

THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT 2024

Volume 52, Issue 2



◆
Celebrating the
Class of 2024,
50th Graduating Class
of Thomas Aquinas
College



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Understanding First Principles

Excerpts from Dr. O'Reilly's Remarks to the Class of 2024 at the Annual President's Dinner

Congratulations, seniors, for completing four years of, in my view, one of the most demanding academic programs anywhere. Let us reflect together on what we have accomplished.

If we are honest about these last four years, a good number of specific things that we have studied have been forgotten. Do we recall the proof to show that interior angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles — in all its details? Do we recall Socrates' argument in the *Republic* that the soul cannot undergo corruption? What about the details of the crown experiment in Natural Science?

And that is just freshman year. If we have forgotten much, does that mean we have wasted our time? Not at all.

If we think about how to find the center of a circle, and prove it is the center, I suspect you could figure that out. That alone shows that you have not forgotten what is central: the principles that one must know in order to demonstrate that property and the method for doing so.

You may forget many details of what you learned here, but your understanding of first principles will remain with you for a lifetime; it will form you, your families, and your communities long after graduation.

Over these past four years, you have considered the proper beginnings of mathematics, the distinction between poetry and history, the principles and methods of the natural sciences, the beginning and order of natural philosophy, of ethics, and of politics, and the beginning and end of theology, to name a few. You did this actively: by reading the fundamental texts before class and discussing them in class under the guidance of your tutors. You also considered these things according to the natural order of knowing.

The result of these efforts is best put by one of our founders, Mr. Mark Berquist: "That you should make ... a beginning [in the way of judgment], and make it well, is the chief purpose of your education here."

What you may not have noticed along the way is the kind of judgment you were developing. That judgment was formed by studying the great minds, about the highest things, with the guidance of tutors, in an order that is rational.

It is the human condition to forget. Angels do not forget things, but we do. An infallible memory is not essential to good judgment, but understanding first principles is, because, with an understanding of these principles, you can recall and articulate what is essential. Without such an understanding, all you have is memory — and that will fail you because memory without understanding is just words.

You have made a good beginning here over the past four years. It is my hope that you will go out to spread the good news to many who have not been given the blessings you have received and so have lost their way. You are needed more than ever.



"You may forget many details of what you learned here, but your understanding of first principles will remain with you for a lifetime; it will form you, your families, and your communities long after graduation."

— President Paul J. O'Reilly

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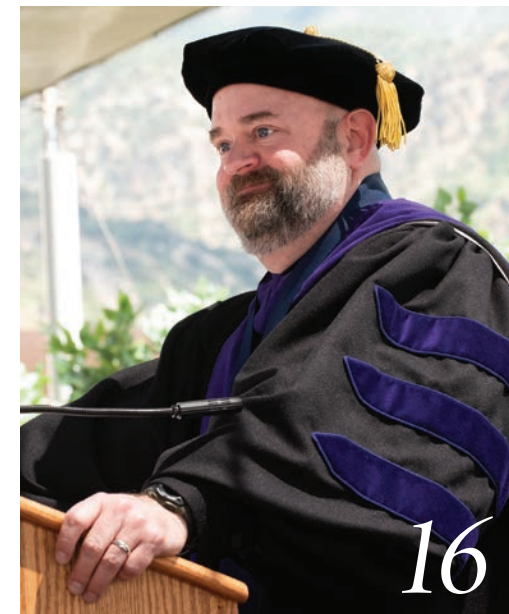
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Commencement 2024

College Salutes its 50th Graduating Class



California Commencement

Friends, families, and loved ones gathered on the two campuses of Thomas Aquinas College this May for the year's two Commencements, celebrating milestones both personal and institutional.

For the College's 107 newest alumni, the Class of 2024, the days marked the culmination of a four-year inquiry into the greatest works of natural science, mathematics, literature, philosophy, and theology, taught under the light of the Catholic faith.

The two days, set one week apart, were occasions to thank God for the continued success of the College's program of Catholic liberal education — by rejoicing in the achievements of those who have most recently completed it.

In his welcoming remarks on both coasts, Dr. Paul J. O'Reilly held the Class of 2024 out as a hopeful sign amid the

violent unrest that plagues so many other campuses. "Rest assured that, despite the troublesome times we live in, it is not those who make the most noise, or organize violent protests, who will have the final impact on our society," he said. "You should be confident that the men and women who graduate today will, in their quiet way, lead us to a better tomorrow."

A Fiftieth for Friends ...

The College's 50th Commencement exercises in California began on the morning of May 11 with the Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, for which the Most Rev. Slawomir Szkredka, the newly installed Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles for the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region, served as the principal celebrant and homilist.

His Excellency offered the Mass from the Chapel's marble altar, which was draped for the first time in beautiful new linens — a gift from the Class of 2024.

"This is our moment of thanksgiving, of gratitude for everything that has been accomplished this year on this campus," said Bishop Szkredka in his homily. "We thank God especially for our graduates, their parents, the faculty, for the work that has been done."

Soon thereafter, the Commencement ceremony began on the academic quadrangle. Always bittersweet, this day of farewells was especially so for this year's graduates, who mourned the absence of Sam Morson ('24), a classmate who died in a car accident after their freshman year. "Sam's classmates have dedicated this program to his memory and signify his membership in their class with an empty chair among their own," said Dr. O'Reilly. "May God console his family members



The California Class of 2024 left one chair empty at its Commencement ceremony in honor of late classmate Sam Morson ('24).

who are present with us today, including his parents. ... May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace."

Given the class's deep, abiding affection for Sam, it was only fitting that the following addresses would dwell on a common theme: friendship.

"Many of the Senior Thesis topics that our class wrote on revolved around friendship, either directly or tangentially. Upon further reflection, I realized that this theme was not only present in our theses. It was present in the curriculum, in the discussions, in the friendly chats outside of class," said Class Speaker Andrew Grumbine ('24). "We have spent the last four years formally training in the pursuit of the truth. Friendship brings a certain perfection and sweetness to this pursuit, and the goal of life is a friendship with Christ."

In his address, California Commencement Speaker O. Carter Snead returned to this same theme. "The virtues needed to flourish are the virtues of genuine and authentic friendship," said Professor Snead, a member of the faculty in the University of Notre Dame's Department of Political Science and its Law School, as well as the director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture. "To practice these virtues, you need to cultivate your moral imagination to see the faces and hear the voices ... of those who are in need. Lift your gaze up from inside and look around you to find the weakest and most vulnerable."

... and a Third for Pioneers

One week later, on May 18, the College held its third annual New England Commencement exercises since the campus opened its doors in 2019, and one more pioneering class bade farewell to the budding community whose traditions it has helped to establish.

His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, Prefect Emeritus of the Apostolic Signatura, served as the principal celebrant and homilist at the morning's Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit in Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel, assisted at the altar



New England Commencement

by the College's chaplains and a host of student acolytes. As in California, the Thomas Aquinas College Choir elevated the hearts of the congregation with hymns and chant.

In his homily, Cardinal Burke reflected on the everlasting motive for such liturgical grandeur: the sanctifying presence of the

"It is not those who make the most noise, or organize violent protests, who will have the final impact on our society."

— President Paul J. O'Reilly

Holy Spirit. He prayed that the Class of 2024 may experience a new Pentecost, "that the life of Christ in them, the life of true sons and daughters of God, through the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in their souls, may continue to flourish, inspiring and strengthening them to serve God faithfully, generously, and purely, and bringing them each day securely along the way to their true destiny."

Following the Mass, graduates mingled briefly with their families and friends before reconvening for the Commencement Ceremony in Moody Auditorium. After a brief welcome from Dr. O'Reilly, the day's speakers reflected on the graduates'

achievements and on the duties incumbent on them in their new lives.

In the Senior Address, Paul Habsburg ('24) exhorted his classmates to continue nurturing their appetite for excellence. "Understand the importance of what we study, especially for our society; embrace it," he said. "Let us go out and do great things for God on this earth."

Complementing Mr. Habsburg's exhortation, Cardinal Burke reminded the graduates in his Commencement Address that they can only do anything for God by remaining close to Him through prayer and the sacraments. "The exceptional Catholic education which you, dear graduates, have received has led you to the truth to which your reason is naturally attracted and which your faith identifies in all its wonderful richness," he said. "The all-beautiful and lasting fruit of your education is a life lived in Christ."

After the addresses on both campuses, graduates received their hoods and diplomas one by one. President O'Reilly then presented the College's "Charge to the Graduates," reminding members of the Class of 2024 of their responsibility for "maintaining, defending, and protecting your Catholic heritage — its faith, its hope, its charity, and all its learning and culture." In reply, the graduates sang *Non Nobis Domine*, giving the credit for their achievement to God and God alone. ❖

Cooperators of the Truth

College Inducts Heather and Milton “Bud” Daily, Jr., into Order of St. Albert

At its 50th annual California Commencement exercises on May 11, Thomas Aquinas College distributed 77 diplomas, as well as one of its most prestigious awards: membership in the Order of St. Albert.

The College established the Order in 1998. Named for St. Thomas Aquinas’s own teacher, the Order exists to recognize those benefactors whose generosity to Thomas Aquinas College has been exceptional. Members receive a cast-bronze bust of St. Albert the Great, and their names are engraved on the base of the statue of the saint that occupies a corner of the campus’s academic quadrangle.

This year, the College extended membership to a couple that has been extraordinarily dedicated to its mission of Catholic liberal education: Heather A. and Milton F. Daily, Jr.

“My uncle J. Edward Martin was a founder of the College in its early years, and he was my godfather,” reflected Mr. Daily at Commencement. “He introduced me to the College” — and soon thereafter, Mr. and Mrs. Daily became some of TAC’s most loyal benefactors. They made their first gift in 2005, and their generosity has never abated.

Mr. Daily followed in his uncle’s footsteps and joined the Board of Governors in 2006, serving for 17 years. In 2018, he played a pivotal role in the College’s acquisition of more than 700 acres of open space surrounding the California campus, and he was an enthusiastic champion of the College’s 2019



Governor Emeritus Milton “Bud” Daily, Jr., receives a bust of St. Albert the Great from Chairman of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi.

“Cooperators of the Truth” is an apt description of the Dailys themselves, who have been steadfast in their cooperation with Truth through their support of Catholic liberal education.

expansion into New England. “He shared his expertise with the College by focusing on the careful implementation of the master plan for each campus,” said Chairman

of the Board of Governors Scott Turicchi. “To that end, he served as the co-chair of the Campus Planning Committee for eight years.” By resolution of the Board, Mr. Daily became a governor emeritus in 2023.

Throughout the years, the Dailys have been a regular and beloved presence at College events. When the Thomas Fire surrounded the campus in 2017, they opened their home for 7 days to 10 student evacuees, who likened their gracious hosts to “a third set of grandparents.”

Among the Dailys’ many magnificent gifts to the College was the coat of arms of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI that is inlaid in the marble floor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. That crest

bears the late Holy Father’s papal motto, *Cooperatores Veritatis*, or “Cooperators of the Truth” — an apt description of the Dailys themselves, who have been steadfast in their cooperation with Truth through their support of Catholic liberal education.

“It’s with deep appreciation that I wish to express my gratitude to Thomas Aquinas College for everything that it’s about,” said Mr. Daily, who spoke from the dais while Mrs. Daily, their children, and their grandchildren looked on. “I have to say that, with Heather, my wife, and family, time in and time out, as we have come up to campus, we have reflected on the feeling, the inclusion, of Thomas Aquinas College. The graduates, the tutors, the people who are part of it always left us with a feeling of gratitude to God.” ❖



CALIFORNIA COMMENCEMENT





THE CLASS OF 2024



QUOTATION

*Ex umbris et imaginibus
in veritatem.*

Out of shadows and images
into the truth.

— St. John Henry Newman



IN MEMORIAM

Members of the California Class of 2024 dedicated their
Commencement ceremony to friend and classmate



Sam J. Morson ('24)

August 12, 2002 – June 2, 2021

May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

“Come, Father of the Poor”

Homily from the 2024 California Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit

by the Most Rev. Sławomir Szkredka
Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles



This is our moment of thanksgiving, of gratitude for everything that has been accomplished this year on this campus. We thank God especially for our graduates, their parents, the faculty, for the work that has been done. And as we pray, we invoke the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Father of the Poor. *Veni, Pater pauperem.*

The Gospel today, taken from the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John, takes us to that great Festival of Tabernacles during which Jesus stood and exclaimed, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink ... Rivers of living water will flow from within him,” if anyone is thirsty. The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the great three festivals of the Jewish religion. In the Book of Leviticus, it says that, when it comes to the Feast of Tabernacles, two things need to happen: People need to dwell in tents, in booths, in tabernacles and makeshift provisional structures. They are to live in them for the whole week. And the second stipulation given in the Book of Leviticus is that they rejoice, rejoice while living in tents and tabernacles for a week.

And I ask myself, how can you find joy in living in a structure like that? At my age, it’s obvious those structures are vulnerable, can easily collapse. It’s a fall festival, so there is some rain in Jerusalem around that time, as well. And yet the Lord says rejoice. Why? Because, as we see in the Book of Exodus, the story behind this festival is the story of God’s loving care for His people as they journey through the desert. As they carry

very little with them, as they live in tents and huts in their tabernacles, the Lord is looking after them. He supports them. He feeds them with bread from Heaven, with manna. He gives them water from the rock to drink.

The Festival of the Booths is the festival of human fragility that is supported, taken care of, and looked after by our God. It is during that festival that Jesus says, “Anyone who is thirsty, let him come to Me. He will receive My spirit.”

Come, Father of the Poor.

When the Spirit comes in the Gospel of John, it is depicted in two scenes. The first

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and very obvious scene is on the day of the Resurrection. Jesus stands in the midst of His disciples in the upper room. He greets them with the words, “Peace be with you,” and then He breathes on them, saying “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Are they thirsty? I think they are. Right before, on the day of the Crucifixion, the Cross of Jesus did not just scandalize them, it crushed them. Some betrayed Jesus, some denied Jesus, all except John abandoned Jesus. Now they are in fear behind closed doors in the upper room. They are thirsty for His spirit, thirsty for His forgiveness, for His peace. “Peace be with you,” He says, and breathes on them, breathes new life into them.

Come, Father of the Poor.

But the Spirit comes even before. In the Gospel of John, at the moment of Jesus’s crucifixion, the Spirit is poured out because, as Jesus dies, as He breathes His last, John says, He delivered His spirit. To whom? The faithful women were there. The Mother of Jesus was there, and His beloved disciple.

They are the faithful ones.

Yes, they did not betray, they did not abandon, but are they poor? I think they are. They are losing their loved one. The bridegroom is being taken away from them. They thirst for the Spirit.

Come, Father of the Poor.

Rivers of Living Water

This is, for the bishops here in Los Angeles, confirmation season. So, I am very blessed to go to different parishes and give the gift of the Spirit to our youth. Deacon Chris, who accompanies me, can recite all my homilies. But he will tell you that, in almost every one of them, I speak about St. Thérèse of Lisieux, for many reasons. According to St. Pius X, she is the greatest saint of our modern times. Pope St. John Paul II called her a Doctor of the Church. Pope Benedict XVI said she was the greatest exegete of the last 200 years. Pope Francis wrote a letter on St. Thérèse last October, inviting all of us to look at her again. And what do we see? We see someone who follows a little way, the way in which our weaknesses and limitations are accepted because they are that space into which God’s mercy and kindness can enter.

