



## Thomas Dillon Inaugurated as President of the College

Solemn purpose, historically rooted pageantry, and carefully chosen words all combined to create a day of substance and blessing for those who attended the inauguration on November 23 of Thomas E. Dillon as the second president of Thomas Aquinas College.

The day's events began at 12:00 noon with the Mass of the Holy Spirit, held, as was the inauguration ceremony, in the main hall of St. Joseph Commons. The principal celebrant and homilist was the Most Rev. G. Patrick Ziemann, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles and Regional Bishop of the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region. Concelebrating the Mass were Rev. Gerard Steckler, chaplain of the college, and Revs. James Garceau and Edward Hopkins, both graduates of Thomas Aquinas College.

In his homily, Bishop Ziemann repeatedly stressed the need to give away, to pass on, the good things which God gives us lest they be lost. In referring to the college, he called it a seedbed in which seeds of truth are planted, good soil which receives the Word of God with joy.

Following the Mass, light refreshments were served, and then, at 2:30 p.m., Mouret's rondo, played by the Festival Brass Quintet, signaled the entrance of the academic procession, led by tutor Marcus Berquist carrying the mace of the college. Rev. Steckler delivered the invocation, and the crowd joined the Thomas Aquinas College Choir and the SS. Felicitas and Perpetua Choir, under the direction of Stephen Grimm (Class of 1975), in singing the national anthem. Andrew Zepeda (Class of 1979), president of the Alumni Association, led the pledge of allegiance.

In welcoming the crowd, Dean Kevin Kolbeck said, "It was only about 25 years ago that this college was nothing but an idea in the minds of our founders....As I look around the room today, I see many of the individuals and groups that have been instrumental in transforming this idea into a living, loving, dedicated community united by a desire to perfect minds and to become pleasing in God's eyes. It is for this reason that I take great pleasure in welcoming you all to this ceremony."



All photos, Timothy Teague

After the general welcome, Dean Kolbeck introduced John Agresto, president of St. John's College, Santa Fe. The dean lauded the role St. John's has played in the development of Thomas Aquinas College, saying, "St. John's has, from the beginning, been very gracious in sharing with us the fruits of its experience and in assisting us in many, many ways."

Mr. Agresto's spirited speech ended with an appeal to President Dillon to be missionary-minded in promoting the kind of education offered by Thomas Aquinas College. "There are colleges in America that want to know about us," he said. "There are professors and teachers who yearn to have our good news told to them....Tom, if anyone knows how to do it, and can do it, it is you."

Next to speak was Brother Mel Anderson, president of St. Mary's College of California, an institution whose effect on Thomas Aquinas College has been profound. In introducing Brother Mel, Dean Kolbeck said, "St. Mary's Integrated Program provided a model in which great books are studied under the light of the Catholic faith. It was a program in which the founders of Thomas Aquinas College first tried out many of the elements that characterize our program. Finally, it was there that many of our tutors, including Mr. Dillon, were formed intellectually."

With wry good humor, Brother Mel pointed out the folly of certain current trends in American higher education. Directing his closing remarks to President Dillon, he said, "Tom, your appointment requires dauntless courage, energy, and unswerving vision. Thomas Aquinas needs your fervent commitment, your noble aspirations, your tenaciousness, and your willingness to suffer."

Cardinal Roger Mahony, archbishop of Los Angeles, then delivered the episcopal salutation. In introducing the cardinal, Dean Kolbeck noted that he "has taken a personal interest in the college (and) has assured us of a constant place in his prayers....He has spoken kind words of encouragement and support."

"My presence here today," Cardinal Mahony began, "is an eloquent testimony to the esteem and reverence we have for Thomas Aquinas College and all those persons who have, through the years, nurtured and supported the growth of this college and actively participated in the mission and life of this outstanding Catholic academic community."

Speaking in a clear, measured fashion, the cardinal delineated the benefits of an education combining faith and reason, quoting both Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Newman. Referring to the recent papal document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, he said that Thomas Aquinas College exemplifies to a high degree the four essential characteristics of Catholic higher educational institutions as identified by the Pope.

Concluding, Cardinal Mahony said, "I again congratulate and pledge our support to President Dillon as he publicly accepts the responsibilities and challenges of leading the academic community of Thomas Aquinas College."

Following, as Dean Kolbeck noted, was "the heart of the matter, the formal investing of Thomas E. Dillon with the office of president of Thomas Aquinas College."

Dr. William W. Smith, chairman of the Board of Governors of Thomas Aquinas College, charged President Dillon "with sustaining the life, directing the affairs, and upholding the integrity of Thomas Aquinas College."

President Dillon accepted the charge, and Dr. Smith pronounced the words of investiture: "On behalf of the Board of Governors, I hereby invest you with this medallion and chain as a sign of the institution you serve and the responsibilities you bear."

Following his investiture, President Dillon delivered the inaugural response, describing Thomas Aquinas College as existing "in order to do the very best things in education." He, too, referred to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, saying that the papal document "proclaimed that a Catholic college must, by institutional commitment, bring to its task the inspiration and light of the Christian message." Referring, then, to Thomas Aquinas College, President Dillon continued, "Indeed, from the beginning, the essential purpose of our college has been just this: to educate our students under the light of the Faith."

Following the inaugural response, Cardinal Mahony gave a blessing, and the crowd and combined choirs joined their voices in singing the Lourdes hymn. The setting sun, whose light now streamed through the west-facing windows, burnished the interior of St. Joseph Commons, and for a moment, heaven and earth seemed to meet, adding a final benediction.

Then, an irrevocable ending note was sounded as the Festival Brass Quintet struck up the suite from Handel's Water Music, the cue to begin the recessional marking the end of the ceremony. By virtue of its serious intent, its honoring of faith and reason, the college's first inauguration had a weight and dignity befitting the tradition from which Thomas Aquinas College draws its life. ☐

Thomas Aquinas College  
10000 N. Ojai Road  
Santa Paula, CA 93060-9980

Address Correction Requested

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Santa Paula, CA  
Permit No. 222

## Henry Salvatori Endows Scholarship

Henry Salvatori, long-time friend and benefactor of the college, has donated \$150,000 to endow a permanent scholarship in his name. Commenting on the gift, college president Thomas Dillon said, "Henry Salvatori has been a major figure behind the success of this college, and we have the deepest gratitude for all that he has done for us."

