



THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

COMMENCEMENT 2019

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Faith and Magnanimity

Bishop Barron, College Celebrate 45th Graduating Class at Commencement 2019

“It seems to me that the entire purpose of the program here at Thomas Aquinas College is to produce magnanimous people, young women and men of great souls,” the Most Rev. Robert E. Barron told the 83 graduates at Commencement 2019. Such people, the Commencement Speaker explained, are “capable of high moral achievement, willing and able to undertake arduous tasks for which they will rightly merit great honor.”

This theme of magnanimity arose repeatedly throughout the day, explicitly at times, implicitly at others, to describe the quality that members of the Class of 2019 can — and must — bring to the world in their vocations, in their careers, and as alumni of Thomas Aquinas College.

An Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles and the founder of the Word on Fire global media ministry, Bishop Barron spoke to an audience of more than a thousand graduates, faculty, and guests on the morning of May 11. He cited the College’s patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, to define magnanimity as “the performance of those moral acts that are particularly hard to perform.” Moreover, he encouraged the graduates to seek out such challenges. “As alumni of Thomas Aquinas College,” he argued, “you will be uniquely positioned to do so.”

Magnanimity and Providence

The College’s 45th Commencement exercises began that morning with the Baccalaureate Mass of the Holy Spirit, where His Excellency, vested in red, served as the principal celebrant and homilist. As the seniors, followed by members of the faculty and Board of Governors — all



clad in academic regalia — processed into Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, the Thomas Aquinas College Choir sang, in Latin, of the Holy Spirit: *Come down, O Love Divine, seek Thou this soul of mine!*

Bishop Barron also presided at the ensuing Commencement ceremony, where he described the “challenges that call forth heroic moral excellence,” chief among them, scandal in the Church and a loss of faith among the young. “It is my conviction that this is not the time to leave; this is the time to fight,” he declared. “And here I call upon every magnanimous graduate sitting here before me today!”

In an unplanned, providential display of thematic harmony, Class Speaker Benjamin Trull (’19) also spoke of magnanimity. “To know Christ is to come to resemble Him, and in resembling Him we come to join Him in being the light of the world,” he said. “In this respect, we must be noble-minded and magnanimous. In virtue

of our education, we are responsible for putting on Christ and radiating His light to the world.”

The Medallion

As part of the Commencement exercises, the College honored Bishop Barron for his own magnanimous work, most notably in new media, by presenting him with its highest honor, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Medallion. “Before taking leave of His Apostles, Our Lord charged them with a solemn mission: to ‘go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature,’” said President Michael F. McLean. “Today we have with us a successor of the Apostles who, in a manner

they could not possibly have imagined, is following their example and carrying out Our Lord’s parting mandate to a remarkable extent.”

After his address, His Excellency blessed the diplomas before distributing them, one at a time, to the graduates. Dr. McLean then concluded the program by delivering another call to magnanimity, this one in the form of the College’s 45-year-old Charge to the Graduates, authored by its founding president, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur.

“You are charged this day with maintaining, defending, and protecting your Catholic heritage, its faith, its hope, its charity, and all its learning and culture,” said Dr. McLean. “May God bless you on your way.”

Commencement 2019

Video, audio, photo slideshows & more:
thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2019

Semper Fidelis, Alma Mater

Minutes after Commencement, Two Graduates Accept Marine Corps Commissions

At the start of this year’s Commencement exercises, one of the graduating seniors, Patrick Nazeck (’19), led attendees in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. His classmates had chosen him for this honor because of his patriotism and his profound sense of duty — both of which would be on display just a few hours later.

Only minutes after the graduation festivities were finished, Mr. Nazeck and classmate Thomas Macik returned to the stage on the academic quadrangle for a very different sort of ceremony. Surrounded by family and classmates, the two new alumni took their oaths and accepted their commissions as members of the United States Marine Corps.

In the last decade, eight Thomas Aquinas College alumni have joined the ranks of Marine Corps officers. Fittingly, it was one of those fellow alumni officers who presented 2nd Lt. Macik and 2nd Lt. Nazeck with their commissions. Capt. Jerry Lademan (’09) returned to his alma mater, ten years after his own graduation, this time to administer the oath and



Capt. Jerry Lademan (’09) administers the U.S. Marine Corps Oath of Enlistment to Thomas Macik (’19) and Patrick Nazeck (’19) shortly after their graduation from Thomas Aquinas College.

to welcome the new graduates into the Corps.

“For the past four years, Thomas and Patrick have studied works of the greatest minds in history, in the proud Socratic tradition of free intellectual exchange and dialectical learning,” said Capt. Lademan. “Now they are acting on the knowledge that they have been privileged to gain by pledging their time, talents, and lives in defense of our great country. They have gained the beginning of wisdom and have

chosen how they will use and protect what they have gained.”

Over the summer vacation between their junior and senior years, the two friends traveled to Quantico, Virginia, for 10 weeks at the U.S. Marine Corps Officer Candidates School. There they underwent a relentless regimen of physical exertion, sleep deprivation, and constant evaluation intended to induce stress. The purpose of these trials, according to the school’s mission statement, is to ensure that candidates “possess the moral, intellectual, and physical qualities for commissioning, and the leadership potential to serve successfully.”

Clearly, the new Thomas Aquinas College graduates passed muster, as evidenced by the delegation of Marines who accompanied Capt. Lademan to present their commissions from the President of the United States. These included fellow alumni Sgt. Benedict Coughlin (’15) and 2nd Lt. Thomas Matthews (’17). Also on hand for the occasion was 2nd Lt. Nazeck’s father, Petty Officer Mark Nazeck, USN, Retired.

Amid bursts of applause, the new officers took their oaths. They then each had single gold bars affixed to their uniforms — 2nd Lt. Macik by his parents, and 2nd Lt. Nazeck by his mother and fiancée. They also received their first salutes: 2nd Lt. Macik from Sgt. Coughlin, and 2nd Lt. Nazeck from his father.

The newly commissioned officers will next report to Quantico, Virginia, for six months of additional training at the Basic School, followed by more specialized training, before leading their first units in the Fleet Marine Force.

“This is not an obligation which they enter into lightly,” said Capt. Lademan, citing their study, while at the College, of the country’s founding documents. “They, more than many of their peers who are getting commissioned into the Armed Services across the country, now enter into this sacred obligation with full knowledge of the origins and basis of their service. They have a firm understanding of the common goods of our country and our religion, and have made the conscious choice to defend them.”

Senior Reflections

From Second-Time Freshman to Physician

Note: The following essay is adapted from remarks made to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its meeting on May 10, 2019.

By **Bella Ayala** ('19)

Good afternoon; it is great to be with you today. My last four years have been a wonderful blessing for me, and they would not have been possible without you. So thank you.

I come from a family of immigrants. My mom and dad met in the Central Valley after moving to the United States from the Mexican states of Jalisco and Michoacán. My twin sister, Angelica, and I were born and raised in Merced, California, the Gateway to Yosemite. Our parents are both teachers and instilled in us a love of learning. Our family has a strong Catholic identity, dating back many generations. We celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with great joy each year, and are devoted to the image of Our Lady from my mother's hometown of Santa Anita.

People often ask me how I came to hear about Thomas Aquinas College, and looking back, I have to say it was by too many accidents to be simply by chance. Prior to my junior year of high school I had never heard of great books schools or a liberal arts education. St. Thomas Aquinas was not a household name.