St. Thérèse famously said that she would like to go to Heaven emptyhanded so that God can surprise her with His generosity.

She preferred not to see the fruits of her labors, worrying that, if she saw the fruits, she would appropriate them to herself. She saw herself as a little child trying to climb three steps, constantly trying and failing and trying, and yet confident that the Father will ultimately stoop down, lift her up, and take her up those three steps. In her poverty, she is the perfect patron saint for those waiting for the gift of the Spirit because she is thirsty. She is poor, open to the gift from above.

Come, Father of the Poor.

In the Gospel we heard today, there is this delightful ambiguity. The underlying Greek text does not make it clear to whom this Scriptural reference is to refer. “Rivers of living water will flow from within him.” From within whom?

Is it about Jesus? Is it about the believer? Our translation that was used today seems to suggest that it is the believer, one who believes in Jesus, that from his heart, rivers of living water will flow. In the Eastern tradition, indeed, it was considered to relate to the believers. In the Western tradition among Western fathers, it typically referred to Jesus. He is the one from within Whom rivers of living water will flow.

So, which one is it? And, of course, if I ask you good Catholics, you will say both, this and that. And you’re right. It’s both.

It’s definitely Jesus. He is the source of

**“As you leave this school
and go into this world ...
remain thirsty and poor,
open to the gift of the
Spirit, to the action of
God in your heart.”**

living water, and we see that at the scene of the Crucifixion, when His heart is pierced open and water flows out. Just as in the vision of the eschatological temple in Ezekiel, that fruitful place from which the whole earth is watered, is nourished, is the Cross, is the heart of Jesus. He delivers His spirit. But at the same time, looking especially at someone like St. Thérèse, we see that believers do nurture others. Seeing how she has inspired many and continues to inspire and nourish us with her spirituality, we see how rivers of living water flow from believers as well.

So, I pray today for you, graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, that as you leave this school and go into this world, you remain thirsty and poor, open to the gift of the Spirit, to the action of God in your heart. And, in this way, you bring living waters to those who need you — and that is to all of us. Amen. ❖



“Friendship of the Best Kind”

by Andrew Grumbine ('24)

Santa Paula, California

Friends, family, faculty, staff, benefactors, and all who have made this community and the life we share possible — on behalf of the Class of 2024 and the students of Thomas Aquinas College, I would like to thank you all for the gifts of your time, talent, and treasure. You have allowed for the existence and growth of a community that fosters a deep love of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

This love is personal, but it is not private; it is common, but not commonplace. It is a love that calls to be shared, and when it is shared, it is not diminished, but greatly increases. It is a love that blossoms into friendship, and friendship of the best kind. Over the last four years, we have all experienced such a

“We have spent the last four years formally training in the pursuit of the truth. Friendship brings a certain perfection and sweetness to this pursuit, and the goal of life is a friendship with Christ.”

love and made many such friendships. As Aristotle says, “To the extent that people share in community, there is friendship.” And so, again, to all who have made possible this community and the friendships produced, thank you. We will always remember and appreciate such a blessing.

Now it seems only right that a Class Speaker speak to his class, so please forgive me for turning my attention mostly to my classmates for the rest of my time up here. You guys are wonderful people, both individually and as a group, and it’s a great honor to be up here delivering this address to you. Thank you for this honor. That said, the task is also quite daunting, considering the 49 previous graduations and their 49 previous speakers. Since I can’t hope to fill the shoes of the speakers who have come before me, I’ll just have to stuff newspapers in and call it good.

Friendship and Happiness

As I was thinking about what to focus on for the speech, and making precious little progress, an observation of my good friend Peter Bockrath ('24) came to mind. Many of the Senior



The Class of 2024 elected Andrew Grumbine as its Class Speaker ...

Thesis topics that our class wrote on revolved around friendship, either directly or tangentially. Upon further reflection, I realized that this theme was not only present in our theses. It was present in the curriculum; in the discussions; in the friendly chats outside of class. It became apparent to me that friendship must hold some place of significance in human life.

Just as I was about to get my idea patented, I found out that I was a couple thousand years late on the draw. Aristotle puts it thus: “Friendship is a thing most necessary to life, since without friends, no one would choose to live, though possessed of all other advantages.” So it seems the central role of friendship in life is a pretty well-known and agreed-upon reality. Even a bitter nihilist like Nietzsche can see the importance of friendship: “It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy

marriages.” This is proof of Fr. John Winkowitsch’s observation this past Convocation Day about gold nuggets of truth being everywhere.

Now, at this point, you may be feeling like Fr. Marczewski does listening to a long-winded confession: “‘Oh, Father, I feel so bad. Father, I have been *struggling* with this and that.’ So what? I’m not here to absolve your feelings. Get to the point.”

Well, here’s the first point: Friendship is a crucial part of a happy life. The truer and more perfect the friends, the better the friendship and the happier the life. Now, if one friend is the perfection of all goodness, truth, and beauty, shouldn’t the goal be to grow as close to this friend as possible? Our Lord calls everyone to have this friendship with Him.

So, whether you are called to the single life, marriage, or the religious life, friendship with Christ is the center of your vocation. Within this, He also calls you to be a friend to others as He is to you, to share this great joy with others. We are called to live our Christianity in every breath we take, serving Our Lord in every word and deed.

“Above all, we must love. Love like your life depended on it. Think, speak, and act in love. Leave in love.”

Our Mission

We have spent the last four years formally training in the pursuit of the truth. Friendship brings a certain perfection and sweetness to this pursuit, and the goal of life is a friendship with Christ, which necessarily involves bringing others to Him. What all of this means for us, I think, is that each and every one of us is called to leave this place with a mission: to spread love of the truth. You and I cannot leave TAC and be stagnant in this: The world needs you now more than ever. In a time like ours, where evil runs wild and takes many shapes and sizes, the truth is desperately needed.

This is all very easy to say, but doing is harder. Living in the truth means being recognized by evil and bitterly hated because of it. It means dying to yourself every day, decreasing so that Christ may increase. This sounds daunting, and that’s because it is. But I believe we have been prepared for the challenge. Covid graduations from high school, and the rough start our class had freshman year, are just a few of the challenges that we have met, and we are stronger for them. You are ready to go out and renew the face of the Earth.

So be not afraid, friends! We have been given great gifts, and we must use them. We must trust, often blindly, but never half-heartedly. Above all, we must love. Love like your life depended on it. Think, speak, and act in love. Leave in love.



... Susana Sedler to sing the National Anthem...

It seemed appropriate to me to conclude with the final words that we read in Senior Seminar. It is a prayer of Socrates and Phaedrus to the gods. I have modified it to address the One, True God:

Is it not surely appropriate to pray to God before leaving? ... O, beloved Lord, grant that I may become beautiful within and that all my outer possessions be in friendly concord with the inner. May I regard the wise as wealthy, and may I have as much gold as only a sound-minded person could bear or carry. ...

Pray, join me in this prayer, too, for friends have all things in common. Let us go. ❖



... and James Blewett to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Make the Good of Others Our Own — Without Counting the Cost

by O. Carter Snead

Charles E. Rice Professor of Law • Director, de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture • Concurrent Professor of Political Science
University of Notre Dame

It's a great pleasure and honor for me, as an alum of St. John's College — your secular cousin — to address this extraordinary community of learning on this special day. While I'm not an alum nor a TAC parent (yet!), I am profoundly grateful to the College on behalf of my dear friends who are, and on behalf of the Notre Dame Law School, which is often richly blessed with your wonderful graduates as students, including the late Timothy Cantu ('10), who tragically passed away in 2021.

For the past four years, through their encounter with works including Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Shakespeare, Dante, Austen, Dostoyevsky — not to mention the complexities of calculus, special relativity theory, electromagnetism, and Zuckerkandl's *Sense of Music* — these seniors have developed habits of mind, virtues, and practices that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

They have learned to read, think, and speak with care. They have come to understand that learning requires vulnerability and the willingness to take risks. At TAC they have developed the confidence that comes from grappling with great ideas and hard questions, but also the humility that emerges from this same encounter and struggle. Here at TAC, you have learned that truth, goodness, and beauty are real — not imagined or merely constructed.

But perhaps most importantly, they have learned that learning, growth, and awakening require a community. They cannot be done on your own — they require encounter, cooperation, and struggle with others. Genuine education requires friendship in the richest sense.

Embodied Souls

Now, I would like to address the graduates directly. Congratulations. You did it. Thank those who made it possible and take a moment to enjoy your accomplishment.



“Here at TAC, you have learned that truth, goodness, and beauty are real — not imagined or merely constructed.”

OK, you done?

Let's talk about what comes next. You are about to embark upon an exhilarating new chapter in your lives marked by dramatic new freedom and opportunities for discovery and creation, including self-discovery and self-creation. This is good. And it is important. But it is not the whole story.

Being TAC students, you rightly appreciate and excel in the life of the mind. And, thus, you may be tempted to think of yourself as simply a mind and a will. The temptation to define yourself solely as an individual mind and will may increase still as you grow into your powers in the new freedom you are about to experience. You may come to believe that the sum and substance of your flourishing is to search the depths of yourself to discover, express, and configure your life plan according to the authentic, original, and perhaps unprecedented truths that you discover within. And you may come to see everything other than your mind and will, such as your body, the natural world, and human relationships, as purely instrumental to these ends.

You should resist this temptation. Don't be fooled. You are not a disembodied mind and will. You are something far more interesting and mysterious than that — a dynamic and integrated unity of mind and body. You are an embodied soul — an ensouled body. You are what philosopher of biology Hans Jonas called a “psychophysical unity.” You don't merely have a body, you *are* a living body. You are an incarnated being.

That means a few things. First, as an embodied being living in time, you are fragile and finite. You will get sick, get injured, age, and you will die. In other words, you are profoundly vulnerable. The arc of a life humanly lived is not defined merely by freedom and self-invention (as important as these capacities are for those privileged enough to be able to exercise them). It begins in complete dependence and vulnerability — even before you are born. And in

the best-case scenario, it follows a gentle upward climb of growth, development, and independence when you reach the peak of your powers, when you immediately pivot downward in a gentle decline back into total dependence once again.

This reality stands us in a particular kind of relationship to one another. Because our lives as embodied creatures render us vulnerable, we are mutually dependent upon one another. But it doesn't stop there. As embodied beings in time, we need one another for basic survival throughout our lives. We all exist “on a scale of disability,” as Alasdair MacIntyre has said. But it is not for mere survival that we need one another. We need one another to learn to become the thing we are meant to be; we need each other for human flourishing. More on what that entails in a moment.

Networks of Giving and Receiving

Consider, first, in light of our dependence, what we need to survive and flourish. We need not the freedom of the unencumbered self, but rather what MacIntyre calls “networks of uncalculated giving and graceful receiving,” composed of people who are willing to make the good of others their own good without counting the cost or seeking anything in return. These networks are a web of relationships defined not by transactions for mutual benefit formed by consenting parties, but rather defined by unchosen obligations and unearned privileges. The late Sir Roger Scruton puts it this way:

For us humans, who enter a world marked by the joys and sufferings of those who are making room for us, who enjoy protection in our early years and opportunities in our maturity, the field of obligation is wider than the field of choice. We are bound by ties we never chose, and our world contains values and challenges that intrude from beyond the comfortable arena of our agreements.

The pristine exemplar of such a relationship is that of parents and children. Parents don't care for children because they are contractually obliged to do so. Children don't earn or bargain for the privilege of being cared for by their parents. It inheres in the relationship itself.

By participating in these networks, we survive. But even more than that, we flourish. And our flourishing, I submit to you, consists precisely in becoming the kind of beings who can make the good of others our own without counting the cost. In other words, by virtue of our embodiment, we are *made* for love and friendship.

So, what is needed to create and sustain these networks of giving and receiving? Again, not the radical freedom of the atomized individual will to create his or her own future. Instead, what is needed are what MacIntyre has described as the virtues of acknowledged dependence. These virtues of uncalculated giving are just generosity (giving according to need), hospitality (welcoming the stranger), *misericordia* (making the suffering of others your own). The virtues of graceful receiving are chiefly gratitude (all is gift), which engenders humility (along with openness to the unbidden and tolerance of imperfection), solidarity (we are all in this together), respect for the intrinsic equal dignity of every member of the human family (regardless of condition or circumstance), and truthfulness.

In other words, the virtues needed to flourish are the virtues of genuine and authentic friendship. To practice these virtues, you need to cultivate your moral imagination to see the faces and hear the voices (even when obscured or silenced by conditions or circumstances) of those who are in need. Lift your gaze up from inside and look around you to find the weakest and most vulnerable. They may be in places you never expected or didn't think to look.

Genuine human flourishing is not about self-invention and the projection of the will, as important as those might be. It is about loving your neighbor as you love yourself. We are most human when we are caring for one another, especially for the weakest and most vulnerable. Never forget that love is more important than power.

And to be clear, in this as in other things, you (and I) will fail. A lot. But don't ever quit. Get back up. As Samuel Beckett said, “Fail again. Fail better.”

Graduates, your parents and I are proud of you. Congratulations once again. And let us again pause to give thanks for this miraculous network of uncalculated giving and graceful receiving that is Thomas Aquinas College. Take care of yourselves, and more importantly, take care of one another. ♦



University of Notre Dame Professor O. Carter Snead with members of the California faculty who are UND alumni

“Reaching Higher and Nobler Truths”

by Austin Tewalt ('24)

Anthem, Arizona

A great teacher and graduate of Thomas Aquinas College encouraged me to visit the campus during my sophomore year of high school. So, I embarked on a journey from Phoenix to Santa Paula to find the place that I had only heard about in stories. After stepping foot on campus, I immediately fell in love. It was beautiful, the students were well-spoken and welcoming, and the beach was only 20 minutes away! I fondly remember learning how to swing dance and then dancing for many hours into the night.

“Although I had my personal doubts about Catholicism, I soon came to appreciate the College’s cohesive project and the common ground that our freshman texts provided.”

Coming from a family of engineers and a non-religious household, I had never seriously considered pursuing a classical liberal education, let alone a Catholic one. But after my visit, I knew I had to attend. The discussions I witnessed, both inside and outside of the class, were genuine, and the importance of their content resonated with me.

Once I became a student, Thomas Aquinas College was more than I had hoped for, but there were a few surprises, too. Having come from a high school that made use of the Great Books and the Discussion Method, I already had a love for the academic life. What I did not expect, though, was that so many students were Catholic! I loved how, at the College, students sought Truth for

its own sake (not that I really knew what that meant), but I had never actually paid much heed to its Catholic nature.

Upon realizing how deeply ingrained the Catholic faith was to the students and faculty, I was both impressed with their integrity and a bit worried. Would their beliefs stop them from considering my perspective in the classroom? And how would I ensure that I find “the Truth” if everyone around shared the same biases? Thankfully, it wasn’t long before I had an answer to these doubts.