Mr. Salvatori's support of Thomas Aquinas College and its educational aims predates the school's existence. A \$10,000 gift made in 1968 was instrumental in the process leading to the opening of the college in 1971. Mr. Salvatori followed this gift, literally the college's first donation, with many others, including very substantial donations to the building fund.



# “To Give Them the Best Possible Beginning”

President Dillon's Inaugural Response

Cardinal Mahony, reverend fathers, members of the college community, and dear friends:

This September 9th marked the twentieth anniversary of Thomas Aquinas College. In its relatively short history, the college has been remarkably successful. It enjoys a national reputation for academic excellence, its graduates are highly regarded, and the strength of its religious commitment is an inspiration to many outside this community. Most importantly, in its essential mission of Catholic liberal education, the college has, day in and day out, helped to rightly form the minds and souls of its students. The academic community is animated by a love of learning, and there is an evident respect for reason and for thoughtful discourse both in and out of class. Moreover, a vibrant Catholic faith permeates the entire college, as indicated by the strong devotional life of its students and faculty, by the number of dedicated lay Catholics among its alumni, and by the number of religious vocations it has fostered.

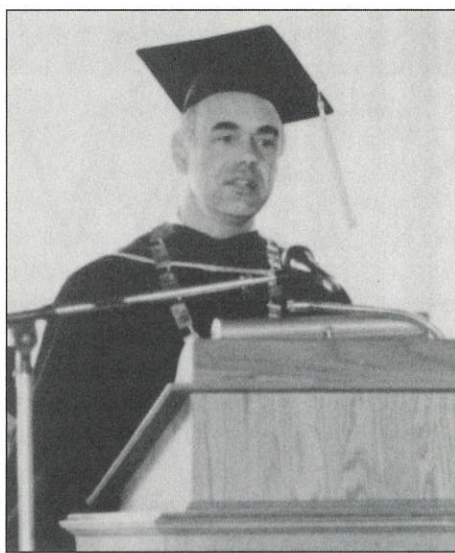
For all these things we owe our most profound thanks to our provident Heavenly Father, for God has blessed this college well beyond expectation. Thanks must also be given to those human agents who have helped to effect God's loving design: to the college's founders and our first president, Ronald McArthur, whose initiative and resolve brought this college into being; to our generous benefactors, without whose benevolence the college could not function; to those who continually pray for the college and who thereby do it immeasurable good; to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, whose Cardinal McIntyre, Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Mahony have graciously offered their approbation, prayers and encouragement. Thanks are due as well to the governors of the college, whose support, counsel and direction have been essential to our success; also to the families who have sent us their sons and daughters, so well disposed to engage in the rigors of our curriculum. Nor should we forget the students themselves, who have shown the trust and good will that is so necessary for any serious engagement

in a common pursuit of the truth. And especially should thanks be given to the faculty, without whose dedication, constancy and sacrifice, the college's program would be but a lifeless ideal, and without whose exceptional devotion to learning, the college would not have its distinctive character and spirit.

We can be thankful, then, that each of the parts of this unique community of learning has contributed so abundantly to the good of the whole, for these united efforts have formed an institution which has become noteworthy for the integrity and effectiveness of its program.

Thomas Aquinas College exists in order to do the very best things in education. It is committed to the proposition that knowledge is a great human good, that the life of learning is worthwhile just in itself, that liberal education frees us from ignorance and points us to the knowledge of the ultimate causes of reality. The college aspires to assist each of its students in the cultivation of intellectual and moral virtue, those habits of thought and action which constitute the highest human excellence. It is committed to the vigorous study and discussion of the greatest books in our intellectual heritage, proposing not to finish its students, but rather to give them the best possible beginning in the life of the mind through a reflective and serious examination of the deepest and most penetrating works in the arts and sciences. As it equips its students with the intellectual tools necessary for a life of learning, the college hopes to direct them on a path leading from wonder to wisdom.

But all of this is yet incomplete. For whatever we may discover through the efforts of our natural reason, as believing Catholics we also have in our intellectual endeavors the guidance of divine revelation and of the teaching Church. Our faith can illumine our understanding and lead us to profound truths which would otherwise be unavailable to us. Let us reflect here on the powerful words of Christ himself in St. John's Gospel. "The reason I was born," says our Lord, "the reason I came into the world is to testify to the truth. Anyone committed to the truth hears my voice." In Catholic liberal



*“There will be no compromise”*

President Dillon

education, properly understood, the voice of Christ and of the Church he heads is indeed listened to as the truth is sought. The benefit of such docility to the Faith is at least twofold. First, what we learn through our faith elevates and perfects what we understand in the natural order; secondly, we are brought to a fuller apprehension of God himself, who is the supernatural source of all that is. Such an understanding of Catholic education is part of our great patrimony. This has been confirmed once more by Pope John Paul II in his recent papal document, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, wherein he proclaims that a Catholic college must, by institutional commitment, bring to its task the inspiration and light of the Christian message. Indeed, from the beginning, the essential purpose of our college has been just this: to educate our students under the light of the Faith.

Looking to the future, I can say with conviction that Thomas Aquinas College will stay the course and remain true to its educational principles. There will be no compromise of the highest intellectual standards; there will be no compromise of the Catholic faith. Our curriculum will embrace the intrinsically best writings our civilization has to offer, with primacy of place given to St. Thomas Aquinas, the Church's greatest thinker. Our students will be encouraged

to read and discuss honestly and fairly, to be accountable to reason, and to be measured by the reality which they are finally trying to understand. Our faculty will be steadfast in their desire to help our students make the right beginning on the long road to wisdom. As fellow learners before the great books, our faculty will assist our students to develop critical habits of mind, help them to see the integration and order of their studies, and aid them in their quest to discover the true, the good, and the beautiful.

There are still many ways in which the college can improve; there are still many pitfalls to avoid. We must be careful not to substitute mere opinion for knowledge, recognizing how difficult it is to develop a knowledge that is precise and deep. We must actively engage our intellects with fundamental questions and constantly test our views so that we can come to understand things more fully. We must remain aware of the many ways in which we are ignorant, and be vigilant in showing proper humility before the truth, wherever it may be found. We must continue to be a community of friends and keep in mind that the truth is a common good, the knowledge of which enriches us all. So long, however, as we commit ourselves to the best and most ennobling things in education, so long as love of the truth burns in our souls, so long as we cherish and revere our Catholic faith and devote ourselves to Christ and his teaching, Thomas Aquinas College will flourish.

