

## Construction of Faculty Building Commences Twenty-five Years of Temporary Trailers Coming to an End

At the October meeting of the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, members authorized the College to begin construction of its Faculty Building, simultaneous with the construction of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. Construction of this long-awaited building is now underway.

Since its inception, the College has sought to unify its teaching faculty and administrative staff so that all employees would view their work as ordered to the paramount purpose of the school—teaching and learning. In

planning for office space, therefore, it was decided that faculty and staff would be housed under one roof to both reflect and help maintain that unity of purpose. Having been asked to design a single building to accommodate the varied functions of all the College's employees, the architectural firm of Rasmussen & Associates in Ventura, California, has met the challenge with outstanding success.

As the Faculty Building will also become the "front door" of the campus, a new road is simultaneously being constructed that will welcome visitors through the original Ferndale Ranch stone gate, guide them through a tree-lined



lane, and, finally, open up to a parking lot adjacent to the new Faculty Building.

Designed in the Spanish Mission Revival style, the U-shaped structure will sit on the northwest corner of the academic quadrangle, between St. Augustine Hall and Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. The location of the Faculty Building will thereby facilitate the myriad interactions among students, faculty, and staff of the College and will increase the staff's level of efficiency.

Visitors will approach the stately west side of the building from a new parking lot just outside the ground floor entrance to the building. An impressive

door—to be constructed from planks made from a mighty redwood, recently fallen on the campus—opens into a large lobby area of space and light. A gracious guest parlor opens to the right, which can be used for receptions as well as extra classroom space when the need arises, and the Admissions office is on the left. Curved stairways rise above the lobby leading to a 42-foot rotunda with eight round windows encircling the top to illuminate the area with natural sunlight.

The Development offices, are located in the west wing, on the first and second floors. Their location, at the top of the stairways, allows easy access for visitors arriving for events or conferences. While Development staff offices are located on the first floor, the chief Development executives are located on the second floor, close to the President of the College.

The Business and Financial Aid offices are in the south wing on the first floor, facing the inside of the academic quadrangle. Since both offices are concerned with student accounts, their proximity to one another will facilitate the necessary

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## Lights, Camera . . .

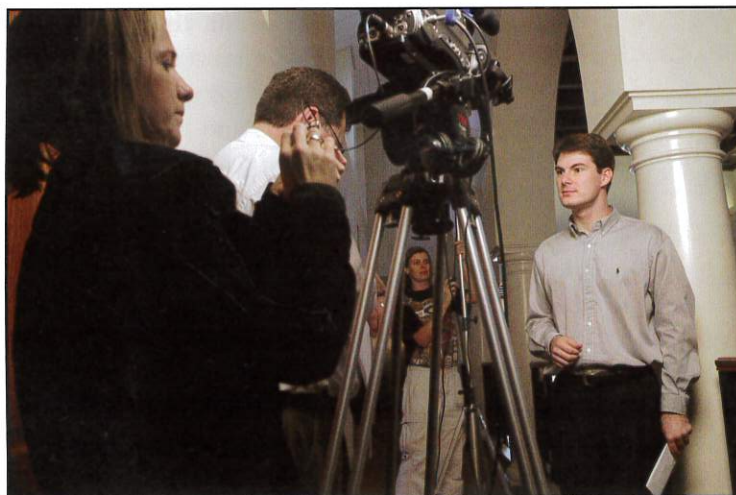
### Network Show to Spotlight Thomas Aquinas College

On November 30, a producer and film crew from the Platinum Television Group spent the day on campus. The Florida-based production company navigates a wide variety of marketplaces with several television shows, national and local print advertising, Internet marketing, and other services. Platinum came to the Thomas Aquinas College campus to shoot footage for its nationally-televised series, *Today's Family*, which offers solutions to a host of educational, health, and social issues facing America's parents as they seek to raise their children well in a time of cultural upheaval.

Attracted to the College by its curriculum made up exclusively of the Great Books, by its record of producing leaders in a wide variety of professions, and by its reputation for cultivating character and integrity in its students, Platinum Television chose to spotlight Thomas Aquinas College on its upcoming, 30-minute show entitled, "The Importance of Choosing the Right College." David Corsair, Creative Director at Platinum Television, remarked when he first contacted the College about this opportunity, "Students at Thomas Aquinas College are armed for life with tools that most students in other institutions just don't have."

Platinum representatives spent the day shooting footage of students in classrooms and residence halls, on the athletic field, and at meals. They also conducted interviews with students and President Dillon, and took full advantage of the unseasonably good weather to capture the beauty of the campus nestled at the entrance to the Los Padres National Forest.

The final product will be a 5-7 minute segment



Senior Ryan Burke prepares for an on-camera interview with representatives of Platinum Television Group

highlighting the strengths of the College and offering it as an excellent choice in higher education for parents and their college-bound children. With first-rate production values, this segment has the potential to be seen by a very large, national audience.

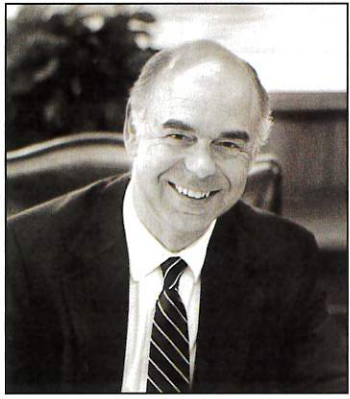
Beginning in late winter and running through spring, "The Importance of Choosing the Right College" will air 50 times in major markets across the country on networks such as the Hallmark Channel and ABC Family, as well as selected PAX TV stations.

Says Director of Admission, Jon Daly, "This is a tremendous opportunity to get the word out across the country about the unique education that is offered at Thomas Aquinas College. With this segment on the College produced by Platinum Television, we will be able to reach a far wider audience than ever before."

Programming information will be posted on the College's Website, [www.thomasaquinas.edu](http://www.thomasaquinas.edu), as it becomes available.

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## Why the Great Books?

Recently I was asked to speak to members of a Legatus chapter about the rationale behind our unique curriculum, made up, as it is, exclusively of the Great Books. This invitation provided me a welcome

opportunity to revisit in a formal way some of the founding principles of the College.

Excerpts from this talk are reprinted below and are meant to be taken in the wider context set by three of our distinguished founders in the informal talks they gave at a recent meeting of the Board of Governors. (See pages 6 and 7.)

Liberal education is undertaken for its own sake, not for the sake of making or doing something in particular. Rather, it simply aims, in the long run, at understanding the truth about reality through a reflective consideration of the most important questions about nature, man, and God that all men face in every age. Socrates instructs us that this kind of education is the most desirable, saying in his famous words, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Liberal education is the beginning of an examined life, a life ordered to wisdom.

Since liberal education is of paramount importance, one must ask how best to conduct it. At Thomas Aquinas College, we are convinced that it is best conducted through a systematic and dialectical study of the Great Books—the original texts in the various disciplines authored by the greatest minds the world has known.

One example would be the *Dialogues* of Plato, in which we see Socrates pursuing questions with his interlocutors about the nature of justice, of virtue, and of happiness. Other examples are the plays of Aeschylus and Shakespeare; the geometry of Euclid, Apollonius, and Descartes; the physics of Galileo, Newton, and Einstein; or the theology of St. Athanasius and St. Augustine.

What makes these books great? What is their power? The answer to these questions is not the same for each of the Great Books. Some are great because they exhibit an exceptional penetration into reality and articulate the truth so well. For example, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle shows that true happiness lies not in sensuality, wealth, power, or honor, but in moral and intellectual virtue. Likewise, in his *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas shows in an exemplary way the compatibility of faith and reason. (Because the College holds that the works of these two great thinkers are especially wise, we study their works in greater depth than any others.)

But there are others among the Great Books which, though they grapple mightily with the perennial questions, nevertheless contain great—and instructive—errors. Indeed, though their authors reason especially well, they too often begin with false principles and conclude in error. A good example would be Lucretius, who in the century before Christ's birth advanced a theory that all reality is reducible to atoms in motion, thereby implying that the soul cannot be immortal.

Many of the Great Books are considered great in the sense that they have had a tremendous effect—for good or for ill—on our world and on the way men think and conduct themselves. For instance, Marx, Freud, Darwin, and Rousseau have deeply

affected our contemporary world and, in a certain way, have shaped it.

Descartes, too, has had tremendous influence with his invention of analytic geometry, as has Newton with his seminal work in physics, the *Principia*. These two thinkers were so successful that their work helped bring about the technological age. But by the same token, they also contributed to an expectation of mathematical certainty in all things—a desire to quantify our knowledge of everything—even where it is not appropriate, as in ethics, political philosophy, psychology, and so forth.

Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche, too, have had a lasting effect, demonstrating vividly that ideas have consequences. Hegel's notion of the "progress of history," for instance, which he introduced in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, now dominates contemporary thought. Marx's book on capital, published in the mid-1800s, led to communism and its spread throughout the world. Nietzsche, too, has changed the very way we think about and

discuss human behavior by introducing the notion of "values" to moral discourse. "Value," of course, is an economic term that is wholly subjective—it is this kind of language that has led to relativism and the denial of any objective moral order.

Yet another example of the powerful effect of the Great Books on the world was made plain to me while on a visit to Monticello. When I observed the books on the shelves in Jefferson's study, I found authors like Virgil, Plato, Cicero, Locke, Ptolemy, and others. Thomas Jefferson's mind was shaped by the ideas of these Great Books, and he, in turn, had a great influence on the formation of our country.

It can be very fruitful to contrast thinkers like Homer and Aristotle with thinkers like Hegel and Descartes. It is clear as one reads the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* that Homer thought that men were becoming steadily worse—less and less powerful than the gods from whom they descended. Hegel, however, holds that man is becoming better and better, and that, in fact, we are in the process of becoming God ourselves.

Another striking contrast can be found between Aristotle and Descartes. Aristotle, when beginning to consider an important question, would consult the wisdom of the past, searching among sometimes conflicting opinions for what was commonly held to be so; this became the starting point for his own investigation. On the other hand, Descartes in his skepticism rejected all that came before him, wanting instead to work things out for himself completely anew.

The Great Books, then, are "great" for a number of reasons: some are exceptionally good avenues to the truth; others can be considered great for the consequential nature of the errors they contain, even as their authors have thought deeply about the questions all men have faced; and many have a certain greatness from the powerful influence they have had on men over time.

