



Thomas Aquinas College

# NEWSLETTER

FALL 1976

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## COLLEGE INSPIRES NEW BOOK

*Escape from Scepticism: liberal education as if truth mattered*, a book inspired by its author's visit to Thomas Aquinas College, is projected for publication in February. British literary critic, author and lecturer, Christopher Derrick first visited the college in the fall of 1974 as a lecturer. Profoundly impressed by its program and, in particular, by the intellectual health of its students, Mr. Derrick returned in the spring of 1975 for several weeks during which he began *Escape from Scepticism*.

In his first chapter, Mr. Derrick recalls the experience which impelled him to return to the campus with intent of writing a book on liberal education.

*"In the chill misty morning, I sat down by the lakeside. The water was entirely calm and reflected the shape of that low bridge to perfection.*

*I looked up past a rounded tree which quivered with bird-life, and I saw a few of the students. Once again, it was a kind of shock to gaze upon them. They weren't in the least like the current image or stereotypes of what students ought to be; they failed most lamentably to come up to my expectations. For one thing, they were quietly dressed and soberly behaved, though nearly always cheerful; for another, they displayed a most unorthodox kind of dedication and hope. In the group which I was then watching, I recognized one or two of them with whom I was talking far into the wee hours last night; and I remembered their enormous belief in what they were doing here, their trust in reality and in reason, their conviction that the human mind could actually apprehend reality and that the effort involved in this exercise was amply worthwhile.*

*What am I doing on this campus? Why should a middle-aged Englishman — a literary critic by*

*profession, self-indulgent in his personal habits, somewhat inclined therefore to insolvency and stoutness — why should such a man find himself six-and-a-half thousand miles from home, sitting by a California lakeside and marvelling at certain students whose background and whose personal pre-occupations and problems are six-and-a-half million miles from his own?*

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*Our civilization? What is that, and where does it stand? Is it in any fit state to be handed on to the next generation? And how?*

*Thorny questions for a perplexed world. I was there because I thought I detected some hint of an answer to them. To put it more cautiously, I thought that these particular students would serve as a hang-peg or starting point for a prolonged worry and meditation that might possibly get somewhere. Their condition, their enterprise suggested that the whole idea of 'liberal education' might need re-thinking.*

*I felt drawn to such an inquiry, though somewhat frightened of it as well. Presumably, my motives ought to be purely intellectual, governed only by a passion for truth. But I am also a parent, worried at the very earthly and pragmatic level about the problem of education, the problem of what one generation can usefully and lovingly pass on to the next and how. One loves one's own dear children very much! What assurances can we give them when the universities, which surely ought to be the guiding lights of our society and the focal points of its wisdom, seem rather to be centers of scepticism and despair and disaffection?*

*This college lacks that kind of character, in all events."*

After reading the manuscript of *Escape from Skepticism*, Mr. Peter DeLuca, college Vice President, expressed enthusiasm. "The work is really excellent. Mr. Derrick, in imaginative and readable prose, has captured the essence of liberal education and its importance to the modern world."

*Escape from Skepticism* is being published by Sugden and Company of LaSalle, Illinois and will be available to the public in mid-February.

## New Freshman Class Welcomed

On Monday, September 13th, faculty and students at Thomas Aquinas College welcomed thirty-five freshmen. Their addition brings total enrollment at the college to 110 students, which represents the maximum number possible in the present facilities. Next year the college hopes to enlarge its facilities in order to take another section of freshmen.

Geographically, the student body now represents twenty-three states, the District of Columbia and three foreign countries; Canada, Austria and Nigeria. California, as may be expected, has the most student representatives with forty-nine. Illinois comes next with eight, followed by the State of Washington with six and Missouri and Wisconsin with five each.

The quality of students applying to Thomas Aquinas College remains high. Based on SAT scores of accepted students, Thomas Aquinas College attracts the top 20% of the students in the nation. The average SAT score of this year's freshman class was 1124.

# **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

It is important to note, when thinking about education, that learning does not, of itself, make a man good. They are good who love God and try to do His will in all things; knowledge is not enough.

