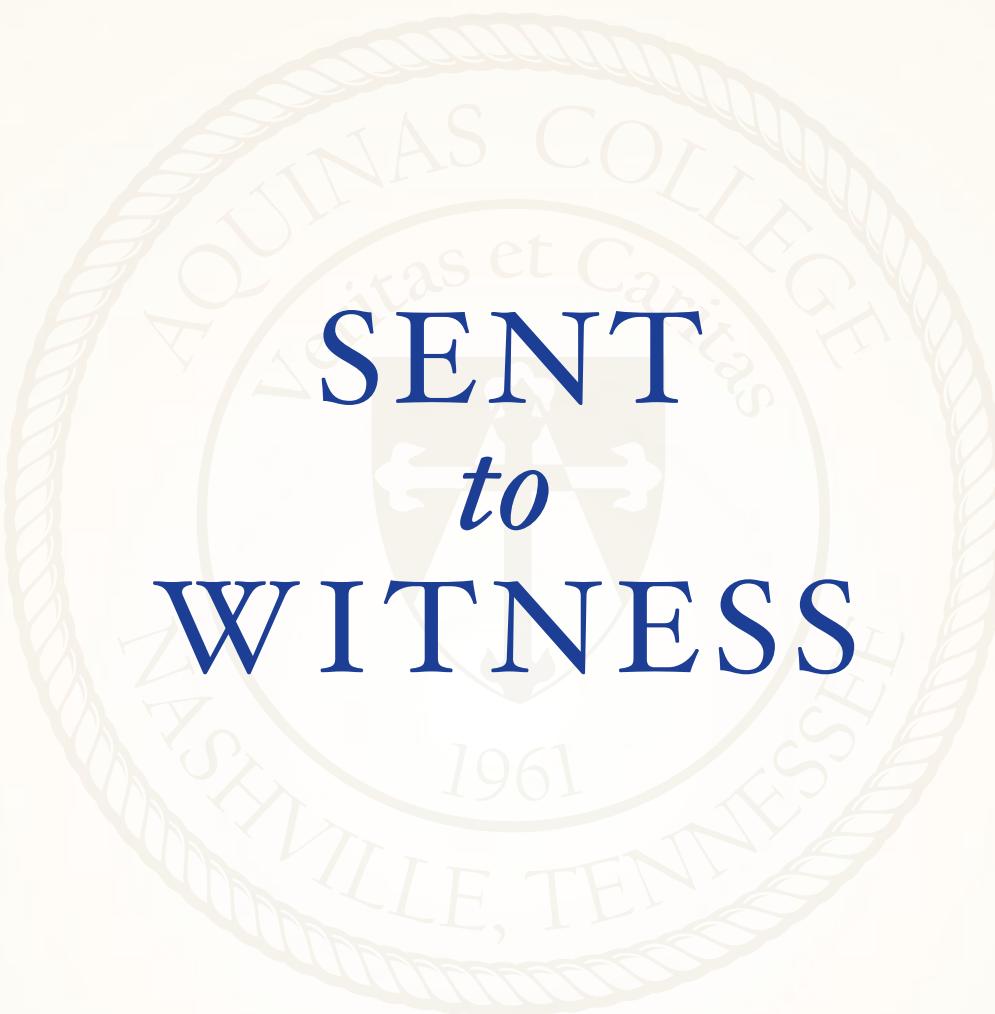


AQUINAS COLLEGE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2025



**SENT
to
WITNESS**

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STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2025**

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It fills me with great joy to share with you *Sent to Witness: Aquinas College Strategic Plan 2019-2025*. The fruit of a year and a half of listening and dialogue, of prayer and discernment, this document provides us with clarity of direction for the next six years. At the same time, it is a living document always open to further refinement in keeping with the vital mission of Aquinas College.

WE UNITE AROUND A COMMON VISION:

To be a leader in the formation of educators who are sent forth to teach, preach, and witness to Truth and Charity for the salvation of souls and the transformation of culture.



This vision statement with the four strategic goals and related objectives take their inspiration from our Dominican heritage and the Church's vision for education, especially as articulated by Pope St. John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. We look to the future in hope and anticipation of more intentionally drawing from the riches of our Dominican tradition while responding energetically to the needs of the present times.

