Leadership and Continuity

Dr. Michael F. McLean Named Fourth President of Thomas Aquinas College

A t its fall meeting on October 24, 2009, the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors appointed as the College’s next president an experienced tutor and administrator who has served the College faithfully for more than three decades: Dean Michael F. McLean.

Dr. McLean assumed the responsibilities of his new office at the start of the second semester. He is, therefore, not only qualified but competent and capable of the highest kind of leadership for the College today.

In what is certainly the grandest tribute to Dr. Thomas E. Dillon to date, on December 1, 2009, the Dan Murphy Foundation of Los Angeles approved a $2 million grant to Thomas Aquinas College in honor of the College’s late president, who died in an automobile accident last spring. “The trustees of the Dan Murphy Foundation are pleased to make this contribution in memory of Dr. Dillon,” says Richard A. Grant, the foundation’s president, “in recognition of his great achievements on behalf of Thomas Aquinas College.”

The process for choosing a new president began last summer, when a faculty nominating committee selected two names by the faculty committee and, in turn, delivered to a nominating committee consulted with senior faculty members to determine suitable candidates. Two names were selected by the faculty committee and, in turn, delivered to a committee of the Board of Governors, which interviewed the candidates extensively.

The committee then recommended Dr. McLean to the Board’s full membership, and the governors approved the appointment unanimously. “We on the Board look forward with great faith and optimism to the continued ability of the school to produce outstanding graduates under Dr. McLean’s leadership,” said Mr. R. James Wensley, chairman of the Board of Governors.

Comprehensive Selection Process

Perhaps unique in the United States, the Thomas Aquinas College bylaws require that the College’s president be chosen from among senior members of the teaching faculty, so as to safeguard the institution’s strong Catholic identity and its commitment to liberal education. “At the time of our establishment in the late 1960s,” explains Mr. DeLuca, “when many Catholic colleges were wavering in their mission, we sought to ensure that our future presidents would be committed to implementing the College’s founding principles in the classroom.”

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“A Tribute to Dr. Dillon’s Tireless Efforts”

Dan Murphy Foundation Makes Lead Gift in New $7 Million Capital Campaign

n an enthusiastic hiker, gardener, and lover of music, Dr. McLean is a longtime champion of Catholic liberal education. He is the co-founder of the Great Books Seminars in Ojai, Calif., and a former president of the board of directors of St. Augustine Academy in Ventura. He and his wife of 42 years, Lynda, are the parents of three children and the grandparents of four.

Upon being appointed, Dr. McLean said, “I am humbled and deeply honored. I appreciate the careful way in which the faculty and Board conducted the presidential selection process. I have a deep love for the College, for the faculty, and for the students and will commit myself completely to preserving the College’s mission, purpose, and fidelity to the Catholic Church. Together with the Board and the faculty, and with God’s help, I will work to ensure that the College continues to attract eager and diligent students and remains in its present strong financial condition.”

Dr. McLean assumed the responsibilities of his new office at the start of the second semester. He will be formally inaugurated on February 13.

Mr. Grant observes, “It is hoped the foundation’s grant will be an impetus to complete the College’s capital campaign as a tribute to Dr. Dillon’s tireless efforts in building the Thomas Aquinas campus. This beautiful chapel exemplifies Tom Dillon’s devotion to the Roman Catholic Church and Thomas Aquinas College.”

The Dan Murphy Foundation’s extraordinary gift reflects its trustees’ enduring commitment to the College’s mission and their conviction that the College will continue to thrive in the years ahead. “The foundation’s trustees make the contribution in the confidence that Thomas Aquinas College, under the leadership of its new president Dr. Michael McLean, will attain new levels of academic excellence as an institution devoted to Catholic liberal education,” says Mr. Grant.

Just as Dr. Dillon envisioned Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel as being the crown jewel of the Thomas Aquinas College campus, the Dan Murphy Foundation’s generous grant to complete funding for the Chapel has become the crown jewel among the nearly $300 gifts that have been given to the College in Dr. Dillon’s memory. These smaller contributions have totaled close to $250,000.

“In the history of the College, it is unprecedented to receive so many memorial gifts for a single person, let alone so many donations of such great value,” observes Dr. McLean. “The Dan Murphy Foundation is leading the way in a beautiful, far-reaching effort among those who share Dr. Dillon’s dedication to Catholic liberal education to fund the Chapel into which he poured his heart, while aiding the College to which he devoted his life.”

Richard A. Grant, president of the Dan Murphy Foundation, is shown here with Thomas Aquinas College Chaplain Rev. Cardinals Buckley, S.J., touring Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel during its construction in 2007. The Dan Murphy Foundation has given the lead gift of $2 million in a new capital campaign to complete all funding for the Chapel project.

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Financial Relief for Families

College Freezes Tuition Rate, Continues to Offer Generous Financial Aid

For both current and future students of Thomas Aquinas College and their families, the College’s Board of Governors has offered some relief from the ongoing economic recession. This past October, the Board announced a freeze in the tuition rate for the 2010-2011 academic year. Even before declaring the freeze, Thomas Aquinas College had developed a national reputation for affordability. The Princeton Review lists the College among the “Best Value Colleges” in its 2010 guide. "No one should let finances deter them from pursuing a Thomas Aquinas College education," says Director of Financial Aid Greg Becher. "The College stands ready and willing to help those with a demonstrated need." The financial aid office will even make a preliminary estimate of the aid for which a family would qualify before a student is accepted.

Economic Concerns

Given the state of the economy, many families are nevertheless concerned about tuition costs and believe — erroneously — that the cost of a Thomas Aquinas College education is beyond their reach. "We gathered through the admissions process that this was a real concern for many prospective students’ families in these uncertain times," says Peter L. DeLuca, the College’s treasurer and vice president for finance and administration. "So we thought freezing tuition and room and board would help to allay those fears.”

These concerns extend to existing students and their families as well. Reflecting a nationwide trend, 82 percent of this year’s freshmen require financial assistance — a 20 percent increase from last year — and some 5 percent of upperclassmen either have made new requests for financial aid or sought increased aid due to a significant drop in family income. “It only made sense,” Mr. DeLuca says, “to keep the price of tuition stable this year.”

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Commitment to Affordability

Keeping the cost of a Thomas Aquinas College education affordable is a challenge. Mr. DeLuca notes, especially since most of the College’s alumni are still young, and the College has a smaller endowment than most older schools. “It is in keeping, however, with the character of the College as a spiritual work of mercy. In the midst of trying economic times, we are determined to find the means to support those who want and can do our educational program without regard to ability to pay.”

Equally important, the College is blessed with faithful and generous benefactors who appreciate the value of genuine Catholic liberal education, not only for its direct beneficiaries, but also for the Church and society. “That the governors are willing to freeze tuition during these lean times is a reflection of their commitment to the mission of the College,” says Mr. DeLuca. “We are profoundly grateful for all of our benefactors’ generosity, and we are determined to continue to be good stewards of their gifts.”
A Labor of Love for Me and My Family

An Interview with New President Dr. Michael F. McLean

Q: Thomas Aquinas College came into being when you were still a student yourself. How and when did you first learn about the College?