First, I quickly found that Thomas Aquinas College values what every student has to offer, and I soon felt very welcomed by the entire campus. In fact, various tutors told me that the College was glad to have students who do not share the Faith, as they help the class carefully examine principles that Catholic students may take for granted.

Second, I realized that everyone has biases. It would be impossible to find a school where no teacher or student let his personal beliefs influence the classroom. Moreover, I saw that the College’s shared Catholic nature produced a great unity in its curriculum. Although I had my personal doubts about Catholicism, I soon came to appreciate the College’s cohesive project and the common ground that our freshman texts provided.

As I progressed through freshman year, and eventually to sophomore year, my reluctance toward Catholicism started to fade. It was especially fulfilling in Sophomore Theology to spend almost an entire year reading the works of St. Augustine. During this time, I was also acutely aware that the College’s curriculum builds on itself. It was a repeated theme in my experience that each year



was greater and more enjoyable than the last, reaching higher and nobler truths.

Junior year, I finally encountered St. Thomas. Here, more powerfully and potently than anywhere else, I saw the unity in the Church’s teachings, how Her doctrine has remained constant since the time of Our Lord, and how this doctrine is beautifully and perfectly consistent with what may be known by man through his reason alone. To finally understand this project, even dimly, was a life-changing experience.

This development continued most beautifully into senior year, when we studied St. Thomas’s treatment of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the sacraments. At the end of the year, thanks to my classes, the support and help of many great friends and tutors, and the grace of God, I came into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

Looking back at the beginning of my journey, I could not have hoped for a more perfect ending. I owe so much to Thomas Aquinas College. I am incredibly thankful for the many friends it has given me, its wonderful education, for four joyous years, and, of course, for helping bring me into the Church.

As I go on to become a teacher myself, I know that many of the skills I have learned and developed here will be of great help. More important, my experience of God’s eternal Truth will continue to inspire me, which I hope to share with those around me. ❖

“There is Still so Much to Learn”

by Anna MacKinnon ('24)

Surrey, United Kingdom

My time at Thomas Aquinas College has been a crazy — and wonderful — adventure.

I first heard about the College when I was in high school back in England. Around then, my family started to homeschool, and I took some online classes with Mother of Divine Grace School. My Latin teacher was a TAC senior who highly recommended the College. So, I came to the High School Summer Program and fell in love with the beautiful campus and everything in it.

I ended up coming as a freshman a year later, as it was the only college providing a strong foundation in the liberal arts, and I could go without swimming in debt for the rest of my life. I think that God was opening a very clear door, and closing others, through the financial-aid aspect of choosing where to go to college.

“The four years at Thomas Aquinas College are truly an incredible opportunity to read worthwhile and influential books, then discuss them with very wise and caring tutors as well as great friends.”

I am so grateful that I came to TAC. As a freshman, I received a letter from a senior, in which she emphasized the importance of gratitude during our time here. Looking back, I couldn’t agree more, and I would now offer any incoming freshman the same advice.

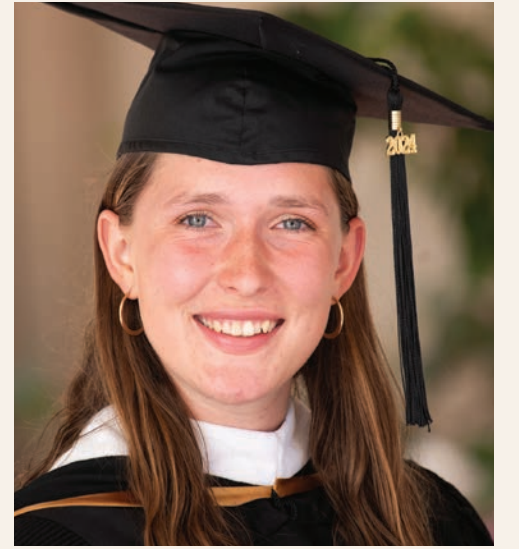
It’s easy to lose sight of the forest among the trees at the College, especially as one gets caught up in classwork.

It’s nonstop, and things can get tough. I remember one week during sophomore year, when we had a math midterm, a language paper, fasting on Ash Wednesday, and a lab report — in addition to our usual classes, which included a particularly long theology reading — as well as trying to navigate a tricky social situation among my close friends. This experience was, perhaps, the epitome of “sophomore blues,” but we all pushed through.

The week of final exams can be similarly intense, as we not only review all that we have read and discussed, but we also make connections and look at the bigger picture. My experience, however, was always that, after painful hours of re-reading texts and group-study sessions, things eventually fell into place. Often, it was only after that final review that I could finally understand why we read what we did that semester, or how it fit into the whole, and that was extremely rewarding.

The four years at Thomas Aquinas College are truly an incredible opportunity to read worthwhile and influential books, then discuss them with very wise and caring tutors as well as great friends. For most people, this is the only time when leisure is their main priority.

One of my favorite classes was Junior Seminar with Mr. Letteney. From Bacon to Descartes to Hume to Kant, we would analyze the authors’ arguments and see where they went wrong and the implications of small initial mistakes, such as distrusting the senses as the starting point of knowledge. It was a great insight into modern thought. I had a powerhouse of a section; we even asked to have an extra seminar on Kant to finish our reading. Mr. Letteney — somewhat baffled, I imag-



ine — obliged us, and so we discussed Kant’s proofs for God’s existence over burritos at his house.

Alongside the studies, TAC enabled me to go to daily Mass and begin spiritual direction. I have also loved working for the Grounds Department as part of the work-study program. It was the perfect change of scene from the classroom and a great opportunity to learn a lot about gardening. Like everyone who comes to the College, I have made many incredible friends, and I will miss living with them, although I know these friends will remain for life.

Next year, I will study bioethics at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C. I decided to apply there when I began working on my new Senior Thesis — after switching topics just over a month before the final deadline. I wrote on embryo adoption after a debate with a couple of classmates, in which I was frustrated at my inability to defend my position. It ended up being an eye-opening project, simultaneously heartbreaking, as it dealt with many sad issues and perversions, but also a beautiful opportunity to learn much more about the true meaning of marriage, motherhood, and the wisdom of God’s order in nature.

I could not be more grateful for the formation I have received at Thomas Aquinas College. Even though there is still so much to learn, I have been given the tools to think deeply — and these will sustain me for a lifetime. ❖



THE CLASS OF 2024

AND SENIOR THESIS TITLES



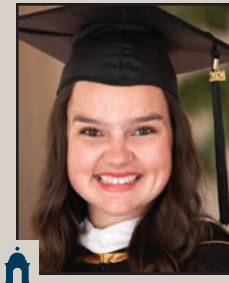
Each year, the seniors of Thomas Aquinas College create what will be the culmination of their four years of academic efforts — the Senior Thesis, a 20- to 30-page paper demonstrating one's ability to fashion logical, sound, and worthwhile academic inquiries. Based on a subject of each student's own choosing, and drawing from the College's classical curriculum, the thesis represents its author's effort to apply his or her education to a matter of scholarly and personal importance.

The process of writing the Senior Thesis takes the better part of a year. It typically begins the previous spring, when juniors ask members of the teaching faculty to serve as their thesis advisors. Student and advisor then work together to craft an appropriate topic, one that pursues a deep question in a leisurely and reflective way. Seniors must

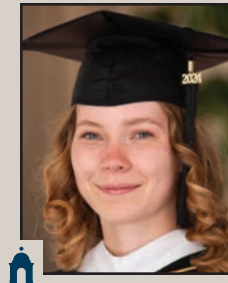
submit their topics for approval to the Dean's Office early the next fall and, once approved, research and writing can begin in earnest. Preliminary drafts are due in November and February, and final drafts are submitted at a celebratory gathering in March.

When the process is at last complete — the research, the writing, and the countless revisions — seniors must defend their theses before a panel consisting of their advisor and two other members of the teaching faculty. For 30 minutes or more, the tutors listen to the defense, ask pointed questions, then recess to decide whether the student will pass, fail, or pass with distinction. Given the amount of time taken to prepare the theses and the guidance of the seniors' thesis advisors, failures are rare, as are marks of distinction, which are awarded only in instances of truly superior work. ❖

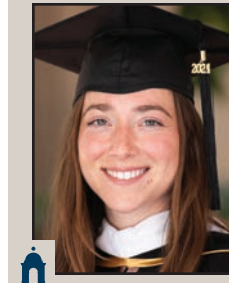
	<p>Foot of the Bed vs. Foot of the Cross: Lady Philosophy's Role in Boethius's Salvation AMANDA JUNE AGUIRRE Rancho Cucamonga, California</p>		<p>"He Stretches Out the Heavens Like a Canopy, and Spreads Them Out Like a Tent to Live in..." Isaiah 40:22: A Defense of Non-Euclidean Geometry WILLIAM TACITUS ALDREDGE Putnam, Connecticut</p>
	<p>Just War Doctrine Applied: An Analysis of the American and French Revolutions AARON MICHAEL ALLEN Hopkinton, New Hampshire</p>		<p>Living in Hope: Myth and the Philosopher's Pursuit of Wisdom CECILIA MARIE ALVAREZ Thousand Oaks, California</p>
	<p>On the Nature of Music: The Means of Music's Imitation of the Passions DOMINIC JOSEPH ANTHONY ANDRES Santa Paula, California</p>		<p>The Need for Speed: A Scriptural Interpretation and Analysis of the Race to the Tomb between Peter and John STEVEN THOMAS ARGO, JR. Santa Clarita, California</p>
	<p>F•R•I•E•N•D•S: The One Where We Explore the Necessity of Friendship for Happiness DOMINIC ANTHONY ARIAS Lincoln, Nebraska</p>		<p>The Devil Made Me Do It: A Thesis Defining Demonic Possession by Way of Aristotle's Four Causes JOSEPH CHRISTOPHER ARIAS Lincoln, Nebraska</p>
	<p>Augmented Ethics: A Defense of the Morality of Bionic Enhancement of Humans GREGORY JOSEPH BAER Santa Paula, California</p>		<p>Damage Caused by the Legalization of Abortion: A Secular View DOMINIQUE BECCAR VARELA San Isidro, Buenos Aires, Argentina</p>
	<p>"Iron Sharpens Iron, and One Man Sharpens Another": An Inquiry on Whether Competition Is Suitable for the Christian Life JAMES ISAAC BLEWETT Santa Paula, California</p>		<p>"Why Are You Able to Be Happy While I am Not?" An Explanation of the Apparent Causes of Happiness PETER JOSEPH BOCKRATH Front Royal, Virginia</p>



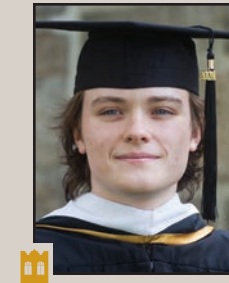
“Pain, Sorrow, Suffering Are but the Kiss of Jesus” (Mother Teresa):
A Response to Ivan Karamazov’s
Problem of Suffering
MARIA MAGDALENE BRITTAIN
Phoenix, Arizona



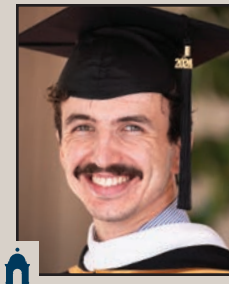
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MARIA BUG
Reutlingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany



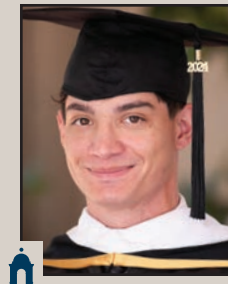
Integrating Islamic Immigrants:
Why Polygamy Cannot Be Conducive
to a Flourishing Political Society
ANGELA SOFIA DIAZ-BONILLA
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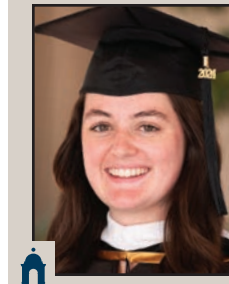
Mind and Matter:
On the Necessity of Faith in Christ
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New Britain, Connecticut



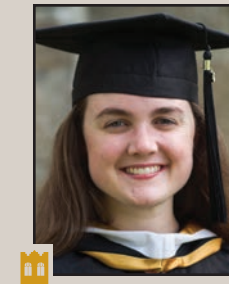
The Sociable Catholic Hermit
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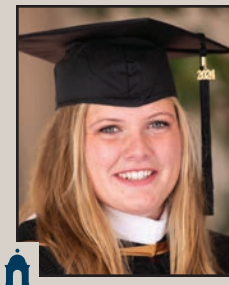
“And the Greatest of These Is Charity”:
Why Charity Is the Most Necessary
Virtue for Salvation
TOMASO VIANNEY CAMMAROTA
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“The Pursuit of Happiness”:
Virtue and the American Government
According to the Founding Fathers
JOSEPHINE ELIZABETH DOWNES
Hickory Corners, Michigan



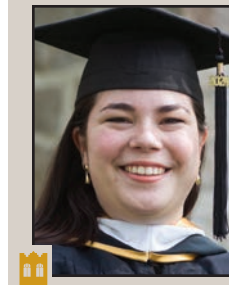
A Study of the Difference of the Virtue
of Justice in Men and Women as Shown in
Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy
MARGARET MARY DUFFY
Shirley, Massachusetts



“For, with the Heart, We Believe unto
Justice; but, with the Mouth, Confession
Is Made unto Salvation” (Romans 10:10)
MARIE ROSE CAREY
Wilton, California



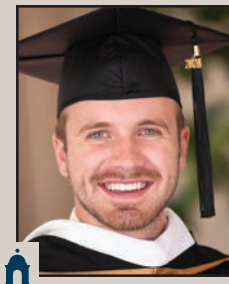
The Sanctification of Work
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Evaluating the First Amendment with
Thomistic Principles of Government
TRINITY ADONAI DUGGAN
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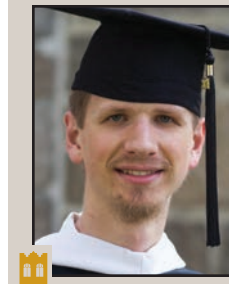
“Why Are They Suffering”:
On the Circles of Incontinence in
Inferno in Light of Aristotle’s *Ethics*
**GEORGIANA MARIA
CECILIA EGAN**
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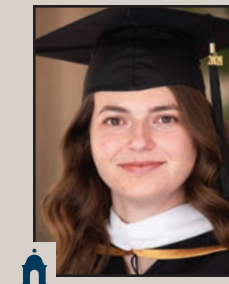
De Debilitate Christi
PETER GERALD CAUGHRON
Kansas City, Missouri



The Natural Law is Necessary in Order
for the Human Law to Achieve Success:
Why the Abandonment of the Natural Law
in Government Will Lead to Its Demise
LUKE-NOËL CECCHI
Cazenovia, New York



