



New Curriculum Unveiled

Building on the original Humanities core, the new curriculum integrates theology and the new Way of Beauty sequence



Reflections on the Year for Priests

College chaplain Fr. William Ventura on St. Jean-Marie Vianney, charity, penance, and vocation

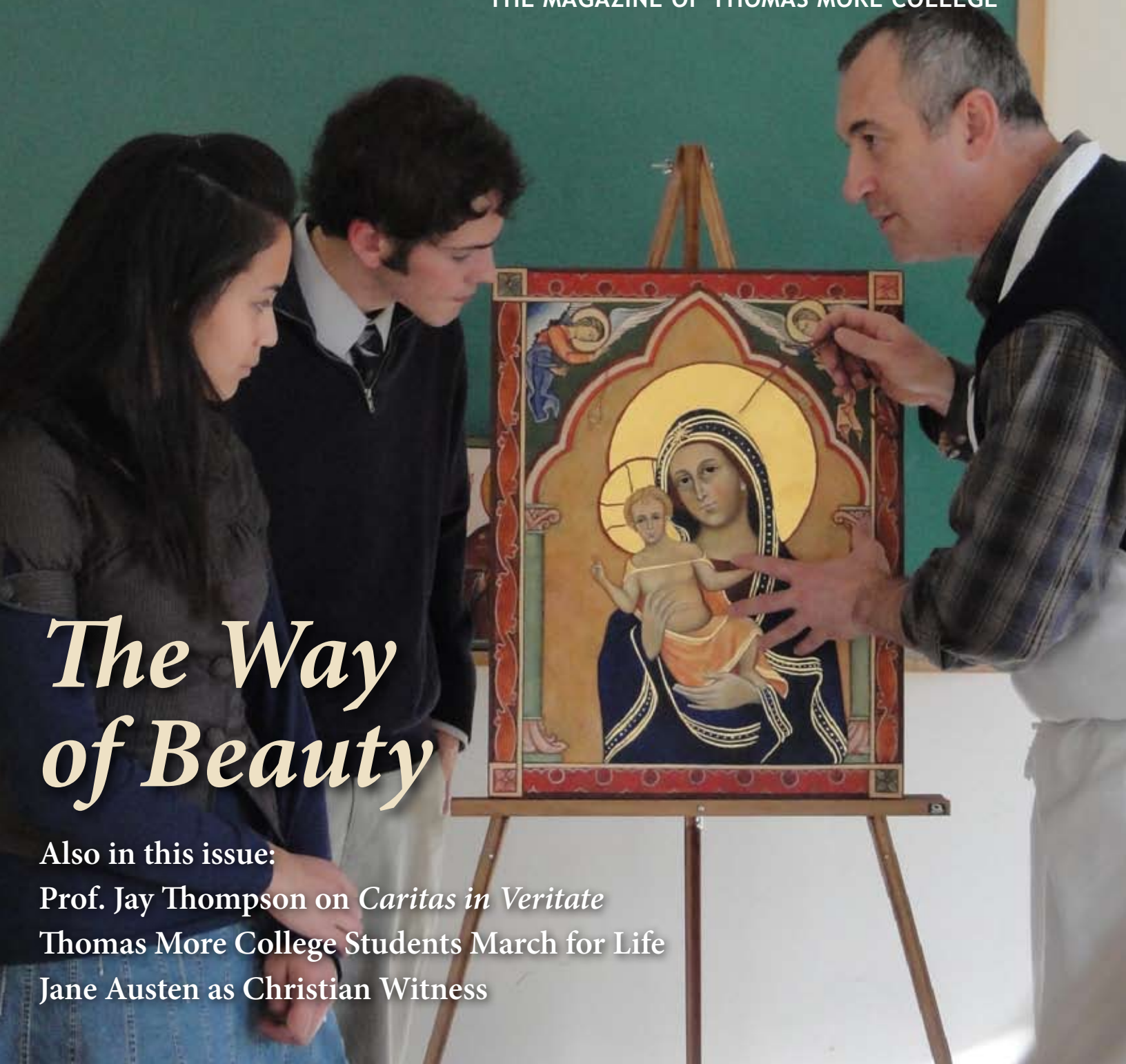


Cardinal Arinze at Thomas More College

Cardinal Arinze lauds Thomas More College, emphasizes to graduates the importance of the Liberal Arts

COMMUNITAS

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS MORE COLLEGE



The Way of Beauty

Also in this issue:

Prof. Jay Thompson on *Caritas in Veritate*

Thomas More College Students March for Life

Jane Austen as Christian Witness



Action Anchored in Truth

BY DR. WILLIAM EDMUND FAHEY

Defining what he meant by a “classic,” T.S. Eliot draws attention to the essential *maturity* of art, artist, and critic. Maturity is much neglected today, as are hierarchy, experience, and discernment. Our society takes comfort in youthful spontaneity, equality, luck, and fashion. To pass a judgment is considered either arbitrary or unkind. Talent becomes a random gift, we cherish the raw and unrefined, and disciplined learning is abandoned as the tool of an antiquated order.

Sadly, the betrayal of maturity is commonplace within the academy. In the hands of the tenured ideologue, Keats’s pronouncement that “Beauty is Truth,—Truth Beauty,—that is all/Ye know on earth, and all

ye need know” becomes a rod to lord over the student. Beauty remains stuck in the eye of the beholder, or demands tortuous initiation in secret knowledge. There is a better path.

This year Thomas More College of Liberal Arts launches its year-long Way of Beauty sequence. Our students will not only study naturalistic and iconic forms of art, but practice drawing and “icon writing.” They’ll plumb the theoretical depths of music, and take joy in learning to chant. When they arrive in Rome, they will not gaze mutely at the treasures of our civilization, but love them rightly, understanding them through a disciplined progress toward an enriched maturity. This is true freedom from the shackles of current prejudice against good art, music, and poetry.

In all actions—artistic, political, scholarly, or religious—we must anchor the imagination in the truth. This dictum is lost on those who conceive of the imagination as something free from

all influence and constraint. Unbridled imagination, once condemned as “the mad woman of the house,” is made a goddess of the vain and fantastic; she beckons her acolytes and turns them from the truth. But an image is for thought, and thought is to express what is perennially good and true and beautiful. The proper use of the imagination is achieved through careful maturation. Hence, the critical need for a structured approach to a curriculum; hence, the care with which we deliberate over our students’ studies at Thomas More College.

I encourage you to continue to follow developments at Thomas More College—for instance, on our website. In all things, we hope to give witness to the College’s motto: *caritas congaudet in veritate* (charity rejoices in the truth).

In Christ the King,

William Edmund Fahey, Ph.D.
President

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(Left) Thomas More College freshmen attend orientation in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, preparing themselves for the academic life that lies ahead.

(Middle) TMC students defend the sanctity of human life at Boston's Walk for Life.

(Right) Cardinal praises Thomas More College for its "unapologetic fidelity to the Magisterium."



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Cardinal Arinze Lauds Thomas More College During Commencement

It is easy to forget last season's headlines, but in spring 2009 much of the buzz in the Catholic press concerned the choice of certain famous Catholic colleges to seek their commencement speakers from the ranks of men with power in the secular world—regardless of those men's adherence to fundamental principles of justice and morality.



Thomas More College turned instead to a man who came from material poverty in a troubled British colony in Africa, a convert from traditional African paganism, who made his name as a pastor of the Christian people in his country, as a peacemaker in its civil war, and a sober guardian of the Church's deposit of Faith. On Sunday, May 10, 2009, Francis Cardinal Arinze addressed the graduating seniors of 2009, their families, and the whole college community as keynote speaker at Thomas More College's commencement exercises.

Cardinal Arinze called Thomas More College “a young and dynamic Catholic liberal arts college... dedicated to forming students intellectually and spiritually within the Catholic tradition and with unapologetic fidelity to the Magisterium.” For Arinze, a “serious and authentic Catholic college” owes its students a “rigorous” education on the proper balance of faith and reason, science and ethics, and specialization versus general education. Students benefiting from such an education will be “model Christians who are good citizens.”

Since “both reason and faith come from God... Truth does not contradict itself,” Arinze explained, citing both John Paul II and St. Thomas Aquinas. “Whatever its source, truth is of the Holy Spirit.”

Speaking of the importance of integrated liberal arts education such as that offered at Thomas More College, Arinze said, “It would be risky to produce citizens who specialize in one little area of life but have no viable vision of the whole of life. While no one pretends to know something about everything, it would be even more dangerous to have to deal with a person who parades himself as knowing everything about a tiny aspect of life, and who is therefore lost in discussing or understanding anything except his own area of specialization.”

Arinze warned that without a proper grounding in philosophy, the advanced study of science and



(Top) Cardinal Arinze addresses the graduates.

(Bottom) Cardinal Arinze offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass prior to the commencement exercises.