Our academic programs and service to the broader community focus on *education*: preparing students to be teachers and leaders in schools and communities, and providing ongoing formation opportunities for teachers, leaders, and catechists already engaged in these important works. We see our work of education as encompassing the human, spiritual, intellectual, and professional formation of the *whole person*. This total formation in the context of a community is united in Christ and the Church, and includes mutual seeking of truth and growth in charity. We strive together for the *integration of faith, culture, and life* that is the hallmark of Catholic education.

At Aquinas College, students are formed as educators in the *Dominican tradition*. An education in the tradition of St. Dominic, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Catherine of Siena, and the other Dominican saints is ultimately about ardently seeking the One who is Truth and Charity—God himself—through prayer, assiduous study, and community. Having themselves been formed in the contemplation of Truth and Charity, our graduates are then sent forth to share the fruits of their contemplation through

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

John 20:21



The Strategic Planning Committee

teaching and the witness of their lives. Thus they share in the Dominican charism of *preaching and the salvation of souls*.

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses,” Pope St. Paul VI wisely noted. Educators who allow the power of divine Truth and Charity to transform their lives can become powerful witnesses of the hope and joy so needed in our world today. It is our prayer that the educators we send forth from Aquinas are such *Gospel witnesses*.

I invite you to peruse these pages to see how this vision for education will come to fruition at Aquinas College in the coming years. Please remember us in your prayers and join with us in being **Sent to Witness** to the world!

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Mary Agnes, OP

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





At a Glance

MISSION STATEMENT

Aquinas College is a Catholic institution of higher education in the Dominican tradition. 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.

VISION

To be a leader in the formation of educators who are sent forth to teach, preach, and witness to Truth and Charity for the salvation of souls and the transformation of culture

CORE PRINCIPLES

Our core principles are derived from the Catholic and Dominican moral and intellectual tradition.

- The dignity, freedom, and flourishing of every human person as made in God's image
- The complementarity of faith and reason as the basis for academic community
- The prudent stewardship of God's individual and communal gifts

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

1. Provide academic programs in education and in the liberal arts that foster the intellectual and moral virtues, professional excellence, and integration of faith and life.
2. Provide services and support that facilitate academic progress, inquiry, and achievement.
3. Cultivate a student experience directed toward the formation of the whole person in virtue, wisdom, maturity, and Christian friendship through social, spiritual, and academic activities.
4. Provide opportunities to engage with the local and broader communities, especially in endeavors related to cultural and intellectual interests, continuing education, catechetics, and faith formation.
5. Steward the gifts and resources entrusted to the College to advance its mission.

SENT TO WITNESS

Aquinas College Strategic Plan 2019–2025



The founding of Aquinas College in 1961 was the realization of a long-held dream of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia of Nashville, Tennessee: to have a place where the newest members of the religious community could receive their initial degrees to serve in the community's teaching apostolate. Over the years, this fundamental mission has remained, even as the sisters have continually found ways to be of service to the educational and catechetical needs of the Nashville community and beyond.

In the fall of 2017, Aquinas College embarked on a path of reconfiguration in order to

- 1. focus its academic programming on preparation of educators and*
- 2. to strengthen its service to Catholic school teachers, leaders, and catechists through spiritual and professional formation programs.*

As a consequence of this new focus, a strategic planning process was initiated. In order to respond to the needs of Catholic education and evangelization locally and beyond, the Aquinas College Strategic Planning Committee broadly surveyed internal and external constituencies including bishops, superintendents, principals, directors of religious education, and educators in various dioceses, long-term friends and associates, faculty and staff, alumni, philanthropists, and other groups and individuals engaged in Catholic education and catechesis. These groups were asked to identify *areas of greatest need in Catholic education and catechesis and how Aquinas College might be uniquely situated to respond to those needs.*



Overwhelmingly, the data collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups identified *faith formation* and *leadership development* as paramount needs, and challenged Aquinas College to *cultivate relationships* that allow for the mutual sharing of gifts in service of Catholic education, while at the same time making academic and ongoing formation programs *affordable and accessible*. Various stakeholders told us of their appreciation for the *Dominican charism* with its rich and balanced spiritual, intellectual, and educational tradition, and of its particular expression in the life and apostolate of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia.

