

# AQUINAS

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SPRING 2018



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CATHOLIC  
EDUCATION



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Aquinas Magazine Spring 2018

Front cover: Sister John Peter Clarke, O.P., '11  
visits with her students at Overbrook School  
on The Dominican Campus. This year, Sister  
has enrolled in graduate courses at Aquinas  
College, taking an evening class once a week.

**“For even as it is better to enlighten  
than merely to shine, so is it better  
to give to others the fruits of one’s  
contemplation than merely to  
contemplate.”**

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II q.188 a.6







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## Mission Statement

Taking inspiration from St. Dominic and St. Thomas Aquinas, the College exists to serve the Church by transforming lives for the Gospel of Christ.

Aquinas College is a Catholic community of learning in the Dominican Tradition with Christ at its center. The College directs all its efforts to the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and professional formation of the human person in wisdom. Students are formed individually and in Christian community so that the harmonious integration between faith and reason can permeate every dimension of their lives. Immersed in exploring the relationship between human civilization and the message of salvation, the College community embraces the Dominican imperative to preach the Gospel, serve others, and engage culture in truth and charity.

*Transforming lives and culture  
through truth and charity*



# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

“For even as it is better to enlighten than merely to shine, so is it better to give to others the fruits of one’s contemplation than merely to contemplate.” (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II q.188 a.6)

Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote these words in speaking of the grace of preaching and teaching. As a Dominican friar, he lived deeply the mixed life of contemplation and action. Gifted with wisdom and insight into the mysteries of the faith, his life was one of continual prayer, study, and teaching. Many sources recount him seeking—and receiving—the answers to particularly challenging questions at the tabernacle, where he would rest his head or present a manuscript to the Eucharistic Lord. When asked by the Lord what he desired, Thomas’ one answer was, “Nothing but Yourself.”



Our holy patron points out a path for our work at Aquinas College. As an institution of higher education, we seek to form our students in true wisdom. Our motto, *Veritas et Caritas* (Truth and Charity), speaks to our goal of guiding students to seek truth and to grow in charity which is ultimately found in God, who is Truth and Love and calls us to share in his life. Saint Thomas Aquinas provides us with a model of one who sought the Lord constantly in prayer and study, and then gave to others the fruits of that contemplation in his teaching and writing. Filled with zeal, he, like his spiritual father Saint Dominic, desired to bring others to know and love the God who was his all-consuming passion.

This issue of the Aquinas College magazine focuses on service to Catholic schools. You will learn about the Saint Cecilia Normal School which preceded Aquinas College and how that mission of preparation of educators has continued unbroken as an expression of the charism of Saint Cecilia Congregation. You will be introduced to the challenges facing Catholic schools today and how Dominicans approach education. In the examples of our graduates you will see the ways Aquinas students have gone forth to “give to others the fruits of their contemplation.” We also pay tribute to an Aquinas student, adjunct professor, friend and shepherd, our beloved Bishop David R. Choby, eleventh bishop of the Diocese of Nashville, who was called home to God this past summer.

The current academic year marks a particular time of growth and challenge for Aquinas College as we focus our degree programs on preparation of teachers and on arts and sciences. We seek to increase the impact of our Centers for Catholic Education, Faith & Culture, and Evangelization & Catechesis in order to provide non-degree formation opportunities for teachers, administrators, and catechists. Since September, we have been engaged in a strategic planning process to discern how we might best use our resources in service of the Church, both in our local community of Nashville and beyond. We have been in consultation with bishops, superintendents, principals, friends and associates, students and alumni, and various national and local groups engaged in Catholic education and evangelization throughout the country to learn the particular areas of need that will help to inform our planning for the next five years.

**Our students have gone forth with lives transformed so that they might in turn transform culture by the light of the Gospel. Their deep study and prayer are meant to be shared. We ask your prayers, that the light entrusted to us might burn more brightly and spend itself in being given away to others.**

Know of our prayers for you and your family. Please remember us in prayer as well. God bless you.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Mary Agnes, OP". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Sister Mary Agnes Greiffendorf, O.P., '02

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[www.aquinascollege.edu/aquinas-magazine](http://www.aquinascollege.edu/aquinas-magazine).



# THE EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A DREAM

The Saint Cecilia Normal School,  
Precursor of Aquinas College

BY SISTER MARY AGNES GREIFFENDORF, O.P., '02



The Most Reverend William L. Adrian breaks ground for Aquinas Junior College, August 4, 1960

In 1960, Mother Joan of Arc Mayo, O.P., major superior of the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia of Nashville, wrote to the sisters of her community that “the time [was] now ripe” to take a step long-desired and discussed: the establishment of a junior college.<sup>1</sup> This undertaking was seen as a “continuation and expansion” of an educational initiative begun over 30 years earlier in the Saint Cecilia Normal School.<sup>2</sup> The Dominican Sisters had established Saint Cecilia Normal School for the training of its sisters as teachers in 1928, and the institution became affiliated with The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. starting in 1929. It operated until the final class graduated in 1963, when the Congregation’s new Aquinas Junior College assumed and expanded upon the purpose of the original normal school by making its degree programs and services accessible to the wider community. This article explores the founding vision for the Saint Cecilia Normal School and its fulfillment in Aquinas College.

## Dominican Study

Over 800 years ago, Saint Dominic founded an Order of Preachers which would be wholly dedicated to “preaching and the salvation of souls.”<sup>3</sup> He established as an essential means for attainment of this mission the observance of the evangelical counsels (poverty, chastity, and obedience), private and liturgical prayer, the regular life with monastic practices, and

study of sacred truth.<sup>4</sup> Dominicans are exhorted that their study must be assiduous and ordered to the sole end that they might be “useful to the souls of [their] neighbors.”<sup>5</sup>

The Saint Cecilia Congregation of Dominican Sisters has been associated with schools from its

inception. Four sisters came from Somerset, Ohio in August 1860 at the request of Bishop James Whelan, second bishop of Nashville, to establish an academy for girls, later named Saint Cecilia Academy. He desired that this academy might “spread the Faith far.”<sup>6</sup> The early history of the Congregation tells of the high standards of the school and of the regular

**The story of Saint Cecilia Normal School, and ultimately, of Aquinas College, is one of love and sacrifice, of vision and of perseverance.**



study and preparation of the sisters for their teaching. An early superior, Mother Ann Hanlon, desired that the sisters be “always students as well as teachers.”<sup>7</sup> It is also said of this same superior that, “after the direct service of God” in prayer, she held the educational apostolate as of “preeminent importance... next to her heart she cherished the progress of the school and the efficiency of its teachers...she kept the sisters up to the highest standards.”<sup>8</sup> An 1889 advertising brochure for Saint Cecilia Academy noted that “The education of youth is the special *calling* of the Dominican Sisters; to qualify themselves for this high duty is their constant aim.”<sup>9</sup>

## Early Training for Sister Educators

Commitment to the quality of its teachers has been a hallmark of the Saint Cecilia Congregation. As the community grew and accepted invitations to serve in other schools outside of Nashville, the education of the sisters continued to receive careful attention. The community’s first Supervisor of Schools noted that “the superiors of the Congregation have spared no cost to give their sisters the best education possible.”<sup>10</sup>

In the earliest years of the Congregation, the sisters spent the summer months preparing for their classes, with master teachers providing instruction in the various subjects, while “the older Sisters instructed the younger ones.”<sup>11</sup> This apprentice or craft model was common among religious communities prior to the First World War, until in the 1920s when teaching certification became more common.

Beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century, the sisters of Saint Cecilia Congregation increasingly worked toward the attainment of degrees from colleges and universities in various parts of the United States. However, not all of the sisters were able to work towards college degrees, and, in fact, like much of the general population, not all sisters had completed high school before entering the community.<sup>12</sup> At the time there were no Catholic colleges in Tennessee; hence, the cost of enrolling all sisters in college programs was prohibitive.<sup>13</sup>

## A Historic Affiliation

Association with The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. began in the early part of the twentieth century as sisters of the Congregation began studies in its Catholic Sisters College starting in 1913. In 1921, Sister Aloysius Evans was the first member of the community to graduate from Catholic University with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Her experience of studying at the university led her to be “ambitious to have a normal school at the Motherhouse, staffed by the Sisters of the Congregation, for the training of the young Sisters of the Community.”<sup>14</sup>

The superior of the community and several other sisters shared this same dream of an official community normal school, or teacher-training institute. In the summer of 1927, Mother Pius Dougherty gathered a group of twelve sisters who were equipped with the necessary degrees to staff such an institution. The group elected Sister Miriam Walsh to serve as the Director of the Saint Cecilia Normal School, and charged her with a two-fold task of organizing a summer session of studies for the following year and of negotiating with The Catholic University of America for affiliation with the program of courses to be offered.<sup>15</sup>

This plan to establish a normal school for the community and to prepare sisters to staff it is quite extraordinary when one considers the size of Saint Cecilia Congregation. At the time of the community discussions in 1927, the community had fewer than 100 members, and staffed twelve schools (nine in the state of Tennessee, one in Ohio, one in Illinois, and one in Virginia). Larger communities with more resources had earlier established community normal schools, but this small congregation, located in the South where Catholics and vocations were scarce,<sup>16</sup> still endeavored to provide for the needs of teacher education so that its schools might be academically excellent.

The first summer session of the Saint Cecilia Normal School was a great success, with seven courses offered. Sister Miriam

### Sister Aloysius Evans, O.S.D. (1870 – 1927)

Sister Aloysius Evans was the first member of Saint Cecilia Congregation to graduate from The Catholic University of America with a Bachelor of Arts degree; she was 51 years old. Her experience of studying at the university led her to desire a college for the education of the sisters of her own community. She was one of the original twelve sisters gathered in the summer of 1927 to begin formal planning for the Saint Cecilia Normal School. She died unexpectedly of pneumonia in December of 1927, and never taught in the normal school that she had so greatly desired for the Congregation.