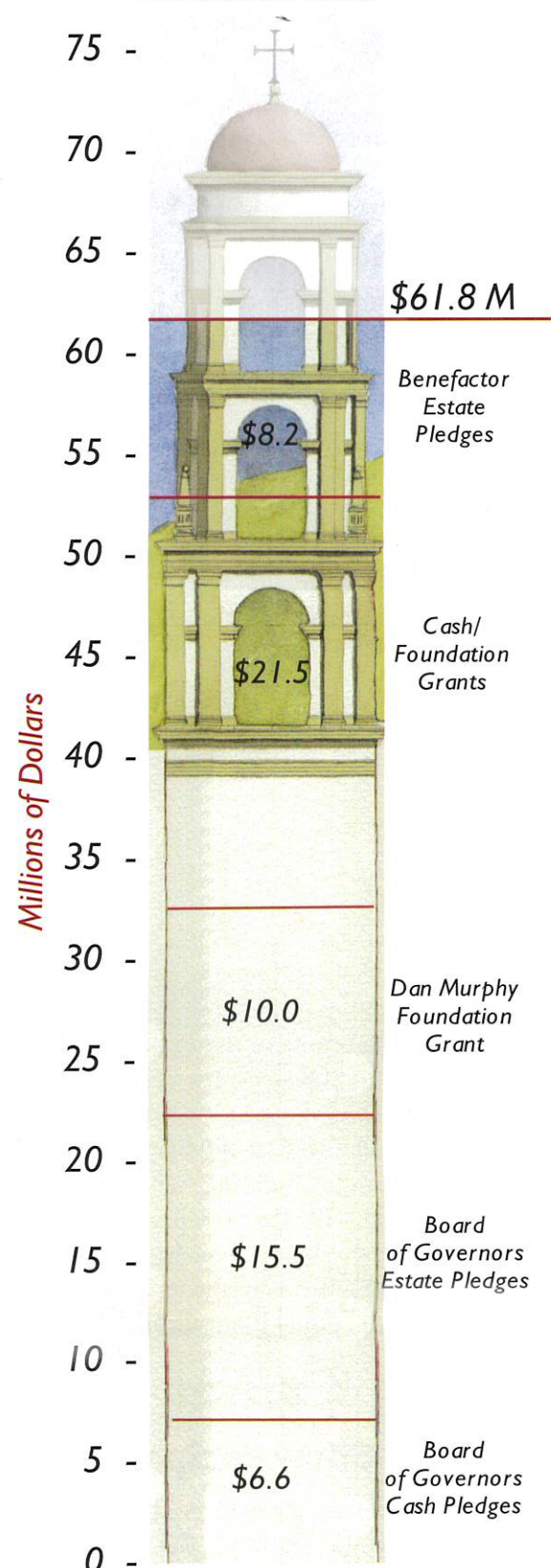
The study of the Great Books gives us the opportunity to step back, get perspective, and ask, among other things, "What is the good?" and "To what should we aspire?" As we seek the truth about reality with some of the most masterful minds the world has known, we are enabled also to critically analyze our own time and its assumptions. At Thomas Aquinas College, therefore, we are convinced that liberal education is best undertaken through the study of the Great Books, allowing us to make the best beginning in the pursuit of wisdom.



**Liberal education is the beginning of an examined life, a life ordered to wisdom.**

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December 2005



As of December 16, 2005

## Golf Classic Update



As we went to press, the College was informed by Sherwood Country Club that it had decided to postpone Thomas Aquinas College's First Annual Golf Classic originally scheduled for May 22, 2006. Sherwood Country Club will be reseeding its fairways between April and August in preparation for the PGA/Target Challenge to be hosted by Tiger Woods at Sherwood. As a result, the College's golf tournament has been rescheduled for next year on May 21, 2007.

The College regrets the inconvenience caused by this change of schedule. Please watch the Newsletter and Website ([www.thomasaquinas.edu](http://www.thomasaquinas.edu)) for updates.

**Upon These Rocks . . .**



Military historians are fond of saying that no battle plan survives the firing of the first bullet. An exaggeration to be sure, but one gets the point.

The fate of a “construction battle plan” is somewhat similar. It can be tested only when work actually commences at a given site; the best laid plans and timelines are subject, therefore, to unforeseeable realities, especially in the excavation phase of a construction project.

The first phase of construction on Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel has been no exception. Due to the vagaries of California geology, it has been necessary to remove an inordinate number of rocks (and numerous hefty boulders) from the construction site. Instead of an estimated 200 truckloads of rock, the final tally came to a staggering 850 truckloads that had to be excavated and carted away from the site for compaction. Then, a correspondingly large number of truckloads of dirt had to be brought in to the site, prolonging this phase of the project by several weeks.

The good news is excavation and grading have now been completed and the pad has been certified. Construction is now moving full-steam ahead and should proceed more or less according to plan.



850 truckloads of rocks and boulders such as these had to be removed from the Chapel site.

**The Story of the Bells**

Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel will be a building that not only teaches, but one that has stories to tell as well—stories like the one about the bells that are soon to find a home in the Chapel’s three-tiered bell tower. Thanks to the actions of an extraordinary friend of the College, these magnificent bells, with a long and rich history, will now have a future, as well.

For more than a thousand years, church bells have spoken to the faithful in tuneful reverberations. They have shouted in alarm, wept in mourning, and laughed in rejoicing; they have told time and called the faithful to worship; they have brought beauty and a sense of community to all within earshot. Sadly, the advent of electronic bells has made the sound of “real” bells mostly a thing of the past. But in the near future, when Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel is completed, the air around Thomas Aquinas College will be filled with the mystical tones that only the old-fashioned kind can produce.

The Chicago parish of St. Boniface, where these bronze bells originated, was founded during the waning days of the American Civil War. For more than a century, they presided over the joys and sorrows of generations of parishioners—their First Communion, weddings, holy days, and funerals. But in 1989, faced with dwindling attendance, the once-proud parish church suffered the ignoble fate of having to close its doors forever. As one chapter of the book closed in Chicago, however, another was destined to open almost two thousand miles to the west, at Thomas Aquinas College.

Due to the intercession of the Honorable William P. Clark—friend of the College and friend to abandoned churches—the bells of St. Boniface were saved from the scrap metal dealer. As Judge Clark explains, “I purchased these bells about fifteen years ago from the Archdiocese of Chicago. They were declared “surplus” and removed from St. Boniface Church...They were to be melted down for the price of \$4.00 a pound.”

Though valued by some only for the copper and tin that could be extracted from them, they were a treasure to Judge Clark who imagined them



in their future home—the bell tower of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Before long, these same bells will be fastened in a new home, nestled safely within the confines of the bell tower of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. From there they will ring out, beckoning those looking for a place to worship the Lord to come to the Chapel and find a home, just as these bells from Chicago have.

Judge William P. Clark is a man of high distinction, who has forged a life’s worth of remarkable public service. He has distinguished himself in the Reagan Administration as the Secretary of the Interior, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and Deputy Secretary of State, and for that service, Thomas Aquinas College commends him. The College thanks this great friend not only for the gift of these bells, but for his service as Co-Chair of its \$75 million Comprehensive Campaign and for his constant good will.



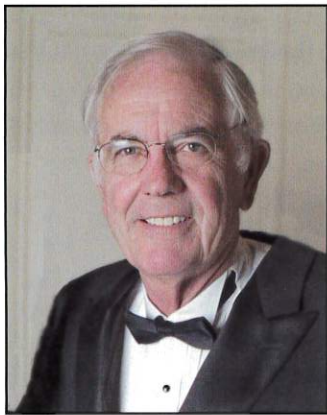
*You too can be a part of the story of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel by contributing to the Chapel Fund at Thomas Aquinas College. Please help build the crown jewel of the campus, a treasure of beauty, grandeur, permanence, and tradition.*

*For details and information on how you may help, please contact Mr. John Q. Masteller at 1-800/634-9797.*

**New Member of the Board of Governors**

**Mr. R. James (Jim) Wensley**

After graduating with a masters of science degree in mechanical engineering from Purdue University in 1958, Jim Wensley went to work for the Hughes Aircraft Company, where he participated in the birth and initial development of the United States space program. Selected as one of the first 100 engineers to begin an organization within the Hughes Aircraft Company, Jim spent the early part of his career designing various aspects of the Surveyor spacecraft, the first unmanned vehicle to land on the moon. He was also part of the team that developed the first communications satellites to be launched into synchronous orbit. In addition, he has worked on several other scientific spacecraft built by Hughes Aircraft for NASA.



In 1993, Jim became the President and CEO of Capstone Turbine Corporation. Under his direction, Capstone would go on to develop, build, and market a small turbine-powered, environmentally-friendly electric generator with an application for hybrid electrical vehicles.

Retired since 2000, Jim and his wife of 47 years, Germaine, have six adult children and nine grandchildren. The Wensleys first learned of the concept of a Great Books curriculum from their own son, Dr. Roy Wensley, a physics professor at Saint Mary’s College in Moraga, California, who also tutors in St. Mary’s Great Books seminars. Intrigued by the thought of using primary sources in his own studies, Jim further learned from his

son that Thomas Aquinas College was the only Catholic institution of higher education in the country with a curriculum comprised exclusively of the Great Books.

Not long after his initial exposure to the Great Books concept, Jim joined *Legatus*, a national organization for Catholic business leaders, and met Thomas Aquinas College president Dr. Tom Dillon at a local chapter event. Since then, Jim and Germaine have attended many events on the Thomas Aquinas College campus and have especially enjoyed the one-day seminars that Dr. Dillon conducts annually for members of his local *Legatus* chapter.

In May of 2005, Jim was elected to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors, and this past October, he attended his first Board meeting. The evening before the meeting, at a formal dinner on campus, he addressed the students and faculty of the College saying, “I am very honored to be a newly-elected member of the Board of Governors of this marvelous institution. You are very fortunate to be able to study with the light of the Catholic faith in a school like this—a beacon of the true Faith. When Dr. Dillon asked me to become a member of the Board,” he added, “I saw it as a great opportunity to become more involved with the school—and the chapel project, in particular.”

The Wensleys have indeed become more involved with the chapel project, and have contributed generously to the fund for this crown

jewel of the campus. They hope to celebrate 50 years of marriage with an anniversary Mass in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel in 2008.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Francis Joseph Wiker**  
October 3, 2005  
Infant son of former tutor,  
Benjamin Wiker and wife, Teresa

**Mrs. Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Schaeffer**  
October 7, 2005  
Benefactor and friend

**Mr. Arthur Grumbine**  
November 21, 2005  
Father of Michael (\*79)  
and Grandfather of Michael (\*96),  
Ave Maria (\*97), Anthony (\*00),  
Arthur (\*06), Rosemary (\*06),  
and Ariana (\*07)

**Mr. Gediminas Jatulis**  
November 25, 2005  
Husband of College Librarian,  
Mrs. Viltis Jatulis

**Mr. Benjamin B. Belnick**  
December 16, 2005  
Father of Mark Belnick, member of  
Board of Governors

# A Shepherd to His Flock

## An Interview with the Most Rev. Robert F. Vasa, DD, JCL

Last fall, the College was honored by a visit from the Most Rev. Robert F. Vasa, Bishop of Baker, Oregon. A native of Lincoln, Nebraska, he was ordained for that Diocese in 1976 and consecrated a bishop in 2000. Bishop Vasa presided over Convocation Day ceremonies and offered the opening Mass of the Holy Spirit. Later that day, he graciously consented to an interview here on our campus, excerpts from which are printed below.

