



# THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2000

## — To Meet Record Enrollment by Fall 2001

### College Seeks Funds to Build New Men's Residence

The College hopes to complete a new men's residence hall by September 2001 to accommodate its burgeoning student body. "It's a problem of space," said Peter DeLuca, Vice-President for Finance and Administration. "For three years, we've filled 5 freshman sections of 17 and still had students on a waiting list. With good retention, that gives us a student body of 277, the largest in our history."

This flood of students has resulted in considerable crowding. "Next September we expect to begin classes with 286 students," he said. "To accommodate that number, as well as a sixth freshman section the following year, we need to complete this new residence as soon as possible."

Presently, the College's residence facilities consist of:

- St. Katharine Hall, (a women's residence for 44 built in 1989);
- St. Bernard Hall (a men's residence for 48 built in 1991);
- Blessed Junipero Serra Hall (a men's residence for 56 built in 1996);
- St. Thérèse of Lisieux Hall (a women's residence for 64 built in 1999); and
- The "200" and "400" dormitories, modular buildings housing 28 and 36 respectively, erected in 1978 and originally slated for replacement within five years.



A digitally-produced conceptual drawing of the interior courtyard of the new men's residence hall, yet to be named, was produced by ArchFX; Rassmussen and Associates of Ventura, CA have been retained as architects for the building.

The Master Plan for the College envisions six permanent residence halls to accommodate the planned student population of approximately 350. The new residence will allow the College to reach its maximum size, assuming continued use of the two modular buildings. A final women's residence will eventually replace those facilities.

The new men's residence hall will provide living space for 106 men, and a three-room suite with a private bath for a resident priest

or other non-student. The hall is designed as a two-story version of St. Therese of Lisieux Hall with a similar gated-entry courtyard with a fountain. It provides three study rooms and four lounge areas, two with fireplaces. A laundry room, an exercise room, and a kitchenette are also provided. The main lounge is a two-story space with beamed ceilings, and the front of the building is graced by a balcony.

Construction will also include improved lighting for the adjacent parts of the campus and the enlargement of the parking lot behind Blessed Serra Hall. The residence will be located just north of Blessed Serra on the former site of the "300" modular dormitory.

Anticipated project cost for the 23,900 square-foot building is \$3.74 million, including furniture, landscaping and fees. To date, the College has received \$1.5 million in gifts and pledges for the project. "We're very pleased to have the support of so many generous people. We are continuing to seek the remaining funds with confidence that we will obtain adequate commitments within the coming year," said President Thomas E. Dillon. "It's an act of faith, but through God's grace we continue to be blessed with responsive, generous benefactors."



## — Insight Magazine proclaims:

### Thomas Aquinas College One of 15 Best U. S. Colleges

Insight magazine, a publication of the Washington Times Corporation, has named Thomas Aquinas College to its list of top 15 colleges in the nation. In its October 2-9, 2000 issue, *Insight* proclaimed:

Thomas Aquinas College, a Roman Catholic school, offers one of the most creative core curricula at any American college. Courses are based, with adjustments toward the times in which we live, on the trivium and quadrivium of medieval education. Their freshman year, students read Homer, Plato, Thucydides. Four years later as seniors, they read Einstein, Tolstoy and other 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>- century greats.

The 15 colleges chosen for distinction (see sidebar) include three state-owned schools, two evangelical Christian schools, three Presbyterian schools, three Roman Catholic schools, and four secular private schools. Thomas Aquinas College and Claremont McKenna College were the only California colleges to make the list. Pepperdine University in Malibu, however, was listed among "Another 15 Excellent Colleges to Consider."

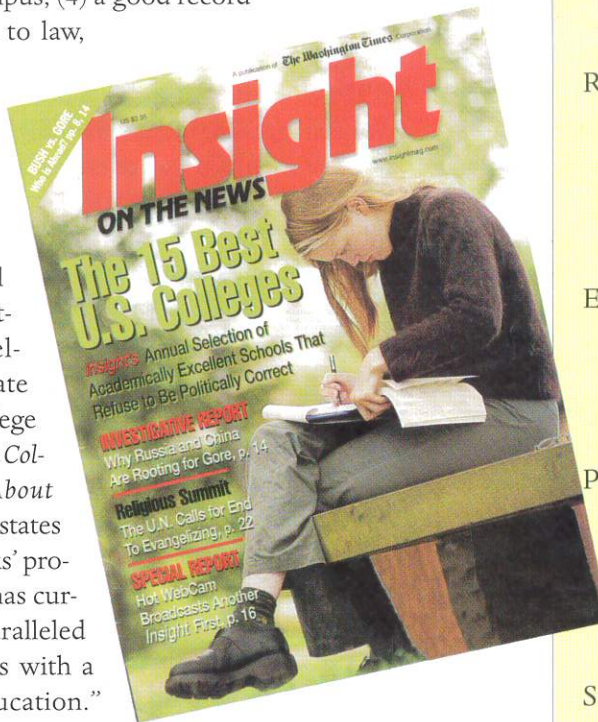
The magazine developed this list by considering such factors as (1) the dedication of professors to teaching; (2) the presence of a core curriculum in which students are exposed to basic, broad-based courses in the fundamental subjects, from the humanities to the sciences;

(3) the quality of the campus; (4) a good record for sending students on to law, medical, and other professional schools; and (5) the presence of an efficient student-aid program.

The College has enjoyed a growing national reputation for its commitment to academic excellence. The Intercollegiate Studies Institute, in its college guide, "Choosing The Right College: The Whole Truth About America's 100 Top Schools," states that, "with its 'Great Books' program, the Thomas Aquinas curriculum is virtually unparalleled for providing its students with a rigorous liberal arts education." Similarly, the *National Review College Guide, America's 50 Top Liberal Arts Schools*, touts the College as offering "one of the most rigorous curriculums of any school in the country." Indeed, the College is the only Catholic college to be included on all three "best colleges" lists.

"We're very pleased to be recognized for this distinction," said College Relations Director, Dave Shaneyfelt. "It's one more hopeful indicator that more and more people are coming to realize that you can provide authentic Catholic liberal education and still maintain academic excellence."

The College admitted 85 freshmen this fall who had an average SAT score of 1260, thus placing them in the top 10% of college freshmen in the nation.



#### Insight's "Top 15"

Roman Catholic:

Thomas Aquinas College (CA)  
Franciscan U. of Steubenville (OH)  
Christendom College (VA)

Evangelical Christian:

Calvin College (MI)  
Wheaton College (IL)

Presbyterian:

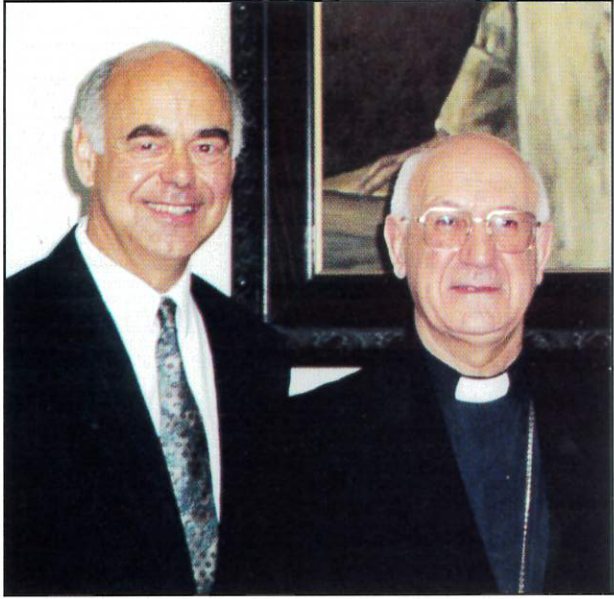
Grove City College (PA)  
Hampden-Sydney College (VA)  
Rhodes College (TN)

Secular Private:

Claremont McKenna College (CA)  
Hillsdale College (MI)  
St. John's College (MD & NM)  
Shimer College (IL)

Public:

James Madison College (MI)  
St. Mary's College of Md. (MD)  
College of William and Mary (VA)



President Thomas E. Dillon with Archbishop Giuseppe Pittau, S. J., the Secretary for the Congregation on Education

I never anticipated, when assuming this office, that I would be engaged in international work on behalf of the College. Yet the past few months alone offer a surprising glimpse of the scope of the educational endeavor here at Thomas Aquinas College.

In May, I was honored to speak to a group of university presidents in Yucatan, Mexico, on the subject of Catholic formation at Catholic universities. The conference, entitled, "International Forum About Values: Philosophy and Education," featured participation by presidents, administrators, and professors from five Catholic universities in Mexico governed by the Legionaries of Christ. They gathered to reflect on how to best implement the very positive understanding of Catholic education in Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. I was pleased to offer some insights on our experience at Thomas Aquinas College which, in our view, stands as a model for that implementation.

Then in September it was our pleasure to host two university professors from Australia, Dr. James Power and Dr. Karl Schmid, who came to observe our institution for the purpose of establishing a similar college in their native land. It was most inspiring to see the dedication of these gentlemen. We pray for their success.

Finally, also in September, I was privileged to attend the Jubilee of the University in Rome. The unprecedented event brought together nine Nobel Prize winners, 300 college and university presidents, 1,500 speakers, and more than 10,000 university professors. Fifty-three different congresses were held throughout Italy, Lebanon, and the Holy Land, addressing such diverse subjects as bioethics, medicine, Biblical studies, science, and architecture.

I attended two conferences. The first one was addressed to college and university presidents regarding the renewal of Catholic higher education; the other, entitled, "Paideia and Humanitas," addressed the importance of serving the human person in all dimensions. Archbishop Giuseppe Pittau, S.J., Secretary of the Congregation for Education, gave the opening address. Archbishop Pittau had served most recently as the president of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

My wife, Terri, and I had the opportunity to renew acquaintances with Archbishop Pittau a couple of days after the event. In our visit with him, he lauded Thomas Aquinas College's educational program and underscored the importance of returning to first principles.

Pope John Paul II closed the Universities' Jubilee with Mass in St. Peter's Square. He had convened this Jubilee to promote a "new humanism," that is, a concern for the human person and the truth and goodness centered in Christ. He emphasized this theme in closing it. (See his homily, reprinted on this page.)