Let me conclude by saying that I am truly humbled by this appointment, and I am honored that the faculty and governors of the college have put their trust in me to fulfill the duties of this office. I desire to serve this college with all that I have, and I count myself extraordinarily blessed to be a member of this community.

Thank you all for coming here today, and I ask that you pray that Thomas Aquinas College remain strong and vigorous in carrying out its mission of Catholic liberal education. The task before us is a noble one, and it is worth dedicating ourselves to with all the energy and determination we have. And no matter how challenging this task may sometimes be, we can take comfort in what Christ himself tells us when he says, again in St. John's Gospel, "If you make my words your home, you will indeed be my disciples; you will learn the truth, and the truth will make you free." ■

# “It Is Our Prayer the College Will Flourish”

Cardinal Mahony's Episcopal Salutation

My presence here today is an eloquent testimony to the esteem and reverence we have for Thomas Aquinas College and all those persons who have, through the years, nurtured and supported the growth of this college and actively participated in the mission and life of this outstanding Catholic academic community. On this special occasion, the inauguration of the second president of Thomas Aquinas College, I send greetings in the Lord to Dr. Thomas E. Dillon, president; to Dr. Ronald McArthur, founder and president emeritus; to the distinguished representatives of the higher education community; to the trustees; to the faculty; to the stu-

dents; to the graduates; to all our guests and all the friends and benefactors of Thomas Aquinas College.

Our coming together for this inauguration ceremony is the occasion for us to offer our congratulations to Dr. Dillon as he is formally and publicly invested as president, assuming the leadership of the Thomas Aquinas College community. With our congratulations we also offer prayers and sincere wishes for the success of his administration. It is our hope and prayer that Thomas Aquinas College will prosper and flourish under President Dillon's vision and leadership and that it will continue to exhibit to the world what St. Augustine so frequently extols — *gaudium de veritate* — the joy of searching

for, discovering, and communicating truth in every field of knowledge for the betterment of the entire human family.

On another level, this inauguration ceremony offers us the opportunity to reflect briefly on the importance of higher education, particularly liberal education, in a context which promotes free and constructive dialogue between faith and reason — a context which allows teachers and students to grasp the whole of reality. Liberal education in a Catholic college takes place within the context of Christian humanism as the animating religious vision and Catholicism as mediating Christian humanism through its beliefs, worship and church structure.

As a community of scholar-believers, a Catholic college brings to life an ongoing conversation between students and professors. This is a conversation about the integration between disciplines and ultimately the integration between faith and reason.

— continued on next page



*“The dialogue between faith and reason is flourishing”*

Cardinal Mahony



## Episcopal Salutation

continued from page 2

As Pope John Paul II has said, "while reason and faith surely represent two distinct orders of knowledge, each autonomous with regard to its own methods, the two must finally converge in the discovery of a single whole reality which has its origin in God."

An institution of Catholic higher learning must be characterized by a free search for the whole truth about nature, humankind and God. Additionally, such an institution must attempt to become a genuine human community focused on service to others. For a description of the men and women formed in such an institution, we may readily turn to Newman's description of the liberally educated person.

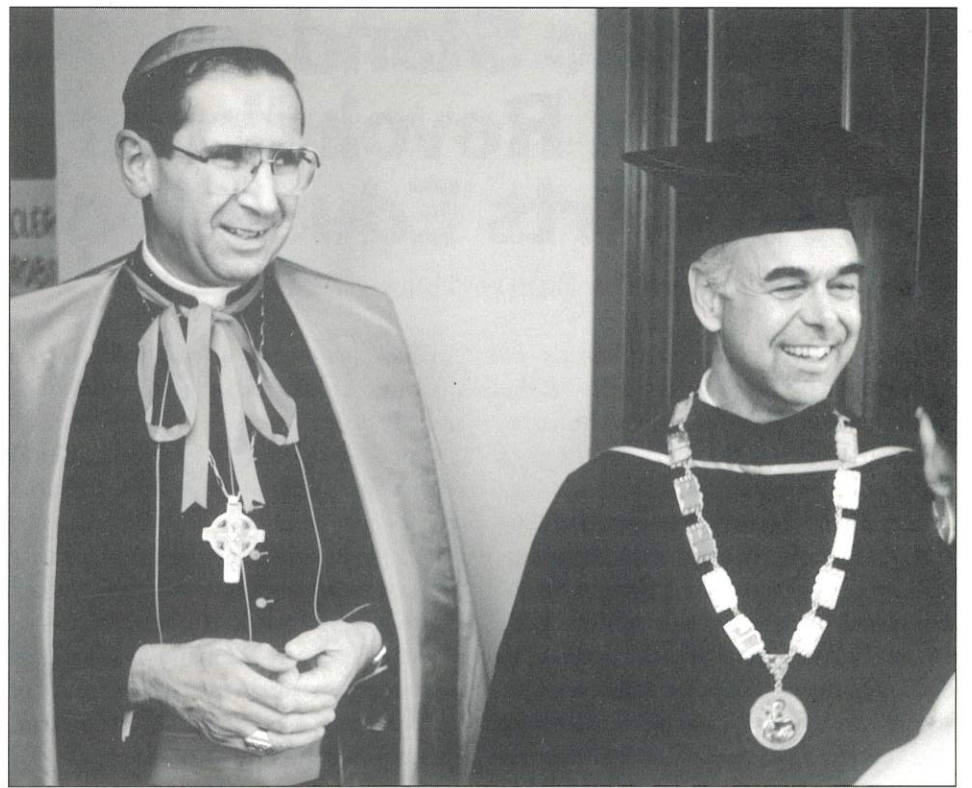
To Newman a university education is "... the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he

knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad."

Granted this description is highly idealistic; yet all genuinely humane educators have in mind as the outcome of their efforts — under God — such persons, even as they themselves would hope to be such persons.