A: I first became aware of Thomas Aquinas College, or at least of the plans for the College, while a senior at St. Mary’s College of California. As a columnist and former editor of the school newspaper, I had become interested in the ongoing faculty debates about the catholicity of St. Mary’s College and the question of how the college’s Catholic character should be reflected in its curriculum and faculty appointments.

I wrote some articles and conducted some interviews on these questions, and at some point I became aware that Dr. Ronald McArthur and others were talking about starting a college. I admired the positions that the St. Mary’s faculty who went on to found Thomas Aquinas College — Ron, Jack Neumayr, Marc Berquist, and Frank Ellis — were taking on the issues facing St. Mary’s, and I admired their commitment to genuine Catholic liberal education, to the great books, and to the discussion method of teaching.

Q: Did this experience make you want to pursue a career in Catholic higher education?

A: Yes, but that career was delayed for a while by my service in the Coast Guard. After being admitted into the graduate program in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, it became necessary for me to serve in the military. So Notre Dame graciously postponed my admittance until I completed my military obligation. My father served as an officer in the United States Coast Guard for 30 years, and it was an honor for me to enter Officer Candidate School in 1970 and commit myself to three years of active service.

That was a valuable experience. Serving for two years as a deck watch officer in the harsh weather and dangerous waters of Alaska, and for a year as a controller in a rescue coordination center in San Francisco, helped me develop confidence in my leadership ability. It also instilled within me the discipline necessary to see difficult and important matters through to a successful completion.

My first love was always philosophy, however, and I never wavered in my desire to one day teach in a program like that at Thomas Aquinas College. I had the good fortune to be taught by Frank Ellis at St. Mary’s College. Frank’s devotion to his students and his manifest love for the philosophic life inspired me a desire to follow in his footsteps and become a teacher of philosophy myself.

Q: How did you first come to join the Thomas Aquinas College faculty?

A: I kept track of the College in the years following my graduation from St. Mary’s, mostly through my friendship with Dr. Ellis. I followed Tom Dillon to Notre Dame in 1974 and I called Ron McArthur and asked if any positions were open at the College. He very graciously said that he remembered me and he encouraged me to apply, saying that the College was planning a move to Santa Paula and on growing to its full enrollment of 350 students. I did apply and, thankfully, was offered an appointment.

I might mention that my parents questioned my sanity when I first showed them the Ferndale Ranch in the spring of 1978, boasting that I had been hired by a college that was going to occupy the ranch’s property. I told them not to worry; Dr. McArthur had assured me the College would be fully developed in five years or so. As many people know, Ron has always been enthusiastic and strong in his faith about the future.

His estimate might have been off a little, but helping the College meet his expectations has been a labor of love for me and for my family. It has been a joy for me to be part of the College — to be able to teach intelligent and motivated students, to be among others committed to Catholic liberal education, and to have contributed in some small way to the College’s success during these past 31 years.

Q: How has this time prepared you for the presidency?

A: My 31 years on the teaching faculty have given me a good understanding of the College’s academic program and the relationships among its parts. My commitment to the College’s educational mission and my discipleship to Aristotle and St. Thomas have only deepened in my years here, and I have seen the joy that students experience as they come to understand better the deep and difficult matters considered in our curriculum.

In my opinion, these are the most important qualifications for the president of Thomas Aquinas College to possess. A sign of this is that the president of the College is required to continue teaching, at least part-time, while serving as president. I have every intention of fulfilling this requirement beginning in the fall semester of 2010. It will be prudent for me, however, to withdraw from teaching during the spring semester of 2010 so that I can make a successful transition into my new responsibilities.

Q: The College’s policy of choosing its president from among its existing faculty is very unusual. What do you think are the virtues of this policy?

A: The College’s policy that its president be chosen from among the Roman Catholic, permanently appointed members of its teaching faculty is stated in the College’s governing documents. My remarks about the issues facing St. Mary’s, and other Catholic colleges and universities in the late 1960s, anticipate the reasons for this provision. One of the ways in which a college or university can lose its focus and wander from its mission is if its leadership loses focus and wanderers from the mission.

Wanting to guard against this as much as possible, the founders of Thomas Aquinas College wisely provided that the president be chosen from among the teaching faculty. This is perfectly in keeping with the unique character of the College’s program and pedagogy as well as with its commitment to the teaching authority of the Catholic Church and to the importance of St. Thomas in the Church’s intellectual tradition.

Everything done at the College is for the sake of, and proportioned to, the educational program and to helping students grow in intellectual and moral virtue. The College has been and will continue to be well served by selecting its president from among those most committed to and most knowledgeable about its fundamental mission.

Q: But is a tutor necessarily well-equipped to be president?

A: One might think that tutors could not possibly be qualified to serve as president. Our history, however, shows that tutors can be successful presidents, and it is impossible to underestimate the important role that tutors have traditionally played in a president’s success. There is also the reassuring fact that the presidential selection process was conducted prayerfully and with openness as a beckoning of God for whomever He may find to be successful presidents, and it is impossible to underestimate the important role that tutors have traditionally played in a president’s success.

Q: What is your top priority as president?

A: My top priority is to maintain the College in the strong condition in which it has been handed on to me. I am determined to continue recruiting students who are able and willing to pursue our program and who will thrive in our community; to appointing faculty devoted to our mission and capable of pursuing the entirety of our curriculum and helping students grow in wisdom and love of learning; and to maintaining the College’s present, strong financial condition.

Specifically, this means raising the funds necessary to provide financial aid to deserving students and their families, strengthening the College’s endowment, finishing the campus, and completing the funding of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel and its related infrastructure. We are deeply grateful to the Dan Murphy Foundation for its lead gift of $2 million in this effort, made in memory of Dr. Dillon, and we are confident that the foundation’s gift will encourage the remaining $5 million necessary to complete the Chapel project. It is very important to me that in all of this I maintain a close relationship with our students and alumni, and that I work collegially and in a spirit of friendship with the faculty, staff, and Board of Governors.

Q: How has the College fared since the death of Dr. Dillon?

A: The presence of God has been felt on this campus since news of Dr. Dillon’s death first reached us. Grieving and in shock, the entire community gathered in the Chapel to receive the news, pray the rosary, and offer Mass for the repose of his soul and for the well-being of Mrs. Dillon. Shortly thereafter, over 1,000 dignitaries and friends of the College gathered for Dr. Dillon’s funeral, not much more than six weeks or so after he had led the dedication of the Chapel he worked so hard to bring to completion.

Shortly after Tom’s death, the Board appointed co-founder and vice president Peter Deluca as interim president. Under Peter’s leadership, the College has faced very well, remaining steadfast in its pursuit of Catholic liberal education. Since my selection, Peter and I have been working together to ensure an orderly transition. The Catholic faith is strong in this community and in the extended Thomas Aquinas College family, and that faith has been much in evidence in the time following Dr. Dillon’s death.

Q: What is the state of the College today?

