

# ANGELICUM NEWS

The Newsletter of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas Alumni and Friends



SPRING 2018

## Unexpectedly in Rome

A Letter from Fr. Michal Paluch, O.P., Rector of the Angelicum University



A year ago, on the 4th of March I got the phone from the Master of the Dominican Order telling me that he would like me to become the rector of the Angelicum. I was at that time in our Dominican Priory in the old town of Warsaw. I cannot say that it was absolutely unexpected – I was informed two weeks before that my name had been put on the list of three candidates presented to the Master. Still, I slept well before the 4<sup>th</sup> of March – there were other candidates...

This phone call turned over my life. Coming to Rome was for me the least expected scenario. I received my doctorate in Fribourg (Switzerland) and I spent a year as a scholar of the Institute for Church Life in Notre Dame, Indiana (USA). So, I had in my life the experience of living in international academic institutions. Nevertheless, I have never studied in Rome and when I received this invitation, I did not even know Italian too well.

Does this mean that the last year was the most difficult year in my life? That is what I was expecting, but I would not put it this way now. I would rather say that this year has been very exciting and overwhelmingly interesting.

Rome has unequalled treasures to offer students, teachers, and even rectors. During the last academic year, we had at our university students from 93 nationalities. It is a carefully selected group – they are sent to Rome to be formed in order to become leaders in their local communities – professors, formators, bishops. In the last couple of decades, our University has formed about 150 bishops for the universal Church. All this means that in the Dominican Order no other institution has a comparable influence on the life of the universal Church. At the Angelicum we are forming people who themselves will become formators.

Such a project might provoke sleepless nights. The responsibility is really huge. Nevertheless, I have great hope in the future for three main reasons. First of all, the Angelicum wants to breathe the Thomistic tradition. Thomas's synthesis remains for us a strong intellectual backbone that we want our students to discover. It should help them to find a reliable way towards God in our divided world. It has been of great help for me during the last months to know that we are really building our education on the shoulders of a giant. The other reason for hope is connected with our most famous student. The Angelicum was the alma mater for Saint John Paul II who must be a very strong pillar for a Polish rector. I think about the spiritual, invisible, and real support of his intercession. I also think of the power of his legacy that should be expanded and developed in the future. The last, but not least, motive for going forward with courage and hope is the fact that the Angelicum is a university that is an intellectual institution of an Order having an 800-year tradition behind it, and a strong international structure. During these last months, I have experienced a lot of support from the Master of the Order, Bruno Cadoré, who wants the Angelicum to become the most important project of the Dominican Order.

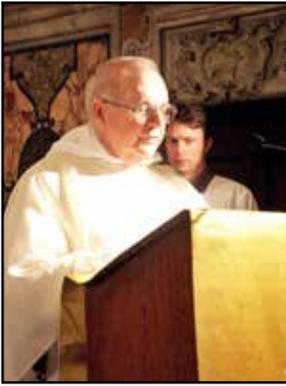
The will of our Master of the Order has found its expression in many important decisions. For example, the Angelicum will be strengthened during the next academic year by an important number of the new Dominican professors coming from all over the world. We want to bring the best brothers we have at present to Rome. Among them will be such well-known and highly appreciated friars as Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P. (USA) and Fr. Emmanuel Durand, O.P. (France-Canada). With the help of the new forces we want to continue developing our Thomistic Institute as a project that will not only focus on teaching but will also develop two research poles – one on the legacy of Aquinas, the other one on ecumenism – interreligious studies.

*continued on page 3*



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## The John Francis Carrere Family Matching Gift Completed for the Fr. Val McInnes Chair at the Angelicum

As a result of the Spring 2017 issue of the Angelicum News, the John Francis Carrere Family of New Orleans graciously offered a matching gift of up to \$100,000 towards the completion of the Fr. Val McInnes Chair. We announced this in the Fall 2017 newsletter, and with your help we are delighted to report that we have met our fundraising goal! The

chair named for Fr. Val has become a reality! As mentioned in the opening article by the Rector, in the fall of 2018, Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P. will be the first Dominican Friar to fill the chair. For the generosity of many readers and particularly the matching gift from the Carrere family, we express our sincere gratitude.



