

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



AT A GLANCE

- ◆ Our Mission statement: Impelled by the Catholic faith and the Dominican mission, Aquinas Institute of Theology educates men and women to preach, to teach, to minister, and to lead
- ◆ Founded in 1925
- ◆ Sponsored by the Dominican Central Province of St. Albert the Great
- ◆ In partnership with the Dominican Southern Province of St. Martin de Porres
- ◆ Designated as a Center for Institutional Studies by the Order of Preachers
- ◆ 12 full-time faculty
- ◆ 12 full-time administrative staff
- ◆ 100 students
- ◆ 14 Dominican student brothers
- ◆ Up to twelve full and partial merit and/or need based scholarships awarded annually
- ◆ 1,900 graduates in a wide range of ministerial positions through the United States including Catholic healthcare mission leaders, parish leadership and pastoral associates, university campus ministers, non-profit executive leadership, social justice advocates, hospital chaplains, youth ministries, academic administration, college professors, high school theology teachers

The development staff have made a sincere effort to ensure information contained in the annual report is accurate and complete. If you were a contributor to Aquinas between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 and your name has been omitted, misspelled, or is listed incorrectly, please advise us by calling 314-256-8856 or email give@ai.edu.

A Message from the President

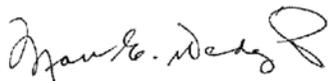
Dear Friends of Aquinas Institute,

The preparation of our Annual Report is a time to reflect on the myriad ways that Aquinas Institute's Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni worked to advance our mission preparing the next generation of Church leaders to go forth into the world preaching the Gospel in word and deed.

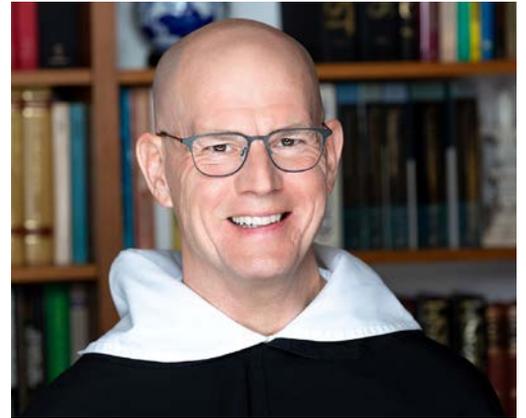
In the following pages, you will see highlights of yet another remarkable year at Aquinas Institute followed by a long list of our friends who have very generously supported our mission. We consider each one of you our partner in mission – the work that we are undertaking and the many successes you will see in the coming pages would not be possible without your support.

As we prepare this report near the end of the calendar year, exhortations to show gratitude to others abound and we begin a new liturgical year preparing our hearts and minds for the gift that is Christmas, the Word made Flesh. I have no doubt that thanks to your generosity, we will continue to build on our great tradition of almost one hundred years of offering excellent theological education and ministerial formation. The gifts that you offer – your commitment, support, hard work, and love for our school gives – me hope for its future. I am humbled and honored to lead Aquinas Institute, and I am deeply grateful to all the members of our community.

Be assured of the prayers of the Dominicans and the Aquinas community and please keep the needs of Aquinas Institute in your prayers as well.



Fr. Mark E. Wedig, OP, PhD
PRESIDENT



A Message from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Aquinas Institute of Theology, it is my pleasure to present this Annual Report for our fiscal year 2021-22. Founded in 1925 and sponsored by the Dominican Central Province of St. Albert the Great, Aquinas Institute is designated by the Dominican Order as one of its Centers for Institutional Studies. Aquinas provides education and formation for Dominican friars studying for both the Central Province and for the Southern Province of St. Martin de Porres. The two provinces collaborate not only in the religious and priestly formation of their brothers but also provide a rich array of theological programs and formation opportunities for other men and women of religious life, for men preparing for the diaconate, and for lay women and men who are preparing for life-long service to the Church.