A: The College has remained strong even in this period of recession, a downturn which has placed an economic burden on the families of some of our students. The College has elected to implement a freeze on its tuition costs to help keep its education affordable. Its benefactors remain loyal and generous. And its alumni have undertaken a $300,000 campaign to help with student financial aid. These are reasons to be confident as we go forward. Mrs. McLean and I have been edified by, and are grateful for, the outpouring of support we have received since the announcement of my appointment, and I earnestly entertain the prayers of all as I undertake my new duties.
In Gratitude

Board of Governors Salutes Former Chairman Maria O. Grant

I n thanking for her service as chairman of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors from 2003 to 2009, the College hosted a celebratory dinner in honor of Mrs. Maria O. Grant on October 24, 2009, during the Board’s annual retreat. Below are excerpts from the various speakers’ praise in her behalf:

R. James Wensley, chairman of the Board of Governors: "An exceptional woman and a model to all chairman to come … Maria steered our ship through some difficult waters, not the least of which was bringing Tom Dillon’s dream for the Chapel to fruition."

Peter L. DeLuca, interim president: "I am really very, very happy to have the opportunity to express my own appreciation and the College’s appreciation to Maria for her many years of diligent work as chairman of the Board of Governors. She really set a standard, and I can’t tell you how great a contribution that has been to the College."

Carson Lind, member of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2010: "I would like to thank Mrs. Grant on behalf of the students. My classmates and I realize that she was a key factor in leading the Board, and her leadership was a key factor in making the past few years for us possible."

Sarah Jimenez, member of the Thomas Aquinas College Class of 2010: "In appreciation for your dedication to Thomas Aquinas College, we would like to present you with this spiritual bouquet, compiled from prayers from the alumni, students, faculty, and staff of the College. ... Many of these prayers will be offered in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel which, thanks to your leadership of the Board during your time as chairman, the students are able to enjoy."

Jerry Panas, philanthropy consultant: "We’ve worked with maybe 300-400 colleges and universities, and I’ve never known a chair with the dedication, the commitment, the devotion of Maria Grant. ... She knows exactly what she wants to achieve, but she always does it with compassion and a gentle hand — kind of a combination of a Jack Welch and a Mother Teresa. Maria, you can see the love that exists in this room for you."

Rev. Marcos J. Gonzalez, pastor of St. John Chrysostom Church in Inglewood, Calif.: ‘Pope Pius XI memorably said, ‘Let us thank God that he lets us live among the present problems. It is no longer permissible among anyone to be mediocre.’ Thomas Aquinas College is not a place of mediocrity. It has never been from its very beginning. A woman like Maria Grant is not a mediocre woman. These are the kind of men and women that we must be. These are the kind of graduates that this great college must produce, men and women who are far above mediocrity."

Honoring Dr. and Mrs. Dillon

Prayers for Late President and Gratitude for His Wife

A lthough it has been just over nine months since the death of Thomas Aquinas College President Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, among those who love him and share his commitment to Catholic liberal education, the prayers continue. In October, the College hosted two memorial Masses and receptions on the East Coast in Dr. Dillon’s honor, and the community celebrated his widow, Terri, for her many years of faithful service to the College.

East Coast Memorial Masses

The inspiration of a dear friend of Dr. Dillon, Robert Monahan, the two East Coast memorial Masses provided an opportunity for friends and benefactors of the College who live far from campus to gather and pray together for the happy repose of Dr. Dillon’s soul. The first Mass was offered on October 14 in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Some 75 hearty souls braved the day’s heavy rains to attend, including Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, who graciously served as the principal celebrant. Dr. Dillon’s death was “a particularly significant loss for me,” His Excellency said, “because his commitment to Catholic liberal education, the prayers continue. In October, the College hosted two memorial Masses and receptions on the East Coast in Dr. Dillon’s honor, and the community celebrated his widow, Terri, for her many years of faithful service to the College.”

The Dillons’ eldest son, Thomas M. Dillon (’91) and two of his five children presented the gifts of bread and wine at both Masses. At the receptions following each, Mr. Dillon thanked the attendees for all their prayers, encouragement, and consolation, and Interim President Peter L. DeLuca spoke of the College’s efforts to continue Dr. Dillon’s work in the years ahead.

Honorin Mrs. Dillon

D uring a formal dinner with members of the Board of Governors on October 23, the College presented a small token of thanks to Dr. Dillon’s most loyal companion, confidante, and aide — his wife of 42 years, Terri. Throughout her husband’s 18 years as president of Thomas Aquinas College, Mrs. Dillon served the College in innumerable ways. Moreover, despite an aversion to flying, she frequently traveled with him across the country and abroad on the College’s behalf, where her friendliness proved invaluable to the president and to the College alike.

“You have been the College’s greatest volunteer for 18 years,” said Mr. DeLuca at the dinner, as he presented Mrs. Dillon with a pearl rosary bracelet. At that moment, the room erupted with booming, sustained applause, as everyone in attendance jumped to their feet and cheered for this generous and tireless — but all too often unsung — heroine of Thomas Aquinas College.

At the Board of Governors dinner honoring former chairman Maria O. Grant, from the left: Michael and Elena Cahir (the Grants’ son-in-law and daughter), Rev. Marcos J. Gonzalez, Mrs. Grant, and her husband, Richard.

Interim President Peter L. DeLuca thanks Terri Dillon for her many years of faithful service to the College.
Two Seniors Recall How Thomas Aquinas College Has Changed Them, Shaped Their Future

By Charlie Goodwin ('10)

By the time I was a skin-

ny 14-year-old don-
ing my helmet for the first
day of freshman football
practice at Loyola High
School in Los Angeles, I
had already been exposed
to good books, beautiful
music, fine art, and
the theater. I had traveled all
over the country and even
out of it a couple of times.
Most importantly, I had
been baptized and raised
in the Catholic faith. I did
well in school and loved
to sing, act, and play sports. I was what many would call “a well-rounded young man.” Unfortunately, I didn’t attribute these gifts to the One who had bestowed them.

That is, I did not acknowledge them as gifts at all. In high school I lived mostly for
myself, thinking that people liked me because I was great. As high school was coming to
a close, I was faced with the decision of choosing what college to attend. I didn’t know
what I wanted to do, but the University of Southern California, football games, and
beer sounded pretty good.

And yet, I couldn’t get this little college up in Santa Paula out of my head. I had
attended the Great Books Summer Program for high school students the summer be-
fore and had the time of my life. I loved the classes. I loved the tutors. I loved the other
students. And I really loved the spiritual life. But the school was so small and different
— and it didn’t have a Division I championship football team. After much deliberation, and
a little prayer, I decided to give Thomas Aquinas College a try for a year and defer
my admission at USC, just in case I didn’t like it.

In all honesty, I knew even then that I had to go to the College. I recognized that
what was happening there was somehow right. It was so … true. I suppose the great-
est sign of this for me was the strong empha-
sis the College gave to the sacraments and the
thriving spiritual life of its students. I some-
how knew that Thomas Aquinas College had what I needed. There was something good going on in Santa Paula, but I couldn’t quite put my finger on what it was. I had to go and find out for myself.

I am most happy to say that that was the best decision I have made in my entire life.
After three months at Thomas Aquinas College, I was sold. The classes were awesome.
I was inspired by my classmates who really wanted to learn and my tutors who were so
invested in guiding us to the truth.