The summer of 2012 changed all of that. My mother read about TAC on the Cardinal Newman Society's list of faithful Catholic Colleges, and since we had no other plans, my sister and I ended up attending the Great Books Summer Program. It was life changing. I fell in love with



philosophy and the liberal arts as a means to finding the truth — a means very harmonious with theology. Nevertheless, when I graduated from high school I chose to go to the University of California, Los Angeles, as a biology major because I believed that it would give me the best chance at pursuing a career in medicine.

Two years later, I was doing well academically but sensed that something was missing. I was tired of subordinating my studies to a specific career goal, and so many things reminded me of Thomas Aquinas College, such as an honors elective I took on great literature. I was also president of the UCLA Pro-Life Club, and during my many discussions with students about abortion, I found myself wishing for a more solid philosophical and religious foundation from which I could argue to moral truths from both faith and reason.

At the start of my sophomore year, I ran into Scott Benigar, then a member of the Admissions Office, who invited me to take a second look at Thomas Aquinas College. I visited classes and spoke with many tutors and students. After much prayer and discernment I decided to transfer to TAC as a freshman — and I have no regrets.

During my time here I have especially enjoyed the Natural Science curriculum. While not as technical as those at UCLA, the science classes at TAC raise many fundamental questions about the sphere and method of Natural Science, the difference between the living and

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non-living, and the nature of the soul — questions which were unvoiced and assumed in my previous classes.

I have had many wonderful tutors during my time here. Their wisdom and humility have made the vocation of Christ the teacher come alive to me. I especially enjoyed the tradition of section dinners, in which students visit their tutors' homes for good food and conversation. Their lovely families are wonderful witnesses to the beautiful vocation of marriage.

I have also learned a lot from my fellow students and have been motivated by their enthusiasm. They are always willing to have a deep discussion both in and outside of class. It was awesome to have friends who invited me to pray the Rosary and could talk about any of the Great Books we read. I hope these friendships will continue long into the future.

I still plan to pursue a career in medicine. I re-started a pre-med club at TAC and invited alumni to speak to students about nursing, psychology, dental surgery, and emergency medicine, as well as organized dissections and shadowing opportunities. Last summer, I was able to spend eight weeks shadowing healthcare providers as part of the Ventura County Medical Center Summer Scholars program. When I applied to this competitive internship, the doctor who interviewed me was fascinated by my liberal arts background and admired the fact that I had devoted four more years of undergraduate studies to complete the program here.

This experience confirmed for me that my Thomas Aquinas College education will be an advantage in pursuing my career goals. I hope to attend medical school and specialize in psychiatry and geriatrics. I am confident that my formation here will help me become the best doctor and Catholic I can be. Thank you.

Miss Ayala is from Merced, California.

Seeing the Difference

Note: The following essay is adapted from remarks made to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Governors at its meeting on May 10, 2019.

By **Andreas Waldstein** ('19)

Looking back at my time at the College as I was preparing for this talk, I was overwhelmed by feelings of joy and gratitude. I have received so many blessings here, many more than I could possibly express. Nevertheless, there are a few aspects of this wonderful place for which I am especially thankful, and which I would like to share with you today.

I attended another institution for a year before coming to Thomas Aquinas College, and I remember that, when I first arrived here, what impressed me most was not the beautiful campus, the amazing faculty, or even the great curriculum. What impressed me most was the astounding excellence of the students.

The institution where I was before was Catholic, but suffered from many of the same moral problems you would expect to find at a secular institution. By contrast, when I came here it was simply *expected* that one would go to daily Mass, that one would follow the Church's teachings on sexual morality and the use of illicit substances. That was amazing to me.

Even more amazing was what I witnessed in the classroom. In classes at my previous college, half the students would be on their laptops, or on Facebook, not listen-



ing to the lecture. They would cram for the exams at the very end, and nobody seemed to care very much about learning. They wanted a career, and they wanted good grades so that they could have a career, but there was very little concern for the intellectual life. When I came to Thomas Aquinas College, and saw how engaged the students were, how much they cared for the curriculum, I remember thinking, “What is the cause of this? How is it that there are 400 students who are so excited about the truth? Where did TAC find all of these people?”

Then I realized, it's not that the College found better people, it's that the whole affair is so much better set up. Here, the rules of residence and — most of all — the rich spiritual life and the availability of the sacraments encourage a different kind of culture. By God's grace, and thanks to the wisdom of our founders, our student body aspires in earnest to holiness.

We also have the wisdom of our founders to thank for the excellence of the College's intellectual life. The reason why the students here are all so excited about learning is because we have been given exciting works to read, and we are put in charge of our own education, rather than having a professor drone at us from a chalkboard. Instead of having in mind that our only goals are the best possible grades and the best possible salaries, we are encouraged to pursue the truth for its own sake.

Here we are guided by the College's serious commitment to the truth. The curriculum contemplates the world that God made and the God Who made it; it is ordered to Sacred Theology, and this structure leads us to direct all of our studies toward contemplating God and His work of salvation. It leads us to submit our intellects and wills to the teaching of the Church — not in a slavish way, but taking on true freedom, the true freedom that can only come of Christ. And because we are united in

“The reason why the students here are all so excited about learning is because we have been given exciting works to read, and we are put in charge of our own education.”

this way of living, in the pursuit of truth and of holiness, we get to experience the good of community in its truest sense.

There is a custom at the College's annual Christmas dance that I cherish: At a certain point in the evening, we all pause and gather around the piano to sing Christmas carols. It never fails to bring tears to my eyes because of the feeling of joyfully committing yourself to this community, of being there with all of your friends, of pursuing the highest things and giving glory to God. It is a foretaste of heaven.

Next year I am going to begin studies for a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. I believe I am well prepared. Not only have I read many of the greatest thinkers, but I have been taught the serious attitude that one has to have toward intellectual endeavors. In whatever I do, I hope that I will always preserve the commitment to the truth and the commitment to the Church that this place has given me.

Of course, none of these blessings which I have received would be possible without all of you, and so I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please be assured that you will remain in my prayers, and may God bless you always as you have blessed me. Thank you so much.

Mr. Waldstein is from Bloomingdale, Ohio.

“Greatness of Soul”

The Commencement Address of the Most. Rev. Robert E. Barron

It is indeed a high honor for me to be speaking to the 2019 graduating class of Thomas Aquinas College, an institution that I have admired for decades and which is situated, I am proud to say, within the borders of my own Santa Barbara Pastoral Region. I am deeply grateful to President McLean, as well as to the Board and faculty of this wonderful college. I want to offer a word of sincere and hearty congratulation, of course, to the Class of 2019 but also to the parents of these gifted young people. It is your love that has sustained them over the years, and this day belongs to you as much as to them.

I distinctly remember my first visit to this beautiful campus five years ago. I had been invited to speak to the community and had brought a fairly serious academic paper. After the long plane trip from Chicago and the surprisingly arduous car journey from LAX to Santa Paula (I wasn't yet accustomed to Southern California travel), I was fairly worn out, and I was convinced that my dense presentation would bore the students — and probably myself — to tears.

With some trepidation, I made my way through the text and then, to my delighted surprise, entertained smart and challenging questions for the next hour and three quarters. As I remember, President McLean had to intervene to bring things to a close, even as dozens of hands remained in the air. In my wildest imagination, it would never have occurred to me that night that I would one day be the bishop presiding over this region; but I must say that one of the particular joys of my current assignment is that I can make frequent visits to this college and experience again the thrill of that initial encounter with the bright and delightfully feisty students here.

“Thomas Aquinas College has no interest in giving rise to pusillanimous graduates, men and women with small souls, who would shrink from the difficult moral challenge of the present time.”