First and foremost, we especially want to recognize and thank our many friends for their support. In particular, we are grateful for an anonymous benefactor who enabled us to retire all our building debts, further opening the way for us to build our Foundation and to strengthen our mission. Without *all* our friends and benefactors, we could not achieve our mission, which is to educate men and women “to preach, to teach, to minister, and to lead.” Among the roster of our donors, you will find the names of many generous individuals and groups who have faithfully given to this prestigious institution over the years, as well the names of many new friends—all partners whose generosity furthers the education and formation of the next generation of preachers, teachers and leaders.

The Report also highlights many items of interest and achievement within the last fiscal year. We are especially proud of our first five Aquinas Scholars who graduated in May 2022, and of our five new Scholars who were accepted into programs for the upcoming academic year in August 2022. The Aquinas Scholars program covers all the awardees’ tuition, books, fees and provides a living stipend. Our donors have been remarkable in helping us to assist many qualified men and women who would not otherwise be able to afford their graduate theological education in the Catholic and Dominican tradition.

During much of the last fiscal year the Administration and Board developed and approved our new Five-Year Strategic Plan, *In Medio Ecclesiae: Preaching in Word and Deed*. Following in the footsteps of St. Dominic de Guzman, who intentionally centered himself *in the middle of the Church*, Aquinas Institute, which is geographically located in the middle of the United States, also strives to find its theological home “in the middle of the Church.” In a time when

ecclesial and societal institutions are divided and polarized, Aquinas' theological mission to stand *in medio Ecclesiae* characterizes our way of striving for Truth and contributing to the life of the Church in its mission of proclaiming the Good News.

In response to the 2021-22 Church Synod, Aquinas will focus on new forms of community engagement and evangelization, giving special emphasis to those under-represented in the Church, especially Hispanic and Black Catholics, those disengaged from the Church, and those without any religious affiliation. At the end of the fiscal year, we received a large grant from the Lilly Foundation to staff our new Center for Community Engagement and Evangelization.

The 2021 Greater Preacher Award was a great success—our first partially “live” event during the COVID-19 pandemic. The award was granted posthumously to Fr. Ralph Seifert, SM, former President of Chaminade College Preparatory School, and to Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP, a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, who specializes in the theology of proclamation. As always, the award and its awardees reflect Aquinas Institute's commitment to recognize and promote quality preaching in both word and deed, as well as by growing our scholarship opportunities.

As always, I am especially grateful to our Trustees, who are very active on our Board Committees and contribute 100% in our fundraising efforts. We are all proud to support the outstanding leadership of Aquinas. Our President, Father Mark Wedig, OP, our Academic Dean, Fr. Michael Mascari, OP, and all our staff, faculty and students are especially encouraged and filled with hope by the generosity of our friends and benefactors. It is a great privilege to serve in this outstanding community.

Grateful always in St. Dominic,



Dan O'Brien, PhD

CHAIR, AQUINAS INSTITUTE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2021-2022

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In medio Ecclesiae: Preaching in Word and Deed

Vision for 2027

A Five-Year Strategic Plan has been completed.

Drawing on the inspiration of St. Dominic, who intentionally centered himself in the middle of the Church (*in medio Ecclesiae*) so as to reach a broad spectrum of persons and perspectives in his study of the Word of God and his preaching, we at Aquinas Institute of Theology also purposefully place ourselves *in medio Ecclesiae* — where the Truth can be encountered. It is from the center of both the Church and society that Aquinas Institute is situated to strategically plan for the next five years.

Thanks to a 2021 Pathways Lilly Endowment grant for assessment and planning, we were able to gather pivotal information from various constituencies of our alumni and students that provided insights for the initial structure of our planning. The unique focus on the role of Aquinas in the intellectual life of our sponsoring Province of St. Albert the Great also helped to guide us with principles to set the framework of our overarching goals. The student-needs assessment and alumni survey especially aided us in determining clear pathways and their related objectives for the next generation of Aquinas graduates.

The structure of the Five-Year Strategic Plan takes its form from our Vision for 2027; it is inspired by “the middle way” of St. Dominic yet focused both on the inclusive ecclesial strategies of Pope Francis and our attentiveness to the rapidly changing demographics of the Church in the United States.

Over the next five years we will implement a plan that will enable Aquinas Institute of Theology to flourish in its intellectual mission to preach the Word of God, so that others may join us in pursuing the saving and life-giving Truth of Jesus Christ.