The tutors here have been not only teachers to me, but real role models for my own
life: They have led students on a journey for truth. The farther I traveled on this jour-
ney, reading the Great Books and learning to discern the truth and falsity in arguments,
the more I was amazed at the unity I found in all of the subjects we studied.

In this way, the College has also affected my plans for the future. As a senior in
high school, I imagined that I would one day become a constitutional lawyer. Now, par-
taking of that my faith is not ridiculous but rather in accord with reason. For me, the
education I have received here has been like an academic “boot camp,” preparing me to
fight for truth as something relative and unattainable, the whole campus pursued knowledge with a zeal I had not observed anywhere else. There was no comparison to any other school I had visited. My decision was made: I had to at-
tend the College.

In the three years I have been at Thomas Aquinas College, my perspective has broad-
ened further. I am fascinated by the idea that faith and reason are compatible and that
morality, instead of being a set of old-fashioned laws which have no relevance today,
is essential to human nature and particularly important in today’s society. I love dis-
covering that my faith is not ridiculous but rather in accord with reason. For me, the
education I have received here has been like an academic “boot camp,” preparing me to
fight for truth and goodness and beauty.

I had attended the Great Books Summer Program for high school students the
summer before and had the time of my life.”

By Kaitlyn Landgraf ('10)

Comparing myself now to the per-
on I was — and the perspective
I had toward education — four years
ago, I can honestly say that the College
has dramatically altered every aspect
of my life: my faith, my academics, and
my plans for the future.

As a senior in high school look-
ing at prospective colleges, I thought
Thomas Aquinas College would be the last
school I would ever attend. I was
accepted at Stanford University, and
I fully planned to go there. I was not
the least bit attracted by the prospect
of a 350-student college in the middle
of nowhere that taught the teachings
of dead, “irrelevant” philosophers and
enforced a dress code and curfew.

However, my perspective was completely changed when I visited both colleges as
a courtesy to my parents, who were urging me to enroll at Thomas Aquinas College.
When I observed classes at Stanford, I listened to professors present truth as an illu-
sion: One person’s reality may conflict with another person’s reality, but both were ac-
cepted as compatible since there was no such thing as an objective truth. To posit this
or absolute morality would be laughable. Such an archaic worldview was comparable
to believing that the world is flat.

When I visited Thomas Aquinas College a few weeks later, I was amazed by the ac-
demic spirit that pervaded the campus. Instead of viewing truth as something relative and unattainable, the whole campus pursued knowledge with a zeal I had not observed anywhere else. There was no comparison to any other school I had visited. My decision was made: I had to at-
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When I visited Thomas Aquinas College, I was amazed by the academic spirit that
pervaded the campus. Instead of viewing truth as something relative and unattainable,
the whole campus pursued knowledge with a zeal I had not observed anywhere else.”

Mr. Goodwin is a senior from Pasadena, Calif. The preceding remarks were adapted from
comments he made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors on October 24,
2009.

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Campus Visits
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• Experiencing the life of the College
• Attend classes, meet students
• Reimbursement for up to $200 in travel expenses

Miss Landgraf is a senior from Saratoga, Calif. The preceding remarks were adapted from
comments she made before the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors on October 24,
2009.

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Worshipping God for His Own Sake

Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Fuel “Vocations Boom” at Clear Creek Monastery

Sixty miles outside of Tulsa, near the small city of Hillbirt, Okla., stands a Benedictine monastery where monks in black habits can be found chanting the Liturgy of the Hours, day and night, in Latin.

This is, as one might imagine, an unusual sight in this deeply wooded, rural area, where cattle vastly outnumber humans, and the population is only 3 percent Catholic. Yet over the last 10 years, “the Monastery,” as the locals have come to call it, has become a familiar, even honored place in northeastern Oklahoma. Its brothers operate a farm on their 1,000-acre property in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, from which they sell cheese and lamb meat. They also offer occasional instruction in Gregorian chant to curious neighbors and visitors.

Above all else, though, they pray. They pray the Divine Office for about six hours a day in the crypt below the construction site that will one day become their permanent chapel. They spend another hour or two praying at Holy Mass, 30 minutes in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and an hour contemplating the words of Scripture (lectio divina). They pray for the needs of the Church, and primarily, they pray to glorify God.

In many ways, Our Lady of the Annunciation Monastery of Clear Creek typifies both the recent renewal of the Church’s monastic tradition and the “vocations boom” experienced in many faithful communities over the last two decades. Founded in 1999 by 13 monks from the 900-year-old Abbey Notre Dame de Fontgombault in central France, Clear Creek has seen its numbers nearly triple to 36 monks.

Fueling this surge has been another authentically Catholic institution some 1,500 miles away, one also situated in an unlikely location: Thomas Aquinas College, just 70 miles north of Los Angeles. More than a third of the men who have entered Clear Creek Monastery since its founding are alumni of the College, who account for 10 of the community’s brothers. Correspondingly, one in eight of the 81 Thomas Aquinas College alumni who are currently priests or seminarians are at Clear Creek Monastery.

“A Good Fit”

What accounts for the tremendous synergy between these two institutions? Lloyd Noble, a Tulsa businessman and a benefactor of both, says it is only natural that the College’s graduates would pursue their vocations within a comparably faithful religious community. “Both are very traditional in their values,” says Mr. Noble. “I think that’s why they’re a good fit.”

The College’s alumni monks also cite additional reasons for how their time at the College helped lead them to Clear Creek. One was the inspiration of tutor John Nieto (‘89), who holds the monastery in great esteem and befriended many of the alumni when he taught them Gregorian chant in the College’s Schola Cantorum. Then there was the witness of the rest of the College’s faculty, particularly its founders. “It was helpful for me,” recalls Rev. Mark Bachmann, O.S.B. (‘82), “to see men like Dr. McArthur and Dr. Neumayr, who were venerable scholars … talk humbly about submission to the Church, about humility, things of God. That really made an impression on me as a teenager.”

Reflecting on his decision to enter Fontgombault after his graduation from the College in 1982, Fr. Bachmann observes that just as the College served as a stronghold against much of the tumult that troubled the Church at that time, so, too, did Fontgombault. “The turmoil made a young man like me uneasy, and I was looking for that stability, that doctrinal stability, that I could entrust my life to.” As Fr. Morey puts it, the College, “Fontgombault has never disobeyed Rome. We are part of the Church; we are here to serve the Church.”

Yet beyond these similarities and the tendency for friendly institutional relationships to self-perpetuate, there are even greater explanations for why so many young men in Santa Paula have found their way to Hillbirt. These explanations become all the more evident when one examines the extraordinary life of the Clear Creek monks.

Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience

A typical day at Clear Creek Monastery begins well before sunrise when the bells ring at 4:50 a.m. After rising, the monks head to the dark, cold crypt chapel for lauds and matins. In choir and on their knees, they spend most of the next two hours chanting the office according to the cursus laid out by St. Benedict in his Rule. Lauds (1962 missal) immediately follows in the side altars that surround the crypt. After prime at 8 a.m., the brothers head to the refectory for a simple breakfast, which they eat in silence, standing at table.

Throughout the day, they return to the crypt or the chapter room six more times for High Mass and to pray the rest of the Office. In between, the choir monks (priests and seminarians) have themselves with private prayer, study, contemplation, and manual work around the monastery, while the lay brothers tend to the farm and livestock.

