

# MOUNT ANGEL | Letter

SUMMER 2019

ALL GUESTS WHO ARRIVE  
SHALL BE RECEIVED AS CHRIST.  
HOLY RULE 13

A PLACE TO SEEK  
& FIND GOD



# INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Summer 2019 | Volume 72, Number 2

## DIRECTORY

**MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY**  
503.845.3030  
www.mountangelabbey.org

**BOOKSTORE**  
503.845.3345  
abbeystore@mtangel.edu

**DEVELOPMENT**  
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**ALUMNI RELATIONS**  
503.845.3030  
alumni@mtangel.edu

**GUESTHOUSE**  
503.845.3025  
retreat@mtangel.edu

**ABBEY LIBRARY**  
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circulation@mtangel.edu

**OBLATE PROGRAM**  
Fr. Ralph Recker, O.S.B.  
ralph.recker@mtangel.edu

**MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY**  
503.845.3951  
seminaryinfo@mtangel.edu

**VOCATIONS**  
Fr. Odo Recker, O.S.B.  
vocation@mtangel.edu

**VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**  
503.407.8175  
volunteer@mtangel.edu

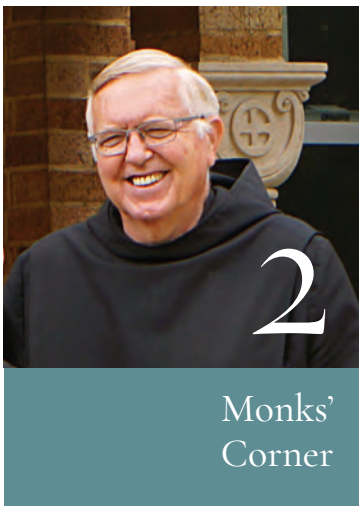
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**Contributors** to this issue include Msgr. Joseph Betschart, Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, Jodi Kilcup, Fr. Dean Marshall, Fr. Ralph Recker,

**Photo Contributors** include Br. Lorenzo Conocido, Fr. William Holtzinger, Karen Jacoby, Mikaele Sansone (CRS), used with permission.

**Editor:** Theresa Myers  
**Design:** Karen Jacoby

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Monks' Corner



Seminary Commencement



Guesthouse Reopens



Oblates of Mount Angel Abbey

*Please note our mailing address:* Abbey Foundation of Oregon, PO Box 497, Saint Benedict, OR 97373-0497.

All other Abbey mail should be addressed to 1 Abbey Drive, Saint Benedict, OR 97373.

*Would you like to receive* our publications, invitations and news via email? Simply send your email address to [news@mtangel.edu](mailto:news@mtangel.edu).

*Do you have special requests* regarding the mail you receive from the Abbey? Give us a call at 503.845.3030. Please send address changes or comments, along with your mailing label, to the Development Office at PO Box 497, Saint Benedict, OR 97373-0497.





## DEAR FRIENDS,

For the past few years, the entire monastic community of Mount Angel has focused on hospitality. It's a trait Benedictines are known for, and our holy father Saint Benedict speaks about it powerfully in the Holy Rule. He admonishes us to receive guests to the monastery "as Christ," with "all the courtesy of love."

That's why many Benedictine monasteries have a guesthouse, where people come for rest and retreat. Our guesthouse, built in 1959, was originally envisioned and designed primarily for men who would come to make silent retreats. It wasn't many years, however, before more and more people wanted to come, including a variety of groups, both men and women. The use of the guesthouse quickly expanded from the original vision. In recent years, we found ourselves turning many away for lack of space.

In addition, the guesthouse building needed substantial repairs. As many of you are aware, the retreat center was closed for almost a year due to an ambitious renovation and expansion project. It was with great joy that we reopened the Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center with a blessing ceremony June 2!

Much of this *Mount Angel Letter* is about the guesthouse, and rightly so. Thanks to the abundant grace of God, and so many, many friends and benefactors, we are now able to welcome larger groups for retreats and spiritual conferences. At the same time, we can accommodate individuals and couples who come for private retreats. Just as important as the larger, updated building, the monks will be more involved in this renewed center with retreats and spiritual direction.

We have much for which to thank God. Our community continues to attract men to the monastic life. The seminary continues to prepare men for the priesthood – this year, nine of our graduates were ordained shortly after the semester ended. And in this issue, we also have some beautiful stories and information about the oblates of Mount Angel Abbey.

