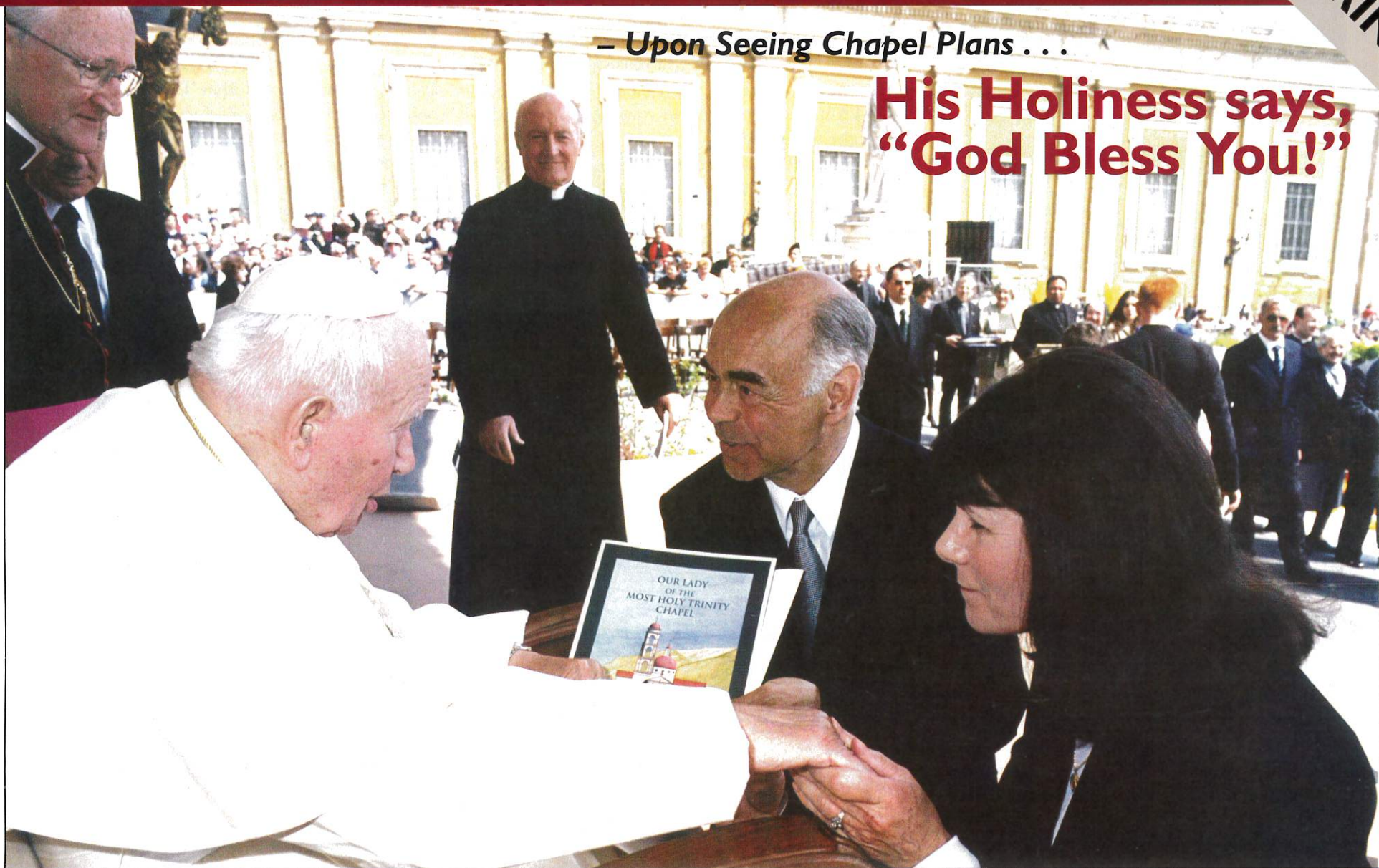




– Upon Seeing Chapel Plans . . .

His Holiness says,
“God Bless You!”