FRANCIS CARDINAL ARINZE

A Life in Brief

technology can be positively dangerous: “The scientist... should not regard whatever is physically possible as also morally lawful. Human action has to take into account the natural law, the eternal law of God written into human nature.” A Catholic college that is doing its job, Arinze said, “educates students to appreciate that moral rules of right and wrong apply also to science, technology, politics, trade and commerce, and, indeed, to all human endeavors.”

Arinze insisted that “the Christian must learn to make a synthesis between his duties as a citizen and his religious practices. There must be no divorce between these two dimensions of his life.... We can also in this light see the mistake of politicians who regard the Church as interfering in politics when the Pope or the Bishops speak on contraception, abortion, strange new definitions of family, the rights of workers, the education of children or what moral standards should guide the mass media,” the cardinal warned.

Concluding, Arinze called for Catholic colleges to “prepare for us members of Congress or the Senate who will not say ‘I am a Catholic, *but...*’ but rather those who will say ‘I am a Catholic, and *therefore...*’”

As part of commencement exercises, Cardinal Arinze was granted an honorary doctorate of philosophy by the College, and presented with a commemorative icon of the Holy Family painted by Thomas More College’s artist-in-residence, David Clayton.



Educated by Irish missionaries, Cardinal Arinze advanced to All Hallows Seminary in Onitsha, Nigeria, where he earned his degree in Philosophy. In 1955, he went to Rome to study Theology at the Pontifical Urban University. He was ordained in November 1958, and earned his doctorate in sacred theology *summa cum laude* in 1960. The subject of his dissertation was an examination of Ibo sacrifice in traditional African religion as a precursor to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Cardinal Arinze spent the early 1960s teaching liturgy, logic, and philosophy at Bigard Memorial Seminary. In 1965, Pope Paul VI nominated him to be co-adjutor bishop of Onitsha. At that time, he was the youngest Roman Catholic bishop in the world. He attended the final session of the Second Vatican Council, where he met the future John Paul II. In 1967 he was consecrated Archbishop of Onitsha. For the next three years, Archbishop Arinze stood as a beacon of peace during one of the most violent civil wars in African history. For three years, he worked with all leaders—Christian, Muslim, and polytheists—to care for refugees and re-establish peace in the region. Over the next two decades, Archbishop Arinze oversaw the formation of an entirely Nigerian clergy and through his steady stream of pastoral letters encouraged the application of the Church’s social and ethical teachings in wider regions, especially in politics, inter-religious dialogue, and the life of the family.

In 1979, Pope John Paul II appointed Archbishop Arinze the pro-president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In 1985, he was elevated to the office of cardinal-deacon. In 1994, Cardinal Arinze presided over the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. In 1996, he was raised to the rank of cardinal-priest. In 2002, Cardinal Arinze was named the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, a position which he held under both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI until his retirement on December 9, 2008.

Cardinal Arinze is the author of 10 books available in English. He has been an active force for catechesis within families and has produced over 1,700 video lectures through the Apostolate for Family Consecration, a series widely distributed in the English and Spanish languages. He continues to be sought as a lecturer throughout the world. Thomas More College was deeply honored to host the cardinal and offer his wise words to its graduating seniors and the broader College community.

Passing on Our Treasures

T.S. Eliot is famous for at once inventing Modernism and remaining preoccupied with “tradition.” Indeed, his most justly famous essay is entitled “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” Speaking as a poet, not a theologian, he meant by this word not the sacred Tradition that guards the Church’s Deposit of Faith and serves as the authoritative interpreter of Scripture, but something at once ineffable and essential—the extraordinarily rich, tension-ridden body of great imaginative art and speculative thought, as expressed in every medium (literary, musical, or visual). One would not err too far in saying that Eliot identified and called on us to honor a “Deposit of Culture.” Unlike its sacred analogue, this cultural accretion makes no claims to divine authority or internal self-consistency. The hoard of accumulated

masterpieces we pass on to new generations includes works of wildly differing world-views. For instance, there is really no reconciling the opinions of Ovid and Augustine—but we eagerly teach them both, and find them joined in artistic harmony, at least, in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. As Catholic educators, it is our glad duty to gently lead young minds, sometimes compelling them with the goad of a grade, as they explore this vast treasury. Imagine Bilbo Baggins (in *The Hobbit*) conducting Thorin Oakenshield and his dwarves through the cave of Smaug the dragon, showing them how to recover from the ravages of time and forgetfulness the wondrous, the fearful, and the beautiful. We may individually be no taller than our charges; indeed, it is a great delight to encounter students whose native talents exceed one’s own.

ACADEMIC ACCLAIM FOR THE NEW THOMAS MORE COLLEGE CURRICULUM



The new curriculum of Thomas More College offers tradition-oriented education at its finest. Its rigorous and vigorous approach to the liberal arts is rooted in the magisterial presence of the classics and in the Magisterium of the Church.

—Joseph Pearce, *Writer-in-Residence,*
Ave Maria University

Thomas More College provides a unique, integrated approach to Catholic theology that is desperately needed today. Immersed in the fine arts, humanities, and philosophy, and challenged to read Sacred Scripture carefully through the eyes of the Church Fathers, students in this program are well-prepared to study the mysteries of the Catholic faith and examine the contact between Western Catholic culture and other traditions throughout the centuries. This comprehensive formation at Thomas More College enables students not only to know the mind of the Church, but also participate effectively in the Church’s mission to evangelize culture.

—Edward Sri, *Provost and Professor of Scripture & Theology, Augustine Institute*

But we are the “burglars” of the company, charged with exploring the byways of the past, and recovering from it what is still great and deserves to be seen. Like Bilbo’s quest, our own is fraught with hazards.

The first danger is to wander blindly, without a guide to assay the worth of what one finds. While the products of the Western past are dazzling, they are not all equally noble, nor can one uncritically regard each facet of every gem. Yet many who teach the Great Books—particularly in a secular setting—turn young people loose in the store-room of the past without the tools of judgment. Students will read—as they should—the works of Cynics and Stoics, heretics and Fathers of the Church, skeptics and saints. Without the guidance of wise teachers grounded in the truth, some will regard each “Great Book” as of equal weight, perhaps of equal truth. The result is rela-

tivism, which renders the whole adventure moot. Other students may get the impression that the later the work and the more modern its presuppositions, the truer it is likely to be. After all, in the applied sciences our newest devices tend to be improvements on older ones. Too many today make the false inference that the same is true in politics, art, or even philosophy. Yet if this were true, it would mean, for instance, that Marx’s thought was more “advanced” than St. Thomas More’s—and there would be no point beyond idle curiosity in learning what Socrates or St. Paul had to say. On this model, the canon of Great Books is little more than a museum of obsolete medical equipment. And those exist. They are entertaining. But they are not the stuff of liberal arts education.

Nor must we, as a few are tempted, treat the past as final and definitive, drawing a line in history after which we judge everything as a sign of decadence, a proof of modern degeneracy. No epoch in which the Church is vital and preaching can ever be wholly lost, and it is our task to look for signs of hope wherever the Spirit has left them—however unlikely the place. Hence, in the darkness of modern totalitarian states, we find the likes of Edith Stein, Viktor Frankl, Karol Wojtyła and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. And in the sterility of post-Christian America, we discover Flannery O’Connor and Walker Percy.

A final temptation comes in the form of fetish, of the imprudent reenactment of recent customs. Such an impulse might lead a college to consider its own past practices somehow sacred. T.S. Eliot warned against this tendency in his essay on tradition: “[I]f the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, ‘tradition’ should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour.” Tradition, especially an intellectual or cultural tradition, involves great labor, not passive reception.

It was with such a great labor that Thomas More College’s board of trustees charged the College in Autumn of 2008, when it asked the faculty to reexamine the school’s thirty-year-old curriculum, in the face

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A liberal arts undergraduate education, such as the one offered by Thomas More College, is an excellent preparation for graduate studies in business and a business career.