During that trip, I met many people who have come to know of the unique mission of Thomas Aquinas College and who praise it for all the good it is doing and who see it as a beacon of hope in higher education. What impact can we expect to see Thomas Aquinas College have on the world by the next Jubilee? I have no idea; but with the grace of God I expect it will be great indeed.

"Ephphatha, be opened!" (Mk 7:34). The words spoken by Jesus at the healing of the deaf-mute ring out once more for us today; they are stimulating words of great symbolic intensity which call us to open ourselves to listening and to bearing witness.

Does not the deaf-mute mentioned in the Gospel bring to mind the situation of those who are unable to establish a communication which gives true meaning to life? In a certain way, he reminds us of those who shut themselves up in a presumed autonomy, which leaves them isolated from God and often from their neighbor as well. Jesus turns to this man to restore to him the capacity to open himself to the One who is Other and to others, in an attitude of trust and freely-given love. He offers him the extraordinary opportunity to meet God who is love and who allows himself to be known by those who love. He offers him salvation.

Yes, Christ opens man to a knowledge of both God and himself. He who is truth (cf. Jn 14:6) opens man to the truth, touching him from within and thus healing "from within" every human faculty.

For you, dear brothers and sisters engaged in research and study, these words are an appeal to open your spirit to the truth which sets free! At the same time, Christ's words summon you to become this "Ephphatha" for countless hosts of young people, to become this word which opens the spirit to every aspect of truth in the different fields of learning. Seen in this light, your daily commitment becomes a following of Christ on the path of service to your brothers and sisters in the truth of love.

Christ is the one who "has done all things well" (Mk 7:37). He is the model to whom you must look unceasingly so that your academic activity becomes an effective service of the human longing for an ever fuller knowledge of truth.

"Say to those who are of a fearful heart: 'Be strong, fear not! Behold your God . . . He will come and save you'" (Is 35:4). In these words of Isaiah, your mission, too, dear University men and women, is well delineated. Every day you are committed to proclaiming, defending and spreading the truth. Often this involves truths concerning the most diverse aspects of the cosmos and of history. The subject material will not always touch directly on the problem of the ultimate meaning of life and the relationship with God, as in the areas of philosophy and theology. However, this problem abides as the larger context of every thought. Even in research on areas of life which seem quite far from faith there is a hidden desire for truth and meaning which goes beyond the particular and the contingent.

When the human person is not spiritually "deaf and dumb," every area of thought, science and experience also brings a reflection of the Creator and gives rise to a desire for him, a desire often hidden and perhaps also repressed but which cannot be suppressed. This was well understood by Saint Augustine who exclaimed: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you" (Confessions, I, 1).

As scholars and teachers who have opened your hearts to Christ, your vocation is that of living and bearing witness in an effective way to this relationship between the individual branches of knowledge and that supreme "knowledge" which concerns God, and which in a sense coincides with him, with his Word made flesh and with the Spirit of truth given by him. Through your contribution, the University becomes the place of the "Ephphatha" where Christ - at work in you - continues to carry out the miracle of opening ears and lips, bringing about a new capacity for listening and a true communication.

Freedom of research has nothing to fear from this encounter with Christ. Nor does this encounter compromise dialogue and respect for individuals, since Christian truth by its nature is to be proposed, never imposed, and has as its solid point of reference a deep respect for the "sanctuary of conscience."

Ours is a time of great transformations which also involve the university world. The humanistic character of culture sometimes seems relegated to the periphery, while there is an increased tendency to reduce the horizon of knowledge to what can be measured and to ignore any question touching on the ultimate meaning of reality. We can ask ourselves what kind of men and women are being prepared by the University today.

To meet the challenge of creating a new authentic and integral humanism, the University needs people attentive to the word of the only Teacher; it needs qualified professionals and credible witnesses to Christ. This mission is certainly not easy, it requires constant commitment, it is nourished by prayer and study, and it is expressed in the normal events of everyday life.

This mission is supported by the pastoral care of university students and personnel, which involves both the spiritual care of individuals and effective activity promoting cultural initiatives in which the light of the Gospel directs and humanizes the paths of research, study and teaching methods.

At the heart of such pastoral activity are university chaplaincy centers where teachers, students and staff find support and help for their Christian lives. As significant places in the University setting, they nourish the commitment of each individual according to the forms and ways suggested by the university context: they are places of the spirit, gymnasiums for the Christian virtues, open and inviting houses, dynamic centers which encourage the Christian animation of culture in respectful and honest dialogue, with clear and purposeful direction (cf. 1 Pt 3:15), and with a witness which is both truth-seeking and convincing.

Dear friends, it is a great joy for me to celebrate the Jubilee of Universities with you. This large and distinguished gathering is an eloquent sign of the cultural fruitfulness of faith.

Fixing our gaze on the mystery of the Incarnate Word, man discovers himself. He also experiences an intimate joy which finds expression in the interior style itself of studying and teaching. Knowledge thus overcomes the limits which reduce it to a merely functional and pragmatic process, and so it recovers its dignity as research in the service of man in the whole truth about himself, illuminated and guided by the Gospel.

Dear Teachers and Students, this is your vocation: make the University an environment where knowledge is cultivated, a place where the individual finds direction for the future, knowledge, inspiration for effective service of society.

I entrust your journey to Mary, Sedes Sapientiae, whose image I entrust to you today, so that she may be welcomed as a teacher and a pilgrim in the university campuses of the world. Mary supported the Apostles with her prayer at the dawn of evangelization; may she also help you to invigorate the university world with a Christian spirit.

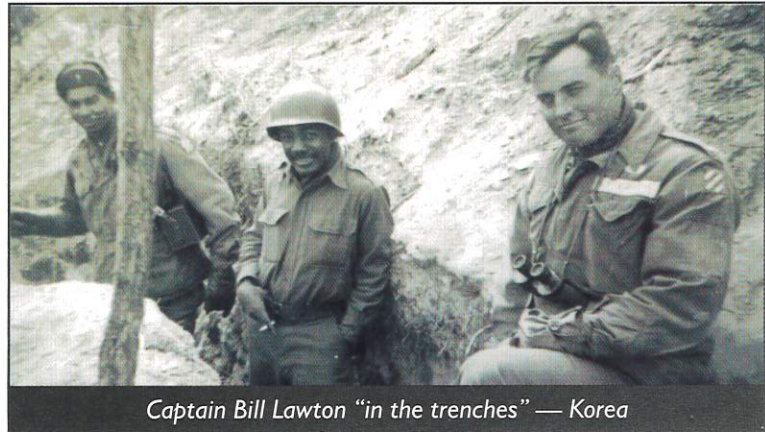


## College Mourns Loss of Co-Founder, Lt. Col. William S. Lawton, Jr.

### A Reflection -

by Ronald D. McArthur, President Emeritus

"I was in a foxhole, the shells were exploding all around, and all of a sudden I was seized with fear for my immortal soul. I remembered then my Catholic Faith, which returned in an instant, and I promised God that I would amend my life and serve Him faithfully if He got me out of there alive." Captain Bill Lawton, recently returned from Korea, told me this in one of the many conversations we were to have after evening classes at the University of San Francisco in the fall of 1956, where the Army had just assigned him as a teacher in the ROTC program.



Captain Bill Lawton "in the trenches" — Korea

was therefore taking courses to get his degree. As I was then an Instructor of Philosophy, he ended up two nights a week in my course. At the end of our first class together I was putting my books in my briefcase as he approached me and said, with mock consternation, that he didn't know about the other students, but that "I won't just listen to professors. When I don't understand something I'll hound you until you explain it to me; be prepared for that."

He was prophetic, but it became clear that his warning had been what it seemed – a friendly challenge to help him learn. He wanted somehow desperately to succeed, as if, I began to think, he were making up for opportunities neglected. When, then, he told me about the incident in the foxhole, it anchored my experience of him, and our growing friendship led on my part to an admiration, and then to a love which one can have for only a few in this fallen world.

No one could have had the slightest understanding of Bill Lawton, at least by the time I had met him, without knowing that his primary aim, of which he was constantly aware, was to obey God, and in so doing to please Him. His duty, which he saw with a clarity not given to all, was exacting; it was forthright in its demands and invulnerable to the lure of an ever-expanding catalogue of exceptions.

Our greatest spiritual writers teach us that while we must serve God in the same way, essentially by obeying His commandments, frequenting the sacraments, praying, fasting, and almsgiving, there are at the same time as many ways to tailor the essentials as there are those who enter His service. Bill Lawton was, by temperament and background, a warrior, and warrior he remained.

Born into an Army family, his father a Lieutenant General, his ambition was to serve his country with honor as an officer in the infantry, "the only real branch of the service," to hear him spit it out. By the time we had met he had fought in Korea, and then, years later, he was to fight again in Vietnam. During the years before and after his time in Vietnam my wife and I became fast friends with Bill and his Peggy, who, if the truth is to be told, was the "sheet anchor" of his life. Many of our conversations touched upon the alarming decline of the moral tone of the country, and of its effect on the Catholic body. When, then, we were trying to found the College, which was a battle by other means against American education and the Catholic imitation of it, one thought instinctively of by-then Lt. Col. Lawton, for whom our activities were a small part of the larger struggle against the forces arrayed to destroy what remained of our once-Catholic civilization.

Bill's willingness to stand with us as a possible founder of a non-existent college with uncertain prospects was in character with his many other acts of friendship over the years – spontaneous, trusting, and animated by the warmth of his affection. His love of all things Catholic prompted him not only to join with us, but also later to help so many of our students and graduates he came to know – arranging an interview, acquiring a green card, extending a visa, finding a scholarship, gaining financial help – with a persistence and determination with which, I thought with approbation, he probably led his men into battle. How many there are of us whose lives are the better for his exertions in our regard!

So then the record, all in warfare against the Prince of Darkness and his minions: Korea, Vietnam, founder and a Vice President of Thomas Aquinas College, Vice President of Catholics United for the Faith, and willing prisoner in the jails of Southern California for standing against abortion – all accomplished by the devoted husband of a most charming and loving wife and the concerned father to their six children, whom he loved above all and for whom he prayed as if nothing else mattered than that they would save their souls.

Belloc, speaking of the old age of William the Conqueror, observes that "in the phase of human life there is, for most men, and for nearly all mature men, a period of some years introductory to death: which years are years of disappointment at the least, and at the most of tragedy." He goes on to say that "with those who have done much there is an added burden, which is that they must cease from battle; for the body is no longer supporting the immortal mind."