Magnanimity

How could I not take as my point of orientation today some thoughts from the patron of this school? I would like to draw your attention to a fairly obscure section of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, namely, Question 129 of the *Secunda Secundae*, wherein the master considers the virtue of *magnanimitas* (magnanimity), which is to say, the quality of having a great soul. There is an intriguing etymological link, by the way, between the term *magna anima* in Latin and the Sanskrit title famously ascribed to Mohandas Gandhi: *Mahatma*, which means precisely the same thing, “great soul.”

So how does Thomas elaborate upon the notion? Here is the beginning of his *Respondeo* to Article One of Question 129: “Magnanimity by its very name denotes stretching forth of the soul to great things (*extensio animi ad magna*).” And this has to do, primarily, with great moral acts, or acts for which one would expect to be honored. Thomas is quick to clarify that the magnanimous person is not interested in honors for their own sake, for such an obsession would amount to *vanagloria* or vain-glory; rather, he or she is interested in doing those things that rightly deserve honor.

Following Aristotle, Thomas further specifies that true magnanimity is ordered to high honor, which is another way of saying to the performance of those moral acts that are particularly hard to perform. Here is part of the *Respondeo* to Article 5 of Question 129: “Accordingly it is clear that magnanimity agrees with fortitude in confirming the mind about some difficult matter.” And this is from Article 6 of the same question: “Magnanimity is chiefly about the hope of something arduous” (*magnanimitas proprie est circa spem alicuius ardui*).

But what is the ground for such hope? It is, says Thomas, in the moral and intellectual character of the



one who knows himself capable of attaining to high, difficult, and great things. Were one not in possession of the capacity for greatness, it would be presumptuous and proud to strive toward excellence.

Some further light can be shed on our theme by considering the opposite of magnanimity, namely, pusillanimity (literally, small-souledness), and this Thomas does in Question 133 of the *Secunda Secundae*. If presumption makes one strive beyond one's capabilities, pusillanimity “makes a man fall short of what is proportionate to his power, by refusing to tend to that which is commensurate thereto.”

In light of this clarification, we see why some translators choose to render *pusillanimitas* as “faintheartedness,” for it amounts to a fear of attempting the moral excellence of which a person is capable. In Article 2 of Question 133, Aquinas makes the contrast unmistakably clear: “For just as the magnanimous man tends to great things out of greatness of soul, so the pusillanimous man shrinks from great things out of littleness of soul” (*ex animi parvitate*). And what causes this shrinking of the soul? Thomas says, “on the part of the intellect, ignorance of one's qualifications and on the part of the appetite, the fear of failure in what one falsely deems to exceed one's ability.”

I trust by now it has become plain why I chose to take us on this brief tour of a usually overlooked corner of Aquinas' masterpiece. It seems to me that the entire purpose of the program here at Thomas Aquinas College is to produce magnanimous people, young women and men of great souls, capable of high moral achievement, willing and able to undertake arduous tasks for which they will rightly merit great honor. Thomas Aquinas College has no interest in giving rise to pusillanimous graduates, men and women with small souls, who would shrink from the difficult moral challenge of the present time.

Given what you have learned here through strenuous effort in the classroom, given how your souls have been shaped by steady exposure to people of exemplary virtue, given the formation that has inevitably come from the Mass and the sacraments, none of you graduates should feel unqualified, either intellectually or morally, to seek the most honorable course. God knows that the world is filled with moral mediocrities, not to mention the craven and the wicked, but you have been made of sterner stuff. Aquinas tells us that one of the principal marks of the magnanimous person is confidence; we send you forth today as confident men and women, ready for the high adventure of the spiritual life.

Two Challenges

Now sufficient challenges certainly rise to meet the confidence of the magnanimous today, and many of those who have preceded me in this role of Commencement Speaker have articulated them: materialism, ideological secularism, moral relativism, and the fruit of these three, namely, a culture of self-invention, a Nietzschean voluntarism, which has emerged as the dominant philosophy of our time. But I would like, in the short compass of this speech, to focus on two particular challenges that call forth heroic moral excellence: corruption in the Church and the massive attrition of our own Catholic people, especially the young.

There is no need to rehearse the sickening details regarding the sexual abuse of young people by priests

these last several decades. Suffice it to say that attacks on the bodies and souls of the most vulnerable members of the Catholic community, precisely by those ordained by Christ to be their shepherds and guardians, constitutes the gravest scandal in the history of the Church in the United States. Compounding the problem, of course, has been the tragic mismanagement of the crisis on the part of some bishops and religious superiors. Far more concerned with the reputation of the institution than with the safety of God's people, too many ecclesial leaders allowed the rot to spread.

If you seek distant historical mirrors of the present troubles, take a look at St. Peter Damian's writings in the 11th century, or the story of Eli and his wicked sons Hophni and Phineas from the first book of Samuel in the Old Testament. Wicked priests and clueless religious superiors are, sadly, nothing particularly new in the life of God's people. Undermining the work of the Church in practically every way, the clerical sex abuse catastrophe has been the devil's masterpiece, and I realize that, in the wake of these revelations, many Catholics are tempted to abandon ship. In fact, in a very recent poll, fully 37 percent of Catholics said that they are seriously considering leaving the Church because of its corruption.

But it is my conviction that this is not the time to leave; this is the time to fight. And here I call upon every magnanimous graduate sitting here before me today. Fight by entering the priesthood or religious life and live up to the dignity of your calling; fight by your very holiness of life, becoming the saint that God wants you to become; fight by doing a Holy Hour every day for the purification of the Church; fight by calling for real reform; fight by insisting that the guilty be held accountable; fight by doing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; fight by evangelizing in your everyday life; fight by ordering your life according to the virtues; fight by playing your priestly role in the sacrifice of the Mass. And more to it, fight by sanctifying your family, your workplace, the market, the political arena, the world of high finance, the realms of sports and entertainment.

In other words, be what the Church is supposed to be in the world. In the Second Book of Samuel, we hear that David's corruption with Bathsheba commenced precisely when the King, instead of going on campaign as was his wont, lingered at home, indulging his private desires. As Pope Francis has often reminded us, when the Church fails to go on campaign, when it turns in on itself, corruption is never far behind. Don't wait for other reformers to arise; this is your moment to meet this crucial moral challenge. And no pusillanimous people need apply.

The second great crisis to which I will draw your attention is the rise of the “nones,” or the religiously unaffiliated. When I was a child, in the early 1970s, roughly 3 percent of our country identified as non-religious. By the early 1990s, that figure had doubled to 6 percent, but still, in terms of absolute numbers, the overwhelming majority of the nation was religious. However today, nearly 25 percent of Americans surveyed claim no religious affiliation, and the situation is direr still when we focus on young people. Among those under 30, fully 40 percent claim the status of “none,” and among Catholics under 30, the number rises to 50 percent.

Any way one looks at these statistics, one must conclude that we are hemorrhaging young people from religion in general and Catholicism in particular. In point of fact, one of the most damning figures is the ratio between those who join the Catholic Church and those who are leaving. It stands at 1:6, that is to say, for every one person who enters our Church, six are going out the door.

I call on the magnanimous graduates sitting before me, rise to meet this challenge! And may I say that as alumni of Thomas Aquinas College, you will be uniquely positioned to do so.

Numerous studies have indicated that the principal reason that people are leaving the Church is that they no longer believe the doctrines put forward by classical

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“Let us be His Light”

The 2019 Senior Address by Benjamin Trull ('19)

Bishop Barron; honored guests; President McLean; Dr. Goyette; Dr. Decaen; governors, faculty, family, and friends: It is my privilege to deliver this address on behalf of the Class of 2019. I thank you, my beloved classmates, for this honor.