—Andrew Abela, Chairman,
Department of Business & Economics,
The Catholic University of America

THOMAS MORE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

CURRICULUM SCHEMA

<i>Term</i>	<i>Classical Languages, Upper Tutorials</i>	<i>Poetry, the Fine Arts, Rhetoric</i>	<i>The Humanities Sequence</i>	<i>Mathematics, Natural Science, Philosophy</i>	<i>Sacred Scripture, Political Philosophy, Theology</i>
First Year					
<i>Fall</i>	Latin Grammar or Greek Grammar (4)	The Way of Beauty (2)	Humanities I: The Greek Inheritance (4)	Natural Science I: Natural History (3)	<i>Expectatio Gentium:</i> The Desire for God (3)
<i>Spring</i>	Latin Grammar or Greek Grammar (4)	The Way of Beauty (2)	Humanities II: Roman and Early Christian Culture (4)	Euclidean Geometry	<i>Redemptor Hominis:</i> The Redeemer (3)
Second Year					
<i>Fall or Spring New Hampshire</i>	Intermediate Latin or Intermediate Greek (4)	Writing Tutorial I: Writing & the Love of Learning (2)	Humanities III: The Christian Civilization of Medieval Europe (4)	Logic (3)	<i>Coram Angelis:</i> Prayer Seeking Understanding (3)
<i>Rome Semester</i>	Intermediate Latin or Intermediate Greek (4)	Poetics (3)	Humanities IV (Rome): Approaches to the Eternal City (4)	Art & Architecture in Rome (3)	<i>Mysterium Salutis:</i> The Teaching of St. Paul (3)
Third Year					
<i>Fall</i>	Junior Tutorial (3)	Writing Tutorial II: The Essay & the Art of Rhetoric (2)	Humanities V: Renaissance & Reformation (4)	Natural Science II: Nature & Motion (3)	On the Good Life I: Ethics (3)
<i>Spring</i>	Junior Tutorial (3)	Writing Tutorial III: Fidelity to the Word (2)	Humanities VI: Enlightenment & Revolution (4)	On the Soul (3)	On the Good Life II: Politics (3)
Fourth Year					
<i>Fall</i>	Senior Tutorial (3)	Senior Thesis Research (2)	Humanities VII: American Civilization (4)	Metaphysics (3)	Divine Economy: Creation, Fall, & Redemption (3)
<i>Spring</i>	Senior Tutorial (3)	Senior Thesis & Defense (2)	Humanities VIII: The Modern Age (4)	<i>Senior Seminar:</i> Nostra Aetate (3)	Life in Christ: Law, Grace, Virtue, and Beatitude (3)

of cultural change, and especially in the light of new educational injunctions offered by two popes—John Paul II, in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and *Fides et Ratio*, and Benedict XVI, in writings such as his “Address to Catholic Educators.” Through spring 2009, then-Provost (now President) William Fahey spearheaded this effort, in close consultation with all active members of the faculty. In the late spring, having taken account of their suggestions, President Fahey submitted the curriculum to the Board of Trustees, which approved it. The resulting sequence of courses appears on the facing page, and will apply to students beginning with the Class of 2013 (this year’s freshmen). Students in earlier classes will continue with the previous curriculum.

The core of the old Humanities sequence, familiar to all Thomas More graduates, remains largely the same, although some key works—for instance, books of the Old Testament—have been moved out of required Humanities sequence into other required courses in Theology. The most significant renovation in the core Humanities class has to do with chronology. The backbone of eight semesters in Humanities will remain in place, but now the courses will be sequenced chronologically, with students beginning in the Ancient world in their first semester, freshman year, and ending their second senior semester with modern and contemporary works. (Previously, all students took the same Humanities seminar at the same time.) The advantages of studying works in chronological order are obvious; the main drawback is that given the college’s size, it will require greater time commitments from our teaching staff—who will, in four years’



The Thomas More College curriculum is ... a strong, contrasting, positive model to counteract the disorienting cafeteria curriculum and the dangerously time-conditioned, short-sighted attractions of premature vocational specialization so common elsewhere. Acknowledging and promoting the interdependence of knowledge and virtue, it is simultaneously Socratic and Christian.

—M.D. Aeschliman, Professor of Education,
Boston University, and Professor of English,
University of Italian Switzerland

time, need to offer not just one section of Humanities each semester, but four (one for each college class). However, the faculty agreed that the greater coherence and clarity offered by a chronological Humanities sequence was worth the sacrifice.

One important addition to the curriculum is an increased emphasis on Theology—the Queen of the sciences, as St. Thomas Aquinas called it. Offered in response to the calls by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI for a renewal of theological studies at Catholic colleges, the new plan of studies increases the number of required Theology courses and offers students classes designed to present perennial wisdom in a fresh manner. Students begin with “*Expectatio Gentium*: Desire for God,” which explores basic questions of belief and doubt, faith and reason, juxtaposing pagan tragedies and the works of famous skeptics against the writings of saints and

popes. In their second semester, freshman year, students take “*Redemptor Hominis*: The Redeemer”—a study of the person, words, sufferings, and deeds of Jesus Christ, Redeemer of Man, as prefigured in the Law, foretold by the Prophets, and proclaimed by the Evangelists. Authors studied range widely from New Testament writers and Fathers of the Church to modern thinkers like Newman and literary artists such as Claudel and Mauriac. The sophomore year is marked by a course in Rome, “*Mysterium Salutis*: The Teaching of St. Paul,” and a course in Merrimack, “*Coram Angelis*,” on the poetry of the Scripture and the Catholic liturgy. Students conclude their theological studies in their senior year with two seminars:

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“The Divine Economy: Creation, Fall & Redemption,” centered on works by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, and “Life in Christ,” which uses the *Summa Theologiae* and Patristic works to examine Grace and the New Law, beatitude and the Beatitudes, the theological virtues—charity, in particular— and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Another important feature of the new curriculum is the two-semester “Way of Beauty” sequence offered by Thomas More College’s Artist-in-Residence David Clayton—a sequence covered in-depth elsewhere in this magazine (see page 16).

Writing courses in the new curriculum have been reconfigured to include a stronger emphasis on the emulation of classical, medieval, and great modern writers; on the traditional art of rhetoric as the attempt (in Richard Weaver’s words) to “write the truth;” and on understanding poetry through the study and writing of formal verse.

Another change in emphasis in the new Thomas More College plan of studies is the choice to privilege breadth over specialization in the last two years. Students will no longer be limited by the choice of majors that divide the undergraduates into three separate “paths,” but instead will be offered a wide array of junior and senior Tutorials that allow them to pursue particular interests with knowledgeable faculty members. Those students who have a strong desire to pursue one academic area will, of course, be able to do so in their choice of Tutorials. These Tutorials will be combined with or supplemented by internships arranged by the

College—for instance, through the Vatican Studies Center, or the Center for Faith and Culture—to help upperclassmen gain critical work experience.

Why go through all the work to craft and implement a rigorous new curriculum? As College President William Fahey has written: “By giving her students a true and integral humanistic formation, Thomas More College enables her graduates to contribute to the evangelization of culture. In an age of cultural dislocation, such a formation must include not only reflection upon the principles of the good life, but also a course of study—almost an immersion—in the great works of Classical and Christian culture and in the lives and writings of the saints, so that the student’s imagination and desires may be shaped in accord with what is truly good and beautiful. This humanistic formation is guided by philosophical and theological ethics and employs the tools of the traditional arts of grammar (through the study of one of the great classical languages), rhetoric, and poetics. Such a formation, culminating in the Tutorials, Junior Project, and Senior Thesis, leads to a kind of eloquence in its possessors, who become ambassadors of the *gaudium de veritate*, the joy in the truth, that is a Catholic education’s characteristic fruit. Like the great Christian humanists throughout the ages—from St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine to St. Thomas More and the Venerable John Henry Newman—the Thomas More College graduate rejoices to have been given the great task of serving the world by communicating the saving truth of the Incarnate Word.”

Not content simply to add Catholic material to an otherwise conventional liberal arts program, the authors of the Thomas More College curriculum have crafted a course of study that communicates traditional Catholic ideas of order and beauty through the very structure of the curriculum itself. Proceeding from the study of classic texts in the fields of language, literature, history, philosophy and theology, the curriculum guides students through an orderly process of intellectual and spiritual development designed to deepen their understanding of Christ, His created universe, and the place of the Church in our world today. In this sense, the curriculum does not simply teach about truth and beauty, but is itself a work of truth and beauty.

—Christopher Shannon, Associate Professor of History, Christendom College

Freshman Orientation

With one of the largest incoming classes in its history, Thomas More College's faculty and incoming freshmen spent two days hiking New Hampshire's White Mountains and discussing the essential role a liberal arts education will play throughout their lives.

After a blessing by the College's chaplain, Fr. William Ventura, the new students climbed the Mt. Willard trail to have lunch on the ledge overlooking Crawford Notch and the Willey Slide—the bare land on Mt. Willey marking the spot of the deadly avalanche recounted by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his short story “The Ambitious Guest,” which the students read as their first homework assignment at the College.

After descending Mt. Willard, the group crossed the rugged Jefferson Notch Road, where deserters of Roger's Rangers, fleeing with loot from their raid against the Indian settlement of St. Francis, lost their way and were destroyed by the elements and the retaliating Indians. Amongst the treasures lost was the “Silver Virgin,” a statue beloved by the Abenaki Indians, based on an image of Our Lord and Lady from the Cathedral of Chartres in France.

Upon arriving at their “base camp,” the Horton Center on Pine Mountain, students enjoyed a dinner of hamburgers and hot dogs, grilled over the campfire, while a fireside chat on the virtues necessary for the academic life rounded out the day. Morning prayer and evening Mass were offered on the heights looking out toward Mount Washington, providing the liturgical frame of each day.

Dawn on Day Two revealed Mt. Madison standing out amidst a cloudless sky and inviting the students and faculty to take to the heights. The students chose expeditions according to their



Thomas More College's Class of 2013 considers which heights to climb.

level of athleticism, with some trekking into Mt. Washington's Tuckerman Ravine to relax by the shore of tiny Hermit Lake, while others joined President William Fahey in the assault of the Boott Spur, one of the high ridges of Mt. Washington. A final group tackled Mt. Adams, the second highest peak in the White Mountains, ascending the celebrated “Chemin-des-Dames”—named for a path in France favored by Louis XV's daughters. The early French, Catholic presence in New Hampshire lingers in many place names.