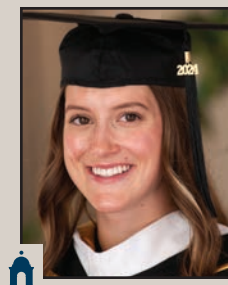
Aristotle’s Science Considers Things
in an Entirely Different Aspect than
Modern Science: A Critique of De
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Aristotle’s Science with Modern Science
THOMAS EDWARD FOX
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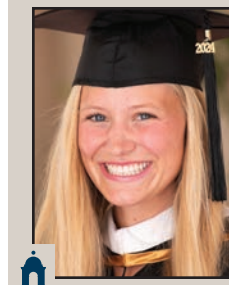
Amen and Awomen:
A Thesis on the Differences and
Complementarity of Men and Women
ANNA CHRISTINE FREDETTE
Vista, California



The Compatibility of Aristotle’s
Nicomachean Ethics with Christianity:
An Argument That Christians Can and
Should Implement Aristotelian Moral
Guidelines in Their Lives
SAMUEL AMBROSE CLANCY
Ashland, Massachusetts



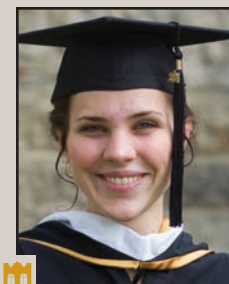
Playing Devil’s Advocate:
Exploring Whether Milton’s Satan
Ought to Be Pitied
SOPHIA GRACE COLARELLI
Lockport, Illinois



Musica Universalis:
Symphony in the Soul of Man
FIONA KATHERINE HOPE FROM
West Chicago, Illinois



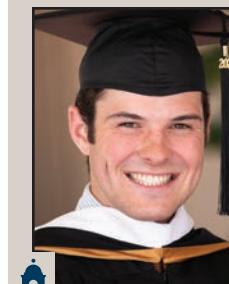
“The Action of Christ the Priest and His Body,
Which Is the Church, Is a Sacred Action
Surpassing All Others”: An Examination
of the External Role of the Laity in Mass
JOHN PATRICK GARDNER
Moscow, Pennsylvania



“The Spouse of the Soul is the Word
of God”: Concerning the Necessity of
Marriage in Attaining Happiness
MEGAN RAE CONRAD
Colfax, Iowa



Number-Base Systems:
An Unconventional Solution to the
Limitations of the Imagination
WILLIAM JOSEPH DEERING
Palmer, Alaska



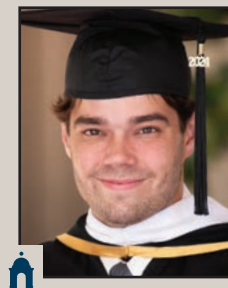
The Profound Importance of the
Family Meal in Light of Natural Law:
Nourishing, Nurturing, and Ennobling
BAYLOR DAVID GEE
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Kant and Aristotle:
A Joint Account of the Faculty of Sensation
DAVID ANTHONY GERRARD
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A Critique of Euclid's Definition of Same Ratio
TYLER HARRISON GETLIK
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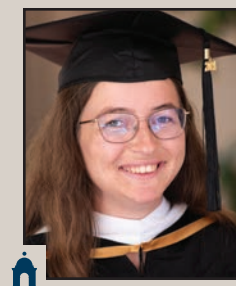
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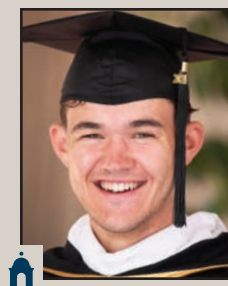
Stories as the Starting Place: A Study of the Imagination and the Story Based on Aristotelian Principles
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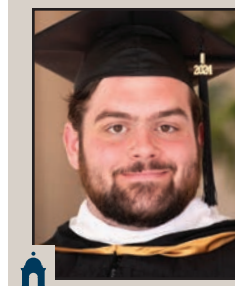
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DAVID PAUL IVORY
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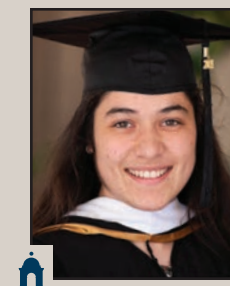
Duel of the Fates: The Fittingness of Fate According to Boethius as Opposed to Homer
CYNTHIA MONICA GRAF
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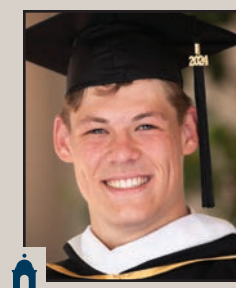
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ERNEST ANTHONY GRIMM
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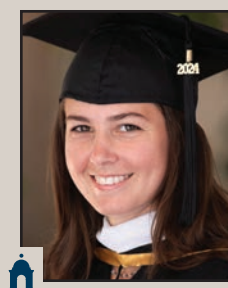
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MICHAEL GREGORY JOHNSTON
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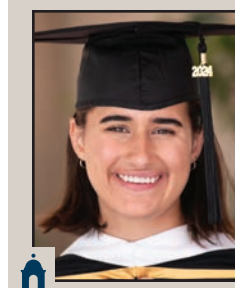
"His Head Is Bent to Kiss You, His Arms Are Extended to Embrace You, His Heart Is Open to Receive You": The Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross Is the Greatest Manifestation of Love
REBEKAH CATHARINA KASAK
 Orangevale, California



Man and Woman He Created Them: Pope Saint John Paul II on the Equal Dignity of Man and Woman
ANDREW GERARD GRUMBINE
 Santa Paula, California



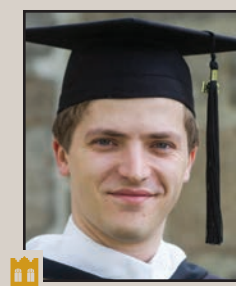
Moral Subversion for the Sake of Highlighting Human Vanity in *The Canterbury Tales*
GIANNA MARIE GUY
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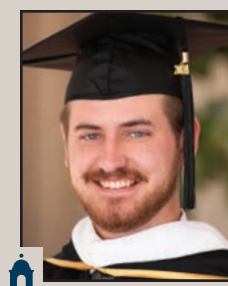
"Until One Has Indeed Become the Brother of All, There Will Be No Brotherhood": Raskolnikov's Repentance in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*
MARGARET GRACE KELSEY
 South Bend, Indiana



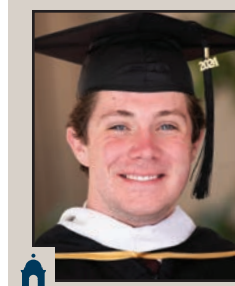
Whether Christ Is Aristotle's Magnanimous Man
ELIJAH RUBEN LOPEZ KING
 Buena Park, California



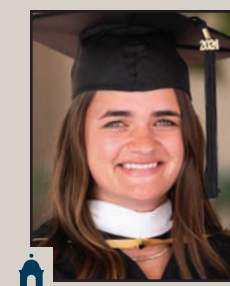
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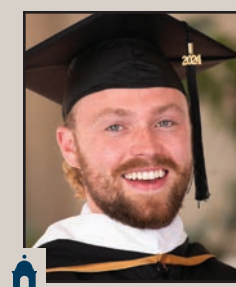
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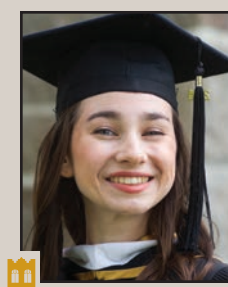
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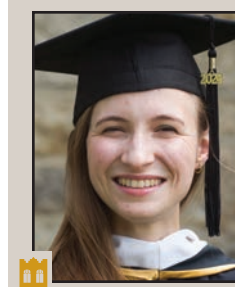
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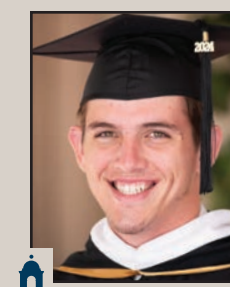
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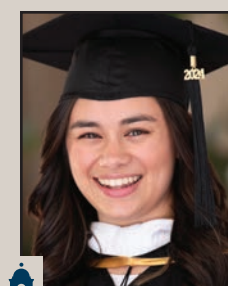
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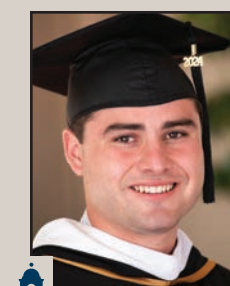
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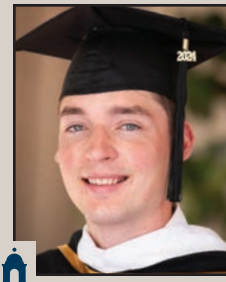
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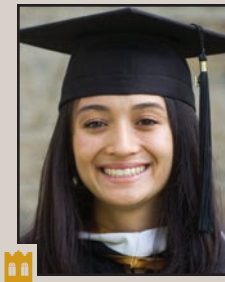
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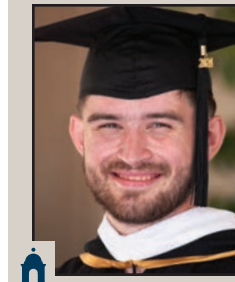
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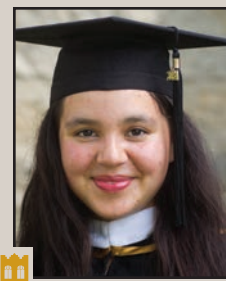
Mother of Our Savior as the Common Good of the Universe
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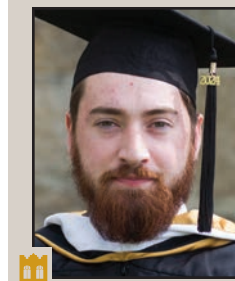
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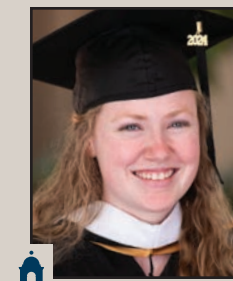
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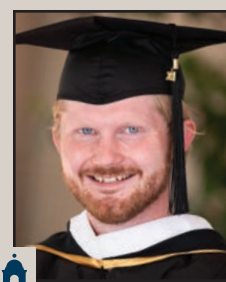
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Given His Principles, Whether Descartes Assumes Something Godlike in Man's Coming To Know
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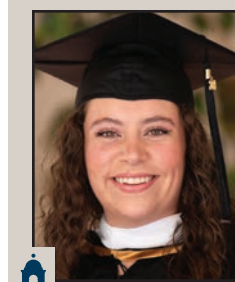
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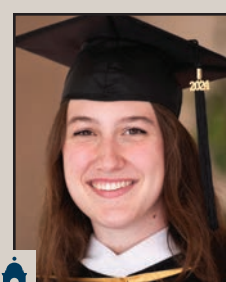
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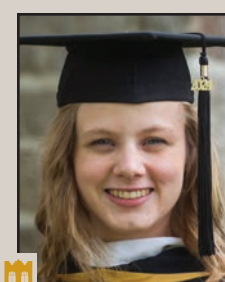
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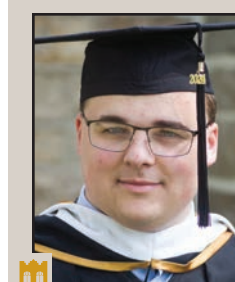
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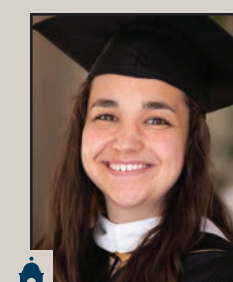
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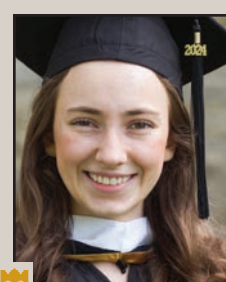
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NICHOLAS JOHN PETERSON
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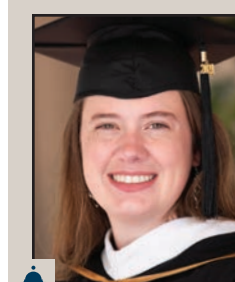
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Both Philosophical Wisdom and Prudence are Needed to Make Man Good
BETHANY MARIE MUELLER
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A Determination of Proper Emotional Attachment and Its Relation to Happiness According to Natural Philosophy
EVELYN MARIE MURRAY
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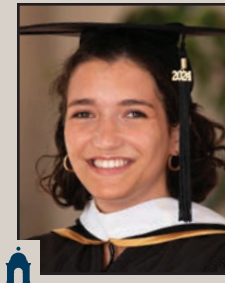
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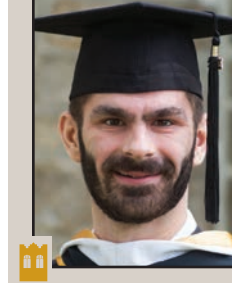
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JOSEPH QUACKENBUSH
 Ojai, California



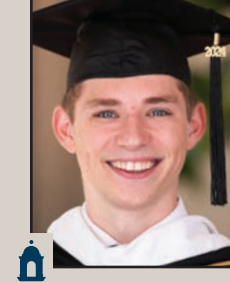
Aristotelian Friendship in
Jane Austen's *Emma*
RACHEL QUACKENBUSH
Ojai, California



"I Do Not Say to You Seven Times,
but Seventy Times Seven":
On the Possibility and Fittingness
of Forgiving the Unrepentant
ANNA MICHELE RIVERA
Kendall Park, New Jersey



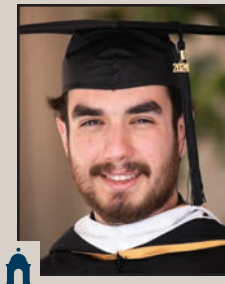
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AMBROSE JOSEPH TERNEUS
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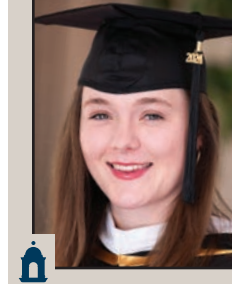
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An Investigation into Two Principles
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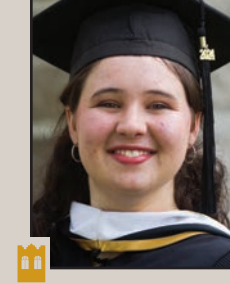
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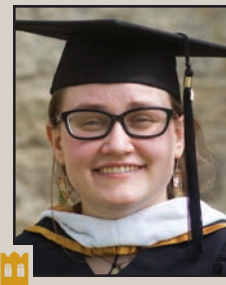
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A Proof for the Mind's Immateriality
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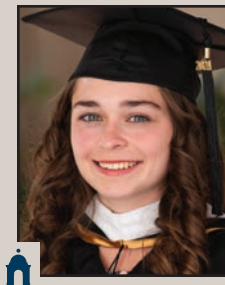
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Newton's Path to the Existence of God
CLAIRE MARGARET THOMAS
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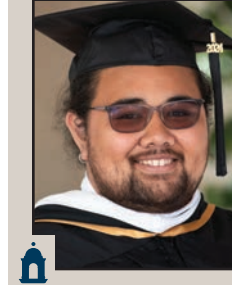
Wonder's Place in Natural Science:
Pitting the Father of the Scientific Method
Against "The Insect's Homer"
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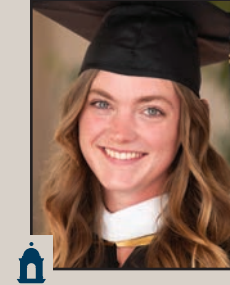
The Purpose of the Dialectic
in Aristotle's *De Anima*
ANNA SANTSCHI
New Lenox, Illinois



