



Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel Takes Shape

Funding Still Needed

Nearly three years since breaking ground, Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel is taking shape. As the weeks pass by, the remaining parts of the façade are being hung, tiles are being placed on the dome over the sanctuary, and the interior becomes more finished and more lovely each day, as can be seen in the photographs that accompany this article. (See also page 3.)

To date, over \$16 million has been donated by generous friends of the College for the erection of this crown jewel of the campus. \$10 million alone came from the Dan Murphy Foundation in Los Angeles, and the College shall be forever grateful to Sir Daniel Donohue and all the trustees of the Foundation for the magnificent gift that allowed this project to begin.

Recently, a substantial gift was made for this project by Scott and Lannette Turicchi, and for this, too, the College is deeply grateful. (An interview with the Turicchis can be found on page 3.)

There are many others who have been motivated to contribute to this unique endeavor—some in memory of loved ones, others to honor the living, and still more in thanksgiving for the good that Thomas Aquinas College contributes to the Church and to the nation. In all, there are more than 2,300 souls who have come together to help make Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel a reality.

But there is much left to be done, and a \$6 million gap to be closed. Says President Thomas Dillon, “We are hopeful that the ranks of contributors to this chapel project will continue to grow in the months to come. All who visit it are deeply moved by its beauty and grandeur, and the sense of permanence and tradition it conveys. They want to be part of this magnificent undertaking.”

The dedication of the Chapel will take place later this year, on November 21, the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Between now and then, the College hopes to attain the \$6 million remaining



Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel has become a presence on the campus, where excitement grows with each passing week. Moreover, its bell tower and dome can be seen from both directions along Highway 150, which passes by the College’s front gate. The exterior scaffolding is due to be taken down in early summer.

to fully fund the Chapel project so that this house of God, unencumbered by debt, will be entirely set apart for God from the first day of its use as a place of worship.

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Comprehensive Campaign Is Extended

Governors Vote to Increase Goal

Last fall at a meeting of the Board of Governors, Chairman Maria Grant reported on the College’s \$75 million Comprehensive Campaign that was begun in 2000. “This has been a very successful effort,” she said, “and President Dillon and his staff are to be commended. We met our financial goal, and that is something to be proud of and for which to give thanks to God.”

The Comprehensive Campaign was conceived in 2000 and formally announced at the College’s 30th anniversary celebration in 2001—just days after the earth-shattering events of 9/11. In these seven years, through the great generosity of the College’s many friends and benefactors who have contributed to the Campaign, the College has built Sts. Peter and Paul Residence Hall, St. Monica Residence Hall, and St. Thomas Hall (the faculty office building). Now Our Lady of the



Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mrs. Maria Grant

Most Holy Trinity Chapel is approaching completion. The campaign has, at the same time, provided for the yearly shortfall between tuition and operational needs, added to the endowment, and disbursed over \$25 million in financial aid to deserving students who could not otherwise complete their education.

Post-9/11 Realities

At the time the Campaign was planned, the funding it sought would have covered not only the cost of a number of buildings on the campus and the College’s

financial aid and operating costs during the life of the Campaign, but it would have also substantially increased the College’s endowment. The tragic and unforeseeable events of 9/11, however, provoked a change in the financial landscape, making it difficult to raise cash. Moreover, in subsequent years, the cost of many construction materials, for example, steel and concrete, skyrocketed.

As Dr. Dillon explains, “9/11 and the substantial rise in building costs have taken their toll on our Campaign efforts. Taking into account, however, the wills and trusts of which the College is a beneficiary, and combining that with the cash we have received during the life of the Campaign, we have met the \$75 million goal of our Campaign. Yet, the reality is that there is still more to be done.”

“For instance,” he continues, “the cost of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel has substantially increased, so much so that we had to cut some features of the building such as the narthex and the crypt, and we scaled back on the plaster and other items. Finally, we reached the point at which we couldn’t cut any more and still give our best to God.”

The Governors Respond

The Governors, therefore, have chosen to extend the Comprehensive Campaign for another three years in order to raise an additional \$25 million needed to finish funding the Chapel and other capital projects, and at the same time provide over \$12 million in concurrent financial aid and operating needs.

Says Chairman Grant, “This is another daunting challenge, and I am so grateful to Dr. Dillon and his staff for their willingness to take it on. They will be building on the success of the past seven years. And members of the Board will also be actively engaged in introducing the College and its projects to new friends who will

want to participate in its efforts to complete the campus while it also keeps its long-standing commitment that no deserving student will ever be turned away simply for financial reasons.”

To contribute to Thomas Aquinas College’s Comprehensive Campaign, please contact Vice President for Development, Mr. Quincy Masteller at 800-634-9797 or at qmasteller@thomasaquinas.edu.

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From the Desk of the President

The True, the Good, and the Beautiful



When Pope Benedict XVI traveled to the United States last month, I had the honor to be present at his address to Catholic educators in Washington, D.C. The Holy Father eloquently restated the Church's long understanding of Catholic higher education—its dignified place in the Church and in society; its foundation on both faith and reason and the compatibility of the two; the responsibility educators have to pass on the whole of the truth while also vigorously exploring its meaning; and the importance of forming a genuinely Catholic environment that conduces to learning the truth and living it.

It was most encouraging to hear Pope Benedict's remarks, as they were in many ways a reaffirmation of Thomas Aquinas College's founding principles, which have governed us these past 37 years. Our founders were intent on establishing an institution permeated by the Catholic faith. For they understood, as our Holy Father explained, that "A university or school's Catholic identity is not simply a question of the number of Catholic students... It demands and inspires much more: namely that each and every aspect of your learning communities reverberates within the ecclesial life of faith. Only in faith can truth become incarnate and reason truly human, capable of directing the will along the path of freedom (cf. *Spe Salvi* 23)."

As Pope Benedict went on to explain, "Truth means more than knowledge: knowing the truth leads us to discover the good. Truth speaks to the individual in his or her entirety, inviting us to respond with our whole being. Far from being just a communication of factual data... the loving truth of the Gospel is creative and life-changing."

Here at Thomas Aquinas College, year in and year out, we see the lives of our students transformed. Through the graces of the sacraments, the truths these young people learn in our classrooms begin to take root in their souls. This is why we engage three chaplains full-time to minister to the spiritual needs of our students, who strive as much for moral and spiritual excellence as they do for intellectual virtue. Our dedicated priests offer Mass four times a day, and they hear confessions before and after each one. In addition, because the students themselves have requested it, the chaplains also make available daily Adoration and Benediction, and they help provide numerous other devotions as well.

Through our academic program, students begin to see the truth about nature, man, and God, and are thereby drawn to worship the One who is Truth—in the tabernacle and on the altar. Time and again Our Holy Father's words are borne out: "Those who meet Him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true."

This is why our chapel project is at the heart of Thomas Aquinas College, for all that we do in our academic program is directed to the knowledge and love of God. To reflect this, we have designed Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel as a place of great beauty that will speak to all who enter that the true, the good, and the beautiful are one in Christ.

Please help us to finish this worthy project. We have raised \$16 million to date, but we must still find an additional \$6 million to complete its funding. This is a daunting amount, but I am confident that there are many among our friends who, desiring to be part of this magnificent project, will give generously to complete this house of God. We will be most grateful for your help!



Once In a Lifetime

Graduate Greet Pope Benedict XVI



Tony Fiorini/The Catholic University of America

Shannon McAlister, graduate of the Class of 2000, received from Pope Benedict XVI a bronze medallion commemorating his visit to the United States. One side bears a bas-relief bust of the Holy Father, while the other features images of the United States Capitol and the United Nations, symbols of the two cities His Holiness visited while in the United States.

Shannon McAlister, a graduate of Thomas Aquinas College's Class of 2000, was chosen by Rev. David M. O'Connell, C.M., President of The Catholic University of America (CUA), to be among a select group of ten people, each of whom personally greeted the Holy Father just prior to his addressing the presidents of Catholic colleges and universities. Now a graduate student in theology, Miss McAlister was the only CUA student in the group, which included well-known journalists Wolf Blitzer of CNN and Tim Russert of NBC News and MSNBC.

Shannon offers her memory of this remarkable moment saying, "When Father O'Connell introduced me to the Holy Father, I greeted him as 'Your Holiness,' going down on my left knee to kiss his ring. As I arose, Father O'Connell mentioned that I was a student of theology at CUA, and the Holy Father's eyes lit up when he heard what I was studying. He asked me what my specialty was. I shared with him that I was hoping to write my dissertation on the idea of the motherly generation of the Eternal Word in the Trinity, according to Bonaventure and Aquinas. He smiled and offered words of affirmation, and I proceeded to tell him that many people had asked me to give him their love. He seemed touched by this—his face was beaming and he replied with gratitude."



Providing live coverage for Fox 5 News WNYW of Pope Benedict's Mass at Yankee Stadium on Sunday, April 20, 2008, was Thomas Aquinas College graduate, Rev. John Higgins ('90), the pastor of the Church of the Assumption in the Archdiocese of New York. Fr. Higgins also had the honor to serve as deacon for Pope John Paul II at his Mass in Central Park during the late pontiff's visit to the United States in 1995.

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A Chapel for the Ages

Couple Makes Substantial Gift to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel

A member of the College's Board of Governors since 2007, Mr. R. Scott Turicchi is Co-president of j2 Global Communications. Before joining j2 Global, he was the managing director of the investment banking department of a securities corporation. His wife, Lannette, who was formerly employed by DreamWorks, is currently working on a documentary on the life of Pope John Paul II. She is also a member of the board and trustee for the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C. Scott and Lannette are the proud parents of three daughters.

The Turicchis recently made a magnificent gift to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel and were kind enough to share their thoughts about this project in the interview below.

Q: How did you learn about Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel?

Lannette: The College's Director of Development, Robert Bagdazian, introduced us to the project. Then we met President Tom Dillon, and his passion for Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel was evident to us from the beginning. We were inspired by his courage and his perseverance in the face of the many challenges he has faced in making this chapel a reality. When someone takes on a daunting task such as this one, it is a sign to us that his work is that of the Holy Spirit. How could we not want to be part of this unique project?

Q: What prompted your magnificent gift?

Scott: We understood that this chapel was being built for the ages and that the goal was beauty for the ages. Since so few churches are built to the scale and grandeur of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, we saw the project as a rare opportunity and wanted to participate in it.