After a pasta dinner, the students were treated to another campfire chat, as Dr. Fahey expounded the medieval notion of a “Collegium,” as both a society of those who read together and of those bound together in the common pursuit of truth. Well exercised in body and in mind, and with friendships fast forming, the new Thomas More College students returned to campus full of enthusiasm for their first year of studies.

Thomas More College Students Walk for Life

On Sunday, October 4, Thomas More College students made the short, 45-minute trek south to Boston to join thousands of concerned citizens for the events marking Respect Life Sunday, sponsored by Massachusetts Citizens for Life, among other organizations. The day was launched with a Mass in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, followed by a rally on the Boston Common, and a 5K walk through the streets of the city to increase awareness of the life issue and raise much-needed funds for a variety of pro-life services for expectant and new mothers.



Students were led by the College's Writer-in-Residence and literature teacher Dr. John Zmirak. "I think it's really important that people get involved in fighting for the sanctity of life while they are still young," Dr. Zmirak said. "I started my pro-life activism at age 11, taking signatures for the Right-to-Life Party in New York. That helped me to commit to the issue, learn about it, and embark on a lifetime of activism."

Students came out of the event eager for more. "The Walk for Life was a great opportunity for me to stand up for what I believe in, and get my opinion on a matter of vital importance out in the public eye," said junior Julia Baaten, who helped carry the college banner through Boston streets.

Another banner-carrier, sophomore Nicole Bertini, said, "I participated in the Walk for Life because unborn children are precious gifts from God and have every right to be born and lead lives of their own. It was an empowering event filled with the glowing energy of people who were happy to be there, happy to celebrate the sanctity of life."

Junior Micah Kurtz said the event gave him hope: "A beautiful sunny day made the perfect setting for such a worthy cause. Joining thousands of other people committed to the sanctity of life was quite a moving experience. It helped strengthen my own belief that the pro-life cause will one day prevail," he said.

"I'm moved and edified by the number of students who turned out this week, and the enthusiasm they showed—even in the face of hostile counter-demonstrators who taunted us as we marched, praying the Rosary," said Dr. Zmirak.

Thomas More College encourages additional pro-life activities, including internships at the D.C.-based Culture of Life Foundation, where beginning in 2008,



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www.ThomasMoreCollege.edu/Donate

TMC students conducted research with leading Catholic bioethicist Dr. William May on the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.

Throughout the national initiative 40 Days for Life, each Saturday Thomas More College students made their way to abortion sites in nearby Manchester, NH, to pray and witness outside the clinics. The school also plans to take part in marches on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, January 22, 2010.

Recent alumnus Teddy Sifert, who now works at a school serving handicapped children, recalled, "At Thomas More College, pro-life activities were the paragon upon which we could see reality all around us. All the gifts given to us by God depend on the most basic right to life."

Even as he took part in the academic search for Truth, Sifert wondered, "How can we claim to pursue truth when the worst falsehood in human history is taking place right in our own neighborhoods? Abortion has killed more people than all the plagues,

famines, genocides, and wars combined."

"After graduation," Teddy said, "I gave up much more lucrative positions in order to work for Sen. Sam Brownback, who passed laws protecting preborn children with Down's Syndrome. Some 97 percent of children who even have a slight chance of being diagnosed with this disability are eliminated through abortion," he said.

"I've noticed that while many graduates from big universities float through life on ever-changing feelings, my classmates chose different careers, grounded in truth and virtue," said Teddy.

Every four years, presidential candidates make their way through New Hampshire, seeking venues where they can garner support. In its 30-year history, Thomas More College has welcomed a wide variety of such candidates—but only those who stand with the Church in defense of innocent life, Dr. Zmirak pointed out. "And that's the stance every Catholic college ought to take."

L'Admirable Jane

The Novelist as Witness

BY DR. CHRISTOPHER O. BLUM,
PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES AND ACADEMIC DEAN

In a letter of August, 1819, the Catholic statesman and philosopher Joseph de Maistre wrote to his friend the Comte de Marcellus the mournful line: "I die with Europe; I am in good company." To Maistre, it was plain that the triumph of the Holy Alliance at the end of the French Revolutionary wars had only bound Europe's wounds, but that deep within the cultural diseases brought on by the Enlightenment continued to fester. Like Maistre, Jane Austen saw that the Christian civilization of the West was waning, and she understood the causes, especially a fatal contraction of the moral imagination and a steady loss of generosity of spirit. If she had lived to complete *Sanditon*, only just begun when she died in 1817, her readers would possess a far more biting satire of the fevered mind of the new nineteenth century than that of any of her completed novels. Yet even in *Persuasion*, the last novel she did finish, the contrast between Sir Walter Elliot and his daughter, the heroine Anne, places in sharp relief the characteristic vices of modern barbarism and the ideals and practices of a decent, godly civilization.

Elliot was a "foolish, spendthrift baronet" who had so wantonly squandered his inheritance that he was forced to let his ancestral home, Kellynch Hall, to a naval officer and his wife. Throughout *Persuasion*, Austen paints in high relief: the "heartless elegance" and the

"prosperity and nothingness" of Sir Walter and his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, stand in sharp contrast to the quiet, patient, understated generosity and right judgment of Anne and the manly, vigorous magnanimity of the hero, Captain Wentworth. What is so striking about Sir Walter is the narrowness of his mind. He can no longer imagine a life spent fulfilling the "duties and dignities of a resident landowner." To him, noble birth was not a vocation to service; it was a precious release from toil that enabled him to attend properly to what interested him most: his person. "Vanity," the novelist tells us, "was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character."

What a clever *reductio ad absurdum* the shallow baronet presents to the moral theory of David Hume, who has been lauded as the Enlightenment's most characteristic and lasting voice. To Hume, life was a theater of the passions, which reason served rather than ruled. Reason, he held, could not seize upon a coherent account of man's nature and end as an ideal to which the will could adhere, but could only divert the passions by setting one against another. To instill public feeling and a regard for virtuous living was, to Hume, a utopian plan; but should the statesman lower his sights, he might at least make use of our natural propensity towards vanity and the love of comfort to stimulate productive activity: "it is requisite to govern men by other passions, and animate them with a spirit of avarice and in-



dust, art and luxury.” “Commerce with strangers,” wrote Hume, “rouses men from their indolence” by creating in them “a desire of a more splendid way of life than what their ancestors enjoyed.” To set free the love of vain display and the desire always to have more things may indeed, for a time, spur gainful activity. Yet, as the ancients knew, our inordinate desire for wealth springs, ultimately, from our mortality, as we seek to stave off pain and death by surrounding ourselves with material possessions. Greed, like every other vice, eventually frustrates itself, saps the vitality of the soul, and ends by turning the person in upon himself. Austen’s Sir Walter Elliot is, therefore, an accurate portrayal of the result of a life spent satisfying selfish desires. He has lost his land, and, tellingly, has raised no son to stand in his place after his death.

Yet Austen’s *Persuasion* is no tragedy. The cheerful generosity of Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth is the ready antidote to the sapped vitality of Sir Walter. Those who would condemn her novels as optimistic, or, like Emerson, dismiss them as “vulgar in tone, sterile in artistic invention, [and] imprisoned in the wretched conventions of English society,” will be surprised if they can bring themselves to read them without a jaundiced eye. Although her stories all have happy endings, Austen was a confirmed realist in her appraisal of human nature. “Pictures of perfection,” she once said to her niece, “make me sick and wicked.” Anne Elliot is indeed shown visiting the poor and the sick, smoothing over the bitterness that inevitably creeps into family life, and, most impressively, denying herself in little ways, such as when she plays the piano so that the Musgrove sisters might enjoy a dance with Captain Wentworth, or consents to leave the injured Louisa Musgrove in the care of her less-capable sister Mary, in order to preserve peace in the family. But these are the quiet good deeds of measured and ordinary goodness. There is nothing flashy or captivating about Anne, merely the well-ordered life of a woman confirmed in her love for the good. And in Captain Wentworth, we see the struggles and false-starts of a man battling against himself, warm-hearted and generous, but also impulsive and apt to nourish a grudge. Hero and heroine together are, then, approachable and believable characters. Jane Austen’s novels are not sermons; they do not need to be, for the rightful consideration of human nature reveals moral truth. As faithful and accurate mirrors held up to nature, her novels almost insensibly lead their readers to the good by bearing witness to the essential rightness of Christian civilization.

Christopher O. Blum, Academic Dean, contributed the Introduction to the Ignatius Critical Edition of Jane Austen’s Pride & Prejudice (Ignatius Press, 2008).



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REFLECTIONS ON A YEAR FOR PRIESTS

An Interview with Fr. William Ventura

Father William N. Ventura, Parochial Vicar of St. John the Evangelist Parish in North Chelmsford, Massachusetts, and a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston joined the chaplaincy of Thomas More College in the Fall of 2008. The College's Academic Dean, Dr. Christopher Blum, interviewed him for Communitas.

