

DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

January 26, 2025

Dear students, faculty, and staff of Aquinas College,

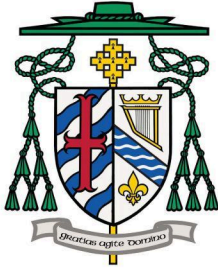
National Catholic Schools Week will be observed from January 26 to February 1 this year. This week provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the immense value of Catholic education, recognizing how it shapes lives and nurtures hearts through faith, learning, and service to others.

With 31 Catholic elementary and secondary schools serving more than 6,400 students, plus the post-secondary communities of Aquinas and Harmel Academy of the Trades, families in West Michigan have a wide range of opportunities to choose Catholic education from preschool to higher education. Through Catholic education, our young people are being prepared to discern and fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

I encourage each of you to consider the powerful role you play in evangelizing our Catholic faith. Your studies, service, and witness at Aquinas College and in the greater community serve as a light of faith in a world often clouded by confusion and division. Whether in the classroom, at service sites, or in your daily encounters, you have the opportunity to spread the message of Christ to those around you. The Catholic education offered at Aquinas invites you to engage the world with the love and truth of the Gospel.

It is especially fitting that the feast day for Saint Thomas Aquinas, patron saint of teachers, students, and Catholic education, occurs during Catholic Schools Week. Saint Thomas' work offers us a profound example of how the pursuit of knowledge can deepen our faith. May his prayer be a guide for all that we do:

Grant me, O Lord my God,
a mind to know you,
a heart to seek you
the wisdom to find you,
a way of life pleasing to you,
faithful perseverance in waiting for you
and a hope of finally embracing you.
Amen.



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May you continue to be witnesses of Christ, spreading the Gospel of our Lord among the Aquinas community and beyond. Please know of my prayers for you—may the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit be poured out in your lives and in your mission over the coming year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David J. Walkowiak", with a small cross symbol to the left.

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids



January 26, 2025

Dear Bishop Walkowiak,

Thank you for all you do in support of the work we do as teachers and staff to bring the faith integral to the education of our students, K-16, in Grand Rapids. Your leadership is a model of evangelization in this capacity and one for which Aquinas College is most grateful.

Catholic education is a significant way to enrich young minds with the importance of believing in something beyond oneself. Catholic higher education allows for the discernment of the faith and how it integrates into one's future of service to others in our personal and professional lives. As a Dominican institution, Aquinas College takes this responsibility seriously. Our Dominican pillars of prayer, study, community and service are at the core of all we do. We cherish our Dominican Catholic community begun and nourished by the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids here at Aquinas and we are ever grateful for your leadership and support as a continuation of the Catholic education so vital and important to our students and their families.

God bless you as we celebrate National Catholic Schools Week, as you say, most fittingly the week of Saint Thoms Aquinas, our institution's namesake, one of the most important scholars of the Church and our patron.

Sincerely,

Alicia R. Córdoba

Alicia R. Córdoba
President, Aquinas College