Sister Aloysius Evans, 1906. Photo courtesy of Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, Tennessee





Beginning in the 1920s, Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia were sent to study for graduate degrees with the purpose of serving as future faculty for the desired normal school. Pictured here are the three graduates of George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville.

promptly went to work on her second task, departing for Washington, D.C. in January of 1929. A letter of Reverend Leo L. McVay, Secretary of the Committee on Affiliation at Catholic University, to Monsignor Edward A. Pace, the Vice-Rector, recalled that, "Sister Miriam of Saint Cecilia's Normal School, Nashville, Tennessee, came to the University and consulted Dr. Deferrari concerning the possibilities of having a Normal School conducted by the Dominican Sisters of Nashville, Tennessee, affiliated to the Catholic University."<sup>17</sup> Dr. Roy J. Deferrari was at that time the Director of the Summer Session at the Sisters College and a member of the Committee on Affiliation. Sister Miriam, along with several other sisters of the Congregation, had attended the Catholic Sisters College and was a former pupil of Dr. Deferrari.<sup>18</sup>

In response to Sister Miriam's visit and request, Fr. McVay communicated that the university was exploring the possibility of normal school and junior college affiliation, but that definitive plans had not been made. The university had formal programs to affiliate seminaries, high schools, novitiate high schools, and colleges.<sup>19</sup> The affiliation program aimed to help improve the quality of Catholic schools and to provide support within the framework of a Catholic philosophy of education. This mutually supportive relationship was viewed as an early form of accreditation.<sup>20</sup>

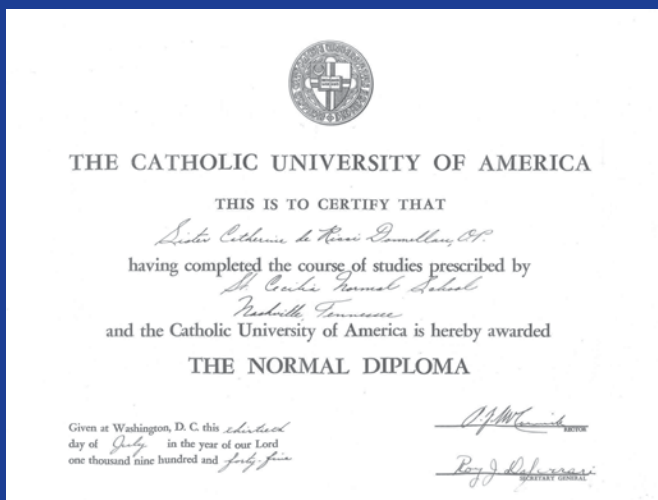
Since guidelines for normal school and junior college affiliation were not yet in existence, Sister Miriam then asked if the school could be "tentatively affiliated."<sup>21</sup> The Committee on Affiliation agreed to grant tentative affiliation to the Saint Cecilia Normal School for the summer of 1929, and stated that credits received through the normal school courses would "be recognized by the Catholic University of America as of credit-bearing value toward the academic degrees of undergraduate collegiate rank offered by the University."<sup>22</sup> Application papers and further guidance were promised in the coming month.

When the application papers did not arrive, Sister Miriam contacted the rector of Catholic University directly, asking to have a meeting with him to explain the request for affiliation.<sup>23</sup> The rector, Fr. James H. Ryan, replied to her request by arranging for her to meet not only with him, but with the entire Committee on Affiliation.<sup>24</sup> Dr. Deferrari met with Sister Miriam in advance of the Committee meeting and greeted her with a humorous, "My, but you are getting ambitious down there."<sup>25</sup> Sister Miriam also met in advance with the rector, who gave his support in their private meeting.<sup>26</sup> In an interview years later, Sister Miriam recounted the story related to her that after the sisters had left the meeting with the Affiliation Committee (which had evidently been somewhat inactive of late), the Vice-Rector said, "Well, one thing the ladies did, they stirred up this Affiliation Committee."<sup>27</sup>

Due to Sister Miriam's initiative and persistence, Saint Cecilia Normal School became the first institution of its kind to be affiliated with The Catholic University of America. Since the university accepted the credits earned through the normal school, the sisters' coursework became transferrable to other

### Saint Cecilia Normal School Diplomas

Beginning in 1939, Saint Cecilia Normal School issued diplomas from The Catholic University of America to its graduates. The *Annals of Saint Cecilia Academy and Motherhouse* for 1939 note that the summer session concluded on August 3 of that year, with five sisters receiving certificates as the first graduates of the normal school. The program from the day showed the ceremony beginning and ending with a hymn and including an address by the major superior. During the following years the same formal ceremony was conducted for the graduates of the Saint Cecilia Normal School. Between 1939 and 1963, 116 sisters graduated from the Saint Cecilia Normal School.



Saint Cecilia Normal School Diploma, 1945  
Diploma courtesy of Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives,  
Nashville, Tennessee



## An Educational Pioneer: Sister Miriam Walsh, O.P. (1886 – 1971)



Shortly after entering the community in 1907, Sister Miriam was assigned to a classroom, over the years teaching students from third grade through high school, and in two schools serving simultaneously as principal and teacher.

From 1928 until 1963, she served as founder, director, and instructor of the Saint Cecilia Normal School. The author of her necrology considered Sister Miriam's greatest achievement to have been the establishment of the Saint Cecilia Normal School, noting that she "endeared herself to the sisters by her keen interest in their studies and the efforts she made to provide educational opportunities for them."

She was appointed the community's first Supervisor of Schools in 1933, a position which she held for 31 years. In addition to her educational contributions, Sister Miriam Walsh served for almost 40 years as Secretary General for Saint Cecilia Congregation, during which time she began the archives of the congregation and catalogued all materials from the earliest days of the community.

Photograph of Sister Miriam Walsh, O.P., undated. Photo courtesy of Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

Catholic and non-Catholic universities, permitting the sisters to complete bachelor's degrees at other institutions following the two-year normal program at the Motherhouse.

Beginning in 1939, Saint Cecilia Normal School classes were offered during the academic year in addition to summers. Instructors included sisters of the congregation, priests, and other lay and religious instructors qualified in their fields.<sup>28</sup> The normal school operated at the Motherhouse of Saint Cecilia Congregation, which also housed the all-girls Saint Cecilia Academy until 1957, providing the sisters in the normal school with the benefit of doing practice teaching in the elementary grades at Saint Cecilia Academy.<sup>29</sup>

Since the Saint Cecilia Normal School diploma was accepted for teacher certification by the State of Tennessee,<sup>30</sup> the requirements for the curriculum were revised from time to time to accommodate new regulations from the Tennessee Department of Education, as well as the needs of the particular group of sisters and the institutions to which they would be sent for their continued studies.<sup>31</sup> From 1943 to 1960, the curriculum generally required 60 to 66 hours of coursework.

## A New Venture: Saint Cecilia Normal School Becomes Aquinas Junior College, 1961

In her 1959 report sent to the Committee on Affiliation, Sister Miriam wrote that "[p]lans are being considered for the opening of a Junior College on the same campus as the new high school. The Normal School will then merge with the Junior College." The General Council of Saint Cecilia Congregation had approved of this plan in December of 1958,<sup>32</sup> and the sisters had sought permission from the Bishop of Nashville as early as 1951.<sup>33</sup> During the 1960 site visit of the Catholic University Affiliation Committee to the Saint Cecilia Normal School, Mother Joan of Arc and Sister Miriam elaborated on their plans of opening a junior college for lay women on their existing Harding Road campus, which already was the site of Overbrook (Elementary) School and the recently relocated Saint Cecilia Academy.

In the fall of 1961, Aquinas Junior College opened to its first students, which included 50 nursing students from Saint Thomas School of Nursing,<sup>34</sup> 13 sisters, and 5 lay women.<sup>35</sup> As the sisters were in various stages of their normal school training, they were granted Saint Cecilia Normal School diplomas up until 1963. The closing of the Saint Cecilia Normal School meant that young sisters entering the congregation would attend Aquinas Junior College and receive an Associate of Arts degree for their two years of study. With this degree, the sisters or lay students could receive a two-year teaching certificate from the State of Tennessee that could be renewed as needed until a bachelor's degree was earned, at which point a professional license would be issued.<sup>36</sup>

The transition from the Saint Cecilia Normal School to Aquinas Junior College was the fruition of the original community ambition: to provide a place for the education of its youngest members. Yet now, the congregation would not only be educating its own, but fulfilling an evangelizing mission of providing a Catholic higher education for the wider community<sup>37</sup> as well as granting its own degrees. Sister Miriam expressed it best in a letter to Dr. Deferrari: "With the transfer of the affiliation of the Saint Cecilia Normal School to Aquinas Junior College, I shall have the privilege of saying, MISSION ACCOMPLISHED."<sup>38</sup>

In 1930, Rev. Leo McVay, Secretary of the Committee on Affiliation at Catholic University, wrote to Sister Miriam, "I hope that out of the experiment of the tentative affiliation of Saint Cecilia's Normal School something of a very permanent and helpful nature, not only to your Community but to all our teaching Communities will emerge."<sup>39</sup> While it is difficult to know the full impact of these early negotiations for other communities, many junior colleges and teacher training institutions did affiliate with The Catholic University of America following the solidification of the program requirements in 1939. For instance, by 1954 there were 43 religious community normal schools affiliated with The Catholic University of America.<sup>40</sup>



Aquinas Junior College reached a new milestone in 1994, when approval was given to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts. With this change to a four-year institution, Aquinas College could now provide a complete program of educator preparation to sisters and lay students. Since 2012, the college has offered graduate degrees in education as well, and students may work towards secondary as well as elementary teaching licensure.

The story of Saint Cecilia Normal School, and ultimately, of Aquinas College, is one of love and sacrifice, of vision and of perseverance. Here we see how sister-teacher formation was handled by a particular community, as well as the often hidden story of the many sacrifices endured by the religious sisters

of this country who, filled with zeal for the spread of the Gospel, strove to make themselves more fit for their ministry. In particular, it tells of one period in the life of a small, southern Dominican congregation that had a dream and strove mightily for its accomplishment for the glory of God and the good of souls.

Today, that same mission continues. 🏰

*Sister Mary Agnes Greiffendorf, O.P. is a graduate of Aquinas College, where she received her teaching degree in 2002. This article is an abbreviated version of a paper submitted for doctoral coursework in Catholic Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at The Catholic University of America.*

## The Legacy Continues

Since 1961, Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia Congregation in their earliest years of religious formation have attended Aquinas College. Here, the sisters take courses in theology and philosophy, and work toward the attainment of graduate or undergraduate degrees in education.

From their studies at Aquinas College the sisters are prepared to serve in the schools staffed by the congregation around the country and world. Today, the sisters serve in over 50 schools in 30 dioceses in 7 countries, teaching at all levels from pre-kindergarten through college.

Since 1860, the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia have been dedicated to the apostolate of Catholic education.

To learn more about the sisters, visit [www.nashvilledominican.org](http://www.nashvilledominican.org).



<sup>1</sup> Mother Joan of Arc Mayo to Community, 23 January 1960. Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>2</sup> Julie Hollabaugh, "Aquinas Offers Associate Arts Degree," *The Nashville Tennessean*, November 24, 1961.

<sup>3</sup> "Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers," in *Saint Dominic: Biographical Documents*, ed. Francis C. Lehner (Washington, DC: The Thomist Press, 1964), 212.