Since most serious Christians grasp this truth quite easily (taught as it is on almost every page of the New Testament), it is no surprise that they many times look to schools as the means to making the young good and holy. So much is this true that the school, if Catholic, is judged by its orthodoxy alone, prescinding from any other considerations.

This in its turn means (getting closer to home) that any college is judged by its stand, and its success in standing, against drugs and sex, and for traditional religious practices; anything else is considered peripheral. Such a stand is like the one almost universally accepted years ago by Catholic colleges in America, making it possible to conceal almost any inferiority behind the banner of orthodoxy.

While it is true that no Catholic college can call itself Catholic without being orthodox, and without taking that orthodoxy seriously — without, that is, being against immorality and for the right religious practices — it does not thereby become a good school.

A Catholic college exists primarily for the sake of pursuing, and finding when possible, truths apprehensible by reason alone, and for meditating upon and elucidating those most important truths which God has deigned in His Mercy to reveal to us. It should, because of this aim, encourage its students to be moral, provide the climate which makes goodness easier rather than harder, and concern itself with the Mass and the Sacraments. All this, however, should be undertaken within the context of a genuine life of learning, where the truth becomes the most important aim of the whole community.

If a college cannot educate its students correctly, if it cannot, that is, teach them to think for themselves, to read well and to write well, and if it cannot illumine their minds with the liberal arts and the sciences attainable by these arts, it is a failure as a school, no matter how successful it might be in other ways.

It is not enough, then, in reaction to the silliness now going on in the name of education, to counter with orthodoxy alone. Those of us who educate must, in pursuing our task in accordance with the mind of the Church, be judged by how well we perform intellectually, and not by how good morally we and our students might be.

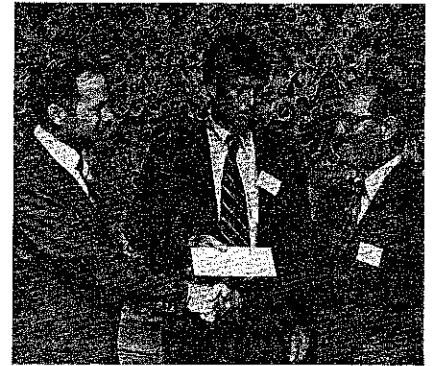
It has been known, at least since the time of Aristotle, that no amount of teaching can make a man good; all goodness is rather acquired by repeatedly performing good actions, or given by God through His grace. We can, on the other hand, teach those who want to learn, and we must try, as best we can, to fulfill that function, difficult as it is. Only then can we call ourselves teachers and only then can we discharge our obligation to our students.

Ronald P. McArthur  
*President*

## **College Is Recipient Of Scholarship Grant From Louisa D. Watson Trust Fund**

Thomas Aquinas College has received \$20,000 for scholarships for needy students from the Louisa D. Watson Trust Fund. Mr. Peter DeLuca, Vice President, and Mr. Dennis Koller, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, accepted the award from William T. Huston, Trustee of the Fund, at a special luncheon held Tuesday, October 12th.

Louisa Watson was a descendant of the Poggis family, early California settlers. Her husband, Robert L. Watson, was a descendant of Manuel Dominguez, recipient of the first Spanish land grant in California. The land grant covered a large part of what is now Los Angeles.



*Peter DeLuca and Dennis Koller accept \$20,000 check from Louisa Watson Fund trustee William T. Huston.*

The college doesn't believe that students should be denied the benefits of Catholic liberal education because they or their families cannot afford it. Once the need of the family is determined, the college simply tries to meet it through a financial aid package which includes work-scholarships, grants and loans. Close to one-half the students currently attending the college participate in the financial aid program.

Since the college does not accept Federal aid, it depends entirely on private sources to fund its financial aid program, which this year was in excess of \$80,000. The college is most appreciative of this grant and others like it which make it possible for needy students to attend Thomas Aquinas College.

# FACULTY PROFILE



Dr. Ronald Richard

How does a man who worked as an engineer for the Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena, California designing trajectories for spacecraft become interested in liberal education and end up as a tutor at Thomas Aquinas College? "It can be nothing but God's Providence," states Dr. Ronald Richard, a new tutor at the college. "After starting to work for JPL in 1962, I was browsing through a used book store in Los Angeles and saw a set of Great Books. Something possessed me to buy them. From then on my real education began; slowly, to be sure, but irrevocably."