We had been watching the campus develop over the years and understood the school's mission as unique in Catholic higher education. Because of its mission, we understood that the Chapel would be the centerpiece of the campus. We were impressed with the time, attention, and focus being put on the project and saw that



this new chapel would make visible to all what was already the case—that the Chapel was truly the center of the school.

Q: What effect do you think the Chapel will have?

Scott: The students at Thomas Aquinas College understand well why they are there and what they are doing. For them, the chapel—whether it be modest (as the temporary chapel certainly is) or grand (as this one will be)—is the center of the College's life. These students really are self-selecting; they see well that they are at the College primarily to learn pursuant to a very specific and

difficult program. But they know, too, that all of this is for the sake of deepening their faith. This is why, in a way, Mass could be offered in a grassy field, for instance, or in the humble chapel in a section of the dining hall where it has been offered these past 30 years, and it would be much the same to the students.

So, while it will be wonderful for these young men and women to have this beautiful place of worship, we believe Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel will have a greater effect on those who are *not* on campus every day, on outsiders, particularly today when the liturgical experience is so poor. There will be a very stark difference apparent to all those visit Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel, one that will enhance their spiritual lives and prod them to ask "Why is it that our churches don't look like this?" Lannette and I are convinced that Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity

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Chapel Update continued from page 1



Right: A statue of Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, shown here in clay, will be situated just over the main door inside the Chapel so it will be seen as one goes out into the Academic Quadrangle.



Above: A crane hoists one of the final pieces of the Chapel's limestone façade into place—the College's crest, supported by angels on either side.

Right: Following the custom of many Roman churches, a dove—a symbol of the Holy Spirit—hovers in the ceiling of the lantern that tops the dome over the Chapel's sanctuary.



Top: A large crane lifts the dome's lantern into place.

Bottom: A close-up look at the interior work being done by EverGreene Painting Studios, Inc. of New York.

Left: This bas-relief (shown in clay) depicts each of the persons of the Blessed Trinity at the Coronation of Our Lady; it will be placed just above the main entrance to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel.



Chapel will have a good influence within the Church, far beyond Thomas Aquinas College and Santa Paula, California.

Q: What do you find remarkable about the design of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel?

Scott: First, of course, is the sense of tradition that the Chapel conveys. Just as the College taps into our roots in its curriculum, studying what the greatest minds of Western civilization have articulated—not what others say about them—so, too, it is important in architectural design to connect back with traditional design. What is especially interesting, though, is that the design is not trapped in time. Just as the Church fits herself in some way to the times in which she exists, so, too, this Chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity is not ossified in time. It is a work of our time, not 20 centuries ago.



Marie-Catherine Toulet

Lannette: We are also attracted to it for its European flavor and for the features, like the dome over the sanctuary, that signify a connection to Rome. We said

to ourselves, ‘Why shouldn’t a little piece of St. Peter’s be in Santa Paula?’

Scott: We believe, too, that its beauty will be powerful and effective in drawing believers and unbelievers to itself.

Q: What are your thoughts about the name that was chosen for the Chapel?

Scott: To honor the Blessed Mother as Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity is not at all typical. On reflection, though, that title for her seems so fitting because of her singular relationship with the triune God. She is, of course, the first among all saints in the depth and intensity of her spiritual relationship with the persons of the Trinity, but in addition, she is the only human being to have a physical relationship with the Son through the miraculous conception of the Word made Flesh. She is truly *Theotokos*, the vessel through whom the Son came to be in time and, therefore, through whom He remains physically present in the world in the Holy Eucharist. As human beings, we want sensory experiences, we need them; yet the immaterial God is beyond us. But through Mary, *Theotokos*, we have a vessel through whom the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, came to be in time with a tangible human nature. How appropriate, then, is this title of Our Lady for us human beings who depend on sensible things to know what is insensible, especially in this age in which we crave tangibles.

Q: Is there anything you would like to add?

Scott: I am pleased by all the attention that has been given to each stone, each pillar, each cornice—the thought that has gone into each element of this chapel and every detail—it all bespeaks a deeply spiritual attitude.

Lannette: For us, this is a marvelous opportunity to do real good both here on the campus of Thomas Aquinas College, but also beyond, in the larger Church.

Scott: It is a real privilege to be part of this project and to be a part of the College community. Almost to a person, everyone affiliated with the College is exceptional.

A Grand Reunion

Remembering, 40 Years Later

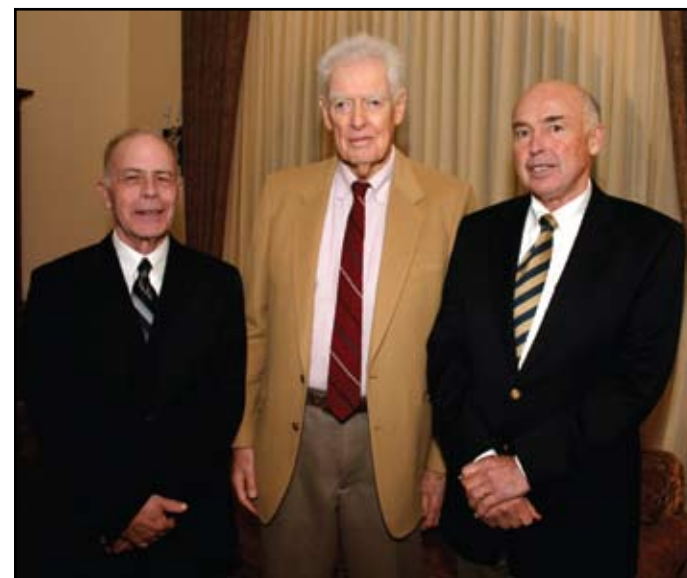
On December 1, 2007, an intimate dinner for 16 was held in the parlor of the new faculty office building, St. Thomas Hall. In attendance were senior officials of the College and those who were present the evening Thomas Aquinas College was conceived. The reunion was held 40 years to the day that the idea of founding a new college, in an effort to help reestablish genuine Catholic liberal education, was proposed.

The evening began with a private Mass offered by the College’s chaplain and Assistant Dean for Religious Affairs, Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J., in the Guadalupe Chapel of the Doheny Hacienda, President and Mrs. Dillon’s home on the campus. A cocktail reception followed in the foyer of St. Thomas Hall, and dinner was served by a roaring fire in the Richard Noble Parlor nearby.

In attendance with their wives were: founding president, Dr. Ronald McArthur; founders, Dr. John Neumayr, Mr. Marcus Berquist, and Mr. Peter DeLuca; president, Dr. Thomas Dillon; dean, Dr. Michael McLean; and vice president for development, Mr. Quincy Masteller. Fr. Buckley was also among the attendees.

The evening’s special guest was Dr. Angelo Codavilla, a prominent force in the conservative movement and a professor of international relations at Boston College. He was one of those present when Thomas Aquinas College was first conceived.

As Dr. McArthur recalls, “On December 1, 1967, I gave a talk at a dinner meeting



Mr. Peter DeLuca, Dr. Ron McArthur, and Dr. Angelo Codevilla were glad to have the opportunity to renew their friendships during dinner in the Richard Noble Parlor.

of the Philadelphia Society at an airport hotel in Los Angeles. Afterwards, I met up with Angelo, his wife, Anne, and Doyle Swan, who at the time was a fundraiser for Pepperdine University. I was holding forth, I suppose, about the dismal state of Catholic higher education, and Doyle turned to me and said, ‘Why don’t you start your own College?’ Bowled over by the thought,

I told him, ‘You can’t start a college!’ But Doyle, Angelo and, later in the evening, Peter DeLuca wouldn’t let it go. They kept challenging me. So, lo and behold, the idea took hold, and Thomas Aquinas College opened its doors less than four years later.”

Peter DeLuca, now Vice President for Administration and Finance, says of the evening of remembrance, “It was a very special night, to have this group of people gathered together, those who were intimately tied to the College’s birth, along with those responsible for its continued well-being. Now, 40 years later, we thank God for the countless blessings He has showered on this noble endeavor.”

After the sharing of many memories and much good fellowship, the evening concluded with champagne toasts all around.

St. Thomas On the Sanctifying Work of the Holy Spirit

Rev. Gilles Emery, O.P., Gives St. Thomas Day Lecture

“The more I study St. Thomas, the more I am unconvinced by the modern claim that the Middle Ages ignored and neglected the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, when one actually reads St. Thomas, one finds the Holy Spirit at the very heart of his understanding of salvation and of life.”

Thus began the St. Thomas Day lecture given this year by the Rev. Gilles Emery, O.P., a world-renowned theologian and professor of dogmatic theology at the Theological Faculty of Fribourg University in Switzerland. Fr. Emery is also a member of the International Theological Commission, an advisory body to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In addition, he is a member of the editorial board of *Revue Thomiste*, and an associate editor of and contributor to *Nova et Vetera*. Fr. Emery’s most recent book is entitled *The Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* and is published by Oxford University Press.

Fr. Emery addressed the faculty and students of the College on the afternoon of January 28, the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, concerning the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. In his lecture, he referenced numerous passages from various works of the Angelic Doctor, including the *Summa Theologiae*, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and commentaries by the saint on passages from Scripture, in particular the Gospel of St. John, all of which illuminate the mission of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying the souls of Christians.

Commented Dean McLean, “This is one of the best addresses we have had concerning St. Thomas, and we are most grateful to Fr. Emery for making the long journey to our campus to help us celebrate the feast day of our patron in such a fitting way.”

During his stay at the College, Fr. Emery talked with students and visited classes, later telling Dr. Dillon, “I only wish I could have had this education!”



In a recent interview at the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, Fr. Emery discussed the effect his years studying St. Thomas has had on him saying, “The most important thing I learned from Aquinas is how to be a theologian, that is to say, what theology is and how theology should be done. I mean not only the method of theology (how to read Scripture with the help of the Fathers, how to integrate philosophy, and so on), but the contemplative and practical nature of theology.”

Says Dean McLean, “We could not hope for more for our own graduates.”