<sup>4</sup> James A. Weisheipl, "The Place of Study in the Ideal of Saint Dominic," (August 30, 1960). Accessed January 15, 2018. <http://opcentral.org/resources/2012/08/23/the-place-of-study-in-the-ideal-of-st-dominic/>

<sup>5</sup> "Primitive Constitutions," 212.

<sup>6</sup> Mother Frances Walsh, *A Short Sketch of the Foundation and Growth of Saint Cecilia Congregation* (n.p.: Nashville, 2001), 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>9</sup> Saint Cecilia Academy, *Prospectus, Saint Cecilia Academy, Mt. Vernon, Nashville, Tenn. for Young Ladies*. (n.p.: Nashville, 1889), Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>10</sup> Sister Miriam Walsh, *A Brief History of the Origin and Development of the Saint Cecilia Congregation of Dominican Sisters*. (n.p.: Nashville, 1935), 62.

<sup>11</sup> Sister Marie Adelaide Hovious, *History of the Schools Conducted by the Dominican Sisters of the Saint Cecilia Congregation in the Diocese of Nashville, Tennessee* (Master's Thesis, DePaul University, 1960), 18.

<sup>12</sup> Sister Mary Antonia Durkin noted in her 1926 dissertation *The Preparation of the Religious Teacher: A Foundational Study* (The Catholic University of America) that around 50% of Americans at the time had not continued formal education beyond sixth grade. The meeting minutes of the General Council of Saint Cecilia Congregation for June 29, 1916 state that the Council decided not to accept to the Novitiate those who had not completed Grammar School.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>16</sup> Sister Miriam Walsh, *A Brief History*, 62.

<sup>17</sup> Leo L. McVay to Edward A. Pace, 18 March 1930. The American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives, The Catholic University of America (Program of Affiliation Records, Box 1, Folder 1), Washington, DC.

<sup>18</sup> Sister Marie Adelaide Hovious, *History of the Schools*, 59.

<sup>19</sup> Saint Cecilia Academy was affiliated with The Catholic University of America beginning in 1915, and the Saint Cecilia Congregation novitiate high school was affiliated with CUA in 1920.

<sup>20</sup> For more information on the historical development and ends of the Program of Affiliation see Rita Watrin, *The Founding and Development of the Program of Affiliation of the Catholic University of America: 1912 - 1939* (The Catholic University of America Press: Washington, DC, 1966).

<sup>21</sup> Leo L. McVay to Edward A. Pace, 18 March 1930.

<sup>22</sup> Leo L. McVay to Sister Miriam Walsh, 1 May 1929. Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>23</sup> Sister Marie Adelaide Hovious, *History of the Schools*, 57.

<sup>24</sup> Roy J. Deferrari to Sister Miriam Walsh, 17 November 1930. Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>25</sup> Sister Marie Adelaide Hovious, *History of the Schools*, 59.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>28</sup> In 1929, the sisters had an Introduction to Journalism course offered by an editor of the *Nashville Banner*. This course is of particular interest in showing the creativity and openness of the sisters to any studies that would advance the good of the schools and

# MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

## Themes in Catholic Schools in the United States

BY SISTER JOHN MARY FLEMING, O.P., '83



**T**he development of Catholic education and schools is one of the best stories the Catholic Church in the United States can tell. And the truth is, the story is not over; it is ongoing. This is a story that is not without its challenges. In the past few years a robust national conversation has developed related to the challenges of Catholic education in our country. This discussion about challenges has coalesced around four main topics:

- 1) Funding and governance,
- 2) Catholic identity in the schools,
- 3) Outreach to students who are Latino, underserved, or living in poverty, and
- 4) Formation of future leaders, teachers, and parents.

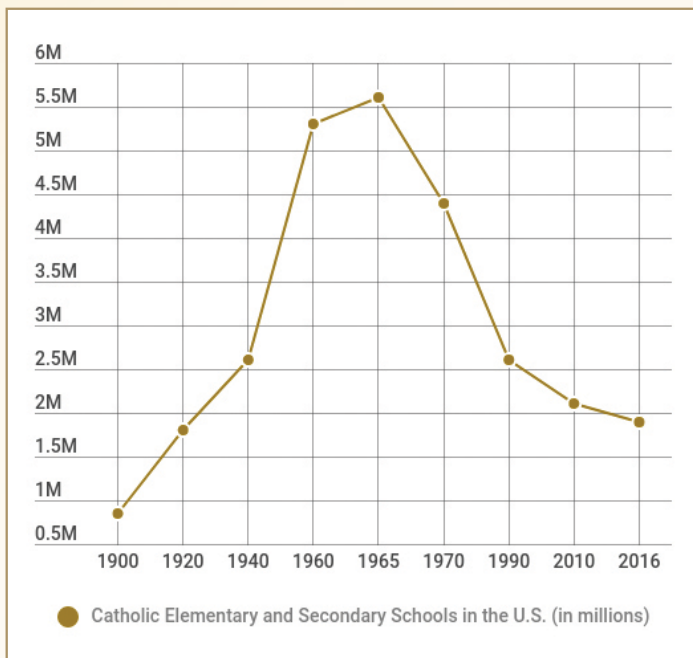
One of the most pressing topics, and the focus of this article, is the formation of future leaders, teachers, and parents.

Catholic school K through 12 enrollment peaked in 1965 with approximately 5.6 million students.<sup>1</sup> Although present enrollment has declined to 1.9 million students, Catholic

schools are still the largest private school provider in the United States. The decline in enrollment is part of a larger demographic shift in the overall Catholic population that has been ongoing in the United States. In 1950, 76% of all Catholics in the United States lived in the Northeast and portions of the Midwest. The majority of churches and schools were built in these two areas of the country in order to accommodate the needs of the Catholic majority living there. Between 1950 and 2010, about a 60-year period, the Catholic population in the United States has moved away from the Northeast and Midwest and is now almost evenly divided at 25% across the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West of the United States.<sup>2</sup> The net result is that Catholic parishes and schools are closing and merging in one part of the country, while new churches and schools need to be built in other parts of the country.

Catholic schools are a vital aspect of the Church's mission to preach the Gospel. As such, they are important to the future and vitality of the Church. It would be easy to conclude that declining enrollment and financial strain are the only major realities facing Catholic schools. Declining enrollment is, in reality, a measurable sign of deeper challenges facing the viability of our Catholic schools.





## The New Evangelization

The focus of the New Evangelization provides an opportunity to think in fresh, creative ways about the Catholic culture in schools. One recent study put it this way:

A new evangelization is needed...that emphasizes the core convictions of Catholicism, reclaims the basic truths of the faith, and develops a Catholic worldview in a way that modern families can understand and embrace...A Catholicism fully understood, a Christianity fully realized, will lead adults, we believe, to a more robust participation in parish life, including enrollment of their children in Catholic schools.<sup>3</sup>

Catholic schools can provide a free and inviting space to support conversion, to touch hearts, and to inspire parents, students, and teachers to reclaim the faith. Strong and faith-filled teachers, administrators, and parents can take active roles in helping schools become intentional environments for learning who Jesus Christ is and for fostering a constant deepening of the faith for parents, teachers, and students alike.

## Formation of Future Leaders and Teachers

In recent conversations about faith formation of teachers, administrators, and parents, a working group of the Committee on Catholic Education at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stressed that it seems the Church has tried to engage people instructionally in the parish and schools who may not be disposed or prepared to meet personally the Lord Jesus.

The working group spoke of the Five Stages of Catechesis found in the *General Directory for Catechesis*: Pre-Evangelization, Initial Announcement of the Gospel, Initiatory Catechesis, Mystagogy or Post-Baptismal Catechesis, and Permanent or Continuing Catechesis. These stages give an insight into the present difficulty facing schools and parishes. Over many years, it seems catechetical instruction has *assumed* that people are prepared to be catechists simply because they have been baptized. In a similar manner, parishes and schools often begin their catechetical programs with the assumption that participants are at Stage Five, that they already have a relationship with Jesus Christ. We know that this is often not the case and that many children, parents, and teachers do not know Jesus Christ or how to share the Gospel of Jesus *with each other*.

Also, it would seem discipleship or accompaniment should begin with the first stage of pre-evangelization by introducing Jesus to those who are in the parish and schools. It must be reiterated that the mission of the Catholic school is the same as that of the Church: Go, make disciples of Jesus Christ; a school accomplishes this as a school, that is, a place where learning takes place.

Clarity of vision and strong leaders formed in the faith are critical to establishing a rich Catholic culture in the Catholic school. The document *The Catholic School* exhorts, “By their witness and behavior teachers are of first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is, therefore, indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision.”<sup>4</sup>

Being academically excellent is absolutely necessary but in and of itself not sufficient. The schools must be an integrated atmosphere that is both faith-filled and academic. This approach is deeply respectful of the human person and helps to make the Catholic school a rich and unique learning environment. The document *The Catholic School* once again highlights the critical role of teachers in creating this environment. It states, “The achievement of this specific aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on the subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there. The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on teachers.”<sup>5</sup>

Faith formation should include both the cognitive and affective domains. This might include individual formation in prayer, sacramental life, Scripture, doctrine, and an understanding of the integrated nature of faith and reason as it is expressed in an educational environment. Formation of this kind should include pastors, administrators, teachers, and all those serving in Catholic schools.



Creating interest in and incentive for formation is critical to long-term viability and success in the schools. In addition to programs and training, there should be a particular emphasis on the sacramental and spiritual lives of the teachers, catechists, administrators, and parents. Opportunity for retreats, faith-sharing, and reception of the sacraments can be centered around education talks, study of the Church documents, and community-building that give teachers the spiritual and intellectual tools to create an atmosphere in their school in which the faith is expressed and welcomed.

Some dioceses have partnerships with associations, academic institutes, and Catholic higher education to offer formation to teachers and staff. In other dioceses the bishops, pastors, and

principals are actively engaged in identifying and forming present and future leaders in the schools. Building for the future with an intentional vision of what a faith-filled school environment looks like takes preparation, planning, and investment.

The National Catholic Educational Association, at the request of its membership, conducted a qualitative study about the challenges facing Catholic schools in the future.<sup>6</sup> The findings of this research corroborate the findings of the previous study cited regarding the New Evangelization. Two of the three leading issues that emerged included Catholic identity and the “cultivation and preparation of the next generation of Catholic leaders.”

## Summary

The Congregation for Catholic Education has stated that “Catholic schools are at the heart of the Church.”<sup>7</sup> They are a vital aspect of the Church’s mission to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and as such are important to the future and vitality of the Church in the United States.

Because they are vital and important, it is critical to support new efforts to develop and form strong, faith-filled leaders and teachers at the elementary and secondary levels of Catholic education. Integrated faith formation for all involved in the mission of Catholic education is part of the New Evangelization.

