

# St. Thomas of Villanova



## PATRON OF THE UNIVERSITY

*"To give treasure away as Thomas of Villanova did,  
is the duty of the rich and the privilege of the wise."*

**V**illanova is a word that can stretch its meaning to enfold the unique experience of everyone who knows and loves the university. The name Villanova, meaning "new town" or "new house", symbolizes for its students a new beginning. It is a place where ideas and attitudes greet students each year as they set out on a journey of discovery with new teachers and friends.

Some students may know little about Saint Thomas of Villanova, and many know nothing at all. The typical Villanova student knows that Thomas was the saint who "gave away" his name to the university. Few are aware that he was also a sixteenth-century bishop, Augustinian monk, renowned writer, educator, and scholar.

This ignorance about the patron of Villanova is understandable. It is not important that we know so little about the life and deeds of Saint Thomas of Villanova. What really matters about Saint Thomas is that he was a good and generous man who loved the poor. That spirit of generosity is the same spirit which his name brings to Villanova University.

Pictures of Saint Thomas of Villanova tell that story well. They commonly show the saint of Valencia clutching a bag full of money, treasures, which he holds, not to keep, but to give away. For Thomas of Villanova, wealth had only one purpose. It was something he could share with the poor, with those who were in need.

That is the enduring value of education at Villanova University. Education means gathering the wealth of wisdom and learning, which students possess not for themselves, but to share with one another and, as Saint Thomas of Villanova did, to share with those who need it.

For over 175 years, the Villanova family has shared the adventure of learning. Together, they have gathered a wealth of knowledge-treasures of the mind and golden nuggets of truth.

To give treasure away, as Saint Thomas of Villanova did, is the duty of the rich and the privilege of the wise. Villanovans know that this wealth of learning, like love itself, is a gift which we possess never so much as when we give it away.

*Reverend Neil J. McGettigan, O.S.A., D. Min.*