-- President Dillon has Audience with Holy Father Presents Chapel Plans to John Paul II

Last spring, President and Mrs. Dillon journeyed to Rome for an audience with Pope John Paul II. On the Wednesday morning after Easter, April 23, 2003, they had the honor to present to the Holy Father the plans for Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at Thomas Aquinas College.

Says Dr. Dillon, “Our Holy Father appeared weary during the general audience. However, when we had the opportunity to briefly visit with him afterwards, and he received the plans of the chapel, he seemed to light up. Upon gazing at the drawing of the chapel’s facade, he lifted his head, looked me in the eye, and – with the corners of his mouth turned up in a slight but distinguishable smile – in a pleased tone said, ‘God bless you!’”

Thinking the Holy Father might appreciate the chapel’s design, Dr. Dillon had long hoped for an opportunity to present him with the plans for this crown jewel of the campus. In addition, Dr. Dillon explains, “Pope John Paul II has, in part, inspired the name of our chapel with his own devotion to the Holy Trinity and to Our Lady, to whom he has dedicated his pontificate and whose symbol is featured in his coat of arms. In fact,” he continues, “it is our intention to inlay a reproduction of the Holy Father’s coat of arms in the floor at the entrance to our chapel.”

The Dillons had made earlier journeys to Rome, last traveling there in 2000 to take part in the Jubilee celebration and to attend a Vatican conference for university presidents from around the world on Catholic higher education. At that time, the Dillons also visited Roman churches and basilicas with an eye to blending some of the Roman architectural features into a California mission revival design for the College chapel.

“It has always been our intention,” explains Dr. Dillon, “to construct a *Domus Dei* that would

demonstrate plainly our connection to Rome, the center of the Catholic world. By incorporating elements of Roman classical sacred architecture – the dome and the baldachino, for example – into our own chapel design, we would signify in stone that the Roman Catholic faith is at the heart of all we do at the College.”

Reflecting on that earlier visit to Rome, Dr. Dillon recalls that “a name had not yet been selected for the College chapel. There had been some consideration early on of naming it for the Holy Trinity, not only for what the College owes to the provident care of the Father, to the Truth who is His Son, and to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but also because the study of St. Thomas’ treatise on God’s triune nature is at the pinnacle of our entire curriculum at the College. Yet at the same time, there was also a great desire to dedicate the chapel to Our Lady.”

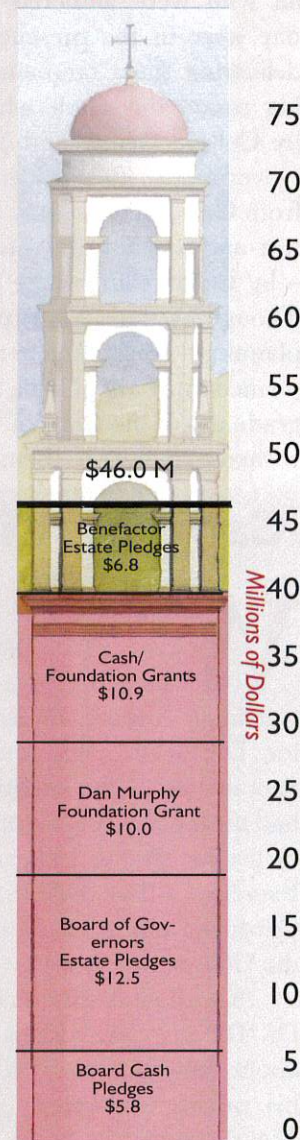
As it turned out, the timing of the Dillons’ Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome contributed to the final selection of the chapel’s name. “The Holy Father had dedicated each of the three years leading up to the Jubilee Year to each of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. He then dedicated the Jubilee Year itself to the Holy Trinity. This helped to persuade us that the chapel name should include the Trinity in some way.” In the end, it was decided to name the chapel for the Blessed Mother, while at the same time to give honor to the Trinity by invoking her in her relation to the Persons of the Holy Trinity under her title of “Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity.”

With the design plans for the chapel complete, and a name chosen, Dr. Dillon says, “It was a singular privilege to present our plans to the Holy Father. With his blessing, we are confident that the project will be well begun.”