The Catholic school should reach out to parents as partners in the education of their children. Supporting the family and finding new ways to catechize families as part of educating children is also a part of the New Evangelization.

Our Catholic schools are a unique and rich blessing to the Church. They receive and offer hope to families and to diverse populations of Catholic children who attend them. Within the context of the New Evangelization, Catholic schools are needed now more than ever. 🇺🇸

*Sister John Mary Fleming, O.P., ‘83 serves as the Executive Director of the Secretariat for Catholic Education, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. She has served as Director of Education for Saint Cecilia Congregation and taught Canon Law on the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. She has been an administrator and teacher in several of the congregation’s schools across the country over the past 25 years.*



Are you attending the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Convention & Expo in Cincinnati?

Sister John Mary Fleming, O.P. and Sister Mary Agnes Greiffendorf, O.P. present “Teachers and Leaders: Formed for Mission”

Tuesday, April 3, 2018  
11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
NCEA 2018 Cincinnati

The session will explore the elements of Catholic school teacher formation and provide resources and guidance for Catholic school leaders in supporting the work of teacher formation at the local level.

<sup>1</sup> Catholic school enrollments in the U.S. peaked during the 1964-1965 school year at approximately 5.6 million students. 1999-2000 school year enrollment was slightly over 2.5 million. 2014 enrollment came in slightly under 2 million. See <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/k-12/index.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> Melissa Cidade, “The Catholic Church in the United States: Where We’ve Been, Where We Are, and Where We’re Headed,” *Momentum* (November/December 2013): 7-10.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald J. Nuzzi, James M. Frabutt, and Anthony C. Holter, *Faith, Finances, & the Future: The Notre Dame Study of U.S. Pastors* (Notre Dame, IN: Alliance for Catholic Education Press, 2008), 54-55.

<sup>4</sup> Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School* (1977), art. 78.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 43.

<sup>6</sup> NCEA Executive Summary of the 2013-2014 Qualitative Study.

<sup>7</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), art. 11.



# THE GIFT OF TEACHING

Reflections on a Dominican Education BY KESHA WALL, '14



I have heard that teaching is both gift and mission, but it was only after I completed my Master of Education in Teaching and Learning degree that I fully understood that. Before, teaching was a job; I did love it. I made plans, showed up for class, and taught students. Did I want students to learn the causes of the American Revolution? Yes. Did I want a gaggle of sentence-diagramming lovers? Who wouldn't? But I realized it wasn't enough. I wanted more.

Aquinas College's School of Education mission statement for the M.Ed. program states, "Individuals... [will be enabled] to bring the message of salvation to bear on ethical, social, political, religious, and cultural issues..."

While classes for my license prepared me to teach content, my master's classes at Aquinas prepared me to teach children—children who are made in the image of Christ.

The first class was Education in the Dominican Tradition. I had worked with a dozen sisters, and I thought this class was going to be an in-depth study of Saint Dominic. Instead, one of the main goals of this course was to share how important teachers are.

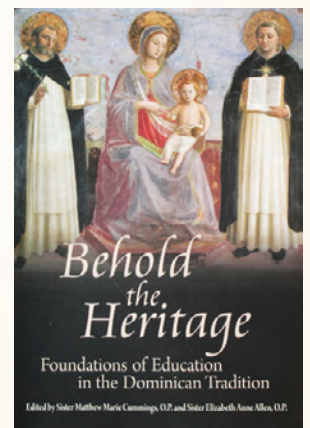
I had always heard that parents were the primary educators of children. In *Behold the Heritage*, this idea is shared many times: "[Parents] must be recognized as the primary and principal educators."<sup>1</sup> This idea is repeatedly emphasized: "The family comes first in being responsible for the education of its children."<sup>2</sup>

These are only two of the many examples in Church documents that speak of the importance of parents. Was I important as a teacher? The Church affirms this as well: "Lay teachers must be profoundly convinced that they share in the sanctifying, and therefore educational, mission of the Church; they cannot regard themselves as cut off from the ecclesial complex."<sup>3</sup>

I was important to my school community! What struck me most in this graduate course was just how much importance the Church sees in education. I never thought the Vatican was writing about education. I loved learning this!

I read Church writings on the importance of technology as a good tool in the classroom, and we discussed examples from Saint Thomas Aquinas' works—specifically that students learn best by doing, and not just through reading. Once again, I had no idea all of these important leaders in the Church had time to think about how an educator, and a lay one at that, should think of herself. This was eye opening, and because of this class, my purpose as a teacher was completely renewed.

The M.Ed. program at Aquinas was also practical. I had a class in



Available on Amazon

**"Lay teachers must be profoundly convinced that they share in the sanctifying, and therefore educational, mission of the Church."**



modes of instruction and one on interpreting data. Even that class, *Data-Driven Decisions in Education*, taught us how to look at standardized test scores and take a student's *individual* circumstances into account.

One of the last classes was Human Dignity and Diversity in Education. This class taught me how I need to focus more intentionally on each student. We discussed learning styles and temperament. We heard from adults from different cultures and how each viewed education. We were told to get to know each student's family.

Sister Elizabeth Anne lived the words of Saint Thomas. She didn't just use texts, but had us "do." We also read; I was assigned a nonfiction book about a young girl with cerebral palsy, as well as a fiction novel about a fifth grade girl who also had CP. I had to present how the world saw these two individuals and how they were treated at schools. I now teach the fiction novel to my fifth graders. We talk about the dignity of all people, and the students are learning how we each have gifts to share, even those whom society marks as "disabled."

We also went to visit Room In the Inn<sup>4</sup>, the "doing" that Thomas Aquinas mentioned. True confession time—I did not want to go. We were to go to the shelter in downtown Nashville and paint with residents. This was very out of my comfort zone, and I truly thought about playing sick. The thought of speaking with homeless people terrified me, but I am forever grateful that my conscience told me to go and I listened.

The residents at Room In The Inn were just like I am. I was able to speak to a few men and women about their experiences. Two were college educated and had once been gainfully employed and living in homes, until medical hardships caused them to lose everything. The residents we worked with were appreciative and friendly. My classmates and I thought this

was the most important thing we had done in the master's program; we saw dignity in others and saw how one small act of kindness made a difference.

As a teacher, I want my students to know the difference between there, their, and they're. But, I now have a new purpose for my students: I want them to see the dignity in every person.

As I write this, my class is almost finished with the book about the girl with cerebral palsy. They are appalled at how she was treated. Reading this novel has fostered important conversations about compassion and dignity. One student told me that before reading this book she was afraid of people in wheelchairs, but now she knows not to be afraid.

My master's education at Aquinas equipped me with information I needed as a teacher. However, what I believe the program did best was prove to me (first through Church writings, and later through hands-on experiences in my own community) that educators are important. It taught me to value each soul with whom I am entrusted. I am not just in education to impart knowledge, but I am there to make sure students know that they are good, and that there is goodness in others.

One Dominican educator writes,

If the curriculum does not come alive in the classroom, it will remain sterile, incapable of either exciting or transforming. Faculty members must make the ideas and values embodied in the curriculum their own and communicate them to students with dedication and expertise, love and compassion. When they reach out to students in this way, they model what it means to be an educated person, how academic excellence and spiritual values can be one in seeking truth and serving others.<sup>5</sup>

I was taught the importance of loving my students, and I heard, "I love you all," from many teachers in the master's program as each course ended. It made an impact upon me. I hope that now when I say, "I love you all," to my students, they feel it and will share it with others. 🙏

*Kesha Wall, M.Ed., '14 teaches language arts and social studies at Overbrook School, where she also mentors new teachers. Kesha studied at the University of Utah before completing her teaching license and M.Ed. through Aquinas College. She and her husband Jon have chosen to educate their children in schools of the Dominican Campus, both Overbrook School and St. Cecilia Academy.*

<sup>1</sup>Pope Paul VI, "On Evangelization in the Modern World," in *Behold the Heritage: Foundations of Education in the Dominican Tradition*, ed. Sister Matthew Marie Cummings, O.P. and Sister Elizabeth Anne Allen, O.P. (Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2012), 9.

<sup>2</sup>Congregation for Catholic Education, "Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines," in *Behold the Heritage: Foundations of Education in the Dominican Tradition*, 215.

<sup>3</sup>Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, "Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith," in *Behold the Heritage: Foundations of Education in the Dominican Tradition*, 97.

<sup>4</sup>Room In The Inn is a Nashville-based organization that "provide[s] programs that emphasize human development and recovery through education, self-help and work, centered in community and long term support for those who call the streets of Nashville home." (Room In The Inn mission statement, <https://www.roomintheinn.org/mission-history-values>).

<sup>5</sup>Father Philip A. Smith, O.P. "A Dominican Philosophy of Education," in *Behold the Heritage: Foundations of Education in the Dominican Tradition*, 272, emphasis added.



# EDUCATION IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION

BY SISTER MATTHEW MARIE CUMMINGS, O.P., '83

One of the traditions in Dominican education is to speak of education as related to the four pillars of Dominican life: Prayer, Study, Community, and Service or Apostolate. While doing so leaves the reader with a rich view of Dominican education, the pillar analogy falls short. The pillars fail to show how integrated these four elements need to be in order to demonstrate the richness of a Dominican education.

Perhaps it is time for a complementary view of Dominican education. What about looking at Dominican education through the facets of the ancient prayer in honor of Saint Dominic, the *O Lumen*?<sup>1</sup> In reflecting on this beautiful prayer one can easily see a pattern for life. If it can be considered a pattern for life, perhaps it also can be considered a pattern for Dominican education.

Let us briefly look at each facet of this prayer.