Bill Lawton was a luminous exception. His body did indeed decay, but with his "immortal mind" he battled on, impervious to the passage of time. His unquenchable relish for the things of heaven gave testimony to the joy of the spiritual childhood which awaits those who enter the lists in the service of that Commander and Chief Who has, in His own words, "overcome the world."

### - Soldier for Christ and Man

On September 17, 2000, Lt. Col. William S. Lawton, Jr. died after a battle with lymphoma. Lawton was one of the seven founding members of Thomas Aquinas College. (The others are founding president, Ron McArthur, John Neumayr, Frank Ellis, Marc Berquist, Dick George, and Peter DeLuca.)

Lawton had led a distinguished military career as well as a life in service for the Church. He was an ROTC student at Pearl Harbor when the bombs were dropped and was called into active service by Proclamation of the Military Governor of Hawaii when the United States entered World War II on December 7, 1941. He entered West Point, class of 1947, following – and then leading – a long family line of West Point cadets that included his father (who, in the class of 1922, had ascended to the rank of Lieutenant General), both brothers, a brother-in-law, a son-in-law, three nephews, and a granddaughter.

By 1947, after post-war action had subsided, he was dispatched to Korea. He completed basic infantry officer's training at Ft. Benning, Georgia, and was honored with an assignment to the 7th Infantry of the 3rd Division, which had the distinction of having been commanded by three U.S. Presidents, Jackson, Grant, and Eisenhower. He rose quickly to the rank of Captain in command of the rifle company when the Korean War broke out and was later dispatched to serve as an Assistant Secretary of the General Staff to General Mark Clark at Far East Headquarters in Tokyo.

In 1956, he returned to the U.S. for a 10-month infantry officer training course, after which he was sent to the ROTC detachment at the University of San Francisco. While pursuing a history degree there, he became acquainted with a young philosophy instructor, Dr. Ron McArthur.

In 1959, Lawton was sent to Paris to serve as a liaison officer to the French Army to consult on relocating the U.S. European Command Headquarters in the event of Soviet aggression. In 1963, he returned to the U.S. to serve as a Battalion Commander in the 101st Airborne Division, becoming the only Major in the Corps to hold such an infantry command. But the following year General William Westmoreland assigned him first as Sector Commander and Advisor to the Governor of the Kien Tuong Province, and subsequently as commander of the famed "Bravo Attachment" (B-41) of the Fifth Special Forces.

In 1965, he returned to San Francisco, serving first as Chief of the Senior ROTC Division, Sixth U.S. Army (26 units covering 10 Western States), and then later as Secretary of the General Staff. He again struck up with McArthur and Neumayr, and four other of their colleagues (Berquist, George, Ellis, and DeLuca, who hailed from St. Mary's College in Moraga). The plight of modern Catholic education was a frequent subject of conversation between them. McArthur had become convinced of the need to form a new college, and Berquist and Neumayr began preparing the founding document for the College, *A Proposal For The Fulfillment Of Catholic Liberal Education*, which they finished in 1969.

Lawton had collaborated with them on plans for founding a new College until the Army sent him to the Claremont Colleges to obtain a doctorate in government. He subsequently was sent to Ft. Bragg where he was Chief of the Training Division of the 18th Airborne Corps and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

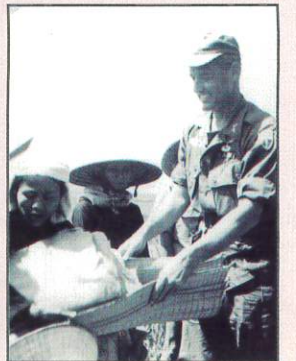
In 1974, after 32 years of service, having earned 2 Legion of Merits, 3 Bronze Stars, and 3 Army Commendation medals, among other honors and citations, Lt. Col. William Lawton retired from the Army to help the College, now three years old, in its administrative and fund-raising efforts. In 1976, his friend, H. Lymon Stebbins, founder of the newly-formed Catholics United for the Faith, also pressed him into fund-raising service, and for the next thirteen years, Lawton served as CUF's Vice-President, handling liaison work with the U.S. bishops and developing a national network for the New York-based organization.

Lawton retired in 1989, and settled in Escondido, California, with his wife Peggy of 52 years. He leaves behind 6 children and 14 grandchildren. He was active on the College's board until his death, and was involved in other important Catholic causes, including Regnum Christi, (the lay movement of the Legionaries of Christ) and Sierra Madre School, a private Catholic elementary and high school near San Diego.

His funeral was held at Mission San Antonio de Pala on the Pala Indian Reservation near Escondido, and he was interred at Ft. Rosecrans National Military Cemetery in San Diego. May he rest in peace.

I for one will miss him as I will miss few others. He was my good and steadfast friend, a wonderful companion, and lavish in arousing the pleasure which seemed to permeate our activities together. I have no idea whether in sum I ever taught him much of anything, but he, by word and deed, taught me the deepest meaning of "duty, honor, country," the motto which signifies the commitment which had prompted his career.

He told me three days before his death, in a voice barely audible, that he was offering his sufferings for the College, and that he had been trying to make connections for it in Rome when he became too weak to go on. May we then, his friends and associates, pray for his children, and for Peggy, the constant companion in body and spirit without whom he might well have faltered in fulfilling the promise he had made in the foxhole; and accept as our duty to pray for the soul of our faithfully departed friend. May his soul rest in the peace he so ardently desired as the goal of his many labors.



## The College Board of Governors Member in Profile:

### Dr. Ralph McInerny

It doesn't take a philosopher to solve a mystery, but it works well when one is writing one. Ralph McInerny is the Michael P. Grace Professor of Medieval Studies and Director of the Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame, where he has achieved international stature as a Thomistic scholar. At the same time, he is an award-winning fiction and mystery writer whose works have been adapted to a television series – which is no mystery if you know the many talents behind the man.

A native Minnesotan, McInerny entered St. Paul's Seminary to test a vocation to the priesthood. He eventually chose a vocation to the lay life, but not before getting his bachelor's degree there. He attended the University of Minnesota and then the Université Laval in Quebec, where he obtained a master's and doctorate in philosophy, graduating *summa cum laude*.

He landed at Notre Dame in 1955 as a philosophy instructor and soon thereafter received a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to study in Belgium. In 1969 he ascended to full professor and later enjoyed visiting professorships at Catholic University of America, St. Anselm's College, St. Mary's College, University of Scranton, Catholic University in Belgium, Cornell University, and Truman State University.

His love for the work of St. Thomas Aquinas led him to focus much of his academic research and writing on the Angelic Doctor and on making St. Thomas more and more accessible to both scholars and laymen. Fourteen of his 23 philosophical books relate directly to the teachings of St. Thomas. Some of his more important philosophical works include *The Logic of Analogy* (1961), *Thomism in an Age of Renewal* (1966), *St. Thomas Aquinas* (1977), *Ethica Thomistica* (1982), *Boethius and Aquinas* (1990), *Aquinas on Human Action* (1992), *The Question of Christian Ethics* (1993), and *Aquinas Against the Averroists* (1993). Other of his scholastic works have been enjoyed by an even broader audience, such as *A First Glance at St. Thomas Aquinas: A Handbook for Peeping Thomists* (1990), and *Thomas Aquinas*, published by Penguin Classics (1998). Moreover, he has published seven non-fiction books also in-



Dr. Ralph McInerny

tended for a wider audience, such as *Miracles* (Our Sunday Visitor, 1986) and *What Went Wrong With Vatican II* (Sophia Press, 1998).

His organizational involvements have been equally extensive. Among his many distinctions, he became president of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, the American Metaphysical Society, the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, Catholic Education Television, and he has served on such editorial boards as the *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, *Center Journal*, *Rivista de Filosofia*, *The New Scholasticism*, *Truth – A Journal of Modern Thought*, and the University of Notre Dame Press. He also has been a board member or advisor to numerous organizations, including American Maritain Society, Catholic Center for Renewal, Indiana Review Foundation, Wethersfield Institute, The Homeland Foundation, and The Catholic Campaign for America.

McInerny has published more than 200 articles and stories in a variety of scholarly and popular publications over the years. Under his general editorship, the Maritain Center launched a 20-volume edition of the *Works of Jacques Maritain*. He is also publishing a 6-volume edition of *Aquinas' Commentaries on Aristotle*.

Significantly, his achievements have gone far beyond the halls of academia. In 1982, he co-founded, with Michael Novak, *Catholicism in Crisis*, a monthly magazine of lay Catholic opinion. *Crisis* magazine, as it is now known, has become a recognized force for orthodoxy in the Church today. McInerny received its

distinguished P. G. Wodehouse Award in 1995. In 1994, he helped found *Catholic Dossier*, a bi-monthly periodical he currently edits. Each issue is a forum for authors to examine important and timely religious and cultural issues.

Not surprisingly, McInerny has enjoyed numerous honors and distinctions, including fellowships with the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Pontifical Roman Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas. He has received honorary degrees from St. Benedict College, Franciscan University of Steubenville, St. Francis College, St. John Fisher College, and St. Anselm College. He is the recipient of, among other awards, the St. Thomas Aquinas Medal for Eminence in Philosophy from the American Catholic Philosophical Association, the Maritain Medal from the American Maritain Association, and the Faculty Award from Notre Dame. In 1993, he was elected to a 50-member committee of the Catholic Academy of Sciences.

In spite of such work which would keep any other scholar busy for a lifetime, McInerny has found time to publish works of fiction. His first book, *Jolly Rogerson*, was published by Doubleday in 1967. His 67<sup>th</sup> book of fiction came out this year, *Heirs and Parents* (2000), following on the heels of *Irish Tenure* (1999) and *The Book of Kills* (2000). His mystery genre books include the Father Dowling and Andrew Broom mysteries and the Notre Dame mysteries. McInerny sold his Father Dowling rights to Hollywood which produced the television series of the same name. It ran from 1987 to 1991 and reruns are still shown today. In 1993, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Bouchercon (Mystery Writers) of America, and he sits on several editorial panels for judging fiction.

Over the past two years, he received a religious scholar's coveted honor: to deliver the prestigious Gifford Lectureships at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St. Andrews. The Lectures were established in 1887 to "promote and diffuse the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of the term – in other words, the knowledge of God."