Graduation is a day of joy and sorrow because it is a day of fulfillment and farewell. We are sorrowful because we must soon depart a community of friends for which we are each unspeakably grateful, and which none of us will, or even could, forget; yet we are joyful because we have fulfilled our goal for coming here in the first



The Class of 2019 elected Benjamin Trull as its Class Speaker ...

place! Mixed as our emotions are, however, I believe the sense of fulfillment should outweigh the feeling of farewell, and therefore I would like to reflect on the task that lies before us as imminent graduates of Thomas Aquinas College, in light of what we have achieved.

We have received (or we hope we have received) a Catholic liberal education. TAC proposes in four years to give us a beginning of Catholic wisdom. I want, therefore, to meditate on each of the terms of this proposal to discern what they say about our new lives and responsibilities.

First, our education has centered on *wisdom*. We have tried to understand the world in which we live, the beings with which we share that world, ourselves, and finally the origin of all things, God Himself. We have taken, as it were, a prolonged intellectual retreat in which to be purged of the darkness of sin and ignorance before returning to the world. With our studies concluded, we are now responsible for living according to what we have received: Wisdom, say the Scriptures, is far beyond the price of pearls.

That we have sought wisdom and in some way acquired her should have profound consequences for how we live, regardless of our vocation or career. We have acquired something great, and in the process begun to reflect that greatness in ourselves; and therefore we must learn to practice the virtue of true *magnanimity* when we step out into the world. David Hume once said, “Be a philosopher, but in the midst of your philosophy, be still a man.” I think our education should spur us to retort: “Let us be men and women, but for all that, let us still be philosophers.” Wisdom is no common possession: cherish the gift, and live accordingly.

We have, thanks to God, our tutors, and our own efforts, spent time in contemplation of what is best: Euclid and Newton; Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Metaphysics*; the Bible, and St. Thomas’ treatment of the Blessed Trinity. What a shame it would be to return from those sublime heights to a lifestyle in which the closest we get to contemplation is bingeing shows on Netflix. We hear in the Book of Proverbs, “Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool that repeats his folly.” Let’s not be that fool. We *must* be magnanimous.

Yet you are probably thinking, “But it’s only a beginning in wisdom! To think you’ve graduated wise is to have been deaf and blind to the education.” I agree wholeheartedly. We have only received the *beginnings* of wisdom. Although we have achieved and acquired much in our four years, in the grand scheme of things to be known and loved, our acquisitions and achievements are less than straw, to which St. Thomas compared his *Summa*.

So I should emphasize: We haven’t come to possess wisdom, but we have at least been pointed in the right direction. Our sinfulness, ignorance, and personal limitations still remain between us and the fullness of wisdom. We must acknowledge with Goethe’s Faust that, for all our labors, we are no nearer to comprehending the infinite: Our steps have been small indeed. Yet unlike Goethe’s Faust, we must rejoice in our lowliness — we must accept our imperfections in wisdom with true humility.

If I seemed emphatic before about our duty to be magnanimous, I must be equally emphatic that we not live up to the popular image of the philosopher (and, for that matter, the TAC graduate): arrogant, condescending, incapable of thinking people wise that have less education than he. This is the worst possible testament we could give to our education and educators; avoiding it demands profound *humility*.

Thus, living in accord with this beginning in wisdom requires that we acknowledge that we have something truly great, the very reception of which makes us great; and at the same time it requires deep awareness of our lowliness. In our lives, then, we must learn to reconcile magnanimity and humility: a tall order, if not a downright impossible demand. Doesn’t this seem a bit paradoxical?

This paradox leads me to the third and final aspect of the proposal: We have received the beginning of *Catholic* wisdom. Our lives and studies here have never been separable, or should not be separated, from the centrality

of Jesus Christ. And this centrality of Christ gives our education, and the responsibilities that now devolve upon us, a whole new dimension.

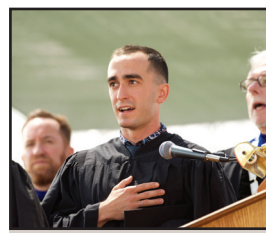
According to our Catholic faith, we believe we have received the foundations — according to faith *and* reason — of the truth about reality, culminating in the supreme revelation of God in the Incarnate Word, crucified and raised from the dead. In virtue of this gift of grace, we have been made friends of God, participants in His life, and apostles of His compassion.

A Catholic liberal education, therefore, offers to introduce its students to the light of Christ through theology and philosophy, and in the process to make their hearts, minds, and deeds glow with that very same light. The supposed paradox between magnanimity and humility is dissolved in the person of Christ. He is the light of the world, and we stand in desperate need of Him for our salvation. In this respect, we must be supremely humble. But to know Christ is to come to resemble Him, and in resembling Him we come to join Him in being the light of the world. In this respect, we must be noble-minded and magnanimous. In virtue of our education, we are responsible for putting on Christ and radiating His light to the world.

There is no time to waste, my friends. As Newman says, “Time is short, eternity is long.” Our world is dark; it needs the light of Christ. Let us be His light. Some of us are soon going to enter the religious life: Let them be the light of the world! Others are going to be married soon: Let them be the light of the world! Some of us are heading on to further study, or to be teachers, or to the workplace: Let us all be the light of the world!

Our education can achieve nothing greater than to make its graduates radiant with the splendor of the truth. In the last analysis, that is the task — that is the responsibility — that falls to us as we conclude our studies at this beautiful school, which has earned the old adage “alma mater,” and as we bid farewell to each other, friends with whom we have shared such a noble and ennobling life. But we must not let nostalgia for the life we are leaving slow us down: Time is short, eternity is long. Let us know, love, and serve Jesus Christ, and thereby reflect His luminous compassion. As a very holy priest once told me, nothing else matters, and all else will follow. Thank you.

Mr. Trull is from St. Louis, Missouri. For audio of his address, see thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2019.



... Patrick Nazeck to lead the Pledge of Allegiance ...



... and Rebecca Oakes to sing the National Anthem.

Bishop Barron's Address (continued from page 3)

Christianity. Though many commentators are tempted to say that the mass exodus is prompted largely by the scandals, this in fact is not true. When queried why they have left the practice of the Faith, most people, especially the young, tell us that they have done so because faith and science are implacable enemies, because God is an unnecessary hypothesis, because Jesus is one questionable mythic character among many, because the Bible is a collection of pre-scientific, bronze-age fairy tales. In a word, they find Christianity intellectually untenable.

You who have had the incomparable privilege these past four years carefully and critically to read Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Newton, Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Bertrand Russell are specially qualified for the arduous task of engaging the army of skeptics who have wandered from the Church. The contemplation of the great intellectuals is indeed an intrinsic good, but may I stress that especially at this moment in the Church’s life, such contemplation can and should give rise to active evangelization and compelling apologetics. So, become uni-

versity professors of theology, college and high school teachers of religion, catechists at the parish level, online evangelists — and know that the moment you exit any Catholic church in America you have entered mission territory. And may I suggest to those who have a particular interest in the physical sciences that you are in the front lines of this battle for souls. In survey after survey, young people report that the supposed conflict of faith and science is the chief intellectual obstacle to remaining a believer.

Conclusion

For many years, I lived and worked at Mundelein Seminary outside of Chicago. A blend of extraordinary natural beauty and extremely fine Georgian architecture, the Seminary is one of the most striking places in the American Catholic world. Cardinal Mundelein, who actively presided over its design and construction, said that he wanted the splendor of the seminary to give the future priests an idea of heaven, so that they would

never lose sight of the ultimate goal of their pastoral work among the people.