At Thomas Aquinas College, the dialogue between faith and reason is alive and flourishing. The college is a community — a community of learners — a community of seekers after the whole of reality. It is a community dedicated to service of others. The world has a great need for institutions with these characteristics and especially for the students they form. The Catholic liberal arts education experience at Thomas Aquinas College, grounded as it is in the discipline of theology, both encourages and enables its students to discover and integrate the connections between the central Christian stories and the stories of their own lives.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Our Holy Father identifies four essential characteristics of



Cardinal Mahony and President Dillon greet the inaugural guests.

Catholic higher educational institutions. Thomas Aquinas College exemplifies these characteristics to a high degree:

- 1) A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the academic community;
- 2) A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith on the growing treasury of human knowledge;
- 3) Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the church; and
- 4) An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the

human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.

In conclusion, I again congratulate and pledge our support to President Dillon as he publicly accepts the responsibilities and challenges of leading the academic community of Thomas Aquinas College. May the example and spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, your institutional patron, inspire and guide you as together you continue to seek, know, and love the God of all truth, goodness, and beauty. ☐

# "We Keep Faith in Liberal Learning Alive"

Inaugural Greetings From John Agresto

President Dillon, I bring you the greetings and the love of your colleagues and friends at St. John's College.

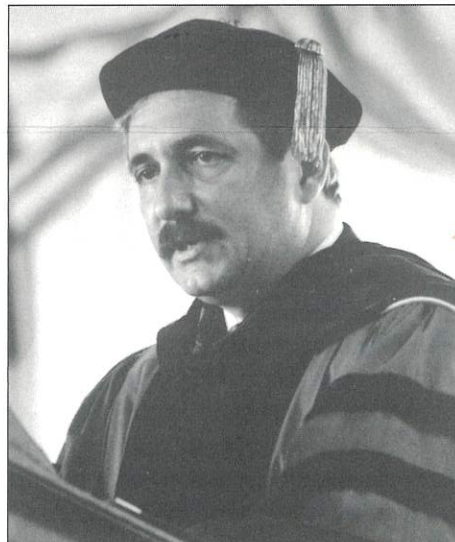
It was suggested that this inauguration, in addition to honoring you, might underscore the connections that we few small colleges have to each other. Connections indeed we do have. We share common aims, common hopes and even, to a striking degree, common means and methods. With the greatest of generosity I have known you and your colleagues to refer, as just now, to my institution as a source for your own. I must admit that in the gloomy world of higher education, the evolution of you from us is one of the few developments I know that can pass for true progress.

Despite the great joy that this occasion engenders, let us begin in all humility. Of the 3,200 institutions of higher learning in America, we are — St. John's, Thomas Aquinas and St. Mary's — just three. Of the millions of students in America, we account for a handful, a few thousand. Our combined faculties marshalled — at least Thomas Aquinas and St. John's — onto a large field could probably not score even one touchdown against Ohio State. In the world of higher education, we are no larger in number and in force than, say, a mustard seed. Again, in humility, we together hold a course of study not widely admired in the world of higher learning. Although our fellows elsewhere talk seriously about the need for everyone to be educated, they claim total incapacity when pressed as to what it might be that every educated person should know.

They admire us for holding fast to the highest standards of liberal education and wonder how it can be that we believe that liberal education means comprehensive learning, in a systematic and sequential way, of all the great fields of human knowing, while they've always thought that liberal education means tasting a bit of this and sampling a bit of that. They admire, honestly admire, our small classes, our conversations, our contacts between students and tutors, but our colleagues elsewhere often get promoted and rewarded on the basis of how large a lecture hall they can fill.

The continuities and connections between us three here today have a bitter-sweet quality, because in celebrating what binds us together, we inadvertently, sadly, highlight the gap between us and so much of education in general. This wasn't, to be sure, always the case. If this nation's founders could see our three colleges, they would find them familiar and defensible. Our schools could, each of them, have educated Jefferson or Madison quite easily. Despite our newness, our forebears would find us solid and, I think, good. Humility, you see, is a difficult virtue, because even as I talk about your college, pride begins to creep in — and it's allowed. Together we are proud of what President McArthur, and you, and this faculty have done in a mere twenty years. Proud of the intelligent, civic and conscientious students you have produced. Proud of the way you have been able to show this nation the fundamental compatibility of Catholic and liberal education.

That liberal education is possible, that



*"The time has come to be missionaries"*

John Agresto

it is conceivable to go from opinion to knowledge, and that such knowledge is both trans-historical and trans-cultural is a possibility only faintly remembered by many of our 3,200 institutions of higher learning. I can only think of a paraphrase of Hobbes, that today's universities serve the truth the way the wooden horse served the Trojans.

We at St. John's and Thomas Aquinas find ourselves having to defend the proposition that reason and knowledge transcend one's class or race or sex, and that people can learn from more than role models, that they can actually learn from books, and that the dead can speak to the living through books and cause us to change our minds and, as a result, our lives, and that there might even be some things that are true, not just today or

here, but true.

In all this, I was reminded of a parable, one that I should hesitate to raise on a day of happiness, on a feast day. It's a parable not told in the Gospels but in Hans Christian Andersen. It goes like this.

There was once a great king who had no male heir, so in order to pass on his kingdom and the hand of his beautiful daughter, he held a contest. "I will give my kingdom," he said, "to the person who does the most unbelievable thing."

People came from all over the earth to compete for this great prize. Some performed physical feats that defied the very laws of gravity. Other performed tricks that made sight seem a liar. But when the people saw the work of one man, they all knew he would win.

This man had made a clock. In form and design it was exquisite. Its carvings had the delicacy and intricate grace of snowflakes. Its face was splendid. On its sides were painted masterpieces depicting the highest achievements of civilization. It told not only the time but also the motion of the heavens and the march of the seasons. It knew the present, it explained the past, and there were some who thought it could reveal the future as well. In its beauty, usefulness, craftsmanship and thought, it was simply the most unbelievable thing anyone had ever seen.

When the contest ended, the king summoned the maker of the clock to come forward with his work and claim the prize. As the artist advanced to receive his crown, a man with a hammer rushed from the crowd. In a fury, he smashed the clock until it was nothing but pieces. Stunned, the king called the hateful fellow to his throne, and to the crowd's astonishment, he gave the man his crown and his daughter, for anyone who would destroy so wonderful and beautiful an object had surely done the most unbelievable thing.