In 1991, the College awarded McInerny the St. Thomas Aquinas Medallion. Two years later he joined its Board of Governors. He and his wife Connie have six children and sixteen grandchildren.

## An Interview with Dr. McInerny

Q. How would you describe the current state of Catholic higher education?

It is a very mixed picture. The great traditional institutions are in various stages of the secularization that has been marked by so many. I think of this as a loss of confidence in, or perhaps just culpable forgetfulness of, the great educational and cultural tradition in which we stand. The abandonment of this has left our universities open to all the *sturn und drang* that beset other institutions – the assumption of the sexual revolution, agitation for recognition of homosexuality, et cetera. In many institutions the question is whether we are so far down the road to secularization that we have passed the point where the makeup of the faculty and the outlook of administrations make any recovery unlikely.

Q. What role, if any, do you see Thomas Aquinas College having on this state of affairs?

An alternative to fighting the seemingly losing battle on traditional campuses is the founding of new institutions on a solid basis. Here Thomas Aquinas College is in the forefront. Its curriculum makes a genuine liberal education possible, one that is animated by the faith and the Catholic cultural tradition.

Q. To what extent, if any, do you see the College and its graduates having an impact on Catholic liberal education?

The way in which the influence of Thomas Aquinas College is felt is principally through its graduates – in religious vocations, professional life, graduates schools, everywhere. They are a powerful argument for what the College is doing. Of course the knowledge of what the College is doing, and how, has an ever-widening and important effect. In many ways, Thomas Aquinas College is a rebuke to institutions that

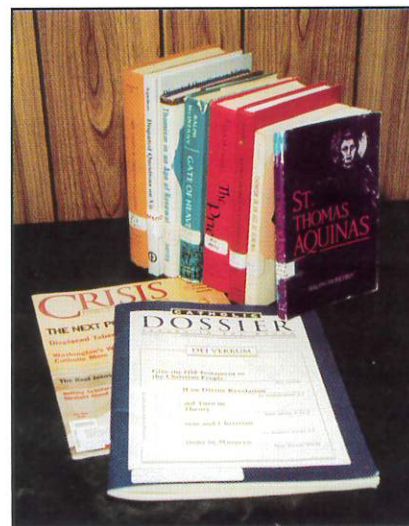
have abandoned the great tradition, and the College is, accordingly, resented. But even negative reactions – there are of course positive reactions – are a tribute to what is being accomplished there.

Q. Why did you think it was important to give of your time and reputation to serve as a member of our Board of Governors?

I am the least of those on the board and often feel totally inadequate to the expectations with which I was named to the Board. But to the degree that I can, I am at the disposal of the College, and frequently refer to it as a beacon in the present darkness.

Q. What do you think are the biggest challenges Thomas Aquinas College will face in the future?

The main one is what Herman Melville put to himself: be true to the dreams of your youth. Thomas Aquinas College has proceeded with great care to retain and strengthen the original inspiration. It is of course essential that this be done. With success and support come temptations to be pulled off in other directions. Only a school that has a firm grasp on what it is doing will stay the course – and Thomas Aquinas College is such a place.



Dr. Ralph McInerny (above) speaking at the College. At right, some of his 23 philosophical books and two popular Catholic magazines he has founded. He is also the author of 7 non-fiction books, 67 fictional books, including the Father Dowling and Andrew Broom mystery novels, and more than 200 articles and stories. He recently delivered the prestigious Gifford Lectures at the Universities of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and St. Andrews, Scotland.

Visit the newly expanded Thomas Aquinas College website at [www.thomasaquinas.edu](http://www.thomasaquinas.edu)

## Alumni Profiles



**Marie I. George, Ph.D.**  
Mission Philosopher

"When I was a little girl, I wanted to grow up and be a missionary," sighs Marie I. George, Ph.D. (Class of '79), professor of philosophy at St. John's University in Queens, New York. Yet, it's only on reflection that George realizes she has, in fact, fulfilled her childhood dream – but not exactly as she had envisioned it.

St. John's is located just 20 minutes from Manhattan, on an island of acreage in a sea of concrete buildings, honking traffic, and pavement parks. The area is inhabited largely by second-generation immigrants from nearly every country in the world – a veritable melting pot of ethnic diversity.

Many of its students are drawn from this area. A telling indicator of its diverse ethnic heritage is the number of cultural organizations sponsored on campus for African-Americans, Arabs, Armenians, Asians, Bangali, Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, Guyanese, Haitian, Hellenic, Hispanic, Indian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Korean, Latin American, Polish, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

Immigrant parents work hard to send their children to a private American college; their children go to St. John's in the hope of rising above their parents' economic state. Many students are not Catholic, although the university does aim to maintain a Catholic presence. Students are just as likely to be Muslim, Hindu, or Jewish, as they are Christian. They are, in any case, largely secularized, uncatechised, and given to the ways of the world. A missionary couldn't ask for a better challenge, and this is where George now is.

For the past dozen years, George has been teaching in St. John's Philosophy Department, through which students are still required to pass in pursuit of a liberal arts degree. Every student must take a semester in the philosophy of human nature, ethics, and metaphysics. George teaches the first two courses, as well as a course on logic.

"Students are not necessarily thrilled when they find out they have to take a philosophy class. And they are constantly looking at the results: 'Is this going to be on the test, Dr. George?' But very often, too, they come to reevaluate their life choices and to become more reflective about the important issues around them because of philosophy."

Ethics probably has the greatest impact on students. "Ethics deals with making everyday choices and people want to make good choices." She had great success using Dr. Laura Schlessinger's book, *How Can You Do That? - The Abdication of Character, Courage, and Conscience*. Students come to see the consequences of making bad choices, especially with choices concerning abortion and premarital sex.

Of course, she also employs classical texts, such as Aristotle's *Ethics*. "People really bite on Aristotle when you bring up the idea of happiness. Everyone wants to know what happiness consists in." She believes that an ethics course should not be chiefly devoted to a historical treatment of philosophers' views on how to determine right from wrong. "If your study of ethics is not helping you make better choices, you're wasting your time."

Thankfully, her time has not been wasted. Students frequently give her reasons to remain optimistic. Many of her former students have become close friends of hers. She is still in contact with students whom she taught in her very first years.

But in spite of her success, she dislikes teaching ethics. "I'd rather just be a philosopher," she laments. "Philosophy begins in wonder and I just like wondering about things." She has received many awards for her "wonderings." Twice she has received the American Catholic Philosophical Association's award for best paper by a young scholar. Last year, she received a St. John's University Award for scholarly achievement, the fifth time she has received such an award. She has also received awards from the John M. Templeton Foundation, and traveling and lecture stipends from the Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame. She recently spoke at Cornell College on "Human Nature and Contemporary Biology," along with the noted atheist/biologist, Dr. Michael Ruse.

She writes on everything from Aquinas to Darwin and has cultivated an interest in the philosophy of science. She just obtained a biology degree in June. (She had received her master's and doctoral degrees in philosophy from Laval University in Quebec.) She's thinking of developing a course on bioethics because false conclusions in this area have such serious consequences. She relies in large part on Aristotle and St. Thomas, the staples of philosophical thought she consumed at Thomas Aquinas College. Indeed, her father, Dr. Richard George, was one of the founding members of the College who helped nurture that interest.

"So many answers are found in Aquinas. Lots of people keep reinventing the wheel; they don't read Aquinas, and they don't approach philosophical questions in terms of common experience, as he did."

Her philosophical dream is to develop a good presentation of St. Thomas' fifth argument for the proof of God's existence - the argument from design. "Such an undertaking is the work of years; you don't want to be too quick in philosophy."

But she counts her achievements as nothing in comparison with her work over the past 10 years in teaching an RCIA course at her local parish in Flushing, New York. Every year she helps about a dozen people enter the Church. "I love philosophy, but the action is with the Church and bringing people to God. This is what I really love to do."

Without quite realizing it, George has become a missionary in every sense of the term. She brings Jesus to people from far-distant lands without having to travel from home. St. Therese of Lisieux, the cloistered patroness of the missions, would be proud.

**Thomas A. Cavanaugh, Ph.D.**  
Philosopher/Ethicist

Few issues are more important today than the issues of life and death at the frontier of science. Few people are speaking intelligently to those issues and defending Catholic moral theology. Few people, then, are like Thomas Cavanaugh, Ph.D. (Class of '85), Professor of Philosophy at the University of San Francisco.

Cavanaugh is at the center of the public fray over some of the most contentious issues of modern life: euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, genetic engineering, organ harvesting, cloning, and reproductive technology. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Cavanaugh is found publishing, speaking, and debating these issues across the country.

Recently, for example, he was involved in a debate with the notorious Australian euthanasia advocate, Dr. Peter Singer, at the Third World Congress of Bioethics in San Francisco. (Singer now holds an endowed chair at Princeton University.) The debate focused on whether it was legitimate to compare euthanasia, as proposed today, with what the Nazis did. "He's a very consistent thinker," said Cavanaugh. "All he's doing is taking the current anti-life position to its logical conclusion."

Much of what Cavanaugh does is in defense of "the culture of life" as Pope John Paul II puts it, but in terms that secularists can understand. "I aim to defend what is reasonable in their own language. I'm not trying to come up with any counterfeit positions; I'm just trying to convince people of the reasonableness of a position that is often presented only in religious terms."

"For example, once you mention the 'sanctity of life,' they understand that to be a religious phrase and they quickly dismiss you. But if you speak their language and refer, say, to the 'inviolability of human life,' you can get them to listen to you. If you give legitimate philosophical arguments for your position, you will get an audience. They might not necessarily agree with you, but they will at least come to see that your position is reasonable."

This is no easy order. Framing arguments against physician-assisted suicide based on the "slippery slope" is one thing. But presenting arguments about the badness of death itself is much harder. "You have to be much more philosophical when addressing those arguments; that can be more difficult to do than in merely presenting a public policy argument."

Yet that is Cavanaugh's forte. After graduating from the College, he obtained his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Notre Dame under the tutelage of Dr. Ralph McInerny [see profile, p. 4]. Cavanaugh's dissertation was on the principle of double-effect, that is, the principle used to analyze the permissibility of a given human action when a foreseen, but unintended effect causes an evil to occur, such as dropping bombs in war, knowing civilian casualties will occur. Using pain medication to alleviate suffering even though it may shorten one's life is another example. The principle, which arises from traditional Catholic moral theology, comes up often in the field of medical ethics; this was Cavanaugh's entrée to the field.