Our Holy Father Benedict XVI has proclaimed A Year for Priests to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Jean-Marie Vianney, offering the patron saint of parish priests to us as a “point of reference.” What do you find most inspiring about the priesthood of the Curé d’Ars?

What I find most inspiring in the life of the Cure is his singular devotion to, and zeal for, the salvation of souls. He did not view himself as a social worker, or an administrator, but as a pastor, after the very heart of Christ, that would do all that is necessary to bring men to God, and God to men. This is most evident in his devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, through the Holy Mass and Adoration, and through his long hours spent hearing Confessions, reconciling souls to God and to His Church.

The Holy Father tells us that he intends for the Year for Priests to “deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel.” How does interior renewal contribute to evangelization?

We simply cannot give what we do not have. Interior renewal for the sake of stronger and more

incisive witness to the Gospel consists of growing in friendship with Christ through His Church. Unless we possess this friendship, most uniquely and perfectly through His Church, we cannot invite or lead others to it. A priest is configured, sacramentally, to Christ—in Whose persona he works at the altar or in the confessional. A priest who does not live up to this friendship cannot invite others to true Friendship with Christ. His attempts at evangelization will, then, become sterile and unable to impart the grace that leads to the transformation in Christ, through His Church, that all are called to.

Benedict XVI asked priests to place the sacrament of Penance “at the center of our pastoral concerns,” and in Caritas in Veritate has called upon Christians to rededicate themselves to charitable works. What is the connection between confession and the exercise of “charity in truth”?

True charity is first directed at God, then at neighbor. However, before we can truly love God, we must recognize that we are first loved by God. Outside of the Holy Mass, this love is best expressed in the confessional. In the sacrament of

Penance, we kneel before the Beloved and express contrition for our violations of His Love, and He embraces us, heals us through His Blood, and continues the work of lovingly restoring His image within our soul. After receiving this outpouring of divine Love, we must now love even more fervently, more zealously, Our Lord, and seek to serve Him where He is found, among and in the “least of the brethren”. As St. John of the Cross wrote, “Love is repaid by Love alone.”

In his homily on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, the Holy Father issued this beautiful invitation: “Together let us pause to contemplate the pierced heart of the Crucified One.” How can the lay faithful join priests in profiting from the *Year for Priests*?

When one part of the Body is properly raised up, all others benefit. When our priests grow in holiness, so do the laity. By dedicating a *Year for Priests*, we look to the priest as head and shepherd, as a Father, and we call him to be more deeply what He is called to be: another Christ, a mediator between God and man leading all to the Father, and dispensing His grace freely upon the faithful. The abundance of grace that flows through the ministry of a holy priest is the

greatest benefit to the Church and the world. That is what this special year seeks to bring about.

There is an urgent need, Benedict XVI says, for “the lives and activities of priests to be distinguished by a *determined* witness to the Gospel.” Do you think that young men today especially need to cultivate the virtue of *fortitude* in order to respond to a vocation to the priesthood?

Without fortitude, our pursuit of virtue fails. We must drive on, constantly, toward the goal of transformation in Christ, in spite of great odds, great obstacles, and great trials. Fortitude strikes at the heart of the meaning of the word virtue, which in the Latin denotes manliness and courage. Without fortitude, there can be no courageous men who are willing to step forward and follow Christ to the very gates of Hell in order to pull the soul back from its brink. Fortitude is essential to healthy manhood, essential to living life as Christ calls us to, and essential to priestly ministry—for the priest is called in a singular and unique way to bravely face whatever may come in order to be transformed in Christ, and lead others to that same transformation.

THOMAS MORE COLLEGE RELEASES

God's Covenant with You

by Scott Hahn

Featuring icons by Thomas More College's Artist-in-Residence David Clayton, *God's Covenant with You* draws children into biblical stories through beautiful drawings that teach the Catholic faith on many levels.

This coloring book is a simple approach to the Bible that communicates the Covenant to children aged 8-12.

SCOTT HAHN
God's Covenant with You



The Bible Tells a Story
illustrated by
DAVID CLAYTON

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THE WAY OF *Beauty*

Why is so much modern art either hideous or banal? How did we get to the point where architects could get away with building in a style they candidly called “Brutalism”? (And it was.) Are we indulging mere prejudice or priggishness when we prefer to pray in buildings that are Baroque rather than Bauhaus? And is it mere philistinism to prefer Byzantine or Baroque religious art to the crude or childish scrawls that mark so many modern churches?

Thomas More College’s Artist-in-Residence David Clayton has answers to these questions, but he would prefer to turn them around. “The real issue,” he says, “is why we find things beautiful. Does there exist a divinely-created order that we can discover in nature, articulate in mathematics and philosophy, and express through music, painting, and prayer? The Western tradition, beginning with the Greeks and continuing through the Middle Ages and the Baroque, answers all these questions, ‘Yes.’ Artistic Modernism, a mirror of modern secularism, says ‘No.’ It takes as its starting point the empty, soulless world depicted by materialist theories of science. It abandons the tradition that Creation is a good and orderly place where man was meant to live in a certain harmony with nature, so the art that emerges lacks order, significant form, reverence and beauty. It doesn’t even strive to be beautiful, but ‘interesting’ and ‘original,’” Clayton says.

At Thomas More College, Clayton—a graduate of Oxford University—is dedicated to passing along to students the older, truer tradition. At an exclusive *atelier* in Florence, he learned the classical techniques of realist painting once practiced by the likes of Velasquez, then went on to study the theology and techniques of Byzantine art from Russian masters. And now at Thomas More College, he incorporates that knowledge in the year-long seminar taken by every freshman called “The Way of Beauty.”

As Clayton says, “Inspired by John Paul II’s ‘Letter to Artists,’ I had been on a mission for several years to establish an art school that could train creative people to serve the Church. Such training must be rooted in traditional principles and in a deep understanding of what we are doing. My goal is to form a living tradition that can develop and respond to the needs of the time without compromising on the timeless principles of beauty, truth, goodness, and unity that underlie all genuinely Catholic art.”

Arriving at Thomas More College as Artist-in-Residence in spring 2008, Clayton offered interested students a course in the techniques and spirituality of painting Byzantine icons—and the experience led him to broaden his ambitions. “Instead of simply focusing on cultivating artists, I realized how

(continued)



broadly the principles I was preaching could be applied,” he recalls. So he crafted a course designed to convey to any student, whatever his aptitude, the Western artistic and musical tradition in a theological context.

The course draws on works of pre-Christian classical thinkers, the Church Fathers (especially St. Augustine and Boethius) who created the Christian theology of Beauty, medieval thinkers such as Aquinas and Bonaventure, and the writings of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who place this theology in a modern context. These ideas are conveyed through the study and practice of Gregorian chant in praying the Daily Office, and the exploration of geometry in art.

“Traditional artistic training not only taught people the skills, but also the ability to apprehend beauty. This aspect can be taught to all, and learning it can transform a student—open him up to beauty, increase his capacity to love what is good, and elevate his soul to God. Since beauty (like truth) is objectively real, these benefits are equally available to those who aren’t artistically inclined,” Clayton explains.

He continues: “The traditional quadrivium is essentially the study of pattern, harmony, symmetry and order in nature and mathematics, viewed as a reflection of the Divine Order—which is best reflected in the rhythms and cycles of the liturgy. Christian culture, like classical culture before it, was patterned after this cosmic order, whose unifying principle runs through every traditional discipline. Literature, art, music, architecture, philosophy—all of creation and, potentially, all human activity—are bound together by this common harmony and receive their fullest meaning in the Church’s liturgy.” In this tradition, Thomas More College freshmen are learning how to chant the office of Lauds.

The sequence Clayton crafted is multidisciplinary and multimedia. “The course is directed towards the creation of beauty as well as its appreciation. We chant the Liturgy of the Hours, relating the structure of the Office to the Mass and the heavenly Liturgy. We link the form found in the music to the principles of geometric harmony found in the visual arts. Then we use those principles for drawing. So the course weaves together geometry, musical harmony, and theology—as

the great artists, writers, and thinkers of the Middle Ages always tried to do.”

Oxford University-based theologian and editor Statford Caldecott acclaims the Way of Beauty course as “one of the most original features of the revised curriculum at Thomas More College. At the same time, it is one of the most traditional, in the best sense of the word. A recovery of such a vital element in the Liberal Arts is long overdue,” he said.

Other theologians agree. Rev. John Saward, author of *The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty* (Ignatius Press), writes: “I am tempted to apply the phrase Cardinal Newman used to describe the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England: Here is the promise of a ‘second spring.’ At the very moment when functionalism and nihilism seem to be triumphant in secular society, a program appears in a Catholic college that demonstrates the undying vitality of arts ordered according to truth, goodness, and beauty.”

