




Newsletter of the THOMAS MORE COLLEGE of LIBERAL ARTS

# COMMUNITAS

INTRODUCING *the*  
STUDENT  
ISSUE





# COMMUNITAS

A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

*Communitas* is published by Thomas More College of Liberal Arts thanks to the generous contributions of loyal supporters.

To support this publication go to:  
[www.ThomasMoreCollege.edu/Support](http://www.ThomasMoreCollege.edu/Support)

<b>Editor</b> Cassandra Taylor	<b>Student Editor</b> Peter Rao '24	<b>Publisher</b> William Fahey
-----------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------

**Photography Interns**  
 Peter Greninger '24 and Mary-Grace Grinstead '26

*Cover art by Shuyuan "Lydia" He '25*





# FAITH & FESTIVITY

## A LOOK INSIDE THOMAS MORE COLLEGE'S SOCIAL COUNCIL



L-R: SOCIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS DECLAN NIELSEN '24, MARGARET SIX '25, GAVIN LECLAIR '27, EMMA ANDERSON '24, AUSTIN HASTINGS '25, AND VALERIE HURTH '27

*By Emma Anderson '24*

Those who visit Thomas More College always comment on the joy they see in its students. There are signs of a unique liveliness on campus that newcomers cannot ignore. You walk into the Student Lounge to the sound of a strummed guitar and stroll through the cafeteria to the comforting hiss of a cappuccino machine—an ode to the semester we spend in the Eternal City. In addition to these smaller, organic signs of social life—so typical of the College's culture—students, faculty, and staff come together as a community for banquets to celebrate the liturgical year. It is the responsibility of the Social Council to organize these events and attend to their practical details.

Here is a snapshot from my experience as a member of the Social Council of what goes into one of Thomas More College's beloved banquets. I deliberate with Dr. Denis Kitzinger and a few other members of the Social Council about how to arrange 150 people (who will be sitting at square tables) into a big circle so that we can do a traditional sitting dance called "Schunkel-Karussell," which involves singing in German while linking arms and rocking backwards, forwards, and side to side. It is the ultimate square peg, round hole dilemma, but we manage to make it work.

We're preparing for the annual Oktoberfest celebration—a tradition since Dr. Kitzinger, a native German, arrived at the College over a decade ago. While I worry about these de-

tails, another part of my brain wonders when I'll finish the essay due the next day. Later, while the sausages cook, a few students walk the forest paths searching for ornamentation symbolic of the time of year. The trees are celebrating with their flaming reds, and the harvest moon will soon be a glowing gold. Everything is ablaze with the colors of autumn.

For this banquet, we decide to decorate our tables with as many red and green maple leaves as possible. These details are not frivolous, expendable niceties. Setting the tone with a festive table elevates people's minds and gives glory to God by acknowledging what He gives us each season. We're simply echoing inside what He has done outside. Oktoberfest itself is a

*Continued on page 7*





# MARKING THE LITURGICAL YEAR

*By Joel Marshall '24,  
Choir Director*

The Thomas More College Choir is a student-led organization that performs for Convocation, Graduation, and banquets, in addition to two annual public concerts: an Advent concert and an Easter concert. Our style of music is strictly classical church music with an emphasis on Renaissance polyphony, but it also includes music from other time periods. We have been gradually expanding our repertoire to include more advanced music. These concerts are inspired by the lessons and carols format with related poetry and scripture readings placed between the musical pieces. Over the past four years, the Choir has evolved from being a casual group that performed simple anthems once a week to being a more robust

institution and a staple of Thomas More College's tradition.

This past semester's Advent concert at Ste. Marie's Parish in Manchester featured a performance of Biebl's *Ave Maria*, in which the solo choir sang from the loft, allowing us to take full advantage of the church's acoustics and Victorian neo-Gothic aesthetic. Other featured composers included Praetorius, Charles Wood, and Palestrina. As always, the pipe organ gave the performance a greater sense of grandeur—especially because of the complex and ornate postlude provided by Ste. Marie's organist, Rob St. Cyr.

The Choir has also performed on other occasions this academic year, including at a dinner honoring former Ambassadors to the Holy See Raymond Flynn and Mary Ann Glendon. Recently, the Choir sang at the Mass offered for

the chartering of the New Hampshire chapter of Legatus. The Mass was offered by the Most Rev. Bishop Peter A. Libasci (Diocese of Manchester) in St. Joseph's Cathedral. Bishop Robert F. Hennessey, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston and Vicar General of the Merrimack Region, as well as distinguished guests from throughout the United States were present.