He has published numerous articles in the history of ethics, medical ethics, and in action theory in journals such as the *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, *Christian Bioethics*, *Bioethics*, *The Thomist*, *Philosophical Papers*, *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, *Aquinas Review*, and *Dialogue and Universalism*. He has also delivered papers at conferences of the American Philosophical Association, the American Catholic Philosophical Association, the American Society of Bioethics and the Humanities, the World Congress of Bioethics, and ETHICOMP.

Of course, not all of his time is spent before potentially-hostile secular audiences. Last year, he addressed the Archdiocese of San Francisco on the issue of stem cell research. This summer, he presented a paper on Aquinas' action theory at Notre Dame. And in September, he attended the Universities' Jubilee in Rome where he presented a paper entitled, "A Critique of the Genetic Privacy Act." He, his wife and son were privileged to attend Mass with the Holy Father.

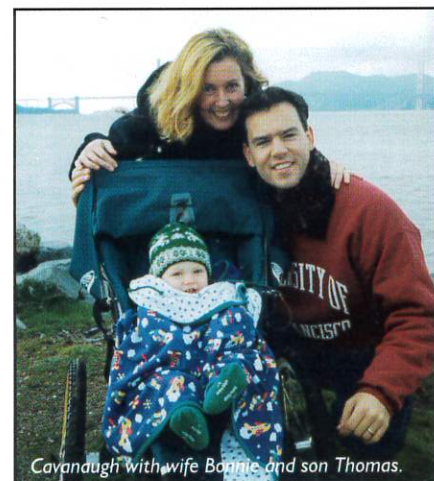
Currently, he is on a one-year sabbatical from his tenured teaching position at USF to write a book devoted to double-effect reasoning. He loves to write, but he also loves to teach and enjoys his colleagues in the Philosophy Department. Normally, he teaches courses in medical ethics and moral psychology and occasionally a course on the philosophy of law. He regularly teaches in the St. Ignatius Institute, a program at the university which offers a classical core curriculum.

Cavanaugh was raised in Erie, Pennsylvania, the only boy among three sisters, and came to the College at the suggestion of a priest whose off-campus classes he was attending while in high school. Little did he know that the priest, Fr. Gerard Steckler, S.J., would become one of the College's chaplains the following year.

Cavanaugh remains grateful to Fr. Steckler for the suggestion. "The College gives you a real breadth of the liberal arts. The math and physics are so important. Moreover, the College has a unique way of developing the skill of argumentation. You acquire the habit of determining what comes first in an argument, what's an inference and what follows from something else."

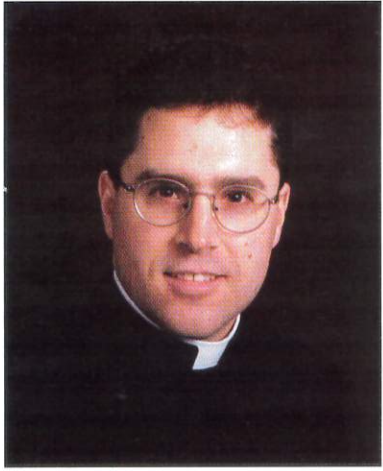
He is also thankful for the influence the College had on his faith. "The entire program shows you the fullness and beauty of the faith – from literature to social teaching, and, of course, through theology. You also come to appreciate that beauty through the liturgy and community life. You come to see that faith can permeate every aspect of your life."

Cavanaugh met his wife Bonnie, a Bay Area native, at the wedding of two friends. Bonnie, a stay-at-home mom, is a registered nurse whose clinical experience proves invaluable to Tom in his research. Their son, Thomas Marcus, is four years old.



Cavanaugh with wife Bonnie and son Thomas.

# —College Celebrates Ordination of 27th and 28th Alumni Priests:—



Fr. Robert Novokowsky

"I've come to see that not all truth *can* be taught through explicit formulae. The majesty of God, His *awesome* majesty, is best revealed to us in the beautiful, such as in a sunset. But, perhaps, the best teacher is the beauty of the Sacred Liturgy, because it is ordained by God, *about* God, and is *ordered* to God. I have experienced this beauty in the Holy Mass, which, because it is beautiful, is also evangelical – it teaches truth."

Last spring, Fr. Robert Novokowsky was ordained a priest in the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, a religious society called into existence by Pope John Paul II, with the permission to use the Liturgical Books of 1962, (the Typical Edition current before Vatican II) including the old

Latin Mass Missal known as the "Tridentine Mass." Fr. Novokowsky was not raised in the milieu of the old Latin Mass; its taste was something he began to acquire at Thomas Aquinas College.

He was raised in Kitchener, Ontario, the youngest of four children, in a good Catholic family. After high school, he thought he might have a vocation to the priesthood, but saw the importance of going to college first. He discovered Thomas Aquinas College when his sister handed him a bulletin she had come across and said, "Hey, you might be interested in this." He had just spent a semester at the University of Guelph in Kitchener and was frustrated by his inability to study math and science along with his liberal arts program. Reading about the College's curriculum was, to him, like reading his desires on paper. He applied at once and enrolled in the fall.

The College lived up to his every expectation. What is more, it fostered his religious vocation. "The sacramental life, the devotional life, and my spiritual director [then chaplain, Fr. Vincent Young] all had a powerful effect on me. I'm not sure I would have pursued my vocation if I had gone anywhere else." While the College has since its inception offered the *Novus Ordo* Latin Mass – that is, the rite of Mass approved after Vatican II – since 1969, the College has, at the request of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, offered the Tridentine Mass monthly.

"I found the Latin *Novus Ordo* to be a wonderful thing. It seemed to correspond with the latent desires in my heart about what the liturgy should be. The reverence and direction was different from what I had experienced in the typical English Mass and became a stepping stone for me to see the beauty of the Tridentine Mass. It was at the College that I discovered this for the first time. It wasn't love at first sight, but a love that grew on me."

While some devotees of the Tridentine Mass have been tempted to break with Rome over liturgical issues, Fr. Novokowsky was never so tempted. "I hadn't been raised in a Traditionalist environment. For me, my devotion came simply from the beauty of the liturgy itself."

He entered the Priestly Fraternity in 1994 after teaching at a minor seminary of the Legionaries of Christ. He spent most of his time in formation at the Fraternity's American Seminary in Scranton, Pennsylvania (which recently moved to Lincoln, Nebraska). He spent one year studying at the international motherhouse in Germany and another year in Colorado.

He is currently serving as Associate Pastor at St. Anthony's Church in Calgary, Alberta, a parish of about 500 families, where he has a specific pastoral duty to offer the sacraments in the traditional rite for the portion of the parish attached to them. In addition, he serves as chaplain for nearby Rockyview Hospital.

"When people come to know the Latin Mass they become attracted to it, one family by one family, one person by one person, at a time." He enjoys the challenge of his vocation. "Since ordination, no two days have been alike. Sometimes I wish they were!"

The first Mass newly-ordained Fr. Ramón Decaen wanted to celebrate on returning to California from the Diocese of Lincoln (Nebraska) was at Thomas Aquinas College. "I found my vocation there; it was only right that, on my return home, I celebrate my first Mass of thanksgiving there."

Fr. Decaen's homecoming was all the more special because he grew up in nearby Ventura, California. He entertained thoughts of a religious vocation during his public high school days and wanted to attend a college that would help him discern it.

He settled on Thomas Aquinas College, in part because his brother Chris was attending here, and because he had known College chaplain, Fr. Gerard Steckler, S.J., since his youth. Fr. Steckler helped him confirm his religious vocation in his freshman year, but to Ramón's great disappointment, transferred unexpectedly to Oregon at the end of the year. Despite this setback, Ramón was blessed the following year with the spiritual direction of the new chaplain, Fr. Thomas Conn, S.J., who continued to nurture Ramón's vocation.

But then Fr. Conn was diagnosed with brain cancer and was forced to curtail activity. He died in October, 1997. Chaplain Fr. Wilfred Borden, O.M.I., then became Ramón's spiritual director. "All three priests were incredible blessings to me and very influential. And so was the example of the faculty and staff families at the College. I got to see first-hand what it means to live by faith because of the great sacrifices they made to teach and work there."

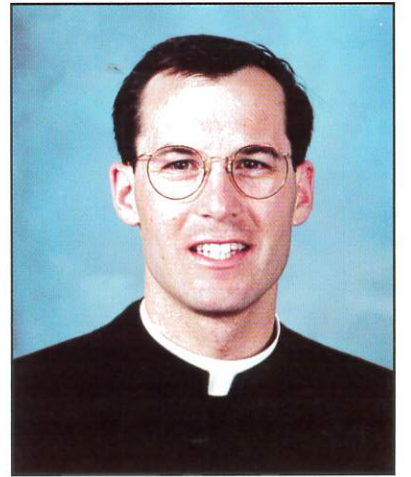
Over the next two years, Ramón corresponded with alumnus, Mike Goyette ('94), who was studying for the priesthood in the Lincoln Diocese. In his senior year, Ramón settled on a vocation to the diocesan priesthood and was attracted to the strong orthodoxy of the Lincoln Diocese under the authority of Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz. He visited during Easter break and knew it was for him. One week after graduation he joined the Diocese's summer program for seminarians.

Ramón was then sent for studies at Mount St. Mary's Seminary, in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Normally, those who enter the seminary with a philosophy degree are still required to take one or two more years of spiritual and philosophical formation. The requirement was waived for Ramón, however, because of the intensive philosophical and spiritual formation he received at the College. "This was a very bold move," he said, "because the backbone of the seminary formation is Aristotle and St. Thomas. They were hesitant at first, but they could see how strong our foundation was in these subjects."

On May 27, 2000, after four years of seminary training, he was ordained – an astoundingly brief time for the normal candidate, made brief because of the intellectual and spiritual formation he had received at Thomas Aquinas College. There to vest him at ordination was his first spiritual director, Fr. Steckler.

Fr. Decaen's first assignment has been as Assistant Pastor at St. Mary's Church, in Nebraska City, Nebraska, a parish of 450 families. He celebrates a Spanish Mass every couple of weeks to meet the needs of the growing Hispanic population coming into the area. He also teaches religion to junior high and high schoolers at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, and a weekly catechism class for junior high students from public schools. In addition, he serves on the Marriage Tribunal for the Lincoln Diocese.