St. Dominic stood “in the middle of the Church, opened his mouth and the Lord filled him with a spirit of wisdom and understanding, clothing him with a robe of glory.” It is from this same place, *in medio Ecclesiae*, that we seek to go forth.

Aquinas Institute Scholars Program

Inaugural Class of Aquinas Scholars Graduate

In the fall of 2020, we welcomed our inaugural class of five Aquinas Scholars, all of whom graduated in May 2022.

Aquinas Institute strives to be a catalyst for evangelization through lay formation and education. In the spirit of our patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Dominican saint and doctor of the church, Aquinas Institute of Theology is proud to offer the Aquinas Institute Scholars Award. This award provides multiple full-tuition, merit-based scholarships for full-time, residential students in select masters programs. The Aquinas Institute Scholars Award also provides a stipend for books and housing, as well as work-study opportunities.



In the fall of 2020, we welcomed our inaugural class of five Aquinas Scholars. These students came to us from Ohio, Pennsylvania, California, Florida, and Texas with an impressive array of ministerial experience and educational backgrounds. All five students successfully completed their studies with us and graduated in May 2022. Each of the students have begun

the next phase of their career with work in school counseling, hospital chaplaincy, parish ministry, working with Trappist Monks, and beginning doctoral studies. Congratulations to our Scholars—we thank them for their service to the church and the world and for broadening the reach of the mission of Aquinas Institute.



The Aquinas Institute SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Preparing the Next Generation of Ministers for the Catholic Church

The second class of Aquinas Scholars began studies in Fall 2021 and are no less impressive than their predecessors.

Master of Divinity Program



Emmanuel (Manny) Diaz

Education: Saint Leo University, Saint Leo, FL
Bachelor of Arts – Religion Major
Salesians of St. John Bosco Seminary, Orange, NJ
2015-2018

Related

- Experience:**
- ◆ Coordinator of Community Outreach, Merrimack College Augustinian Volunteers, North Andover, MA
 - ◆ Communications Assistant, Saint Joseph Catholic Church, Tampa, FL
 - ◆ Director of Communications, Mary Help of Christians Center, Tampa, FL



Emma Grace Johnson

Education: Berry College, Mount Berry, GA
Bachelor of Arts – Religion and Philosophy Major
Bachelor of Science – Psychology Major

Related

- Experience:**
- ◆ Confirmation Catechist, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Rome, GA
 - ◆ LifeTeen Core Team Member, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Rome, GA
 - ◆ Leadership Team Student Coordinator, Berry College Gate of Opportunity Scholars Program
 - ◆ Leadership Team Programming Assistant, Berry College Gate of Opportunity Scholars Program
 - ◆ Student Supervisor of Athletics Office Operations, Berry College Athletic Department

Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies



Elizabeth (Beth) Rheume

Education: Webster University, St. Louis, MO
Master of Arts – Human Resources Management and Development
Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL
Bachelor of Science – Early Childhood Education Major

Related

- Experience:**
- ◆ Level III Catechist, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church
 - ◆ Level I and II Assistant Catechist, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church
 - ◆ Parish Council Secretary, St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church
 - ◆ Youth Ministry Leadership Board, St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church
 - ◆ Human Resources Generalist, Enterprise, St. Louis, MO

Master of Arts in Theology



Josh Ostertag

Education: Thomas More University, Crestview Hills, KY
Bachelor of Arts – Theology Major, History and Philosophy Minors
Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, OH

Related

- Experience:**
- ◆ Eighth Grade CCD Teacher, St. Catherine of Siena, Ft. Thomas, KY
 - ◆ Eighth Grade PREP Teacher, St. Joseph Parish, Crescent Springs, KY
 - ◆ Confirmation Preparation Instructor, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Burlington, KY



Rafael Piña Valdez

Education: Universidad Panamericana, Guadalajara, Mexico
Specialization in Anthropology and Ethics
Tecnologico de Monterrey, Guadalajara, Mexico
Bachelor of Science – Industrial and Systems Engineering Major
Catholic Biblical Institute, Archdiocese of Guadalajara, Mexico
Diploma in Sacred Scriptures