This place, with its own distinctive blend of natural and man-made beauty, has always reminded me a bit of Mundelein. And indeed, this campus, where liturgy, prayer, fellowship, deep communion with the saints and geniuses of the Catholic tradition are on steady offer, is something of a Catholic heaven on earth, an anticipation even now of the splendor of life on high with God and the saints. But just as the students at Mundelein were not meant to stay on the grounds of the seminary, so you are not meant to stay at this lovely place. Rather, you are meant to go forth, carrying what you have received and cultivated here, in order to sanctify our suffering world.

Is this an arduous task? Yes! But magnanimous people like arduous tasks, for they are ordered to the moral work that will give the highest honor. Are these choppy seas? Yes! But only pusillanimous people are afraid of choppy seas. Your four years here have given you great souls. Let them be unleashed! God bless you all.

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An Explanation of King Lear’s
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LAURA ANN ALTIC
Eureka, California



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Free”: A Critique of Knowledge
and Happiness in *Anna Karenina*

**DOMINIC ATHANASIUS
AMOROSE**
Mesa, Arizona



“El Inmortal”: A Reflection on
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BELLA TERE AYALA
Merced, California



Virtue and Self-Interest in
The Wealth of Nations

**THOMAS AUGUSTINE
BECHER**
Santa Paula, California



Yes, I Can Be a Patriot and Still
Critique the Constitution: An
Examination of Constitutional Law

**ZACHARY MARSHALL
JEAN BECKMAN**
Canton, Georgia



A Comparison of the Accounts
of Human Knowledge Presented
by Aristotle and Immanuel Kant

**MADELEINE ROSE
BIRCHENOUGH**
Tuscola, Illinois



“All Things Suited to a Woman,
He Hands Over to Her”:
On Woman’s Natural Capacity
for Authority

**CLAIREMARIE THÉRÈSE
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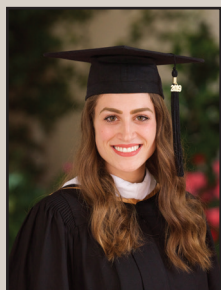
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On the Role of Emotion in
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Santa Paula, California



On the Proper Interpretive
Principles for *Die Zauberflöte*:
An Examination of the Character
of the Queen of the Night and
Her Aria “O zittre nicht, mein
lieber Sohn.”

**EDMUND MORE
COVINGTON**
Liberty, South Carolina



Proposal for a Grounding of the
Psychological Sciences Based
on the Synthesis of Modern
Empirical Method and Thomistic
Natural Philosophy

**XAVIER SAMUEL
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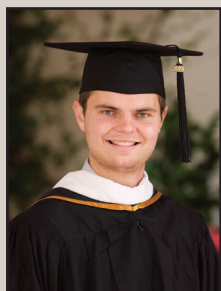
“I Am the King’s Good Servant”:
On Why All Christians Are Called
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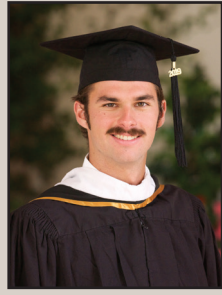


On the Redemptive Suffering
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"It Is Not Good That Man Should
Be Alone; I Will Make Him a
Helper Fit For Him": Comparing
the Friendship in Marriage to the
Friendship between Those of the
Same Gender
**ROBERT AUGUSTINE
GOYETTE**
Santa Paula, California



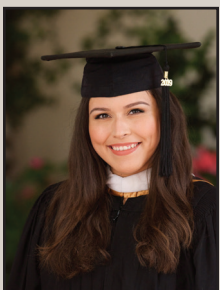
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Growing in Knowledge and Love
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Beauty in Dante's *Paradise*
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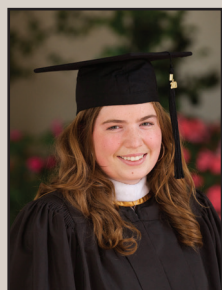
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 Unless He Has First Struggled"
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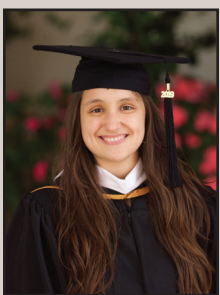
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MOIRA JANE O'REILLY
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RACHEL EMILY RIVERA
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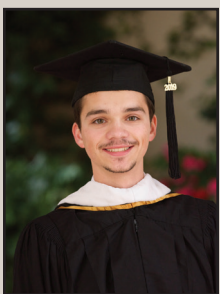
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 A Christian Judgment of Pierre's
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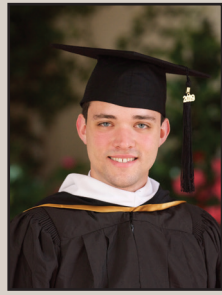
“Through Him, with Him, and in Him”: On the Power of Charity to Unite Us to the Holy Spirit

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Antioch, California



On the Use and Abuse of Culture

BENJAMIN DOMINIQUE LEO TRULL
St. Louis, Missouri



Government Surveillance for the Common Good

BENEDICT JOHN URBANCIC
Chardon, Ohio



God Alone: The Compatibility of the Life of Solitude and Charity

SAMANTHA LIGAYA DAVIDE URETA
Cadillac, Michigan



“Liberty Is to Faction What Air Is to Fire, an Alimnt without Which It Instantly Expires”: On the Sufficiency of the Provisions Made against Majority Faction in the Formation of the United States

BRIAN CARLOS VENEGAS
Gallup, New Mexico



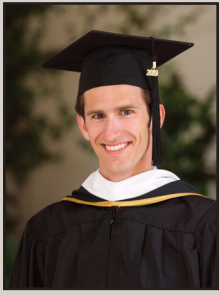
Why Burnyeat Is Wrong: The Credibility of Aristotle’s Theory of Sensation

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“I Want to Know What Love Is”: Why Christians Cannot Be Stoics

ELAINE MARIE WALSHE
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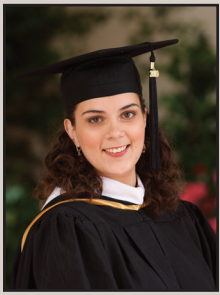
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MARY FRANCES WICHOREK
Anchorage, Alaska



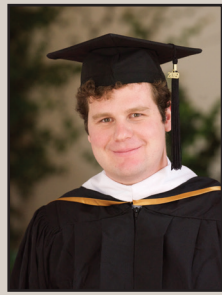
Keeping It Real: A Critique of Locke’s Account of Sensation

RACHEL CATHERINE WILLIAMS
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The Relevance of Touch in Coming to Knowledge and Happiness

MARIETTA GABRIELLA THERESE WYE
London, United Kingdom



The Evidence that Nature Acts for an End

NICHOLAS ZWEMKE
Tempe, Arizona



PATRON
St. Dominic

QUOTATION

“Let us first of all and before all be kind, and then honest, and then – let us never forget one another.”

– Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*



“Non nisi Te, Domine”

An Interview with the Most Rev. Robert E. Barron

Note: The Most Rev. Robert E. Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, was Thomas Aquinas College’s 2019 Commencement Speaker.

In your Baccalaureate Mass homily you spoke about how the Holy Spirit has revealed the truth to the Church in stages, accounting for the development of doctrine. How does one know what is a genuine development of doctrine and what, by contrast, is really a change or corruption?

I go back to Cardinal Newman, who distinguishes carefully between development and corruption. He knew that, for example, cancer is a kind of development, but it is one that corrupts the body. So there are changes that are not authentic developments, but are corruptions.

Newman had seven criteria by which to determine the difference between a development and a corruption. Among them is “preservation of type,” where the general, overall structure of a doctrine remains in place, even if some aspect of it comes into clearer focus. Another criterion is “conservative action upon its past”: A development cannot simply change what came before; genuine development always conserves the essence of what came before. Then there is “chronic vigor” such that when a point emerges it has “staying power,” and you say, yes, that is a legitimate development, not a corruption.

