

Autumn 2017

# MOUNT Angel *Letter*



SAINT BENEDICT GUESTHOUSE  
& RETREAT CENTER  
BLESSING A NEW BEGINNING





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**Special Thanks** to the Monastic Advisory Council for the Mount Angel Letter: Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, Abbot Peter Eberle, Fr. Augustine DeNoble, Fr. Pius X Harding, Br. Andre Love, Fr. Odo Recker, Fr. Ralph Recker and Fr. Vincent Trujillo



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## Dear Friends



This late summer and fall have been a season of new beginnings here at Mount Angel, many of which you can read about in this issue of Mount Angel Letter.

Always foremost in my mind and heart are the men beginning life with us as Benedictine monks. We recently received four men into the novitiate, and three others made their first vows. They join a substantial percentage of our community (40%) who are still in the initial years of monastic life.

We also celebrated the ordination of Fr. John Vianney Le. And Fr. Odo Recker celebrated his 25th Jubilee of his profession at Mount Angel. Fr. Odo and his family marked the occasion with a hot air balloon ride, lifting off from the seminary soccer field. I was greatly pleased to be able to join them!

The new school year at Mount Angel Seminary began August 28. It's always a joy to welcome back students continuing their studies and those who are beginning. Once again, we are close to a full house.

Each of these events calls upon us to be a welcoming community. By our holy Rule of St. Benedict, we are directed to receive each guest as Christ. That is the heart of this issue, as we present to you a truly major project: The renovation of the Abbey's Guesthouse and Retreat Center.

In the last several years, we've seen the arrival of more and more people to the retreat center. Not just more in numbers, but more in diversity. And our current facility built in 1959 to accommodate single men is no longer adequate. We want the renewed Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center to be every bit as beautiful and functional and in keeping with our Benedictine principles as our Aalto Library and the seminary's Annunciation building.

I believe Mount Angel Abbey is called to be a space open to everybody, a place where the monks themselves are growing in their monastic conversion by developing the capacity to recognize Christ in each guest.

I invite you to pray for this work we are beginning, to imagine yourself coming to pray and spend time with us on retreat in a place of beauty and peace. And I look forward to welcoming you as Christ.

Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.

+ Jeremy Driscoll, OSB

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





The monks of Mount Angel Abbey have undertaken a mighty mission: To expand and renovate their Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center. The transformed center will serve as a spiritual “home” for guests who seek an authentic spiritual experience – grounded in the monks’ ancient rhythms of prayer and liturgy.

## Living St. Benedict’s ancient vision for hospitality



Since becoming Abbot (and before then), I have encountered many benefactors and guests of the Abbey who spoke eloquently about the role of the Retreat Center in our Archdiocese and beyond. It’s more than a place, they tell me. It is a holy experience.

Here, they say, you find respite from an increasingly secular society. Whether you visit the Hilltop to encounter Christ and deepen your faith, to enter into prayerful quiet, or to interact with monks, spiritual directors and fellow guests, the ancient rhythms of this place seep into your heart, inviting God’s love into your daily life. In the 6th century, Saint Benedict voiced a revolutionary vision for receiving guests and recognizing Christ in them. Similarly, in our day, Mount Angel Abbey is called to contribute to the American cultural scene, where relations between people can be so difficult. I think that’s one reason why people visit our hilltop. They long for a place where you don’t have to earn kindness or buy it or deserve it. They know that, if you go to Mount Angel, you will be treated with grace. It doesn’t matter who you are.

The Benedictine life has inspired some of the greatest architecture in the history of Western Europe. In that

spirit, we don’t want to just fix up this building because it’s falling down. We want this project to match the beauty and integrity of the Abbey Library and Annunciation, the seminary’s learning center. In those cases, the vision of the monks was not to build store rooms for books or merely functional classrooms, but to create spaces that inspire excellence because they themselves represent excellence.

Over centuries, monks have learned how to create virtual domains. With their monasteries, they have created worlds apart – not to keep the rest of the world out, but to show what the world could be. With their monasteries monks have shown how people can live together, what their buildings could look like, what their homes could look like, how they should eat, how to study and work – in short, how they do anything. This “world apart” is the treasure we want to offer lay people and clergy, bishops and seekers, Catholics and non-Catholics.