— continued on next page bottom



# “A Catholic Standard-Bearer of Revolutionary Liberal Arts Education”

Inaugural Greetings From Brother Mel Anderson

Bring hearty congratulations to President Thomas Dillon from the Board of Trustees, the administration and faculty of St. Mary's College of California, his alma mater.

It was in the integrated program of liberal arts at St. Mary's that President Dillon experienced quintessential liberal arts, which we gratuitously assume contributed to the inspiration that led him to dedicate himself to an institution unequivocally devoted to radical liberal learning.

Even though considerable rhetoric has in recent times come to the defense of liberal arts education in the face of political, social, ideological and cultural contrariness, to those of us who stake our claim on the bedrock of liberal education, we hope and pray that Thomas Aquinas College will, under the able leadership of President Dillon, grow ever taller and stronger. We earnestly pray that Thomas Aquinas College will be widely recognized as a Catholic standard-bearer of revolutionary liberal arts education in the face of trends which exalt narrow specialization, encourage research to the detriment of teaching, seek to impose uniform academic parameters, and which all too often give primacy to a socio-political agenda, the excessive manifestation of which has emerged as “political correctness.”

Those who pledge their allegiance to liberal education, who understand the undergraduate academy as a preparation for achieving authentic wisdom, will reverence insightful, coherent, cohesive liberal arts education and a faculty — or more accurately, a community of learners — committed to the fulfillment of such an education as that here at Thomas Aquinas College. Those in higher education who honestly seek intellectual diversity should roll out the plushest and most vibrant of red carpets to welcome the new president of Thomas Aquinas College, a school which is the pacesetter of an education second to none, yet a sign of contradiction to many.

In national publications, St. Mary's College is considered a comprehensive institution, whereas Thomas Aquinas College has devoted itself exclusively to liberal arts education. Even so, St. Mary's requires that all of her students enroll in what we call the Collegiate Seminar, a series of four courses of readings and seminar discussions beginning with the Greeks and ending with the moderns, the selections drawn primarily from the so-called canon of western great books.

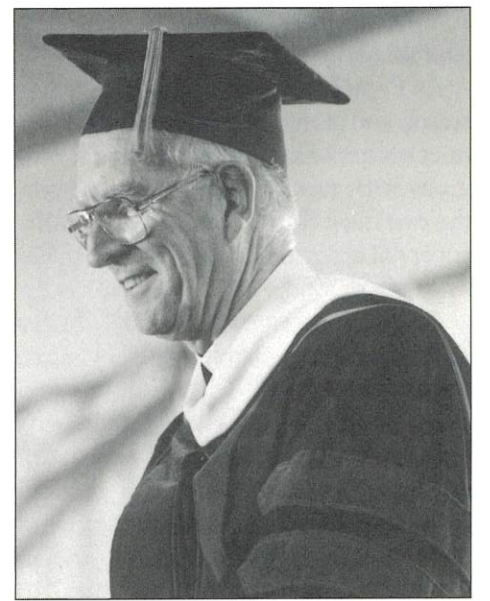
This kind of program is familiar to the students here and at St. John's, Annapolis and Santa Fe.

The 1986 visiting team accreditation report for St. Mary's College included the following notation: “One concern noted by several team members is that there is only one female author on the entire seminar reading list. Inclusion of more female and minority authors would seem appropriate, given the centrality of the Collegiate Seminar in the general education component of the college.” The visiting team said urbanely what more radical voices decry as the overrepresentation of dead white male authors in the curricula of colleges and universities. It has been my view that it is the thought that counts, not the ethnicity, racial identification, religious tradition or gender of the author.

Recently, I attended the inauguration ceremonies of a new university president. In his well-wishing remarks, the

student body president of the institution stated that he hoped the new president would concede that Euro-centrism in the curriculum should come to an end. While all of us engaged in Catholic education welcome ethnic, racial and gender diversity, one must question the assumptions and understanding of those who look upon higher education, not as an institution dedicated to enlarging understanding and refining science, but rather as a place for the promotion of uniform social and political engineering.

There are some, well intentioned enough, who view the study of various cultures as one way of instilling a needed American civic virtue, reminiscent of the virtues of toleration which attended the confluence of earlier immigrations known as the melting pot phenomenon. While familiarity with cultures other than our own may prove to offer some valuable insights and may purge us of some conscious or unconscious prejudices, our first task is to understand the philosophical assumptions, those deep influential roots, from which have grown the American way of life; or, to put it differently, let us study what we have in common as men and women before the God who made us. For multiculturalism in the curriculum has unfortunately become the *au courant* watchword for many of the social, polit-



“Let us study what we have in common”

Brother Mel

## Ralph McNerny on Thomas Aquinas College

The accomplishments of Dr. Ralph McNerny are legion. For almost 40 years he has been a professor in the philosophy department at Notre Dame, distinguishing himself through numerous scholarly works on a wide variety of subjects. Last September he was named president of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. He is also well known for his public and unwavering defense of the Catholic church, serving as advisor to popes and bishops.

Formed in the same intellectual tradition as the founders of Thomas Aquinas College and an ardent supporter of the school, Dr. McNerny was invited to address the Board of Governors at a meeting held November 22, the day before the inauguration of Thomas Dillon. Below are some of his comments:

“There was a serious, even global, inspiration behind the founding of Thomas Aquinas College; the school is not just an alternative to the mainstream. I've come to believe more and more that the mainstream in Catholic education is right here, and if Catholic higher education is going to be renewed, it will be because of what is happening here.”

“What has been lost or terribly weakened in Catholic education is the notion that faith plays a role in the work of the mind and the imagination. What impresses people when they come to Thomas Aquinas College is that the intellectual life is seen as an integral part of the Christian vocation, of the spiritual life. If things are going to turn around, the model — the yeast — of Thomas Aquinas College will play an essential role.”

“I feel very strongly about this college, and what has made the greatest impression on me is meeting the products of this place, the graduates who have come to my university: to the law school, the medieval institute, the philosophy department. They are extraordinarily bright kids. They're noted at Notre Dame for coming in with 800s in their GRE scores.”

“The thing that has struck all my colleagues is the Catholicity of the graduates of the college; for instance, they go to Mass everyday. It's not just a question of some pious people who aren't loathe to study, but rather people who have integrated the spiritual and intellectual life.”

ical or ideological agendas which would further undermine the authentic work of higher education.