\$75 Million Comprehensive Campaign October 2003 Update

The \$75 Million Comprehensive Campaign to finish building out the campus and fully fund our scholarship endowment keeps rolling along! During the last four months, our donors have contributed \$800,000 to the Campaign. The College recently received a grant of \$150,000 from the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation of Los Angeles for current scholarships, and a \$100,000 pledge from the Joseph B. Gould Foundation of Los Angeles for the Dr. and Mrs. William W. Smith Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Over the course of the next year, the College will be engaged in soliciting gifts to finance construction of our next three buildings – the final women’s residence hall, the faculty office building, and most importantly, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity. Please pray for the success of our efforts!



“Blessed are the Poor in Spirit”



Blessed Mother Teresa, Commencement Speaker, 1982.

Noting, as she often did, that though many in the Third World hunger for food, the poverty in America was a spiritual poverty, Mother Teresa told the graduates, “...Your parents, your relations, your friends, even the whole world, is expecting that you be...the light that Jesus said: ‘I am the light that you must light; I am the truth you must speak; I am the joy that you must share; I am the life that you must lead; I am the love that you must love.’ Go with that – the joy of loving.”

Class of '82 graduate, Katie (Blewett) Masteller recalls the blessed occasion: “It was a privilege like no other to have had Mother Teresa with us for our graduation day. Her call to love Christ in all men – especially the unborn – struck a chord with each of us. We were celebrating the successful completion of a rigorous academic program in which we drank deeply from the Church’s rich intellectual heritage. Mother’s words put our accomplishment in perspective: great and praiseworthy as it was, we were reminded we would gain nothing if we had not love.”

Following Mother Teresa’s Address, the Chairman of the College’s Board of Governors at

Church as demonstrated in her life and work. In her overwhelming love of the poorest of God’s creatures, she has manifested the deepest meaning of the Gospel and the life lived for Christ through Mary, and has brought that message through her words and actions to a spiritually hungry world.”

President Emeritus Dr. Ronald P. McArthur later reflected that, “Mother Teresa gave our young people wisdom and counsel to guide them throughout their lives and advice on how to express their love of Christ through Mary by helping their neighbors, by strengthening their family life, by lighting a new light: the Light of Christ in our times. In addressing the graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, Mother Teresa was speaking to all young people, to all of us.”



Thomas Aquinas College graduate, Maggie Isaacson, ('86), holds the hand of Mother Teresa on the day of Maggie’s final vows, when she took the name of Sr. Marcella.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3). With this first of the Beatitudes in mind, the Holy Father, Pope John II, beatified Mother Teresa of Calcutta before a devoted crowd of more than 300,000, gathered from all around the world in St. Peter’s Square on October 19, 2003.

At Thomas Aquinas College, Mother Teresa’s beatification has kindled memories of the time she spent on our campus in 1982. Having received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, Mother and her work with the Missionaries of Charity were being given a great deal of publicity. In 1982, she received numerous invitations to deliver the Commencement Address at colleges and universities around the world. Of these, she accepted only two – one from Harvard University, and one from yet little-known Thomas Aquinas College.

There was little doubt in anyone’s mind that all who were gathered for the ceremonies that day were in the presence of a saint, who, when delivering the Commencement Address, fingered her rosary the whole while. Flanked on all sides by College faculty and Members of the Board of Governors in full academic regalia, the tiny nun from Calcutta wore only her simple white and blue sari and a plain gray sweater (against the “cool” – by Indian standards – Southern California day). Though extreme security measures – weeks in the planning – were taken to assure Mother’s safety, she seemed unaware of it all, focusing instead on the 22 graduates of the Class of 1982 and the message she wished to deliver to them.

+ LDM
MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY
54A A.J.C. BOSE ROAD
CALCUTTA – 700016

Sept 1991

Dear President Thomas Dillon,

I have just received the invitation to attend your inauguration as the II president of Thomas Aquinas College in November.

I send you my prayers and best wishes and pray that God’s blessing may abide with you as you lead the college into the future. May you be the presence of Christ – His Love and His Compassion to your students and staff. I hope you will help them to recognize the likeness of Christ in the poorest of the poor in their distressing disguise and restore to them the dignity that is theirs as children of God – created for greater things – to love and to be loved. Be God’s Hands to serve those entrusted to you and His Heart to love them.