*The John Francis Carrere Family of New Orleans. Mrs. Elizabeth L. Carrere Havens is pictured in the center with her four children from left to right, Joe Carrere, Margaret Carrere Johnson, John Carrere and Mike Carrere.*

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The Angelicum University expresses its sincere thanks to those who contributed generously to the University from January 2014 through April 2018.

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The support does not come only from the Master and our Order. I want to express my deep gratitude to the sponsors contacted by the International Dominican Foundation who have helped to establish the Fr. Val Ambrose McInnes Chair at the Angelicum. This chair will give us a possibility to invite an outstanding Dominican scholar for the whole year to work on Aquinas/ John Paul II and to live with us. The first of them will be the

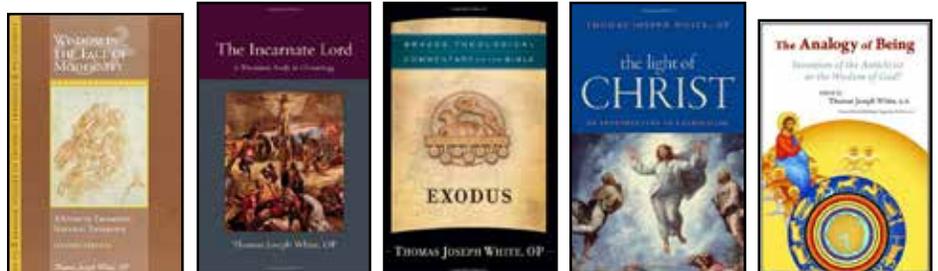
above-mentioned Thomas Joseph White, one of the best known Dominican theologians in the US, during the next academic year.

Obviously, there is still a lot to do during the next months and the next years. There are still many reasons for the rector's sleepless nights. But we are moving forward.

**Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P. named first Fr. Val McInnes Chairholder at the Angelicum**



Fr. Thomas Joseph White is a Dominican priest, who lives and teaches at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC. He has been the director there of the Thomistic Institute from 2008-2018. The Thomistic Institute organizes Catholic intellectual events on secular campuses in the United States, and currently reaches thousands of people each year, both in person and online. Originally a native of southeastern Georgia, Fr. White studied at Brown University. He converted to Catholicism his senior year, influenced by reading Flannery O'Connor, John Henry Newman, and John Paul II. He did doctoral studies at Oxford University where his research focused on Thomas Aquinas' metaphysics and arguments for the existence of God. Fr. White is the author of various books and articles including *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity, A Thomistic Study in Natural Theology* (Sapientia Press, 2009, second edition 2016), *The Incarnate Lord, A Thomistic Study in Christology* (The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), *Exodus* (Brazos Press, 2016) and *The Light of Christ: An Introduction to Catholicism* (Catholic University Press, 2017). He is a regular contributor to *First Things* magazine, and is co-editor of the academic journal *Nova et Vetera*. In 2011 he was appointed an ordinary member of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas. Fr. White will begin his new assignment at the Angelicum in the fall of 2018.

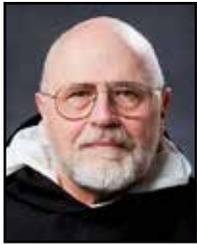


*Titles by Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P.*



## Angelicum Faculty: Where are they now?

### Fr. Albert Paretzky, O.P.



*Written by Fr. Albert Paretzky, O.P.*

I first heard of the Angelicum when I was a novice in 1975. Fr. Ferrer Smith, who was at our community in Dover, was still teaching there one semester a year. It seemed like an exotic place from his description, though he expressed frustration with the Italian way of running things. Seven years later I found

myself invited on a trial basis to teach New Testament. Although living conditions were a bit primitive by American standards, I never found living at the Angelicum difficult, even if I quickly understood Fr. Smith's reaction to the Italian free-and-easy style.