Lunch and dinner are also simple affairs. The monks sit on backless stools and eat silently while listening to a reading from the Rule of St. Benedict or some other work of historical or spiritual significance. Recreation is limited to a half-hour walk six days a week and a longer, three-hour hike on Thursdays. The day ends with compline at 8:25 p.m., after which the brothers retire to their cells, usually at about 10 p.m. Silence is then observed until the end of matins the next morning.

Like all religious, Clear Creek’s monks take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which their brothers Br. Patrick Carter (‘05), Br. Peter Miller (‘07), and Br. Robert Nesbit (‘07), all of whom entered as postulants in 2007, made simple professions and began their novitiate at Clear Creek, the next step in an eight-year process that will, God willing, culminate in their ordinations to the priesthood in 2015. Six days later, another alumnus, Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B. (‘00), was himself ordained in the crypt chapel by Tulsa’s bishop, the Most Rev. Edward Slattery. (See story, right.)

Reproduction of a mosaic of St. Benedict is seen on a wall.

The Benedictine monks of Clear Creek Monastery, 10 of whom are Thomas Aquinas College alumni, take their daily half-hour walk.
The intellectual life of the College thus lends itself naturally to contemplation. It makes your mind realize the value and the importance of the contemplative life in the broad sense — the importance of the life of the mind and of the spirit, of prayer and studies,” says Br. Carter. As Br. Nesbit describes it, “the intellectual life of the College puts you in the current of the whole of Western thought, of Western culture, which was formed by the monastic life.”

And because the College’s curriculum is oriented toward theology, that is, knowledge of God, it tends to cultivate a deeper love for Him that is typically expressed through a greater desire to do His will. “What we learned about God in the curriculum — St. Augustine, the way he spoke about God, and St. Thomas’ treatise in the beginning of the Summa Theologica — really set me toward this,” says Fr. Bachmann. “The College’s academic program is all ordered to theology, to God;” adds Br. Nesbit. “So when I was thinking ‘What am I going to do now?’ during my junior year, I prayed to know God’s will. And I thought, ‘Well, I have to give my life to God.’”

“What Must Their Creator Be Like?”

Still, as instrumental as the monks’ academic experience was in deepening their faith and opening their hearts to their vocations, living on the Thomas Aquinas College campus in a tight-knit community of believers was, in many instances, even more transformative. “The College provides a really healthy climate, first of all from your peers,” says Fr. Bachmann, who remembers that his own faith was stoked as a freshman when he heard two of his classmates speaking passionately about Fatima. “I realized then that I’ve got to make a decision. I’ve got to be serious about what I believe.”

Fr. Morey recalls that around the time of his junior or senior year, “I found myself wondering. If I live surrounded by these people whom I love and admire and respect so much, and I wasedited by them and their life and enjoy their company — some of the best friends I’ve ever had — What must their creator be like?”

“Truth is not the only transcendent;” Fr. Morey explains. “Like in the College’s motto (verum, bonum, pulchrum), there’s also the good and the beautiful in addition to the truth…” Yes, it’s the experience in the classroom setting and learning, but it’s also the smell of the orange blossoms on campus as it floats up the canyon in the spring, or playing beach volleyball in Ventura, or smoking cigars at Dr. Nieto’s, or eating burgers and shakes at In-N-Out, orange milkshakes at The Summit. These aren’t the noblest of all reasons, but the multifaceted reflections that you see all around you, and they are good, beautiful, and true.

“I was at the College when I began to take my faith seriously,” says Br. Nesbit. “The community life, all the people, the faculty, the staff — and the Mass — all that really helped.” Or, as Br. Miller simply puts it, “I certainly would not be here if it were not for the College.”

Spiritual Symbiosis

Of course, the converse could be asked as well: Would Thomas Aquinas College be here — that is, would it have survived, let alone thrived through its first four decades — without the sacrifices, penances, and personal mortification of so many religious, including its alumni? Even liberal education as we know it would not exist today.

“The intellectual life of the College puts you in the current of the whole of Western thought, of Western culture, which was formed by the monastic life.”

The fruits of the monks’ sacrificial lives may be invisible to us in this life, but they are real,” says College President Dr. Michael F. McLean. “We are proud of the alumni at Clear Creek who so wholeheartedly take on the monastic life, and we are truly grateful. They bring great credit to the College, and even more importantly, they bring great glory to God.”

Alumni Priests to 46

Two Recent Ordinations Bring Number of Alumni Priests to 46

Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B. (’00)

It was during the fall of his junior year at Thomas Aquinas College that Joshua Morey first learned of Clear Creek Monastery. He came across a story about the newly founded community in The Latin Mass magazine. Upon seeing the cover photo of a monk and fellow alumnus, Br. Joseph Marie (’76), digging a hole at the Oklahoma monastery’s front gate, he remembers saying, “I don’t know what that place is and I don’t know why, but I need to go see it.”

So he paid the monastery a visit, and on September 8, 2001, he entered as a postulant, prepared to leave the world behind. Three days later, terrorists staged the dreadful attacks of 9/11. “Somehow you knew that you really couldn’t return to the world anymore,” he recalls, “because the world is not what it was three days ago.”

On the morning of October 25, 2009, in the monastery’s crypt chapel, the Most Rev. Edward Slattery, bishop of Tulsa, placed his hands on Br. Morey’s head and ordained him to the priesthood. “Fr. Morey, I should like you to consider for a moment that this is the reason for which God has shared to have you with the priesthood of His Son, Jesus,” His Excellency said during his homily. “Nothing that anyone can do will do more to further the progress of the world towards the end for which God has created it than the Mass which you offer morning after morning. You cannot imagine the depth of the world’s longing for the forgiveness you will offer it.”

Now it is the life work of Rev. Joshua Morey, O.S.B., to pray for that changed world he left behind eight years ago — and to bring to it the mercy of Christ so desperately seeks.

Rev. Thomas Bolin, O.S.B. (’96)

When he was a freshman at Thomas Aquinas College, David Bolin first began to realize that he was called to the priesthood. It was a vocation he discerned, in large measure, in the classroom.

Through studying philosophy and, later, theology, he came to appreciate that “abstract argument was capable of strongly influencing my desires.” Thus he started to think of his future in more abstract terms. “Basically,” he says, he asked himself a simple question: “What is the better thing to do?” — and set his mind to do it.

That “better thing,” David concluded, was the priesthood. But by the time of his graduation in 1996, he was still unable to decide what sort of priest he should be — religious or diocesan — and where. So, while continuing his discernment process, he went to the International Theological Institute in Gaminj, Austria, where he earned a master’s degree and a licentiate in sacred theology. In the summer of 2004, he at last entered the Monastero San Benedetto in Norcia, Italy, the birthplace of St. Benedict, where the 1,000-year-old monastery was recently refounded by a group of American Benedictines after a nearly 200-year absence.

Over the last five years, he has made his first profession and his final vows; he has also taken “Thomas” as his religious name. On October 31, 2009, he was ordained to the priesthood by the Most Rev. Renato Boccardo, archbishop of Spoleto-Norcia, at the Basilica of St. Benedict in Norcia’s central piazza.