Those of you who live in this Santa Paula environment, removed from the frenetic pace of the world about you, should consider yourselves in an academic oasis where the full-bodied nectar of the gods is offered to those who thirst for truth, where students come who are inclined to reach beyond their grasp and who fervently seek a freedom from what is beneath them, and thus emancipated, may behold the majestic array of God's creation above them.

I urge President Dillon to take heart and to exercise his political acumen. There are those in academia who fail to recognize the wisdom of the Thomas Aquinas experience and who even bristle at the suggestion that what you do here is at the zenith of exceptional educational opportunity. It is disheartening at times to realize that colleagues in academia are among our most disturbing foes. Would that they knew better.

Tom, your appointment requires dauntless courage, energy and unswerving vision. Thomas Aquinas needs your fervent commitment, your noble aspirations, your tenaciousness, and your willingness to suffer. The more we recur to what we were meant to be, as our colleague Eva Brann, dean of St. John's, shrewdly observes, the better are our chances of being at all.

Tom, may the Holy Spirit guide you every moment of your presidency. May the Father continue to bless the extraordinary work of Thomas Aquinas College, and may the Word made flesh be the touchstone of your academic reality. ☒

### John Agresto

continued from page 3

My friends, that clock is many things. Sometimes it's the Faith. At other times, it's the peace of nations. Sometimes it's just a child, and sometimes — maybe today — that clock is education. The very idea of liberal education today exists only in bits, but the good news is that the pieces of that clock have been saved, and in some places it has been rebuilt. Thomas Aquinas College is one such place.

President Dillon, following on this I have but one admonition; from one president to another, one small piece of

advice. Your school and mine have often, I am told, been compared to monasteries. Through our discipline, we keep faith in liberal learning alive — we share it, and we try to understand it together. Monasticism is a defensible and sometimes necessary stance in the world, but the time has come for us not to be monks but missionaries.

There are colleges in America that want to know about us. There are professors and teachers who yearn to have our good news told to them. There are citizens who are desperate to know if the clock can be rebuilt. Tom, if anyone knows how to do it, and can do it, it is you. Thank you. ☒

## The Mace and Chain of Office

The president's chain of office and the mace of the college, gifts from Dr. and Mrs. Henry J. Zeiter of Stockton, Calif., were fashioned especially for the inauguration. Incorporating these symbols into the ceremonial life of the school allies Thomas Aquinas College with centuries of academic tradition.

Although first used in battle, the mace, by the 14th century, had been transformed into a ceremonial symbol of authority carried in processions. The earliest faculty mace was used at

the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, in 1438.

The mace of Thomas Aquinas College, designed and carved by Charles Kubilos of Oxnard, is made of black walnut, a native California wood found on the campus. On its orb are displayed the four emblems found on the shield of the college.

The president's chain of office, designed and produced by Robert Lynn of Ventura, has links which are reproductions of the open book found on the college shield. The connecting link is the shield itself. The pendant disk bears the image of St. Thomas Aquinas with his emblem the sun. ☒



## A New Chairman for the Board of Governors

Another transition occurred recently in the life of the college; the chairmanship of the Board of Governors passed from Frederick J. Ruopp to William Weber Smith, M.D.

Fred Ruopp, a member of the Board of Governors since 1982, served as chairman for five and one-half years. In 1988 he was asked where he hoped the college would be at the end of his tenure. "We are about to start the first new dormitory," he answered, "and I would like to see the second one started, and, I hope, a classroom building started by then, and to see some moderate endowment fund."

In fact, since that time, a second dormitory was not only started but also finished, as was a new classroom building; and an endowment fund has been established. By that measure alone, Mr. Ruopp's tenure was a great success; but beyond this, his service was characterized by unflagging good spirits, an unstinting gift of time, and the whole-

hearted application of his considerable experience and intelligence.

Dr. Smith was elected to the Board of Governors in 1989. A specialist in internal medicine, he is a member of both the staff and board of trustees of Saint John's Hospital, Santa Monica, and is also a member of the staff of Santa Monica Hospital. He was introduced to Thomas Aquinas College by his wife Gerry. "She brought me up to the campus," Dr. Smith said, "and took me to a class. That was it, I was completely sold — I felt I needed to help the college in any way I could. From that, I was subsequently asked to join the board."

After Dr. Smith had served two years, Fred Ruopp approached him about becoming chairman. "Bill had all the qualities the board was looking for in the next chairman to lead the school forward into its next phase of development," Mr. Ruopp said.

At first Dr. Smith was reluctant. "It came as quite a surprise, a shock really,"



Dr. Smith, left, confers with Fred Ruopp.

he explained. "I was very much a green pea and felt there were others who surpassed me in experience and abilities. I mulled it over for quite some time — Fred and I talked back and forth. Finally I felt that not only was this a great chance to do something for the school but also for God. And so I accepted."

Both men feel that the school's goal of 350 students and a completed campus can be reached in this decade. "As we've gone along," Fred Ruopp said, "we've been gathering momentum, and that should continue to build. We are all very

conscious of the current economic environment, so it may be more difficult than in the past five years to raise the funds to do this, but with God's grace and the help of all our friends, it can be done."

When asked if he had any final advice to give Dr. Smith as the new chairman, Fred Ruopp said, "I don't really think he needs any. He's had a long and successful and distinguished career, and I think he's eminently qualified. I'm available to be called upon for any experience that's useful to him, but I don't think he needs advice." ■

## Record-Sized Freshman Class Includes Two From Eastern Europe

A record-number 67 students — 30 men and 37 women from 25 states and countries — make up this year's freshman class. Behind the statistics stand an extraordinary group of young men and women, each with aspirations, talents and accomplishments uniquely his own. An additional distinction, however, marks this freshman class; it is the first to include students from Eastern Europe: Plamen Monovski of Cherven briag, Bulgaria, and Aneta Wojciechowska of Warsaw, Poland.

Both students bring with them experiences radically different from those of most students at the college. Concerning December 13, 1981, the day martial law was declared in Poland, Aneta, eleven years old at the time, said, "I remember the day exactly, even the hour. It was 9 o'clock in the morning when we heard on TV that there was a state of war in Poland, and all schools were closed. I went with my mom to church — it was just five minutes away — and along the way we ran into tanks and soldiers with guns. We saw people being arrested on the street and pushed into waiting cars."