St. Benedict taught his monks to “greet all guests as Christ.” This is a Benedictine value that encourages each of us to grow in faith and charity. Greeting guests as Christ is our spiritual ministry and commitment at Mount Angel.

Since we first began exploring this project in 2014, under the leadership of Abbot Gregory Duerr, it has been quite

a journey. This summer, construction began with a bang! Demolition and construction on the south side of the building are making way for the expansion.

This project is a big dream for me and my community. We believe Mount Angel Abbey is called to offer a welcoming Christian space that is open to everybody. This is a place where the monks themselves are growing and expressing their own monastic conversion, by developing the capacity within themselves to recognize Christ in each guest. I sincerely hope you share our dream to transform the Retreat Center to meet the spiritual needs of so many.

To close with the words St. Benedict prescribed for the monastery’s old Porter, each time he greeted guests, “Thanks be to God. Your blessing please!”

Please pray for us at Mount Angel Abbey. Thanks be to God for you.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ *Jeremy Driscoll, OSB*

Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.

## Seek the things that are above.

– Colossians 3:1

The monks of Mount Angel Abbey envision a renovated and expanded Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center, which will offer:

- Our region’s center for spiritual renewal and encounter with monastic spirituality.
- A refuge of peace and beauty in the midst of our tumultuous world.
- A much-needed place of retreat, fellowship and friendship for our hard-working clergy.
- A place where guests fall in love with Mount Angel Abbey and join the ranks of its many friends, oblates and benefactors.
- A shining example of Gospel hospitality, of radical “welcome.”

### Saint Benedict Guesthouse & Retreat Center Campaign at a Glance

**Timeframe:** 2016-2021 (five-year pledges)

**Phase One:** \$8.5 million

**Campaign total:** \$14 million

**Expansion:** 27,000 to 45,000 sqf

**Increased capacity:** 33 to 50 rooms

**Construction began:** Summer 2017





## What will the new Retreat Center offer?

Mount Angel's original retreat house was built in 1959 to offer retreats to single men. Today, the center's cramped spaces simply don't meet the needs of group and individual retreats, tours, day visitors, couples, clergy, bishops and the families of monks and seminarians – who sometimes arrive all at once!

The new Retreat Center will transform the building's exterior and interior, always reflecting Benedictine values of order, simplicity, and beauty. When completed, the expansion plans will allow twice as many guests to encounter Christ in the Retreat

Center! The building will offer versatile spaces – such as dedicated areas for hospitality and contemplation – and tech-equipped meeting rooms with the infrastructure needed to offer a simple and comfortable retreat.

*“I love hearing the bells at prayer times throughout the day. . . . The monks' care shows us that we have a purpose, God loves us, we are welcome here.”*

*— Guest comment*

Retreat Center guests will be supported by ADA accessibility, building code and life safety improvements throughout the facility. Just as important, they will enter a spiritual haven, with expanded retreat program offerings and opportunities for spiritual direction, graced by artwork that reflects Benedictine spirituality.



*This bas-relief statue of St. Benedict, rendered by Br. Andre Love, O.S.B., is currently placed at the church-level entrance to the retreat center. It eventually will be mounted in the exterior wall of the new parking-level entrance (see image at left).*

JUST THE OTHER DAY I WAS ASKED BY A GUEST:  
*“Do you like being Guest Master?”*



Another way of asking that is: “Do you love the monastic life?” The Abbey Guest Master is a visible point of hospitality, but he is little to nothing without the Abbot and community he represents. If there is no praying community here, there is no reason to come to Mount Angel. If our guests encounter no one here striving to live a life of charity, one might as well go elsewhere.

Our vision for the Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center is that of a place of true encounter with Christ. After welcoming the guest “with all the courtesy of love,” St. Benedict says in his Rule that we are to “pray together,” and then “the divine law is read to the guest for his instruction.” After that, “every kindness is shown to him.” In other words, feed guests well in body and soul. Provide a clean and safe place to sleep. And welcome them into the heart of the community, into its life of liturgical prayer.

Peace is Christ's gift to us. The monks of Mount Angel Abbey want our renewed and expanded Guesthouse and Retreat Center to be a place where together we can carry the gift of Christ's Peace to our families, friends, and to all the world.