Precisely because ideas develop, Newman realized that you have to have an authority — because the authority has got to make the final call: Is that a development or is that a corruption? It was a very clever move on his part because, in a way, the notion of the development of doctrine appealed to the more liberal side of the discussion in his day, but, as he said, that carried with it the implication of an infallible authority — which appealed to the conservative side of the equation. But he said both are mutually implicative: You have an infallible authority because doctrine tends to develop.

If doctrine was like a football that you pass on from one to the next, you would not need an authority. Doctrine, however, is more like a tree developing, or like a river unfolding. That is why you need an infallible authority. As Newman said, doctrine does not exist on the printed page, but in the play of the life of the mind. The ideas are not just static on a page, but they exist in my mind, and my mind is turning them over, and considering them, and wondering about them. And then they are tossed to you, and you do the same thing. And then you talk to somebody else. Then those ideas are tossed across time, and in that process there is naturally going to be a development.

Could you give an example?

It is perhaps a clichéd example, but the butterfly is the development, but by no means the image of, the grub. Another example, to take a certain teaching, would be the Incarnation, which gives rise over time to the practice



of preserving the bodies of saints, and leads eventually to the veneration of relics.

Newman also traces the development of the virtues in the religious orders — Jesuits, Benedictines, Franciscans. Here we find the development of these certain virtues, such as the fierce obedience of the Jesuits, which developed from listening to the Lord, and poverty with the Franciscans. He was trying to show how these virtues of the early Church unfolded over time and how their expressions became refined in the various religious orders.

Does something similar take place in the individual person’s life — a slow revelation of the fullness of the truth? And if so, how should we take this into account when conversing with non-believers?

I wrestle with that a great deal, actually. Here is the problem: Sometimes the full-blown Catholic doctrine on something can strike a “none” (one who has no religious affiliation) like a wild or crazy idea because he is not ready for the full teaching. So I do not start with the Eucharist, for example, or even with the Incarnation. Instead, I start simply, often beginning with notions of contingency, necessity, and causality — concepts that people might be able to get their minds around. And then I ask them about the lack that a person may feel in his life. I ask, “Where is that coming from, and why? Why aren’t you satisfied? You know, if you are a dog, and you have enough to eat, and your needs are taken care of, you just fall blissfully asleep. How come *you* are not like that? Why don’t you fall blissfully asleep when you have enough to eat?” So I often start with that kind of question. Now it will lead by steady steps toward the full feast. But if you start with the full-blown doctrine, it’s too much. They can’t yet bear it.

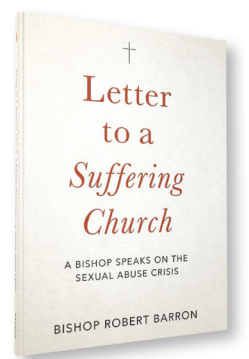
I think I used that image in my homily at your Baccalaureate Mass — about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father is the one who speaks — *Deus dicit* — and the Son is the spoken Word. The Spirit, though, is the Divine Interpreter because there has to be a divine power that interprets the Word that the Father has spoken. So when it comes to the “nones,” the Holy Spirit must do more work to prepare them to receive the full teachings of the Church.

Irenaeus compared it to the education of children. A little child asks where the sun goes at night, and you say, “The sun is going to bed.” You are not lying; you are telling him what is within his cognitive and epistemic framework. Later, in college — you hope — he will learn cosmology. That is true in the religious arena, too. You might start with some very simple way of phrasing something. I do find with the “nones” that they can be smart in all kinds of areas, especially the sciences, and they can be super-smart in the technological realm, but in the humanities they can be rather hopeless. So you have to start slowly, simply, carefully.

Cardinal Newman is a good example. Go back to him. Newman never, as far as I know, uses the cosmological arguments. He is post-Kantian, and post-Humean, and what he uses is conscience. His is a more modern move, a more Cartesian move. He says that the way you find real assent in matters of religion is through the voice of the conscience. It is a more modern approach, and one that people may be more at home with. But I find, actually, with the intensity of the interest in science, that the cosmological arguments do have a resonance, too.

You recently published a short book called *Letter to a Suffering Church*. What is it about and what motivated you to write it?

It was originally proposed to me by an editor at Random House with whom I’ve worked in the past. He said the idea for it had come to him in prayer. About that time, I was realizing more and more that Catholics are utterly demoralized and so angry and so ready to leave the Church because of the priestly abuse scandals. So I immediately agreed to do it. When it turned out that Random House couldn’t publish it in time, we decided Word on Fire would publish it. Then it became like a mission. I wanted it to read like a letter, like a pastoral letter, and very quickly the five chapters came to me. So in airports or when I was at home in between trips, I would just sit down and write.



I was moved to write this little book because we have been talking about this scandal for something like 25 years now. I understand that the Church has to respond legally with protocols, and I’m not against that at all. But we can start to sound very legalistic: ‘We’re going to do this and this, and there will be this committee and this commission.’ But who is addressing it biblically, theologically, spiritually? That is what I wanted to do. So that’s how the book kind of fell into shape.

The first chapter is called “The Devil’s Masterpiece,” and it describes the scandal, but as the Pope has said, it does not leave out the spiritual dimension. The second chapter, which may be my favorite part in the book, looks at the scandal through a scriptural lens. The Bible has a lot to say about sexual misconduct; it’s all over it once you start looking — from Eli and Hophni and Phineas (1 Samuel) to David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11–12) to Lot and his daughters (Genesis 9). So I recount these stories, which offer a very powerful, distant mirror to our present situation.

The story of Eli, Hophni, and Phineas seems to me to be the clearest Biblical echo of our present scandals: a corrupt high priest and two of his sons who are priests, both corrupt financially and sexually. People complain, and Eli says, “I’ll take care of it.” But he does nothing, and his sons continue abusing the people. Then comes disaster for Israel, with its enemies descending upon Israel and destroying it. That’s us, you know.

Chapter three, “We Have Been Here Before,” I owe in large measure to Msgr. Charlie Meyer who taught Church history for a thousand years at Mundelein Seminary. He





The Most Rev. Robert E. Barron was the College's Commencement Speaker on May 11, 2019. He bestowed diplomas on 83 graduates.

taught me, and later we were colleagues there. He told us all the great stories about the popes and all the wonderful saints. But he told stories of corruption as well, and that helped us see that the Church has been through a lot of corruption and a lot of stupidity and wickedness and yet, here we still are. So I give an account of some of that history.

I end that chapter with Peter Damian, as he is the best mirror for our time. What we have is really, as I put it, spiritual incest, spiritual fathers preying on their own sons. They have abused their own spiritual children. What we need to do is what Peter Damian did — to name things clearly. There is a reluctance to do so, lest it lead to a general scapegoating of gay people. But it is silly to deny the truth that 80 percent or so of the cases of abuse have been male on male. So I say that, and I also talked about clericalism.

The final two chapters are meant to encourage Catholics to stay with the Church, to pray for her purification, and to contribute to it by their own saintly lives.

There was legislation pending here in California that called on priests to betray the seal of the confessional. Though its sponsor has recalled the bill, what do you make of this development?

It is not clear yet why the bill's sponsor pulled the proposed legislation, though there was a great outcry against it across the state. But one fears this may be only temporary, and that it will soon resurface.

I think we have to be really strong and clear about this. And there is, as far as I can tell, a very strong consensus of the bishops that, if the bill is brought back, we would have to fight it. We simply couldn't cooperate with it. We would have to resist it with some version of civil disobedience. And, of course, we would try to block it in the courts right away.

