as he took very seriously indeed the teaching of Thomas Aquinas that the office of bishop requires a high degree of sanctity.

While all Catholics are not called to be priests or religious, all are called to follow Christ in a serious way, to imitate Christ's wholeness of life in what we traditionally call holiness. Fisher is a good model.

I wish all the graduates of Thomas Aquinas College my repeated congratulations on their graduation and hope they receive every appropriate grace and blessing as they commence their new lives.

I am sure that you have already met many good examples and mentors in this environment and in your families and among your friends. May you also be inspired by the learning, holiness, and courage of St. John Fisher to devote your own life to some great and some good cause.
Q: You are known for your interest in Catholic education, and were the Director of Aquinas College in Australia for eleven years. Why is Catholic education so important for the Church and for society?
A: I don’t think I’ll be saying anything that you don’t well understand here at Thomas Aquinas College. I think that Catholic education is characterized by both faith and reason. Yet, in Australia, as in the States, we Catholics are a minority. So, if we wish to talk to the majority around us, what we have in common is the use of reason.

Also, in the Western world, we Catholics have a marvelous intellectual tradition. I think it was St. Ber- nadine of Siena who used the phrase that is now famous, saying something to the effect of “Standing on the shoulders of giants, we can see much farther than we would if we were just standing by ourselves.” That is the advantage that our faith gives us in intellectual things and why I stand four-square with what you are trying to do here at Thomas Aquinas College.

Q: When you speak about “standing on the shoulders of giants,” would it be correct to assume that you would consider St. Thomas Aquinas one of those giants?
A: Yes, absolutely. In the seminar, I followed a course of scholastic philosophy, but we didn’t do nearly enough of St. Thomas and studied too many secondary authors. The training was somewhat arid and impersonal, and it needed to be reformed and brought up to date. So, in my mind there is no doubt that the tradition of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas is the great Catholic intellectual tradition that has been espoused again by the popes since Leo XIII, and while Pope Benedict might be more an Augustinian than a Thomist, in a thousand different ways we are indebted to Thomas. In the area of philosophy that Thomas Aquinas is the great Catholic intellectual tradition, because, in practice, everybody draws the line. Nobody—badly.

You know, self-interest is blinding and sometimes can be very powerful. Those who appeal to the “primacy of conscience” is not one way out of the problem of simply confessing that we don’t live up to Christian standards, because in fact, very, very few people go to bat for Hitler because he might have been in his beliefs.

There is a lot that might be said on that, but the “primacy of conscience” is not one way out of the problem because, in practice, everybody draws the line. Nobody does it. The truth lays bare everything, or almost everything. Very, very few people go to bat for Hitler because he might have been in his beliefs.

The truth has primacy, whereas conscience is a vector of activities in a typically Thomistic sort of approach, whereby we try to identify what is morally true, what actions are good, and what actions are bad. We call it “forming our conscience.”

Those who appeal to the “primacy of conscience” (and there is quite a body of them in Australia), never speak about spiritual blindness, but there is such a reality. This is manifestly true. The beatitudes speak of the “pure in heart” seeing God, and I think, too, the “pure of heart” are much more likely to see moral issues clearly. You know, self-interest is blinding and sometimes can be completely blindling; and habits of sin distort our vision, too badly.

Q: You spoke in your Baccalaureate Mass Homily of the individual conscience— that it can’t coerce us into believing a particular truth. But the Second Vatican Council never spoke in any great detail about the relationship between the Magisterium and the individual conscience.

There is a lot that might be said on that, but the “primacy of conscience” is not one way out of the problem because, in practice, everybody draws the line. Nobody does it. The truth lays bare everything, or almost everything. Very, very few people go to bat for Hitler because he might have been in his beliefs.

The truth has primacy, whereas conscience is a vector of activities in a typically Thomistic sort of approach, whereby we try to identify what is morally true, what actions are good, and what actions are bad. We call it “forming our conscience.”

Those who appeal to the “primacy of conscience” (and there is quite a body of them in Australia), never speak about spiritual blindness, but there is such a reality. This is manifestly true. The beatitudes speak of the “pure in heart” seeing God, and I think, too, the “pure of heart” are much more likely to see moral issues clearly. You know, self-interest is blinding and sometimes can be completely blindling; and habits of sin distort our vision, too badly.

Q: You spoke in your Baccalaureate Mass Homily of a renewal of the Church that is underway now. What do you see coming about, and what are the roles of lay people and priests?
A: People speak about the “John Paul II Generation,” and there is no doubt that the late Holy Father was able to inspire many young people to follow the Catholic way, to follow the Cross of Christ. A lot of these were World Youth Day people. I’m not saying they’re a majority of the young people, but there are a goodly number of them. They have challenged the Church to use their talents, to prepare them and direct them, and to channel their energies into productive areas.