**Fr. Pius X Harding, O.S.B.**  
*Guest Master*





## A place to seek and find God



When the Abbey asked if I would agree to be featured in the October *Mount Angel Letter*, I replied that I prefer to keep a low profile. But if it will help their effort to renovate their aging retreat center, I have to say “yes.”

My wife, Liz, and I became involved with the monks at Mount Angel Abbey about eight years ago. Since then, our main mission has been fundraising and providing direction for new initiatives at the Abbey.

Over these years, I have come to admire the monks and their Benedictine spirituality. Each monk is unique and has his own reasons for having joined the monastery, but the thing they have in common is an attraction to a prayerful life. Prayer is the glue that makes them a spiritual community.

They have a beautiful church where they gather five times a day to pray, in addition to daily Mass. They operate a seminary dedicated to the formation of priests, a world-class library, and a guesthouse focused on spiritual retreats.

Most of the facilities at the Abbey are adequate for their intended purpose, except the guesthouse and retreat center. Yet, it is needed now, more than ever, as a place of spiritual respite for Catholics, non-Catholics, clergy, and lay people. That’s why the monks have embraced the mission to transform the building.

Right now, we have received gifts and pledges for about \$8 million dollars. The total cost will come close to \$15 million. My focus as a primary fundraiser is to determine how we can raise another \$7 million. We are all praying the Holy Spirit will inspire the hearts of Mount Angel Abbey’s friends and supporters to complete the funding.

Please join us in prayer for this important initiative. If you have the means – or if you can influence others who have the means – consider helping with this campaign. With our help, the monks can provide a welcoming place of refuge, free of distractions, where all can encounter God and find joy, happiness, and inner peace.

– Stephen Zimmer  
Abbey Foundation of Oregon Trustee



### The Visitation Garden

My dear sweet wife, Liz, had a deep devotion to Mary and the rosary. She died in 2016. She would be most pleased that the renovated and expanded guesthouse will have a rosary garden with a Visitation statue and quiet corners for prayer and reflection.

The monks seek the assistance of Mount Angel Abbey’s friends and benefactors to transform the Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center into the region’s leading center for spiritual growth and renewal. Your gift is important. It will be stewarded wisely. And it will be appreciated by the thousands who receive soul care at the Abbey.

To make a contribution toward the monks’ new Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center, you may use the gift envelope included in this magazine. For more information, you are welcome to contact Jodi Kilcup, Director of Development at 503-928-0173 or [jodi.kilcup@mtangel.edu](mailto:jodi.kilcup@mtangel.edu)

## CONSTRUCTION BEGINS FOR BENEDICTINE BREWERY TAP HOUSE, TASTING ROOM

The role of brewer was an unexpected assignment for Fr. Martin Grassel, O.S.B., whose primary job is that of community procurator.

“I was not a fan of beer in college or afterward,” he said.

But at a monastic celebration in 2006, he tried a local craft porter. He liked it, and that led to an interest in Oregon beers.

Six years later, when a friend offered to donate home brewing equipment to the monks, the initial response was, “No thanks.” But after reconsideration, the equipment became Fr. Martin’s experiment. There were, he admits, mistakes during his initial attempts. “Once the hoses blew off the chiller, and there was beer spraying all over the room.” However, he persevered and eventually produced a batch of pale ale. “The monks liked it!”



There had been some previous interest by the monks in the monastic tradition of brewing. After all, hops have grown on Abbey-owned acreage since the 1880s. But when a long list of new, potential revenue sources was presented during a community meeting, Fr. Martin’s new hobby was last on the list but the only one approved.

When a stainless steel ten-gallon brew system was donated, the Benedictine Brewery became reality. Now, the monks believe the time has come for a Benedictine



Brewery and Taproom. With plans drawn, the brew house and tasting room will seat about 50. Located adjacent to the Abbey, hops growing in nearby fields provide the perfect vista. Construction began in early October and is expected to be complete next March.

A brewery and tasting room may not be the first thing people think of when they visit Mount Angel Abbey. But Fr. Martin believes the brewery project can also be a means of evangelization. After all, the motto of the Benedictine Brewery is “*Taste and Believe*.”