Related

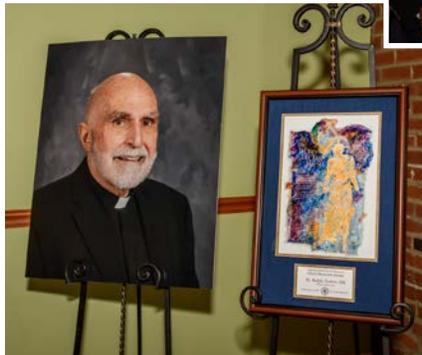
- Experience:**
- ◆ Head of Theology subjects within Humanities Department, Universidad Panamericana, Guadalajara, Mexico
 - ◆ Professor, General Academic Coordinator for 'Specialization in Anthropology and Ethics' Program, Universidad Panamericana, Guadalajara, Mexico
 - ◆ Television Host, Maria Vision, Guadalajara, Mexico
 - ◆ Chief Content Officer, Maria Vision, Guadalajara, Mexico

Fundraising Events

27th Annual Great Preacher Award

Our annual awards event was held as both an in-person and virtual gathering.

In November 2021, Aquinas Institute of Theology presented the Great Preacher Award to Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP, Professor, University of Notre Dame and posthumously to Fr. Ralph Siefert, SM, longtime President of Chaminade College Preparatory in St. Louis. Established 27 years ago, the Great Preacher Award honors preachers who proclaim, in word and deed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the coming and presence of the reign of God.



Mary L. Hill, Joanna and Chris Pelligreen, and Sr. Pat Twohill, OP and to all of the Great Preacher committee members.

Our world desperately needs preachers who offer a word of hope by sharing the Good News of God's love and mercy, and Aquinas Institute works to form preachers to follow in their footsteps.

The planning committee looked forward to gathering in person again after the virtual 2020 Great Preacher event. Sr. Cathy is a well-respected and well-loved former faculty member at Aquinas and many alumni and friends expressed their hope of celebrating with her in person. However, due to a serious surge in covid cases, it was decided that it would be best to host a virtual event again in 2021. Additionally, we were saddened by the death of Fr. Ralph in September. Fr. Ralph was a master preacher, a scholar, and dedicated minister and priest, and Aquinas Institute of Theology was honored to posthumously recognize his life and contribution to Church life, along with that of that of Sr. Cathy, with the Great Preacher Award.

The funds raised at this event are used to support our internationally recognized preaching program and assists us in preparing the next generation of men and women who, like our esteemed honorees, will go forth and preach the Gospel in word and deed.

Aquinas Institute would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who attended and to our 37 event sponsors. Over \$130,000 was raised at this event to support the Great Preacher Award. We would also like to give a special thank you to our Committee Chairs,



GPA 2021 COMMITTEE

CHAIRS

Mary L. Hill
Joanna and Chris Pelligreen
Sr. Pat Twohill, OP

COMMITTEE

George Avila	Fr. Michael Mascari, OP
Jennie Weiss Block, OP	Fr. James Marchionda, OP
Angie Doerr	Daniel O'Brien
Fr. Tom Condon, OP	Fr. Mark E. Wedig, OP
Lucie Huger and	Jill and Dave Wenzel
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GiveSTL Day

GiveSTL Day Breaks Aquinas Record.

Give STL Day is an annual event which raises money and awareness for nonprofits in the St. Louis region. This day of giving provides nonprofits with an opportunity to reconnect with donors, kindle new relationships, and promote their missions. Since its inception in 2014, Give STL Day has raised over \$26.2 million. Give STL Day is a part of the St. Louis Community Foundation's initiative to expand charitable giving in our community and to strengthen our local nonprofit sector.

Emma Grace Johnson, Master of Divinity student and student worker for the development office, spearheaded the campaign this year. Johnson helped to create a marketing and communication plan and content, planned a power-hour event at Aquinas, and worked to get the entire Aquinas community excited to invite others to learn more about Aquinas Institute and the work that we do. Her hard work paid off—this year Aquinas raised \$31,537.31 for GiveSTL Day—that is a 500% increase over our largest ever GiveSTL Day in 2019 and is larger than the prior four years combined!