The oblates are men and women who commit to live the Benedictine rule and spirituality in their daily lives. They remain close to the monastic community through shared prayer, retreats, and a deep love and appreciation for the Rule of St. Benedict.

I hope and pray that, through the beautiful photos and stories of this issue, you will experience a "visit" to our monastery, and that you will share the peace, joy, and blessings we experience daily here at Mount Angel. Better yet, we hope to see you here on our Hilltop. The doors of our guesthouse are once again open!

God bless you,

+ Jeremy Driscoll, OSB

The Right Reverend Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.  
Abbot and Chancellor  
Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary

## Four Postulants Prepare for Novitiate



**Last March**, the community of Mount Angel received four men as postulants. In a simple rite described in the Rule of St. Benedict, written 1,500 years ago, the men knocked on the door of the monastery and were asked the question: What do you seek? They responded: “To join the community of Mount Angel Abbey.”

According to the Rule, they were allowed to enter, but, “A senior [monk] chosen for his skill in winning souls [was] appointed to look after them

with careful attention.” The four men, Br. David Hernandez, Br. Luke Klotz, Br. Trent Sislow, and Br. Zachary Norstedt, are now under the direction of Fr. William Hammelman and will live the next several months inside the cloister.

They will follow the daily monastic schedule (*horarium*), attend classes to learn what it takes to be a monk, and work in the monastery while they discern their vocations. If they desire to continue, they will be considered for admission as novices in the fall.





## Vocational Milestone



At a Mass celebrated June 16 in the Abbey church, **Fr. Liem Nguyen** celebrated 25 years of priestly ordination. Fr. Liem made his first profession of vows at Mount Angel in September 1989 and was ordained on June 11, 1994. Fr. Liem is the novice master and junior master. In this role, he guides the formation and vocational discernment of both the novice monks and those preparing to make solemn vows.

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*The process of discerning a vocation to Mount Angel usually begins with a personal visit or a discernment retreat with the monks. Fr. Odo Recker, vocation director, plans at least three retreats each year, offering participants an opportunity to live with the monks and follow their schedule for a few days. They also spend time in prayer, conferences, and conversation about vocation discernment. The next retreat is scheduled for October 18 to 20. For more information, email Fr. Odo at [vocation@mtangel.edu](mailto:vocation@mtangel.edu).*

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## Benedictine Brewery Receives Recognition

The Benedictine Brewery and Taproom opened last August, and has steadily grown in popularity – even in the darker days of winter. In May, it received a “Most Oregon Part of Oregon” award from Travel Salem. The award is apt, given that hops grown on Abbey land and water from the Abbey’s wells are used in the brews.

To visit the brewery and taproom is to enter the world of rural Oregon, with its beautiful views of farmland and the surrounding mountains. Backing the brewery is the Abbey hillside, with sheep and goats clearing the brambles nearby.

A taste of the monastic life comes with each draft of beer as Fr. Martin opens the doors for business by ringing a bell and blessing the doorway with holy water. In the late afternoon or early evening, especially on the weekends, it’s not unusual to find a few monks in the taproom ready to welcome all who come. Many who stop at the taproom find themselves drawn to also visit the Abbey, just as the monks had hoped when they first envisioned a monastic brewery.

**TASTE & BELIEVE!**







## COMMENCEMENT 2019 at MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

The 44 graduates of Mount Angel Seminary earned a total of 55 degrees and certificates at the 2019 commencement. Among the graduates were nine deacons who returned to their home dioceses for priestly ordination.

Mount Angel Seminary's graduating class of 2019 celebrated its Baccalaureate Mass on the afternoon of May 10 and Commencement Exercises the following morning. Most Reverend Kevin W. Vann, Bishop of Orange, gave the Commencement Address, speaking to more than 300 family and friends assembled in the Abbey church.

Bishop Vann expressed his appreciation for the landscape that surrounds Mount Angel. The beauty of this part of the country, he noted, close to the Cascade mountain range, helps to "form and define the landscape of the souls" who live and study at Mount Angel. In the same way, he told the graduates...