— Adapted from Don Williams’ Beerchaser-of-the-Month blog site (<https://thebeerchaser.com/about>)

For updates on this project, follow the Benedictine Brewery on Facebook. Cases of Black Habit and St. Benedict Farmhouse Ale are periodically available at the Mount Angel Abbey Bookstore.



# Community

NEWS ABOUT MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY

## MONASTIC MILESTONES HELP BUILD COMMUNITY

*In the past several weeks, beginning in August with the ordination of Br. John Vianney, O.S.B., the community of Mount Angel has celebrated a number of vocational milestones.*

**August 4** - The Benedictine community of Mount Angel Abbey was joined by a church full of people who came to celebrate the ordination of Fr. John Vianney Le, O.S.B. Archbishop Alexander K. Sample, Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, was the main celebrant; Abbot Jeremy was the principal concelebrant. Fr. John Vianney is currently assigned to the staff of Mount Angel Seminary as a formation director.



**September 5** - Br. Alfredo Miranda, O.S.B., has completed his transfer of stability to the community of Mount Angel. Originally from El Salvador, Br. Alfredo first joined a Benedictine community in Guatemala and made his first vows there in 2015. He came to Mount Angel in the summer of 2016. In the photo, Br. Alfredo visits with retired Abbot Gregory Duerr, O.S.B.



**September 7** - At Vespers, Abbot Jeremy invested four monks as novices. From left to right in the photo: Br. Miguel (Rudy) Olivarez, Br. Victor Ochoa, Br. David Buttrick, and Br. Emilio Gonzalez. Having lived several months with the community as postulants, they now begin a year of intensive study and practice of the monastic life.



**September 8** - At a Pontifical Mass presided by Abbot Jeremy and celebrating the Nativity of Mary, three novices professed their simple vows of stability, conversion of life, and obedience. Congratulations to Br. Justin Gilligan, Br. Anselm Flores, and Br. Gabriel Asbury.



**September 17** - Fr. Odo Recker, O.S.B., along with the monastic community, his immediate family, and friends celebrated his 25th jubilee of monastic profession with a Mass and reception afterward. Fr. Odo is the Subprior, Director of Monastic Vocations, and Novice Master for the community. *Ad multos annos!*

*More photos and stories of life at Mount Angel Abbey can be found online at [www.mountangelabbey.org](http://www.mountangelabbey.org) or on the Mount Angel Abbey Facebook page.*



# Formation

NEWS ABOUT MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

## COWBOY TURNS SHEPHERD: *An interview with Jason Pettigrew*

*The seminarians who study at Mount Angel come from more than 20 dioceses and five religious communities from across the western United States, Pacific Islands, and beyond. They bring with them a wealth of experience, knowledge, and talent. Among the more colorful backgrounds found in the current student body is Jason Pettigrew, studying for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.*



in Gunnison, Colorado, he told me, “Jason, you come into town once a week for groceries. That’ll be the time for your RCIA.” We did RCIA for six months. The best day of my life was when I was baptized, confirmed and received Communion.

### How did you decide to pursue the priesthood?

As my faith and knowledge grew, a few profound things happened. Father Murray said, “Jason, you may be called.” I said, “I don’t want to be. I’m happy where I am.” He replied, “You might not have much say in it.”

I was up at 9,000 feet on a beautiful ranch in the Rockies by myself, praying the rosary and talking with God. The desire kept growing. Eventually I quit the ranch and sold my horses, trucks, trailers, everything, and I went to the seminary.

### Jason, tell us about your faith journey.

I didn’t become Catholic until my 30s. I grew up on a cattle ranch and went all over the Southwest gathering wild cattle and catching boars and donkeys. I had a nice string of horses, money in the bank, and everything that was supposed to make me happy, including a fiancée. But something was missing.

I asked God, “Please show me what you want from me.” A few days later a thought kept popping in my head: “Rosary, rosary, rosary.” I had never prayed the rosary, but I bought one and learned how to pray it.

I attended my first Mass at a Catholic church in Carlsbad, New Mexico. I felt I was home.