Two days later, Rev. Thomas Bolin, O.S.B., traveled to Rome, where he had the privilege of offering Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica for visiting members of his family and Thomas Aquinas College co-founder and tutor Dr. John W. Neu- mayr, who had represented the College at his ordination.

Fr. Bolin now lives in community at Norcia along with 14 other monks whose principal task — in addition to a comprehensive prayer life — is caring for the basilica. Recently appointed subprior, he organizes much of the life of the community, oversees its finances, and teaches Latin and Scripture to its novices. One can fairly say that he is fulfilling the desire he first experienced as a Thomas Aquinas College freshman some dozen years ago: “To serve God in the best way that I can.”
After more than a half-century of marriage that has produced four children, a successful family business, seven grandchildren, and a first great-grandchild due in May, Helene and Alphonse Calvanico of Staten Island, N.Y., are hardly in need of another legacy. Yet motivated by an abiding love, they are generously creating one — not for themselves, but for their late sons, Robert and Richard.

Since the beginning of this “mixed marriage” in 1953 (Helene’s family was Norwegian and Protestant, Alphonse’s was Italian and Catholic), the Calvanicos have had their share of trials and struggles. Their ethnic and religious differences aroused tremendous objections from their extended family, especially when Mrs. Calvanico entered the Church in 1961. Moreover, Mr. Calvanico, a retired engineer, has survived three separate bouts with cancer. But none of these hardships can compare with the tribulation of losing the two sons who, growing up, shared a room in the family home that Mr. Calvanico had built.

The third of the Calvanicos’ four boys, four-year-old Robert was shy, quiet, and loved his daddy fiercely. He would sit next to Mr. Calvanico at the dinner table, a position he cherished so dearly that “the boys could never bribe it away from him.” Two months before his fifth birthday, little Robert was struck with a malignant brain tumor. He died only two weeks later, on Christmas Eve of 1963.

For years, the Calvanicos struggled to overcome the grief of losing Robert. Their faith was their consolation, found especially in sharing the gift of the Mass together. “The pain gets easier,” Mrs. Calvanico says. “It has to, or you would go crazy. But it never goes away.”

More than 40 years after Robert’s death, Mr. and Mrs. Calvanico would experience excruciating pain again in 2006 when their second son, Richard, died suddenly from a blood clot at the age of 49. A devoted father and husband who personally saw to it that his wife earned a college degree, Richard placed a high value on education. He was also deeply committed to his Catholic faith. “The guys at work used to call him ‘Fr. Rich,’” his mother jokes.

When the Calvanicos were looking for ways to memorialize Richard, Thomas Aquinas College seemed a natural choice. They had only recently come to know of the College through its quarterly newsletter, but they liked what they saw. “I was very impressed with the type of curriculum, but the biggest thing that got me was that the College was teaching the classics to its students,” Mrs. Calvanico says.

When the Calvanicos were restructuring their will after Richard’s death, they made a realization: “Robert wasn’t even in our will, and we wanted to correct that,” says Mrs. Calvanico. So they decided to divide their estate evenly by four: one quarter for each of their two surviving sons, one to be shared by Richard’s family, and the fourth — Robert’s portion — as a legacy gift to Thomas Aquinas College.

“Robert never got to go to school,” the couple explains, so it seemed fitting to honor him through an educational institution. They have opted to use their gift to create an endowment in Robert and Richard’s names that will support the financial aid needs of future students. “The Calvanicos have chosen a beautiful, a truly extraordinary way to honor their sons Robert and Richard,” says Thomas Susanka, the College’s director of gift planning. “They and their children will always be part of the College family, in our prayers and in our hearts. We will not forget.”

In Memoriam

The Hon. William A. Wilson, 1914 – 2009

The Hon. William A. Wilson, the first U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See in 117 years and an emeritus member of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, died of cancer on December 5, 2009, at his home in Carmel Valley, Calif.

After earning a degree in mechanical engineering from Stanford University in 1937, Mr. Wilson married Elizabeth “Betty” Johnson in 1938. During World War II, he served as a captain in the Army Ordnance Corps. He worked for his family’s business, Web Wilson Oil Tools, eventually becoming president, until the company’s sale in 1960. From there, he had a successful career as a real estate developer, cattle rancher, and investor.

In the 1960s, the Wilsons struck up an enduring friendship with an actor named Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy. Bill became one of Mr. Reagan’s early supporters and advisors, and when the latter became governor of California, he appointed his friend to the state university’s Board of Regents. Upon taking office in 1981, President Reagan then appointed William A. Wilson as his personal envoy to the Holy See — a position that was eventually upgraded to ambassador in 1984 after Congress repealed an 1867 law forbidding the use of federal funds for a diplomatic mission to the Holy See. For five years, Ambassador Wilson represented the United States to the Holy See, dealing with the highest levels of the Church and the American government.

Introduced to the College by member of the Board of Governors Miss Rosemary Donohue, Ambassador Wilson was, he said, “attracted by the curriculum and could see it was educating students while maintaining a religious atmosphere.” He joined the Board in 1988 and chaired its finance committee. In 1998, he escorted then-College President Thomas E. Dillon and his wife, Terri, on a trip to Rome to meet Pope John Paul II, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and other Vatican officials.

“Bill Wilson was a very generous, very good friend to Thomas Aquinas College,” said Peter L. DeLuca, who was serving as the College’s interim president at the time of Ambassador Wilson’s death. “He was always committed to doing whatever he could to advance the College and its mission.”

Mr. DeLuca represented the College at Ambassador Wilson’s funeral Mass, where various family members spoke of his love for the College. “Just days before he died,” said Mr. DeLuca, “Bill received a Thomas Aquinas College Christmas ornament that we had sent him in the mail. Knowing how much he cared for the College, his family chose to include the ornament among the personal items they enclosed in his casket.” Ambassador Wilson has been laid to rest beside Betty, who passed away in 1996. The couple are survived by their 2 daughters, 6 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.
Nothing is Impossible for God
Homily of Deacon Chris Sandner at the Regional Mass for the Unborn

Note: As part of Respect Life month, on Sunday, October 18, 2009, Thomas Aquinas College hosted the Regional Mass for the Unborn in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Hundreds of guests from throughout the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles attended the Mass, including members of the pro-life group at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Students from both colleges served as lectors, acolytes, and in the choir, then gathered after the Mass for fellowship in St. Joseph Commons.

At the request of the Most Rev. Thomas J. Curry, who could not be present, Thomas Aquinas College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., was the principal celebrant at the Mass, joined at the altar by his fellow College chaplains as well as Rev. John Love of St. Mark’s University Parish in Santa Barbara and Deacon Chris Sandner, Respect Life coordinator for the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region. Deacon Sandner delivered the homily, which is reprinted below.

When our cause is the truth, and the mission is clear, then fear cannot take root within us. Now I ask you, who could have predicted, or even imagined, what seven individuals would have found in the cause of truth — their mission to make the Catholic faith the very lifeblood of a college education. No one would deny that Aristotle and Shakespeare and Euclid should have a place somewhere in a college curriculum, but really, in this day and age, should Aquinas and Augustine and Anathasius take center stage on a college campus? Well, they not only should, they have. And while this college may be small in numbers, her cause remains the pursuit of truth, and her mission in pursuit of that truth is all so clear to us. Now because of their efforts, these graduates are taking that Catholic faith which they learned on this campus into every profession and discipline around the world. Because, after all, nothing is impossible for God.