Three Appointed to Board of Regents

Three appointed to Board of Regents

James T. Fahey, Jr. ('94)

A graduate of Thomas Aquinas College's Class of 1994, James Fahey is a product manager at SanDisk Corporation in Milpitas, California, where he manages flash-memory-based card products for the mobile market. His background in the field of technology includes product marketing, product management, and semiconductor design roles both in the Silicon Valley and in Europe.



Mr. Fahey holds a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering and computer science from the University of California at Berkeley and is currently pursuing a master's in philosophy part-time from the International Catholic University.

Mr. Fahey is a Third Order Carmelite (OCDS) in the Infant Jesus Carmelite Community in Santa Clara, California. A former wine steward, he enjoys broadening his knowledge of wine by visiting the greatest wineries and wine regions in California and around the world.

Commenting on his appointment to the Board of Regents earlier this year, Mr. Fahey says, "I believe in the education that Thomas Aquinas College offers, and I am grateful to my parents, friends, teachers, and

the whole College community. I of course jumped at the opportunity to help give back in some small way to my *alma mater* for the great gifts of faith, knowledge, hope, and love that I have received through it. It is exciting to join this group of Regents who help raise money for the campus and for future generations of students."

Recalling his own years at the College, Mr. Fahey says, "When you read great saints such as St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Robert Bellarmine, St. Francis de Sales, and St. John of the Cross, you begin to understand what was required to form these minds. It took generations of people—families and religious communities—devoting their lives to study, prayer, and work to provide their educations. I believe that the education at Thomas Aquinas College, being grounded in the original works of the masters in philosophy and theology, offers a great beginning that, if built upon with a lifetime of continued study and good living nurtured by the sacraments, could very well produce this type of great mind and great saint."

"It has been my experience," he continues, "that the College's program produces devout Catholics who serve the Church well as parents, teachers, priests, religious, and laity, and who are able to carry on a dialogue with the works of these great thinkers, teachers, and shepherds. This is just what is needed in the Church today and why graduates of Thomas Aquinas College are so valuable to the life of the Church."

"The College," he adds, "shows what can be done when Catholics devote themselves to the perfection of the heart and mind under the wisdom and experience of the Church."

Alexander E. Lessard

Co-founder and former president of The Palisades Financial Group in Los Angeles, Alex E. Lessard has recently formed a Wealth Management team within UBS Financial Services Inc., with offices in La Jolla and Los Angeles. The focus of his new team is the tactical allocation of assets throughout all stages of wealth accumulation, preservation, and transfer. Mr. Lessard offers comprehensive executive and business financial planning services, asset management, personal risk management, and corporate benefits planning. He and his team address the full spectrum of financial goals important to businesses and families across generations. He has been a manager of family wealth since 1991.

Speaking of his recent appointment to the Board of Regents, Mr. Lessard says, "I am honored to assume the role of an ambassador of the College to the larger community. Numerous opportunities to comment upon the excellence of Thomas Aquinas College present themselves in the course of client conversations, contact with colleagues, and in the wider sphere of business acquaintance. The upcoming Golf Classic at Sherwood Country Club is the perfect kind of event to raise the profile of the College, especially with businessmen drawn both by a fraternal love of the game and the beauty of the venue. It is an investment that should pay perennial dividends into the College's scholarship fund."

Mr. Lessard holds a bachelor's degree, *summa cum laude*, from the University of St. Thomas, a Doctorate in systematic theology and ethics from Boston College, and a master of science in Financial Services (MSFS) from The American College with a concentration in complex business and estate planning. He holds the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation and has passed Level One of the Chartered Financial Analyst Program (CFA).

In 1991, Alex married Angela (née Grimm, a graduate of the College's Class of 1985), and their ninth child was born in February. He serves on the board of InsideCatholic.com and Morley Publishing in Washington, D.C., and as the program director on the Pasadena Chapter Board of Legatus International. He also serves as treasurer of St. Monica Academy in Pasadena, CA. The Lessards' avocations include reading, music, and travel.

Reflecting on his association with Thomas Aquinas College, Mr. Lessard says, "I first learned of the College from a graduate who would become my wife. She came to

the doctoral program in theology at Boston College far better prepared than the rest of us. Angela's ability to enter easily into the conversation with great authors pointed to a well-ordered education and a habit of lively debate. The more I learned about the integrated curriculum and Socratic classrooms, the more convinced I became both of the program's fundamental soundness and of its importance for any effort to retrieve authentic Catholic liberal education in America."

He adds, "We have tried to increase our support of the College each year, and with a number of young children who love the school, this support will inevitably multiply. The fundraising mission of the Board of Regents challenges members to leverage their personal support within wider business and personal spheres of influence, and this should lead both to adding wonderful new families to the College community and to broader support for the College 'from the outside in.' I am especially pleased that the Golf Classic benefits the scholarship program, as I was the beneficiary of a scholarship throughout my undergraduate years."

Gerard T. Weisbecker

Jerry Weisbecker is Senior Vice President at Griffin Industries, a major force in the residential home-building market in California. His role is to bring the international investment community to the firm to enhance and expand its real estate investment and development platform.

Formerly, Mr. Weisbecker was Senior Executive Vice President and CIO of *Banco de la Nación Argentina*, the commercial arm of the Argentine Central Bank, where he



managed the banks' \$18 billion (U.S. dollars) portfolio. From there, he began a successful 20-year career as a partner and managing director with Kidder, Peabody and Co., a long-standing investment banking firm. After that firm's buyout by PaineWebber in 1994, Mr. Weisbecker successfully transitioned to managing director roles at Merrill Lynch and Stone and Youngberg LLC.

Mr. Weisbecker received a bachelor of science degree in economics and finance from St. Johns University in New York and completed graduate courses in the financial management of commercial banks at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He served as a commissioned officer in the United States Army and is a past chapter president of Legatus International, a world-renowned Catholic business leaders' organization.

He says of his recent appointment to the Thomas Aquinas College Board of Regents, "To me, the Regents exemplify the true nature of charitable giving—that of time, talents, and treasures in order to create and propagate an instructional and learning environment that maintains the orthodoxy of Catholic teachings. Nothing is more noble than to be involved in the pursuit of truth, and I am humbled by my participation on this path with some of the finest Catholics it has been my pleasure to meet."

Jerry and his wife, Francine, have been married for 40 years and have three grown sons and four grandchildren. They are active in a number of local political, social, and religious groups and keep busy with their cherished grand-parenting duties.

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Rev. Bernard McCoy, O.Cist. ('88)
Superior, Abbey of Our Lady of Spring Bank in Sparta, Wisconsin

Excerpts from an Address to Governors of the College, Faculty, and Students
2007 Board of Governors Retreat

Introduction by President Thomas Dillon

J-Vann McCoy was born and raised in North Carolina. He studied astrophysics at the Georgia Institute of Technology before coming to Thomas Aquinas College. Here, he found his Catholic faith and his vocation to the priesthood. After graduation, he entered the Cistercian seminary of Hauterive in Fribourg, Switzerland, and was ordained in 1995.

Fr. Bernard is now a contemplative monk and the superior of the Abbey of Our Lady of Spring Bank in Sparta, Wisconsin. An entrepreneur by nature, he is also the founder and CEO of his abbey's primary means of support: LaserMonks.com, one of the largest and most successful office retailers in the country. This growing company supports not only the monks of the abbey but also its charitable works, from scholarships for young people pursuing vocations, to aid to Native American schools and missions, to funding for a school in Vietnam that trains street kids in the use of office software.

Fr. Bernard and LaserMonks.com have been featured by CNN, ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings, Reuters, USA Today, Entrepreneur Magazine, National Public Radio, Zenit, the National Catholic Register, and EWTN. I have invited him to speak tonight, though, not simply for his successes as an entrepreneur, but for his holiness and faithfulness and his appreciation for the mission of Thomas Aquinas College and the good that it does.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen; it's a real pleasure to be here.

There were a few tears in my eyes as I drove over to the campus this evening because there is a lot more here than when I was a student. You students have it easy; you know, we had to walk both ways uphill with no shoes in the rain and snow, but you, young folks, you have it easy here.

Lost

Twenty years ago, I was sitting on a park bench on the grounds of a Georgia university campus. I was coming back from a frat party after, perhaps, a few too many drinks. Looking over the Atlanta skyline, I started to cry—and I'm not a crying kind of guy.

I wasn't particularly religious at the time, but I was so lost that night that I prayed to God saying, "I don't know where I am supposed to be, what I am supposed to do, or where I am supposed to go; but somehow I want to try to use what gifts I've got, even my weaknesses, to try to do some good with the rest of my life. You'd better show me where I am supposed to go and what I am supposed to do." Little did I know how that would turn out.

I started looking around for something else because I hated where I was. I found a list of the ten smallest colleges in the United States, and I said to myself, "These are great; I've got to know what they are." Among them was a little place called Thomas Aquinas College. Since I had never been past the Mississippi, anything in California seemed strange and weird, but I looked at the review of the College and was impressed with its curriculum. Something attracted me to it.

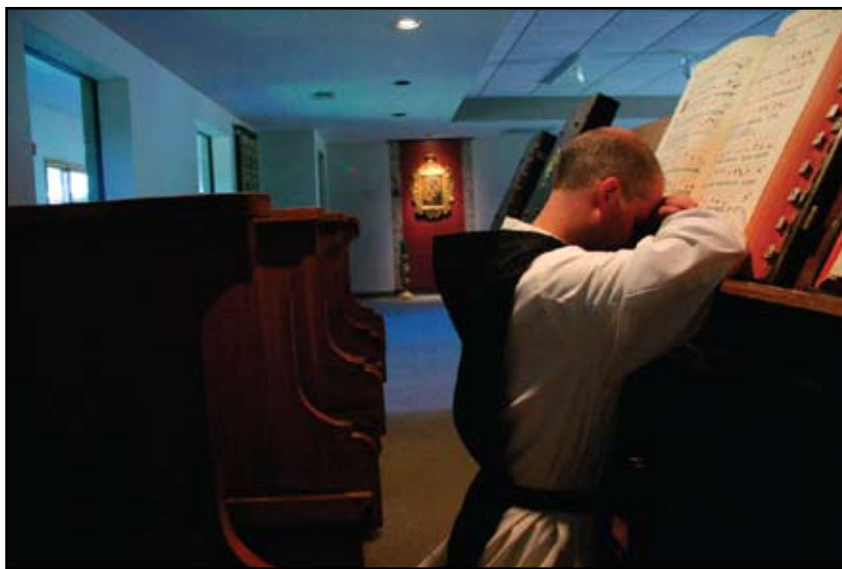
This was in August (I was enrolled in the summer semester), just before the new academic year was to begin. Nevertheless, I called and talked to the Director of Admissions, Tom Susanka, and he said he would send some information.