When I worked for the Ute Indians in the Four Corners area, I spent half the year on the reservation and the other half in the high country with the cattle, so I was unable to attend RCIA classes. But when I met Fr. Steve Murray



“A rancher’s life is in service and sacrifice for the flock. That’s exactly what a priest should do.”

### How has the seminary been for you?

Having grown up around rugged men and riding a horse for a living, I don’t find many guys like me in the seminary. That’s been difficult. Sitting in the classroom rather than being outside isn’t easy.

But there are also many graces like going to prison ministry, going to the nursing home and taking Communion to the elderly — truly serving the people.

### Tell us more about the Santa Fe archdiocese.

New Mexico has four or five different cultures that intermingle. Our archdiocese is unique. We have the oldest Catholic church still standing: San Miguel Chapel in Santa Fe. We also have the Shrine of Chimayó, the “Our Lady of the Southwest.” It’s really rich in Catholic tradition and faith. New Mexico is home, and I love it.

### How do you see yourself as a missionary?

I embrace it. Pope Francis said that priests should smell like their sheep — I spent my whole life with livestock. A rancher’s life is in service and sacrifice for the flock. That’s exactly what a priest should do. A priest, just like a rancher, gets that call in the middle of the night — you get up and serve 24/7. We’ve got to smell like the sheep — or in my case, like the cows.

— Reprinted with permission from *Extension* magazine.  
© 2017. For more information, please visit [www.catholicextension.org](http://www.catholicextension.org). For a video of this interview, go to [www.catholicextension.org/videoseries](http://www.catholicextension.org/videoseries) and select Episode 10.



*Fellowship*  
NEWS FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



NEW SCHOLASTIC YEAR BEGINS AT MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

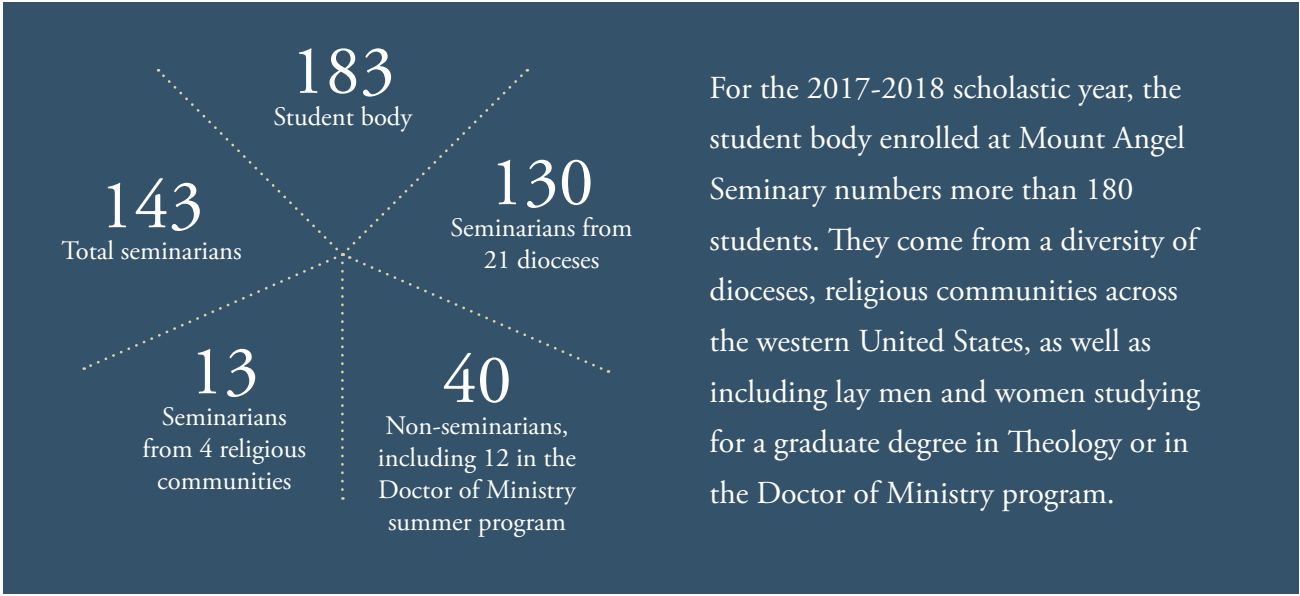
Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B., chancellor of Mount Angel Seminary, presided at the Mass of the Holy Spirit on August 28 to open the scholastic year at Mount Angel Seminary.