**Q: How do you see your role as a bishop and, in particular, your role in the Diocese of Baker?**

A: Having been raised in the Diocese of Lincoln and having served for 24 years as a priest there, I have had the experience of what it is like to live in a genuinely Catholic culture within a city, even where Catholics are only 10% or 15% of the population. In Baker, the Catholic population is even smaller—perhaps only 9% or 10%. I want them to realize that it is indeed possible for Catholics, even when they are small in number, to have a visibility, an identity, and an impact that far outweighs their numbers.

In so many places, Catholicism has been eroded by our culture. I have been exposed in innumerable ways to the meaning, the depth, the beauty, and the wonder of Catholicism. I want to bring that experience to the faithful of Baker. I want them to understand that Catholicism calls us to step out of the secularity of our culture, to be counter-cultural, to be different, and to make a difference, and to somehow be an exception.

**Q: In your five years as Bishop of Baker, what kinds of initiatives have you undertaken to help the faithful to bring about a genuinely Catholic culture?**

A: So often one hears that people do not know whether something is right or wrong, and neither do they know where to look to find that information. So what I have tried to do is teach. For instance, I tried to make the most of the Year of the Eucharist declared by Pope John Paul II and the preparatory years leading up to it.

I was very much taken with the late Holy Father's pastoral letter, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, in which he recommended as one project for dioceses—and really for every parish—for the Year of the Eucharist that they undertake a thorough study of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. In fact, when the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* had come out four years earlier, I had initiated diocesan-wide projects and regional presentations about it. I had also made the liturgy the subject of my Confirmation homilies, focusing on the need to approach the Mass with reverence, attention, and devotion, and reminding priests and laity that there are liturgical norms and rules that we need to be attentive to. We had seminars on the subject and encouraged people to study the *Instruction*.

I have also encouraged pastors to study and teach the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in their parishes. In the parish in the city where I live, I met for an hour and a half every Tuesday for 18 months with a small group of adults from the area. We went through, from the beginning to the end, the whole *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph by paragraph. I wanted people to know that the *Catechism* is a viable, approachable document that they have the capacity to read. I have tried to help them recognize that these are the truths that their Church teaches.

Drawing on the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, we have put together diocesan liturgical guidelines, a sort of dictionary of various terms. We also laid out rules and regulations about how things are to be done. I have also, to the best of my ability, encouraged and insisted that the priests of the diocese be attentive to the liturgy, that they



conduct it in the manner and method that the Church calls us to do.

**Q: You have recently published two pastoral letters concerning lay ministry in the Church. What have you hoped to achieve with these?**

A: Our own diocesan guidelines from the 1980s state that only people of "high moral character" can serve in the various lay ministries—teaching religion, administering Holy Communion, proclaiming the Word of God, and so on. I saw that there was a shepherding role here, that if I were to be true to my mandate to be a shepherd to the flock and thereby protect it from error and false messages, I must define the meaning of "high moral character."

So, these two documents, *Giving Testimony to the Truth* and *Entrusted with Sacred Duties*, do just that. They clarify the teachings of the Church to which those in lay ministry must adhere, and they lay out the standards for who can be assigned to these roles. These two documents, then, serve two purposes: to protect the faithful from error and to instruct the laity, and especially lay ministers, about the core teachings of the Church.

**Q: How did you discern your vocation?**

A: I grew up in a Catholic family. We were devoted to prayer and would say the family Rosary every night, and we would always say the prayer for vocations. By God's grace I developed a love for the liturgy, a love for the Eucharist. We had the opportunity to go to daily Mass, which we did from the time I was in the first grade all the way through high school.

The old missal, the St. Joseph Missal, had the prayers of the priest, and though I didn't realize it until later, they are really a recitation of Psalm 116: *What return should I make to the Lord for what he has done for me? The cup of salvation I will take up and I will call on the name of the Lord. My vows to the Lord I will fulfill in the presence of His people.* I said that prayer daily and thought, Lord, if that is what you want me to do, give me the grace to respond. The thought never left me.

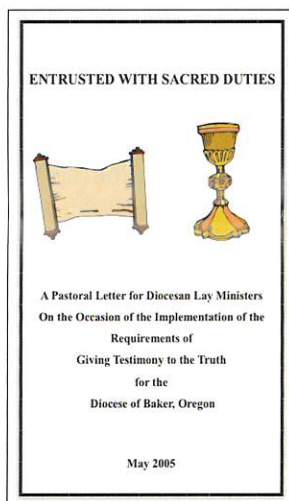
About the time I was a junior in high school, I had made the determination to enter the seminary. So, after graduation, I went directly to St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, then to Holy Trinity Seminary in Dallas for Theology. Following ordination I was sent to Rome to study Canon Law and then back to Lincoln. Then the Pope sent me to Oregon.

**Q. What advice do you have for someone discerning a vocation?**

A. You know, I read a lot about astronauts, but I have never had the hint of a question in my mind as to whether I should become an astronaut. It has never crossed my mind. Why not? Because I am not called to be an astronaut.

The reverse is true as well. If one wonders whether he has a vocation, I believe that is itself a sign, a call. If someone responds at all to a suggestion concerning a vocation, I believe that response is a sign of a vocation. If someone internalizes that wonder and asks, I wonder if the Lord could be calling me?—then the very asking is a strong sign of the Lord's invitation. Those who are not called do not even get that far.

I would reiterate the words of Pope John Paul II, "Do not be afraid!" If there is a call, a hint, a suggestion, pray it is for real and do not be afraid of casting yourself into the hands of the Lord as wholly and as enthusiastically as possible. The priesthood is a great life, one of the best! At times difficult, certainly. But the blessings and rewards far outweigh any perceived sacrifice.



## Faculty Building - Continued from page 1

communication between the offices. Their position on the first floor, on a level with the academic quadrangle, also makes them easily accessible to students.

Faculty offices fill the remainder of the first floor in the east wing, and on the second floor in the south and east wings. The Dean's office is located on the second floor in the southeast corner.

In short, tutors, students, and faculty will be able to avail themselves of the College's various services that, for the first time, will be found in one, centralized location.

The Fletcher Jones Foundation of Los Angeles is playing a critical part in making the Faculty Building a reality, with a most generous grant for its construction fund. The College is deeply grateful to the Jones Foundation for its faithful partnership over the years and for its prior contributions for computer equipment, the scholarship fund and the endowment.

Likewise, it is impossible to reflect on the beginning of the construction for the Faculty Building without acknowledging the crucial role that the Fritz B. Burns Foundation of Los Angeles has played

in this project: it is primarily due to the Burns Foundation's magnificent \$3 million grant that the College is able to begin construction. Moreover, the Burns Foundation has been a major contributor to the College for many years and has actively participated in many of the College's capital projects: St. Augustine classroom building, Albertus Magnus Science Hall, and Blessed Serra and St. Bernard's Residence Halls, the latter being named for the patron saint of Fritz Burns' father.

Watching the earth-moving equipment prepare the ground for the Faculty Building, College president Dr. Thomas Dillon commented, "Without the help of the Fletcher Jones Foundation and the Fritz B. Burns Foundation's steady and deeply generous assistance, the College simply would not exist,



let alone thrive as it does today. Now, as we undertake the construction of the Faculty Building, which will strengthen the Thomas Aquinas College community even as it provides a fitting 'front door' to our campus, we are proud and thankful that the Fletcher Jones and Burns Foundations are playing such a pivotal role in the life of the College."

# Papal Biographer Lauds College

## George Weigel, Guest of Honor at Annual Board Retreat

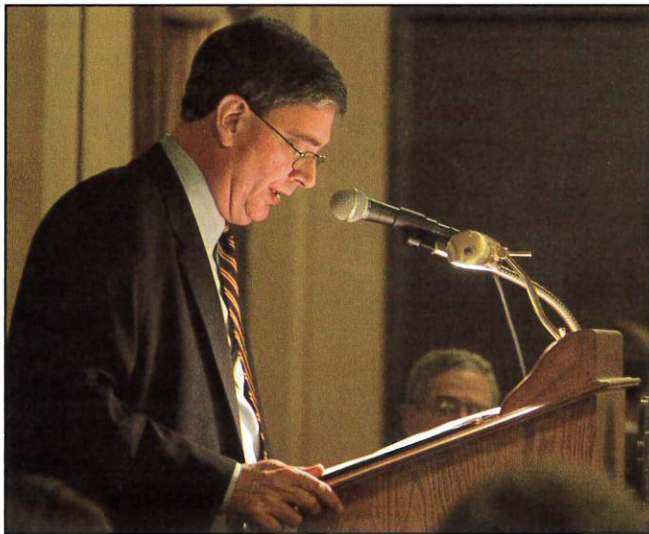
Each year, on the last weekend of October, members of the Board of Governors of Thomas Aquinas College gather together for a working retreat. This year, traveling from all points of the compass, they assembled at the world-renowned Ojai Valley Inn (the Inn) in the Ojai Valley, known to movie buffs as “Shangri-La,” the setting of the 1937 classic film, *Lost Horizon*. Against the dramatic backdrop of the Topa Topa Mountains, they attended meetings, engaged in lively discussions, and renewed friendships over elegantly prepared receptions and meals.

On the Friday evening, following afternoon committee meetings at the Inn, members of the Board and their spouses convened at the College for a reception with College faculty at St. Monica’s Hall. They then attended a formal dinner for the entire student body in St. Joseph Commons, at which governors were seated with members of the senior class and faculty.

After dinner, Mr. George Weigel, a syndicated columnist and author of the definitive biography of Pope John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*, spoke to the assembled guests about the Catholic intellectual life. He lauded the College for its conviction in the face of prevailing skepticism that the truth about reality can be attained by the human mind.

In explaining that John Paul II thought the intellectual life ought to “make us more the human beings that God created us to be,” Weigel said, “Thomas Aquinas College knows this—that the life of the mind involves the spiritual life as well, and that is why I have always thought of this institution as a college in the image and likeness of John Paul II.”

The evening concluded with a short recital by students in St. Bernardine of Siena Library. Senior



and baritone Daniel Lendman entertained the audience with selections by Handel, accompanied by Joe Hsieh ('06). Then Joe and Tom Duffy ('08) dazzled listeners with a four-hand sonata by Mozart that showcased a baby grand piano by Yamaha, recently donated to the College by Mrs. Margaret Brooks-Llamas, a member of the Board.