The Angelicum was an important total immersion induction into the Dominican Order as an international entity. In the early 1980's we were over one hundred in the community made up of professors, Dominicans from all over the world doing graduate studies, and the student brothers from Sicily. I counted twenty-five nationalities in all plus Italians from every region except Rome. The different national groups tended to stick together. However, the Americans from the four U.S. provinces bonded with individuals from all the different parts of the world. Fr. Vincent de Couesnongle, who was still Master of the Order at the time, preferred to speak of the Order as the Dominican Family. From the beginning of my nineteen-year association with the Angelicum until now, I can think of the Dominicans only as a world-wide fraternity, with all of the characteristics of a family with all of a family's ups and downs under one roof. But what held us together was praying the Office in common (Latin psalms and prayers with reading in Italian) and meals, where we could all disagree on the quality of what was served. Or how it was served. One community chapter devoted forty-five minutes to

### Br. Solomon Maticha, Seminarian Studying at the Angelicum University

*Written by Br. Solomon Maticha*

I am Br. Solomon Maticha, a Missionary of Charity seminarian and a student of St. Thomas Aquinas University, the Angelicum, in Rome. I was born in Kenya. For a little while in time I lived with my parents (a span of seven years) before they died following each other including my elder brother. In that darkened exodus it remained a mystery for life with all my brothers who were after me. We lost everything in human eyes experiencing the night of life but God's light kept on shining. In His heart, I believed that the wonders of the world come and go, but the true desires of my heart never die. After I completed my high school in pain, I spent seven years at home as a parent father figure, caring for my two younger brothers who were in the lower primary. Apparently, God's call for me was right over there. I heard his voice in that brokenness of experience of which today I am a Missionary of Charity and a student at the Angelicum University.

I AM NOT ALONE

As a child having been born in Kenya on December 30, 1986, just by the hills of Kisii and named Solomon Onyansi Maticha, I

an extended argument over how the sauce for the pasta was to be served – already mixed in, separately, in or separate from the warming carts. I learned in that discussion that the “gondola” was the Sicilian for “sauceboat”.

The international character of the Angelicum community was balanced by the presence of students from six continents (no Antarcticans!), representing even greater ethnic and linguistic diversity. It was a crash course in all the different worldviews and modes of expression of almost every human culture.

Those of us not from Italy spoke a kind of Angelicum Italian. Our Swiss French prior of the early 80's once congratulated a member of the community on his “anniversario”, thinking that it meant “birthday” as the similar French word would have meant. It actually is used for the anniversary of someone's death! There were great scholars there, too. I was impressed that one of the Flemish professors of philosophy had read all of Aristotle in Greek. “How can you teach a course on anything, unless you can read the works in the original?” he explained.

I left friends behind when I was assigned back to my province in 2001. I miss not being able to visit archaeological sites, of which Italy is full, with Fr. Ditton on Sundays. I took away an appreciation of Dominican life and the Dominican academic apostolate which has colored the way I subsequently approached both a brief association with the Dominican House of Studies in Washington and a longer stint with the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley. I work now as procurator (bursar) for St. Vincent Ferrer Priory in New York, where we have guests from all over the world passing through. With so many of these friars we have mutual acquaintances that we would not have had, if the Angelicum had not been so important a part of my life.

remember I had a mother who loved me very much. My mother was a nursery school teacher, a devout Christian in the Catholic church and a peasant farmer. Nevertheless, before she developed health complications she took us to catechumen class, and a year later after a long suffering she died of stomach cancer. My elder brother had died almost seven months before my mother of a disease I am not acquainted with. In October 1997, my mother breathed her last. As I was still a child I never believed how people really die more practically, I could see people crying, and weeping. I could imagine as a joke, until the day before my mother was buried, I went alone to the coffin. I tried to call her,



*Brother Solomon Maticha, originally from Kenya is a second-year philosophy student at the Angelicum. Having experienced the loss of his parents and older brother at a young age, he describes his trials of raising his younger siblings while feeling drawn to the priesthood.*



"Mum! Mum!" but she could not reply. The following day after the burial, in the evening I felt I missed her for supper, and I even asked, "where is my mother?" Nobody could answer. You can imagine what happened...! What about my two younger brothers who were younger than me? Neither of them knows nor do they remember how she looked. Later when I missed her for the second and the third time, I believed that she had truly died.