## Light of the Church

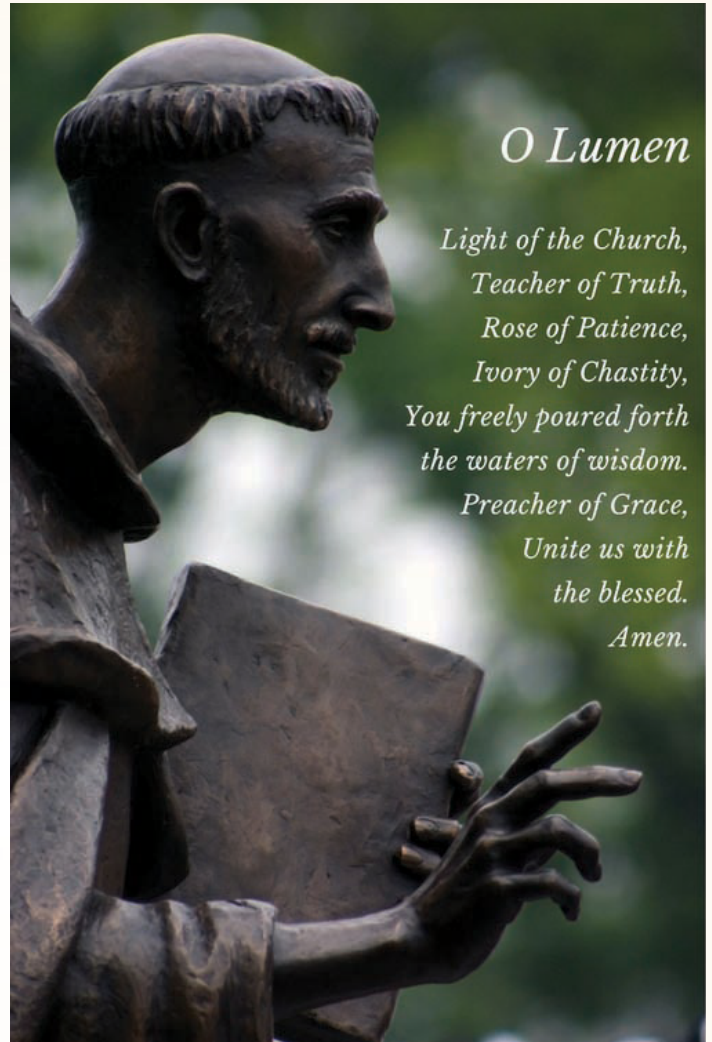
Many sources refer to Saint Dominic as “*in medio ecclesiae*” – in the midst of the Church. One could say that he not only was a light to the Church, but also was enlightened by the Church. A Dominican education should also be enlightened by the Church, especially by the Word of God and the Sacraments. The education received is to be unto salvation and in service to the kingdom of God.

## Doctor of Truth

Here one cannot resist speaking of the healing work of education. Some translations of the prayer refer to Saint Dominic as “Teacher of Truth,” but “Doctor of Truth” reveals the healing work of education. Father Vivian Boland, O.P. states of Saint Thomas Aquinas, “He was himself a good teacher and his preferred analogy for what the teacher does is the work of the medical doctor. Just as the medic cannot replace nature but can assist it in various ways, so the teacher cannot replace the student’s intellectual processes but can assist them in various ways.”<sup>2</sup> We speak the Truth to each student, helping each one to grasp that the Truth in a way that is possible for the individual; just as a doctor treats each individual patient.

## Rose of Patience

Certainly education requires patience, and not just from the teacher! This title should be looked at through the lens of some questions. When is the appropriate time for a certain lesson? What will be the best way for instruction to occur? Which learners might need a different approach or a different time of instruction? What is necessary for the salvation of each soul?



## *O Lumen*

*Light of the Church,  
Teacher of Truth,  
Rose of Patience,  
Ivory of Chastity,  
You freely poured forth  
the waters of wisdom.  
Preacher of Grace,  
Unite us with  
the blessed.  
Amen.*

## Ivory of Chastity

Imitating Dominic’s virtue of chastity allows us to have purity of intention in our work of education. It also guides us in a purity of message. We are not in the work of education, specifically Catholic education, to share our own knowledge and greatness. Rather, our goal is to help make the Truth, Who is Christ, be more fully known and loved. That is the guiding principle: that all should be for the love of God. Ivory is an enduring substance and so is the Word of God. The Gospel message must be the enduring foundation upon which a Dominican education is set.

## You freely pour forth the waters of Wisdom

Saint Thomas Aquinas famously taught that the highest vocation is “to contemplate and to give to others the fruits of our contemplation.”<sup>3</sup> Here is where, perhaps, one sees how

truly integrated the four pillars of prayer, study, community, and service are in a Dominican education. We cannot give what we do not have. Each of these pillars helps to form us and fill us so that we can be of service to others. This reflects the beautiful unity of gift and mission: we have received so that we can give. We have received the gift of Christ through our prayer and study so that we can give Him through our mission to build a truly Christian community through our loving service to others.

### Preacher of Grace, unite us with the Blessed

The ultimate goal of a Dominican education is the salvation of the student through the reception of the message of the eternal Word, who is salvation! Thus a transformation occurs by which the student is prepared not only for this life but also, ultimately, for eternal life.

Saint Dominic, pray for us! 🙏

*Sister Matthew Marie Cummings, O.P. is a Professor of Education and 1983 graduate of Aquinas College. She holds a Doctoral degree of Education in Instruction and Curriculum Leadership. Sister is an editor for the book Behold the Heritage: Foundations of Education in the Dominican Tradition, and has extensive teaching experience at the college and elementary levels.*

<sup>1</sup>For a beautiful commentary on the *O Lumen*, please see: Richard T. A. Murphy, O.P., *The Timeless Dominic: a Commentary on the O Lumen* (Tacoma, WA: Cluny Media, 2015).

<sup>2</sup>Father Vivian Boland, O.P. "The Healing Work of Teaching: Thomas Aquinas and Education," in *Behold the Heritage: Foundations of Education in the Dominican Tradition*, ed. Sister Matthew Marie Cummings, O.P. and Sister Elizabeth Anne Allen, O.P. (Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2012), 276.

<sup>3</sup>Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, Q. 188, art. 6.

### Prayer for Dominican Educators

God, you gave us in the person of St. Dominic, a zealous preacher of Your Word for the salvation of souls. Help us to recognize in each person the dignity which you have bestowed on them. Grant us the grace to be attentive to the needs of those we serve. Grant us wisdom and understanding in our prayer and our study. Give us unity in our effort to build community.



In our prayer, study and community form us for Your service. Grant us fidelity to our intellectual and spiritual traditions. Help us to nurture our students and to foster in them a love for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Support us in the cultivation of their character and in shaping their hopes and desires in bringing to fruition the New Evangelization.

In that final moment, lead us and those You have entrusted to our care to the peace of Your kingdom. Amen.

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# ALUMNI PROFILE: PRISCILLA SERRANO, '17

BY SISTER ELIZABETH ANNE ALLEN, O.P., ED.D.



**P**risilla Serrano, a 2017 graduate of Aquinas College, might be a first-year teacher, but she is already an award winner two times over! The first award came from Aquinas College right before her graduation; the second was presented by Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools before she had finished her third month of teaching.

In 2017, Priscilla was named the recipient of the Saint Dominic Teacher of Truth Award. Given annually by the faculty of the School of Education, the award honors a student who exemplifies those professional and personal qualities which comprise the goals of the Aquinas teacher formation program.

In conferring the award, Sister Mary Anne, Dean of the School of Education, remarked that each Aquinas graduate “is prepared to embrace the calling to make a difference in the lives of the young people they will teach in the years to come.” Priscilla is committed to making that difference, and her extraordinary efforts were recognized by her colleagues at Paragon Mills Elementary School. They nominated her for the Metro “Out of the Box” Award, which she won in October.

Priscilla is passionate about the power of teaching. A first generation Mexican-American, she credits her parents for instilling in her the desire to learn which, in turn, led to her desire to teach. She explains, “Both of my parents had to drop out of middle school due to poverty. My dad had to help out on the family farm, and my mom’s family simply could not afford to send me to school (since school in Mexico was free only up until 6th grade). I was taught to value and make the

most out of my education. I went into teaching knowing that I wanted to be a part of what can positively impact the lives of kids who live in poverty, especially those who are new to this country.”

The student body of Paragon Mills is comprised of children who come from over 30 language groups, many of whom are recent immigrants; Priscilla’s classroom mirrors this rich diversity. One of her favorite memories of this year is the first time one boy in her class spoke to her. A refugee and a new English language learner, he did not interact or speak with anyone for the first week of school. Toward the end of the second week of school, he spoke his first full sentence as he said good-bye at the end of the day: “I love my teacher!” Her experience in working with immigrant children is a major factor in Priscilla’s decision to pursue a master’s

degree in instructing English language learners.

Priscilla has very definite ideas about teaching and states them without hesitation. “In order to be the teacher who makes a lasting impact on the lives of one’s students, it is necessary to be reflective, caring, and a life-long learner. A teacher does not only teach content, but teaches students!”

**“Aquinas and the Dominican Sisters  
have been a significant part of my  
beliefs and educational philosophy.  
Teaching is a calling.”**

She believes that Aquinas prepared her well for teaching “with great classes and with field experiences starting freshman year. I was constantly observing and learning in real classrooms around the city.” What is the most important thing about being a teacher that Priscilla learned at Aquinas? “To teach the whole child and to always teach Truth.” What is the most satisfying thing about teaching? “The most satisfying thing about teaching is seeing students grow academically and socially.”

As Priscilla closed her reflections, she said, “Aquinas and the Dominican Sisters have been a significant part of my beliefs and educational philosophy. Teaching is a calling. I have the privilege to touch and shape the lives of children and families.” She added, “It is a joy to go to school every day knowing that my little ones believe in me and I believe in them.” For any teacher, maybe that is one of the best awards of all. 🍀

*Sister Elizabeth Anne Allen, O.P., Ed.D. is a member of the faculty of the School of Education and Director of the Aquinas College Center for Catholic Education.*

Spotlight on our newest center:

# THE CENTER FOR EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS

BY SISTER MARY MICHAEL FOX, O.P., PH.D. AND JASON GALE



conversion to Christ is made firm through an intentional initiation into the fullness of the Christian life that is at once believed, celebrated, lived, and prayed.<sup>3</sup>

A delicate interplay exists between the work of evangelization and catechesis such that one cannot be effective without the other. Their unique and indispensable “moments” continue to be experienced throughout the faith life of a disciple. In other words, the nature of the *sequela Christi* is such that every person who accepts the grace of faith in

**S**aint John Paul II, in his document addressed to Catholic universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, wrote:

Through programs of continuing education offered to the wider community, by making its scholars available for consulting services, by taking advantage of modern means of communication, and in a variety of other ways, a Catholic University can assist in making the growing body of human knowledge and a developing understanding of the faith available to a wider public, thus expanding university services beyond its own academic community.<sup>1</sup>

As a Catholic institution of higher education, Aquinas College takes seriously this call to share its resources with the Church, and does so primarily through its Center for Catholic Education, Center for Faith & Culture, and Center for Evangelization & Catechesis. Our newest center, the Center for Evangelization & Catechesis, was founded in the fall of 2017.

Evangelization and catechesis are at the core of the Church’s mission to “make disciples of all men” (Mt. 28:16). Evangelization announces the Gospel as truly “good news” for all mankind, proclaiming the truth that sets us free. Within the “rich, complex, and dynamic reality” that comprises the work of evangelization lies the essential work of catechesis.<sup>2</sup> Catechesis is that period of formation whereby a person’s initial

Jesus Christ and His Church is in constant need of hearing the Gospel proclaimed, explained, and lived.