And the Way of Beauty course is far more than an introduction to art history or music appreciation, according to Clayton. “The practical creation of beauty transforms students. First, it develops the habit of conforming the whole person to divine order, which is impressed by de-

THOMAS MORE

On Oct. 15, 2009, Thomas More College made practical use of sacred art that was created through the Way of Beauty Program—enthroning in the college chapel an icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus painted by David Clayton in his studio on campus. The image was blessed and incensed as part of a votive Mass that consecrated Thomas More College to the Sacred Heart, celebrated by college chaplain Fr. John Healy.

The liturgy also included the Litany of the Sacred Heart, recited by the whole college community, then a pledge to the Sacred Heart to strive in “person...life...actions...pains, and sufferings... to do all things for



grees upon the soul. Second, it exercises and sanctifies our creative intellect. Now, God's intellect is purely creative: If He thinks something, it is. The prayerful creation of beauty is therefore a step closer to our heavenly destiny. Third, when beauty is created, it is a gift for God and directs the hearts of others to glorify Him. Therefore, it is an act of love."

The results of such an aesthetic education are not all ethereal, Clayton insists. "When we apprehend beauty, we do so intuitively. So an education that improves our ability to apprehend beauty also develops our intuition. All creativity, even that employed in business or scientific endeavors, is, at its source, intuitive. Such creativity generates not just more ideas, but better ideas—better because they are more in harmony with the natural order. Recognizing beauty moves us to love what we see, to love God and our fellow man, and serve them," he says.

While the Way of Beauty course has only just gotten underway—so it is a little early to write a review—

An education that improves our ability to apprehend beauty also develops our intuition. All creativity is at its source intuitive. Such creativity generates not just more ideas, but better ideas...

students who took Clayton's icon painting course in 2008 received an introduction to its principles. And they were captivated.

"I had taken drawing and art classes before, but none with such guidelines and ideals toward which to strive—none which had taught me not only to *seek*, but to *know* that for which I was looking. Religiously, this is the ideal," said Rebecca McGarry (*Class of 2009*). "Icon painting, for me, is a new mode of perception with

a new medium of presentation—a portrait both of faith and of human understanding. It is, through art and paint, oil and brush, the ceaseless exploration of the human and the divine."

Joseph Mazzarella (*Class of 2009*) recalls the structure of Clayton's class: "It began with chanting different prayers that served to focus the mind and direct the soul to higher things, so students of different beliefs together were able to move to think with one mind oriented toward truth through beauty. For three months,

(continued)

COLLEGE CONSECRATED TO THE SACRED HEART

the love of Him, at the same time renouncing what is displeasing to Him."

"It was important that my first year as president begin with this clear display of devotion," said Dr. William Fahey, President of Thomas More College. "Pope Pius XII referred to the devotion to the Sacred Heart as the 'devotion of devotions.' It is a simple spiritual and intellectual acceptance of the person and mission of Our Lord. We accept Jesus as the Christ, the redeemer, as our Sovereign Lord, and we accept His mission as a mission of mercy for all men."

After the homily, the faculty recited a Profession of Faith, containing the Creed as well as a testimony accepting the entirety of Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and the ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Church. Following this, Dr. Fahey, with his right hand on the chapel Bible, took the Oath of Fidelity on Assuming Office, pledging to see that under his leadership the College will safeguard "the deposit of faith in its entirety" and "faithfully hand it on and explain it." All faculty teaching theology or Sacred Scripture at Thomas More College have also received the Mandatum from the Bishop of Manchester.

Thomas More College senior, Paul Kniaz, said, "We're all trying to restore the image of Christ's Sacred Heart in ourselves. I think that is something we can do as a community as well. This event established our education as having that as its goal."

David Clayton said, "It is quite an honor and a privilege to have the work I created for the College chapel, as a part of my duties here, be engrafted into the liturgical life of the College. It is precisely along these lines that most sacred art has traditionally been created—to serve a specific devotional need."



POPE JOHN PAUL II ON THE ARTS

None can sense more deeply than you artists, ingenious creators of beauty that you are, something of the pathos with which God at the dawn of creation looked upon the work of his hands. A glimmer of that feeling has shone so often in your eyes when—like the artists of every age—captivated by the hidden power of sounds and words, colors and shapes, you have admired the work of your inspiration, sensing in it some echo of the mystery of creation with which God, the sole creator of all things, has wished in some way to associate you....

God therefore called man into existence, committing to him the craftsman's task. Through his 'artistic creativity' man appears more than ever 'in the image of God,' and he accomplishes this task above all in shaping the wondrous 'material' of his own humanity and then exercising creative dominion over the universe which surrounds him. With loving regard, the divine Artist passes on to the human artist a spark of his own surpassing wisdom, calling him to share in his creative power.

Every genuine art form in its own way is a path to the inmost reality of man and of the world. It is therefore a wholly valid approach to the realm of faith, which gives human experience its ultimate meaning. That is why the Gospel fullness of truth was bound from the beginning to stir the interest of artists, who by their very nature are alert to every 'epiphany' of the inner beauty of things.

—"Letter to Artists," 1999

it wasn't just our hands that Mr. Clayton guided, but also our hearts, regularly educating us in the symbolism of the varied and seemingly trivial aspects of icons that otherwise disappear before the untrained eye. He painted along with us, using his own icon as an example, and moved from one of us to another, redirecting our work as we moved along. The results of this were startling; each and every icon was different but beautiful, showing the model from which we all worked and our own individual styles." (The completed icons were exhibited for parents and guests of the college at Commencement 2009.)

Recent graduate Joe Ellis (*Class of 2009*), opines: "Learning the history of iconography fit perfectly into our education as modeled after the medieval monastic college. The icon class was the perfect combination of all of our major studies: it incorporated the mathematics of Euclid, the philosophy of the early Church, the literature of the Gospels, and the inquiry into the psyche of both the artists and their subjects," he said.

What is more, Ellis explained: "This may amuse you, but I find my education follows me even into the kitchen. I made three pizzas for someone, all of different sizes. I laid out the pans for them, did a double-take, and re-arranged them so that they were ascending circles, as we often discussed in class. It was an inspiring moment, because, for the rest of that night, I thought about Euclid and how I could apply his geometry to the apartment I am converting."



Thomas More College students follow the way of Beauty that leads to truth, learning the monastic discipline of icon "writing" from Artist-in-Residence David Clayton.



A Basket of Riddles

*Composed by members of the Junior Class for
the course "Love and the City," and compiled
by guest Instructor Dr. Amy Fahey.*

I.
I rise with the dead, refuse is my refreshment
Some rue life's passing, but I rejoice and grow.
Food for me is men or beast or plant.
Upon the leaf-floor I gain my footing
And would make a hardy stool, if I were stronger.
Among the dead my kingdom is boundless,
But the living can still pluck me whole
And toss me, a silly creature, into their salad bowl.
—Jesse Brandow

II.
Gathered fields for gathering
I once was scattered stalks of sun,
supple limbs as an archer's bow
enmeshed, embracing, becoming one.
Now firmly bound to my new ties
I hold my baby soundly sleeping,
or sixteen daisies proudly peeping,
or jars of jam with painted label
—unless I choose to grace the table.
—Lucy M. Domina

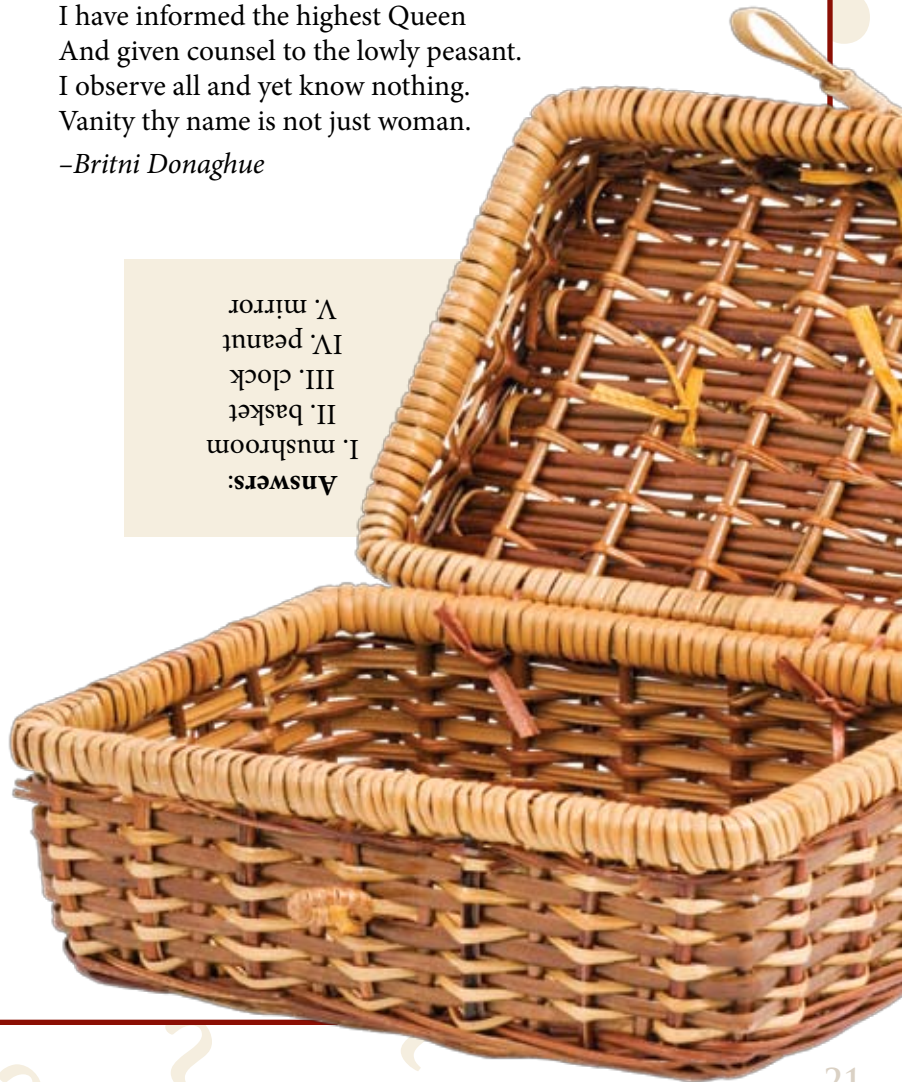
III.
My hands never stop, and across my face
moves all the action of the world, though I
do not move. Men wrap me round with metal
bars and wear me all the day, they hate
to see me; yet they love me, too.
To some I have replaced the sun, no light
They need with me. I am relentless with
my tick which reigns whenever silence is.
Three things I measure out in harmony
so to make by three a unity of one,
bound together in a tick, which men do
live by and grow sick by. So men
have put this element in me, and though
they wear me and keep me bound,
they will never ever master it, for it
encaptures them instead with stronger chains.
—Paul Kniaz