That is one reason why tertiary education is so enormously important. In Sydney, I have significantly increased the number we have devoted to chaplaincies at our secular universities, and I have encouraged Catho- lic university life.

You know, one of the reasons I came to support Thomas Aquinas College is exactly because I believe you’re doing a good thing. I’ve met some of your young people, and you have manifestly wonderful young people. You are equipping them to survive intellectually. You are giving them the capacity to participate usefully in the dialogue that has got to take place in our society. I mean we can’t just retreat into our ghettos and let the rest of the world be. We’ve got to engage the society. And I think we’ll get a good hearing because the permissive soci- ety, as it is called somewhat misleadingly, doesn’t make people happy.

Q: You have been President of Vox Clara for the past six years. What is the work of this commission and why is it important for the Church?
A: Vox Clara is a commission of the Congrega- tion for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. There is a new Roman Missal that was published in Latin now 5 or 6 years ago, and obvi- ously it has to be translated into English. The Missal contains all the prayers of the Mass, both its proper and commons. (By contrast, the Lectionary contains the readings from the Old and New Testament.) The ambition is to have one English translation for the whole world. So, led by a group of bishops, the Inter- national Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) has commissioned translators to do the work. They are preparing the translation, and the Vox Clara has been ex- amining their work and advising the Congregation for Divine Worship on its suitability and, especially, on its fidelity to the Latin text.

Now, it is much easier to paraphrase the Latin. But it is challenging, especially with the old texts which are so sparse and concise. It is challenging to translate them with complete accuracy into beautiful English. Some people thought it just couldn’t be done. Well, the new translation won’t be to the satisfaction of everybody, but I think the new translation will demonstrate that it can be done, and it has been done in a way that is an im- mense improvement.

In the past, translations would be made, and the work would be completed. Only then would they be sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship to examine them. If they had been on the wrong track from the be- ginning, that often resulted in a long hold-up, and once in a while a complete rewrite.

By contrast, Vox Clara has been examining the texts as they are being produced and presenting our advice to the Holy See. Therefore, rather than the Holy See wait- ing until the end and then perhaps holding everything up by asking ICEL to re-do it, we have, I think, obviated delays at the latter stages by making our observations very early on.

I think the quality of the translations that have been coming to us for the last few years is infinitely better than the quality of some of the translations that we had early on, which were much looser and less faithful.

While the work of Vox Clara has achieved an enor- mous amount of time for all of us bishops and cardinals who come from a number of countries, it is actually one of the most high-powered and effective committees on which I’ve ever worked. It has also been a pleasant and wonderful experience for me. So, while the work has been hard, it is very worthwhile.

This work is most important for the Church. If you write a learned article, it might be read by a thousand people. If you write a newspaper article, it might be read once by a hundred thousand. But the lit- urgy, the texts—especially the Sunday texts—will be heard by millions and millions of people, time and time again.
good and happy or whether they’re disaffected. And it’s all the difference in the world! It makes older people like me feel so much better.

Q: Is there anything you would like to add?
A: I want to repeat just how impressed I’ve been, and perhaps add one detail: how impressed I’ve been by the beauty of the place. The buildings are beautiful! And, for example, this garden is beautiful; the gardens are full of beautiful flowers. I’m sure it creeps into the souls of the young people who study here that they are in beautiful surroundings. Truth, goodness, and beauty really are the work of the Creator.

Q: You are describing sounds like a refinement of the initial changes?
A: Yes. It is a refinement or a purification of the original translation. It’s not a back-flip or an about-turn; it’s a re-orientation. We’re now heading in the direction in which we should have been going from the beginning. And of course, we’re like everything else, a bit wiser now than we were then. We learn from our experience.

Q: The phrase that comes to mind is “lex orandi, lex credendi” (as they pray, so will they believe).
A: Yes, that is the underlying premise of our work, because these prayers will now reflect the fullness of Catho-
lic teaching, especially on matters like redemption, sin, the purity and goodness of God, and God’s transcen-
dence. Time and time again, in these prayers, we will
have presented the fullness of Catholic faith, rather than having it occasionally trimmed or cut down or even, sometimes, a bit distorted. There is no doubt in my mind that some of the old translations were “ideologized;” the poor translations were really ideological changes. A clas-
sic area is the feminizing of some texts.

Q: What are your hopes for World Youth Day and the Holy Father’s visit to Australia this summer?
A: First of all, I hope for a spiritual renewal and a spiri-
tual strengthening, certainly for our young Australian Catholics. In addition, I have spoken in quite a number of countries around the world, inviting young people to come, and even at this late stage, I do this here, with the Thomas Aquinas College family. I would invite them to come not just to strengthen their own faith, but to help
strengthen the faith of young Australian Catholics. So I think they understand that; it’s a kind of solidarity. You know, it works like that.