These data have informed and shaped the present strategic plan and the strategic goals we have set for the coming six years. The four strategic goals are:

1. ACADEMIC LIFE

The program of studies at Aquinas College will form students to be educators who allow Truth and Charity to transform their own lives and the lives of those they will serve.

2. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Aquinas College will provide a strong educational community that integrates the human, spiritual, intellectual, and professional formation of all students.

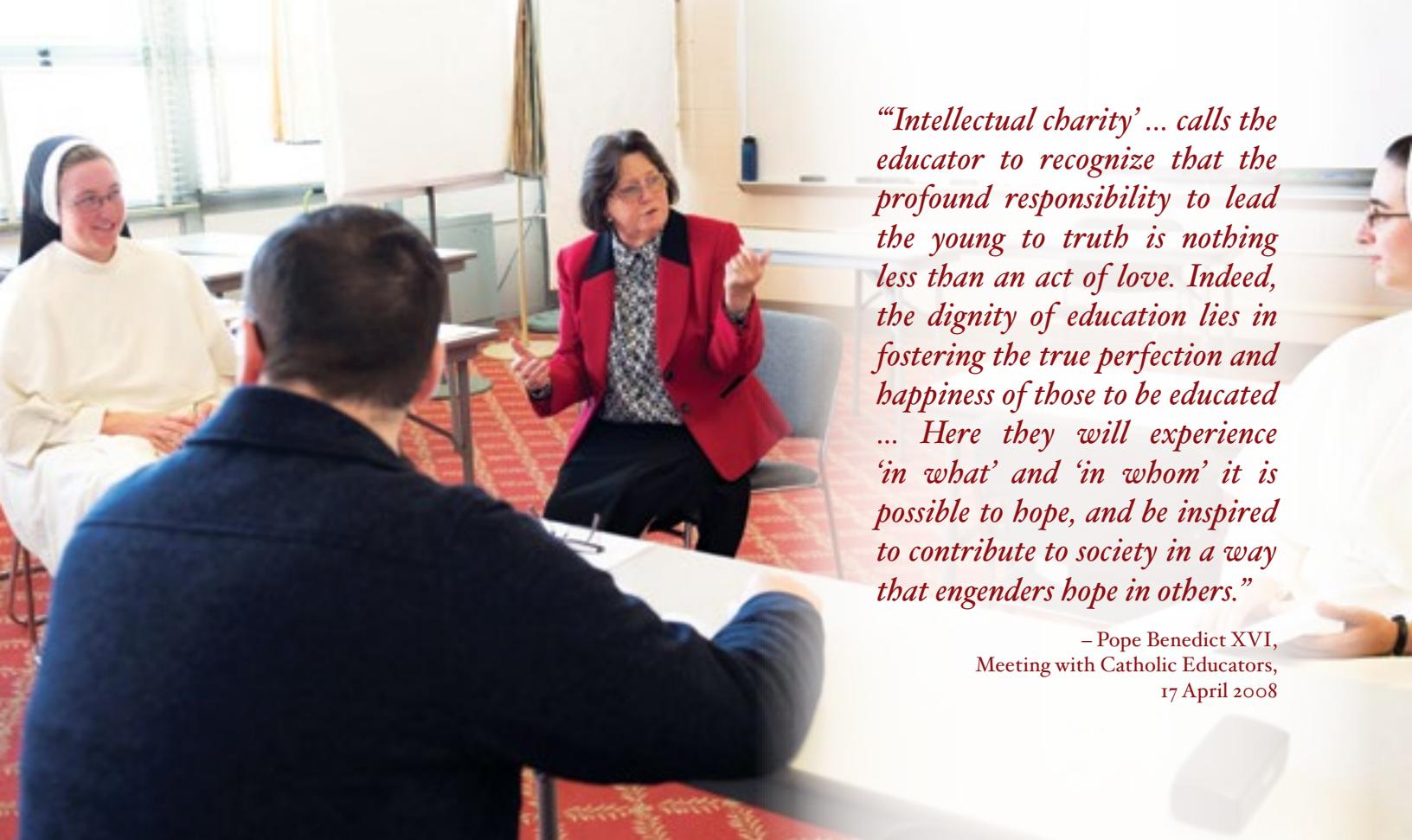
3. SERVICE TO THE BROADER COMMUNITY

Aquinas College will serve the broader community through academic and institutional initiatives and through the work of the Center for Catholic Education, the Center for Evangelization and Catechesis, and the Center for Faith and Culture.