*"Your calling, your ministry, your vocation, strengthened by the degrees you will receive today ... will truly form and define the culture and the lives around you."*



Last spring, as part of a national tour, the Knights of Columbus brought the incorrupt heart of St. John Vianney to the Abbey church. Seminarian Dalton Rogers, studying for the Diocese of Fresno, said he prayed for the intercession of St. John Vianney, patron of parish priests, to "forge in [me] ... a heart set aflame with love for God and his people, a love poured out every day, to the very end."



*St. John Vianney, pray for us and for all those who respond to the call to serve God's people as parish priests!*





Fr. Peter Arteaga, MSpS, Nancy Holt, Deacon Scott Pearhill  
 (Not in photo: Rev. Msgr. Joseph Betschart, Deacon Scott Dodge, Rev. Thomas Koller, O.C.D.)

## Doctor of Ministries

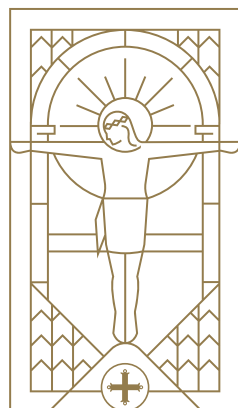
The first cohort of six students in Mount Angel's Doctor of Ministry program graduated this spring. This advanced degree summer program provides an opportunity for Catholic pastoral ministers – ordained, religious, and lay men and women – to deepen and enrich their ministries in their local

communities. The program helps candidates integrate theological learning with their pastoral skills and experience. It invites continuing conversion to Christ and an ever-deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries. For information, email Deacon Owen Cummings, at [owen.cummings@mtangel.edu](mailto:owen.cummings@mtangel.edu).

### *Here is what some of our seminarians are doing this summer:*



- Through Catholic Relief services, visiting refugee camps in Greece and Serbia *(In photo at left, seminarian Michael Hoolihan, Diocese of Orange, is with a mother and daughter in the Skaramagas camp in Athens.)*
- Working in a supervised pastoral assignment as part of their graduate studies
- Taking a Spanish immersion course in Cuernavaca, Mexico
- Attending the Institute for Priestly Formation at Creighton University
- Attending the John Paul II Healing Center in Tallahassee, Florida
- Working in parishes in their home dioceses
- *Continuing to share the love of Christ with all they meet!*





**We welcome you!** Our holy father St. Benedict tells us to, “Welcome all who come as Christ.” With the opening of our newly renovated and expanded guesthouse, we are ready to do just that.

*This is a space designed to allow one’s soul to both rest and expand.*

In this place of retreat, we desired to create something beautiful – in its architecture, artwork, and landscaping. Even the furnishings, and the food served in the dining room, reflect the beauty and glory of God. This sense of beauty and place is important to Benedictines. We vow stability; we’ve been praying and working on this Hilltop for almost 140 years. This is the place where we monks have learned to listen and to hear the voice of God. And we want to share that experience with you.

Here, thanks to the hard work and generosity of so many, we have a place where all can *Seek Things Above!*

– ABBOT JEREMY





# MOUNT ANGEL

SAINT BENEDICT  
GUESTHOUSE & RETREAT CENTER

A PLACE TO SEEK & FIND GOD



*This is what we have made together:*

- A regional center for spiritual renewal
- A place to seek God and encounter monastic spirituality
- A refuge of peace for guests of all faiths (or no faith)
- A resource for clergy and pastoral ministers seeking retreats and fellowship
- An inviting place where young adults can explore faith, culture and values
- A beautiful space for meetings, conferences and receptions
- A setting that flexibly accommodates groups, individuals, and visitors
- A shining example of Gospel hospitality





## Retreats

One of the first initiatives for Br. Louis Nguyen as director of the newly formed Office of Spiritual Ministries was to begin what he calls “Abbey Sponsored Retreats.” These are based on the spirituality of St. Benedict and the monastic way of life.

Next up for Br. Louis is to begin ministry to young adults. Still in the development stage, ideas include monthly dinners and conversation about the faith; regular retreats for young adults; annual conferences at the Hilltop for faith sharing, common prayer, music and education.