*God bless you
M. Teresa MC*

that time, Mr. Thomas P. Sullivan, presented to Mother Teresa the St. Thomas Aquinas Medallion, the College’s highest honor.

“The Governors of Thomas Aquinas College,” Mr. Sullivan announced, “on behalf of the College community, award to Mother Teresa the St. Thomas Aquinas Medallion as a token of their respect and esteem and to recognize and honor her for her extraordinary dedication to God and the Catholic

Nine years later, when Dr. Thomas Dillon was elected as the second president of the College, Mother Teresa responded to an invitation to his inauguration with a letter to him from India – now a relic of one of the blessed in heaven (see inset). Unable to attend the festivities, she sent to him congratulations and a loving admonition. “I have treasured this letter,” says Dr. Dillon, “and have tried to live Mother’s charge to ‘Be God’s hands to serve those entrusted to you and His heart to love them.’ I pray that, through her intercession, I may be faithful to this ideal.”

“It is a special joy for the Thomas Aquinas College community,” Dr. Dillon continues, “that one of our graduates, Maggie Isaacson ('86) – now Sr. Marcella, M.C. – received the call to join Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity.” (see photo)

Like all of Mother Teresa’s sisters, Sr. Marcella has taken the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and an additional vow to serve “Christ in his distressing disguise,” as Mother Teresa had explained in her Commencement Address at the College. “In our congregation we take a fourth vow of giving wholehearted, free service to the poorest of the poor. By this vow, we are specially bound to the people who have nothing and nobody, and [we], also, fully depend on Divine Providence.”

Sr. Marcella was, for five years, the superior of a Missionaries of Charity convent in St. Louis, MO. She is now at their convent in Detroit, MI, where the sisters’ mission is to evangelize the Spanish-speaking people of that city. “Mother will always have a ‘mother’s place’ in the heart of every Missionary of Charity,” Sr. Marcella says, “as well as a central place in our religious congregation. The M.C. vocation is to satiate the thirst of our Crucified Spouse for love and for souls as He disguises Himself in the poorest of the poor. Mother always wanted her Missionaries of Charity to be true to their name, and she never ceased to set before her spiritual children the means to become true Missionaries of Charity through intimacy with Jesus in the Eucharist and through tender and child-like devotion to Our Lady.”

The beatification of Mother Teresa of Calcutta is a joyous occasion for her Missionaries of Charity, for Thomas Aquinas College, and for Catholics worldwide. In her total embrace of Christ in the poorest of the poor, she enriched all our lives.

Cardinal Arinze to be next Commencement Speaker

While in Rome this past spring, President and Mrs. Dillon had the privilege of meeting with His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. A few months earlier, Cardinal Arinze had most graciously accepted Dr. Dillon’s invitation to preside at the College’s 2004 Commencement Exercises. The Dillons were eager to meet the Cardinal, and to thank him for agreeing to honor the College in this way.

“Cardinal Arinze received us warmly,” explains Dr. Dillon. “We visited with him in his office for about half an hour, and then walked with him to his private residence. Three seminarians from Nigeria served us lunch, where we discussed with His Eminence, matters of liturgy, the Church, and Catholic higher education.”

“I was deeply impressed,” he continues, “by Cardinal Arinze’s intelligence, his humility and his graciousness. Even more, I saw his love of the Church and her teaching, which is rooted in his love of Christ and in his priestly character.”

Over lunch, Dr. Dillon had the opportunity



Dr. & Mrs. Dillon with Cardinal Arinze at his office in Rome. Cardinal Arinze will be the Commencement Speaker at the College in 2004.

to tell His Eminence how much the College community looked forward to having him as a guest next year, and how well-received he would be by members of the faculty, the Board of Governors and the students themselves. Says Dr. Dillon, “We are honored indeed that Cardinal Arinze will take time from his busy schedule to travel to our campus in California and preside over our Commencement Exercises next May. We very much look forward to welcoming him to our campus at that time.”