In April, the Choir presented two Easter concerts (April 13–14). These featured several pieces representing the different days of Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday and concluding with Christ's Resurrection. The selection included William Byrd's *Emendemus in Melius* and Charles Wood's arrangement of *This Joyful Eastertide*, in addition to hymns and motets composed by Tallis and Palestrina. *To hear the recording, please visit [ThomasMoreCollege.edu](http://ThomasMoreCollege.edu).*



# FROM CLASSROOM TO STAGE

By Peter Shanley '25,  
Play Co-Director

Despite beginning rehearsals as late as October 5, the Thomas More College Players successfully performed Patrick Hamilton's *Rope*, a complex and tragic play involving dark but ultimately rewarding themes, on November 11–12.

Immediately following their murder of a classmate, two London university undergraduates, Wyndham Brandon (Gavin LeClair '27) and Charles Granillo (William Greninger '27) hide their victim in a chest on which they serve dinner to a small party of guests that very evening. Brandon's sick hubris seals his downfall, for he cannot resist the urge to invite his friend, mentor, and intellectual superior Rupert Cadell (Peter Rao '24). Throughout the three

acts, Cadell, a cynical war veteran with a dry sense of humor, uncovers clues that eventually reveal Brandon and Granillo's despicable crime.

*Rope* challenges students to reexamine their ideas and theories regarding ethics, and question lines of reasoning they took for granted. Displaying Brandon and Granillo's depraved characters through a cautionary tale, this macabre play presents the audience with a tragedy in which a subjective approach to morality falls apart in the face of an objectively indefensible act.

Director Emma Anderson '24 was always a reliable help in leading rehearsals and guiding cast members with acting advice. Kateri Davis '25 and Jude Wassell '27—playing the youngest of the evening guests and archetypes of early twentieth-century

English hedonistic culture—provided the audience with much-needed comic relief. The elderly duo of Samuel Matt '27 and Sofia Seidl '26, father and aunt of the victim, introduced a comforting yet eerie atmosphere, and Jacinta Sigaud '26 fit her role perfectly as Sabine. As villains, Mr. LeClair and Mr. Greninger conveyed the serious tone upon which the play absolutely hinged. Mr. Rao, the only Senior in the cast, acted as a model to his co-stars by immediately mastering his role as Cadell.

The advantage of having such a small cast, with only eight characters, was that all the members had space to perfect and polish their individual roles. Additionally, they developed a chemistry among themselves, making it possible to establish whatever mood a scene required, whether humorous or dramatic.

L-R: CAST MEMBERS SAMUEL MATT '27, KATERI DAVIS '25, AND GAVIN LECLAIR '27





# THE INTERSECTION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

By *Brendan McDonald '25*

St. Thomas More was both a scholar and a politician. He rejoiced in classical education even as he became a statesman. As he was fluent in Latin, he was fluent in law. As he studied philosophy, he studied the particular ways of his contemporary world. It is with this seeming paradox between theoretical studies and practical concerns—between leaving the world and joining it—that

invited to attend and contribute. Milk Street Society members examine the philosophical arguments studied in class in light of the contemporary issues that face man today. The discussion is not random. At the beginning of the year, a theme is selected based on student interest and faculty guidance. That theme is then discussed from the perspective of the different readings. This year's theme is the separation of church and state.

mission. But does such a group comport with what Thomas More College hopes to accomplish? Is it not the purpose of classical education to study philosophy, not politics? How could a search for the practical not be a hindrance and instead be a legitimate asset in the quest for truth? These are valid questions, but it is exactly when one grasps the College's dual purpose in scholarly and worldly pursuits that one discovers its dual purpose in education and cultural influence, and by extension, the Milk Street Society's role.

An idea central to Milk Street and the College is that it is not sufficient to possess knowledge of the truth. Instead, it is demanded of Catholics that we enter and shape the culture through whatever role we are called to play. Plato uses the analogy of the cave for the philosopher's role in the *Republic*. To shift the analogy slightly, the culture, stuck in the darkness of the cave, sees only shadows of the truth. Those in the light of faith cannot simply remain there—they must journey to assist those still in darkness.