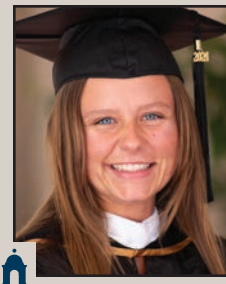
The Re-Enchanted Shall See God
SUSANA ISABEL SEDLER
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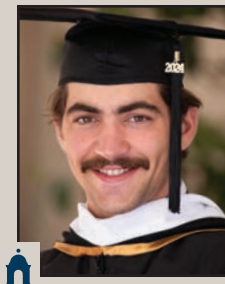
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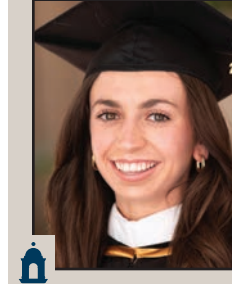
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The Role of Emotions in the Christian Life
ANNA MARY VAN WIJK
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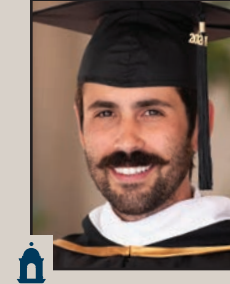
The Our Father as Primary
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SARAH BERNADETTE SHIELDS
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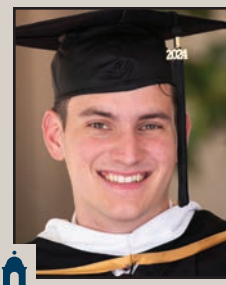
Ministries, Angelic in Nature
SAMUEL PAUL SMITH
Deerwood, Minnesota



"If I Have All Faith, so as to
Remove Mountains, but Have Not Love,
I Am Nothing."
FRANCESCA MARIE VERCILLO
Santee, California



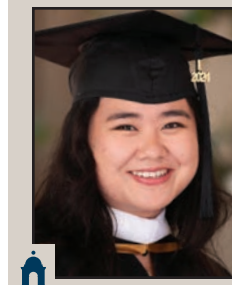
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Human Nature and the Legitimacy of
Political Authority in Hobbes and Aristotle
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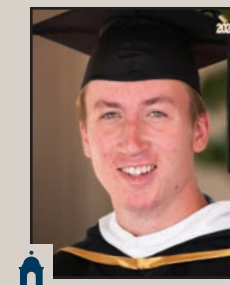
"Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi:
salutare vultus mei, et Deus meus"
(Psalm 42): An Inquiry into Hope and
Its Role in Man's Interior Life
JONATHAN RICHARD STEINEKE
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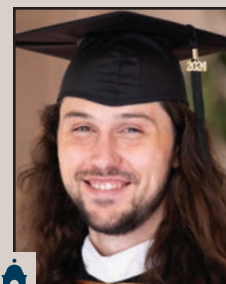
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Can the Thought of Aristotle and Aquinas
on Manual Labor Be Reconciled?
ISABEL MARIA PILAR STORCK
Columbus, Ohio



The Rout in Battle:
On Knowledge of Universals
from Sensible Particulars
KAYLA YA-HAN WANG
Anthem, Arizona



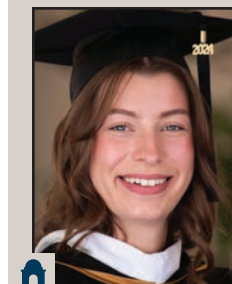
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An Argument for the Necessity
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NATHANIEL JOSEPH WHITTAKER
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JONATHAN WINTHROP STURKIE
Oceanside, California



Why Am I Writing This?
An Explanation of Wisdom as an End in
Itself and as a Means to Union with God
ALEXANDER JOSEPH TEMPLE
Wake Forest, North Carolina



A Lifetime of Penance for
a Moment of Ecstasy
**JOSEPHINE MARIE
YOUNGBLOOD**
Spring, Texas

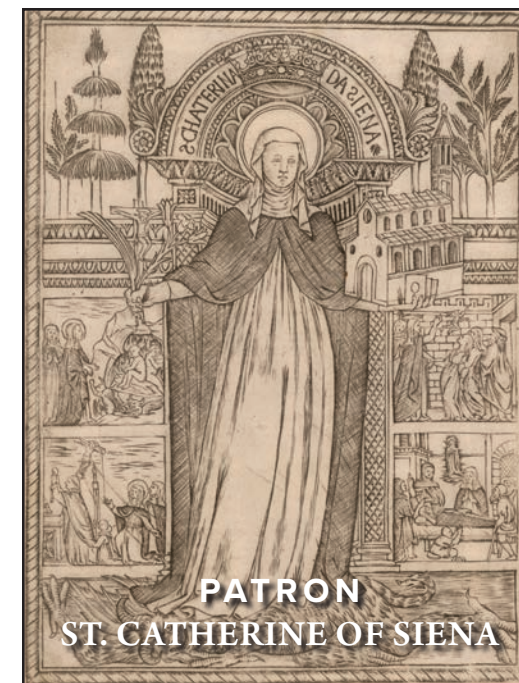
***Congratulations to
the Class of 2024!***



NEW ENGLAND COMMENCEMENT



THE CLASS OF 2024



PATRON
ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

QUOTATION

*I have said this to you,
that in me you may have peace.
In the world you have tribulation;
but be of good cheer,
I have overcome the world.*

— John 16:33

The Goal of Today's Commencement is Eternal Life

Homily from the 2024 New England Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit

by His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke
Prefect Emeritus of the Apostolic Signatura



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. It is most fitting to offer the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Commencement for the New England Class of 2024 of Thomas Aquinas College. The studies which the members of the Class of 2024 have undertaken here have been, at their root, an expression of the “thirst” for the “living water” of the Holy Spirit which flows in “rivers,” immeasurably and unceasingly, from the glorious-pierced Heart of Jesus into our hearts.

“The studies which the members of the Class of 2024 have undertaken here have been, at their root, an expression of the ‘thirst’ for the ‘living water’ of the Holy Spirit.”

At the same time, the Commencement which they celebrate today is, at its root, an expression of confidence in the Holy Spirit to guide them unfailingly and unstintingly in the future for which their studies have prepared them. Our fruitful life in Christ in the Catholic Church, in virtue of the indwell-

ing of the Holy Spirit in our souls, is not something external to a Catholic university education but is, rather, as Thomas Aquinas College has understood from its founding, both its inspiration and its fulfillment.

During the course of His public ministry, which had its consummation in His Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, Our Lord invited all men to quench their thirst for divine truth and love in Him, in His most sacred heart: “If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37-38).

God the Son, in fact, had taken our human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, to provide for us the “rivers of living water,” the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which sustains us all along the way of our earthly pilgrimage and brings us securely to the heavenly destiny of our earthly days, be they many or few.

Our destiny is not some mundane and therefore passing achievement, but rather eternal life with God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — in the company of the angels and all the saints. Regarding Our Lord’s words of invitation, the Gospel tells us: “Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given,

because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39). The goal of today’s beginning, today’s Commencement, is eternal life.

Guided by the Holy Spirit

Our Lord consummated His saving work by ascending to the right hand of God the Father and sending forth from the Father the Holy Spirit to dwell faithfully within our hearts. In His final discourse with the Apostles before entering upon His Passion and Death, Our Lord assured them:

I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you ... When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:7, 13-14)

It is from the same farewell discourse that the New England Class of 2024 has taken its class quote, words of Our Lord to reassure us of the victory of eternal life which He has won for us, if only we, guided by the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, entrust ourselves to Him as His faithful, generous, and pure

“fellow workers in the truth.” He, the “shoot from the stump of Jesse” upon whom the sevenfold “Spirit of the Lord” rests — “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, and the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2), shares the same sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit with those who are alive in Him in the Church.

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we have heard how the Apostles, consecrated at the Last Supper to act in the person of Our Lord and Master, head and shepherd of the flock, at every time and in every place, courageously went to all the neighboring people to baptize and confirm those who had received the gift of faith in Our Lord. With the pastoral charity of Christ, they fulfilled the desire of the people to become in Christ, the only begotten God the Son, adopted children of God the Father through the Holy Spirit dwelling within their souls.

The apostles Peter and John went down from Jerusalem to Samaria where they “prayed for” and “laid their hands on” those who “had received the word of God” (Acts 8:15-17). By the Apostles’ prayer and by their laying-on of hands, the people “received the Holy Spirit.” What the Apostles did in Samaria at the beginning of the life of the Church continues today through the same apostolic ministry.

Priests and bishops, conformed to the person of Christ, head and shepherd,

through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation to those who have received the gift of faith, bringing them to life in Christ in the Church through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What is more, Christ’s priests and bishops offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to nourish the faithful spiritually with the true Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord.

Our Lord brings us to life by the outpouring of the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism and strengthens and increases the same outpouring in confirmation. Through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, He makes sacramentally present His Sacrifice on Calvary, by which He has saved us from sin and its fruit, eternal death, to nourish the life of the Holy Spirit within us until it reaches its full maturity in eternal life.

Give Our Hearts Completely

The world and Satan try in every way possible to tell us that it is not possible to live in the truth and love of Christ, to follow His command: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). On the contrary, by the grace of the Holy Spirit at work in us, even the weakest and poorest soul is capable of knowing divine truth and practicing divine love, and of attaining its reward, eternal life. Rightly, we pray in the words of Psalm 117:

Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol Him, all peoples! For great is His steadfast love toward us; and the faithfulness of the LORD endures for ever. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 117:1-2)

Certainly, the challenges in following Christ are many, as are the temptations to leave Him and His way, but God is ever ready to shower upon the humble and contrite heart an abundance of the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit.

As we are blessed to take part in today’s Commencement, let us pray for the graduates of the New England Class of 2024 of Thomas Aquinas College, that the life

of Christ in them, the life of true sons and daughters of God, through the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in their souls, may continue to flourish, inspiring and strengthening them to serve God faithfully, generously, and purely, and bringing them each day

“By the grace of the Holy Spirit at work in us, even the weakest and poorest soul is capable of knowing divine truth and practicing divine love, and of attaining its reward, eternal life.”

securely along the way to their true destiny, their true home, in Heaven.

Let us pray for Thomas Aquinas College that she may continue to be a school of Christ, that she may continue to be the vehicle by which the Holy Mother of God, drawing our hearts to her Immaculate Heart, takes us to her divine son, especially in times of trial and temptation, exhorting us as she exhorted the wine stewards at the wedding feast of Cana: “Do whatever he tells you” (John 2:5). Thus, may her students receive the grace to be always alive in Christ, to be, with Our Lord, “fellow workers in the truth” (3 John 8).

God the Son Incarnate will now descend to the altar to make sacramentally present His sacrifice on Calvary, God’s supreme act of love for all mankind. Seated at the right hand of God the Father in glory, He will pour forth from His glorious-pierced heart His life — His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity — to sustain the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Let us, together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Purest Heart of Saint Joseph, and the priestly heart of St. Thomas Aquinas, give our hearts completely to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus for the glory of God, for our eternal salvation, and for the salvation of the world.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. ❖



“Let us go out and do Great Things for God”

by Paul Habsburg ('24)
Gfletz, Austria

Your Eminence, Cardinal Burke, ladies and gentlemen of the Board of Governors, members of the faculty, families and friends of the College, fellow students: Today we look back on four years of hard work; four years of constantly saying ‘yes’ to the challenges of a rigorous education; four years of spiritual and intellectual growth. We have studied the greatest minds of history — Augustine, St. Thomas, Plato, Aristotle, Newton, Einstein, and countless more. We have read and discussed difficult realities, such as the Trinity, the soul of man, and the way in which we learn. We have considered the development of calculus, electromagnetism, and the theory of relativity. Under the guidance of our wise tutors, we have spent 4,572 hours in the classroom in discussion, and even more outside in preparation.

Throughout these four years, one gets used to the ebb and flow of the daily routine; one falls into a schedule that usually starts before 7:30 a.m. and for many ends around 11 p.m. Day to day, we have followed our routine, and so it is very easy to miss the forest for the trees. Today we ought to take a step back and realize that we are part of something great here at the College, something to be proud of.

“We follow in the intellectual tradition of the greatest men of history, asking the questions that our ancestors asked thousands of years ago, questions that are timeless and will always define man’s thought.”

We follow in the intellectual tradition of the greatest men of history, asking the questions that our ancestors asked thousands of years ago, questions that are timeless and will always define man’s thought. If one thing has become clear throughout our studies, it is that man does not change fundamentally. Plato’s theory of the political man and government translates surprisingly well to more recent writers like De Tocqueville; Aristotle’s fundamental understanding of quantity finds an echo in modern mathematical theorems.

The matter of the curriculum that we have been pursuing



The Class of 2024 elected Paul Habsburg as its Class Speaker ...

for the past years of our lives is truly timeless and has drawn to itself not just the speculative leaders of history, but also those who achieved greatness in practical matters. Plutarch quotes a letter from Alexander the Great to his teacher:

Alexander to Aristotle, greeting. You have not done well to publish your books of oral doctrine; for what is there now that we excel others in, if those things which we have been particularly instructed in be laid open to all? For my part, I assure you that I had rather excel others in the knowledge of what is excellent, than in the extent of my power and dominion. Farewell.

We see here something remarkable. One of the greatest men to decorate secular history himself understood the study of the first causes to be greater and more noble than even his military achievements.

Tools for the Pursuit of Truth

These same first causes we study here in our last year, as a culmination of all the philosophy we have been doing. Though we by no means master the science of the first causes, we are allowed a glimpse into this knowledge so highly regarded.

However, even this excellent understanding envied by kings is only the handmaid of the science of God and the Blessed, which is the greatest undertaking of all in the curriculum. In our study of the bridging of the infinite gap between man and God in the Incarnation, our study of the salvation of man in the Passion, and our study of our particular means to God in the

sacraments, we contemplate truths withheld even from Aristotle. Theology, laid out so clearly by St. Thomas, explained so beautifully by St. Augustine, and defended so eloquently by the papal encyclicals, is not only the pinnacle of our studies here, but ultimately, as the science of God, the highest thing to consider.

In addition to the study of philosophy and theology, we spend almost as much time doing mathematics and the natural sciences as we do our two main disciplines. Why is that? Why do we spend a whole year preparing challenging Euclid propositions every day? Why do we study the development of our understanding of the motions of the heavens? Why bother learning the principles of musical theory?

All these particulars we engage with in order to build a foundation for the higher truths. Details, such as the cause of mutation during DNA replication and the difference between instinct and intellect, add to a more comprehensive picture of reality. They are the world in which we live, each reflecting the divine in some way. Insofar as it is ordered to a study of the highest things, everything we read in our four years here can be called great and pertains to that which wise men ought to know.