4. ADVANCING THE MISSION

Aquinas College will implement plans to steward and develop its unique gifts and resources in order to advance its mission.

In the pages that follow, these four strategic goals in the areas of Academic Life, Student Experience, Service to the Broader Community, and Advancing the Mission are presented along with the objectives that flow from each of these goals.



“Intellectual charity’ ... calls the educator to recognize that the profound responsibility to lead the young to truth is nothing less than an act of love. Indeed, the dignity of education lies in fostering the true perfection and happiness of those to be educated ... Here they will experience ‘in what’ and ‘in whom’ it is possible to hope, and be inspired to contribute to society in a way that engenders hope in others.”

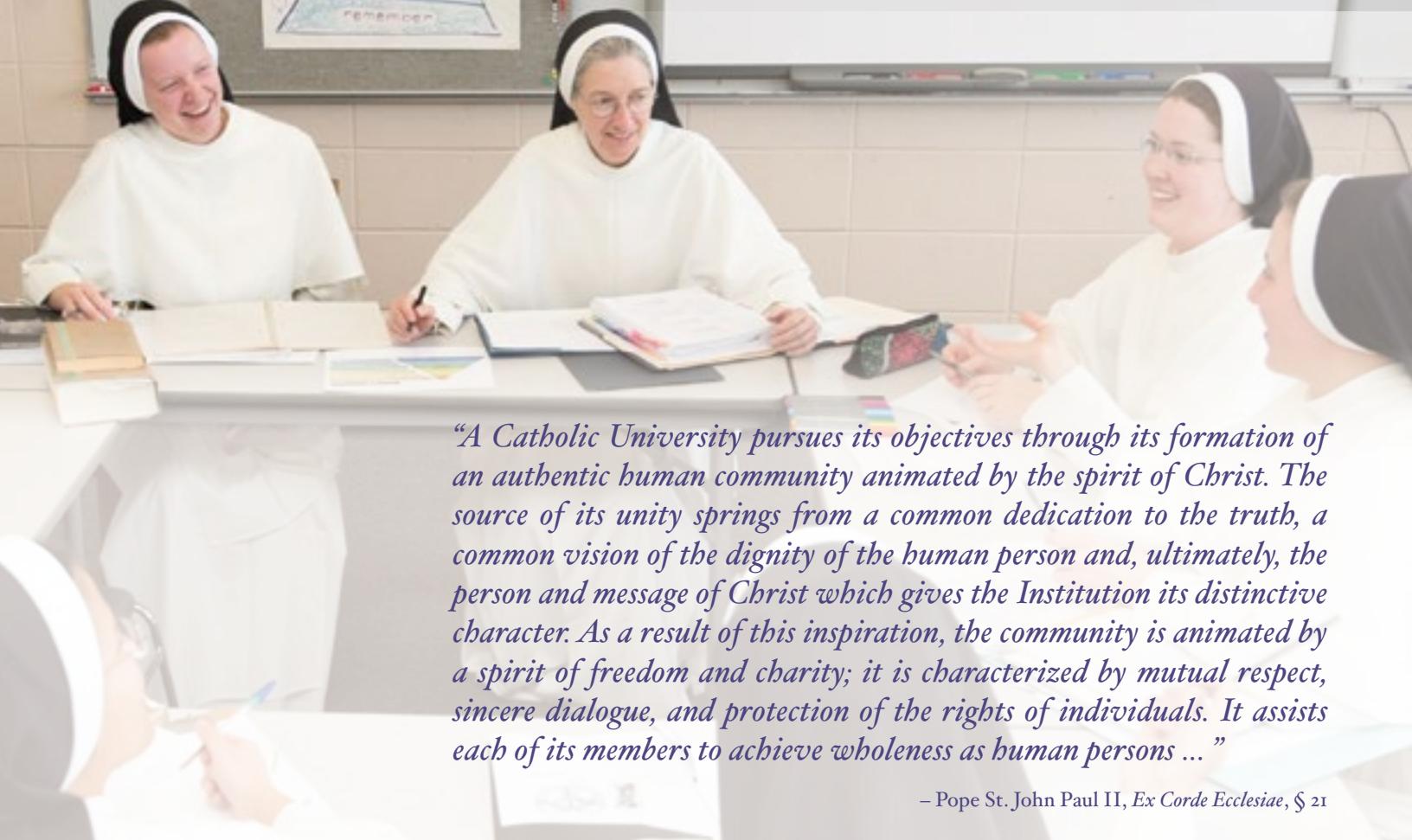
– Pope Benedict XVI,
Meeting with Catholic Educators,
17 April 2008