We are so fortunate to be here today in this magnificent chapel, and together we will now recommit ourselves to that same cause of truth — with a mission that is slightly different but just as clear. In 1995, when Pope John Paul II issued his landmark encyclical The Gospel of Life, he addressed it not just to bishops or to priests or to Catholics, but to all people of good will. The Gospel of Life spells out for the whole world why every human being, without exception, is inherently valuable to the world — by virtue only of conception. Pope John Paul wanted us to understand where the human being fits into the universe, what are the reasons for man's existence, and what are his obligations to the truth and to each other?

The Pope went on to very forcefully challenge each of us to confront the harsh reality of a culture — and what that culture is doing to itself — whenever it redeﬁnes the human being in terms of a social efﬁciency or personal convenience. He wanted us to know in what ways the human being is being undervalued. How is human life under attack?

Trusting God More

In our ﬁrst reading (Job 42:1-3, 12-17), we learn that complete trust in God is the heart of our own salvation. For his whole life, Job had taken quite a beating. His health impeded him, and his friends turned on him. The more he tried to understand the world that God had placed him in, the more he seemed to suffer. When he had ﬁnally had enough and there was no place else to go, Job made the decision to simply accept the role that God had placed in front of him or to refuse it. Of course she had doubts. Of course it made no sense to her. Of course she would endure the stigma of an unwed pregnancy. But in the face of everything, this model for all women embraced all that God had placed before her, her suffering as well as her joy. In the end she, too, experienced the happiness that God wanted her to have — not because she understood better, but because she trusted God more.

Today you and I are challenged in this same way. Neither Job nor Our Lady for whom this chapel is named were ever passive observers of the world in which they found themselves, and neither are we to become passive in the face of what we are witnessing. To protect the weakest before the strongest, and the most innocent first of all, we must acknowledge at least the possibility that God is asking us to play a role and to make a difference.

Yes, that will mean that we will have to confront anyone who commands us to remain silent in the marketplace of ideas. No matter how many there are or how loudly they oppose us, our commitment to the weak and to the innocent must find its voice in order to inﬂuence the culture that we are in.

We Must Do Our Best

You and I ask for nothing more than to increase human decency and to be guided by the power of real love. We must ﬁrst and always do our best to convince those who care too little for the unborn child that their self-interest is no virtue. A culture that relentlessly discourages and denigrates the old as well as the unborn denies to both their rightful place in which to live a complete and natural life. And it must be taken on.

We must vigorously explain, simply and forcefully, that every unborn child has a purpose that is just as great and just as necessary as the oldest among us, and that the value of human life can never be measured in years or wealth.

We will never stop grieving deeply for the unborn children who will never take a ﬁrst breath — not only because of the manner or the means by which their lives came to an end, but because they, more than any of us, are truly the purest of all. Even the unborn child yet to take that ﬁrst breath affects each of us. The mere sight of an expecting mother reminds us all that there is a tomorrow. With each new baby comes the promise that somehow God's intentions will one day become the intentions of all people of good will. Every child brings hope, and every child brings joy to the world. And each child is God's alone.

The good news is that we are in the right place at the right time in history, and we are in the right fight. Be encouraged and have heart. Your presence today testiﬁes not to a fear of the abyss, but to your courage and your desire to accept the world that God has placed you in, that you have something quite powerful to say to those who choose ignorance instead of truth.

“Your presence today testiﬁes not to a fear of the abyss, but to your courage and your desire to accept the world that God has placed you in, that you have something quite powerful to say to those who choose ignorance instead of truth.”

Our reading from the Acts of the Apostles (17:26-28) reminds us that we are all truly God’s children and that we are here for a purpose. We are not born with a purpose, we are conceived for a purpose. And no matter how much we develop our skills, advance our science, or develop our intellect, no matter how many years or days of life that we are given, our true purpose is to seek and to know God. And in a world that seems increasingly incoherent, we must ﬁnd the resolve to feel our way through the fog toward God. Although we may be in doubt, God isn’t.

From our gospel (Lk. 1:26-28), it’s clear that God had already chosen Mary for a speciﬁc mission. His plan for her was already set, just like it is for you and me. As best she could, Mary had to decide to either accept the role that God had placed in front of her or to refuse it. Of course she had doubts. Of course it made no sense to her. Of course she would endure the stigma of an unwed pregnancy. But in the face of everything, this model for all women embraced all that God had placed before her, her suffering as well as her joy. In the end she, too, experienced the happiness that God wanted her to have — not because she understood better, but because she trusted God more.

Deacon Chris Sandner, Respect Life coordinator for the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, delivers the homily at the October 18 Regional Mass for the Unborn in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Students from Thomas Aquinas College and the University of California, Santa Barbara, sing in a joint choir from the Chapel's choir loft.

“Your presence today testifies not to a fear of the abyss, but to your courage and your desire to accept the world that God has placed you in, that you have something quite powerful to say to those who choose ignorance instead of truth.”

Thomas Aquinas College Chaplain Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., receives the gifts of bread and wine at the Regional Mass for the Unborn.
Making a Difference — One Student at a Time

Brian T. Kelly ('88) To Succeed Dr. McLean as Dean of the College

When 20-year-old Brian Kelly attended his sophomore philosophy class at Thomas Aquinas College in 1985, he never imagined that his tutor one day would be the College’s president and that he would one day be its dean.

Twenty-five years later, however, Dr. Michael F. McLean, then a young member of the teaching faculty and now the newly appointed president, has named Dr. Kelly to succeed him as dean of the College. The selection, made after extensive consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee for the Selection of the Dean, numerous conversations with members of the faculty, and much deliberation, was approved unanimously by the executive committee acting on behalf of the College’s Board of Governors.

“Dr. Kelly has served the College ably as a tutor since 1994,” says Dr. McLean. “I am confident that he and I will work well together and that he will be successful in his new position.”

After graduating from the College in 1988, Dr. Kelly earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in medieval studies at the University of Notre Dame, where he studied under renowned Catholic philosopher Ralph McInerny, an emeritus member of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors. During that time, Dr. Kelly worked as a research assistant at Dr. McInerny’s Jacques Maritain Center and as a teaching assistant. He also was awarded a prestigious Bradley Fellowship.

Upon completing his graduate work, Dr. Kelly returned to his alma mater as a member of the teaching faculty. “Coming back to the College was a kind of a natural fulfillment of what I saw as important,” he recalls. “I always saw the position of a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College as the best job in America because you get to

pursue the truth in a way that is very fulfilling to the soul, with good people, and with people who already have a sense as to where the truth lies,” he says. “And I thought it was a way that I could make a difference in the world — one student at a time.”

Over the course of his nearly 16 years as a tutor, Dr. Kelly has served as assistant dean for student affairs, taught in the Great Books Summer Program for high school students, and served on a number of faculty committees, including the admissions and instruction committees. “Dr. Kelly has a solid understanding of the workings and the principles of the College,” says Dr. McLean. “He is fully committed to its mission and to the College’s discipleship to Aristotle and St. Thomas.”