The members of the Senior Class do not stand here today as wise men and women, nor as great ones. In fact, it is doubtful

“Insofar as it is ordered to a study of the highest things, everything we read in our four years here can be called great and pertains to that which wise men ought to know.”

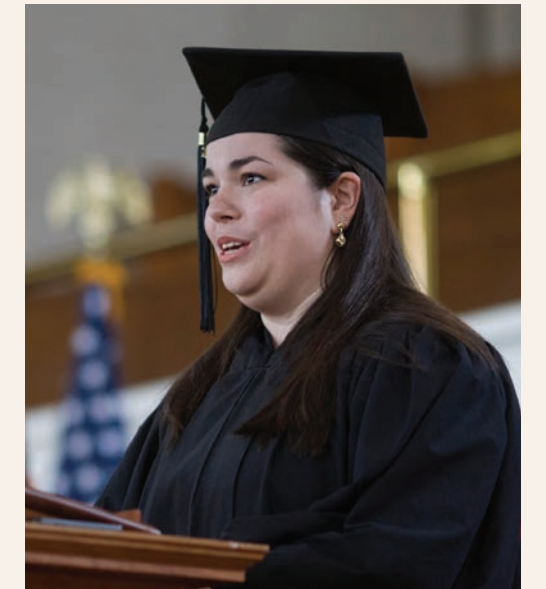
whether St. Thomas himself would even regard us as beginners in theology. What we have been given are tools for the pursuit of truth in our lives. It was a mere preparation of what is to come. To echo one of our chaplains, “Of those to whom much is given, much is expected.”

A Duty to God and Our Fellow Man

We truly have been given much, and we have a duty to God and our fellow man to use it for good. Our society has many gaping wounds nowadays that must be healed, many people in despair and with no hope. An education like the one we received prepares us perfectly to step in, recognize the problem, find a solution, and apply the remedy to the root cause of the particular evil encountered.

I believe that every single one of us has a vital role to play in God’s church on earth, that we have not merely been given a nice treat, a fun four years, and true friendships, but that our receiving this education is a step toward doing important things in this world. I believe that among our senior class today there are great leaders, called by

God to lay down their lives for others. I believe we can do good not only in the economy, but also in politics; not only for the intellectual good of society, but also for the spiritual. We can do good in education, in the medical field and law, in the trades and in financial services.



... Trinity Duggan to sing the National Anthem...

We can aid the Church in its mission to clarify the sciences and lead souls to Heaven through a marriage of faith and reason.

What we have to do first, though, is appreciate what we have been given, and so I want to put into words the challenge presented to us in receiving a TAC degree: Understand the importance of what we study, especially for our society; embrace it, and go out there to do great things in the name of God and His church on earth. Have an impact. We must go out into the world and let the light of Christ shine through us, rather than hide it under a bushel. We have been given many talents, but their greatness lies not in holding on to them as our own good, but in going out and multiplying them as a common good.

We will all pursue our particular plans after graduation, landing where we can and where we are needed. It is likely that many of us will never have the time for leisure that we have had here, giving our lives in the service of the Church, our



... and Miles Caughron to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

countries, and our families. But we have been given the means to do anything we do greatly: to live a life ordered toward something higher than ourselves, higher even than things in this life; to live a life ordered toward God through the search for Him as the cause of all life and the spring of truth.

Let us go out and do great things for God on this earth.

St. Thomas Aquinas, pray for us. ❖



The New England 2024 Commencement Address

“What Shall We Do?”

by His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke
 Prefect Emeritus of the Apostolic Signatura



“Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37) Such was the response of “devout men from every nation under Heaven” (Acts 2:5) to St. Peter’s Pentecost Discourse. The Holy Scriptures tell us that “they were cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37). St. Peter had proclaimed to them the truth of the Redemptive Incarnation with these words:

Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know — this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised Him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. ... This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which you see and hear. ... Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified (Acts 2:22-24, 32-33, 36).

Witnessing the transformation of the Apostles by the descent of the Holy Spirit and hearing the preaching of St. Peter, the devout men understood that the event which they were witnessing and the enduring reality which it manifested had changed their lives forever. They recognized the abiding victory of Jesus, “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), over sin and death through the outpouring of His spirit, God the Holy Spirit, upon the Church, into the hearts of the faithful members of the Church, Christ’s Mystical Body.

To their heartfelt question, “Brethren, what shall we do?” addressed to the Apostles, St. Peter, without hesitation and without equivocation, responded:

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to Him.” And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying: “Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:38-40).

The Scriptures attest that “those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41), and that their lives were marked by holding “steadfastly to the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

“The exceptional Catholic education which you, dear graduates, have received has led you to the truth.”

Convert Daily to Christ

Dear graduates of the New England Class of 2024 of Thomas Aquinas College, you have received a Catholic university education. You have been pondering in depth the truth of the immeasurable and enduring love of God for man, both as it is prefigured in everything good, true, and beautiful — the fruit of the law of God written in nature and, above all, upon every human heart — and as it is perfectly revealed in the redemptive Incarnation of God the Son, Who dwells in human hearts by the outpouring of God the Holy Spirit in the Church. It is the truth that St. Peter, inspired and made courageous by the Holy Spirit, announced to the “devout men from every nation on earth” on Pentecost.

Having completed your years of study at Thomas Aquinas College, having been blessed to have contemplated the truth announced by St. Peter on Pentecost both through the cultivation of God’s gift of reason and through the embrace of His even more wonderful gift of faith, you have come to Commencement on the Vigil of Pente-

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cost Sunday. Having been so enriched with the pursuit of divine truth and love, you, like the devout souls who witnessed Pentecost and listened to the preaching of St. Peter, must be “cut to the heart,” asking the successors of the Apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” As a successor of the Apostles, as a shepherd of God’s flock, of the Church, Christ’s Mystical Body, I am pleased to honor today’s Commencement, Thomas Aquinas College, and you, her graduates of 2024, by responding to your question.

The answer to the question is simple: Convert daily to Christ, repent of your sins, and respond with all your heart to Christ’s call to holiness of life. Your lives, like the lives of those baptized on Pentecost, must be marked by a steadfast adherence to the truths of our Catholic faith handed down to us in an unbroken line through the apostolic tradition; to our communion with one another as true sons and daughters of God in God the Son by virtue of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation; to faithful participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, “the breaking of bread,” by which Christ makes sacramentally present the fruits of His sacrifice on Calvary; and to the rich treasury of devotions and prayers in the Church. By so living, you will remain in the company of Christ in His holy church and become ever more one in heart with His Most Sacred Heart.

In a particular way, the seed of Christ’s life planted in your souls at baptism is meant to flower in the gift of your entire being to Him through your vocation in life, whether it be to the conjugal life of marriage, to the dedicated single life, to the consecrated life, or to the priesthood. The daily conversion to Christ which leads, in adulthood, to the knowledge and embrace of your vocation with a faithful, generous, and pure heart is indeed the principal fruit of a truly Catholic education. Commencement for you raises the question: What shall we do? At the present time in your Christian growth, it raises the question: What is God’s plan for me? To which vocation is He calling me?

Vocation and Catholic Education

A Catholic education fortifies us to know God’s plan and to do God’s will by recognizing the darkness and sin around us and in our lives, and by embracing Christ, Who dispels the darkness and conquers sin in the world and in our lives by His dwelling with us in the Church. St. Peter did not mince words with those to whom he preached. He told them: “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” Catholic education — whether it be in the arts, sciences, or skills — is steeped in wonder at the good order of God’s creation, and at the call to be with Christ, God the Son Incarnate, “fellow workers in the truth” (3 John 8). The true development of reason is only possible within the context of the Faith, of the study of God and of His plan for us and the world, as He has revealed Himself and His plan to us in Christ. Catholic education leads us to intimate communion with Christ, inspiring us to know the truth and to live the truth in love, above all in our vocation in life.

Remember the words of the Letter to the Hebrews, regarding our communion with the saints in the Church: “Therefore, since we are



“Convert daily to Christ, repent of your sins, and respond with all your heart to Christ’s call to holiness of life.”

surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Catholic education forms us to keep our eyes fixed on Our Lord, and to view everything in our daily life in the perspective of its fulfillment in the life which is to come, eternal life. Our Lord Himself has taught us in plain words, “whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:27).

Pope Pius XI, in his Encyclical Letter *Divini Illius Magistri*, “On Christian Education,” quoting the words of St. Paul to which I have just referred, described a Catholic education with these words:

The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism, according to the emphatic expression of the Apostle: “My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you.” For the true Christian must live a supernatural life in Christ, “Christ who is your life,” and display it in all his actions, “that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” Hence the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ.

Rebellion and Revolution

The great challenge of Catholic education is to avoid the multiple distractions of false atheistic and materialistic ideologies and to remain focused on communicating Christ as He comes to us through

apostolic tradition, the living tradition of the Church.

We live in very troubled and troubling, sometimes seemingly apocalyptic, times; we understand all too well the timeliness of St. Peter’s exhortation on Pentecost: “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” The rebellion before God, the revolution against His truth and love handed down to us in the Church, has reached an unimaginable level. It is a rebellion not only against the Faith but also reason. We witness in the world the denial of our very nature as God has created us.

What is more, the rebellion and revolution are sustained by some from within the Church, even by some who are called and ordained to shepherd the flock. We witness the devastating results for the Church in Germany. The current sessions of the Synod of Bishops threaten to extend the same devastation to the Universal Church.

Devout Catholics are rightly disheartened and discouraged, and justifiably angry at the profound suffering inflicted upon the Mystical Body of Christ by the apostasy, the abandonment of Christ, to embrace the ways of a world in rebellion before God. Your question at Commencement, “Brethren, what shall we do?”, is the question of what are we to do in the contemporary situation of the Church and of the world, which, in certain respects, is unprecedented in the history of the Church.

Certainly, the answer is not to leave Christ, Who is alive for us in the Church, but to remain faithfully with Him in the Church, to be His faithful “fellow workers in the truth,” teaching His saving word and bringing His saving grace to the world with ever greater fidelity and generosity, even in the face of indifference, ridicule, persecution, and death. God the Father confides to each of us the care of some portion of the kingdom of His Divine Son Incarnate. We should only be concerned to be faithful, generous, and pure followers, disciples, of Christ the King.

Let us recall the words of St. Paul in his Letter to the Colossians: Christ “is before all things, and in Him all things hold together ... For in Him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on Earth or in Heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross” (Colossians 1:17, 19-

“Christ conquers the disorder introduced into the world by the sin of man, by the rebellion of our first parents against the will of God for us and for the world.”

20). Following Christ means loving God and serving His plan for the salvation of the world. If we deny Christ at work in the Church, nothing else in life makes sense any longer. Trusting Christ’s word and His promises, we do not lose heart, but, rather, are confident that He will win in us the victory over sin and death.

Christ the King

Christ is the king of Heaven and Earth, pouring out His life for us, as He declared to Pontius Pilate who questioned Him about His kingship. “My kingship is not of this world. ... You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (John 18:36-37).

God the Father has come to reign lovingly over His children through God the Son Incarnate, Christ the King. Through the redemptive incarnation of His only-begotten Son, God the Father speaks to us the truth which purifies us of the lies of our sins and frees us to worship Him “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). In the words of St. Paul, “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).



In Christ is realized the right order of all things, the union of Heaven and Earth, as God the Father intended from the beginning. Christ conquers the disorder introduced into the world by the sin of man, by the rebellion of our first parents against the will of God for us and for the world. It is the obedience of God the Son Incarnate which reestablishes, restores the original communion of man with God and, therefore, peace in the world. His obedience unites once again all things, “things in Heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1:10).

The exceptional Catholic education which you, dear graduates, have received has led you to the truth to which your reason is naturally attracted and which your faith identifies in all its wonderful richness. The all-beautiful and lasting fruit of your education is a life lived in Christ. Christ indeed continues to be at work in us through the teaching of the truth and the manifestation of its beauty in the Sacred Liturgy and of its goodness in a virtuous life. May Commencement leave you “cut to the heart,” asking Our Lord: “What shall we do?” May the Virgin Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, lead you at Commencement to turn, with her, to Christ, and to heed her maternal counsel: “Do whatever he tells you” (John 2:5).

Thank you for your kind attention. May God bless you and your families. ❖

“I Was Given Something Truly Remarkable”

by Paul Habsburg ('24)
Gfletz, Austria

Coming to Thomas Aquinas College was probably the best decision I ever made. The best thing that ever happened to me was my baptism into the Church, but since I did not choose that, I can confidently say that my best choice was that of coming here.

I grew up in the Austrian countryside in a family that loved God but was on the search for a spiritual home for many years of my childhood. We were Catholic, but it was hard to find like-minded families nearby. I went to various schools, public and private, but I always felt a bit like an outsider among my friends.

“I have considered and discussed the Trinity, the nature of the soul, the theory of relativity, and the cutting edge of modern science.”

Perhaps it was my last name that drew the attention of teachers, often negative, but more likely it was the fact that my parents, my five sisters, and I went to Mass every Sunday and prayed before meals and before bed. I had friends who were culturally Catholic, but outside of some cousins I did not see often, I grew up in a world where I was different. This had the fortunate effect for all of us siblings that we grew very close among each other, something I am grateful for every day.

When I was about 15, we moved to Rome, where my father had found employment. While most of my friends during my time there were still non-Catholics,

we finally found a faithful community that gave us a sense of belonging. Through this revival of the Faith in my family and through friends of ours, I switched to Mother of Divine Grace School for my last year of high school. In fact, I loved that year so much that I chose to spread my senior year over two years.

Through Mother of Divine Grace School, I first heard of Thomas Aquinas College. At the time, I had very little orientation in life, and I was headed to do what most of my peers in Europe do after they finish school: drift between various college degrees and party throughout my twenties. TAC offered something new and different. I remember going on its website, and the first thing that I found was the section on rules. I read it — it must have been an hour or so — and afterward, I knew I wanted to go to TAC and nowhere else.

The clearness of the rules, their strictness relative to anything I had experienced, and their obvious orientation toward study was something completely new to me. The strictest rules I had known at school were at best half-hearted preventative measures to make the life of the teacher less difficult. At TAC, it was clear, the academic life was taken seriously. I only realized how real all this was when I got onto campus after that summer, setting foot in the U.S. for the first time.

My freshman year, I completely embraced the aspect of quiet from the world that I was offered. I had no phone, rarely ever used one of the school computers, and went to bed early. I fully focused on my studies and my spiritual



life. This made our chapel a home of mine, and I spent much time there, doing homework and spiritual reading. I think some of the greatest joys I found were in the math program that we pursue here for a large portion of our studies. I came to TAC with a negative perception of mathematics, seeing it as incomprehensible and not for me. A few weeks ago, I successfully defended my thesis on calculus.

I am now at the end of my education here, having read every notable text from Augustine to the popes, from Plato to Nietzsche, from Euclid to Einstein, from Archimedes to Maxwell. I have considered and discussed the Trinity, the nature of the soul, the theory of relativity, and the cutting edge of modern science. On top of that, I have made friendships that I never thought I could.