Fr. Decaen is in awe of his new vocation. "I love being used by the Lord in such a powerful way. To make present the Holy Eucharist and sacraments to the people of God is such a powerful reality. To be called in the middle of the night to bring the Eucharist to someone's dying husband – I'm glad that people want that, and I've been blessed enough to provide it."



Fr. Ramon DeCaen

## Thomas Aquinas College Alumni Priests

1. Rev. James Montanaro, O.M.V. ('77\*)  
*Oblates of the Virgin Mary, Milton, MA*
2. Rev. Isaiah Teichert, O.S.B. ('78)  
*Benedictine Camaldolese Hermits, Immaculate Heart Hermitage, Big Sur, CA*
3. Rev. Peter Short, O.M.V. ('78)  
*Oblates of the Virgin Mary, Cordoba, Argentina*
4. Rev. James Garceau, C.R.I.C. ('78\*)  
*Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception Los Angeles and Santa Paula, CA*
5. Rev. Peter Hopkins, L.C. ('79)  
*Legionaries of Christ, Cheshire, CT*
6. Rev. Edward Hopkins, L.C. ('80\*)  
*Legionaries of Christ, Cheshire, CT*
7. Rev. Mark Avila, O.M.V. ('81)  
*Oblates of the Virgin Mary, Sacramento, CA*
8. Rev. Mark Nemetz, O.M.V. ('81)  
*Oblates of the Virgin Mary*
9. Rev. Mark Bachmann, O.S.C. ('82\*)  
*Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross, Hulbert, OK*
10. Rev. Barry O'Toole, L.C. ('82)  
*Legionaries of Christ, Cheshire, CT*
11. Rev. Kermit Syren, L.C. ('84)  
*Legionaries of Christ, Cheshire, CT*
12. Rev. Jude Francis Vos ('84)  
*Diocese of Fargo, ND*
13. Rev. Rory O'Toole, L.C. ('84)  
*Legionaries of Christ, Cheshire, CT*
14. Rev. Francis, O. Praem. (Michael Gloudeman) ('84)  
*Canons Regular of Premontre, St. Michael's Norbertine Abbey, Silverado, CA*
15. Rev. Christopher DeHerrera ('85\*)  
*Archdiocese of Denver, CO*
16. Rev. Andrew Koch, O.S.B. ('85\*)  
*Order of St. Benedict, St. Benedict Abbey Still River, MA*
17. Rev. Mary Michael, O. Cart. (Steve Tobias) ('86)  
*Order of Carthusians, Vancouver, B.C. Canada*
18. Rev. Jeff King ('86)  
*Diocese of Gallup, NM*
19. Rev. Phillip Chavez, S.O.L.T. ('86\*)  
*Society of our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, Robstown, TX*
20. Rev. Anthony (Sean) Kramer, O. Mar. ('86\*)  
*Congregation of Maronite Monks Holy Nativity Monastery, Bethlehem, SD*
21. Rev. Matthew O'Donnell ('88)  
*Diocese of Stockton, CA*
22. Rev. Bernard McCoy, O. Cist. ('88\*)  
*Order of Cistercian Fathers Cistercian Abbey, Sparta, WI*
23. Rev. John Higgins ('90\*)  
*Archdiocese of New York, NY*
24. Rev. Charles Van Vliet, F.S.S.P. ('91\*)  
*Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter St. Clements Church, Ontario, Canada*
25. Rev. John Berg, F.S.S.P. ('93\*)  
*Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, Elmhurst, PA*
26. Rev. Mark Moriarty ('95\*)  
*Archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN*
27. Rev. Robert Novokowsky ('93\*)  
*Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, Canada*
28. Rev. Ramon Decaen ('96\*)  
*Diocese of Lincoln, NE*

\* denotes graduate

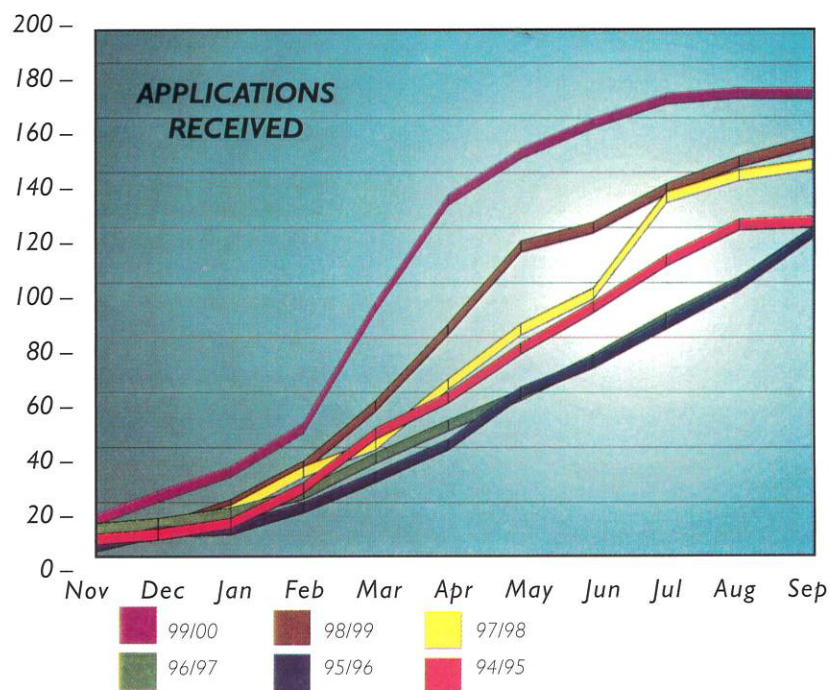
# Large Freshman Class Brings College to Record Enrollment

– High School Summer Seminar Program Credited for Increase

On a sunny California morning this past September, 85 freshmen signed the registry during convocation ceremonies and brought the College student body to a record 277 for the 2000-01 academic year. This was the fourth year in a row that applications for the freshman class have increased over the previous year.

Indeed, so many applications had been received so early this year that the freshman class was filled by mid-March. The College accepts applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the class was filled, successful applicants were assigned to a waiting list in the order in which their applications were completed. Many of them were subsequently offered places in the class.

"This is a very bright, enthusiastic class," said Admissions Director Tom Susanka. "I'm always amazed at the great variety and goodness of entering students. I know this is a special time for them, but it's a special time for us, too."



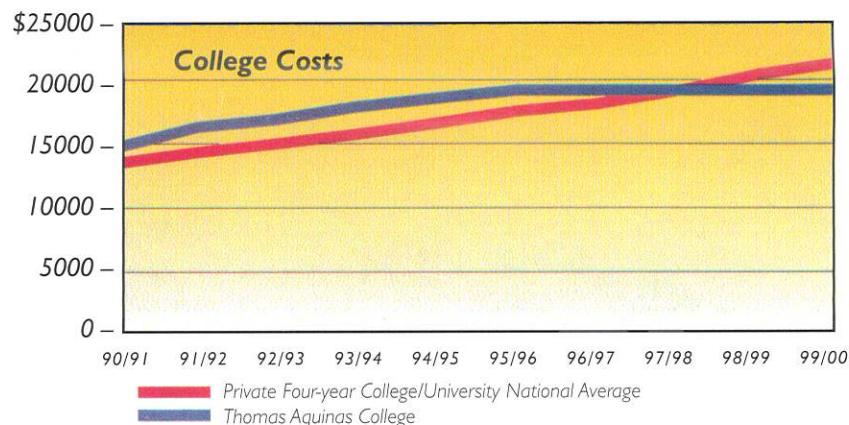
Susanka credited the High School Summer Seminar program for the increase in the number of applications and eventual students. Nearly one-quarter of this year's class had attended last year's summer seminar program – a percentage that has held since the inception of the program three years ago. To date, the program has attracted 230 young scholars, including the 48 who attended this past year from across the U.S., Canada, and France.

The summer seminar program aims to replicate the experience of College life here. For two weeks, students are grouped into three "tutorials" of 17 students where, under the direction of College faculty members, they read, discuss, and analyze, some of the greatest works of Western Civilization. They encounter questions of moral, political, and religious authority, framed in the works of Sophocles and Plato; questions of

Student Body Profile 2000-2001	
<b>Enrollment:</b>	<b>277 students, 148 men 129 women</b>
<b>Geographic Distribution:</b>	<b>35 states, Austria, Bulgaria Canada, China Kenya, Mexico Puerto Rico South Africa</b>
<b>Average SAT:</b>	<b>1260</b>
<b>Top 25% of High School Graduating Class:</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Private School/Homeschool:</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Previous College Experience:</b>	<b>26%</b>

the right relation between faith and reason prompted by Kierkegaard's reflections on *Genesis*; issues concerning human imperfection and corruption as seen in Shakespeare's *MacBeth*; fundamental natural rights as framed in the Lincoln-Douglas debates; arguments for purpose and order in nature raised in J. Henry Fabre's investigation of insects; the beauty and absolute quality of truth as seen in Euclid's mathematical demonstrations.

The students also enjoy side excursions, such as strolling along the beach and State Street in Santa Barbara, or visiting the Getty Museum to take in great works by Rembrandt, Monet and Van Gogh, or attending a performance of "Fiddler on the Roof" at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Center. The program closes with an evening banquet and celebration.



## TRUTH BEST GUIDE IN CHOOSING COLLEGE By James Bemis

If, as T. S. Eliot said, April is the cruelest month, then what might the poet say about May? For high school seniors, the recently departed "merry, merry" month of May might be the most bittersweet of all.

That's because in May most seniors can finally answer the question dogging them all year: Where are you going to college? Depending on the impenetrable mysteries of acceptance and rejection, the decision may be easy, agonizing, or no choice at all.

For those accepted by their dream university, May is the month of magic, of magnificence, of escalating merriment. Others may find it a period of resignation, rationalization, perhaps even despair.

Our family just completed such an odyssey with our daughter Marisa, a senior at La Reina High School in Thousand Oaks. The adventure started last year when she began looking seriously at universities. Consulting guidebooks about "choosing a college," the field soon narrowed from the universe to a manageable subset.