For Plamen, life under Communism meant the lack of a Christian environment in which he could explore his feeling that there must be a God. "I understand," he said, "how in 45 years Christian faith can be lost." Finally, in 1991, he was baptized and accepted into the Orthodox church. "I found that for all my serious questions, the Orthodox church had an answer."

Both Aneta and Plamen were already attending university when they applied for admission to Thomas Aquinas College. As a high school senior, Plamen had won the Bulgarian National Olympiad in Literature, a highly competitive six-hour test during which contestants write essays based on research



East comes West, Aneta Wojciechowska and Plamen Monovski.

materials provided at the beginning of the examination. The judges, a panel of some of Bulgaria's most prominent literary critics, gave Plamen's winning essay the equivalent of an A+. As a result, he entered the University of Sofia directly, bypassing the entrance exams.

What he found, however, left him dissatisfied. "I wanted to change my education," he said, "to something which didn't lead to skepticism, and I began looking around the world."

Searching through *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges*, one of the few reference books available in Bulgaria, Plamen found that "even though all the descriptions are standardized, the one for Thomas Aquinas College sounded a bit different. And when I sent letters to various colleges, the response I got from Thomas Aquinas College was very different. It mattered to whom they were writing — they were taking a personal interest in me. When I received the college *Bulletin of Information*, it was kind of shocking; everything I was looking for seemed to be there — I thought it must be an advertising trick. I kept getting more information on the college, which made things even clearer but that much more unbelievable. So finally I took the big risk and came."

"Now that I'm here," Plamen continued, "I think the advertising should be even grander. But I don't think anyone can successfully advertise everything at the college. You could be told for years about some of the things here, but you have to experience them — just come and live this way. I have had lots of study in my life, and I thought nothing could surprise me — either information or method — but here I am constantly being surprised."

Aneta Wojciechowska had completed two years at the University of Warsaw before coming to Thomas Aquinas College. Alongside her studies, she was working as a professional journalist, a career she began at age 18 after winning a journalistic competition. She also writes poetry, her work appearing in the *Anthology of Young Polish Poets*, published in 1990. In addition, she is a serious painter.

Although it meant starting over again as a freshman, Aneta decided to come to Thomas Aquinas College. One reason was the great books program.

"When I first saw the reading list," Aneta said, "I exclaimed out loud that these are all books I really love, books I want to read." She was also attracted to the seamless integration of the intellectual and spiritual life. "I had never before been in a situation that allows you to

grow both spiritually and intellectually — here everything ties together."

At first, however, she was disappointed. "I was used to discussing books in a completely different way," Aneta said. "In Poland, we didn't focus on what the book was about. It was more opinion — whether I liked the book, what I thought about it. So for the first few weeks here, I was really angry. "These people don't think; they're just saying what's in the book — I don't like it."

"But then I thought maybe I should be more humble and start over from the beginning — no memories, no preconceptions. That's when I noticed something different. In discussing the content of the books, the tutors are looking for something eternal, something that's really true. And then they ask what this truth means for us. Before, I had lectures — just memorize and repeat — but here the tutors are searching with us, not just telling us the obvious. There is something special about this."

It is true, there is something special about Thomas Aquinas College, with its tutors, its curriculum and its teaching method. There is another thing that makes the college exceptional, the students it attracts. Plamen Monovski and Aneta Wojciechowska are but two of the 201 remarkable young men and women who are studying here. ■

### Dates Finalized for the Great Books Seminar Weekend

The third annual great books seminar weekend has been scheduled for July 24-26. Held on the campus of Thomas Aquinas College, the seminar offers a memorable combination of the intellectual, spiritual and social life.

Since the announcement of the seminar in the last newsletter, interest has been strong, so the college recommends making your plans now. For information, call Jackie Slay in the Development Office, (800) 634-9797.



# The Friday Night Lecture and Concert Series



Ralph McInerny fields a question with good humor.

On September 13, just three days after classes had begun, tutor Thomas Kaiser delivered the first lecture of the new school year on the topic "The Study of Nature in Liberal Education."

Distinguishing between the liberal arts and liberal education, Mr. Kaiser maintained that the study of nature is absolutely essential in arriving at wisdom, the true end of liberal education. Arguing from St. Thomas, he pointed out that, unlike truths in mathematics, which can only deepen our knowledge of the properties and essences of mathematical things, in natural science, the knowledge of one thing can lead to the knowledge of another, leading ultimately to God himself, the seat and font of all wisdom.

On September 27, classical guitarist Carlos Gonzales cut a wide swath across the repertory of the classical guitar, ranging from late-Renaissance pavans to the music of Villa Lobos. Before playing, Mr. Gonzales commended the student

body on the loving welcome which he, a total stranger, had received the previous Monday when he came to view the hall in which he would be performing. "I hope to reciprocate the warm reception I got," he announced.

Reciprocate he did in a performance notable for its athletic virtuosity and intensity. Not only was the event musically satisfying, but the sheer number of pieces performed gave an almost encyclopedic overview of the history of the classical guitar.

Continuing the musical theme, tutor Marcus Berquist lectured October 25 on the topic "Music, Good and Bad." Mr. Berquist maintained that it is possible to distinguish between good and bad music, and more particularly that "good music, at its best, disposes the soul to virtue — moral and intellectual — while bad music does the opposite."

Arguing from Aristotle and example, he first showed that a work of art is imitative, not creative, and that the object of

imitation in music is the passions of the soul, such as joy, sorrow, boldness, fear, hope, despair, or anger.

Music, to a degree greater than the other fine arts, arouses or excites the passions it imitates, passions which can be either reasonable or unreasonable. The imitation of the reasonable passions, if it evokes similar passions within the soul, will dispose a person to virtue, and this is the very best thing music can do. The imitation of unreasonable passions, if it provokes the same within a soul, has a corruptive effect. This effect, then, on a person's soul is the measure of the worth of a particular piece of music.

On November 15, Philip Chandler, professor of classics at the University of Oklahoma, delivered a lecture on the topic "Why Dante Had to Journey Through Hell."

Dante's *Divine Comedy* was written, Prof. Chandler said, as an all-encompassing imitation of God's two books, the Bible and creation; in it faith is made visible through poetry.