Most importantly of all, though, I have found a purpose in my life. I now know that I am called to holiness, to be with God eternally. I know that others in my life rely on me to get their souls to Heaven; I know that I was given something truly remarkable. I can speak clearly about matters of faith and philosophy as well as mathematics, science, literature, music and much more. I was given an opportunity to do great good for God's church on Earth, and I fully intend to do so. Thomas Aquinas College gave me purpose and love, which I hope to spread to those whom God puts in my life. ❖

“These Past Four Years Have Forever Changed Me”

by Anna Santschi ('24)
New Lenox, Illinois

I first heard about Thomas Aquinas College in my sophomore year of high school, when my dad suggested that I attend the College's High School Summer Program. When it came to college choice, my parents had let each of my siblings go to a college that matched his or her particular aptitude and field of interest — their only requirement was that it be on the Newman Guide list of Catholic colleges.

I had always had a particular love for my STEM classes in high school. Every year I made sure to include as many in my schedule as possible. So I was a little surprised that my dad would suggest a liberal arts college. But I thought it could not hurt to check it out. I looked into the College and saw that it was in California. That was it. I was convinced that it was not the school for me. I love winter, and the idea of year-round summer immediately shut down TAC as an option. My dad told me to at least go to the Summer Program; if nothing else, it would be a good experience.

“Most importantly, I have learned how to center my life around God such that what I learn, and how I learn, leads me closer to Him.”

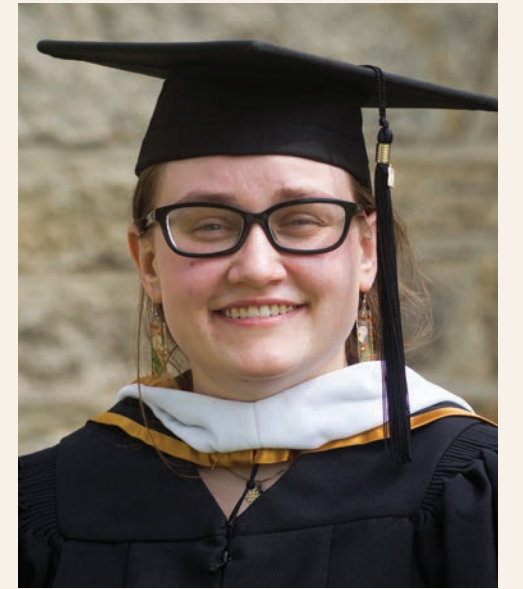
Cut to next year. I am finishing my junior year of high school and, once again, I find myself looking up the TAC website to apply to the Summer Program. Lo and behold, what does it say on the site's front page? “One Program, Two Coasts.”

The College was opening up a new campus in Massachusetts, and that year was the first that they planned to have a Summer Program there as well! Suddenly, my only real objection to TAC was gone. So, I had no choice but to go and see what it was all about.

At the Summer Program, we read authors such as Plato, Sophocles, Kierkegaard, Fabre, Boethius, and Aquinas; we studied biology, theology, philosophy, literature, and, most importantly, math. (At least, it was the most important to me!) Starting in the second week, we studied and demonstrated propositions from Euclid's *Elements*. It was a new way of studying math, and it really intrigued me, especially in the context of the full curriculum.

I loved all of it. There was not a single reading I did not enjoy. Every class was another opportunity to pursue and attain truth. And it was all done in a community that truly cared about and fostered that intellectual pursuit. Every day we were given specific time to study. At every meal, the tutors were more than willing to discuss and guide me through any question I asked. The prefects all exuded a complete love for the truth and for the school that was helping them attain it.

Two weeks passed, the program ended, and I was convinced. Thomas Aquinas College was my school of choice. I loved the books, the style, and the tutors. I loved the community. I loved being with people who shared my passion for learning. I went home and informed my parents that I was going to go to TAC. I applied. After a wait that seemed to last an eternity, I was finally



accepted into the Class of 2024.

These past four years have forever changed me. At this school, I have grown in my reason, my virtue, and faith. I have learned truths about God, man, and nature. I have learned how to reason validly while using true premises so as to arrive certainly at the truth. I have learned when it is proper to trust an authority versus when I need to form an argument on my own. I have learned how to live in a community truly ordered to learning.

Most importantly, I have learned how to center my life around God such that what I learn, and how I learn, leads me closer to Him.

In particular, I have discovered the joy of seeking wisdom through philosophy, especially in Aristotle. Before coming to the College, I had never done any sort of philosophical learning, formal or otherwise. I came to the College seeking only to study math while also gaining a well-rounded education. Yet what most captured my heart freshman year, and every year afterward, was reading Aristotle's works and especially applying his principles to theology with St. Thomas in junior and senior year.

Learning to see the world in the context of first principles and clear syllogisms has allowed me to have confidence that I can achieve truth, and that such a pursuit is worthy of a lifetime of dedication. I go out desiring to take what I have learned here into the rest of my life. ❖

Stay Close to Christ and Grow Closer to Him

An Interview with His Eminence
Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke



This spring you inaugurated your nine-month novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe, which our students have been praying in New England and which culminates on her feast day, December 12. Could you tell us about why she is a fitting patroness for this time?

Well, in 1531, the Church universally was in a terrible crisis with the Protestant Revolt, but also in Mexico, there was a terrible attack on human life through the practice of human sacrifice among the Aztecs, with thousands of people violently killed. At the same time, there was developing a very bloody conflict between the Native Americans and the Spanish explorers and settlers. It was a miracle: Our Lady appeared to St. Juan Diego, and her message was so simple and direct.

In times of great crisis — and surely we face such a time today, both in the world and in the Church, with a rebellion against God, the attack on the family, the attack on our human identity as man and woman, the attack on religious freedom, and ever-more diffuse confusion and error within the Church that are leading people away from Christ — it is Our Lady who will bring Christ to us again. I am confident that, through this nine-month novena, Our Lady is going to work many miracles in various parts of our nation and the world in order to bring us back to Christ, Who is our only salvation.

How would you counsel parents to choose a Catholic school for their children?

When I was a youngster, some 76 years ago, if parents chose a Catholic college, they could be sure that their son or daughter would be, first of all, taught the Catholic faith in a serious way, but also that they would be imbued with Catholic morals. But today, that isn't the case, and parents have to seek out the sound Catholic universities or colleges.

Thomas Aquinas College, both the New England campus and the California campus — and there are others too, like Christendom College, and Benedictine, and Belmont Abbey — still serves this import-

ant function. The Cardinal Newman Society is very helpful: It studies each college to indicate to parents where they can be certain that their son or daughter will be led deeper into life in Christ and the Church and become a strong member of Christ's mystical Body.

“Thomas Aquinas College is committed to the idea that Christ is not something added on to a university education, but that the knowledge and love of Christ in His holy church are integral to the whole education.”

You have been a very generous supporter of all Catholic colleges that are trying to remain faithful. Do you see anything that's distinctive or unique about Thomas Aquinas College?

Thomas Aquinas College is committed to the idea that Christ is not something added on to a university education, but that the knowledge and love of Christ in His holy church are integral to the whole education. We see this — and this is the way I was taught when I was young — that surely there is the fullness of the revelation, the Gospels, in the teaching of the Church.

We can see glimpses of this even in ancient cultures. For instance, I remember when I was in high school, studying *The Aeneid* of Virgil, and the priest who was teaching us pointed out that the filial piety of Aeneas toward his father was a prefigurement of what the Church teaches about filial piety, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

At Thomas Aquinas College, this teaching is done in this very challenging way, through the Discussion Method, which helps students come to the fullness of the understanding of the text. It's not a situation where a professor comes in and gives a lecture for an hour;

rather, he sits with the students and achieves the same thing that he would with a lecture, while also helping them to enter into these texts directly and to uncover the truth that is in them.

That's a form of education that is really remarkable. It's quite distinctive of Thomas Aquinas College. There may be one or another college like it, but I don't think there are many.

Last year you celebrated the 15th anniversary of the shrine you erected to Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin. That church was built around the same time that Thomas Aquinas College completed Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel in California, designed by the same architect, Duncan Stroik. What effect do you think these buildings have had on sacred architecture in the United States?

These are holy places, and when people enter, the beauty of the architecture lifts their minds and hearts to God. People say, “I have had an experience of a holy place, a place which has inspired me to want to be more Christ-like.” Churches should employ all the finest architecture and art in order to make the encounter with Our Lord in the sacraments as full as possible. It should lift us up to Him and draw us away from worldly considerations.

People have said, “Oh, we can't build churches like that anymore.” It seems ridiculous to me that people would say this in our time, when we have so many means that those who went before us didn't have, and they, at great sacrifice, built the most beautiful temples to God. Yes, we can do that today, too. It requires great sacrifices on the part of many, but they are sacrifices which are connected directly to the encounter with God that takes place in the church building.

We are blessed a hundredfold for all that we do to make our churches and chapels as beautiful as possible. St. Francis of Assisi, who, of course, embraced the life of poverty, made very clear in his letter to the clergy that, when it came to church, only the finest materials should be used, and everything should be done to make sure that the church was appointed in the finest way possible.

One of Mr. Stroik's former students, Anthony Grumbine ('00), helped design the renovation of Our New England Chapel, which was built for nondenominational use and had to be adapted for Catholic worship. Having offered the Baccalaureate Mass there, what were your impressions?

Well, first of all, I hadn't seen the Chapel as it was before, but I was greatly impressed with its very beautiful sanctuary, with the figures — St. Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal John Henry Newman, and, of course, Our Lady and the crucifix — as well as at the beautiful altar and the addition of a central aisle for processions. What also impressed me greatly, and this is an integral part of our sacred worship, was the music — beautiful singing from the choir and the finest music to accompany such a solemn high Mass.

Also, being the celebrant, I could see directly the fervor with which everyone was participating in the Eucharistic sacrifice and uniting themselves to the priest who was offering the sacrifice,

“During the few days I was on campus, I had conversations with a number of students, and I saw how profoundly sincere their relationship with Christ is.”

making sacramentally present Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. It was really, for me, I have to say, very moving. And I want to say, too, that this fervor was not a surprise to me. During the few days I was on campus, I had conversations with a number of students, and I saw how profoundly sincere their relationship with Christ is, and how they were searching to know God's will more in their lives, to know how to put their gifts and talents at the service of Our Lord.

In your Commencement address, you discussed how our graduates need to discern what their vocations are. About 10 percent of our alumni go into the priesthood or the religious life. Do you have any advice for alumni who may be discerning these vocations?

Yes. For them, above all, it's important to stay close to Our Lord and especially the Blessed Sacrament: daily Mass, if possible, of course, and then also to make visits to the Blessed Sacrament, because when Our Lord is calling somebody to the priesthood or the



Cardinal Burke with College Governor John Guinee at a dinner that Mr. Guinee and his wife, Kara, hosted in His Eminence's honor at their home near the New England campus.

consecrated life, Satan gets busy to do everything he can to discourage the young person from even thinking that it would be possible to respond to the vocation. So we have to really stay close to Our Lord in the Eucharist, and then also regular confession, and daily prayer to Our Lord, saying, “You'll help me to know my vocation and to embrace it with all my heart.”

Then, of course, there is the importance of having a spiritual

director, who assists you in sorting out the various thoughts that you have about it, the fears, concerns. Of course, you are blessed at the College to have these good priests, as well as many alumni priests and religious who periodically come to visit the College. Such visits are a good occasion for students to ask questions about vocations.

“We have witnessed a disintegration of the Catholic way of thinking, of Catholic culture. That simply has to be restored, and that will come by way of reason and faith.”

You said that we must avoid “the multiple distractions of false atheistic and materialistic ideologies” of our time. When those ideologies are so widespread, as they are today, how can one avoid them?

It’s a poisonous atmosphere, and so one has to take extraordinary measures of prayer and pay great attention to what one reads and studies, to make sure that it’s coherent with the truth, and not part of the kind of materialism and atheism which are so pervasive in today’s thought. That’s why a college like Thomas Aquinas College is so important. Education gives us the tools of critical reading, and through conversation with others, we come to a deeper knowledge of the truth. We can’t be lighthearted about this, and sometimes we are called to suffer for the sake of the truth and to suffer in combatting these errors that, tragically, are so pervasive in our time.

Throughout the nearly 50 years of your ministry, the preeminent public issues we have confronted in this country have been those pertaining to life and family. In recent years, it seems, the ground has shifted, and we now have gender ideology, which presents a new challenge, inasmuch as it questions what it means to be human and even the very notion of truth. How should the Church respond to that challenge?

Today the attack is on reason itself and on nature itself. For instance, to say that I can change my nature: I was born a male and that I can, through the use of various chemicals and mutilation, make myself a woman — this is an attack on reason, on nature. So the Church must continue to teach the doctrines of the Faith in all their clarity, and that will lead us to questions of natural law, of the good order that’s written in our very human nature and which we must respect.

That is, I think, at the risk of repeating myself, the importance of education as it is given at Thomas Aquinas College. It enables us to see these most fundamental questions, which have to do with the natural law, which have to do with who we are as human beings. We have witnessed a disintegration of the Catholic way of thinking, of Catholic culture. That simply has to be restored, and that will come

by way of reason and faith. The two are always in harmony with each other, because God is the One Who gave us the gift of reason and blesses us with the gift of faith.

During your homily in the Baccalaureate Mass, you said that “by the grace of the Holy Spirit at work in us, even the weakest and poorest soul is capable of knowing Divine truth and practicing Divine love.” That is a radical message when the world tells us holiness is unattainable.

I have been a priest over these many years, and I have witnessed, in parishes and other settings in which I work, people who suffer from many weaknesses, but who — by turning to Christ and to the help of His grace — have lived good and holy lives. Christ has won the victory in their lives, and I believe there are many such stories. I have been blessed for the past few years to serve on the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. What is so striking is that, despite very different circumstances and obstacles, these individuals have not only lived good and holy lives, but heroically so.



At the New England Seafood Dinner, held on the eve of Commencement, Héléne (Augros '92) Froula presented His Eminence with a handmade paten bearing his coat of arms.

So none of us should be discouraged about ourselves; we can, too. We have a tendency to think of the saints as if they just kind of dropped out of Heaven perfect, but all of them lived in circumstances of daily living like our own, and they transformed those by following Christ faithfully. When I was a boy, it was a great blessing that we were encouraged to read the lives of the saints. I think we need to get back to that practice.

Christ is our salvation. Christ comes to us in the Church, which is His mystical Body. We are members. I would urge everyone, especially through the help of the Mother of Christ, whom He gave to us as our mother as He died on the Cross, to stay close to Christ and grow closer to Him. Use all the helps necessary to live each day in Christ, so that even the most ordinary day becomes truly extraordinary. God the Son Incarnate is acting through us, for our salvation and for the salvation of the world. ❖



Lives Lived in Christ

What’s Next for the Class of 2024

“Let’s talk about what comes next,” Professor O. Carter Snead told the graduates at Thomas Aquinas College, California, at Commencement 2024. “You are about to embark upon an exhilarating new chapter in your lives marked by dramatic new freedom and opportunities for discovery, creation, including self-discovery and self-creation. This is good. And it is important. But it is not the whole story.”

Indeed, the whole story, as Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke would instruct New England graduates just one week later, is far greater than mere self-actualization. “The all-beautiful and lasting fruit of your education,” His Eminence observed, “is a life lived in Christ.”