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ACADEMIC LIFE

The program of studies at Aquinas College will form students to be educators who allow Truth and Charity to transform their own lives and the lives of those they will serve.

OBJECTIVES

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- 1.1 Provide an integrated and robust course of studies grounded in the Catholic liberal arts tradition, Christian anthropology, and Thomistic philosophy of education that prepares students to understand and serve contemporary needs in education and evangelization.
 - 1.2 Prepare a faculty development program that supports an integrated Catholic education across the disciplines.
 - 1.3 Identify means to provide a Catholic school leadership program through graduate-level program and certificate offerings.
 - 1.4 Identify ways to diversify course delivery to increase accessibility of graduate programs to a wider audience.
 - 1.5 Implement a comprehensive admissions plan for all programs and majors.
 - 1.6 Provide targeted ongoing professional formation for education program graduates during their first three years in the classroom.



“A Catholic University pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community animated by the spirit of Christ. The source of its unity springs from a common dedication to the truth, a common vision of the dignity of the human person and, ultimately, the person and message of Christ which gives the Institution its distinctive character. As a result of this inspiration, the community is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals. It assists each of its members to achieve wholeness as human persons ... ”

– Pope St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, § 21

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Aquinas College will provide a strong educational community that integrates the human, spiritual, intellectual, and professional formation of all students.

OBJECTIVES

-
- 2.1 Formulate a program of activities that fosters community among faculty, staff, and students, preparing and motivating them to be at the service of communion within families, schools, parishes, and society.
 - 2.2 Provide enriched opportunities for liturgical and devotional prayer in common.
 - 2.3 Increase opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to collaborate and share ideas in pursuit of wisdom as an academic community.
 - 2.4 Enhance academic and non-academic support services to meet the needs of all students.



“Catholic education is one of the most important challenges for the Church, engaged as she is today in implementing the new evangelization in a historical and cultural context which is in constant flux.... Catholic academic institutions cannot isolate themselves from the world, they must know how to enter bravely into the areopagus of current culture and open dialogue, conscious of the gift that they can offer to everyone.”