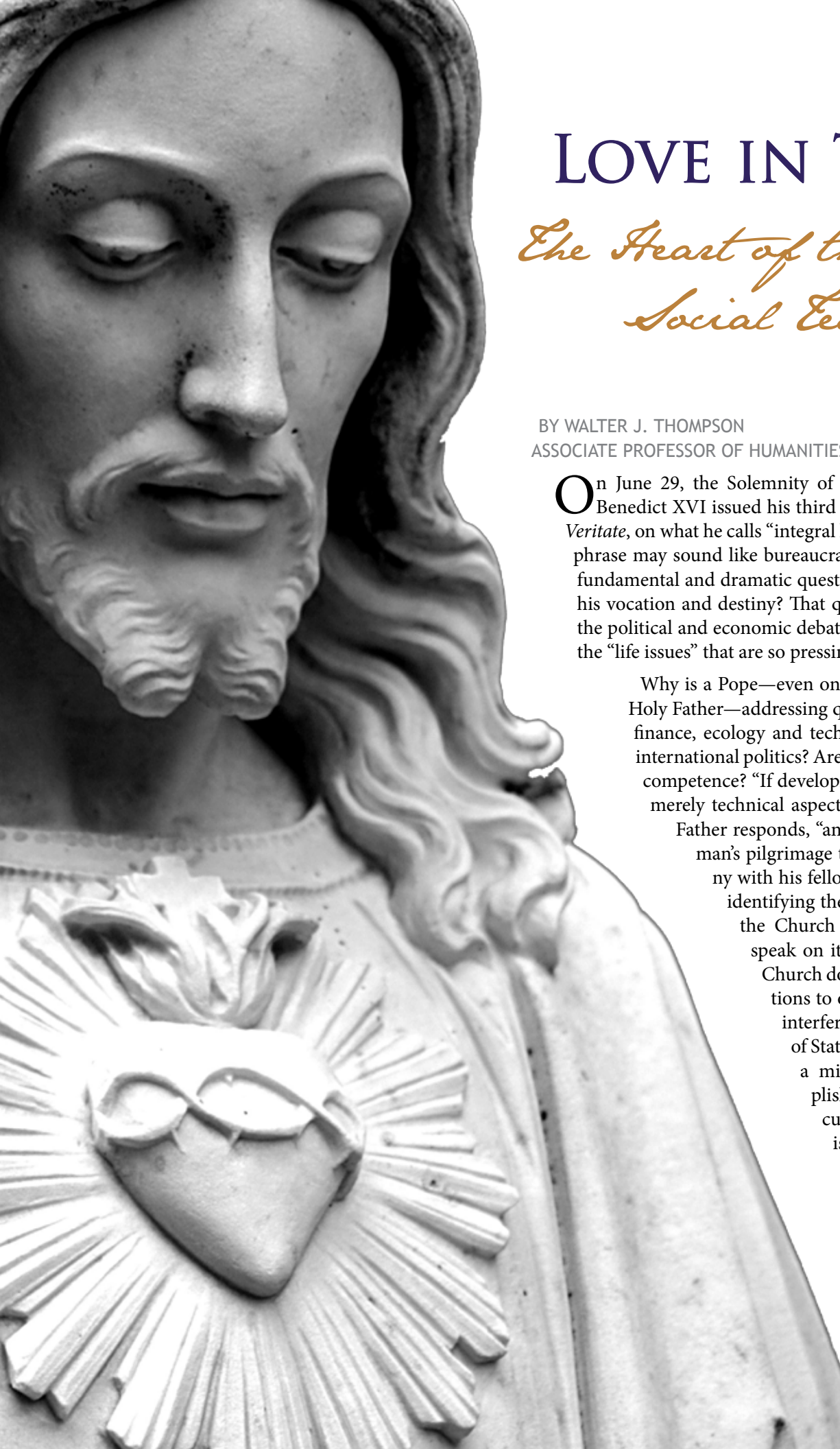
IV.
The earth embraced me
And with oak roots lay
My kids were two to cradle
In bayous they boiled me
I fed the snake snout
Carver discovered me
I house now in jars
Loved, lord and lowly alike.
—Bill Herreid

V.
My face is not my own,
Ever changing and yet always remaining the same
Friend of pride allied with Fate—
I have informed the highest Queen
And given counsel to the lowly peasant.
I observe all and yet know nothing.
Vanity thy name is not just woman.
—Britni Donaghue

and I bound bands through it
loathed then by lords.
or even a third crammed in.
and in brown bags bought me.
and circus goer the same.
and crushed my kin.
and with jams and jellies lie
What is my name?

Answers:
I. mushroom
II. basket
III. clock
IV. peanut
V. mirror





LOVE IN TRUTH

The Heart of the Church's Social Teaching

BY WALTER J. THOMPSON
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES

On June 29, the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, Pope Benedict XVI issued his third encyclical letter, *Caritas in Veritate*, on what he calls “integral human development.” That phrase may sound like bureaucratic jargon, but it implies a fundamental and dramatic question: What is man? What is his vocation and destiny? That question lies at the heart of the political and economic debates of our time, particularly the “life issues” that are so pressing.

Why is a Pope—even one as learned as the present Holy Father—addressing questions of economics and finance, ecology and technology, globalization, and international politics? Aren’t such matters outside his competence? “If development were concerned with merely technical aspects of human life,” the Holy Father responds, “and not with the meaning of man’s pilgrimage through history in company with his fellow human beings, nor with identifying the goal of that journey, then the Church would not be entitled to speak on it.” On such questions, “the Church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim to interfere in any way in the politics of States. She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation.”

The Church, “being at God’s service, is at the service of the world.” She has a duty to shed the light of the Gospel

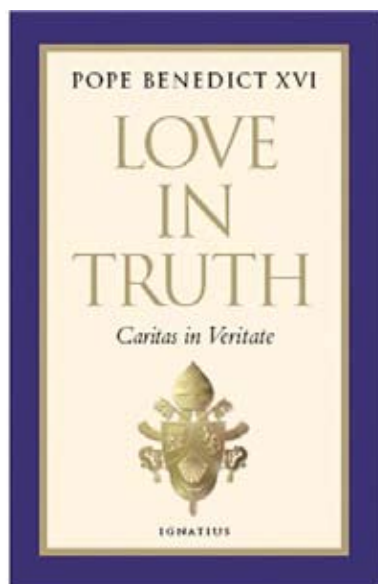
on contemporary problems, to bear witness to the truth that sets us free. In this she imitates Christ, who came that we might have life and have it abundantly.

The Holy Father has much to say on many subjects, but his central concern is to set forth the “heart of the Church’s social doctrine,” the principle from which all responsibility in social life flows. That principle is rooted in the heart of the Church’s faith, which the Pope had treated in his first encyclical, *Deus caritas est*.

For Christians, “everything has its origin in God’s love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it.” God so loved the world that He gave His only Son for our salvation. Christ reveals “in all its fullness the initiative of love and the plan for true life that God has prepared for us.” We are called to love in return, to pour forth the love we have received. Every duty of one man to another is ultimately derived from love, for love is the sum and fulfillment of the Law. The Church’s social teaching is nothing but “the proclamation of the truth of Christ’s love in society.”