Next, she gathered literature about her twenty or thirty "top" choices, mesmerized by photos of grand, stately Halls of Administration, majestic magnolia trees in blossom, and statues of famous founders gracing the grounds. Reading the brochures, she imagined herself in the shadow of Notre Dame's Golden Dome, walking through Harvard's hallowed halls, or strolling along Lake Michigan amidst the great Gothic spires of the University of Chicago.

Hating to burst her bubble, I quickly reminded her about the frosty Indiana winters, Massachusetts'

blinding snowstorms, and the arctic-like blizzards of Illinois. (This is not a child that suffers chills gladly.)

Undaunted, we trekked back East to look at schools, stopping by Georgetown, Catholic University, Columbia and others. Each impressed her in its own way, but the thought of being that far from home – and that cold in winter – made the reality of an East Coast school less attractive than the dream.

So a California school it would be: now at least geographical boundaries were set. This still left her with lots of sifting to do.

Then came something unexpected that completely reformed Marisa's thinking. Not like a thunderbolt perhaps, but gradually the way for her became lit, the path more evident, the goal increasingly apparent.

Last August, she attended the Summer Great Books Program at Santa Paula's Thomas Aquinas College. Here, for the first time, she tasted the wild, delicious fruits of the pursuit of truth for its own sake – education as a means of determining one's own proper end and destiny. Nowadays, just speaking about what is good and true sounds quaint and somewhat medieval, like searching for the Holy Grail. Yet this is the quest that built Western Civilization and its great institutions – including the universities themselves.

Most higher education institutions have abandoned this mission, instead becoming glorified vocational training centers, diploma factories concerned solely with money, jobs and careers. They've forgotten there's a higher calling for man's intellect – examining how one should live.

At Thomas Aquinas College, Marisa spent two weeks in the company of fifty teenagers, following the trail blazed by great ancient thinkers – Aristotle, Plato, Aquinas, Shakespeare, and others. While there, she uncovered a shocking fact: against all the modern world's teachings, there exists a thing called truth, and she can know it.

Enthralled by this idea, she pored through college brochures, searching for those promising to help her discover what constitutes a good life. Narrowing her choices to four – Loyola Marymount, Santa Clara, St. Mary's in Moraga, and TAC – she applied and was accepted to all.

Now came the hard reality of the final choice. After much prayer and reflection, the answer was obvious. Only one college took up her challenge by making an astonishing claim of reckless bravery: Come here, and learn what is truth.

That college was Thomas Aquinas College.

So next fall, we'll pack Marisa off to the magnificent foothills behind Santa Paula, where she'll experience the joys and sufferings of college life – meeting her roommate and new friends, pulling all-nighters to finish a paper, the intense pressure of finals. But at TAC, she'll also be guided in her search for something far more important – the means of living a noble and abundant life.

I have no doubt she'll find it there.

James Bemis writes a weekly column for the Los Angeles Daily News. This column appeared in the June 4, 2000 edition and is reprinted with permission. And, yes, his daughter is currently a freshman and is doing well.



Mike and Marilyn (née Ellis) were classmates

## - Mike Letteney: Following the Fate of the Phone Book

When choosing a college, consult the Yellow Pages. Mike Letteney did.

Letteney was a year out of high school, a transplant from Massachusetts, and a lumberyard worker in nearby Ventura. Late in the summer of 1984, he decided he wanted to go to college. But when he found that the out-of-state tuition he'd have to pay at a local state college

would be comparable to what he'd pay at a private college, he thought he'd check out local private colleges.

So he got out the phone book, looked under "colleges," and the first private college entry he saw was "Thomas Aquinas College." He called Admissions Director Tom Susanka who told him there was still room in the freshman class. Letteney got an application, started filling it out, but abandoned it in frustration when he couldn't keep his messy freehand essays from curving over the page. Susanka called and urged him to complete it. Letteney did and delivered it to Susanka the next day. That was Thursday. On Friday he was accepted. On Monday he started school.

He had no idea what he was getting into. In fact, when he had come to drop off his application, Susanka had to explain to him the unique character of the College, noting that all classes were held around tables and that no desks existed. Susanka went to show him a typical classroom. The first door they opened happened to be filled to the ceiling with desks (being stored for a group over the summer). Letteney thought Susanka was pulling a fast one.

Letteney's story is stranger still. Less than a year before, he had intended to join the Army. He had scored high on his aptitude test and was highly-recruited. The night before he was to swear in for duty, he walked out in front of a grocery store after work and met up with a few friends who were drinking beer – just as a police cruiser came by. Two friends fled, but Letteney stayed with one on crutches who couldn't flee. Letteney was arrested and cited for a public drinking violation.

The next day the recruiter told him he couldn't swear in with an open case pending. He later beat the charge, but in the meantime his father invited him to come to California, which he did. Had Letteney not walked in front of the grocery

store that night, he would not have ended up in Ventura, not have gone to the College, not have turned his life around, not have married his classmate, and not have returned to teach. Thank you, Mr. Police Man.

Letteney was raised Catholic but wasn't serious about his faith. Eventually, his studies took root, specifically, with St. Augustine in his sophomore year, and he realized the importance of living the Christian life. He found a love for philosophy (as well as for his classmate, and now wife, Marilyn Ellis), and after graduation in 1988 wanted to study more. He was fascinated with the relationship between modern science and Aristotelian natural philosophy.

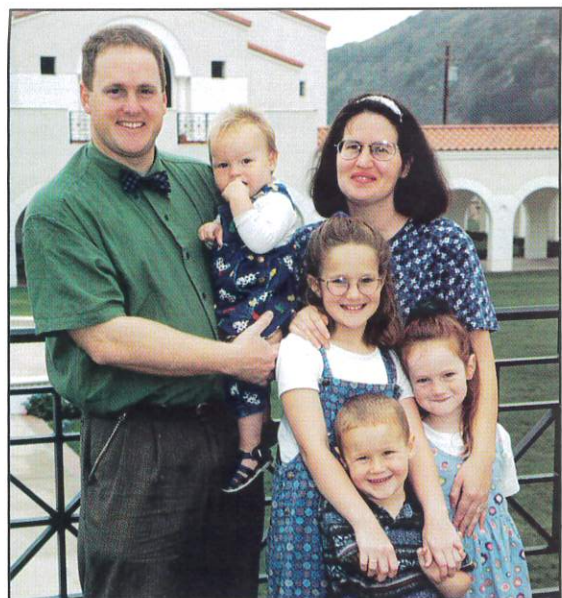
He went to Notre Dame, obtaining a master's degree in the history and philosophy of science, another master's in philosophy, and a doctorate in philosophy. He was awarded the distinguished Bradley Fellowship from 1990-93 and from 1994-96, and worked under Dr. Ralph McNerny [see profile page 4] helping to archive Charles de Koninck's papers, organizing a summer Thomistic institute, and assisting at McNerny's "Basics of Catholicism" courses. He wrote his dissertation on the 18<sup>th</sup> century naturalist, George Cuvier, who sought to defend the teleological underpinnings of biology against the rising modernists of the day. Today, he gets requests from scholars to review related monographs.

He was also teaching introductory philosophy courses for undergraduates and found a love and gift for teaching. He wanted to return to his *alma mater*, but no tutor openings existed. He took a teaching position at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he taught the "theory of knowledge" and various seminars on the history and philosophy of science.

Two years later in 1998, a tutor vacancy arose at the College and Letteney returned. "I had some apprehension about coming back to be a colleague with men and women who had been my teachers, but I was surprised how quickly that went away. They were so welcoming."

He is glad to be teaching according to the College's unique pedagogy. "At Xavier, I'd come in with a prepared lecture and would know exactly the kinds of questions that were going to come up. Here, you have to trust that your students will find their way. Sometimes, you send out the opening question on a wing and a prayer. More often than not your prayer is answered in the most unexpected and delightful way."

Today, Mike and Marilyn raise five children together. Thanks to the Yellow Pages.



Steve and Mary (née O'Hara, '87) and family were classmates

## - Steve Cain: Evidence of the Power of a Good Friend

Cheating on tests was no big deal when Steve Cain was in high school in West Palm Beach, Florida. He couldn't understand why his freshman classmate wouldn't help him with answers on their Latin test. But Tony Andres was unlike everyone else. For starters he was the only kid Steve knew, including himself, whose parents hadn't divorced. He was smart, athletic, and came from a family that would stay up late discussing interesting things. And he was Catholic.

Steve was amazed that Tony wouldn't help him cheat. That struck him as a good thing. He then had many serious conversations with Tony about many serious things that started him down the road to faith. The oldest of three children, Steve was baptized Episcopalian, but he was functionally pagan, raised without any church involvement. "Tony never openly proselytized me; he simply explained his position about things I couldn't fathom, like why he wouldn't go to the mall on Sunday."

On graduation from high school, Tony came to Thomas Aquinas College; Steve "wasted" a year at Florida State University. They continued to correspond and to visit on breaks and their conversations became even better. Steve could see the impact of the College on his friend. He toyed with the idea of enrolling himself, but didn't think it would be worth going so far from family and friends. And, besides, it was Catholic and he was not. He decided to head back to the northeast near his father and attend Connecticut College.

In the meantime, he kept talking to Tony to good effect. At the beginning of his junior year, he became Catholic. "It's a sure sign of God's existence if you can convert at a place like Connecticut College." What Steve didn't know, is that Tony had gotten his College friends, including a young sophomore girl, Mary O'Hara, to pray for him.

During spring break later that year, Steve came to visit Tony at the College. At the first class, the tutor was late due to car problems. Steve was amazed to see students start the class without him. He was even more impressed when the tutor showed up halfway through class and inconspicuously, but naturally, entered the conversation. Campus curfew, single-sex dorms, and night prayers were other curi-

osities. He saw they were good and regretted not attending the College himself.

But God had other plans in store. Talking with Tony made Steve interested in Aristotle and St. Thomas. The philosophy offerings at Connecticut were constraining, so he switched to classics and double-majored in physics, graduating with honors in classics and distinction in both majors.

At Tony's recommendation, he moved to Boston to teach physics and philosophy at a Catholic high school and to audit a philosophy course at Assumption College taught by Professor Duane Berquist, (brother of Thomas Aquinas co-founder Marcus Berquist). Steve was smitten by Berquist's erudition and began to participate in what was to become ten years of study groups under the famed Thomistic professor. Joining the group was Mary O'Hara, freshly graduated from Thomas Aquinas, pursuing graduate studies at Boston College. The two fell in love with more than just St. Thomas' commentary on Aristotle's physics. They married two years later.