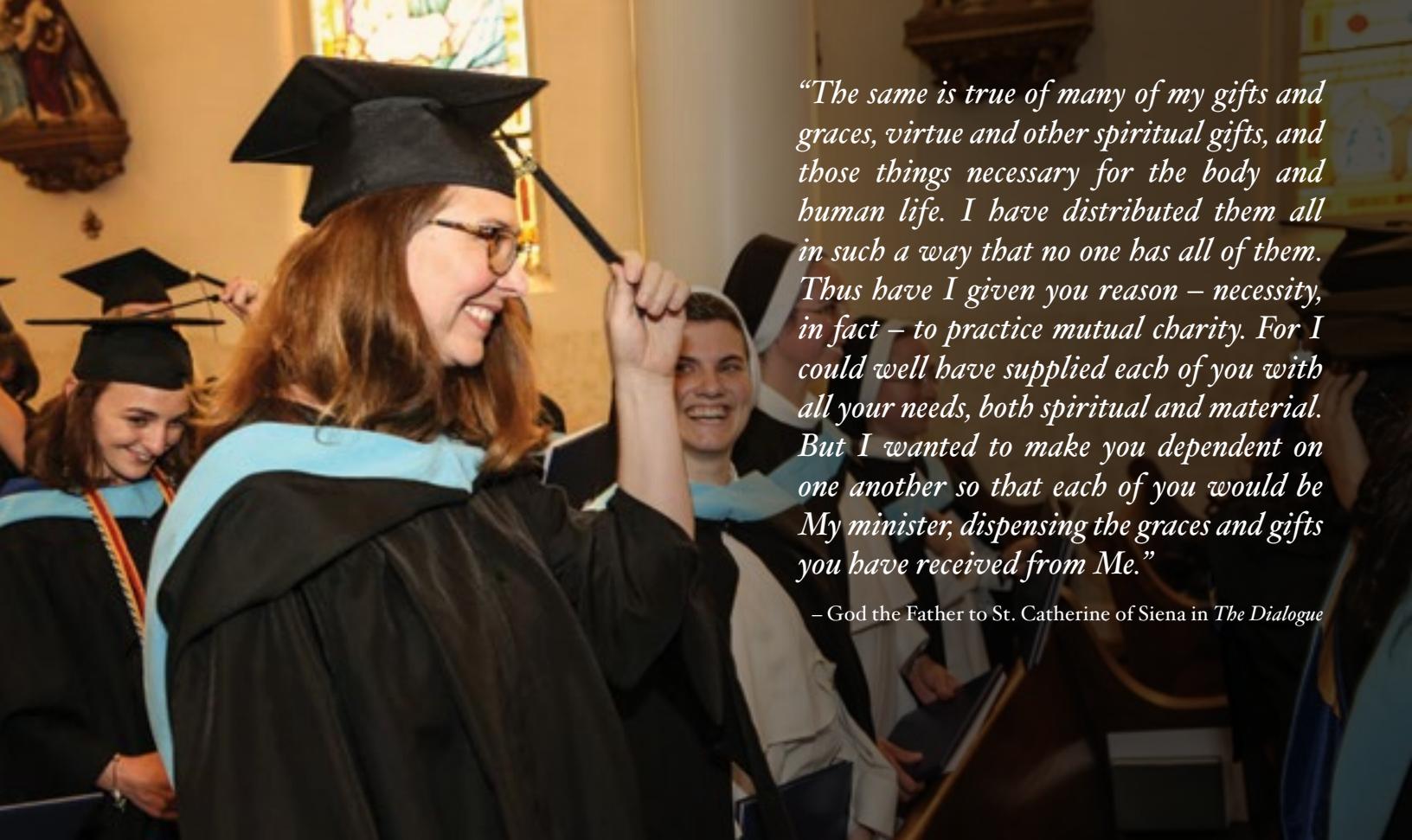
– Pope Francis, to Participants in the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education, 13 February 2014

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: SERVICE TO THE BROADER COMMUNITY

Aquinas College will serve the broader community through academic and institutional initiatives and through the work of the Center for Catholic Education, the Center for Evangelization and Catechesis, and the Center for Faith and Culture.

OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Determine the mission and scope of each center’s service to local, national, and international communities.
- 3.2 Develop a series of programs and conference opportunities that can be customized for various audiences, settings, and platforms of delivery.
- 3.3 Develop customized ongoing formation programs with dioceses, parishes, and schools that address the local Church’s needs in evangelization, catechesis, and education.



"The same is true of many of my gifts and graces, virtue and other spiritual gifts, and those things necessary for the body and human life. I have distributed them all in such a way that no one has all of them. Thus have I given you reason – necessity, in fact – to practice mutual charity. For I could well have supplied each of you with all your needs, both spiritual and material. But I wanted to make you dependent on one another so that each of you would be My minister, dispensing the graces and gifts you have received from Me."

– God the Father to St. Catherine of Siena in *The Dialogue*

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: ADVANCING THE MISSION

Aquinas College will implement plans to steward and develop its unique gifts and resources in order to advance its mission.