Love, however, cannot be built on lies. It must recognize and promote the “integral good” of the beloved. Without truth to inform it, charity becomes an empty sentiment that demands nothing in particular. Without love to inspire it, “social action becomes a game of private interests and the logic of power.” In short, without “charity in truth” there is no human development, for there is neither a goal to seek nor the will to seek it.

To love in truth, we must understand who it is we are loving and what is his good. We must liberate ourselves from reductionist visions of man and recognize his true dignity and calling. Much of the encyclical is given over to laying out the central goods of a complete human life—from the fundamental good of life, through bodily and external goods such as health and wealth, to moral and intellectual goods such as justice and truth, to spiritual goods such as charity. “Charity in truth” wills and works for the development “of the whole man and of every man.”



*Without truth to inform it,
charity becomes an empty
sentiment that demands
nothing in particular.*

The truth to which our love must correspond precedes us and must be discovered and accepted. We find it written on the heart in the natural moral law and further revealed in the Gospel. “God reveals man to himself; reason and faith work hand in hand to demonstrate to us what is good, provided we want to see it.” In the work of discovering truth, reason needs to be supported and purified by faith, liberated from the distortions of ideology and the pull of private interests.

Authentic human development should be the goal of social action at every level, from the household through the corporation to the state and beyond. As nations and peoples become ever more interdependent, their common action should aim at an ever more common good. The forces of globalization should be humanized, directed toward the integral good of the entire hu-

man family. But we cannot build such a society by our own strength. Fraternity among men “originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, Who loved us first, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is.” Only if we heed that call and learn from Christ can we recognize one another and live as brothers. “The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and allows itself to be guided by truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God.”

Integral human development is a vocation that requires a “free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone.” Because human beings are free, development can never be guaranteed by automatic and impersonal forces or structures. It cannot be effected by “invisible hands,” whether of the market or of technological progress. “Development is impossible without upright men and women.” There can be no social good without good people—people who love justice, who prefer the common good to private gain, who are ready to give and forgive. Without growth in wisdom and charity, there can be no human development.

With this encyclical, the Pope offers his contribution to true and complete human development, bearing witness to “charity in truth,” its motive and ultimate measure.

Feasts and Seasons

THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN, DECEMBER 27



Of all Jesus' Apostles, the only one who didn't die violently was Jesus' favorite, John. All the others were murdered, mostly by the Romans (though some enterprising rabbis may have tossed St. James the Lesser from the roof of the Temple in Jerusalem). Stories vary as to how John survived to become the old man who wrote the Apocalypse. The most enduring legend tells that pagans attempted to poison the apostle's wine. But when John made a simple blessing over his cup, a serpent leapt out of his wine, winked at him, and crawled away. And here is the really telling part: *John didn't send the bottle back.* Like any connoisseur, John knew that you're only supposed to do this if the wine has been spoiled by corkage. Instead, John calmly drank the cup and walked away unharmed.



This story inspired Catholics in later centuries to make St. John a patron saint of vintners, and bless wine on his feast day (Dec. 27), with the following prayer (taken from the Roman Ritual):

Lord Jesus Christ, Who spoke of Yourself as the true vine and the Apostles as the branches, and Who willed to plant a chosen vineyard of all Who love You, bless + this wine and empower it with Your blessing; so that all who taste or drink of it may, through the intercession of Your beloved disciple John, Apostle and Evangelist, be spared every deadly and poisonous affliction and enjoy bodily and spiritual well-being. We ask this of You Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Glühwein

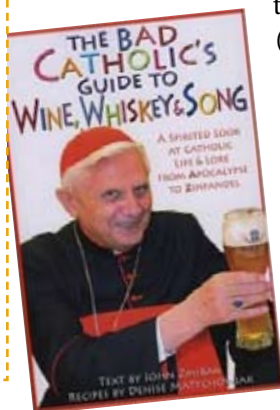
- 1 750 ml bottle red wine (preferably made by monks)
- 1 orange, sliced in rings peel of another orange
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 4 cloves

Directions:

Combine all ingredients. Simmer 15 minutes. Strain and serve warm.

CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN

German-speaking Catholics still mark St. John's feast day by brewing up a tasty batch of mulled *Glühwein*, a hot, fruity drink which helps ward off the Teutonic winter. The English drink something similar, which they call "Bishop Wine," (as an apostle, John was one of the first 11 bishops). The same drink in Sweden is called *Glogg*, and in the Netherlands *Bisschopswijn*—though the Nether folk serve it on the Feast of St. Nicholas (Dec. 6). Why not warm up your Christmas season by lading a bowl of this concoction for your friends and family? One old custom has it that at each cup, you offer your loved ones this toast: "I drink you the love of St. John," and between the toasts read aloud a quote from St. John's Gospel, such as "God is love." (1 John 4:8)



Adapted from *The Bad Catholic's Guide to Wine, Whiskey, & Song*, by TMC Writer-in-Residence Dr. John Zmirak (www.badcatholics.com).

Ruminatio

considerations from an academic life

BY WILLIAM EDMUND FAHEY, PRESIDENT AND PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES

In one of his *Adages*, Erasmus comments on the ancient proverb, *mentiuntur multa cantores*—“considerable are the lies sung by poets.” Erasmus’s thoughts are built around the appearance of the proverb in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Erasmus rightly distinguishes between the kinds of poets and poems meant by the proverb. It is not to be taken as a sweeping condemnation of poetry, but rather a warning against soothing or seductive words that “tickle the ear” of the listener and make him think highly of himself. In short, it is a warning against flattery.

“Flattery” is not a word derived from Latin, but from Old French: *flater*, to stroke or charm with the hand. The essence of flattery is to provide a false comfort about someone’s situation. St. Thomas Aquinas, in his treatment of flattery in the *Summa Theologiae*, drew upon a passage from Ezekiel to mark his turning towards a conclusion (his *sed contra*) about flattery: “Thus saith the Lord God: Woe to them that sew cushions under every elbow and make pillows for the head of persons of every age to catch their souls” (Ezek. 13:18). Thomas, it should not surprise us, condemned flattery as a sin—though venial, in most instances.

Filled with desire to motivate his students, a professor can find himself tempted to sew such venial pillows. It can appear easy and effective to tell students—regardless of their real abilities or accomplishments—that they are “the best” that one has ever taught. Equally, the college professor grasping for motivation can be tempted to preach that the life of the student is the highest life, higher in fact than that of the teacher. This is flattery of the highest degree, and it often leads to despair or deepening delusions. Some students—catching on after a time that each class is “the best”—will perceive the meaningless of the statement and grow afraid that their education is, in fact, counterfeit. Others, wittingly or not, will delve deeper into the mines of their own self-love, taking the initial flattery and building more elaborate tunnels to find gold for their idol. This is not to suggest that there is no place for praise and encouragement, only that experience is an austere master, but one who must be obeyed.

Altiora te ne quaesieris (“Do not seek things above you”)—this was an adage older than those of Erasmus. Toward the end of his book, *The Intellectual Life*, A.G. Sertillanges meditates on the meaning of the ancient saying. He offers this expansion: “Every work is great when it is exact in measure. A work that exceeds its proper limits is worst of all.” Such a notion can only be cast in the teeth of our age. Ungoverned curiosity and ambition are commonly elevated as virtues essential to the academic life. They are not. Joyfulness and constancy; perseverance and humility; gratitude and discipline; these are virtues proper to an academic life.

For the teacher, the appearance of the student each autumn is, indeed, a miracle and a warning. In a sense, the arrival of the autumn student with all his green questions, sprung from a desire for knowledge, quickens the renewal of the teacher’s own heart and mind, focused perhaps overly long on the same truths, while often failing to see them. The arrival of September’s youth prompts him to ask whether he has exercised the virtues proper to his vocation. The verge of each academic year is a beautiful moment, a moment of change which prompts the teacher (to borrow words from Richard Wilbur) “to sunder/ Things from thing’s selves for a second finding, to lose/For a moment all that it touches back to wonder.” For in wonder is the beginning of wisdom, both at first and again.



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think again.

The great G.K. Chesterton once said, “The great majority of people will go on observing forms that cannot be explained; they will keep Christmas Day with Christmas gifts and Christmas benedictions; they will continue to do it; and some day suddenly wake up and discover why.”

Let’s hope they do, but, in the meantime, Christmas has become something of an embarrassment in an increasingly secular society, which tends to convert it into an orgy of commercialism and sentiment. Yet the “spirit of Christmas” survives—as Chesterton also says, it is always on the verge of dying, yet always alive. In the dark depths of winter, a candle is lit for the armies of springtime.

Perhaps we could look on the brash and ugly consumerism of Christmas as another

form of winter, against which our lights are kindled. That little tree with its baubles and flames is the Tree of Life, hung with fruits of the Spirit for the healing of nations. This little token of the wild forest is brought into our house, dressed with symbols of all the good things that come from heaven, crowned with angelic glory, and becomes for a few days the centre of the world. In front of it, gazing at the mysteries held in those deep green branches, we remember that we are children.

In our homes, the spirit lives, and the culture of death trembles.

Stratford Caldecott

Stratford Caldecott
Editor, *Second Spring*