Dr. Kelly grew up in Indiana and Illinois along with 13 older siblings, including his brother Rev. Brendan Kelly (’85), now a priest in the Diocese of Lincoln, Neb. It was while a student at the College that Dr. Kelly first met his wife, Karen (Stuart ’88) — a classmate in Dr. McLean’s sophomore philosophy section. The couple live in Santa Paula with their six children, the oldest of whom, Grace, is currently in her sophomore year at the College.

As dean, Dr. Kelly supervises the College’s program of Catholic liberal education, assigns tutors to their classes, and is responsible for the general welfare and discipline of the students. He chairs the instruction and curriculum committees and oversees a wide range of College programs, from student activities and alumni relations to the fulfillment of what I saw as important,” he recalls. “I always saw the position of a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College as the best job in America because you get to
toll and St. Thomas.”

U.S. patents. Dr. Latty is an active supporter of Catholic education at all levels — parish, high school, and college — and he served for nine years as the president of St. Edward Parish School in Dana Point, Calif. Jim and his wife of 39 years, Cathy, have four children and reside in Westlake Village.

James L. Tierney

Mr. Tierney is the chief operating officer of Inter-Print, a printing and marketing communications firm in Los Angeles. He is also a founder of Pendleton Capital, a private equity investment firm which, like Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, Calif., shares its name with Major General Joseph Henry Pendleton, the late U.S. Marine Corps general. Notably, Mr. Tierney is himself a former Marine Corps artillery officer, having served in units in the First Marine Divi-
sion and around the world. At the rank of captain he commanded a company of 500 Marines. Mr. Tierney earned an artium baccalaureus, cum laude, from Harvard University and a master’s degree in business administration from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He serves on the Board of the Foundation of Moorpark College. Jim and his wife, Kendra, have been married since 2001 and live with their five children in Northridge.

Regrouped and Reenergized

Regents Meet on Campus, Welcome Newest Members

As ambassadors for Thomas Aquinas College throughout Southern California, members of the Board of Regents typically do their good work beyond the campus gates. But on Saturday October 3, the Re-
gents came together on campus to regroup, reenergize, and welcome their newest members. “This was a chance for us to set the agenda for the work of the Regents over the next year,” said Vice President for Development Quincy Masteller, “as well as to thank them and honor their willingness to support the College.”

The gathering began with a meeting in the College’s Executive Conference Room with Mr. Masteller and Interim President Peter DeLuca, during which time the Regents’ spouses were treated to a tour of the rare books in St. Bernardine of Siena Library. Afterward, both groups met for a late-afternoon Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at which College Chaplain Rev. Paul Rafferty, O.P., was the celebrant.

During his homily, Fr. Rafferty praised the Regents, who are appointed by the Board of Governors, for their generous service to Thomas Aquinas College. Active in their local communities and professions, the Regents are well-positioned to represent the College in Ventura and Los Angeles counties. In addition to raising awareness about the College and cultivating new friends on its behalf, the Regents also generously support the school’s operations. They are members of the Catholic Charities Ventura Board and the Downtown Buenaventura Mission School. The Hacketteins are also active in organizing charity and political events that promote Catholic principles and teachings throughout the county.

James A. Latty

Mr. Latty is an accomplished businessman and has more than 30 years of experience at public and private companies, Dr. Latty holds a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology as well as to thank them and honor their willingness to support the College.”

Their new members join the Board,” said Mr. Masteller. “They are all committed to making Thomas Aquinas College — which is nationally recognized for its aca-
demic excellence — even better known here in its own backyard.” The new members include:

Gordon Hackettine

Mr. Hackettine is the chief executive officer of Rainie Industries, a manufacturer and distributor of premium cardiology equipment based in Ventura and San Diego. After earning his bachelor’s degree in business at the University of San Diego, Mr. Hackettine went on to earn a master’s in business administration from California State University, Northridge. Gordon and his wife, Deena, live in Oxnard with their two small children. They are members of the Catholic Charities Ventura Board and the Downtown Buenaventura Mission School. The Hacketteins are also active in organizing charity and political events that promote Catholic principles and teachings throughout the county.

James A. Latty

Mr. Latty is an active supporter of Catholic education at all levels — parish, high school, and college — and he served for nine years as the president of St. Edward Parish School in Dana Point, Calif. Jim and his wife of 39 years, Cathy, have four children and reside in Westlake Village.

James L. Tierney

Mr. Tierney is the chief operating officer of Inter-
Print, a printing and marketing communications

firm in Los Angeles. He is also a founder of Pendleton Capital, a private equity investment firm which, like Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, Cal-

ifornia, and Webster University. He has been granted seven

Fourth Annual

Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic

Sherwood Country Club

Thousand Oaks, California

Monday, May 24, 2010

Presented by the Board of Regents of Thomas Aquinas College

Proceeds to support student scholarships

For more information, please contact Quincy Masteller at qmasteller@thomasaquinas.edu or 805-525-4417

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Calendar of Events

St. Thomas Day Lecture: Dr. Lawrence Feingold, Ave Maria University
“The Crucified Christ and the Beatific Vision” ....................... January 28

All College Seminar ................................................................... February 5

Inauguration of Dr. Michael F. McLean as fourth president of Thomas Aquinas College........................February 13

Mardi Gras Dance ....................................................................February 13

Lecture: Rev. David Meconi, S.J., St. Louis University
“St. Augustine on Deification” ................................................February 26

Solemnity of the Dedication of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel ..................................March 7

Lecture: Dr. Giuseppe Mazzotta, Yale University
“On Dante’s Comedy” ................................................................. March 12

Presentation: Barrie Schwortz, Documenting Photographer, Shroud of Turin Research Project “Science and the Shroud of Turin” .... March 17

St. Genesius Players Student Production.................................. March 20

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

**Weekdays**

7:00 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)
11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)
5:00 p.m. (Ordinary Form)

**Saturdays**

7:30 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)
11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)

**Sundays**

7:30 a.m. (Extraordinary Form)
11:30 a.m. (Ordinary Form)
4:15 p.m. (Ordinary Form)

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

1. During Advent, Thomas Aquinas College students collected 40 crates of non-perishable items for a Rotary Club-sponsored effort that delivered food baskets to some 450 needy Santa Paula families on Christmas Eve.
2. Players from the College’s intramural flag-football league compete in a first-ever exhibition match against a visiting team from John Paul the Great University on November 15.
3. Members of the Thomas Aquinas College Choir sing during the annual Advent Concert.
4. Daniel Lundman (’06) and Alyssa (Yaklin ’10) Lang perform a Mozart duet.
5. Members of the College’s Board of Governors from left to right: L. Scott Turricchi, Chairman R. James Wensley, and former chairman Maria O. Grant.
6. From left to right: Lynda and Michael McLean, the new president of Thomas Aquinas College, with friends of the College Claire and J. R. Smeed.
7. Terri Dillon, wife of late College president Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, and the Honorable William F. Clark, co-chairman of the College’s Comprehensive Campaign.

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