A new life began for our family, with my twin brother and I deciding to take turns to go to school. He went one day and I remained at home and if I went, he remained home taking care of the young ones. That was our life until we finished elementary.

#### IN HIS FOOTSTEPS I HEARD HIM CALLING ME

Given that life challenges and challenge gives meaning to life. Life in high school was as hard as anything else you can imagine, but I was able to try my best. I equally experienced all like the other students but they could express their trials to their parents, but I missed someone to express mine to. At the end of the fourth-year course I finished my study even though I had felt an inner call to join religious life. Life was so complicated even more as my two younger brothers looked like sheep without a shepherd. Having decided to join the priesthood in religious life I had to keep my gaze on these young ones.

Life at home became a very big load for me, since my brother who was helping felt a bit tired and needed to begin his family. And the other brothers were not ready for the task of sacrifice. Two things came to my mind; that if I joined the priesthood and my brothers remain desperate, it will not make sense with me following my vocation. I decided to put it on hold and take my brothers to school. I began farming both tea and dairy milk. In the meantime, my grandmother got sick. In the event of moving with her from one place to another I felt that God was calling me to serve the people who were suffering like her, the old, and even to visit those with no one to see them. After this long illness, she passed away, but this thought remained fresh in my mind. I did not know the Missionaries of Charity nor Mother Teresa. While going for adoration in the parish, I came across a directory with the names of all the missionaries working in Kenya. I applied to two of them and thank the Lord, my first letter came from the Missionaries of Charity. Since I knew nothing about this community, I went to the internet and to my surprise, I saw in bold letters that "we are serving the poorest of the poor, the sick, the prisoners, the least and the last."

I felt consoled and loved, I was invited for a come-and-see experience. However, it was more difficult that I expected to minister to the street people and dressing their wounds was a real encounter and a difficult one. I prayed, "God, you called me and for sure I know it is you, why do I feel fear to touch them? If you really called me, give me the grace and confirm that this is my place." A few months later, unaware to me, I feel I was getting happy to serve the poor and then I realized that the Good Lord already gave me the grace. The greatness of the Lord is unmeasurable, in every part of my life. I can see His footsteps not only by myself but my entire family that He still provides for in abundance.

#### AS SEMINARIAN STUDENT OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS UNIVERSITY IN ROME

As a second-year student of philosophy at the Angelicum, the most fascinating experience I have had is the doctrine of excellence given by the professors. It is not just a university, but a home and a mother of excellence of what it takes to live our fully human life. Despite learning from the highly qualified professors, for me as a person, hopefully a future priest, being an academic doesn't matter much, but what I see as beautiful, is a university with all its staff fully giving what I call a real-life gift, not just a career but a witness itself. This is actually what gives meaning to life.

My studies have been what I call most fruitful, in my life amazing, not just knowledge but the fundamentals of the whole of my life and making it very meaningful. When I recall back to my life in 1997, when everything seemed lost, a life full of darkness, I could not imagine finishing my studies, but wonderfully, the one who reveals Himself to me is a God of history, not only for the Israelites but also the history of my life.

I have enjoyed being in the university, to recognize and love my very self, see the unseen footsteps of the very powerful One, that indeed I was not just alone, but someone else was with me, that He prepares the history of everyone and that mine is on course. With these few remarks I can say that I have a dream and a purpose in life that is being unfolded and becomes clear as I study my theology. What the university gives, I cannot give and what I can do, the university cannot do but together we can do something beautifully fashioned in our lives' history. May our university continue to bear the fruit and flourish in every season, welcoming, forming, and sending, for this we have been called. Bear in abundance in our lives in as much as we have received. Thank you and may God bless you all.



