Father Bart Timmerman, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, celebrated the St. Ambrose 2015 Graduation Mass on Pentecost Sunday, telling the graduates, “we send you out on this Pentecost Sunday to bring light to the world.”

William Yallaly, Associate Director of Communications for the Diocese of Madison, delivered the commencement address titled “Now Is A Very Acceptable Time.” He said, “We are called to far more than what we have already achieved.” Mr. Yallaly reminded the graduates that “this is the day the Lord has made,” observing that “the year of Our Lord 2015 is the year of Our Lord.” Graduates should seize the opportunity that each day presents and “charge headfirst into [their] responsibilities.”

The Class of 2015 is poised to do just that, with post-graduation plans that will scatter them across the country to Notre Dame, the University of Southern California, Iowa State, Kansas, UW-Whitewater, Alverno College (Milwaukee), and Madison College in town.

The newest SAA alumni will have diverse opportunities to “seize the day” next year.

Elizabeth Schiedermayer, winner of the 2015 Christian Service Award, learned from practicing self-giving daily at St. Ambrose how to “give the gift of self.” Valedictorian Matt Marsland reflected back on his years with his classmates at St. Ambrose: “… the light of Christ informed everything we learned and everything we did.” Director of Classical Education Dr. Constance Nielsen, who served as the graduation Master of Ceremonies, warmly congratulated the graduates. After years of helping students grow into their best selves, she shared, “I can finally tell [graduates] that you’re amazing exactly the way you are.”

St. Ambrose School Families Are On A Mission!

“Back in the day, when St. Ambrose started and we were deciding about schools, I was unsure about choosing a brand-new school,” admits Jerry Duhn, father of Mary (SAA ’13) and Stephen (SAA ’17). “We thought, ‘what if it fails?’”

A decade later, St. Ambrose’s enrollment has grown tenfold, and the Duhns are convinced they made the right decision. “After seeing the success of St. Ambrose,” Jerry says, “you can really see the Holy Spirit at work.”

The Duhns are joining other school families this summer to establish the 2015 Matching Challenge fund, which will enable all donations to the school to be doubled during July. In July 2014, thanks to generous benefactors, St. Ambrose was able to have their first-ever Matching Gift Challenge, which fully funded the school’s annual tuition assistance fund.

“As I saw our community come together to fulfill St. Ambrose’s mission last summer, I truly felt as if I witnessed a miracle,” said Development Director Laura Karlen. “I am so impressed by the school parents’ enthusiasm in working together to repeat this miracle for 2015.”

The July Matching Challenge ensures that St. Ambrose can continue to offer tuition assistance to nearly half the student body, making Catholic classical education accessible to families. St. Ambrose challenges all supporters to contribute by July 31, 2015 -- all gifts will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to $15,000!
It’s not unusual for teachers to inspire their students. But how many students are so inspired by their teacher’s presentation of Catholic social teachings that they work to ensure the government serves the common good? Ben Emmel, for one.

Ben graduated from St. Ambrose in 2007. His first job after graduating college was working for the state agency that oversees Wisconsin’s technical colleges. Was the system serving the needs of its students? It was Ben’s work to find out. His passion for service led him to graduate school at UW-Madison’s La Follette School of Public Affairs and now to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) where Ben will begin full-time work this summer. The GAO is the independent investigative arm for Congress. As the “congressional watchdog,” it evaluates how taxpayer dollars are spent. Is the government serving the people as it should?

True, Ben’s graduate work and internship experience helped lead him to his career. But Ben points to Dr. Constance Nielsen’s Religion classes at St. Ambrose as especially formative: “She explained the social teachings of the Church: how the Holy Fathers identified roles in society for both government and individuals to work for charity and justice.” He adds, “Caring for the poor and society is not just the responsibility of government, but our personal duty as Christians.” On the job, Ben will directly live out his Catholic faith and work for the common good.

Ben and his wife Jen will move to Washington D.C. later this summer, when they’ll also expect their first child. It’s a blessing to have a well-formed Catholic in D.C.!