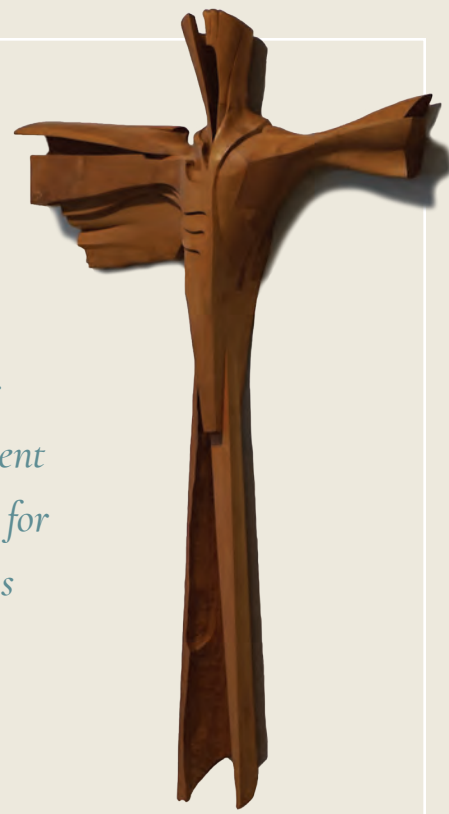


*“We hope this place will be a haven for spiritual renewal and growth, learning and contemplation, fellowship, friendship and prayer.”*

– ABBOT JEREMY

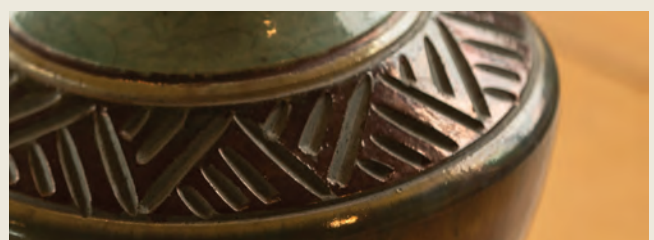


*Fifty years ago, people came to the retreat center to do spiritual work. They still do, but they often come exhausted and need an experience of peace before they make a retreat. That's why we've taken great care to create a comfortable, safe environment for individuals seeking refuge and reflection, and groups gathering for retreats or conferences. We welcome all people to come away to this quiet place to pray and rest awhile.* – FR. PIUS, GUEST MASTER



## Added Spaces

- St. Benedict Adoration Chapel
- Westminster Room (seats 50)
- Montecassino Room (seats 14)
- Subiaco Room (seats 8)
- Three Kings Room (seats 8)
- St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael Parlors
- Three Dining Rooms – the San Fedele Refectory (seats 80); the Abbot's Dining Room (seats 12); the Samaritan Room (seats 6)
- Three lounges provide quiet spaces with beautiful views
- Two spacious terraces and the Visitation Garden offer inviting, landscaped outdoor sites for events and contemplation
- 41 new and renovated guest rooms accommodate up to 82 overnight guests



More photos and information at [mountangelabbey.org/guesthouse](http://mountangelabbey.org/guesthouse)



## OBLATES FIND SPIRITUAL HOME AT MOUNT ANGEL

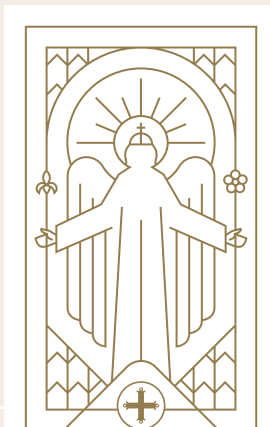
Since the time of the desert fathers and mothers, Christians have experienced an inner call to embrace monastic spirituality, as a way of offering themselves to God. At Mount Angel Abbey, beginning in the 1950s, many seekers have found a home for spiritual growth among the monks and in the community of oblates.

Mount Angel oblates are men and women, clergy and laypeople, who make a lifelong commitment to be associated with the Abbey. Their formal profession follows a process of prayerful discernment and formation. They take an oblate name and embark upon the Benedictine way, in which monks and laypeople are united in their desire to “seek the things that are above.”

Fr. Pius X Harding, Mount Angel’s Oblate Director from 2004 to 2018, has observed a “long, quiet story of change” in the oblates he has known. “A lot of people are looking for stability in our turbulent society,” he comments. “Oblates often want to find balance in their active lives.”