The following morning, three of the College’s founders and the President and Dean, gave an inspiring presentation to Board members and their spouses, describing the nature of the curriculum and the mission of the College (see pages 6 and 7 for excerpts).

A formal meeting of the Board of Governors followed at which members determined that construction of the Faculty Building (see page 1) would proceed simultaneously with that of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.

Dinner that evening was served in the Maravilla Dining Room at the Inn where governors, their spouses, and senior staff enjoyed exquisite cuisine and good company. Following dinner, Mr. Weigel

addressed this more intimate gathering, speaking chiefly of his newly-published book, *God’s Choice: Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of the Catholic Church*. Guests were then given personalized copies of the book.

On both Saturday and Sunday, Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., chaplain at the College, offered Mass at the Inn. Following Mass on Sunday, a brunch served *al fresco* brought the retreat weekend to a close.

Chairman of the Board, Mrs. Maria Grant, called the weekend a great success. “It is always a great blessing for our governors to spend time with each other. I am delighted with the Board’s decision that we move ahead on the Faculty Building and the Chapel at the same time since both of these buildings are so urgently needed. Before long, all our students will be able to worship together, and our faculty will have moved from the temporary facilities they have occupied for so long to one building that will better serve the ends of the College.”



Members of the Board of Governors look forward to dinner with the seniors each year at their weekend retreat.

## Covering the Pope

### An Interview with George Weigel

George Weigel is a senior fellow at the Center for Ethics and Public Policy and the author or editor of eighteen books, including: *The Courage to be Catholic: Letters to a Young Catholic*; and the definitive papal biography, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II*. His latest work, entitled *God’s Choice: Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of the Catholic Church*, has just been published by Harper Collins. Mr. Weigel visited the College in October.

**Q. How does one go about becoming the official biographer of a pope?**

A. I had been in conversation with John Paul II for three or four years. I had been writing about him from virtually the beginning of his pontificate. In 1995, it occurred to me that it was ridiculous that there wasn’t a decent book that was reliable in telling his remarkable story.

**Q. Could you describe the timeline of the book?**

A. I first proposed the idea to the Pope’s press secretary around May of 1995. About six or seven months later, I was at dinner with the Holy Father, and the topic of a biography came up. He had apparently been aware of the conversation from the previous months, and he indicated that he thought it would be a good idea if I were to take it on. Three years after that, I had a book.

**Q. Could you characterize the cooperation you received from the Pope and the Vatican as you did the research for the book?**

A. The Pope was tremendous in his cooperation. Some in the Vatican and back in Poland were less forthcoming with me, but for the most part I received invaluable amounts of help. One of the most cooperative individuals was then-Cardinal Ratzinger, whom I had known long before I had known John Paul II.

**Q. Did you learn anything about John Paul II that you weren’t expecting?**

A. Oh yes. I knew the War had been a crucial experience of his life, but I didn’t know any of the details or the depth of it. Also, I had not reckoned with how important his father was. I think his father was one of the most important influences in his life.



**Q. Besides the obvious fact he was the first non-Italian pontiff in over four hundred years, what other factors went in to making John Paul II so extraordinary?**

A. He was not in any way a vain man, but I think he knew what he knew. And he knew in October 1978 [when he was elected] that he knew how to be a bishop and that he was not going to be repackaged or remade by the traditional managers of the Pope. He was going to do this his way. And that included this kind of enormous public witnessing of the Faith that manifested itself in the Pope’s precedent-shattering global pilgrimages.

**Q. In your latest book, *God’s Choice: Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of the Catholic Church*, you spend the first one hundred pages on the final days of John Paul II. Why?**

A. How would you describe the conclave to elect the new Pope without describing the momentous history that led up to it? It really was a seamless transition.

**Q. Do you think John Paul II’s pontificate had an impact on Catholic higher education?**

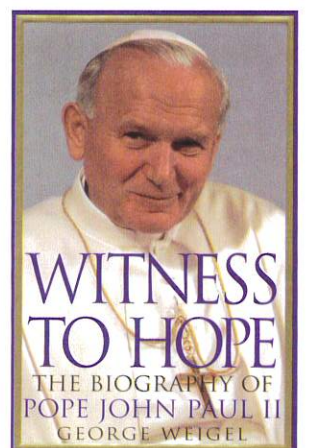
A. Very much so. Actually, I am more optimistic about the future of Catholic higher education in America than I was ten or fifteen years ago.

**Q. What makes you so optimistic?**

A. I believe there are two important factors that color my optimism. First, the Catholic deconstruction that took place in this country in the 1960s and 1970s has turned out to be rather sterile. Those who rejected *Humanae Vitae* didn’t really replace themselves into the next generation. The second major factor is that no one could have predicted the enormous renaissance of young Catholic vitality under the impact of John Paul II. If you put the two together, you begin to get the kind of reform—genuine reform—that is pushing the numbers back in the right direction.

**Q. So there’s a future for Catholic higher education?**

A. Absolutely. But we shouldn’t be satisfied with the gains we’ve made so far. The goal of Catholic liberal education is to educate young men and women who are going to take responsibility for their own lives, their families, the Church, and the country. The problems are still formidable, but I think there has definitely been a turn.





**Dr. Ronald P. McArthur**  
**Founding President and Tutor**  
*The Nature of Catholic Higher Education*

In establishing Thomas Aquinas College, we wanted it to be Catholic, seriously intellectual, and providing as a result a curriculum which would be manageable for young and interested American Catholics.

What, then, is Catholic higher education? Catholic education is characterized as *faith seeking understanding*. It means that both the teacher and the learner believe the fullness of the Christian message, and that it lives in them to the extent that it becomes supremely important to understand it more completely—to see, as much as is possible, what is first believed.

This conception is an echo of St. Augustine, St. Anselm, the whole monastic tradition, St. John Damascene, St. Albert The Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, and innumerable popes in their magisterial teaching. It is the traditional understanding of Catholic education, the education which played such a crucial role in the flowering of Catholic Europe.

St. Augustine, who perhaps more than anyone else determined the character of Western Civilization, gives fervent witness to faith as the basis of understanding. He says, in one of his sermons, that “If you cannot understand, believe so you can understand.”

St. Anselm follows the same path. He says in the *Proslogium*, “I do not understand so that I may believe; rather, I believe so that I may understand.”

St. John Damascene, in his treatise *On The Orthodox Faith*, says that “The Godhead is ineffable and incomprehensible....Nevertheless, God has not gone so far as to leave us in complete ignorance, for through the world the knowledge and existence of God has been revealed by Him to all men.”

These great thinkers we have made our guides, and from them we learn not only the importance of faith, but of understanding as well. That understanding is only possible because we have intellect, our very slight spark of divinity, which is nevertheless a precious gift.

Here is Pascal’s remarkable affirmation of intelligence: “The grandeur of man lies in thinking. Man is nothing but a reed, the most feeble in nature; but he is a thinking reed. It is not necessary that the whole universe arouse to crush him; a vapor, a drop of water suffice to kill him. But when the universe shall crush him, man will still be more noble than that which kills him, because he knows that he dies, and knows as well the advantage the universe has over him; the universe knows nothing. All our dignity lies in our ability to think. It is there that we must take our bearings, and not from space and time, which we would not be able to fill up. Work then to think well; there is the principle of morals.”

**There is no incompatibility  
between faith and reason.  
They make one whole,  
though of unequal parts.**

All genuinely liberal education springs from this conviction, that the cultivation and development of the intellect is a noble endeavor, and that it is essential for the well-being of the Church and society. It is sound Catholic doctrine that God has revealed Himself not only in the inspired Scriptures, but in the world He has created. To study this world is itself to study the word of God, and no complete education can neglect it.

All the education known to the pagans is, therefore, a significant part of our own concerns. There is no incompatibility between faith and reason. They make one whole, though of unequal parts.

The curriculum at the College is fashioned in order to help our students acquire the liberal arts, those arts which perfect the mind in its activity of thinking, and further help them acquire

**P**rior to the Board of Governor’s annual retreat v  
Dean Michael McLean to organize a presenta  
Board members would benefit most from hearing dir  
invited three of the College’s founders to speak to the  
then explained the details of the curriculum.  
The founders’ presentations were a rare opport  
unflagging courage brought Thomas Aquinas College

some knowledge in mathematics, the modern mathematical sciences, and more especially in philosophy and in theology...and all for the sake of understanding better the contents of the Faith with which we begin. This is the sole aim of the College, and all the parts of the curriculum are meant to play some role in achieving this end. We count ourselves successful in the measure that our graduates have begun a serious study of reality, and are equipped to pursue further the learning into which they have been initiated.

We do this by using the texts themselves of the great thinkers. But the school is not a “Great Books school,” in the way that is often understood. We do read original texts, and we take those original texts seriously. But the school was not founded to read important texts by important thinkers in order to see what people say. It was founded in order to help our students understand reality as best they can. To do this we use and are guided by the doctrine and method of St. Thomas Aquinas.

There are two theologians who stand above all others as masters: St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Leo XIII, in *Aeterni Patris*, after lauding many great Christian thinkers has this to say about St. Augustine: “Augustine would seem to have wrested the palm from all....What height of philosophy did he not reach? What region of it did he not diligently explore...in expounding the loftiest mysteries of faith...”

Then Pope Leo, after having lauded the scholastics doctors for their further contributions in philosophy and theology, has this to say about St. Thomas Aquinas: “Among the scholastic doctors, the chief and master of all stands St. Thomas Aquinas, who, as Cajetan observes, because ‘he most venerated the ancient doctors of the Church, seems to have inherited the intellect of all.’ The doctrines of those illustrious men, like the scattered members of a body, Thomas collected together and cemented, distributed in wonderful order, and so increased with important additions that he is rightly esteemed the bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith.”

Pope Leo’s encomium of St. Thomas is but one of very many. The consensus of papal teaching



**Marcus Berquist**

**Founder and Tutor**

*Discipleship in the Intellectual Life*

My topic is discipleship and the way in which discipleship defines our whole intellectual effort at the College. Let me start with this observation: a Christian is a man who follows Christ. He is a disciple or learner from Christ.

That is not, however, the limit of his discipleship because Christ himself appointed His Apostles as our teachers as well. He said to the Apostles, “He who hears you hears me.” So our discipleship to

Christ extends to discipleship to the Apostles and their successors. But it does not stop there either because the Church itself has a living, authoritative *Magisterium*. We follow that as we follow the Apostles. And there is likewise a further discipleship involved, because there are the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and the successors of the Apostles have recommended them to us as our teachers and our guides, men such as St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. John Damascene, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and all the great Fathers and Doctors of the Church. We take them as our masters as well.