I took 400 pilgrims from Melbourne to the Rome World Youth Day, and we stayed in two Ro-
man suburbs, you might call them, quite a way out-
side of Rome. I heard later that the Italians there, perhaps the young Italians, were very much im-
pressed, strengthened, and helped by the faith of our young pilgrims. That will happen in Australia, too. Also, I’m saying in Australia that this is an explicitly Catholic celebration, but it is offered to all young Aus-
tralians, especially the young Australians who don’t have a set of religious convictions and are looking for some-
thing that once in the Eucharist could never be repaid, but

For example, we will be having an enactment of the Stations of the Cross on the Friday afternoon in Sydney. In order to help our non-Catholic Christians, some of whom are deeply immersed in the Scriptures, all the Stations are taken from Scripture; whereas in our tradi-
tional Stations of the Cross they, for example, include Veronica, who does not appear in the Scriptures. But we have taken one of the Scriptural versions of the Stations, and will enact it.

Going back to what we were saying before about primary sources... if we can present the figure of Jesus as Jesus is, with His story, I think this will be the supreme, teaching moment of the World Youth Day—the Way of the Cross. The Holy Father will be there for it, and he’ll start it off, and we will process around the shore of Syd-
ney harbor, which, I think, will be quite spectacular.

It is part of the traditional practice of World Youth Day to have the Stations of the Cross on the Friday, and it’s interesting that all the roles are played by young, local people. We have an outstanding range of young people, but those playing Jesus and Mary are really exceptional. I insisted, especially for the major roles in our Stations, that our actors had to be believers. I just didn’t want good actors that could enter into the part; I wanted them to believe. And I think we’ve met that criterion.

I’ve been to three World Youth Days, and they are marvelous. It is so energizing to see tens of thousands of happy, young adults. It is like coming here to Thomas Aquinas College and seeing your graduating class. As an outsider, I only really knew a bit about the place, but you can recognize whether the young people are basically
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Hillary Gay Rowney
Mariposa, California

Madison Versus Machiavelli: Are the Forms and Principles of Government Held by Niccolo Machiavelli the Same as Those of the Founding Fathers of the United States?
Nicholas Ruedig
Chicago, Illinois
Cardinal Pell himself was then awarded the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. In presenting the medalion, Mr. Wensley noted that it “had been established in 1975 as the College’s highest award, as a means by which the College might recognize and honor those who have demonstrated, by their lives and work, an extraordinary dedication to God and His Church.”

After receiving the award, Cardinal Pell delivered the Commencement Address, offering the graduates St. John Fisher as a model for their lives ahead. “St. John Fisher is remarkable for many reasons,” said Cardinal Pell, “but one might begin with a group of new graduates by reminding them that he was truly wise.” He then went on to describe the ways in which St. John Fisher also demonstrated courage, holiness, and a love of learning throughout his life. He closed his talk with the hope that the inspiration of this great saint would move them in their own lives “to some great and some good cause.” (For the full text of Cardinal Pell’s Commencement Address, see page 1.)

A record 80 seniors from around the country were then awarded Bachelor of Arts degrees in liberal arts and received from Cardinal Pell their diplomas. As is customary at the College, as a prayer of thanksgiving and humility, the graduates then intoned the hymn Non Nobis Domine, the English translation of which is “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.”

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The Order of St. Albert the Great was established to honor those benefactors who have contributed to the College in a magnificent way. Inducted into the Order this year at Commencement were (from left to right) Mr. and Mrs. R. Scott Turicchi; the late Mr. Richard Noble, whose award was accepted by his sister, Mrs. Ann Noble Brown; and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation of Oklahoma; the award for which was received by the Foundation’s executive director, Mr. Michael Cawley. Cardinal Pell presented a bronze bust of St. Albert to each of the inductees.

1) Mary Teichert waits patiently for the procession to begin. 2) Meghan Duke receives the academic hood from Dean Michael McLean, assisted by former Dean Glen Coughlin. 3) The completed dome of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. 4) Mr. Tom Susanka, Director of Planned Giving, escorts long-time tutor, Dr. Molly Gustin, to the Commencement site. Mrs. Gustin is retiring this year after more than 30 years of service to the College. 5) Graduates process to the academic quad for Commencement. 6) Baccalaureate Mass procession. 7) An interior view of the Chapel.

Calendar of Events

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<tr>
<td>High School Summer Program</td>
<td>July 27 - August 9</td>
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<td>Freshman Orientation</td>
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<td>Convocation—The Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone to preside</td>
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<td>Lecture — Peter DeLuca: On Liberal Education and Citizenship</td>
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<td>Lecture (TBA)</td>
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