Dr. Richard's experience with the Great Books led him to think seriously about leaving the engineering field and going into the teaching profession. "At that time I was also involved in a discussion group at my local parish and through this became seriously interested in Church matters," states Dr. Richard. "I knew then that if I were to teach, it would only be in a Catholic school."

Dr. Richard completed his Doctorate in Astronomy at U.C.L.A. in 1968 and joined the faculty of St. Benedict's College (now Benedictine College) in Atchison, Kansas in 1970.

In order to improve his background, Dr. Richard audited Philosophy and Theology courses at St. Benedict's. It was through this experience that he came to know Dr. Donald Scholz. Dr. Scholz influenced him in two ways: 1) he taught him Scholastic Philosophy and, 2) he told him about Thomas Aquinas College.

Dr. Richard came to the college in the winter of 1975 to give a lecture as part of the Friday night lecture series. Of his first experience with the college, he

states, "It left me with a feeling of excitement which far exceeded anything I had anticipated. It also left me with a burning desire to return here as a tutor."

Return here he did. Dr. Richard's first year teaching assignments include the Sophomore Philosophy and Junior Mathematics tutorials.

"The only shortcoming the college has, as far as I can see," states Dr. Richard, "is that not enough young people can be given the benefit of a Thomas Aquinas College education."

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## ADMISSIONS REPORT

A question often asked about the program of Catholic liberal education offered at Thomas Aquinas College is "of what practical use is it?"

The answer, of course, is that while this curriculum aims at making men better, rather than at making better products and services, there can be no real separation between liberal education and the knowledge that makes men and women successful in all parts of society.

To see the truth of this statement one only has to look at the success our graduates have had. Five are studying for the Doctorate in Philosophy at the Universite Laval in Quebec, Canada. One has just completed his course work for a Masters Degree in Philosophy from Niagara University. One is studying Theology at the Gregorian in Rome. Two are in the Doctoral program in the History of Science at the University of Indiana. One is in the Masters program of Business Management at U.C.L.A. One is studying for a Masters Degree in Music at California State University at Northridge while another is studying literature at the same institution. Two graduates are in law school. Six are teaching at the high school or elementary school level and a number are in the business world.

Now it's obvious that there are some things a graduate of Thomas Aquinas College cannot do. He couldn't immediately upon graduation, for example, get a job as a nuclear physicist or a marine biologist. But, then, if one majored in accounting he couldn't be a nuclear physicist or a marine biologist either.

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I just returned from a two-week recruiting trip that took me to Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati, Bloomington, Indiana, St. Louis and Kansas City. Thanks to the kind offices of friends of the college in each of those cities, I had the opportunity to speak to many hundreds of people about the program of Catholic liberal education at Thomas Aquinas College. The enthusiasm people show when told that a college with our ideals actually exists never ceases to amaze me.

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I will be spending a week in Michigan in Mid-March. I ask anyone in that area wishing to sponsor a gathering of people interested in hearing about Catholic liberal education, either in their home or school auditorium, to please write to me at the college.

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Again, I urge all students planning on applying to Thomas Aquinas College for next year's Freshman class, to submit their applications as soon as possible. Last year we filled early and had to resort to a waiting list. Most on the waiting list did not get to come.

Dennis Koller  
*Director of Admissions*

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## APPEAL GENERATES SUPPORT

In the last Newsletter, Vice President Peter DeLuca made an appeal for contributions from "those who believe in the college but who have not the financial means to make a large gift". This week he reported receipt of \$4,245 in cash contributions and \$855 in pledges for a total of \$5,100 from forty-eight donors.

In his letter Mr. DeLuca noted that many who are not capable of giving large sums of money "feel that what they *are* capable of doing is insignificant and unimportant". He argued that this is not so and that the aggregation of small contributions can be most beneficial. He feels that his argument has been supported by the excellent response received so far.