So we have what one might call a triple discipleship, first to Christ Himself who is God made Man, then to the Apostles and their successors, and thirdly to those teachers whom the Apostles have designated as reliable guides for us. At the College, this is where we start.

This is not peculiar to Catholic education. All learning requires some kind of trust and faith; one has to believe that at least he is getting good direction from his teachers. One does not necessarily believe everything his teachers say, but he at least believes that they will direct his mind rightly in the study of what he wants to know.

When St. Thomas says, then, that it is necessary for the learner to believe, that is not just true of the

Christian, it is true of any learner who is dealing with anything that is difficult to understand. What is not always known is that in point of fact one does trust, without even being aware of the fact that he does.

This direction by another is in some ways the most crucial part of discipleship. The learner does not know the order in which he should proceed. It is like when I try to cook something, I look at the recipe, and it tells me the order in which the various steps should be done. I must add the water to the cornstarch, not the cornstarch to the water; if I do not do it in the right order, the whole thing comes to naught. So one has to do things in a certain order or he will not reach the goal he is aiming for.

That is even more true in the intellectual life: there is an order one must follow in order to learn these difficult things; without that order, one will not get there. Of course, one cannot know that order to start out with; one has to trust.

So turning to a consideration of the College, our object is that the students make a good beginning, first things first. Otherwise, it is like having a house on a foundation that is unsound; the whole edifice collapses. That is why we proceed the way we do in the curriculum. For instance, we spend the entire first year in mathematics reading Euclid’s *Elements*. This is not because we have an obsession with Greek

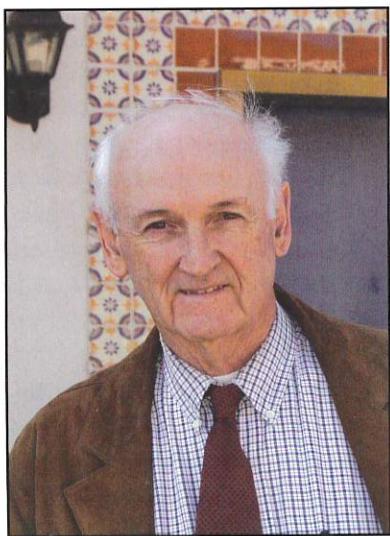
asked, Chairman of the Board, Mrs. Maria Grant, asked  
n about the College's unique curriculum. Realizing that  
ly from those who established the College, Dean McLean  
vernors and their spouses. The Dean and President Dillon  
ty to learn from those who with profound insight and  
ife. Excerpts from their informal talks are printed below.

is clear: St. Thomas is the greatest theologian, and his doctrine the greatest achievement of the Catholic mind. Our understanding of him, then, is the single most important reason for the founding of Thomas Aquinas College; take away the habituation to St. Thomas and you would have nothing but a name.

**Dr. John W. Neumayr**

**Founder and Tutor**

*The Background of the College*



The model of the College is an ordination of all learning to theological wisdom. This has been called *liberal* education—a kind of education that is sought not for some special purpose, not for practical ends, finally, but that man might know how things are, that he might be fully a man.

A program of liberal education traditionally consisted in the liberal arts, then the sciences, and finally philosophy. The liberal arts came to be known as the *trivium*—grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The *quadrivium* is made up of the mathematical sciences, and then introduces the student to an ordered universe, as in cosmology, or even a moral order, as in music. These studies were considered preliminary, the little ways into philosophy and ultimately into theology.

St. Augustine had in mind these preliminary studies when he called upon Greek learning to elevate the mind so as to participate more fully in theological wisdom. St. Anselm, too, had them in mind when he spoke about *fides quaerem intellectum*. “Faith seeking understanding” involved

turning to the handmaidens—the liberal arts and sciences—and bringing them together to help in the work of theology.

Historically, the beginning of university life came from the Catholic faith and from theology. Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Salamanca, Bologna—all the universities that sprung up in the Middle Ages came about from the desire that the Christian had for his faith to seek understanding. All of the disciplines were brought together into these centers of learning, and out of those centers came all of the universities that followed. There was a great intellectual culture that was present in Christendom and shaped that world.

With the dawn of the Enlightenment in Europe, a great shift took place in philosophy and science, beginning in the 17th century with Descartes who started education off in a new direction. The older sense of education was that one could not arrive at wisdom about things if one did not master the liberal arts and sciences. Descartes, however, started philosophy from scratch saying, as it were, I am going to reject everything that I ever learned before, or that we have ever learned before as a civilization and a culture, and start anew. Then he began, of course, looking for one method that would apply to everything, and started with the famous *cogito ergo sum*—I think, therefore I am—as the very first principle of all knowledge.

When Descartes did that, he trapped himself in the mind. Before, philosophy had been understood as talking about *things*, about *reality*. From Descartes on, though, all philosophy started not with things, but with ideas. Our late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, called this the beginning of the “philosophy of consciousness,” contrasting it with the “philosophy of existence,” of which St. Thomas and Aristotle are the masters.

The “philosophy of existence” starts with things, not with ideas, and leads ultimately to *ipsum esse subsistens*—subsisting being itself, which is God. The “philosophy of consciousness,” on the other hand, begins in the mind, never leaves the mind, and ends up in an absolute subjectivism. Man becomes everything and the measure of all things. With this, the traditional “philosophy of being” vanished; within 150 years of Descartes, at about 1800, there was nothing left of Christian intellectual culture in Europe.

That is why Pope Leo the XIII, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, urged that Catholic education return to St. Thomas and that tradition that roots

itself not in ideas but in things. Moreover, he urged Catholics to go back to all those disciplines that are necessary to acquire some measure of wisdom.

There was, therefore, a kind of Thomistic revival that took place largely in the first half of the 20th century. Sadly enough, it was so tainted with modern thought that St. Thomas was never used as St. Thomas. Instead, a kind of neo-Thomism came along in which, one did not really go to Thomas; one used Thomistic language, but only captured modern thoughts. It was not long, therefore, before Thomism in this sense began to fall apart.

We who were teachers in Catholic colleges and universities were aware of what was happening; we could see things were eroding badly. In the late 1960s, it got to a point of collapse. It was then that we launched the idea of Thomas Aquinas College.

We thought that if we were going to do it, we ought to do it right. Therefore, we would not just try to give students an exposure to St. Thomas, or an exposure to Aristotle, but we would actually try to create within them those intellectual virtues, those

habits that are fundamental to all right thinking.

Of course, the only way one can attain these virtues is to actually practice them, not just read about them, but to actually acquire them and

make them part of oneself.

It would be necessary, therefore, to go back to the fundamental things without skipping over, without short-cutting. If, for example, one’s father is a rocket scientist, it is possible that one can learn the latest technique from him without having to go back and invent the wheel, as it were. But if one’s father is just and temperate and prudent and so on, one cannot just pick up from where he left off. One has to go through the whole experience of learning those virtues oneself, learning to be temperate, learning to be courageous, learning to be just, learning to be prudent.

Liberal education is like that. One must go back to the very beginnings and do the very same things that Aristotle did, that St. Thomas did, that St. Augustine did. If one does not do those things, one simply has not put education on a firm foundation.

Our ambitions were to revive something of the Christian intellectual culture that once flourished in Europe, and as we look at our students, I think we can say the dream has happened. I think the results have even exceeded our expectations.



culture, but because we are convinced that this is where the science of mathematics begins. If one does this well, he is prepared to go on and do other things with proper understanding. If he does not do these basic things well, nothing else will be done well.

Similarly we spend almost a whole year studying Aristotle’s *Physics*, his general treatment of the

**“At the College, we do not think that all thinkers are created equal. We think that some are masters, and some are not.”**

nature of things. Why do we do that? Because we think that there he addresses the most fundamental general questions about nature—those questions that have to be resolved properly or none of our further thinking about nature will be well done.

The consequence of not having resolved these general questions well is illustrated in some of the authors we read in other parts of the curriculum. In the junior year, we read Galileo’s *Two New Sciences*, which is on terrestrial mechanics. The treatment

of natural acceleration in that book is seriously compromised by Galileo’s general misunderstandings of motion, time, continuity, and infinity. He does not have a good general understanding of nature. Thus, although he is brilliant in discovery, he is very poor in judgment.

We have this same concern for order in the study of theology. We study St. Thomas’ *Summa Theologiae*, which is for St. Thomas the beginning of the scientific study of the faith. We spend a long time on the first part of this work because it is the best possible treatment of that subject, the finest beginning in the science of theology that has ever been written.

At the College, we do not think that all thinkers are created equal. We think that some are masters, and some are not. Therefore, to read Aristotle is one thing, to read Descartes is something else; both of them should be read, but not for the same reasons. Similarly, not all mathematicians are created equal; some are better than others. Particularly when it comes to doing the fundamental things well, some are better than others. That is the understanding on which the school proceeds.

For us, the most important thing is to make the right beginning. We have to do certain basic things very well, as well as can be done with young persons

who do not have any previous experience in the intellectual life. This means we have to make them as we are, disciples of the greatest masters. We have to say to them, ‘I know it is a hard book, it is a lot of work, and it is old, and the translation might leave something to be desired, but this is where you make a good beginning. If you learn these things well, then you will be able to think well about the later questions that come up as well. If you do not make this beginning properly, then what you do later will always be flawed. In some cases fatally flawed.’

Of course much the same thing is even truer in theology, where unless one makes the beginning of sacred doctrine rightly, then, later on very bad things happen. Philosophy is the handmaiden of theology. One cannot develop the truths that come out of our faith, without a good understanding of the natural world, a good foundation in philosophy. If that foundation is bad, then the theological doctrines will never be rightly learned.

That is the reason why we couple Aristotle with St. Thomas the way that we do, because as St. Thomas himself says, Aristotle is ‘The Philosopher.’ To do theology well, therefore, means in practical terms being a disciple of Aristotle. So the college, then, is really defined by discipleship to those two masters.

# Thomas Aquinas College Welcomes New Regents

## Three Appointed to College Board

*Like many institutions, a private college relies on the good will, generosity, and assistance of leaders in its community in order to thrive.*

*Fortunately, the list of individuals who have dedicated their efforts to assisting Thomas Aquinas College is formidable—and it is expanding.*

*It is, therefore, with gratitude and enthusiasm that the College welcomes three new members to its recently-formed Board of Regents.*

### Nicholas E. Martin

Mr. Nicholas Martin is a seventh generation Californian, with a German ancestor who arrived in the Golden State during the 1849 Gold Rush. A graduate of the University of Southern California, Mr. Martin is a Certified Public Accountant and the President and Owner of Martin Container Inc., the oldest and largest provider of industrial storage containers on the West Coast.