Mark Richards, a leadership consultant in Calgary, Canada, helps lead a group of Mount Angel oblates who have gathered there for the past 25 years. Once a year, he drives 15 prayerful hours for a week in retreat at Mount Angel. Benedictine spirituality, he explains, is the “floor” of his work. “A big issue in corporate life is the lack of balance,” he believes. Formed as an oblate, he works with leaders to discern how they “operate” their lives, and whether their behavior is congruent with servant leadership. St. Benedict’s Rule, he observes, reflects wisdom accumulated “over a lot of time about how people really are.” Mark applies lessons learned at Mount Angel to the challenge of building community and trust in organizations. “When monks mess up, they bow to each other,” he says. “My wife and I do that, too.”

Donna Bevens, professed in 1991, was initially struck by “the loving way monks and oblates greeted each other. I remember a time when a visitor asked me, ‘How long have you been a friend of the Abbey?’ I thought to myself, yes, that’s what I am, a friend of the Abbey.”







First oblate retreat  
July 29, 1960  
with Abbot Damian  
Jentges, O.S.B.



Communication is key to that friendship for Fr. Ralph Recker, who was appointed Oblate Director last January. As a start, he said he hopes to initiate the renewal of the Oblate Newsletter. “We’re not going for anything fancy, just a way to keep everyone updated and connected.” He is also organizing a pilgrimage in the coming year to Mount Angel’s motherhouse in Engelberg, Switzerland, for the 900th anniversary of its founding in 1120.

For people who seek balance and stability in a turbulent world, the Benedictine tradition offers deep resources, both ancient and ever new. First and foremost, the communion between monks and oblates is based on a shared life of prayer, including Mass, the Divine Office, lectio divina or holy reading, and contemplative prayer.

“I’m a single person and live alone,” says Sarah Morris, a professor of nursing and an oblate since 2016. “I love knowing that when I pray the Divine Office, the monks at Mount Angel are praying, oblates are praying out in the world, and communities all over the world are praying.”

– JODI KILCUP

Neil Beyer, an electrician employed by the Abbey, made his oblation in 2014. “From the beginning,” he says,



*“I recognized that St. Benedict’s Rule was a guide, not only for monasteries, but for family life in general. For me, especially, Chapter 2 on the qualities of the abbot has helped me strive to become a better husband and father. In the future, I hope to see more growing families enter and participate in the oblate community.”*



LEARN MORE BY VISITING  
[MOUNTANGELABBAY.ORG/OBLATES](http://MOUNTANGELABBAY.ORG/OBLATES)

## Father Dean Marshall

“LISTEN CAREFULLY, MY SON, TO THE MASTER’S INSTRUCTIONS,  
AND ATTEND TO THEM WITH THE EAR OF YOUR HEART.”

These opening words to the Rule of St. Benedict provide the basis for monastic life at Mount Angel Abbey, but they also form a guiding principle for the seminarians. Seminary life at Mount Angel formed me in such a way that I learned to listen to the Lord with my heart through classes, pastoral ministry, the liturgy, and practices such as lectio divina. I see the same formation in my brothers as we seek to become priests of Jesus Christ, according to his will.

The entirety of the Rule, along with the Benedictine rhythm of prayer and work, started to take on a much deeper meaning for me as my time at Mount Angel Seminary progressed. Eventually, I came to discern that in addition to becoming a diocesan priest, I was also being called to become an oblate of Mount Angel Abbey, living the charism of Benedictine spirituality in my priestly life back home in Sacramento. While I am not a monk, this Benedictine foundation through oblation provides a central framework for everything else I do. The centrality of the liturgy, connection to the Word of God, and the rhythm of prayer and work have



helped me to discern God’s will in my life and become a more faithful Christian, even though I have a long way to go in my journey of faith.

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**NOW THAT I HAVE GRADUATED MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY AND APPROACH PRIESTLY ORDINATION, MY OBLATION TO GOD ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT HAS COME INTO EVEN SHARPER FOCUS.**

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I look forward to working in the Lord’s vineyard in my home diocese with the bishop, priests, and lay faithful, knowing that I have a firm foundation from my time at this holy Hilltop and through my formation as an oblate. Knowing that the monks and I are connected in prayer

provides encouragement and support as I begin my priestly ministry.

In today’s world, we don’t often hear about things like “monks” and “oblates,” but I am extremely grateful to God for being counted as a member of the Benedictine family, and I look forward to actively maintaining this connection throughout my life.