Photo credit Dominik Macak



## Angelicum Alumni: Where are they now? Dr. Aurelie Hagstrom, STD



*Written by Dr. Aurelie A. Hagstrom, STD,  
Associate Professor of Theology, Providence College*

When I was an undergraduate at Providence College in the 80's, we often heard about the Angelicum from our Dominican Friars who had studied there. We would also meet members of the Angelicum faculty when they came to

Providence in the summer to teach a course or do some sabbatical research. In those days, the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas seemed like a faraway exotic place that I would never visit, much less study there.

These days when I mention the Angelicum to my own students here at P.C., I usually get the same kind of quizzical looks. I tell them about the agony and ecstasy of living in the Eternal City and being a student at the Pontifical universities. I wax eloquently about being the only lay woman in most of my classes at the Ange and the experience of sitting among seminarians and priests from the world over as an S.T.L. candidate. They usually treat it as ancient history, but my memories from 1988-1992 in Rome are still quite vivid and precious.

I studied dogmatics for the licentiate as well as the doctorate, specializing in ecclesiology. My focus was the vocation, mission, and spirituality of the laity. And this has remained my area of research, teaching, and writing. Living at the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas those four years gave me an ecclesial formation that has proven to be critical in my work as a professor and theologian in the academy of Catholic higher education in the U.S.

Indeed, it is this ecclesial commitment in academic theology, this context of studying in the heart of the Church, that is the great strength of a pontifical education in Rome. And this is what I am most grateful for as an alum of the Ange. Studying in Rome gave me a deep sense of the universality of the Church and a more profound appreciation for the liturgical life of various expressions of Catholicism around the world.

Being honest, I must admit that the Angelicum was not a very well-organized, polished, professional institution when I was there. Who could forget the unheated classrooms, the overgrown abandoned garden out back, the lack of a proper bookstore, the lousy coffee at the Bar, and the uninviting atmosphere of the so-called Library? But we still loved it! There is nothing like such dire circumstances to build real Christian community!

Recently, I was the faculty resident director of the Providence College Centre for Theology and Religious Studies study abroad program, living in Rome from 2013- 2016. I had the opportunity to visit the Angelicum many times for events, lectures, conferences, and simply to catch up with friends. I found a much more organized, professional and welcoming institution. I loved the new bookstore and the Library was impressive! It was gratifying to see how much the university had grown and developed in the 20 plus years since I was there.

It seems that a pontifical education is as important now as it has ever been. Forming men and women with high academic standards along with fostering a deep love for the Church is just what is needed to embrace Pope Francis' call for missionary disciples to heal a wounded world. May the Angelicum continue in its mission of truth and fidelity to the Gospel!



*Photo credit Dominik Macak*

### IDF Invites You to Experience Sacred Scripture

Dominicans have lectured and commented on Sacred Scripture for centuries. IDF is excited to welcome you to PRIXM, a newly released weekly online newsletter presented by Dominican friars from the Ecole Biblique, some of whom have taught at the Angelicum. For more information and to subscribe, please visit [www.priXM.org/en](http://www.priXM.org/en).

# PRIXM



## New Dominicans at the Angelicum

### Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P., Angelicum Alumnus Returns as PUST Director of Development



*Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P. is preparing to return to the Eternal City and the Quirinal Hill as the new director of development for the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas beginning September 2018. He also served five years in the Order's East African missions where he was novice master for friars in their initial stage of formation from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Southern Sudan, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. Contact him:*

*+1-202-642-3597 or [benedict.croell.op@pust.it](mailto:benedict.croell.op@pust.it)*

*Written by Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P.*

On February 24, 2018 I received the humbling news from the Master of the Dominican Order, that he had appointed me as Director of Development for the Angelicum. This means I will be working side by side with our Rector, Fr. Michal Paluch, O.P. and the President of the International Dominican Foundation, Fr. Allen Moran, O.P. We hope to reconnect with alumni of our beloved university and to find more friends to accomplish its mission in the Church.