The Center for Evangelization & Catechesis at Aquinas College serves the specific purpose of forming catechists and catechetical leaders who possess an understanding of the nature of their work, as well as the necessary skills for being successful. The center is a direct response to the Church’s request that centers of formation be established to provide “basic training and ongoing formation of catechists” as well as to attend to their “personal and spiritual needs.”<sup>4</sup> Through a variety of initiatives, the center provides support to principals, teachers, catechetical leaders, catechists, and parents alike.

## Training in the Catechist Formation Program

Our *Catechist Formation Program* was established in 2007 to provide catechists with basic formation in doctrine and catechetical methodology. The core component of the program is comprised of 6 courses. Each course contains 5 lessons—4 related to doctrine and 1 to catechetical methodology. When it was designed, the Aquinas College Catechist Formation Program was the first of its kind. Inspired by the systematic and organic nature of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, each course offers a lesson on the four pillars of the Catholic faith: creed, sacraments, morality, and prayer. Our unique design reveals the interrelated nature of our faith that is believed,



celebrated, lived, and prayed, thus providing our trained catechists a model for their own catechesis.

Although anyone may take advantage of our online courses, Aquinas College specifically partners with the dioceses of Nashville and Knoxville for their catechist certification, offering our courses both live and online. The diocese of Cleveland makes use of our free videos for a component of their catechist certification as well.

### Training in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The Center also serves as home-base for training catechists in the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* (CGS) approach. CGS is a unique approach to children's catechesis developed in Rome, Italy by Sofia Cavalletti, a biblical scholar, and Gianna Gobbi, a master in the Montessori Method. Drawing from their expertise in God and the child, Cavalletti and Gobbi discovered a way of forming children in the Catholic faith that is at once both doctrinally rich and spiritually vivifying. The center's resident CGS trainer, Sister Mary Rose Bingham, O.P., currently trains in Nashville and in other cities and states. She has trained outside of the country, as well as offered summer training at Aquinas College. Sister is a nationally certified CGS trainer for Levels 1 and 2 and is awaiting Level 3 recognition.

### Praying as a Family and Virtues in Practice Workshops

In addition to the aforementioned training of catechists, the center offers formation for parents and principals who wish to form their children in a life of prayer and virtue. Parents are the primary catechists of their children, and the Church has asked that they be supported in this all-important work.<sup>5</sup> The *Praying as a Family* workshop is based on a book by the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia. It provides simple and inspiring ideas to help parents establish rituals of prayer and celebrations of the faith in their homes. *Virtues in Practice* is a program designed to help children in grades pre-kindergarten through eight grow closer to Jesus by imitating His life and virtues. It is set up in such a way that an entire school community studies the same virtue each month, to provide a whole-school (and at home, whole-family) focus. The program covers 27 virtues over a three-year cycle, with 81 saints held up as models of the virtues.

### Catechetical Consultation

While we have established programs to help catechists, we recognize that with the changing needs of modern men and women arise unique challenges for catechists and catechetical

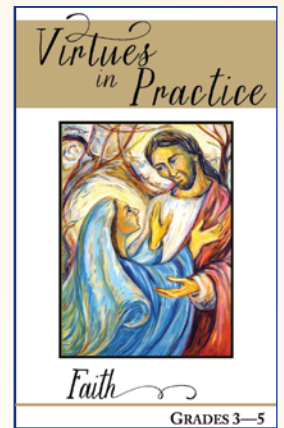
leaders. The center has begun to work with schools and dioceses to provide consultation to renew evangelistic efforts within their catechetical programs. Pope John Paul II made the observation:

"Catechesis" must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith, but also with arousing it unceasingly with the help of grace, with opening the heart, with converting, and with preparing total adherence to Jesus Christ on the part of those who are still on the threshold of faith. This concern will in part decide the tone, the language and the method of catechesis.<sup>6</sup>

While each school, parish, and diocese experiences this to some degree, each situation is unique; the Center for Evangelization & Catechesis provides tailored solutions and directives to create environments of encounter and renewed zeal for leaders and catechists sharing in the work of their bishop. 🏹

*Sister Mary Michael Fox, O.P. holds an M.A. in Theology with a Specialization in Catechetics from Franciscan University of Steubenville and a Ph.D. through the Maryvale Institute in Birmingham, England examining the pedagogical approach of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Sister has vast experience as a catechist.*

*Jason Gale is the Director of the Catechist Formation Program at Aquinas College. He has earned undergraduate and Master's degrees in Theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville and the Maryvale Institute. He has also received an Ecclesiastical License of Divinity (in Catechetics) from the Maryvale Institute. He lives with his wife and 5 children in Dickson, Tennessee.*



This free, online, K-8 resource is available at [www.aquinascollege.edu/centers/center-for-evangelization-and-catechesis/virtues-in-practice](http://www.aquinascollege.edu/centers/center-for-evangelization-and-catechesis/virtues-in-practice).

<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, art. 36

<sup>2</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, art. 18.

<sup>4</sup> GDC, no. 213, 233.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, art. 3; GDC, no. 179.

<sup>6</sup> CT, art. 19.

Learn more about the initiatives of the Center for Evangelization & Catechesis!  
[aquinascollege.edu/centers](http://aquinascollege.edu/centers)

# FIT FOR THE MISSION

BY SISTER MARY MICHAEL FOX, O.P., PH.D.



A number of years ago we heard a lot about the importance of business managers and CEOs hiring people who were “mission fit” for their company. At Aquinas College we see the need for forming teachers who are not only “mission fit” for Catholic education, but also exceptionally “*fit for the mission*.”

The Catholic school is a “privileged environment” for preaching the Gospel, forming “part of the saving mission of the Church”<sup>2</sup> and ultimately the saving mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides a “critical, systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith.”<sup>3</sup> This means that the formation of intellectual virtue—historically a trademark of Catholic education—is united with the formation of moral virtue, thereby forming a truly integrated human person who

knows not only how to navigate the modern world, but also, and more importantly, how to influence it. “Reference to Jesus Christ teaches man to discern the values which ennoble from those which degrade him.”<sup>4</sup>

Teachers are the single most critical element for helping the Catholic school fulfill its mission. The link between teachers and mission in the Catholic school is so critical that the Church calls for their “very careful preparation.”<sup>5</sup> Catholic school teachers need to be experts in their field of education, possessing both a proper formation in content knowledge and in pedagogical skill. Furthermore, in order it to fulfill its unique mission, the Catholic school needs teachers who are experts in God *and* experts in humanity.



## Experts in God

To be an “expert in God” means nothing more—and *nothing less*—than to truly *know* Him in the biblical sense of that word. Such knowledge is simultaneously an endeavor of the mind and of the heart. It is a knowledge gained through prayer, study, worship, and morality. To be “fit for the mission,” Catholic school teachers need a solid formation in the teachings of Jesus and His Church. Without exception, those teachers specifically engaged in handing on the faith need a deep formation in the truths of the faith. To fulfill the mission of the Catholic school, all teachers must “always be ready to give a reason for their hope” (1 Pt 3:15). In the Catholic school this means, expressly, a hope found in Jesus Christ.

Knowledge of God gained through study becomes life-changing when it is animated by a life of prayer and worship. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes prayer as a “vital and personal relationship with the living God.”<sup>6</sup> This intimate relationship with God begins in Baptism and is deepened by grace with each subsequent reception of the sacraments, particularly Confession and Holy Communion.

The sacramental life is life in Christ, otherwise known as the moral life. Catholic school teachers preach the Gospel most effectively and give witness to the “surpassing value of knowing Christ” (Phil 3:8) when they embrace a life of grace and virtue. Such witness is indispensable in order for the Catholic school to fulfill its mission. The words of Pope Paul VI ring as true today as when he first proclaimed: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses.”<sup>7</sup>



## Experts in Humanity

While being experts in God is a matter of indispensable importance, experience confirms that this expertise is not enough for Catholic school teachers; they must be experts in humanity as well. This means first of all that they must possess an authentic Catholic anthropology, lest their view of education be reduced to a mere acquisition of technical skill. Of course we want our students to possess the skills needed for gainful employment, but the mission of Catholic education lies beyond the temporal.<sup>8</sup> The human person is made for eternal life with God; all other achievements in this life should be directed towards this final goal. To be an expert in humanity, then, is to have a true understanding of the nature of the human person as having his origin and destiny in God.

Secondly, whereas the Catholic school exists expressly to preach the Gospel, there remains a critical need for its religion teachers to be experts in *catechetical* pedagogy, since the Gospel is never simply proclaimed, but is always proclaimed to *someone*.<sup>9</sup> Due attention must be given to the “differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity and social and ecclesial conditions”<sup>10</sup> of those to whom the Gospel is proclaimed. This is not an easy task. Adapting the Gospel message according to the audience requires careful discernment so as not to compromise God’s revelation. Thus, to be faithful to God and to the person, catechists must be formed in good catechetical pedagogy.<sup>11</sup>

Catholic educators were reminded of this need by Pope Benedict XVI during his 2008 Apostolic Journey to the United States: “[E]very Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.”<sup>12</sup> The mission of the Catholic school is indeed high reaching, yet one that can be fulfilled when its teachers are not only mission fit but truly “fit for the mission.”

*Sister Mary Michael Fox, O.P. holds an M.A. in Theology with a Specialization in Catechetics from Franciscan University of Steubenville and a Ph.D. through the Maryvale Institute in Birmingham, England examining the pedagogical approach of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Sister has vast experience as a catechist.*

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, art. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., art. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., art. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., art. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, art. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2558.

<sup>7</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, art. 41.

<sup>8</sup> GE, art. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 167.

<sup>10</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, art. 170.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. GDC, no. 139; 145.