Fr. Mark Wedig, OP was able to secure a matched gift during our power hour from an anonymous donor. We are incredibly grateful to that donor who matched the \$13,000 in donations made from Noon to 1 pm that day.

The work Emma Grace does to assist the development office is excellent preparation for her future career in ministry. Lay leaders will need to have the skills to work alongside ordained leaders and her work on this campaign has further sharpened her leadership skills, as well as further training in volunteer coordination, fundraising, resource management, and marketing and communication. All of our student workers have the opportunity to supplement what they are learning in the classroom with meaningful work at Aquinas.



Good Things Happening at Aquinas

Students Express Gratitude to Donors

This year, Aquinas students handwrote personalized thank you notes to all of our donors. Students gathered over lunch four times this year, dividing up the list of donors among those gathered and spent their time between classes writing the notes to convey their gratitude.

The students understand how crucial Aquinas donors are to their educational experience and are excited to have the opportunity to reach out to the donors directly.



“ I know that our tuition does not cover the total cost of my education. It takes money to keep the lights on, to have high speed internet, to heat and air condition the building and I love that I can personally thank those people who make it possible for me to attend Aquinas. ”

STUDENT

No More Mortgage!

Many good things are happening at Aquinas. As a show of confidence in the leadership and direction of Aquinas, an anonymous benefactor has made it possible for Aquinas to move closer to toward the goal of long-term financial sustainability. The mortgage on the building at 23 S. Spring and the construction loans which allowed Aquinas to move operations to the upper level have been paid in full. What an amazing gift. Aquinas is humbled by this investment in our mission.



What Sets Us Apart from Other Theology and Ministry Schools?

Our mission statement — *Impelled by the Catholic faith and the Dominican mission, Aquinas Institute of Theology educates men and women to preach, to teach, to minister, and to lead* — identifies our school as an educational institution that is both Catholic and Dominican. Most people have a good sense of what it means to a Catholic school and Aquinas Institute is grateful and proud to be a part of the Catholic religious tradition and all it stands for and offers. However, what truly sets us apart from other fine Catholic schools is our Dominican identity. The following “Hallmarks of the Aquinas Way” describe what we believe sets Aquinas Institute apart from other schools of theology and ministry.