Mayberry R.F.D.

Let's stop there and back up just a second...Has anyone here ever seen the *Andy Griffith Show*? Well, I'm from North Carolina, from a little town called Mayberry, R.F.D.—the real town. My mom grew up with Andy and chased him around the soda fountain at

sixteen; my dad grew up two doors down. I grew up as a kind of wishy-washy Methodist in this small Southern town.

I quit high school at 16 and went to a highly-respected technical university in Georgia to study astrophysics. In the midst of that, before I ended up as a drunken frat kid on the park bench, I attended a gala with my big brother who lived in Atlanta and moved in the upper echelons. We were in tails and tux and such, and during the event this big fellow comes up to me. He was about 6'6" tall, in a dark pinstripe suit, wing tips, and so on. He said to me, "Young man, I understand you're not real happy with what you're doing. Have you ever considered studying international law and finance?" I said, "No, but why do you ask?" He said "Well, I'll tell you what: I know your brother, and he says you're a good kid and seem to be



kind of a bright fellow. We'll take care of things. We'll send you to the University of Chicago, or wherever you want to go. We'll take care of the tuition. We'll give you an apartment, a car, and spending money." I told him, "That's a very nice offer. I'll think about it."

I checked with my brother later, and he said, "Everything he tells you is true, very true. In many ways, he's a good man, and we do a lot of good things together. We go to the opera, and we do a lot of charitable works together. But there's something you need to keep in mind, little brother...there's some fine print to this contract. He's, well...he's the head of the largest mob family in the South, and there's a little more than meets the eye here." That was enough for me!

Admission to the College

I received the admissions information from Tom Susanka just a week before my final exams, and I noticed the envelope right away because it had an image in the return address area of St. Thomas teaching the five proofs for God's existence to a small group. I was late for class, so I grabbed it thinking, "Oh, I've got that information from that funny college," and ran. I came in the back door, a little late, and the professor was coming in late, too. This happened to be one of those introduction to philosophy courses. He sets his books down, and I set my books down—with this funny envelope on top. He says, "I've decided to change my curriculum for the next three weeks." Alright. "I think," he continues, "that I'm going to teach you about St. Thomas Aquinas and the five proofs for God's existence." Wow.

To make a long story short, my admission to Thomas Aquinas College was somewhat unusual. I wrote all the essays in 24 hours, sent them out by overnight mail, and took my final exam in calculus the day after. On the way to the exam, I called from the library payphone to see if they had received my information. The response was, "Well... yes.... umm... why as a matter of fact we did, and while the incoming class of freshmen happens to be full, we called a kind of an emergency meeting of the admissions council and we decided to accept you, by exception."

I was upset. I was upset, and my mouth opened. I couldn't believe it. Now, this is important, because it has to do with what comes later. I was upset because it was one of those things: I knew if I was accepted, I had to go, because I would kick myself the rest of my life. I

just knew that there was something right and something good about whatever it was they were doing at Thomas Aquinas College.

But I had to take my exam. When I came back, I literally emptied my room into my car, got into it, and drove to California.

"We're All Catholic Here"

Within two months I had fallen in love with the education here. One day, this little old man who lived here on the campus—the College chaplain, it turned out—came up to me at Sunday brunch. Old Monsignor Gallagher (God rest him) comes up behind me. He still had this Irish muscle to him, and he grabbed me and a couple of other folks and said "Weelllll now, I hear y'er not bein' Catholic. Would ye like to come up and study the Catechism with me?" I said "Well, I don't know sir...What's a Catechism?" "Ohhh, just to learn a little bit about the Catholic faith." "Well, okay." I'm a nice Southern gentleman, I grew up in a nice Southern family, and I had to be genteel and kind. "Oh yes, I'll come and visit you, sir."

Well, from that moment, things happened quickly. By early in the second semester of my freshman year, it was very clear that it was time for me to make some changes. One day, I was taking a walk, and a car drove up with these two older couples in it, and the driver rolled the window down and says, "Scuse me young man, but do your caretakers live here? We're Jehovah Witnesses, and we'd like to speak with them." And I said, "Well... ma'am... well, you know, I'm sorry, but we're basically

all Catholic here, and you're probably not going to find any people interested." She said "Well, okay....Fine," and rolled the window back up. After they left, I walked about a hundred feet away. Then it struck me: "Whoa.... wait a minute.... 'We're all Catholic here....!'" Right then, I wandered up to the little trailer at the top of the hill, knocked on the door, and said "Well, Monsignor, now where do I sign?"

I converted on Ash Wednesday, and within a month, I knew in some strange way that I had a vocation to the priesthood, that whatever it was that was going on behind that altar in that little chapel, that was what reality really is, and that's what it's all about.

An Intellectual Assent

I would call this an intellectual conversion. After talking to the Jehovah's Witnesses, I said to myself, "You know, even if I leave here right now, I can't believe anything else than what I've come to understand here." It was largely intellectual, an assent, if you will, to the intellectual truths around me, from reading Aristotle, the Bible, and all kinds of things. It made sense. I had grown up thinking I was going to be a scientist with a BMW and a hot tub, but on that park bench I just knew there had to be more. I came here and found that there is indeed much more to be had.

What I found at the College was the ability to learn—not only to think, to debate, to argue, but to look for truth at its core. Not only did that distinguish everyone I was with here, but when I left, people that I met would ask, "Where did you go to school?" They noticed in me what we all do: ask hard questions, be unemotional about them, discuss them. For instance, we'll say, "What about this, or this, or this?" or "That doesn't follow." Or again, "Yes, but the author didn't actually say that; he said this. I read that." Yes, I read that, and read this, and read this, and this, and this.... and people can't believe this.

Seeking the Good of Another

My time here at the College was exceptional. It was the budding and seed of my own faith and service to God. One of the most important things I learned was from St. Thomas, his definition of love in his treatise on charity: to seek the good of the other. You don't have to like someone to love them.

That's important to think about—to love your enemies and seek their good in whatever ways it takes doesn't mean you have to like what you're doing. The truth is, you can seek the good of your best friend even if you're angry with him right now. St. Thomas teaches much the same thing in a similar treatise, where beatitude is defined as friendship with God.

This is what I found was starting to move me within, this desire to seek the good of another. That's a real sign of charity in one's life, the real acid test for where we are, where we're going, and where we hope to be at some point.

When I graduated from the College, I started looking around for where in the world I was supposed to go. In the meantime, I lined up a job working at the Ojai Valley School for a year to pay off some debts. Before starting, I went home and bought a new convertible and some nice clothes. I was ready to come back to my job here, but I stopped for a visit at a monastery in Sparta, Wisconsin, on the way.

This monastery had almost nothing to invite a young man: it was located on an old farm with an old trailer for a chapel. Yet, this was not unlike the campus I had just left. It, too, was a pioneer situation, and there was something true and very good going on there. My experience at the College, a kind of Catholic oasis, fit very much with the life of this monastery, where monks spend four to five hours a day in Gregorian Chant, in prayer. It is a relatively traditional place in a lot of senses. So, it seemed natural for me to go.

But the reason you go is not the reason you stay; God had further plans for me. What is important to see is that I had made this intellectual assent here at the College, with a conversion of understanding, and a turn to the truth. What had still to happen was the conversion of the heart.

Learning how to Love and Be Loved

I was very much an outgoing, extraverted, skill-building, typical American male when I entered Thomas Aquinas College as a freshman. I was an international scuba-diver, I was a pilot (I still am; in fact, I'm a member of the International Association of Priest Pilots, believe it or not.) I'm a trumpeter, French hornist, flutist, actor, and a computer language buff. I was just into everything.

What I discovered though, is that all these were extra skills. Ultimately, what had to be developed was learning how to love and to be loved—seeking the good of another and, at the same time, welcoming the good toward oneself from others. All of that had to start developing in a conversion of the heart, if you will.

When I joined the Cistercians, I was shipped off almost immediately to Europe for studies, to Fribourg, Switzerland. I didn't know it at the time, but the university I studied at is probably the top university for Dominicans in the world. The now Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna, Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, was there as a history professor when I was there. Many master theologians of the Order at that time were my professors. I had the best of the best as far as Thomistic tradition.

St. Bernard is the Cistercian's primary saint, a Doctor of the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas died in a Cistercian monastery, at Fossanova in Italy. We all know the story of how when he was dying he said everything he wrote was as straw. The brothers there were saying, "Please, tell us about the Song of Songs," and he said, "No. Go to Bernard; he said it all, and I can tell you no more." So you see, there was a close connection between the Dominicans and the Cistercians. In fact, in the refectory in the Dominican students' house there in Fribourg where I studied, there is a giant 15th century mural that depicts Cistercians and Dominicans having a meal together.

At Fribourg, I studied St. Thomas and lived the monastic life. It was a hard year. Everything had to be in French. I went there with no French, and within only one year had to end up passing Licentiate exams. There was intellectual formation that was intense, to be sure, but at the same time there was something important going on in the heart—learning how to love and to be loved.