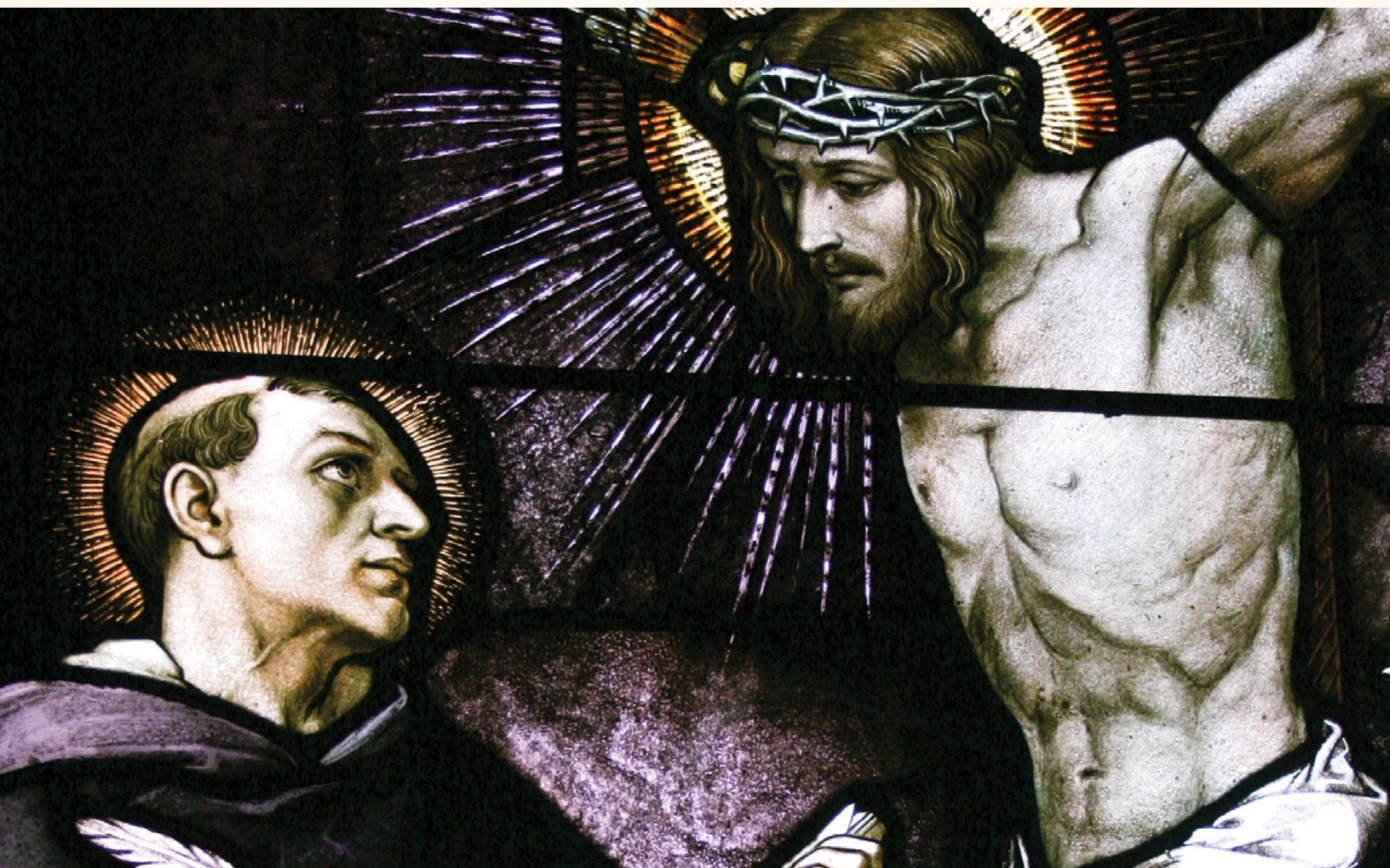
<sup>12</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Catholic Educators (Apostolic Journey to the United States of America and Visit to the United Nations Organization Headquarters), April 17, 2008.



# ICON RICH IN SPLENDOR

## The Life of St. Thomas Aquinas

BY REVEREND GREGORY PINE, O.P.



Saint Thomas Aquinas has an elusive personality. What with a modest bearing and a medieval method, Saint Thomas's work lacks the peculiar flair that one might hope to find therein. For all his voluminous output, rarely do we find humorous aside, satirical whimsy, or personal anecdote. Rather, one is led to believe that Saint Thomas was simply an intellectual machine, a monster of erudition who produced Christendom's finest theology at a rate of nearly fifteen pages a day, a man of hulking frame and abstracted countenance forever engrossed in the incomprehensible. With an ability to make first-impressions of such like, it's no wonder many consider him boring. But this reading decidedly misses the point, for to appreciate his personality we oughtn't look for it in quips or cracks. Rather by attending to Saint Thomas on

his own terms, his personality shines through in precisely the place it ought—in his life—and specifically in his life as the verification of and testimony to his work. For Saint Thomas Aquinas was truly conformed to the realities about which he read, disputed, and preached.

Consider one sense in which we see this borne out: As a Dominican friar and heir to the Holy Preaching of Toulouse, Saint Thomas was especially preoccupied by the question of evil: it forms the principle objection to the existence of God in the Prima Pars of the *Summa Theologiae*, Question 2, article 3; it demands considerable attention in the famous treatise on creation; and it constitutes the subject matter of one his longest *Quaestiones disputatae*.



Good, Saint Thomas teaches, is convertible with being; while evil is a privation thereof. Thus the good always has pride of place and the last word; it possesses a kind of cosmic priority. What is more, evil does not represent a failure in the divine plan. The providence of God is such that nothing falls without its bounds, nor can it be frustrated by any secondary or instrumental cause. God is neither defeated nor scandalized by evil. Finally, God permits no evil to befall except he can bring from it some greater good. Each Easter Saint Thomas sings the Exsultet with full-throated approbation: “O Happy Fault!” Here we have the settled conviction of the Angelic Doctor, but how did it touch his own life?

Saint Thomas, we know, was born to a noble family. One of nine children, he was set aside from a young age for an ecclesiastical career. His parents hung on him their hopes of feudal and political advancement and promoted him as the next abbot of Monte Cassino. At the age of 5, Thomas was entrusted to the [Benedictine] monks as a boy oblate. Saint Thomas lived in the monastery for some 11 years, until, at the age of 16, he was forced to leave the monastery when Frederick II invaded the monastery lands. From there, he moved to Naples to finish a degree in liberal arts. There he met the [Dominican] friars and was captivated by the God whom they contemplated and preached. Thomas resolved to join the friars and was almost successful until his parents got word; they could not abide his intention to take up with a religious movement which was as yet untested and lacking in distinction. And so, like any normal southern Italian family, they kidnapped him and placed him under house arrest until such time as he should wise up. Saint Thomas’s perseverance tried their patience, and so, his brothers devised a plan to expedite the process. A grave sin, they reasoned, would put an end to his idealistic aspirations; and so they introduced a temptress into his room to set the stage for a fall from grace.

Here we pause to take in what, by all accounts, is a pretty desolate landscape—an evil state of affairs. Saint Thomas had frustrated his family’s plans for political advancement. They, in turn, had frustrated his plans for religious perfection. He has, in a certain sense, failed in his life and vocation. And he is perilously close to failing in virtue.

But here the personality blazes forth—at once terrible and good. Saint Thomas, we are told, took a brand from the fire, courteously conveyed the woman from his quarters, and scorched a cross on the door, returning to his bedside to pray.

Behold the saint in midst of evil—misunderstood, stymied, betrayed, but *not confounded*—and thereby he testifies that all that he wrote, disputed, and preached is true—universally and existentially—true. So though he be failed vassal, lapsed Benedictine, and fragile innocent, in his very person the evil that befalls is somehow transformed in God’s providence and

turned to profit. No, he did not advance his family’s political aims, but his sanctity accorded greater dignity to those of his stock than any ever ascribed to Guelf or Ghibelline. No, he never returned to Monte Cassino, but his teaching went on to vindicate the religious and apostolic life against some of its most venomous and vehement detractors. And though the cloister would have spared him the encounter with the temptress, yet by his victory, his chastity was fortified and made fruitful for generations yet to come.

As the verification of and testimony to his work, Saint Thomas’s life is an icon rich in splendor. Like his precious Savior before him, Saint Thomas bore in his life the very substance of his teaching. In Saint Thomas, the patron of your college, you have an intercessor who is no mere peddler in abstractions, but a saint, one who has been tried and not found wanting. Those who turn to him in need do not come away empty-handed, but rather emboldened by the encounter with one who has taught and suffered the truth and who has expended himself in its service. So whatever trial befall, Saint Thomas will not be confounded, nor shall you. 🙏

*Father Gregory Pine, O.P., a member of the Dominican Friars of the Province of Saint Joseph, serves as Associate Pastor at St. Louis Bertrand Parish in Louisville, KY. He also teaches as an adjunct Professor of Theology at Bellarmine University.*



# AQUINAS FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE NEWS



**Richard Bulzacchelli, S.T.D.**, Associate Professor of Theology, wrote a commentary entitled “The Morality of President Trump’s DACA Decision.” It is available online at *The Imaginative Conservative* as of September 2017. Dr. Bulzacchelli also participated in a panel presentation, “The Seal of the Confessional,” at the Mental Health Law Workshop on

Confidentiality for the Mental Health Association of America of Middle Tennessee, Waller Law Firm, Nashville, TN, in November 2017. He also presented the lecture “The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception: What’s At Stake?” at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, OH, in November 2017.

**Mark Causapin, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, reviewed the books *The Great Formal Machinery Works: Theories of Deduction and Computation at the Origins of the Digital Age*, by J. von Plato, and *Algebra in Action: A Course in Groups, Rings, and Fields* by Sharhriar Shahriari in the journal of the Mathematical Association of America. Dr. Causapin also published the article “The Effects of Language Simplification and Pictures on the Ability of Emirati University Students to Comprehend and Solve Mathematics Word Problems” in *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 2017.

**Sister Matthew Marie Cummings, O.P., Ed.D., ‘83**, Professor of Education, was selected as a member of an On-Site Reaffirmation Committee for Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Fall 2017.

**Elizabeth R. Donlon, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Education, presented “Using Book Talks to Engage Reluctant Readers” at The Tennessee Reading Association Conference on December 12, 2017. School of Education senior, Olivia Casbarro, was a co-presenter.

**Sister Mary Dominic Pitts, O.P., Ph.D.**, Professor of English, reviewed *The Hebrew Bible as Literature*, by Tod Linafelt, in *Faith Magazine*, January-February 2017. She also presented “Many Shall Come from the East and the West: Unexpected Parallels in the Preaching of Augustine and John Chrysostom” at the Christian Scholars’ Conference at Lipscomb University on June 8, 2017.



**Vincent T. Ryan, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of History, presented the lecture “The Crusades: What They Were Not,” as part of the Life of the Church Lecture Series for the Diocese of Nashville, March 2017. He also presented “The Truth About the Templars” for the Bellevue History & Genealogy Group in December 2017.

**William C. Smart, Ph.D.**, Associate Provost, reviewed the book *Bounds of Their Habitation: Race and Religion in American History in Catholic Southwest: A Journal of History and Culture*, by Paul Harvey, in Fall 2017.