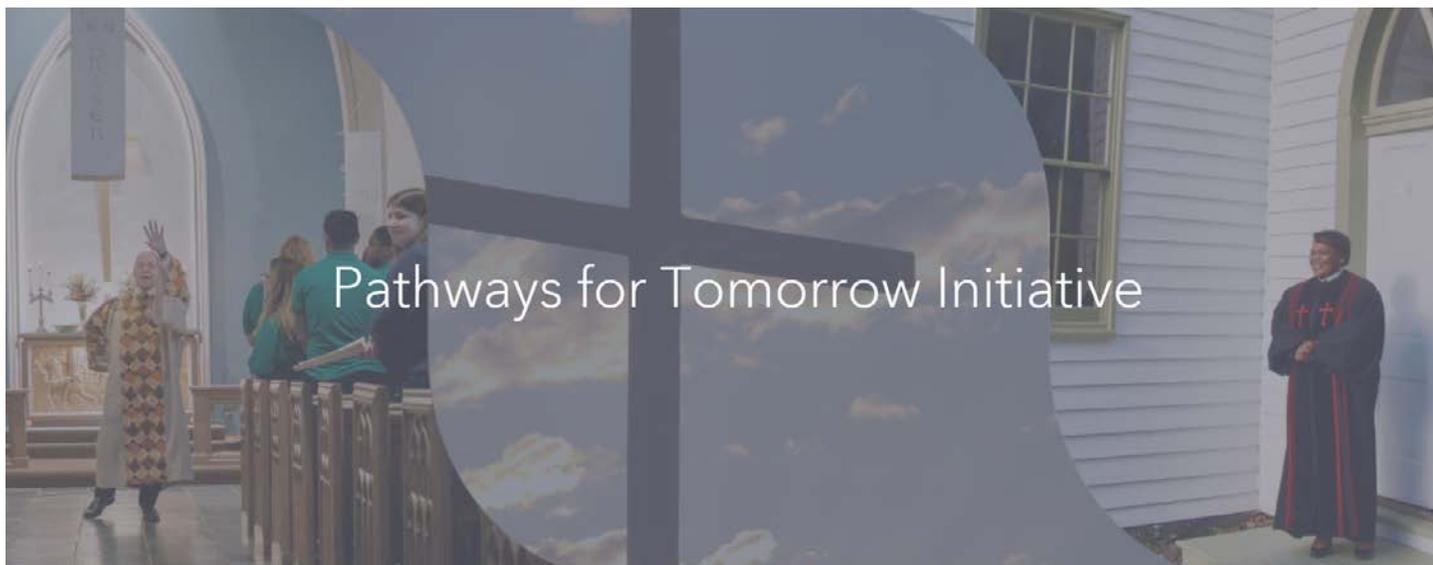


Hallmarks of the Aquinas Way

- ◆ Our engagement with and access to our Dominican heritage in the 800-year-old rich intellectual tradition of the Order of Preachers and its extraordinary contribution to the intellectual and pastoral life of the Catholic Church.
- ◆ At the heart of all our programs is the unique Dominican approach to education that holds as its primary purpose a search for Veritas, the One who is Truth himself, Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we seek to encounter in all of our programs, coursework and campus life, and whom we seek to share through our mission of evangelization, namely to be useful by preaching and teaching for the salvation of every person.
- ◆ Our theological orientation is informed and built upon the scholarship and intellectual legacy of the Dominicans of the River Forest School of Thomism and its interpretation of our great patron, St. Thomas of Aquinas whose study of the Word of God led him to engage the world positively in a pursuit of Truth that was expansive, comprehensive, and all-encompassing.
- ◆ Aquinas Institute likewise undertakes its intellectual mission in the same spirit of St. Thomas by following his example. We seek the Truth of Christ as it has been revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures and Tradition of the Church and we strive to understand it by our engagement with others, with men and women from various cultures, backgrounds, and social strata, which is the contemporary reality of the Church and the world in our own time and place.
- ◆ At Aquinas Institute, we place our theological study at the service of what Dominicans call the “Holy Preaching.” The Holy Preaching is not a discrete experience confined to a few minutes from the pulpit; rather for Dominicans it is an expression of our shared life, where as a community we seek to make a comprehensive and dynamic response to God’s presence in our lives and the world. Building on and from the Dominican preaching charism, we form men and women in a living community where professors and students learn from one another and where those who study with us are well-prepared to go forth into the world, preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

For more information about
Aquinas Institute, please visit ai.edu

Aquinas Path for Tomorrow Project



Aquinas Institute of Theology has received a grant of \$1 million from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The *Aquinas Path for Tomorrow Project* is being funded through Lilly Endowment’s Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, a three-phase initiative designed to help theological schools across the United States and Canada as they prioritize and respond to the most pressing challenges they face as they prepare pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

The central purpose and overarching goal of the *Aquinas Path to Tomorrow Project* is to strengthen Aquinas Institute’s mission to educate and form the next generation of ministerial leaders who will share the Gospel of Jesus Christ by actively participating in the emerging cultures of our religiously disengaged world. This commitment will position Aquinas — academically and operationally— for its long-term sustainability through two initiatives. The first is to establish a Center for Community Engagement and

Evangelization that will provide opportunities for continuing formation, especially in preaching, administration, and community building, all of which are essential for engaging the emerging cultural realities of our time. The second is to develop a broad and inclusive institutional culture of philanthropy that will provide financial sustainability by lessening the school’s dependence on tuition revenue.

Aquinas President Fr. Mark Wedig, OP emphasizes that “Lilly Endowment’s funding of the *Aquinas Path for Tomorrow Project* will allow Aquinas Institute to achieve some of the pivotal goals and objectives of our new five-year strategic plan. The Endowment’s grant monies will help Aquinas to extend its outreach beyond its academic degree programs and serve new groups of stakeholders for the generation to come”

Aquinas Institute of Theology

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT AND EVANGELIZATION



Aquinas Institute of Theology is one of 105 theological schools receiving phase two grants. Together they represent the broad diversity of Christianity in the U.S. and Canada. The schools are affiliated with evangelical, mainline Protestant, nondenominational, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic, Black church, Latino, Asian-American and historic peace church traditions (e.g., Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, Quakers).