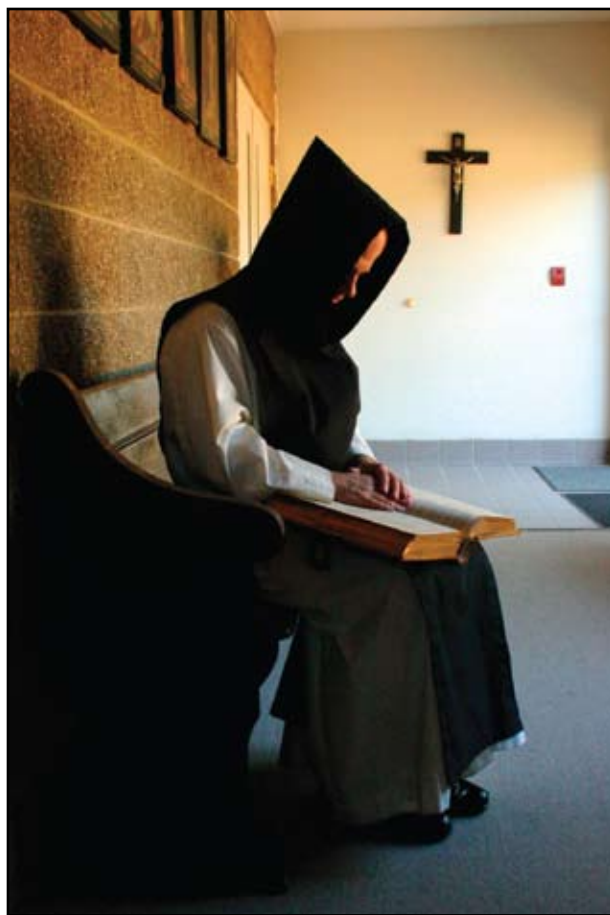
The retired abbot general said to me when I first started my studies. "Brother Bernard," he said, "You're going to study about God. But don't forget—and most theologians today do—don't forget, it's not about God; it's the time you spend with God." How much time do we study, think about, work for God, as opposed to spending time with Him? That stuck with me, and it's something I think is important. There is an intimacy we're supposed to have with God, just like one would have with a friend. It's one thing to talk about your friend, or hear about him, or read a book about him, but what about spending some time with him? That's what life is all about. Keep that with you.

LaserMonks.com: Putting Food on the Table

When I came back to my abbey in 1995, I had all this esoteric knowledge in mystical theology, in psycho-spiritual development, all kinds of things like that. But I was made steward of temporal affairs and told, "The monks have this nasty habit of wanting to eat at least twice a day. Please put food on the table." So suddenly I was engaged in finding money to support the monastery as well as build a new wing for it.

To do this, we started a number of projects—I won't go into all of them—but among them were five-star golf course developments, real estate developments, raising shitake mushrooms—all kinds of stuff.

Then one day, my printer ran out of toner and I



thought, "This is way too expensive for a bunch of black dust. There's got to be a better way." And from that came a little company that's called LaserMonks.com. We started in 2001 with annual sales of \$2,000, and now we're one of the largest office retailers in the country, offering everything that OfficeMax, Office Depot, Staples, and Corporate Express do—about 45,000 products, at the same price or better. And we'll give you a spiritual rebate with every purchase: the monks will pray for you....What a deal!

Encouraging Social Entrepreneurism

So this little business started out and has done relatively well. Dr. Dillon mentioned in his introduction a few of the media outlets that have covered us, and we've had some good ones. In addition, last year *Fortune Magazine* named us one of its most admired companies in America, for smaller businesses. Not bad. *The Los Angeles Times* also did a nice article, as did the *London Independent*. And I did a *BBC* interview last week. It just keeps going.

As the CEO of LaserMonks.com, I do a lot of national speaking engagements with institutions and major companies on social entrepreneurship—doing for-profit work in order to support non-profit good works. I speak to national business leaders, especially through *Legatus*, the international Catholic CEOs' organization, as well as many secular groups. Imagine,

this little monk comes in and tells business people how to run their businesses...and they actually listen! And they're incorporating some of these Christian values of Christian stewardship into the formation of their businesses and their market economy. This is a good thing!

Don't Underestimate what God Can Do

I went into a monastery to be a contemplative monk, thinking I would pray all my life—and I do that—but I've ended up doing a lot of other things that I never expected to do, and having an effect in a world that often the Church doesn't get to touch. All of this, because of this college, where I came with absolutely no intention of doing anything I'm doing right now.

So, you should never underestimate what God can do with the gifts and talents of every single person in this room—whether it's the students that are going to go out into the world, or the members of the Board of Governors, or the faculty members—to bring good about in this world. That's what Thomas Aquinas College is about in so many ways.

The Romance of Knowledge and Love

During my sophomore year here, we studied St. Anselm's *Proslogion: Credo ut intelligam. I believe so that I may understand.* That's what got me into the Church. Then I entered the Cistercians, more of a *Credo ut experior* group. *I believe so that I may experience.*

What I have learned is that these two must work together, the mind and the heart. Even St. Thomas says one must know an object before one can love it. If you know it, and you see it as good, you're going to love it. If you love it, you will want to know it more. There is this infinite spiral that continues, much like a romance.

In the monastic life, there is a phrase: *ora et labora; prayer and work.* We put these together. Work is not something we do 9:00-5:00 and then go home and be real monks. We intersperse the day with moments in which we touch base with God, we touch base with our brothers, we touch base with a certain amount of intellectual education. We have readings at meals, which are otherwise silent. We take full graduate level courses. There is a constant flow throughout the day where we make a conscious choice to structure our days around growth of body, mind, and spirit.

I take care that my monks try and keep in good physical health. Looking after myself is much harder. What is essential, though, is to have someone to whom you're accountable—a mentor, spiritual guide, spiritual director, whatever it may be. St. Bernard once said "He who is the disciple of himself is the disciple of a fool." There is something very serious about that. To have someone to whom you're accountable in your life is the one thing that will help you move forward and keep a certain amount of priority and viability in everything you're seeking.

Listen with the Ears of Your Heart

I am proud of this college. I am proud of everything that goes on here, and I am proud of everyone in this room—those of you who have made the commitment to study here; those of you who have made the commitment to teach here; those of you who take your time, your talent, and your treasures to keep this college going and move it into the future. We've set the standard in America for liberal education. We continue to do so. Our graduates are all over the country doing all kinds of great things. This is an incredible place, and we have all been called here for some strange reason, never knowing—never knowing—where it might lead, what we might end up doing, who we might affect in our lives. I'm very thankful for that.

One day during my formation, I was in prayer, and I seemed to hear Our Lord ask, "What would you have of me?" I responded saying, "Only you, Lord... for everyone." And that is what I wish for you tonight: only Him, for each of you. Wherever you are going, wherever life takes you, wherever He takes you, listen with the ears of your heart. Respond to those calls, and you never know where it might lead.

Let us pray for one another. God bless you all!

It Just Keeps Giving and Giving and Giving

The Enduring Power of an Endowed Gift

The little rabbit in the television commercial, promoting long-lasting battery power, is a good image for the enduring character of an endowment fund. Once established, an endowment fund just keeps paying out money year after year. Unlike the battery that eventually runs down, it lasts in perpetuity. Perpetuity is a long time.

The permanence of an endowment is exactly what attracts some benefactors to this means of supporting Thomas Aquinas College. They like the idea that the principal of their gift will stay intact while the income will be used to sustain the important mission of the College: Catholic liberal education, faithful to the Church. They realize that



Mr. Tom Susanka, Director of Gift Planning

some day they will be gone and their outright annual gifts will no longer be available to help meet current needs. Through an endowment, though, they can keep making their annual gifts.

Some endowment donors are also attracted to the opportunity an endowment gives to memorialize a loved one or other respected person. They use this perpetual giving arrangement to bring honor and recognition. Father Salvator Franco (may he rest in peace) and his sister, Helen, for example, established first an endowment in honor of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gennaro Franco, and then an endowment in honor of St. Padre Pio. At Father's and Miss Franco's request, these endowments have been used exclusively to support students who could not attend Thomas Aquinas College without financial assistance.

Since these endowments for financial aid were established in the 1990s by Father Franco and his sister, their funds have been carefully invested, producing a two-fold effect: 1) funds nearly equal to the original gifts have been distributed as financial aid to deserving students and 2) the original gifts are themselves now worth twice what they were when given. Thus, in effect, *the Francos' endowed gifts have now nearly tripled in value*, and they will continue to grow and assist young people who would otherwise not be able to complete their education at Thomas Aquinas College.

An endowment can be created during life or at death through a bequest or trust remainder. It can be restricted to specific needs of the College or it can remain unrestricted to help the College meet its general needs. You can create your own endowment or contribute to one that already exists. One can be made with a single gift or with repeated gifts. They can also originate from a single source or through the efforts and support of many persons.

Endowments are especially useful in drawing other family members into the giving arena. For example, grandparents who establish an endowment in the family's name provide their children and grandchildren with a continuing bond with Thomas Aquinas College, and they have the satisfaction of seeing "their" annual endowment grant benefit an important and noble work.

Thomas Aquinas College has developed sound policies for creating and managing its endowment funds. This information is available upon request.

For further information, please contact Director of Gift Planning, Mr. Thomas Susanka, at tsusanka@thomasquinas.edu or 800-634-9797. He can show you a variety of ways to make an endowment dream come true.

College Ranked 3rd Best in U.S. for "Yield"

U.S. News Releases Study on Liberal Arts Institutions

On February 12, 2008, *U.S. News & World Report* released a study on yield, the percentage of applicants accepted by a university or college who end up enrolling at that institution in the fall. Asking "So, which colleges do students *really* want to go to?" the national weekly surveyed its 100 "top tier" liberal arts schools for the Fall 2006 entering class concerning their admit yields and overall acceptance rates.

Thomas Aquinas College ranked #3 in this list of 100, with a 65% acceptance rate and a 77% yield rate.



Ranking above the College were only the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Naval Academy.

Explaining its findings, *U.S. News* comments, "If a school has a high yield (a large proportion of those admitted enroll), it means that the school is most likely very popular with a top reputation and that the students are highly motivated to go there." By contrast, it continues, "A very low yield means that the school could be a 'safety' or second choice for many of those who apply."

Commenting on Thomas Aquinas College's yield ranking, President Thomas Dillon said, "This is a sign that the College is doing a good job of recruiting applicants well-suited to our unique program of Catholic liberal education. It is also worth noting," he continued, "that the only two schools to out-rank us are military academies, two of the most-sought-after institutions by college-bound students in the country."

IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

Dr. Thomas H. Skrinar – July 14, 2007
Benefactor, father of Suzanne Milton ('81)

Mr. Joseph F. Desmond – August 19, 2007
Friend and benefactor

Mrs. Mary Louise (Goedde) Nolasco ('77) – October 24, 2007
Graduate

Mrs. Georgiana Montalban – November 13, 2007
Friend and wife of Ricardo Montalban

Mrs. Mary Jane Noble – November 2007
Mother of friend and benefactor Lloyd Noble

Mrs. Helen Victoria Zegler – November 2007
Grandmother of employee Michael Zegler

Mr. Arthur Henry Heywood – November 2007
Father of former employee Christine Stanley

Reverend Thomas Pontolillo – December 7, 2007
Friend and benefactor

Reverend Harry Marchosky – December 11, 2007
Former chaplain

Mrs. Pauline Ann Wassell – December 11, 2007
Grandmother of tutor Edward J. Wassell III

Mr. Carl J. Heinz – December 12, 2007
Friend, benefactor, and member of the Legacy Society

His Eminence Alfons Maria Cardinal Stickler, S.D.B. –
December 12, 2007
Friend, Archivist Emeritus of the Vatican Secret Archives

Mrs. Mary Jane Miner – December 22, 2007
Friend and member of the Legacy Society

Mrs. Marina G. Privitelli – December 30, 2007
Friend and benefactor

Mrs. Phyla M. Caldwell – January 9, 2008
Friend and benefactor

Mr. Carl N. Karcher – January 11, 2008
*Friend, benefactor, and member emeritus
of the Board of Governors*

Mr. David J. Altman – January 12, 2008
Friend and benefactor

John David DeLozier, Ph.D. – January 12, 2008
Friend and benefactor

Mr. John Timothy Furlan – February 1, 2008
Father of Timothy J. Furlan ('01)

Mr. Eugene Donohue – February 7, 2008
*Brother of benefactors Sir Daniel Donohue and Rosemary Donohue,
member of the Board of Governors*

Dr. William A. Galeno – February 7, 2008
Friend and member of the Legacy Society

Mr. William F. Buckley, Jr. – February 27, 2008
Friend and benefactor

Mrs. Lorna D'Souza – March 13, 2008
Mother of Karen D'Souza ('08)

Mr. Ezra Brumbach – March 19, 2008
Member of the Legacy Society

Mr. Paul S. Erramouspe – March 27, 2008
*Benefactor, father of Jessica Morey ('03),
Rachel ('06), and Stephanie ('08)*

Helping to End Poverty

Freshman Earns \$10,000 Award from the S.E.VEN Fund

In its inaugural national essay contest, the Social Equity Venture Fund—S.E.VEN Fund—has chosen Thomas Aquinas College freshman Luke Bueche as one of three undergraduate winners for his entry on the topic of “Reversing the Cycles of Poverty: Including the Poor in Networks of Productivity.” The award is accompanied by a \$10,000 prize. The other winners are enrolled at Columbia University and Mount Allison University.

The S.E.VEN Fund is a virtual non-profit entity recently established by entrepreneurs Michael Fairbanks and Andreas Widmer through a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. Their strategy is to “markedly increase the rate of diffusion of enterprise-based solutions to poverty by targeting investment that fosters thought leadership through books, films, and websites; role models...in developing nations; and shaping a new discourse in government, the press, and the academy around private-sector innovation, prosperity, and progressive human values.”

The essay competition spotlights important work that aligns with the Fund’s mission to advance international efforts to help end poverty by connecting all people to networks of productivity. Winners were selected through a competitive review process that included a jury of leading business executives, development experts, and academics.

Essay winners addressed the question: “Poverty can be regarded as a matter of exclusion from networks of productivity, and not simply as having an unequal portion of what is imagined to be a fixed number of economic goods. In that sense, ending worldwide

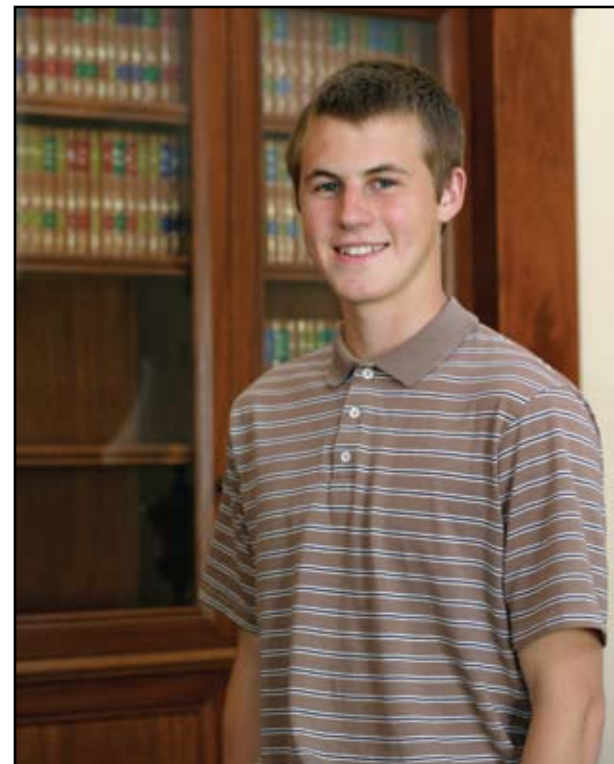
poverty is serious business. Describe enterprise-based solutions to poverty in this context.”

Says Mr. Widmer, “This competition regards innovators and future thought leaders who understand that ending global poverty is serious business. The recipients have all taken an integrative approach to look at poverty from many different angles.”

The abstract of Luke’s essay states:

Poverty, traditionally seen as a shortage of economic goods, is in reality the exclusion of the poor from business and profitability. Foreign aid, dedicated to reversing a shortage of economic goods, is a fallacious solution to poverty. The true solution to poverty will integrate the poor into productive networks. The most efficient and viable solution at present is enterprise-based microfinance institutions. Proven to be successful, microfinance institutions empower the poor, exploit their ingenuity, and dignify their state of life while introducing them into productive business networks. Therefore, it is the best means to reverse poverty and its effects.

Luke Bueche is originally from Shelby Township, Michigan, and was home-schooled through 12th grade. He has participated in speech and debate events, winning several awards, and played forward on his high school basketball team. He also studied Latin and was



awarded two *cum laude* awards for his high scores on the National Latin Exam. Luke plays the piano, as well, and has ranked among the top performers in the annual testing run by the Michigan Music Teachers Association. At the College, Luke continues to be involved in sports and music, and aims to refine his thinking and rhetorical skills. He is also an acolyte and served as Master of Ceremonies during the Easter Triduum at the College.

Regents Plan 2nd Annual Golf Classic

Proceeds to Benefit Financial Aid Fund

On Monday, June 2, 2008, Thomas Aquinas College’s Board of Regents will present the 2nd Annual Thomas Aquinas College Golf Classic. The event will be held at the prestigious and beautiful Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, California. Designed by Jack Nicklaus and the site of Tiger Woods’ Target Challenge Golf tournament, Sherwood Country Club has an international reputation as a challenging but “playable” golf course for every skill level.

The purpose of the Golf Classic is two-fold: first, to raise awareness of the College throughout Southern California; and second, to raise funds for financial aid for deserving students in need of economic assistance to remain at the College. Each year, the College must raise approximately \$3 million in financial aid funding, for all of which it relies on the generosity of devoted friends and benefactors. The Regents, therefore, have undertaken the Golf Classic in order to contribute in a substantial way to this need.

The cost to play is \$1,200 per person, and there are some sponsorships still available. Registration the day of the event will begin at 10:00 a.m., and tee time will be at 11:30 a.m. The day will conclude with refreshments, a buffet dinner, and an awards ceremony. Awards will be presented for low gross team, low net team, individual low net, and individual low gross. There will also be men’s and women’s long drive prize opportunities as well as two hole-in-one, two closest-to-the-pin, and putting contest awards.

James Scanlon, Chairman of the Board of Regents and Chairman and CEO of Scanlon, Guerra, Burke Insurance Brokers in Woodland Hills, says, “This is a wonderful opportunity to come out for a great day of golf at a world-class venue in support of deserving students at Thomas Aquinas College. We are blessed to have this unique institution right here in Ventura County, one that is preparing young men and women extraordinarily well for intellectual and moral leadership in all walks of life. Last year we raised over \$50,000 for these students; this year we hope to double it!”

For information about the Golf Classic or sponsorship opportunities, or to register for the event, please contact Robert Bagdazian at the College at 805-525-4417 or rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu



2nd Annual



*Thomas Aquinas College
Golf Classic*

*Sherwood Country Club
Thousand Oaks, California*

Monday, June 2, 2008

Presented by the Board of Regents of
Thomas Aquinas College

Proceeds to support student scholarships.

For more information, please contact Robert Bagdazian
at rbagdazian@thomasaquinas.edu or 805-421-5927.

Alumna Update

1993 Graduate Covers Pope's Visit to the U.S.

Father John Higgins ('90) was not the only Thomas Aquinas College graduate to have a front-row seat to history during the Holy Father's visit to the United States (see page 2). His fellow graduate Dr. Pia de Solenni of the College's Class of 1993, served as a co-host with Bob Dunning for Sirius Satellite's radio coverage by the Catholic Channel of Pope Benedict XVI's speech at the United Nations. Prior to that talk, Dr. de Solenni also hosted a live, call-in show concerning the pontiff's visit. She says of the experience, "Most, if not all, of the Pope's addresses will have an historical impact; I think this speech contained key ideas that will further develop an international understanding of foreign policy."

An ethicist and theologian, Dr. de Solenni is an expert on life issues, issues relating to women's health, the new feminism, and culture. The owner of Diotima Consulting, she has published articles in *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, *The Washington Post*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *Our Sunday Visitor*, and *National Review Online*. Dr. de Solenni has also appeared on MSNBC, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, CNN, and ABCNews, among others, and she has been quoted by *The Associated Press* and in newspapers nationwide, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*. She also serves on several advisory boards including the Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People of the Archdiocese for Military Services, USA.

In February 2007, Dr. de Solenni was appointed by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as a

citizen member of a delegation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The focus of the conference was the "girl child." She says of her appointment, "I gave input where I could, and I observed the proceedings closely. It was an eye-opening experience to see how ideological and political countries can be. The United States attempted to introduce two resolutions—one on pre-natal and post-natal sex selections (e.g. abortion and female infanticide), the other on forced and early marriage. Based on a deep distrust of the United States because of a belief that it would ban all abortions if allowed (I wish it were so easy!), the first resolution never even made it to the floor, while the second was hotly contested by countries at opposite ends of the spectrum, some because their religious law allows for forced marriage."