Seeing an opportunity to expand the markets for storage containers from the steamship lines of America and Asia to the consumer and homeowner, he founded Martin Container in 1976. Its corporate offices are located in Wilmington, California, and its main operational building is in nearby Compton. Martin Container Inc. also maintains branch offices throughout North America.

Nick and his wife, Judy, have been married for 35 years and are the proud parents of four sons: John, Kenneth, Andy, and Charley. The youngest Martin son is now a student at St. Monica's Academy in Pasadena, California, where Mr. Martin is a member of the governing board. Through his involvement with St. Monica's, he gained firsthand experience of some of the good fruits of the education offered at the College. "Many of the teachers we have at St. Monica's come from Thomas Aquinas College. Their excellent intellectual caliber and their faithfulness to the Church made me want to support the institution that was producing them."

Mr. Martin had long been familiar with the College, as his late father, Mr. J. Edward Martin, was one of its earliest and most generous supporters as well as a member of its Board of Governors.

President of the College, Dr. Thomas Dillon, was delighted with Mr. Martin's appointment, saying, "I am especially pleased that Ed's son has accepted a position on our Board of Regents. In this capacity, Nick will be carrying on the Martin legacy at Thomas Aquinas College."



Dr. Costigan (r.) with friend and benefactor Richard Grant.

### William Costigan, M.D.

A native Californian who grew up in Thousand Oaks, Dr. Costigan received a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering from the University of California at San Diego in 1988, where he was the class valedictorian.

Upon graduation, he took some time off from studies in order to assist his best friend who was suffering from renal cancer; among other things, he took this friend to Lourdes to bathe in the healing waters there.

Upon their return, the cancer was found to be in remission.

The experience has given Dr. Costigan a great dedication to this holy site and inspired him to sponsor several other individuals on journeys to Lourdes. In addition, he is now a Provisional Knight in the Order of Malta, known around the world for its annual pilgrimages to this shrine of Our Lady.

When Dr. Costigan returned to his studies, he attended Tulane University in New Orleans, where he earned a master's degree in health administration. Having had a desire to become a doctor from young age, he then enrolled in the University of Southern California Medical School and earned an MD.

Specializing in spinal surgery, Dr. Costigan has studied in some of the most prestigious medical institutions in the world, including Oxford University and

the University of Nottingham. Currently, he is a partner with Congress Medical Associates, Inc., a multi-specialty orthopaedic medical practice in Pasadena, California.

Dr. Costigan learned about Thomas Aquinas College through his friend, Thomas P. Sullivan, a long-time member of the College's Board of Governors and its first Chairman. After attending commencement exercises in 2003 at which Cardinal Christoph Schönborn officiated, and after participating in a Summer Seminar weekend at the College, Dr. Costigan was convinced that the College was an institution he wanted to support.

As a Regent, Dr. Costigan believes that his "outsider's" view of the value of a Thomas Aquinas College education will be helpful to the College and its graduates. "The liberal education these students receive is of immense worth. I hope to help find ways to apply that education to the practical world of business and science and, in that way, make a positive impact."



### Edward O'Connor

Edward O'Connor is the Chief Executive Officer of Benefice LLC, which provides information, products, and services to the global Catholic market. He has an extensive background in venture capital and business advisory services, having served formerly as chief information officer and investment advisor at Chase Capital Partners and JP Morgan Partners and, more recently, as managing partner for HipKnotix LLC.

Mr. O'Connor has also held executive and managerial positions at ESPN, AGIC, and the Young Presidents' Organization. He is an honors graduate of the University of Texas, where he earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree, and he has completed all coursework toward a PhD in political philosophy/humanities at the University of Dallas. Mr. O'Connor lives in New Haven, Connecticut with his wife, Molly, and their five children Claire, Aidan, Nora, Maeve, and Brigid.

Having learned of Thomas Aquinas College from his wife's brother, the admissions director of a Catholic college on the east coast, Mr. O'Connor wanted to learn more. He began to investigate the College and eventually visited the campus. What he discovered deeply impressed him. "I couldn't get over the beauty of the place, the rigors of the academics, and the good balance of faith and reason."

About this time, his good friend, Mr. David Young, was appointed to the College's Board of Governors and quickly proposed that a Board of Regents composed of up-and-coming professionals across the country be established to assist the Board of Governors in building up support for the College. His initiative was supported by his fellow Board members, and the Board of Regents quickly became a reality, with David serving as its Chairman. Naturally enough, it was his suggestion that Edward be offered an appointment to the new Board.

Mr. O'Connor is now committed to doing whatever is necessary to promote and benefit the College. "I am especially interested," he says, "in helping to devise a media campaign whereby we can get the word out about Thomas Aquinas College to the general market and to particular markets in order to raise consciousness about the school's quality and foster substantial amounts of financial support."

Mr. O'Connor has already put his words into practice and is actively engaged with Development office staff in designing and implementing the initial phase of a national media campaign. Says Director of College Relations, Mrs. Anne Forsyth, "It is wonderful to be able to draw on Edward's experience and expertise. We are so grateful to him for his initiative and guidance in this effort."

## The Christmas Spirit Students Volunteer Locally

Each year needy residents of Santa Paula, California, benefit from a Christmas Basket Program that relies on the hard work and generosity of many in the community. Without this program, sponsored by the Santa Paula Rotary Club and Boys & Girls Clubs, economically strapped families would have little to prepare for their Christmas dinners, and Christmas trees would shelter fewer toys.

This past Christmas, 22 students from Thomas Aquinas College along with tutors John Goyette ('90), Matthew Walz, and Philip Wodzinski, as well as the College's Career Counselor, Mark Kretschmer ('99), donated their time and efforts to this worthy cause and made Christmas Day just a little bit brighter for many families.

This year, over 400 underprivileged families living in and around the city of Santa Paula received Christmas baskets filled with food and

toys. Volunteers canvassed neighborhoods and grocery stores soliciting both monetary donations and canned good items. Food items and toys were then assembled into Christmas gift baskets and distributed to the needy.

Thomas Aquinas College volunteers collected well over 1000 cans of food and distributed over 500 fliers to residences and businesses. Tutors' families participated as well and helped sort and pack the Christmas gift packages, making them ready to be delivered. In the true spirit of Christmas, these volunteers helped to give many families the kind of Christmas dinner they otherwise would have gone without.

Mr. Gary Nasalroad, a member of the Santa Paula Rotary Club and chairman of the Christmas Basket Program, singled out the contribution made by the Thomas Aquinas College volunteers. "We had never gone door to door before. Yet in one day, the volunteers from Thomas Aquinas College collected over a thousand cans of food. It was a resounding success and we look forward to the

participation of Thomas Aquinas College in next year's program."



Jonathan Tonkowich ('06) and Ingrid Mitchell ('06) and their van filled with cans and Christmas Spirit.



# Alumni Update

## Graduate is Voice for the Voiceless

Catherine (Katie Wynne) Short ('80) is a Thomas Aquinas College alumna of exceptional accomplishment. After graduating from the College and being accepted to Harvard Law School and Boalt Hall at the University of California at Berkeley, she chose to study law at the latter, where she received a JD in 1983. She has devoted nearly all of her subsequent legal career to helping to defend—*pro bono*—the most innocent and defenseless in our society.

Having collaborated in 1989 with fellow graduate and member of the College's Board of Governors, Andrew Zepeda ('79) in founding Life Legal Defense Foundation located in Napa, California, she now serves as its legal director. Mrs. Short has also served as a research attorney for Americans United for Life and has worked on several important pro-life cases that have come before both the California and United States Supreme Courts. And all the while, she and her husband, William Short ('80), have raised and home-schooled their nine children. Their home is in Ojai, California.

Over the last few years, Mrs. Short has been deeply involved with pro-life work in her native state of California. Recently, she co-authored Proposition 73, the parental notification initiative that was included on last November's special election ballot in this western state. ([www.ParentsRight2Know.org](http://www.ParentsRight2Know.org)) Aiming to protect young girls from the aggressive tactics of the abortion



Katie Short ('80) with her nine children at their home in Ojai, California.

industry and, as the statistics show, the adult males who prey upon them, this long-time champion of the unborn helped to fashion legislation that would have made mandatory parental notification a part of the California State Constitution.

Interestingly, there was another connection between the College and this initiative: per California law, every proposition must have a citizen-sponsor who first promotes the legislation. Sponsorship for Proposition 73 was supplied by Paul and Barbara Laubacher whose daughters, Laura and Monica, are in the junior and freshman classes at Thomas Aquinas College.

Another critical element in getting Proposition 73 placed on the ballot this past fall was provided by Mr. Jim Holman. A long-time supporter

of many Catholic causes and institutions—including Thomas Aquinas College—Mr. Holman generously helped to finance the initiative, while also collaborating with Mrs. Short and others in their efforts on behalf of the unborn. "Jim is one of the most generous men I know," says Katie, "and he is a valiant defender of the unborn. Without him, this initiative would never have made it on the ballot, period."

Mr. Holman is likewise thankful. "Katie is just one example of the kind of high caliber of graduates that Thomas Aquinas College regularly produces. The work Katie has done on this and all of her pro-life activities is a perfect example of how the *fides et ratio* of Thomas Aquinas College bears good fruit."

Days before the election, polls showed the proposition ahead by as much as 13%. In the end, however, the voters of California rejected Proposition 73. Not only were its supporters outspent by a sizable margin, but the initiative was placed on a ballot with a group of propositions that were stridently attacked by a variety of special interest groups. It seems that Proposition 73 got swept away with the tide.

But Katie Short and Jim Holman are not about to give up. Though the failure of Proposition 73 was disappointing, it did not shatter the resolve of those fighting on behalf of the unborn. In recent weeks they have re-filed the initiative for placement on this coming November's ballot.

## A Salute to Benefactors

### Appreciation Dinner Held at California Club

Downtown Los Angeles has gone through many changes over the years, and its skyline is now dominated by a steel and glass forest. But wedged in between the many non-descript examples of minimalist architecture is the California Club. A modest, eight-story building designed in the rich classical Beaux Arts tradition by architect Robert D. Farquhar, the California Club was completed in 1930 and declared an L.A. Historic Cultural Monument in 1966 (#43). Through the courtesy of the Chairman of the College's Board of Governors, Mrs. Maria Grant, and her husband, Richard, the College's Christmas Appreciation Dinner was held at this elegant venue on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Appreciation Dinner is the College's way of expressing its gratitude to those who have demonstrated, through their magnificent gifts of time and treasure, extraordinary support for Thomas Aquinas College and its students.