– Fr. Dean Marshall was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Sacramento on June 1, 2019. He made his final oblation on January 27, 2019, taking the name Berchtold after the third abbot of Engelberg Abbey.





# THE SEVEN-HOUR OBLATE

## *Julie Notburga Simpson*

Julie Simpson became an oblate novice in February of 2018. It was a big step toward fulfilling her longtime desire to become a Benedictine oblate of Mount Angel Abbey. That November, she had a tumor removed and in December, was diagnosed with a rare, aggressive form of cancer. The doctors told Julie she likely had about a year to live.

Julie was ready to make her full oblation in February of 2019, but renovations of the Abbey's guesthouse postponed the retreat when oblate novices make their final commitments. In March, after more scans, Julie learned her tumors were growing in number and size. There was nothing more to be done; Julie had less than two months to live. The desire to make her oblation – her full act of commitment to live as a Benedictine oblate – became urgent.

When I learned of Julie's situation, I decided to make the trip to her home in Washington state and receive her oblation on Monday of Holy Week, April 15. By Friday, April 12, the family was told Julie had just hours to live. By Saturday, she had only moments of coherence, and on Sunday, she was moved to the hospice unit of Providence Hospital in Everett, Washington.

On Monday morning, I arrived at the hospital as friends and family gathered for the Oblation

Mass. In the homily, I reminded Julie that as we celebrate Holy Week, we look toward the feast of the Ascension. As Jesus rises into heaven, beyond this earth, we pray, "Where the head has gone before in Glory ... the body is called to follow ... in hope."

After this, Julie's oblate mentor, Darlene Goodwin, presented Julie for oblation. Since at this point she was unable to speak for herself, the entire group of her relatives and friends voiced Julie's desire to become an oblate and associate herself with the monks and works of Mount Angel Abbey. Darlene read the oblation promises and Julie took the name of an Austrian saint known for her charity, Notburga. I accepted Julie's oblation and placed a medal of St. Benedict around her neck, which she was able to grasp in her hand.

At Communion, Julie received a drop of the Precious Blood as Viaticum for her journey. Before the Final Blessing, everyone assembled and anointed her with nard, as Mary had anointed Jesus in the Gospel reading for that day's Mass.

Seven hours later, Julie Notburga Simpson, oblate of Mount Angel Abbey, passed from this world to follow where Christ, her Redeemer, has gone.

– FR. RALPH RECKER, O.S.B., DIRECTOR OF OBLATES



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## JOIN THE MONKS OF MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY *for the LITURGY OF THE HOURS*

### SEEK CHRIST. FIND JOY!

*Please join the monks and seminarians of  
 Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary  
 at the 16th annual*

### SEMINARY BENEFIT DINNER

November 3, 2019  
 Oregon Convention Center  
 in Portland

Celebrate the formation of men who love Christ and the Church, and find joy in service and ministry. You and 1,200 other guests will help inspire, educate and form the priests of tomorrow, in a room filled with love of our shared mission.



*If you are unable to attend, please share your prayer intentions and know that Mount Angel keeps you in our prayers.*

**FOR INFORMATION**  
 about table sponsorships and tickets, please see our website at [mountangelabbey.org/sbd](http://mountangelabbey.org/sbd)



#### WEEKDAYS

Vigils: 5:20 am  
 Lauds: 6:30 am  
 Holy Eucharist: 8:00 am  
 Midday Prayer: Noon  
 Vespers: 5:20 pm  
 Compline: 7:30 pm

#### SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

Vigils: 7:30 pm (Saturday)  
 Lauds: 6:40 am  
 Holy Eucharist: 9:00 am  
 Midday Prayer: Noon  
 Vespers: 5:20 pm  
 Compline: 8:00 pm

## IF A MONK, SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR OR TEACHER HAS CHANGED YOUR LIFE...



*Fr. Edmund Smith, O.S.B., 1938 –*

If mentors at Mount Angel have challenged you or a loved one to grow in new ways or opened doors to God, please consider planning a gift or bequest to honor them. That way, others will have life-changing opportunities as well.

For information, contact Susan Gallagher at 503.845.3030 or [development@mtangel.edu](mailto:development@mtangel.edu).

*Please note, when writing your will, our legal title and address is:  
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 1 Abbey Drive, Saint Benedict, OR 97373  
 (Tax ID number: 04-3703021)*