Dr. de Solenni's time at the United Nations convinced her of the need for people with good formation to engage in political life. "While it's tempting to want to ignore it," she says, "we can only blame ourselves if we absent ourselves from political life and it yields destructive policies."

This is why she continues to be grateful to her *alma mater* for the formation she received there. "I am glad to see some of my fellow alumni working in the public arena," she adds, "and I hope that more graduates of the College will be interested in applying their formation to more public and professional careers. In particular, I hope we will see more women from the College taking on more public roles in 'every aspect of society.' Naturally, one's family comes first, but some women are both able and willing to take on public roles at different times in their lives. We have been given so many talents, it would be a shame to hide them from ourselves, our families, and our communities, as if we could hide them from God."

When asked about Pope Benedict XVI's understanding of the role of women, Dr. de Solenni recalls, "When he was head of the Congregation for

the Doctrine of the Faith, then-Cardinal Ratzinger published a document titled *On the Collaboration of Men and Women in the World*, in which he specifically states that women have a role *in every aspect of society*. Just this past February, he addressed a conference of the Pontifical Council for the Laity on the anniversary of the publication of his predecessor's apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* saying, 'God entrusts to women and to men, according to the characteristics that are proper to each, a specific vocation in the mission of the Church and in the world.'

While it is clear to Dr. de Solenni that not all women will do the same things or be active in all spheres of life, she nevertheless believes that the contributions of women are important in each one. "If we leave women out," she explains, "we leave out part of what it means to be human. Even our understanding of the Church requires both man and woman: bridegroom and bride."

"It seems to me," she continues, "that we have spent a lot of time trying to prove that women and men can do the same things. Well, now we know that men and women can do just about all of the same things. So, instead of talking about *doing*, I hope the focus is shifting to a discussion of *being*. We need to talk about what being a man or a woman contributes to what we do. Ultimately, it is a question of developing our understanding of metaphysics as it applies to the human person."

After graduating from Thomas Aquinas College in 1993, Dr. de Solenni earned a Sacred Theology Baccalaureate from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Angelicum*) and a Sacred Theology Doctorate, *summa cum laude*, from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome. She was awarded by Pope John Paul II the prestigious 2001 Prize of the Pontifical Academies for her ground-breaking dissertation—an analysis of feminist theories in the light of St. Thomas Aquinas' teachings. She and her husband reside in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Image of Angelic Doctor Graces St. Thomas Hall

Gift Made by Dr. and Mrs. McArthur

On Thursday, April 24, 2008, an impressive statue of the College's patron was unveiled in St. Thomas Hall. The 5-foot bronze image, depicting St. Thomas Aquinas seated and teaching with book in hand, was commissioned by the College's founding president and faculty member, Dr. Ronald P. McArthur, and his wife, Marilyn. It now graces the foyer of the new faculty office building.

On hand for the event was the sculptor, himself, Mr. Charles Kubilos, a resident of the nearby town of Santa Paula. Following an introduction by Mrs. Maria Grant, Chairman of the Board, Mr. Kubilos came forward to remove a draped cloth that had concealed the statue since its arrival and placement in the Hall some days earlier. Members of the Board, friends, faculty, and students assembled for the event expressed admiration for his work with warm applause.

Dr. and Mrs. McArthur then came to the podium to highlight the significance of their gift (see sidebar for Dr. McArthur's remarks), after which the College's Dominican chaplain, Rev. Paul Raftery, O.P., blessed the new statue. The dedication ceremony closed with hymns sung in honor of the Angelic Doctor by the College Choir. A luncheon in honor of the McArthurs followed.

Said President Dillon, "This dedication ceremony was an occasion on which to honor and thank the McArthurs for their generosity and for the untold sacrifices they made in helping to bring Thomas Aquinas College to life. Their gift today," he continued, "is a most fitting one—a sign of their conviction that discipleship to St. Thomas in the intellectual life is the surest way to attain wisdom, and that the imitation of his virtues is an unending path to personal sanctity. It will also be a sign of our own determination to maintain down through the generations our essential mission: Catholic liberal education under the light of the teaching Church, so many of whose teachings have been wonderfully illuminated by her Universal Doctor, our patron."

Dr. McArthur's Remarks



Sculptor Charles Kubilos poses with Dr. and Mrs. McArthur (on either side of the new statue) along with President Dillon and Chairman Grant.

their doctrine from Thomas Aquinas. To follow his leadership is praiseworthy: on the contrary, to depart foolishly and rashly from the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor is something far from our mind and fraught with peril. For, those who apply themselves to the teaching and study of theology and philosophy should consider it their capital duty, having set aside the findings of a fruitless philosophy, to follow St. Thomas Aquinas and to cherish him as their master and their leader.

This college was founded specifically in that discipleship to St. Thomas, the Common Doctor of the universal Church, and this statue is now a fitting sign of the spirit of the College—now radiating upon all who enter this hall, itself named in honor of the Angelic Doctor.

The soul of St. Thomas was perfected with all the virtues, both moral and intellectual; he was, according to the papal bull announcing his canonization, among the very greatest of all the saints. All praise, then, to Charles Kubilos for sculpting this very handsome statue, which expresses at the same time through its penetrating gaze a power of intellect, in the lines of its face an equanimity and peace of soul, and in its posture the charity of the teaching master. Thank you, Mr. Kubilos, for bringing to such a happy completion all we had dared hope when we commissioned the statue.

May the principles and method of St. Thomas Aquinas reign uninterruptedly at Thomas Aquinas College, and may his sanctity continue to enliven us to imitate him in all our words and actions.

Dr. McArthur: Marilyn and I count it both a privilege and a pleasure to have been able to commission this statue. Due to the intelligent design of this building, anyone entering it cannot fail to experience the all-pervading influence of the one in whose name the College was founded. No one with a sound understanding of Catholic higher education can ever over-estimate the importance of St. Thomas Aquinas. Pope Pius XII, himself recapitulating the thoughts of almost every pope after the death of St. Thomas, teaches that:

Those who wish to be true philosophers should take the principles and foundations of

Passing On the Traditions of the Church

1993 Graduate Leads Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter

When John Berg arrived at Thomas Aquinas College in the fall of 1989, few would have considered him a likely candidate for the office of Senior Class Speaker four years later. So limited was his understanding of the program on which he was to embark (“I thought an education meant preparing to get a job”) and of the community in which he was to live (“I thought being Catholic meant going to Mass on Sunday”) that chances were slim he would be a suitable spokesman for his fellow seniors at Commencement. Nevertheless, in the spring of 1993, his friends and classmates did elect him to speak for them. For in the intervening years, John had come to possess, more than most, the intellectual and moral virtue to which they all aspired.

A Transformation of Mind and Heart

Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, John was one of four children. As he recalls, “Though I was raised a Catholic, attended Catholic schools, and practiced the faith, I was not serious at all about my religion.” When his father presented the opportunity to attend Thomas Aquinas College, John resisted, thinking the then-small school with its temporary trailers “just a little too crazy.” He opted instead to attend a large Catholic university in his home state where he would study physics. But it wasn’t long before he found the classroom experience simply too dry. Hoping to be more engaged by the discussion-method classes at the College, he applied and was accepted. Even then, though, the College’s unabashedly Catholic character held little interest for him.

In the course of the next four years, however, John found that not only did his knowledge grow exponentially, so also did his faith. “The College passes on the Faith through uniting it with reason,” he would later say in his Commencement talk. “This rational explication and defense of the doctrines of the Church... were for many of us the first attempt we had ever seen made to defend many doctrines.... The Faith—for the first time, perhaps—could be seen as something coherent, reasonable, and defensible.”

But knowledge alone was not sufficient for the conversion within the Faith that John experienced. As Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman once said, “It is persons which influence us, voices which melt us, and deeds which inflame us. We are not converted by syllogisms.” In the chaplains at the College, the tutors, their wives, and in the upper-classmen, John found just such examples, numerous models of self-sacrifice—of how to *live* the Faith—and they inspired him to want to do the same.

Discerning a Vocation

During the course of his junior year, John began to hear God’s call and to desire “a future in which he

would give all to God.” At the same time, through his studies of St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*, his understanding of the sacraments and the role of priests as “dispensers of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1) increased. So, also, did his love for the Mass, especially what was then called the Old Rite of the Mass.

“At first,” he recalls, “I would tell a friend of mine that I would be a diocesan priest, where the battle really was. He would argue that most did not offer very good formation, but I would say that I would survive... In the end, however, I realized I was too weak; I needed the Old Mass, now called the extraordinary form. I needed all of the support this form offers. It is rich in prayers and gestures and rules, and is made for those who need the extra help to be well-prepared for the graces of the Sacrament.”

With the liturgy now a primary focus, John turned his sights to the newly-formed Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter. “It had been established,” he explains, “as a society of apostolic life only a few years earlier by Pope John Paul II, through the intercession of then Cardinal Ratzinger, who is, therefore, regarded by members of the Fraternity as a kind of ‘founder of our founders.’ Right from the beginning, it was established as a society of pontifical right, which was unprecedented in the history of the Church.”

John was attracted to this new order by its three pillars: its attachment to the See of Peter, as its name betokens; its dedication to the extraordinary form of the Mass and all the sacraments, in parish settings; and its emphasis on the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas as a clear basis for presenting the Faith to believers and unbelievers alike in the modern world. He, therefore, sought entrance to the Fraternity, was accepted, and began his preparation for the priesthood during the summer of 1993, just after graduating from the College.

Path to the Priesthood

John spent his first year of spirituality in the Fraternity’s new seminary in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Having already fulfilled the philosophy requirement at the College, he was sent for the next two years to study theology in Wigratzbad, Germany. He then spent three years completing his theological studies at *Santa Croce*, the *Opus Dei* seminary in Rome, receiving a pontifical licentiate in theology. During this time, he was ordained to the priesthood and did some pastoral work as the first chaplain for the Fraternity’s church in Rome, *San Gregorio dei Muratori*.

Fr. Berg returned to the United States in 2000 to teach dogmatic theology for a year at the Fraternity’s North American seminary, after which he was assigned for the next five years to the parish of St. Stephen the First Martyr in Sacramento, California. One of the parishioners, it turned out, was his former tutor and the founding president of Thomas Aquinas College, Dr. Ron McArthur. “Imagine what it was like,” he says, “to give sermons, knowing he was in the congregation!”