This is a real slippery slope. Now this bill demanded that priests come forward with the confessions of child abusers, but why would the state stop there? 'What if someone commits murder? Shouldn't we demand that priests report that? And what about spousal abuse? And how about rape?' What would stop them?

It really is fallout from what I call the "Devil's Masterpiece," the scandal of sexual abuse by wicked Catholic priests. Because children were abused — which everyone agrees is the worst possible thing — they are now attacking confession. It is like a storm that just keeps spinning, and this central, low-pressure system is just generating more and more disaster.

The Most Rev. Jerome Listecky is the Archbishop of Milwaukee now, but years ago, he taught moral theology at Mundelein Seminary and did the confession practicum for seminarians. He told us fourth-year theologians, "If someone asks you, 'Father, can you hear my confession?' The answer is yes. The answer is *always* yes. The answer is yes even if it puts your life in danger." Then he said, "Suppose someone says, 'Father, what was said in that confession?' The answer is, 'It never happened. It never happened.' Even if it puts your life in danger, the answer is, 'It never happened.'"

So that's what we were taught back in 1986. And now it has come to this: Even if it means we have to go to prison, "It never happened."

There is an intuition that unites priests — liberals and conservatives. We just instinctually know that the Eucha-

rist and confession are these two absolutely unique things that only priests can do. For all priests there is an instinct to protect these sacraments, which are vitally important.

As the founder of Word on Fire ministries, with a huge following around the world, you are something of a celebrity. How do you avoid the sin of pride?

Well, there are a couple things. One is the groundedness I find in the small chapel in my residence. Every single morning I start the day with an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and I pray the liturgy of the hours. I never see it as a burden. It is a great joy. I bring everything to the Lord, saying, "What am I doing today? Why did that happen yesterday? Why did that person talk to me?" I am always trying to ground what I'm doing in God's will. "Lord, am I doing Your will? Am I doing this for Your sake? Is this what You want me to do?" That is my prayer. That has to be my prayer.

When I visit religious communities (or really anybody), I always ask them to please pray for me, because I am susceptible to pride, as everybody is. I get overpraised by a lot of people. But in God's providence there is a balance because I also get unfairly attacked. So I suppose that does something positive for my pride.

You recently ordained six priests in Washington, D.C. What was that like for you?

These were my first ordinations, and it was a thrill. It was just delightful because of the fact that these were Dominicans, because that religious order means a lot to me. That day, as I ordained those men in the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception there in Washington, D.C., I realized what it means to be a bishop in the fullest sense, one who passes on the power of priesthood. It was extraordinarily powerful. And it was just a delight.

Your episcopal motto is *Non nisi Te, Domine*. Where does that come from, and why did you choose it?

It is from Thomas Aquinas, who is my great hero and patron saint and the reason I am a priest. He said these words at the end of his life. He had placed the text of his treatise on the Eucharist, from the third part of the *Summa Theologiae*, at the foot of the cross, as if asking the Lord to pass judgment on the text. Then the Lord spoke from the cross to him and said, "You've written well of me, Thomas. What would you have as a reward?" And this was Thomas' response: *Non nisi Te, Domine* (I'll have nothing except you, Lord). It's striking: St. Thomas didn't ask for anything that we normally ask for.

When I was appointed an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, it struck me that these words of Aquinas, who is such a key figure for me, should be my motto. And it is the right answer for the whole spiritual life. That is what I want.

I talk about this motto in most of my confirmation homilies. I show them my coat of arms and tell them the motto and the story of St. Thomas before the crucifix. And I tell them, "If the Lord asks you what you want in life, that's the right answer."

Sometimes people think that St. Thomas is too rationalistic, that the *Summa* is too dry and technical, that he formed a rather soulless system of theology. But he was really very mystical. Take the master idea in Aquinas, about the divine simplicity — that, in God, essence and existence coincide (Q. 3, a. 7, *Prima Pars*). I can state that very technically, but really, that is a deeply mystical thing to say. After that, what can I say further about God? In a way, nothing. You cannot get any further traction once you say that, in God, essence and existence coincide — to be God is *to be*. After that, everything else you can say tends to be in negative form, for example, He can't be material; He can't be bodily; He can't be finite; He can't be this and that.

When I was rector at Mundelein Seminary, we redid the house chapel and we named it the John Paul II Chapel. I am exceptionally proud of what we did. It had been very bland and undecorated, with 19 windows made of

just plain glass. I filled them with stained glass of great saints associated with John Paul II, and one of them, of course, is Thomas. He is right up in the front, and he is shown opening the text to his question in the *Summa* on God's essence and existence — Question 182. I had the glassmaker make sure it was open to that question because, as I always taught my students, it is really the master idea of Aquinas.

What are your impressions of Thomas Aquinas College and your thoughts about the College opening a second campus in New England?

Oh, I am very excited about this development. I sincerely love Thomas Aquinas College, and I was delighted when I heard about this expansion. I knew you had some struggles getting approval, so I was delighted to hear the news. I think the more your model of education is spread, the better, and now it will be available coast to coast. I like that. Both sides of the country. You might develop a campus in the middle of the country, too. I would love to see that. I am very, very enthusiastic about it. I was delighted when I heard about it.

In Memoriam

Cdr. Joseph H. Bauernfeind

September 10, 2018

Legacy Society member

Bronius Benediktas Maknickas

January 22, 2019

Father of Tomas Maknickas ('99)

Dr. Thomas Sheridan

April 13, 2019

Legacy Society member

Rev. James V. Schall, S.J.

April 17, 2019

Member of the Board of Visitors

Frederick J. Ruopp

April 19, 2019

Member of the Board of Governors

Legacy Society member

Mary Mazza

April 22, 2019

Grandmother of Maria ('11), Monica ('11), Elizabeth ('16), Thomas ('20), and Patrick ('23)

Douglas Lee Alexander ('77)

May 18, 2019

Alumnus

James C. Barr

May 27, 2019

Father of Noreen (McCann '79); grandfather of Jack ('09), Molly ('11), Maggie ('13), Martin ('16), Patrick ('17) and Bridget ('20)

Philip Crotty

June 8, 2019

Legacy Society member

Jim Newman

June 9, 2019

Legacy Society member

John Kaiser ('07)

June 20, 2019

Son of Patti (Grimm '79) and Ken ('78) and brother of Will ('03)

Mary Walker

July 8, 2019

Mother of Karen ('76) and Maureen (Alley '79)

Great Souls Unleashed

What's Next for the Class of 2019

“This campus, where liturgy, prayer, fellowship, deep communion with the saints and geniuses of the Catholic tradition are on steady offer, is something of a Catholic heaven on earth,” the Most Rev. Robert E. Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, told the graduates at Commencement 2019. “But,” he continued, “you are not meant to stay at this lovely place. Rather, you are meant to go forth, carrying what you have received and cultivated here, in order to sanctify our suffering world.”

Whether as laypeople or as religious, surgeons or scholars — with plans firmly in place or still in the early stages of formation — the members of the Class of 2019 are taking His Excellency's words to heart. These new alumni are united in their determination to “sanctify our suffering world” through their work and lives.

“Your four years here have given you great souls,” the Bishop advised the graduates. “Let them be unleashed!” Below are some of the primary disciplines, professions, and vocations into which these great, unleashed souls are headed.

Religious Life

Of this year's graduates, the first to answer God's call to the priesthood or religious life will be **Mary Catherine Eddyblouin**, who is entering the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, on August 22, the Feast of the Queenship of Mary. A religious vocation had “always been in the back of my head,” she says, but she only began to consider it seriously during her junior year. “The spiritual formation here is amazing, but the intellectual formation was also instrumental in getting me to realize my vocation,” she explains. “The mathematics, especially, brought me to more fully see the beauty of God.”