My first time at the Angelicum (2008-2010), was studying under Fr. Luke Buckles, O.P. and Fr. Paul Murray, O.P. while I served as university chaplain for English speakers. It was truly formative for my life as a priest and friar. After finishing the STL, I became the Director of Vocations for the U.S. Province of St. Joseph (Eastern), living eight years in Washington, D.C. at the Dominican House of Studies. I have been privileged to welcome eighty-five men who are currently in various stages of Dominican formation. Three of these men are already ordained priests and nine more will be ordained this May by Angelicum alumnus and former professor, Cardinal Dolan of New York. I have recognized quickly that this is the work of the Lord. It is His work more than it is mine.

These last eight years have been primarily in preaching the Gospel through campus evangelization efforts and retreats at mostly secular universities. Together with fellow friars we cooperated with the U.S. based, Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). These campus visits and a number of parish missions helped me to see that God is working on college campuses and in the confessional!

What does all of this have to do with being the Director of Development? As Vocation Director my focus has not been about convincing young men to join the Order of Preachers. It has been simply: to evangelize everyone! The added bonus: along the way our friars have met many young men who also wish to share in the preaching mission of Jesus Christ - and so they come.

My prayer is that my work on behalf of the Angelicum might be the same: to spread the Gospel for the salvation of souls. I want to build strong friendships with each of you. Hopefully together we will find others who would want to join us in that friendship which makes this university a true instrument of evangelization and makes all of us, friends of Jesus Christ. Look at the grace and blessing the Angelicum has been for the Church already - imagine what God still has yet to achieve!



On behalf of the International Dominican Foundation, I look forward to working closely with Fr. Benedict Croell in his new position at the Angelicum as we together promote the mission of the institution.

## Friends of the Angelicum



All are invited to join in support of the Angelicum University as a "friend" allowing you to receive benefits like the printed newsletter, electronic invitations to special lectures given at the Angelicum and an open invitation for an arranged guided tour of the University if you are visiting Rome. With your support and participation, we hope to enhance these benefits as we grow!

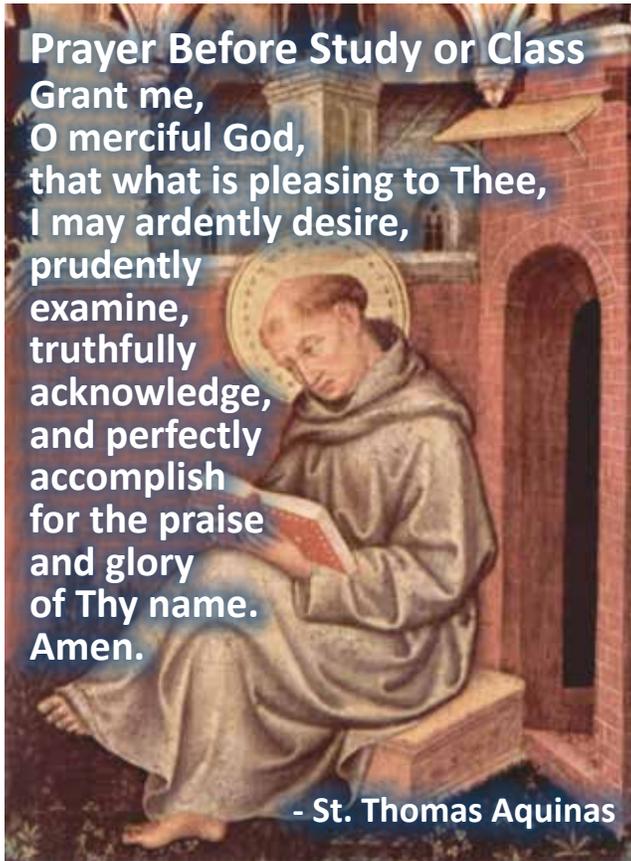
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- ✓ Joining the "Friends of the Angelicum" with a donation of \$50.00 or more.
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**Prayer Before Study or Class**  
Grant me,  
O merciful God,  
that what is pleasing to Thee,  
I may ardently desire,  
prudently  
examine,  
truthfully  
acknowledge,  
and perfectly  
accomplish  
for the praise  
and glory  
of Thy name.  
Amen.

- St. Thomas Aquinas



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