Steve taught for a year at Trivium Academy, a classics high school in Lancaster, Massachusetts, and then attended Catholic University for graduate studies in Greek and Latin. After completing course work for a master's degree in classics, he relocated back to Boston College and obtained a master's degree in philosophy. He is now a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy, having passed his exams with distinction, and having acquired numerous honors and awards. While pursuing graduate studies and private home tutorials from Duane Berquist, he served as Professor of Humanities at the Legionaries of Christ college seminary and its Center for Higher Studies.

In 1998, a tutor position opened at Thomas Aquinas and Steve jumped at the chance. For him, it was a chance to make up for lost time; for his alumna wife, Mary, a homecoming. They have four children together.

Steve says teaching at the College is humbling. "Generally a teacher is expected to have a command over the material. But under this teaching format, students are always asking questions that you may not have the answer to. Its goal is to be able to say, 'I don't know,' and then work together to find the answer. You bring out a sense of the common enterprise that way. And you really see that tutors are fellow students here."

Steve loves the interaction with students. "Conversations inside class often spill outside class. You have meals with students, social activities with students, you develop a friendship with students – which is how the intellectual life should be, a common endeavor. When I taught as a lecturer, I'd come out of classes drained. But here, I come out invigorated."

Tony Andres, the graduate, is now a Professor of Philosophy at Christendom College. Steve Cain, the wishful graduate, now teaches here. They still talk.



Steve Cain clarifies a point with Christina Mahar ('03)



## Two Tutors To Tutor



### - Tim Smith: From Baptist Seminarian to Catholic Professor

If all roads lead to Rome, you shouldn't be surprised by the road that went through a Baptist seminary. That was Dr. Timothy Smith's road.

Smith was born into a Baptist family in Memphis, Tennessee and after age 10 was raised in Salina, Kansas. His grandfather was a Baptist minister, one uncle was a Baptist missionary, and everyone

thought young Timothy would follow in their footsteps. He was a youth group leader who eventually rose to an assistant pastor, and was found preaching in many different churches.

After high school he entered William Jewell College, a Baptist college, and enrolled in a new "Oxbridge" program which featured one-on-one tutorials and study abroad. At Oxford in his junior year, with the Baptist church a long way from home, he began attending the Anglican Church. He was overwhelmed by the beauty of the cathedrals and the majesty of high church liturgy. "I came to understand in a new way both the awesomeness of God and what it means to have 'fear of the Lord.'"

He graduated from William Jewell in 1988, and enrolled in Southern Theological Seminary in Louisville with the plan to become a Baptist minister. He studied early Christian theology under a mentor who had been a friend of the renowned Trappist monk, Thomas Merton. Smith thus consumed spiritual works not normally found in a Baptist's diet: works by St. John of the Cross, Brother Lawrence, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Theresa of Avila. Twice, even, he visited Merton's Abbey of Gethsemane.

These experiences were beginning to have a cumulative effect on Smith, who at this point was attending primarily an Episcopal Church. He then experimented with attendance at Mass and recognized what he had been reading about.

By the end of his seminary studies, Smith realized he was called to be a teacher, not a preacher, and he thirsted for more studies in the history of Christian spirituality. A mentor recommended him to Notre Dame University in the hope that he would study under a noted Protestant historian, Dr. Bernard McGinn. Smith then enrolled – just as McGinn left. But Smith stayed and shortly thereafter decided to

become Catholic. He was baptized the following Easter.

While at Notre Dame, Smith met another graduate student, Diana (pronounced "Dee-anna") Vaskeviciute, from Lithuania, who was working toward two masters' degrees – one in peace and international studies, the other in government. Before coming to the U.S., Diana obtained an English degree from the University of Vilnius and had worked as a translator and interpreter for a drama theater and for visiting diplomats. She got the degrees; they married soon after.

After obtaining his masters degree in Medieval Studies, Smith obtained a doctorate in Medieval Studies under the direction of Dr. Ralph McInerney [featured on page 4]. His doctoral dissertation, "Aquinas' Trinitarian Theology," will be published by The Catholic University of America Press next year. He was also appointed to the editorial board of *Sapientia*, a philosophical journal published by the pontifical Catholic university in Buenos Aires.

While at Notre Dame, Smith taught a freshman theology course, "Foundations of Catholic Theology." He came to see the importance of teaching in an integrated program where courses build one on another. He knew of Thomas Aquinas College through his friendships with alumni pursuing graduate work at Notre Dame. He then read the College's founding document and found what he was looking for: an ordered, integrated curriculum. He applied for a teaching position and was accepted this year.

"I really appreciate the idea of working together with people on a common project, to be able to work with other faculty and students in a curriculum where everything matters and the parts illumine one another. The point of teaching is not merely to raise questions, but to provide the means of answering those questions."

He also enjoys the seminar method. "After a lecture, you have no idea whether it was effective. But after a seminar, you know exactly whether and to what extent students are making progress."

He's presently teaching sophomore theology and sophomore seminar courses – courses which cover the works of St. Athanasius, St. Anselm, St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, Boethius, Dante, Chaucer, and Spencer, among others. His background in medieval theology makes him a natural fit for these courses.

He marvels when he looks back on his road well-traveled. "If you had told me, say, twelve years ago, that I would one day be teaching at a profoundly Catholic liberal arts college, I would have thought you were insane. On the other hand, as I sit here today, I can't imagine doing anything else."

Quite a road. Of course, he had quite a Driver.



### - Matt Walz: First from Christendom College

Two very different Catholic schools, one new bridge between them: Matt Walz. In 1971, Thomas Aquinas College was founded to establish authentic Catholic liberal education. Since then, other colleges, such as Christendom College in Virginia, were founded to achieve similar goals. It was inevitable that cross-pollination of faculty would someday occur. Dr. Tony Andres, a 1987 graduate of Thomas Aquinas, has been a professor at Christendom for seven years. Now, Matt Walz, a 1995 graduate of Christendom, joins the faculty of Thomas Aquinas. A first exchange is complete.

Walz is the youngest of seven children. Three sisters and a brother preceded him at Christendom. He was born in Albany, New York, but was raised for most of his life near Kent State University where his father teaches biochemistry.

On graduating from public high school – where he was distinguished as a valedictorian – his main interest was in mathematics. He planned to study at Christendom for two years and then return to Kent State to study math. But a love for philosophy held him hostage in Virginia. The math could wait.

He double-majored in philosophy and theology and graduated, once again, as class valedictorian. His philosophy thesis addressed "How one can speak of God," while his theology thesis focused on the modes of God's presence in creation, grace, and the Eucharist.

He pursued graduate studies in philosophy at The Catholic University of America, accumulating numerous academic honors, including the Johannes Quasten Fellowship for Graduate Studies, the Richard M. Weaver Fellowship, the McAllister Scholarship for Advanced Studies in Scholasticism, and the Salvatori Fellowship.

In 1989, he obtained his master's degree in philosophy, writing on "Thomas Aquinas' Adoption of Aristotelian Psychological Method, Exemplified in His Doctrine on the Will." The American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly also published his article, "Theological and Philosophical Dependencies in St. Bonaventure's Argument Against an Eternal World and a Brief Thomistic Reply." He anticipates getting his doctoral degree in May, being only one chapter away from completing his dissertation on "Thomas Aquinas on the Human Will and Freedom: Towards a Scientific Understanding."

While in graduate school Walz volunteered for a local Missionaries of Charity clinic, bathing and feeding AIDS patients. "It's really incredible to see how much the sisters love people – the experience brings you back to the reality of Christianity."

Walz came to learn about Thomas Aquinas College through alumni who were engaged in post-graduate work with him at Catholic University. One advantage he saw to teaching at Thomas Aquinas is the ability of tutors to be able to explore subjects that professors at other schools could never do. "I've known a lot of professors over the years who've been restrained from teaching something they really love." Walz was impressed, for instance, with the math and sciences at Thomas Aquinas and relished the thought of being able to dive into those courses.

Walz loved his time at Christendom, but sees many differences between Thomas Aquinas and Christendom. "Christendom clearly has a more practical bent, and its program is less integrated – which might be good or bad depending on how you see it. For me, it was a good because I was exposed to a wider-range of philosophical thought through my major. But at the same time, I missed out on the maths and sciences that are done here."

"One thing I really like about TAC is the pedagogy – the seminar discussion method. Christendom mostly follows the lecture method, which has its strengths. But I also see the value of the seminar method. When I lectured before in my courses, I found my best work with students was always done outside the classroom, when you'd be having a real conversation about an issue raised in class. Here, you do that all the time as part of the class. Students here learn how to learn on their own. As a lecturer, I was always leading by the hand."

"Plus, with the lecture method, it's hard to interest those students who don't want to be interested. So you start focusing on the 10-15 students who are interested and then leaving out the other 25, or you start dumbing down the material so the other 25 can pass. The seminar method, though, helps an uninterested student cultivate the love of learning himself and, once he discovers his own interest, he becomes engaged. I got tired of students asking me, 'Why do we need to know this?' That question never comes up here."

Last year, Walz married his classmate, Teresa Ann Heim, who after graduating from Christendom, obtained her master's in education from Marymount in Virginia, and then taught kindergarten and second grade. She gave birth to Damien Joseph this summer.

The Walzes are a long way from home. But they find a warm welcome here.



## Student Life at a Glance



Top (L to R): Andrew Jiminez and Liz Jacobson; freshmen at Senior-Freshman dinner/dance; Brendan Wicke and Dorothy McNamara compete at the All-School Picnic  
 Middle Row: Seniors tug at All-School Picnic; Winners of the "Best of Show" "Achilles' Chili," at nearby Lake Casitas Chili Cook-Off; Juniors pull during tug-o-war  
 Bottom: Erica Raeder and brother, Michael, at Freshman dinner/dance; Tutor Herb Hartmann with students at All-School Picnic; Erik Bootsma DJs dinner/dance

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### Calendar of Events

Friday Night Lecture, Christopher Bruell .....	November 10
Advent Concert .....	December 1
Christmas Break .....	December 16 - January 7
Friday Night Lecture, Michael Waldstein .....	January 12
President's Day Lecture Fr. Richard John Neuhaus .....	February 23

Please call to confirm these dates.

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