This idea is fully recognized when one examines the College's curriculum. During Junior year, students study the Reformation, Renaissance, and Enlightenment. It is one thing to grapple with these ideas in the period in which they developed; it is another to recognize their recycled forms in the problems of today. Indeed, one might even argue that it is impossible to fully understand these ideas without tracing their development up to the present day.

The reverse of this is also true. It is impossible to address the philosophical errors of contemporary thinkers without understanding the history and tradition of philosophy and the truth of the faith as a whole. The philosophy of today is based on the philosophy of yesterday, and will determine the philosophy of tomorrow. Milk Street members and Thomas More College students in general are prepared to engage with the culture, having understood from whence it came and where it is going.



DR. MICHAEL HANBY ADDRESSING THE MILK STREET SOCIETY

Thomas More College's Milk Street Society is concerned.

The first question one might ask is, "What sort of name is that?" The Milk Street Society is a student-run discussion group named after the street on which our patron St. Thomas More was born. Founded in 2018, the Society is sponsored by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, which supports conservative groups on college campuses.

Similar to the College's classroom method, Milk Street meetings involve peer-to-peer Socratic discussion. This discussion has leaders—a Senior takes the role of president and a Junior, vice president—and a specific subject matter based on a short text. All students are

In addition to weekly meetings, the Society hosts two to three lectures by scholars to expand on the theme. This past fall, Dr. Michael Hanby of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage & Family in Washington, D.C. and Thomas More College's own Phil Lawler gave talks. Each considered how Catholics should interact with our society, using historical analysis for support.

It is important to emphasize that Milk Street is not a class. It is an extracurricular activity that students choose to attend. Just as students recognize the goodness of the College's mission, they recognize how the Milk Street Society contributes to that



# FAITH & FESTIVITY

*Continued from page 3*

celebration of the fruits of the earth that God created and continues to bring forth for us.

It is an easy temptation at an academically driven school to treat such celebrations as an afterthought. But a Catholic liberal arts education should not be a passive experience. It is truly active as it yearns to be lived out with one's fellow man. It is a waste to study Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* or *Politics* if you do not intend to grow in virtue and develop meaningful relationships with the people in your life. You can do this in small ways, like taking a study break to sing with your classmates, or in larger, more organized ways, like when the student body dresses up in traditional German garb for Oktoberfest. You cannot isolate one aspect of the education at Thomas More College, because everything is designed to teach you the same lesson: how to live well.

This mindset guides our Social Council meetings. We work with Dean of Students Dr. Michael Taylor, Director of Collegiate Life Dr. Sara Kitzinger, and the Student Life staff to stay aware of how we can help our fellow students. How are students getting along? What can we do to help our classmates get to know each other better? Are we as Social Council members doing our part to set the right tone? These are questions we consider so as to better pass on the College's traditions to new students, while also encouraging them to incorporate their gifts and talents into the community.

The Social Council also "checks the pulse" of the student body, which helps dictate what events occur on weekends. Do people want to sing and dance, or do they need a restful weekend? Should we turn on the ever-popular cappuccino machine for the students powering through a paper?

Creating a living, thriving culture is what Thomas More College has set out to accomplish. As students, we realize the value of our ancient inheritance. We seek to live out the great charges we've read about in books, instead of returning them to the shelf with a wistful "I wish we could go back in time." God has placed us here, at this exact place and historical moment, not to mourn modern failings, but to accept the challenge to revive old traditions and adapt them to our unique community. In so doing, we hope to flourish in our Faith and our lives.



SCENES FROM THIS YEAR'S OKTOBERFEST  
AND EASTER BANQUETS





THOMAS MORE COLLEGE  
of LIBERAL ARTS  
Six Manchester Street  
Merrimack, NH 03054



Dear Friends of Thomas More College,

Blessed Easter! *Christus surrexit!*

You hold in your hands a special issue of *Communitas*. It is quite common throughout the College for us to expect our students to shoulder some of the responsibility for fostering its life and livelihood. Whether in Residence Life and Admissions, in Collegiate Life and Buildings & Grounds, or most obviously in the classroom, we do not view the life of the student as the life of a coddled and swaddled dilettante. Instead, we see it as a training in stewardship for those who aspire to keep alive Catholic traditions and the vision of human flourishing as presented by the College faculty and staff. And so, it is quite natural that we have initiated a special edition of *Communitas*, designed, authored, and edited by our own students. Please enjoy this issue and keep our students in your prayers as they pursue their studies and move on to renew our society.



William Edmund Fahey, PhD  
*Fellow & President*