Mr. DeLuca is hopeful that those who have not as yet responded to his appeal will be encouraged to do so by his report. He points out once again that if all who receive the Newsletter were to give \$100 per year, the college would have a constant income of \$400,000.

# CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER

- 10 Ladies Auxiliary sponsored luncheon at Madame Woo's Restaurant in Los Angeles. Mr. John Neumayer, Dean of Thomas Aquinas College, is guest speaker.
- 15 - 19 Open House on campus
- 19 Lecture by Angelo Coddevilla on Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

## DECEMBER

- 3 Lecture by Dr. Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn
- 8 Auxiliary sponsored Communion Breakfast - 10:00 a.m. on campus.

## Auxiliary News

The Thomas Aquinas College Ladies Auxiliary has sponsored various social functions in the Los Angeles area to help promote the college since September of 1970. In February of this year, they reorganized in order to be even more effective in bringing the news of Thomas Aquinas College to others.

"We wanted to broaden our base of support," states President, Mrs. Carole Smith, "so we decided to concentrate on a major membership drive. Already our efforts have produced close to one-hundred members."

The college is fortunate to have such a dedicated and distinguished group of ladies working for it. Mrs. J. Bradford Crow (Kathleen), in addition to being first Vice President of the Auxiliary, is State Chairman for the California Conservative Union. Mrs. G. Earl Carson (Virginia) is National Chairman for Pro-America in addition to being the Auxiliary's Treasurer. Mrs. U. S. Grant IV (Fanny) is Membership Chairman; Mrs. Carl J. Doria (Betty) is Recording Secretary and Mrs. Robert E. Auth (Peggy) is Parliamentarian. All are active in Pro-Life activities.

The Auxiliary is sponsoring many projects simultaneously; a

luncheon November 10th; campus open house the week of November 15th; a Communion Breakfast on December 8th and the most ambitious project of all - the furnishing of the Hacienda on the site of the new campus. "The house requires old Spanish, old English or old Federal furniture," states Mrs. Smith. "We urge all friends of the college to remember our project as you talk to acquaintances who may be moving. Of course, donations are tax-deductible."

Those wishing more information on the Auxiliary may contact Mrs. U. S. Grant IV, 121 Groverton Place, Los Angeles, 90024.

## Tuition Increase Announced

In accordance with their policy of trying to keep college income abreast of inflation, the Board of Governors, at their November 1st meeting, set new rates for tuition, room and board. The increase, effective September 1st, 1977, will bring the total resident cost of attending Thomas Aquinas College to \$4,050. This represents a 7.28% increase over the \$3,775 cost for the current year. Tuition increased from \$2,325 to \$2,550 and room and board from \$1,450 to \$1,500.

The college realizes that many deserving students cannot afford the costs of attending Thomas Aquinas College. Consequently, it has set up a substantial financial aid program to insure that no student is denied this kind of education because of lack of funds.

## FATHER MARTIN CYRIL D'ARCY, S.J.

### *Requiescat on Pace*

Your prayers are requested for the response of the soul of Father Martin Cyril D'Arcy, S.J. who died Saturday, November 20th.

A member from the beginning of the Board of Visitors of Thomas Aquinas College and an enthusiastic advocate of its program and philosophy, Father D'Arcy lectured at the college twice during its early years. His intelligence, wit and humor will be sorely missed.

Father D'Arcy was a prominent English Jesuit philosopher for more than fifty years. He converted many famous people including Dame Edith Sitwell, the poet, and Evelyn Waugh, the satirist.

A Requiem Mass was sung at the college for the repose of Father D'Arcy's soul on Tuesday, November 23rd.

## BRIEFS . . .

The 1976-77 student Bulletin and other literature is available from the college office.

The college is offering for sale a high quality recording of Medieval and Renaissance music. The stereo album contains a number of selections by the Grimm Family Choir, six of whose members have attended the college. The cost of the recording is \$6.75. (This includes postage). Proceeds benefit the Thomas Aquinas College Student Fund. This record can be purchased by sending your check to the college office.

Mr. Peter L. DeLuca, Vice President for Development, reminds friends of the college that many business firms match employee contributions to educational institutions.