Invoking the Holy Spirit and welcoming close to 180 students to the Hilltop, Abbot Jeremy reminded the congregation that August 28 is also the feast of St. Augustine, whom he described as “an absolute giant of the Catholic theological tradition.” The

Abbot told the students that throughout the year they “will hear of St. Augustine in our pursuit of philosophy, of the arts, of pastoral practice, of rhetoric, of spiritual growth.”

But, what is truly important to know about St. Augustine, said Abbot Jeremy, is this: “What the Holy Spirit found and molded in Augustine is the same basic ‘stuff and material’ that exists in every human being — student, faculty, monk, employee, guest.”

As the school year begins, each student may have different talents academically, but all are called to respond to the gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit. “We are to praise the Holy Spirit for the gifts he poured out on St. Augustine for the sake of the Church, for the sake of the world,” said the Abbot. “We pray to the Holy Spirit today for the same gifts.”



WORK AND STUDY AT THE ABBEY PROVIDES JOY, COMMUNION

The majority of students at Mount Angel Seminary are, by far, seminarians studying for ordination. They are each preparing to serve God’s people as a priest in a particular diocese or religious community. But over the years Mount Angel has also been the scholastic home to a number of lay students, working toward a graduate degree in Theology or, more recently, enrolled in the new Doctor of Ministry program.

Among the current lay students is Brian Morin, husband and father, and Lieutenant Commander in the Navy Reserves. Morin is also a full-time employee in the Abbey’s Aalto Library, where he is both the Theological Librarian and the Archives & Electronic Resources Specialist.

Attending Mount Angel Seminary was not originally in Brian’s plans.

Having just finished ten-and-a-half years active duty in the Navy, he was transitioning to the Reserves and had completed a degree in library science. But Brian recalled that he “always wanted to get a degree in theology, to pursue God more and more.” When he chanced to see a poster with Mount Angel Abbey written on it, he soon knew where he was meant to be.

“It’s wonderful,” Brian says, “being with the seminarians, and having the opportunity to study shoulder to shoulder with future priests, as well as the connection to the Benedictine community.”

This sense of connection has been at the core of Brian’s experience of the seminary and hilltop community. “One of the joys of working in this library,” Brian says, “is the librarians and staff feel like a family. That’s rare to find in the workplace.”

In his experience, his studies at the seminary illuminate and complement his work in the library.

“Abbot Jeremy’s class, Introduction to Theology, was a centering experience,” Brian recalled. “It all centers on the Eucharist.”

Speaking of his work in the Aalto library, Morin says, “For me, this library is not a repository of encyclopedic knowledge, but it is an icon to bring and mold us into the image of God. Here at the Abbey’s library, I view us as engaging in that enterprise. And you can’t get this online. You have to experience it!”

– Dominic Sternhagen, seminarian





On September 15, Fr. Odo Recker, along with his brother, Fr. Ralph Recker, members of their immediate family and friends, Abbot Jeremy Driscoll and Br. Lorenzo Conocido, celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of Fr. Odo's profession as a monk of Mount Angel Abbey by enjoying a hot air balloon ride over the Abbey and surrounding valley.



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*Join the monks of Mount Angel Abbey for the Liturgy of the Hours*

#### WEEKDAYS

Vigils: 5:20 a.m.  
Lauds: 6:30 a.m.  
Holy Eucharist: 8:00 a.m.  
Midday Prayer: Noon  
Vespers: 5:20 p.m.  
Compline: 7:30 p.m.

#### SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

Vigils: 7:30 p.m. (Saturday)  
Lauds: 6:40 a.m.  
Holy Eucharist: 9:00 a.m.  
Midday Prayer: Noon  
Vespers: 5:20 p.m.  
Compline: 8:00 p.m.



*Fr. Jerome Young, O.S.B., 1958 – 2012*

## If a monk, spiritual director or teacher has changed your life ...

If mentors at Mount Angel have challenged you 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 503-312-5425  
or [susan.gallagher@mtangel.edu](mailto:susan.gallagher@mtangel.edu).

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