**Sister Thomas More Stepnowski, O.P. Ph.D.**, Vice President for Academics, presented two papers: “The Formation of the Imagination: Preparing for the New Evangelization” at the Symposium on Advancing the New Evangelization, Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas on April 1, 2017, and “How the Mystery is Imprinted in the Heart’s Memory: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the Imagination” at the Speaking the Truth in Love Conference, Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio on October 15, 2017. The article “Restoring the Imagination: The Contribution of Conrad Pepler, O.P., and Gerald Vann, O.P.” was published in *The Downside Review* (July 2017), and she contributed the chapter “*Laudato Si’*: A Distinctive Way of Seeing and the Formation of the Imagination” in *Reflections on Laudato Si’*, Cambridge Scholars Press 2017.

**Sister Mary Madeline Todd, O.P., S.T.D.**, Assistant Professor of Theology, presented “Is Friendship Still Possible: *Amicitia* in Aristotle and Aquinas” for the Thomistic Institute Lecture Series at Harvard University on March 2, 2017; “Mercy and Literature: The Heart of God in the Words of Man” at the CMSWR Regional Workshop in Lincoln, Nebraska on March 4, 2017; “Tears Transformed: Affectivity and Spiritual Growth in Saint Catherine of Siena’s Theology” for Towards an Intrinsic Feminine Theology: An International Seminar in Rome, Italy on April 29, 2017; “Love Stronger than Death: Forgiveness as the Foundation for Freedom” at the Assumption Readings International Ecumenical Conference in Kiev, Ukraine on September 23, 2017; and “Human Dignity and the Meaning of Suffering” for the Core Values Initiative at Franciscan University of Steubenville on September 29-30, 2017. She published the article “The Difference Christ Makes in Friendship” in *The Catechetical Review* in September 2017.



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: WILLIAM C. SMART, PH.D.

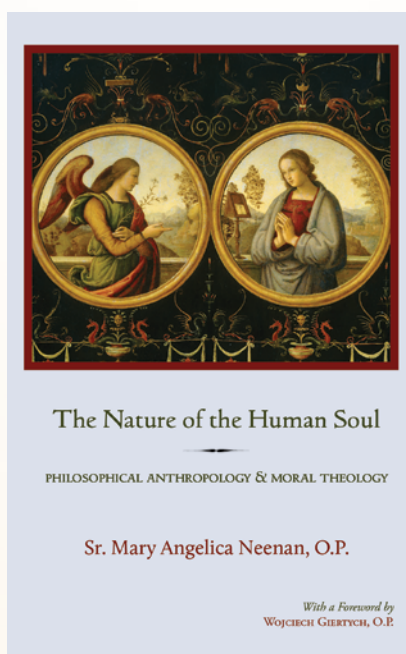
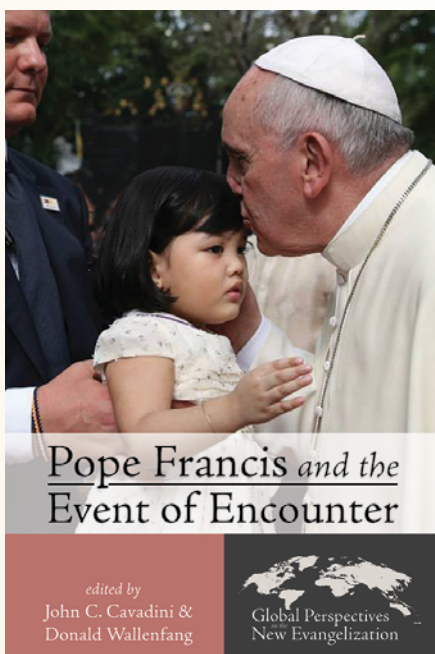


When the front door of the White House opened in the fall of 1998, Sister Mary Philip, O.P., the receptionist, looked at the visitor and immediately said, “Charlie Smart?” “No, Sister, that’s my dad. I’m William Smart.” Charles Smart served on the School Board at Saint Patrick School in McEwen, the same school attended by William Smart and his four siblings, and now attended by Will Smart, the son of Dr. William and Tammy Smart.

Within a few months of that initial visit to Aquinas, Dr. William Smart, who completed his Ph.D. in Microbiology at University of Tennessee and several years as a post-doctoral assistant at University of Georgia, began teaching biology, microbiology, pathophysiology, and anatomy and physiology at the college. After joining the Aquinas faculty in 1999, Dr. Smart also served as the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences (2001-2012). He currently serves as Associate Provost and as the Director of Institutional Research. These positions support Dr. Smart as the accreditation liaison for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, which includes writing and coordinating accreditation reports, assisting other colleges and universities as an off-site and on-site evaluator, and compiling data for institutional effectiveness.

Having been educated by the Dominican Sisters at Saint Patrick, Dr. Smart now has an active role in educating the student sisters at Aquinas, and several of his former students are teaching his son, Will, at Saint Patrick. Dr. Smart’s participation in the *Fides et Ratio Institute* and the inaugural meeting of the Society of Catholic Scientists has encouraged him to continue to study the interface of faith and science. Of his time at Aquinas, Dr. Smart offers that “I have grown professionally and spiritually in ways that I could never have imagined. I have seen many changes during my time here, but the constant has been the joy-filled community and the powerful witness of the sisters—administration, co-workers, faculty, students, and most importantly –friends.”

## NEW BOOKS FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION



*Pope Francis and the Event of Encounter* (2018) was released in January by Wipf and Stock and is available on Amazon.com. Chapter 2: “Embodied Mercy: The Centrality of the Incarnation in the Thought of Pope Francis” is by faculty member [Sister Mary Madeline Todd, O.P., S.T.D.](#)

*The Nature of the Human Soul: Philosophical Anthropology and Moral Theology* (2017) by [Sister Mary Angelica Neenan, O.P., S.T.D.](#), Assistant Professor of Theology, was released by Cluny Media and is available at [ClunyMedia.com](#).

# BISHOP DAVID CHOBY

## Friend, Teacher, and Shepherd after God's Own Heart

BY SISTER MARIAN SARTAIN, O.P., '67



David Choby attended Aquinas Junior College as a student in the 1965-66 academic year.

During the spring semester of 1992 Father David Choby was an adjunct instructor of Moral Theology at Aquinas College. As he went about his priestly responsibilities that spring and taught his evening classes, Father Choby would have been aware that Pope John Paul II had just issued a document on priestly formation, and without doubt he would have read it with keen interest. "I will give you shepherds after my own heart,"<sup>1</sup> the document began, quoting God's promise through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 3:15). The young Father Choby would surely have recognized words that had somehow shaped the aspirations of his own life. In God's providence, Aquinas College was one of the settings in which those priestly aspirations were formed and refined.

Born in Nashville in 1947, David Choby received his early education in Nashville, graduating from Father Ryan High School in 1965. His college studies began at Aquinas, where he took classes from 1965-1966 as he prepared to enter the seminary. His classes at Aquinas included a private course in Latin taught by Sister Mary Agnes Burke, O.P. Though the two were distant cousins, Sister was nonetheless exacting in her expectations. In later years, Father Choby often took time to visit the graves of both Sister Mary Agnes and another distant cousin, Sister Maria Goode, when he visited Saint Cecilia Motherhouse. He obviously had fond memories of the Dominican Sisters' role in his personal life.

David Choby was ordained to the priesthood in September of 1974. His priestly formation continued in the years that followed, both through active pastoral responsibilities in Nashville parishes and in further studies at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome, where he earned a degree in canon law. From 1984-1989 he served as seminary professor at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. After his return to Nashville, while pastor at Saint John Vianney Parish, Father Choby was invited to return to Aquinas College as a teacher, probably in some of the very classrooms where he had once been a student. During the ten semesters he served as adjunct at Aquinas, he brought to that role the



Father David Choby served as an adjunct professor at Aquinas College in the 1990s, teaching Ethics and Moral Theology.






Bishop David R. Choby

same quiet, friendly demeanor and careful, measured thought that had marked him as a student. Even when his responsibilities prevented his continued teaching at Aquinas, the college knew in him a sturdy friend and supporter.

In December of 2005, Father David Choby was appointed the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Nashville. Spending himself with the heart of the Good Shepherd, Bishop Choby

was a living example of God's promises kept. Aquinas College

continued to be touched in many ways by the goodness of that heart.

After serving as Nashville's shepherd for 11 years, Bishop David Choby died on June 3, 2017. Ever the pastor and teacher, he also served ever with the shepherd's heart. In his quiet kindness, he was also ever a friend to the Dominican Sisters and to the college that had helped to form him. 

*Sister Marian Sartain, O.P. is a 1967 graduate of Aquinas Junior College, and was an Instructor of Scripture and Theology at Aquinas for a number of years. She currently serves as Secretary General of the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia Congregation.*

<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (March 25, 1992), art. 1.

❧ *May our friend and teacher with the shepherd's heart rest in peace.* ❧

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*continued from page 7*

their own work as teachers. For instance, the instructor recorded that an objective of the course was to teach the sisters how to write press releases to promote the schools.

<sup>29</sup> *Report of Progress for Institutions of Higher Education (Saint Cecilia Normal School)* [1 May 1954], Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Sister Aloysius Mackin, *Saint Cecilia's Golden Urn: 1864-1994* (n.p.: Nashville, 1994), 151.

<sup>31</sup> *Data Presented for Consideration of the Committee on Affiliation and Extension (Saint Cecilia Normal School)* [6 July 1943], Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Sister Miriam Walsh, "Nashville Dominicans' First Hundred Years," *Dominican Educational Bulletin* (Fall 1960): 11-15.

<sup>33</sup> Bishop Adrian to Mother Annunciata, 12 March 1951. Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>34</sup> In 1961, the Daughters of Charity, who owned and operated Saint Thomas Hospital, made arrangements with the Dominican Sisters by which students working towards

nursing diplomas in their Saint Thomas School of Nursing could take science courses at Aquinas College. "Fifty Student Nurses in Aquinas Program," *The Tennessean*, September 17, 1961.

<sup>35</sup> Sister Miriam Walsh to Roy J. Deferrari, 12 October 1961. Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>36</sup> Sister Miriam Walsh, undated notes concerning courses offered, Saint Cecilia Congregation, Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>37</sup> Mother Joan of Arc to Community, 23 January 1960.

<sup>38</sup> Sister Miriam Walsh to Roy J. Deferrari, 25 October 1962. Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>39</sup> Leo L. McVay to Sister Miriam Walsh, 12 December 1930. Saint Cecilia Congregation Archives, Nashville, TN.

<sup>40</sup> Roy J. Deferrari, "The Junior College, on the Organization of the Junior College," *The Catholic University of America Affiliation Bulletin on Higher Education* 23, no. 1 (1960): 6.



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### QUESTIONS?

Sister Elizabeth Anne, O.P.  
Director, Center for Catholic Education  
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