Graduate School

Given that the Thomas Aquinas College curriculum is ordered toward theology, it should come as little surprise that three of this year's graduates — **Madeleine Birchenough**, **Rachel Rivera**, and **Benjamin Trull** — are heading to the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., to earn advanced degrees in the Queen of the Sciences, or that a fourth, **Saxony Schmittle**, is busily applying to various graduate programs. “Before this year, I didn't want to go to graduate school, and if I had gone, it definitely would not have been for theology,” says Mr. Trull. “But studying the Holy Trinity during the first semester of senior year, I realized that there's a profound intersection between the life of prayer and the life of study. I went from studying God in the classroom to talking to God in the Chapel, and that experience led me to want to come to know Him even more.”

Theology is only one of several disciplines that members of the Class of 2019 will study at the graduate level: **Rachel Williams** has received a full scholarship, including a stipend, to pursue a doctorate in politics at Hillsdale College. ... **Andreas Waldstein** will study for a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. ... **Stuart Schultz** is earning a master's in sports journalism at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. ... After taking a year to retire student debt, **Francis Donnelly** intends to pursue a degree in music, as does **Edmund Covington**, who will study at Denver's Metropolitan State University.



Education

In recent years, several schools, recognizing the excellence of the College's academic program and its students' passion for learning, have come to Thomas Aquinas College to recruit seniors for teaching positions. This year the Great Hearts Academies, a consortium of classical charter schools that operate throughout the Southwest, have hired seven more new alumni: **Maria Gilicinski**, **Matthew DeBates**, **Kathryn Fox**, **Abigail Herbst**, **Therese-Marie Kuenstle**, **Samantha Ureta**, and **Marietta Wye**. “Realizing how amazing my tutors have been, how they can encourage you to become the best that you can be,” says Miss Wye, “made me want to try teaching for myself.”

John Adams Academy — a rapidly expanding charter high school in Roseville, California, that offers a classical curriculum — has added two members of the Class of 2019 to its faculty: **Zachary Beckman** and **John Herald**. ... **Rebecca Montanaro** has found employment with Mother of Divine Grace, the widely heralded distance-learning program founded by alumna Laura Berquist ('75). ... Three more of this year's graduates will remain at their alma mater — albeit 3,000 miles away — to serve as resident assistants for the inaugural year of Thomas Aquinas College, New England: **Isaac Cross**, who also seeks to do some freelance political writing in his spare time, **Mary Catherine Froula**, and **Thomas Moore**.

Business

“My involvement in the TAC Business Club was really helpful in getting me access to resources and realizing that the College teaches a lot of skills that are applicable to business,” says **Clairemarie Buskmiller**, who has been hired as a proposal writer for Trintech, a software company in Dallas. ... **Xavier Crawley**, **Joe Daly**, and **Jack Murphy** are enrolling in a master's program at The Catholic University of America's Busch School of Business. ... **Thomas Becher** will work as a project manager for a construction company in Santa Paula, California, splitting time between the office and field, in preparation for earning his contractor's license. ... **Benjamin Hamerl** is entering a sales-management training program for Bisco Industries, an aerospace component distributor. ... **Thomas Dirck** has accepted a position at Next Generation Marketing in Pleasanton, California.

Apostolate

Ever since Thomas Aquinas College's founding, the Dan Murphy Foundation has been one of its most generous benefactors, contributing to, among other things, the construction of several buildings, most notably Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. This spring, the foundation has hired two members of the latest graduating class: **Dominic Amorose** will work in the foundation's Los Angeles offices, and **Bella Ayala** will assist on its behalf with an archdiocesan healthcare initiative for one year before going to medical school. ... **Nicole Steltz** is joining the staff of the newly opened Margaret Home in Rochester, New York, which provides a healthy living place for at-risk mothers of unborn babies and newborns.

Thomas Graf is returning to the Catholic Answers apologetics apostolate, where he interned last summer, to work in its video, radio, and marketing departments.

“Having a firm foundation in the philosophy and theology of the Catholic faith will help me to communicate these very difficult, higher concepts with the broader world,” he says.

Marriage

“We got to spend a lot of time together here, talking about important things,” observes **John Herald**, who on July 5 wed Claire (Tabera '18) in Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel. “Because we have been through this same formation, we now share a view of what we want to do in life, how we want to raise our kids, which I think has prepared us well.” ... Two days after the Herald wedding, the Chapel was the site of the nuptial Mass of **Emmanuelle (Thériault-Allaire)** and **Robert Goyette**. ... There are six more weddings scheduled for members of the Class of 2019 within the next year, including three between '19 classmates. And more marriages are believed to be forthcoming!



Emmanuelle (Thériault-Allaire) and Robert Goyette

STEM

Among the members of the Class of 2019 who are entering the “STEM” fields of science, technology, engineering, and medicine, **Robert Goyette** will work for Blue Mantle Technology, a cybersecurity firm in Virginia, and **Nick Pfeiffer** plans to enter a one-year cybersecurity credentialing program. ... **Benjamin Whalen**, who earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering before coming to the College, will work for an engineering firm, Douglas Machine, Inc., in Alexandria, Minnesota. ... After completing some prerequisite classes, **Michael Sedler** hopes to pursue a doctorate in either astrophysics or mechanical engineering, and **Ryan Kielas** looks to attend medical school, with the long-term goal of becoming a diagnostician. ... **Caleb Skvaril** is enrolling at the Santa Clara School of Law, where he will focus on intellectual-property law as it pertains to the technology industry.



Public Service

Having completed Officer Candidate School for the U.S. Marine Corps last summer, **Thomas Macik** and **Patrick Nazeck** received their officer commissions just moments after Commencement. (See page 1.)

Agriculture

“I think the art of contemplation is very close to the agricultural life,” reflects **Christina Matthews**, who is taking a job on a hay farm in northeast Oregon. “When you're working outside, immersing yourself in the beauty of God's creation, you're able to really contemplate the work that God has made.” ... **Emily Lyons** will be an assistant wrangler at a cattle ranch in Colorado. ... **Stephanie Pipes** plans to work between two farms in Austria. ... **Timothy Guynan** is returning to work for his family's farming business in Nebraska.

Commencement Festivities



1. Nick Pfeiffer ('19) tosses his text onto the fire at the thesis draft-burning party. 2. Ed Mohun ('20) and Maria Perry ('20) say goodbye to the Class of 2019 at the Junior-Senior Dinner. 3. Members of the Senior Class mark the end of the year with some late-night bowling on the Wednesday before Commencement. 4. After completing their last exam, seniors take a celebratory swim in one of the College's ponds ... 5. ... then pose for a class photo. 6. Thomas Graf proudly announces the Class of 2019's accomplishments to the underclassmen during lunch in St. Joseph Commons.

Commencement 2019 Keepsakes!



Order photos and portraits at
thomasaquinas.edu/commencement2019

Calendar of Events

For more information, please see www.thomasaquinas.edu/calendar

New England Convocation August 24

The Most Rev. Mitchell T. Rozanski,
 Bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts, presiding

California Convocation August 26

The Rev. Joseph Illo, Pastor, Star of the Sea Church,
 San Francisco, California, presiding

Opening Lectures August 30

California: Dr. Joseph P. Hattrup
 New England: Dr. Thomas J. Kaiser
thomasaquinas.edu/lectures

Alumni & Parent Day (California campus) October 12

thomasaquinas.edu/alumni-parent

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