A Tremendous Responsibility

On July 7, 2006, Fr. Berg was elected by the Fraternity’s General Chapter as its third Superior General. His first reaction was one of surprise, and an understandable reluctance. “All of our priests want to be in parishes or seminary formation, not doing administrative duties,” he explains. “And I was fairly young for such responsibilities (though with regard to our order, I am one of the older priests, believe it or not). I was reassured, though, by one of our founders, who told me my youth would be on my side; I would have the energy to do the job. Still, I knew I would have to pray harder for wisdom and prudence.”

Fr. Berg now lives in the order’s general house in Fribourg, Switzerland. He has in his care over 200 priests and 120 seminarians, who serve the Church in over 100 dioceses worldwide. They



Very Rev. John Berg, FSSP ('89) was recently interviewed by Raymond Arroyo of EWTN concerning the *motu proprio*.

are present in dioceses and parishes in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Hungary, Poland, England, Scotland, Nigeria, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Columbia.

It is no surprise, then, that Fr. Berg travels at least two-thirds of the year. “My main duty,” he explains, “is to the priests and seminarians of the Fraternity. I am responsible that they have the means set out by our constitutions—and, therefore, the Church—to achieve holiness. I must ensure that our seminaries (one in Lincoln, Nebraska, and one in Germany) are well-staffed and well-ordered, and I must place our priests in work that will provide them appropriate formation. Then it is my task to contact them frequently, in a fatherly manner. In addition, I make the financial and material decisions for the order with the aid of a general council.”

The Impact of the Motu Proprio

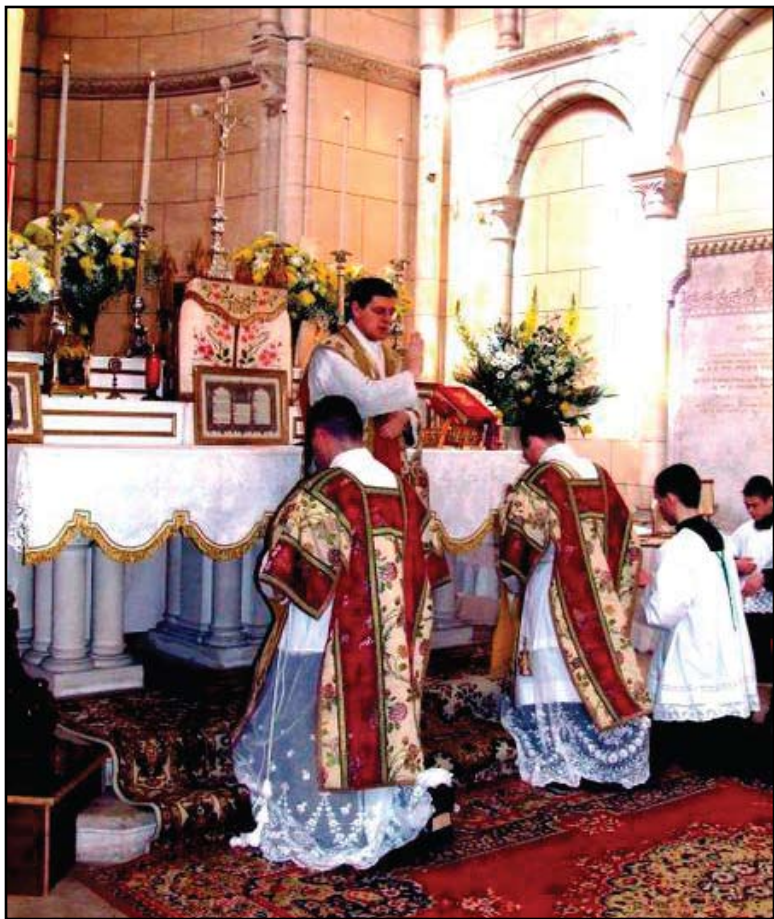
With the promulgation of Pope Benedict XVI’s *motu proprio* in July of 2007, the priests and services of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter are in greater demand than ever before. “Just prior to the *motu proprio* being issued,” recounts Fr. Berg, “we had begun to offer week-long training sessions in the extraordinary form of the Mass and the sacraments at our North American seminary, as demand was already on the rise from priests all around the country.”

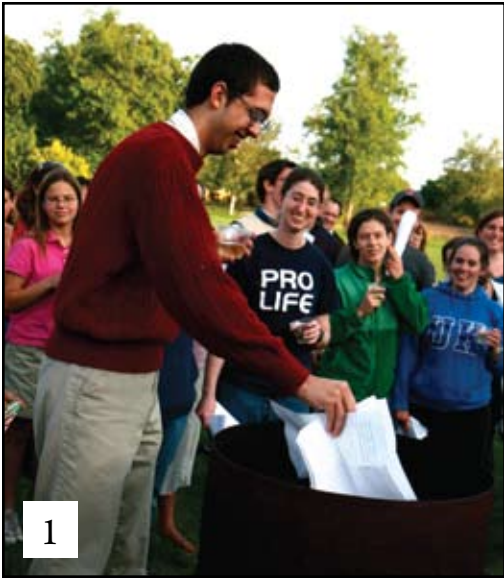
Under Fr. Berg’s direction, the Fraternity has now increased the frequency of these sessions, as many bishops want to make certain that their priests are well-versed in the extraordinary form. “We have now trained over 100 priests,” says Fr. Berg. “They leave often with increased reverence for the Mass, saying that they finally understand various elements of the *Novus Ordo* because they have seen their roots in the extraordinary form.”

In June the Fraternity will release an instructional training DVD, produced in conjunction with the EWTN Global Television Network and endorsed by His Eminence Dario Cardinal Castrillon Hóyos, president of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, which oversees the Fraternity.

Explains Fr. Berg, “For many years, the crisis in the Church has been presented as a catechetical one, or as a matter of communicating better with the world. But I believe the Holy Father is telling us that it is a liturgical problem as much as a catechetical one. Man is not just a mind or soul; he is moved through his senses, through ritual, and what he believes is thereby reinforced. As the preface of Christmas says, man arrives at the invisible through the visible.”

Providence has so disposed it that Fr. Berg now has the opportunity to heed in an eminent way an admonition from his own Commencement talk 15 years ago. When he spoke to his classmates of what lay ahead, he said, “We have a duty to bring to the world the Catholic faith just as we have received it, in part, here. We must show others that knowledge of the Divine does illumine all other knowledge, and that the tenets of the Faith are reasonable... We must also live a moral, Catholic life in all of our dealings with society, and pass on the beautiful traditions of the Church to others in the community in which we live, whether that community be small, as a family, or large, as a town.” Fr. Berg’s community is now as wide as the world.



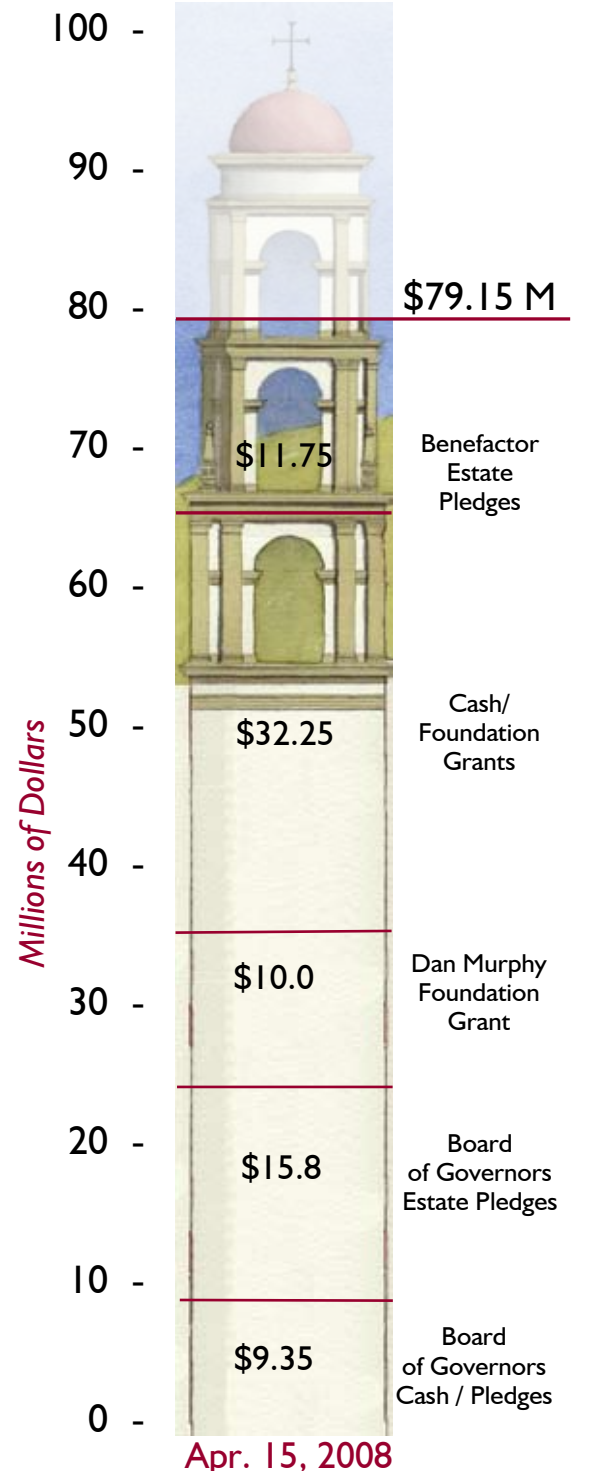


CAMPUS LIFE



1) Seniors gather 'round for the annual "draft-burning party," at which various iterations of their senior theses go up in smoke 2) A view of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel from behind St. Thomas Hall 3) Spanish dancer at the Mardi Gras dance 4) President Dillon gives a tour of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel to members of the senior class 5) Entertainment at the informal party known as *Chez Martin* 6) Scene from an updated version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* 7) Annual faculty/senior softball game

Campaign Update



Calendar of Events

- 2nd Annual Golf Classic June 2
- Alumni Association Dinner June 28
- Summer Seminar Weekend #1 July 11-13
- Summer Seminar Weekend #2 July 18-20
- High School Summer Program July 27 - August 9
- Freshman Orientation August 22
- Covocation August 25

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