Director of Gift Planning for the College, Mr. Thomas J. Susanka, served as Master of Ceremonies. Mrs. Grant welcomed the guests, President Dillon offered his deep thanks for their generosity, and the two together toasted their esteemed guests. Rev. Monsignor Francis J. Weber, Archivist for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles at the San Fernando Mission, then offered the invocation and blessing.

As guests dined, they enjoyed the graceful music of harpist, Carol Robins. Later, they were entertained with a movement of Mozart's Flute Quartet in C Major played by the Thomas Aquinas College Quartet: Peter Chirdon ('06) on flute, Anne Bulcher ('06) on violin, Gina Eid ('07) on viola, and John Bulcher ('05) on cello.

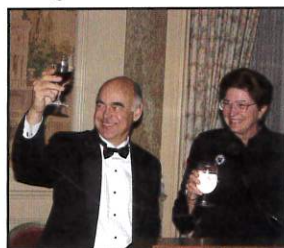


Member of the Board Governors, Michael Grace, then came to the podium to read the story of the first Christmas from St. Luke's Gospel. When he concluded, the College Quartet returned to accompany guests in a rendition of Gruber's timeless Christmas carol, "Silent Night." College chaplain, Rev. Cornelius

Buckley, S.J., bestowed the final blessing on all in attendance.

This event could not have transpired without the special attention of its Dinner Committee: Mrs. Paul Griffin III, Mrs. William F. Mills, Mrs. Mark E. Montgomery, Mrs. W. Ken Skinner, and Mrs. R. J. Wensely. The College is grateful to these gracious ladies for the work they did in planning a beautiful evening.

At the dinner, guests received a program with a sentiment that bears repeating: *With hearts full of gratitude, we salute all who are gathered here this evening, our partners in helping to form young men and women in the Truth of Christ. Because of your generosity, the light of Truth, which first shone in Bethlehem, will shine more brightly in our world. As we prepare for His coming, may God richly reward you for your goodness.*



## Choir Shines at Advent Concert

### Cathedral Organist Provides Accompanist

On December 2, attendees of the Friday Night Lecture and Concert Series at Thomas Aquinas College were treated to a special Advent performance by the College Choir, directed by Mr. Daniel J. Grimm ('76). Despite the limitations of the dining hall in St. Joseph Commons—the College's multi-purpose venue until its auditorium is built—the Choir sounded grand, accompanied as it was by Mr. Samuel S. Soria, Organist of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. An impressive organ was brought in just for the occasion.

The Choir presented Maurice Durufle's *Requiem*. A French composer born in 1902 in Louviers, Durufle was the organist at the church of St-Etienne-du-Mont in Paris. He wrote only fourteen published works, the most famous of which is his *Requiem, Op 9*. He died in 1986.

Mr. Soria, a highly accomplished musician, was delighted to have the opportunity to perform the *Requiem*. Prior to his appointment in Los Angeles, he was the organist for nine years at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, Illinois. A graduate of Valparaiso and Northwestern Universities, Mr. Soria took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in 1993 in the J.S. Bach International competition at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He has recorded two CDs on the Delos International label.

Choir Director Daniel J. Grimm was deeply appreciative of the contribution Mr. Soria made to the evening. "It was a great honor to have a musician of the caliber of Samuel Soria join us, and his talents brought a sense of grandeur to the concert."

Following the *Requiem* was a brief intermission. Upon returning to their places before an appreciative audience, Choir members delighted the standing-room-only crowd with traditional Christmas songs that ran the gamut from Biebel's *Ave Maria* to traditional Spirituals like *Mary had a Baby*.

The College looks forward to the day when it can offer its talented students and visiting lecturers an auditorium designed and built specifically for musical performance and public speaking. Until then, the College is grateful to all those who in a less than ideal setting nevertheless uplift the College community with their talents and wisdom.



Mr. Samuel S. Soria, Organist of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

### Thomas Aquinas College Choir

**Sopranos:** Nicole Dunn, Rosie Grimm, Sophia Mason, Katie Tappel, Anne Hellerman, Marisela Miranda, Dominique Shema, Anna Cunningham, Mary Teichert, Ivie Connolly, Annie Sauder, Amy Ringle.

**Altos:** Paula Grimm, Kelsey Wuensche, Maria Forshaw, Baily Fator, Catherine Ryland, Mary Rose Parker, Elizabeth Tevald, Mary Steichen.

**Tenors:** Daniel Grimm, Nathan Reyes, Nathaniel Hellerman, Robert Mohun.

**Basses:** Arden Mills, Joseph Ferrier, Simon Noster, Francis Fast, Henry Zepeda, Joel Morehouse, Daniel Lendman.

Mr. Paul E. Griffin III

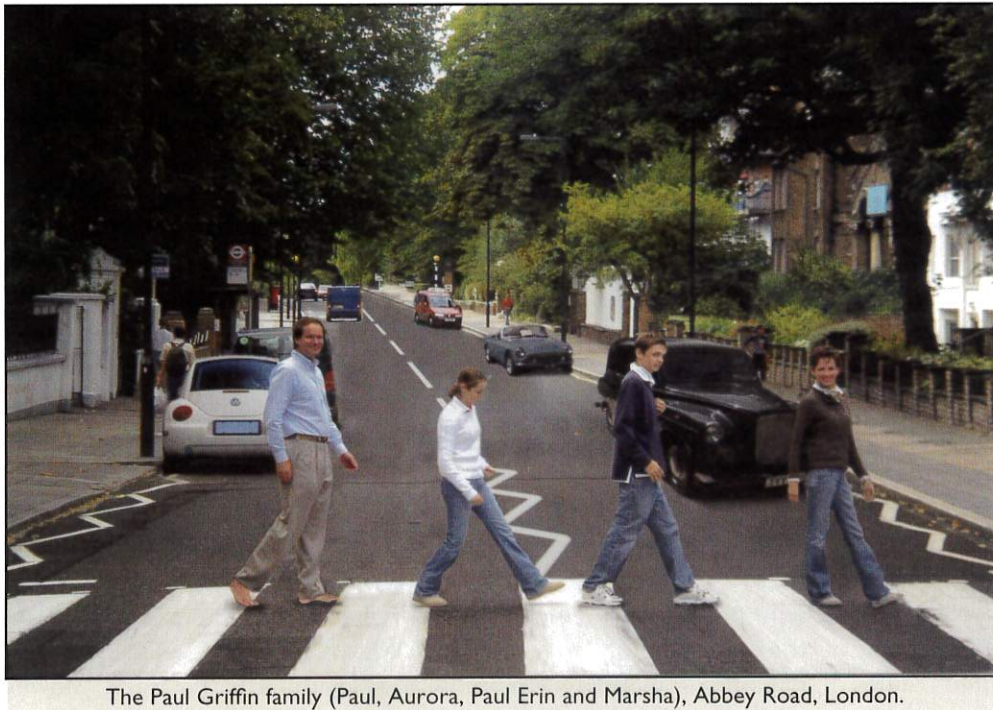
Paul E. Griffin III was born in Long Beach, California, and has lived in Southern California his entire life. A 1979 graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), he is a member of the home-building Griffin family that over five generations has developed an outstanding reputation for producing quality residential communities.

Mr. Griffin is the President and CEO of Griffin Industries, a company he founded in 1992. A major force in the residential home-building market throughout California, Griffin Industries has expanded in recent years to Georgia and Florida. Mr. Griffin is soon off to the Gulf state of Dubai where he will open discussions regarding a 2000-house master plan with schools, shopping centers, and offices.

In 1997, Paul Griffin was honored as the "Builder of the Year" by the Building Industry Association. In 2000, he was similarly honored by the charitable organization Habitat for Humanity.

When Mr. Griffin was a teenager, his father presented him with a hammer, a carpenter's belt, and the notion that the best way for him to learn the family business was to start from the ground up. All through his high school and college years, Paul worked at residential construction sites for his father's company, Griffin Homes Company. It was his father's goal to show the young Paul what hard work was all about and to have him learn firsthand the particulars of the building trade. Paul remembers those years fondly and believes they taught him very well the importance of doing a job to the best of one's ability—and the importance of a good education.

Upon his graduation from UCLA, things began to change for Mr. Griffin. First, he traded in his



The Paul Griffin family (Paul, Aurora, Paul Erin and Marsha), Abbey Road, London.

hammer for a briefcase and began working in the offices of the Griffin Homes Company instead of at construction sites. Though office work did not require swinging a hammer under the hot sun, learning to deal with the legal and financial imperatives that come with the home-building trade had its own brace of challenges. Mr. Griffin soon proved particularly adept at meeting these head on.

His life changed in an even more dramatic way soon after he graduated from college when he met and later married his wife, Marsha. Mr. and Mrs. Griffin are now the devoted parents of son Paul Erin (19) and daughter Aurora (15), two children of note-worthy accomplishments.

Suffering from a form of autism, Paul Erin has had to overcome many educational challenges during the course of his life. But with the hands-on attention and extraordinary commitment of his father—and especially his mother—Paul Erin has managed to be fully integrated and mainstreamed into every school system in which he has been enrolled since the time he was in the fifth grade.

He is now essentially an "A" student, has taken college preparatory classes in high school, and has become a kind of model in his school district of how children with disabilities such as autism are capable of great things when they have dedicated parents like Paul and Marsha Griffin.

Aurora is an accomplished, internationally-ranked horsewoman. At the same time, she maintains stellar academic credentials and is a member of the Johns Hopkins Talented Youth Program, the result of having achieved outstanding SAT scores when she was only 12 years old. Though their daughter has several prestigious Ivy League institutions showing interest in her as a future student, it is the hope of the Griffins that Aurora choose

Thomas Aquinas College for her undergraduate education.

When he joined *Legatus* in 1994, Mr. Griffin soon met fellow member and College president, Dr. Thomas Dillon. Not long after, Paul began supporting the College; in 1999, he was appointed to its Board of Governors. He serves as the Chair of the Board's Campus Planning Committee, and he is a member of its Executive Committee. He also serves on the Board's Development Committee. Paul is delighted to use his industry expertise to help guide the College in its efforts to complete its Master Plan for its campus, and he has taken a special interest in the Chapel project.

Mr. Griffin believes that Thomas Aquinas College is an exceptional training ground for the leaders of tomorrow, a place where young men and women are stimulated intellectually, formed spiritually, and prepared well to meet the demands of modern, twenty-first century society—far better, in fact, than many of their counterparts who graduate from other institutions.

An Interview with Paul Griffin

**Q. What is it that makes Thomas Aquinas College different from other colleges?**

A: I first learned about the College through Tom Dillon when I joined the Ventura/L.A. North Chapter of *Legatus*. Tom was already a member and he would often tell me about Thomas Aquinas College and how different it was from other institutions of higher education. I have to admit, he made it sound too good to be true—it was hard to believe that there really was a place that was committed to quiet, serious study of the Great Books and was also committed to the teachings of the Church.