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Deepen all constituents' understanding of the relationship of Aquinas College with its founding religious congregation, the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, and ways in which the College participates in the Congregation's charism and mission.
- 4.2 Develop and implement a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy to convey to internal and external constituents the mission, identity, programs, and services of Aquinas College.
- 4.3 Develop and implement a comprehensive advancement program with an emphasis on identifying sources for philanthropic support and/or partnership opportunities that ensure affordability and accessibility of programs to target audiences.
- 4.4 Form mutually beneficial partnerships and ongoing relationships with dioceses, schools, foundations and donors in service of the Church's mission of evangelization, catechesis, and education.
- 4.5 In collaboration with the entities comprising The Dominican Campus, identify means to strengthen the sharing of resources and designated services.

Aquinas College students are

FORMED TO TEACH, SENT TO WITNESS

Funding Priorities for *Sent to Witness: Aquinas College Strategic Plan 2019–25*

The following are current funding priorities to implement the vision set forth in *Sent to Witness*:



1. Faculty Development

The strength and excellence of any institution of learning lie in its faculty. Your support will enable us to provide opportunities for enhanced faculty study, scholarship, and community through attendance at professional conferences, purchase of materials for faculty and staff studies, and engagement of high-quality speakers for faculty formation.



2. Operational Support for the Center for Catholic Education, Center for Evangelization and Catechesis, and Center for Faith and Culture

Catholic schools and parishes often have limited financial resources for providing ongoing faith formation opportunities for their teachers and catechists. Your financial support makes it possible for us to provide conferences, workshops, and retreats for teachers, leaders, and catechists that are affordable and accessible for all who wish to participate.



3. Scholarships for Catholic School Teachers

Our children deserve outstanding teachers who will help prepare them for life in this world and in the next. It can be a challenge for Catholic school teachers' salaries to support graduate studies in education or educational leadership. Your support will enable us to offer tuition discounts for all Catholic school teachers who wish to advance their learning and skills in service of Catholic education.



4. Special Programs in Service to the Broader Community

This issue contains articles on our **FORMATION WORKSHOPS FOR EDUCATORS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS** and **PILGRIMAGES FOR EDUCATORS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**. These are two life changing opportunities that your financial support will make more affordable and accessible to a wider audience.



5. Capital Support

Your financial contribution toward facility improvements will allow the college to continue to offer a comfortable environment to host groups of educators and catechists for workshops, retreats, and conferences. Your generosity for capital improvements will ensure that buildings and grounds are appropriately maintained both now and well into the future.

Help us advance the mission!

WAYS TO SUPPORT AQUINAS

ONLINE GIVING

- Donate once or consider becoming a monthly donor by pledging the amount of your choice.
- Use our secure online giving portal at www.aquinascollege.edu.

PHONE OR MAIL

- Send your donation in cash or check made payable to Aquinas College. A remittance envelope is included for your convenience.
- Call our Advancement Office at (615) 383-3230, extension 467, and speak with Kim Hoover to donate by credit card.

STOCKS, BONDS, OR SECURITIES

- Your gift of stocks, bonds, or securities to Aquinas College may result in tax savings.
- To make a gift of stocks, send a Letter of Intent. Please contact Kim Hoover at (615) 383-3230, extension 467, and see our website for details.

MEMORIAL OR HONORARIUM

- Would you like to honor a teacher or mentor that made a difference in your life? Memorial or honorary gifts may be made to Aquinas College.

WHEN YOU SHOP

- You can help Aquinas College every time you shop at smile.amazon.com. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Aquinas College.

PLANNED GIFTS

- Making a planned gift through a will, estate plan, or another type of deferred gift, such as one through an IRA or retirement fund, life insurance policy, or charitable trust, gives donors opportunities to provide future support for the Aquinas College as well as opportunities for short and long-term tax benefits.

MATCHING GIFTS

- Inquire with your employer today about a matching gift program.

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

- Donors 70½ or older are eligible to move up to \$100,000 from their IRAs directly to qualified charities without having to pay income tax on the money. Visit our website for information about eligibility and how to complete the transfer, or contact Kim Hoover at (615) 383-3230, extension 467.

*Formed to Teach,
Sent to Witness*



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