“Theological schools have long played a pivotal role in preparing pastoral leaders for churches,” said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Today, these schools find themselves in a period of rapid and profound change. Through the Pathways Initiative, theological schools will take deliberate steps to address the

challenges they have identified in ways that make the most sense to them. We believe that their efforts are critical to ensuring that Christian congregations continue to have a steady stream of pastoral leaders who are well-prepared to lead the churches of tomorrow.”

The Pathways initiative is part of Lilly Endowment’s wider efforts to strengthen theological schools and other religious institutions and networks that prepare pastoral leaders to ensure that a diverse array of Christian congregations are guided by a steady stream of wise, faithful and well-prepared leaders.



With gratitude to the following individuals
and companies for their generous support of
Aquinas Institute of Theology.

Aquinas Institute Scholars Program Benefactors

We are grateful to the following friends of Aquinas Institute, each of whom have made a two- or three-year commitment of \$25,000 to \$35,000 per year which makes it possible for Aquinas Institute to offer full-tuition merit scholarships with housing and book stipends to academically gifted lay men and women who desire to serve the Church.

Anonymous

Frank and Valerie Esposito

Dcn. Patrick and Lyndy Toole

Fay Beth Wedig Trust

Dave and Jill Wenzel * * 🐾

Word and Deed Annual Fund

With gratitude to our Annual Fund Committee and to our donors who helped us to exceed our Annual Fund goal of \$155,000.

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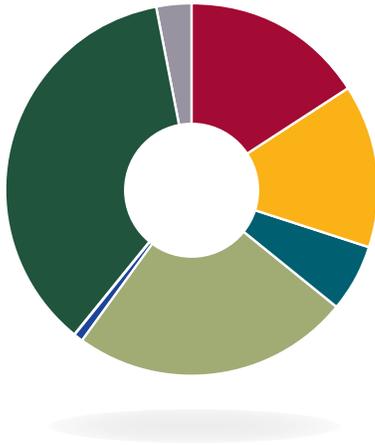
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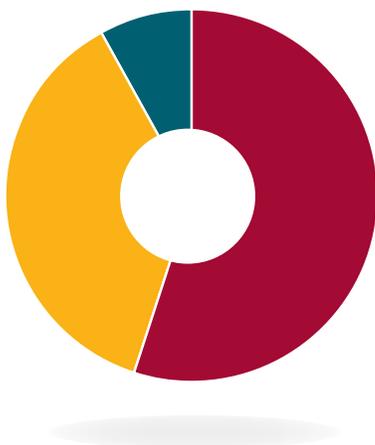
(As of June 30, 2022)

Sources of Funds



Source	Amount	Percent
Tuition and Fees	\$729,898	16%
Gifts (unrestricted)	\$628,690	14%
Gifts (restricted)	\$270,280	6%
Grants	\$1,052,250	24%
Contributed Services	\$38,550	1%
Subsidy		
Ongoing Subsidy	\$443,835	10%
Additional Support (Mortgage)	\$846,695	20%
Forgiveness of Debt	\$272,503	6%
Shared Facilities Revenue	\$147,600	3%
Subtotal	\$4,430,301	100%
Net investment loss	(\$203,432)	
Change in value of split-interest agreements	(\$2,215)	
Total	\$4,224,654	100%

Uses of Funds



Source	Amount	Percent
Education Programs	\$1,378,044	55%
General Administrative	\$936,473	37%
Physical Plant and Depreciation	\$210,151	8%
Total	\$2,524,668	100%

The Dominican Blessing

From an anonymous thirteenth century source

May God the Father bless us,

May God the Son heal us,

May the Holy Spirit enlighten us and

give us eyes to see with, ears to hear with, and

hands to do the work of God with,

feet to walk with, and

a mouth to preach the word of salvation with,

and the angel of peace to watch over us and lead

us at last, by our Lord's gift, to the kingdom.

Amen





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