When I visited Thomas Aquinas College for the first time, I found it just as Tom had described. I found students who were not only intellectually strong, but were willing to grapple with the bigger questions of life as well. In my mind, that certainly makes Thomas Aquinas College a cut above other colleges.

I've been a member of the Board of Governors since 1999, and being in real estate and construction, it's a natural for me to be on the Campus Planning Committee, working closely with Dr. Dillon, Peter DeLuca, and Chairman of the Board, Maria Grant. Watching the campus grow before my eyes has been very gratifying.

**Q. Do you have any advice for the students at Thomas Aquinas College?**

A: One thing that has always bothered me is that I see so many people who may be very engaged in their Christian faith but aren't necessarily high achievers in other facets of life. On the other hand, there are those I have encountered in the business world who are high achievers but don't take their



Christian faith very seriously. It makes me think of Christ's warning that if we are given talents we're expected to do something with them.

The way I see it, Christians are supposed to be the leaders, the top businessmen and top politicians. I'd like to encourage the students of Thomas Aquinas College to work hard in school so as to be prepared to graduate and go into the world to become those business and political leaders.

**Q. Do you think Thomas Aquinas College students are better-equipped to face such a challenge?**

A: Absolutely. The most important thing in a person's life is his relationship with the Father. But a lot of young people who go off to college forget that. They come from good, Christian homes, but then they find themselves on most college campuses where the relationship with God is not stressed. That's what I love about Thomas Aquinas College. It makes no bones about what it thinks is the most important thing in its students'

lives—that our entire existence is about nurturing that relationship with the Father.

When you combine that strong faith with the intellectual formation students receive, you have a very powerful formula for personal and professional success. This goes back to what I talked about earlier, because our Father wants us to be top achievers. He wants us to take those talents that Jesus spoke about in parables and put them to practical, good use in the world He made for us.

**Q. What kind of future do you see for graduates of Thomas Aquinas College?**

A: The reason I'm on the Board, the reason I'm donating time and effort to the College, is because I fully expect the students of Thomas Aquinas College to be the next generation of real estate developers, business owners, lawyers, and so on. I expect them to become bigger and more successful than I could ever hope to be. At the same time, I believe this College will continue to produce the educators, religious, and priests that will make the Church stronger and more vibrant.

If you were to take all of this education and all of these resources and go and live in a small community, having nothing to do with the rest of the world, I don't think God would be very pleased at the end of your life when you tried to give an account for what He had given you. But I think Thomas Aquinas College graduates will be able to hold their heads up high because they will be taking the faith and reason they develop here and making a real difference out in the world. That's why I'm on the Board, and that is why I love Thomas Aquinas College.

## Team Work: Ben ('96) and Andrea ('96) Loop

According to no less an authority on the sanctity of marriage than the late Pope John Paul II, "Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual gift, which unites the spouses and binds them....They make up a sole family—a domestic church." (*Familiaris Consortio*, 1981)

Meet Ben and Andrea Loop, two high school sweethearts, two graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, and one family unit joined together in the sacramental bonds of marriage in very much the fashion that John Paul II described.

Like a number of Thomas Aquinas College alumni who are profiled in this newsletter, Ben and Andrea were not cradle Catholics. They began their journey to Rome looking for answers to difficult questions of life, and arrived, through the grace of God and their Thomas Aquinas College education, at the Truth.

### The Journey Begins

Unlike most of the College's married alumni, Ben and Andrea traveled most of their road together, starting out as high school sweethearts in the small town of Calswell, Idaho. They identified themselves as Christians, with Andrea having an especially strong belief in God, but neither embraced any particular, organized faith. Affected some by the prevailing skepticism of modern culture, they were uncertain about many things. But of one thing they seemed fairly sure: there was nothing the Roman Catholic Church had to offer them.

It was in their last year of public high school back in Idaho that Ben and Andrea's journey began. One of their teachers, Mr. Stephen Hauge, introduced a Great Books political philosophy class for seniors in which the two enrolled. Andrea took an immediate liking to it. "We read Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Plato's *Republic* and through those works, we began to see that our minds were indeed able to grasp reality and that there were truths which could be known." Ben completes the picture saying, "Exchanging loving glances over Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*...what could have been more romantic than that?"

### Moving Closer to Rome

After graduating from high school, Ben and Andrea attended a small, Catholic college on the East Coast because it seemed to offer more of what they had found with Mr. Hauge; but they soon found the experience lacking. About the same time, however, Ben's younger sister, Rebecca ('96), learned about Thomas Aquinas College and visited the campus. She called her brother and, with great excitement, told him that the curriculum he and Andrea had been seeking actually existed at Thomas Aquinas College. All three applied for admission, and the following year, Rebecca, Ben, and Andrea were enrolled in the freshman class at the College.

Ben was enthusiastic about learning at the feet of true masters like Euclid, Aristotle, and Plato. For Andrea, however, struggling with questions about what to believe about God, the seriously Catholic nature of Thomas Aquinas College was troubling. She feared that people with a strong faith would have an equally strong desire to share it, and she didn't want to engage in "battles," having to fend off challenges to her own beliefs. But it wasn't long before Andrea's misgivings were dispelled. "I was in awe of the people I met at the College. I had been in churches all of my life, but had never experienced the zeal for holiness that I found there."

Though it was the College's curriculum that most attracted Ben, he, like Andrea, couldn't help but be influenced by the good example of faculty and students alike. "Through our classes in theology, our dorm room conversations, and the personal example of our tutors and classmates, both Andrea and I began to wonder whether objections we had to Catholicism were reasonable anymore." Though



During the first few years of marriage, Andrea and her daughters Gwendolyn and Claudine became frequent flyers, often hopping on planes to be with Ben whose professional duties include extensive travel. The addition of sons Aidan and Henry has kept Andrea grounded in recent years, but thanks to cell phones, the Loops stay in close touch when Ben is on the road.

they were pleased for Ben's sister, Rebecca, when she entered the Catholic Church during their junior year at the College, Ben and Andrea had a longer road ahead of them.

They graduated from the College on June 14, 1996, and were married just two weeks later. With Ben having been heavily recruited during his senior year by the Cerner Corporation, a healthcare software company based in the Midwest, the newlyweds moved to Kansas City, Kansas, and settled down.

### Conversion

Ben and Andrea loved living in Kansas City, and Ben excelled at his new job. But something was missing. They began to search for a church they could call their own, and seriously considered a certain Presbyterian congregation. At the same time, Ben's sister Rebecca, unaware that they were on the verge of becoming Presbyterians, was inspired to make a novena with a few fellow graduates of the College to St. Francis de Sales for their conversion. It is surely no coincidence that St. Francis de Sales served in Geneva, Switzerland, as a missionary to the Calvinists—the founders of the Presbyterian Church.

Through the graces of that novena and the intellectual and spiritual foundation the Loops had received at Thomas Aquinas College, Ben and Andrea, after probing the merits of the Presbyterian Church, came to the conclusion that the Catholic Church was the only one that met all the criteria necessary for their belief. According to Ben, "I had always more or less assumed that Catholics had to prove to me that theirs was the infallible Church, founded by Christ. But I finally realized it was the other way around: It was I who bore the burden of proof to justify my dissent. The Catholic Church was the only church with a history one could trace directly back to Christ."

### Professional Success

Following their conversions, Ben's professional career continued to prosper and grow. Sponsored by Cerner, Ben obtained an MBA from the University of Chicago's European Executive MBA program in Barcelona, Spain, and it wasn't long before he had built a multi-million dollar product and service portfolio at Cerner.

In November of 2005, Ben became the Practice Director for Siemens Medical Solutions company, an extensive and far-reaching services, imaging, and software company based in Erlangen, Germany. "It is gratifying to see my work translate into better patient care, more satisfied clinicians, and improved operating margins for the uninsured."

Though he works in the high-tech world of computer software, Ben is quick to explain that it has been his exposure to the "ancients" that best prepared him to succeed in the world of business.

"There's no question that my Thomas Aquinas College education has made me a better thinker and a better problem solver."

### Forming a Domestic Church

The Loops credit Thomas Aquinas College not only for Ben's professional success, but for being instrumental in their conversion to Catholicism. Now the proud parents of Gwendolyn (6), Claudine (4), Aidan (2), and Henry (six months), they are forging the kind of "domestic church" of which the late Pope John Paul II spoke. When in need of a model for their family life, they recall their days at Thomas Aquinas College, their conversations there, and the care with which so many of the faculty and alumni were raising their children.

Because Ben travels frequently for business, Andrea shoulders the lion's share of domestic responsibility. And as Ben often remarks, raising strong, Catholic children is more important than developing software to make the health care industry run more efficiently. For her part, Andrea believes that

without the foundation she received at Thomas Aquinas College she would not be as well-equipped to meet her domestic challenges. "With the Socratic method, people are allowed to discover the truth through conversations instead of being told. That's how we've approached the education of our own children." In teaching them, Andrea relies in part on the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a program that offers a Montessori-based approach to the religious formation of children.

### Reflections

The Loops have come a long way from that little town of Calswell, Idaho. Andrea sums up their journey saying, "We laugh about the fact that in this little town in Idaho, we fell in love with philosophy and fell in love with each other at the same time. Now, just look at all the circumstances that brought us to the Church. It was really marvelous—something that we couldn't have planned for ourselves and, in fact, neither one of us had intended."

St. Irenaeus, one of the great Fathers of the early Church, is quoted in the opening pages of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "...The Church, though scattered throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, having received the faith from the apostles and their disciples... guards [this preaching and faith] with care, as dwelling in but a single house..." Fifteen years ago, Ben, his wife, Andrea, and his sister, Rebecca, walked through the doors of Thomas Aquinas College and, through the grace of God, came ultimately to that single house we call the Church.

But the story does not end there: In God's great mercy, Ben's parents have come into the Church as well. Speaking for all the Loops, they say, "Thomas Aquinas College has been a wonderful influence on us all, and an instrument in changing our lives. We are truly grateful."



The Loop Family, 2000  
Front: Rebecca (Loop) Mohun ('96) holding Bernadette, Pam Loop, Jerry Loop; Back: Max Mohun ('86), Ben Loop ('96), Andrea Loop ('96) holding Gwendolyn.

# CAMPUS LIFE



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## Calendar of Events

All School Seminar	January 27
St. Thomas Day	January 28
Friday Night Lecture, Montague Brown	February 10
Schubertiade	February 17
President's Day (no classes)	February 20
President's Day Lecture Honorable Frank Shakespeare	February 24
Friday Night Lecture, R. V. Young	March 10
Easter Recess	April 12 - 19

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