To follow Dante through Hell is to experience the geography of sin, actual or potential, in our own souls. "Dante," he said, "gives us an almost tangible reason both to reject sin and to recognize our absolute need of God's help to do so. He is a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit to effect conversion and the justification of the human will."

"If there were a poet laureate of Christendom," Prof. Chandler concluded, "it would surely be Dante. And if there were an institution in which Dante could expect to find his most attentive readers, it would surely be this college, for every class begins, 'Come Holy Spirit.'"

The following Thursday, November 21, Ralph McInerny delivered the college's first Inaugural Lecture on the topic "The Golden Rule and Natural Law." A

lecture by a distinguished friend of the college had, from the beginning, been conceived as an integral part of the inaugural weekend, and Prof. McInerny was honored by the faculty as the person to deliver it.

After touching briefly on modern moral philosophy, Prof. McInerny posed the specific question, "Is the Golden Rule, for St. Thomas Aquinas, a precept of natural law?" the first precept of which is that good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided.

Citing St. Thomas, who in turn cites Aristotle, Prof. McInerny first showed that the Golden Rule makes explicit the more basic command to "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Pointing out that a leitmotif in the teaching of St. Thomas is that certain truths, naturally knowable in themselves, are imbedded in revelation, Prof. McInerny convincingly demonstrated that "the Golden Rule is a natural law principle which is also fittingly found in Scripture, where it takes on the authority of God revealing. This means that the commandments of love, which we would have quite naturally assumed to have supernatural import, must themselves be open to an understanding which makes them applicable to all men."

Prof. McInerny's lecture, very briefly sketched above, was a tightly reasoned model of serious philosophical thought uniting faith and reason, a fitting beginning for the inaugural weekend.

The last event in the first semester's lecture and concert series was the traditional Christmas concert, held December 6. Stephen Grimm, assisted by student Peter Kay, directed the 32-voice Thomas Aquinas College Choir in a musically sophisticated and profoundly moving commemoration of Jesus' nativity, preparing the listeners' hearts, as was appropriate to the season, for the coming of Christ. ☒

## We Remember Our Benefactors

### Despite Recession, Funding Is Up

by Michael F. McLean  
Vice President for Development

Despite the well-publicized recession, friends of Thomas Aquinas College are responding generously to our stepped-up annual campaign. By the end of December, the college was well over halfway to its \$1.3 million annual fund goal for 1991-92. Nearly \$900,000 in cash and pledges has been raised, and the college is making every effort to raise the remainder by June 30.

Major gifts and pledges have been received from the Andersen Foundation, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Drum Foundation, the Ruth and Vernon Taylor Foundation, and the Fritz B. Burns Foundation.

Many individual donors have also contributed to our success. Particular thanks are due Mr. and Mrs. John Friedrich, Mr. and Mrs. James Barrett, Mr. Ernest Hahn, Mr. Henry Salvatori, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Desmond, Mr. Corwin Denney, and Mr. Joseph Jachimowski.

Of the funds raised in the annual campaign, the largest part, by far, is used to provide financial assistance to deserving students. Between now and the end of June, many foundations, corporations and individuals will be asked to help with the final \$400,000 needed to meet our goal of making genuine Catholic liberal education available to every qualified student, regardless of financial circumstances.

Not only is our annual fund drive off to a good start, but also total giving through December is over \$100,000 ahead of last year. The greatest increase is in endowment giving, with over \$250,000 received. The college owes particular thanks to Mr. Henry Salvatori and the Fletcher Jones Foundation, whose generous contributions have helped our scholarship endowment reach more than \$500,000.

We remember our benefactors in our daily Masses and prayers, and we thank them for their generosity and commitment to the goals of the college. We ask all the friends of Thomas Aquinas College to pray earnestly for our continued success.

### Planned Giving, A Benefit for All

With the establishment of several charitable remainder unitrusts in the past two years, Thomas Aquinas College has taken concrete steps to ensure its future stability and financial well-being. In addition, the donors who established these trusts will enjoy lifetime income from them, as well as estate and income tax advantages. In short, these trusts are win-win arrangements for both the college and the donor.

Charitable remainder trusts are only one of the ways in which donors are providing for the future of the college. Many individuals have included the college in their wills, which not only helps the college in the future but may also lessen estate taxes and probate costs after the donor's death. Others have contributed

life insurance policies which will provide substantial benefit to the college upon the death of the donor.

To help ensure that the college will be able to educate future generations of students, friends of the college are strongly encouraged to consider the tax and income advantages of the various kinds of planned gifts that are available. If you own highly appreciated assets, you may be particularly well advised to consider a gift to the college in your overall financial and estate plan. You may also want to consider the advantages of using life insurance to replace the assets you donate to charity.

Should you wish to discuss a possible gift to the college, please call Michael McLean, Vice President for Development, at (800) 634-9797. The college will work closely with your tax advisor or attorney to implement the plan which makes the most sense for you, your family, and the college.

### Another Way to Give

Thomas Aquinas College thanks the Holy Rosary Church and Priory of Portland Oregon, and especially the Holy Name Society within the church, for its support of the college.

Last year, the Society set itself the goal of raising funds sufficient to provide a scholarship to Thomas Aquinas College. All high school seniors graduating in June 1991 and registered in the parish were eligible to apply. Joseph F. Foye, president of the Holy Name Society, said the decision to raise the funds was made both "to promote the image of the

Society and to promote Thomas Aquinas College within our parish because we think the college's efforts are a sound building block for the future church in the United States."

The Society's fund raising efforts were successful, and the first recipient of the scholarship matriculated with this year's freshman class.

Supporting qualified students wanting to attend Thomas Aquinas College is one way any parish can be directly involved in contributing to the future strength of the church. Interested parishes should contact Thomas Susanka, Director of Admissions, at (800) 634-9797.

## Your Prayers Are Requested

Please pray for the repose of the souls of the following persons:

**Mr. Virgil Brooks**, employed as the maintenance man for the college from 1974 until his retirement in 1985. Dedicated and hard working, Mr. Brooks was a master storyteller, beloved by the students and all who knew him.

**Mrs. Virginia Milner**. Mrs. Milner was a personal friend of various members of the Board of Governors, especially Mr. and Mrs. William Wilson.

**Mrs. Marty Randall**, the mother of alumna Patrice Coleman (Class of 1980).

**Mr. John Jackelen**, benefactor of the college.