Yet a life lived in Christ — though unified by faith, hope, and love — is not one-size-fits all. “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:4). The newest graduates of Thomas Aquinas College exemplify these many varieties, not only through their manifold gifts, but through the disparate paths they follow as they pursue lives lived in Christ.

Graduate School

Given the rigorous Catholic liberal education that draws students to the College, it is unsurprising that many of the Class of 2024 are bound to graduate programs near and far.

Anna McKinnon (CA’24), who traveled more than 5,000 miles from her native United Kingdom to study at TAC, will continue her stateside sojourn at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C., pursu-

ing a master’s degree in moral theology with a concentration on the ethics of biotechnology. Likewise seeking a master’s in theology is Megan Conrad (NE’24), who will study marriage and the family at the International Theological Institute in Gaming, Austria.

“TAC geared me up for this.”

While some graduates consort with the queen of the sciences, others are fonder of the queen’s handmaiden. Trinity Duggan (NE’24) will pursue a master’s in political philosophy at Hillsdale College. “TAC geared me up for this,” says Miss Duggan. “Studying Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Politics*, as well as the American documents in Junior



Seminar, both satisfied my initial curiosity and piqued my interest in politics.”

Texas is a particularly prominent destination. Isabel Storck (NE’24) will seek a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of St. Thomas’s Center for Thomistic Studies in Houston, while 100 miles north, Samuel Clancy (NE’24) and Ambrose Terneus (NE’24) are headed for Baylor University to pursue doctorates in political science and mathematics, respectively.

Seminary

Inspired by his encounter with the truth in the College’s chapel and classrooms, Jonathan Steineke (CA’24) will discern the priesthood for his home diocese of Phoenix, Arizona, at Nazareth Seminary. In his new life as a seminarian, he suspects, he will frequently draw on the rich speculative formation he received at the College, in particular “learning to read St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* and comparing it to other spiritual authors and theologians.” As a diocesan priest, of course, his first duty will be pastoral — but here, too, he expects his time at TAC will prove invaluable. After experiencing the love of God through friends and classmates, says Mr. Steineke, “I’ve realized that there are a lot of other Christians who also need to know Christ’s mercy and love. I want to spread that to them.”

Education

Numerous alumni of Thomas Aquinas College have been drawn to teaching over the years, and the Class of 2024 is no exception. Newlyweds Annie (Powell) and Gregory

Baer (both CA’24) are slated to teach at Ascent Classical Academy in Fort Mill, South Carolina, while Anna Mae (Hinkle NE’24) Aldredge will teach in the distance-learning program for Mother of Divine Grace School.

For some, teaching also means a return to their roots. Amanda Aguirre (CA’24), Luke Hammett (CA’24), and Austin Tewalt (CA’24) have all taken positions at middle or high schools that they attended as children, and all look forward to sharing the

riches of their Catholic liberal education. “Spending four years going through the math courses here, you get a totally different look at Euclidean geometry,” says Mr. Tewalt, who will teach high school Euclid at Anthem Preparatory Academy in Phoenix, Arizona. “I hope to bring something unique to my class.”

Medicine

Thomas Aquinas College stands out among its peer Catholic schools by emphasizing the indispensable role of the sciences in liberal education. Some students are thus naturally drawn to scientific professions — often to the science of medicine, which extends and enriches the study of human nature conducted in the classroom. William Deering (CA’24) plans to return to Alaska to work through the prerequisites for medical school, after which he hopes to dedicate himself to studying infectious diseases. “TAC has given me the wonder I think I’ll need to be a more research-centered doctor,” he says.

Philomena Bug (CA’24) is applying to medical schools both in the United States and in her native Germany, with the goal of specializing in gynecology, while Evelyn Murray (CA’24) will study to become a dental hygienist. “The Natural Science program at the College has given me a wonderful new perspective on how I see the world,” reflects Miss Murray. “I think that will help me have a deeper appreciation of my classes in dental school.”

Business

For many more, the future leads into the wide and varied world of business. Ricardo Madan (CA’24) will attend the Sands Institute of Technology, a leading cybersecurity program. Cyndi Graf (CA’24) will combine business and evangelization as an intern at Dynamic Catholic in Nashville.

Maria (Brittain) will work for AdjusterPro, while her new husband, Dominic Arias (both CA’24), will become a real-estate loan officer. Closer to home, as it were, Georgiana Egan (NE’24) will work for Thomas Aquinas College, New England, as

the campus’s special events manager.

David Ivory (CA’24) is taking a job at Starr Companies in Houston, Texas, as a commercial construction insurance underwriter, approving insurance deals for oil rigs, solar fields, computer-chip factories, and more. “The analytical skills that are taught and fostered at TAC are phenomenal,” says Mr. Ivory. “Being able to read a complex text — and convey that information to another person — is invaluable in business.”



Some graduates have entrepreneurial aspirations. After a few months working at his brother’s winery this summer and fall, Eamonn O’Reilly (NE’24) will return to the northeast to get a foothold in the New York wine industry, hoping eventually to open his own winery. Cecilia Alvarez (NE’24) plans to attend business school and someday open a coffee shop or pub. “TAC is by necessity a closed community,” she says. “I want to take the cool aspects of our communal experience here and integrate them with the wider world.”

“Being able to read a complex text — and convey that information to another person — is invaluable in business.”

Engineering

Complementing Thomas Aquinas College’s scientific focus is its attention to mathematics, which inclines many students to technical fields. Joseph Letteney (CA’24) will study mechanical engineering at Boston University in the fall. James McCann

(CA’24) and Diego Salcido (CA’24), meanwhile, will continue to be classmates under new — and balmier — circumstances: Both have received full scholarships to study mechanical engineering in the inaugural cohort of the Catholic Institute of Technology in Castel Gandolfo, Italy.

“A number of the College’s tutors were engineers before they came here,” says Mr. McCann. “Many of them say the same thing: Engineering is great, so far as it goes, but most schools take a very robotic approach to it.” Thanks to their formation at the College, by contrast, all three aspiring engineers will be able to take a more organic and principled approach to building tomorrow’s machines.

Law

In addition to future doctors and engineers, the Class of 2024 also includes future lawyers in its ranks. Claire Thomas (CA’24) has been accepted to the University of Texas School of Law for the fall on a considerable scholarship, while others plan to take a gap year to prepare competitive applications and get some real-world experience. Paul Habsburg (NE’24), for example, will work at the Sovereign Military Order of Malta’s offices in New York City for a year, while Luke-Noel Cecchi (NE’24) will play Division I basketball for Sienna College, getting his fill of one kind of court before turning his attention to another. “I want to start in real estate law,” says Mr. Cecchi, “but I’m hoping eventually to do something a little more noble in the legal field — maybe criminal law as a trial lawyer.”

Public Service

Joseph Arias (NE’24) will move to Montana to pursue a career in law enforcement as a state trooper, while William Aldredge (NE’24) — at the recommendation of a family friend — plans to join the United States Space Force later this year.

Having sharpened his mind by grappling with science and mathematics for four years, Mr. Aldredge looks forward to mastering the technical side of a new field. “I’m going to have to learn orbital mechanics in a

relatively short amount of time,” he laughs. “It’s going to be incredibly helpful to have gone through TAC!”

Publishing & Journalism

Gabrielle Margand (NE’24) is taking courses on publishing at Columbia Uni-

versity Graduate School of Journalism, and Grace (Miller NE’24) Porto is leaping directly into the profession as a staff writer for CatholicVote, which assigned her to cover July’s National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. Journalism and the wider publishing world will land both graduates

in all kinds of conversations, echoing the College’s classroom setting and demanding the same skills. “When taking in a lot of information,” says Mrs. Porto, “TAC has helped me figure out what I need to clarify, what I don’t understand, and what’s at the heart of an issue.” ❖

Holy Matrimony

It was a banner year for TAC marriages, with some 17 engagements coming out of the Class of 2024 — most between ’24 classmates, but some involving members of other classes, and others still to loved ones elsewhere. “Thanks to our TAC education and its style of learning, we have learned to work together,” says Joseph Arias (NE’24), who wed Rachel (Wroblewski NE’23) one week after his graduation. “We are able to move forward as a family, as a unit, to reach our goals.”

The day after the Ariases tied the knot, Rosaleen (O’Reilly) and

Andrew Grumbine (both CA’24), followed suit. “I am so grateful for the formation my wife and I received at TAC,” Mr. Grumbine reflects. “Being able to listen carefully to others, discuss respectfully and with consideration, and always keeping everyone’s betterment in the truth as the primary goal — these are wonderful abilities for anyone, and invaluable for the married!”

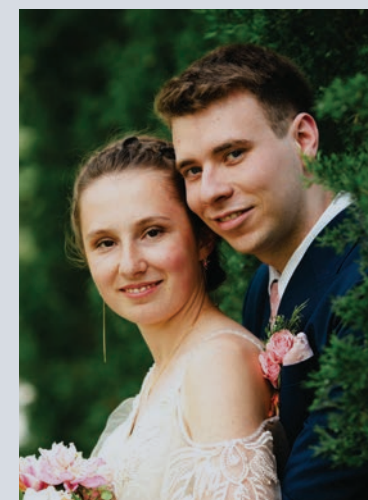
Below are photos of eight of the weddings that took place just in the first month after Commencement. Congratulations to all the brides and grooms! ❖



Anne (Powell) and Gregory Baer (both CA’24), May 18



Rachel (Quackenbush) and Thomas Rust (both NE’24), May 24



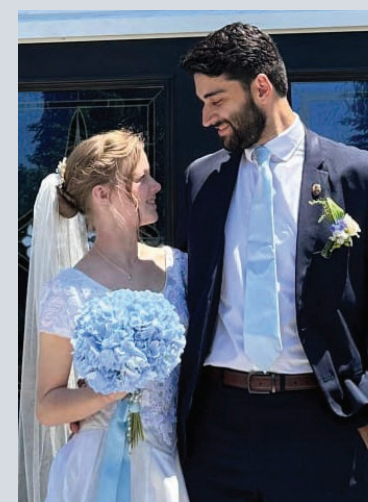
Rachel (Wroblewski NE’23) and Joseph Arias (NE’24), May 25



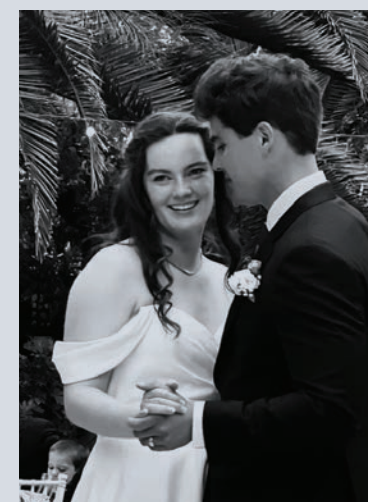
Rosaleen (O’Reilly) and Andrew Grumbine (both CA’24), May 26



Maria (Brittain) and Dominic Arias (both CA’24), June 1



Grace (Miller NE’24) and Lucas Porto (NE’25), June 1



Liliana (Armstrong) and Joseph Letteney (both CA’24), June 8



Anna (Kuebler) and Abraham Lemmon (both CA’24), June 15

IN MEMORIAM

Ron Lantz

March 19

Legacy Society member

Mary C. Deardurff

March 21

Mother of Rich ('84); grandmother of Domi (Deardurff '07) Martin, Benedict J. Deardurff ('09), and Clare (Deardurff '11) Schofield

Marsha S. Cleserci

April 16

Mother of Rev. Joseph B. Hudson, O.S.B. ('03)

Dr. Richard George

April 20

Father of Dr. Marie ('79) and Ellen ('82)

Isaiah Jerome Patrick Holmes

May 10

Son of Jacinta (Bolin) and Jeremy (both '99), brother of David ('27)

Richard King, Jr.

May 30

Father of Richard ('99), Meghan ('00), Maura ('11), and David ('20); Grandfather of Peter ('24) and Jason ('26)

Emmitt Kraus

May 31

Father of Julia (Kraus '10) Milton

Esther Wachtell

June 1

Member, Board of Governors

Marcella Gleason

June 7

Benefactor

Paula Ellis

June 19

Mother of Katherine (Zehnder '85), Jessie (Van Hecke '86), Marilyn (Lettenev '88), Angelica (O'Reilly '88), and Richard ('91). Grandmother of Augustin Zehnder ('13); Nick Van Hecke ('17); Anastasia (Blain '13), Anthony ('14), Teresa (Chauhan '16), Emily (McDonald '22), Joe ('24), and Katarina Lettenev ('27); and Dominic ('12), Brigid (Hennessy '16), Moira ('19), and Eamonn O'Reilly ('24)



*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*

Commencement 2024 Keepsakes!

Order photos and portraits at thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2024



Because the future needs the wisdom of the past ...



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The St. Thérèse of Lisieux Legacy Society

Please contact Paul Blewett, Director of Gift Planning
pblewett@thomasaquinas.edu | 805-421-5924

UPCOMING EVENTS

More events: thomasaquinas.edu/events

-  ConvocationAugust 24
-  ConvocationAugust 26
-  Opening LectureAugust 30
Dr. Travis Cooper, Tutor
-  Opening Lecture August 30
Dr. Paul Shields, Tutor
-  Lecture: Rev. Daniel Moloney September 13
Assistant Chaplain, Ohio State University
-  Lecture: Dr. Andrew DinanSeptember 20
Associate Professor of Classics, Ave Maria University
-  Opening Concert September 27
Paul Galbraith, classical guitarist
-  Alumni & Parent DayOctober 12
-  Lecture: Dr. Alexander Pruss.....October 18
Professor of Philosophy and Director of Graduate Studies, Baylor University
-  Alumni & Parent DayOctober 19
-  Lecture: Dr. Angela Knobel November 8
Graduate Director and Associate Professor, Philosophy University of Dallas

Campus Mass schedules: thomasaquinas.edu/masstimes

STUDENT LIFE



1. Freshmen bid farewell to members of the Senior Class over cookies, chips, games, and conversation at Snack Night in the campus coffee shop ...
 2. ... while juniors say their goodbye by throwing a dinner party.
 3. Members of the Class of 2024 gather up early drafts of their Senior Theses ...
 4. ... then toss them into the flames at the annual Draft-Burning Party.
 5. Having completed their last final examination, the seniors go for a celebratory swim in the Pope St. John Paul II Athletic Center pool.
 6. Sophomores host a brunch for the departing seniors in St. Cecilia Hall.
 7. Members of the Class of 2024 raise their glasses at the President's Dinner.



1. After their last classes, students gather on the lawn outside Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel to commemorate the end of the academic year. 2. Seniors cheer before ultimately falling to the faculty team in a fierce game of softball. 3. The Class of 2024 marks the end of final examinations with a plunge into the Connecticut River. 4. Members of the junior class honor the seniors at an end-of-the-year dance. 5. Upon completing the last seminar of their TAC careers, seniors are greeted with a glorious sunset. 6. Sophomores treat the outgoing seniors to a Sunday-morning brunch. 7. The soon-to-be-graduates remind underclassmen of all the work they still must complete at the Senior Boast.



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