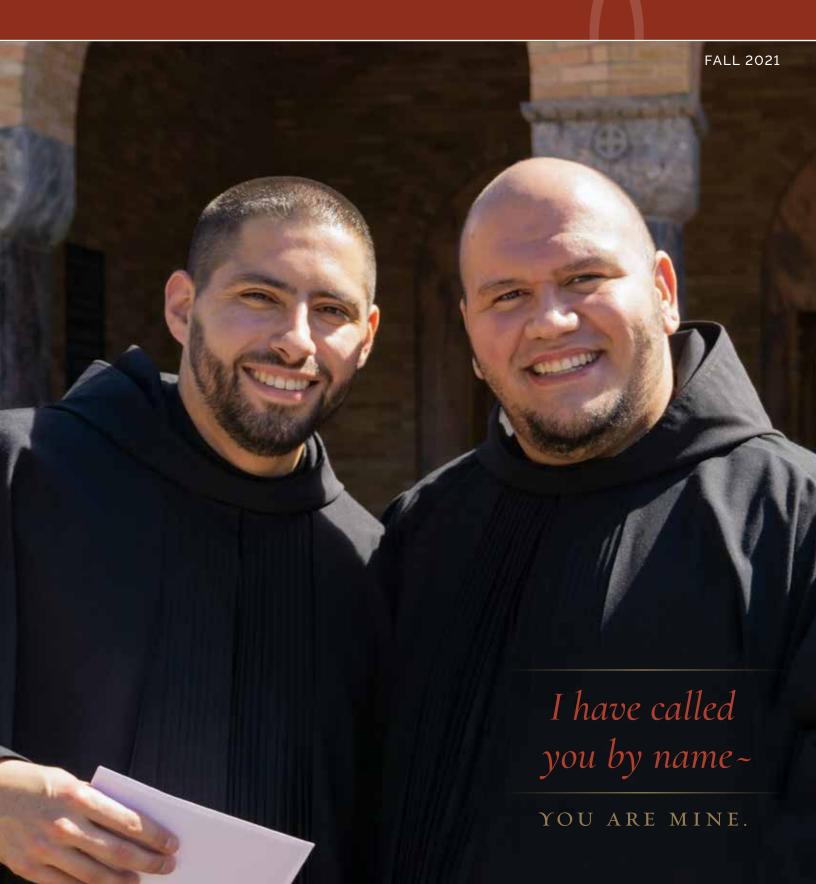
# MOUNT | Letter





## NSIDE THIS ISSUE

Fall 2021 | Volume 74, Number 3

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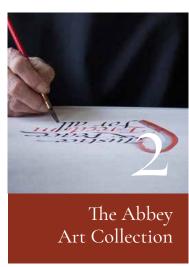
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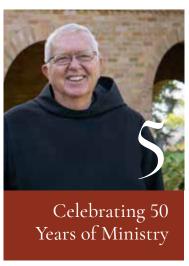
**Contributors** to this issue include Abbot Jeremy Driscoll and Ethan Alano

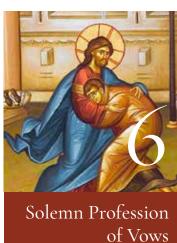
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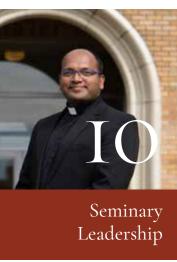
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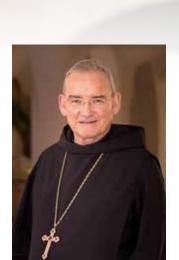




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#### DEAR FRIENDS,

We have an abundance of good news in this issue of the Mount Angel Letter, both for our Benedictine community here on this Hilltop, and for the broader Church in which we live and serve. As you read about some of these blessings, I hope you will rejoice with us.

The stories range from Fr. William Hammelman's 50th jubilee of ordination to five monks professing their solemn vows, two novices professing first vows, and three postulants beginning their year of canonical novitiate, to the grace of welcoming so many people to the Hilltop, especially through the doors of our guesthouse and at the Benedictine Brewery.

We also remain edified by and grateful for the generous men who have begun a new academic year at Mount Angel Seminary. Arriving from across the western states and several religious communities, our seminarians' joy in gathering for a new year of study and discernment for priestly ordination is palpable.

These men are the pastors of tomorrow. At Mount Angel, they learn to pray, be still and calm in times of turmoil, be compassionate when faced with suffering, and be courageous in the face of failure or injustice. In short, in the comings and goings of all that happens here, our seminarians live a vibrant life that prepares them to serve their future parish communities.

We also feel blessed to remain spiritually close to you; we keep you in our prayers of gratitude. With your kind notes, prayers and generous financial support, I believe we hold each other up to the Lord's grace and mercy.

Despite the uncertainties and precarity in our world, we live in hope and gratitude.

God bless you,

+ Jeveny Muricel, OSB

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



## THE ABBEY ART COLLECTION

#### Providing a window into the art world of Mount Angel Abbey

Beginning in the fall of 2020, Mount Angel's art curator, Fr. Nathan Zodrow, O.S.B., has prepared six virtual art exhibits for the Abbey's website. The virtual exhibits are curated from collections held by Mount Angel. The fifth exhibit focuses on calligraphy and highlights two of Mount Angel's calligraphers, Fr. Vincent Trujillo, O.S.B., and Fr. Philip Waibel, O.S.B., both of whom continue this monastic work by teaching it to the next generation.





saiah 61, 40, by Fr. Vincent Trujillo, O.S.B., 4.5" x 6.25" Modern Batarde pen lettering)

Receive all as Christ, by Fr. Philip Waibel, O.S.B., 18" x 24' (Uncial Brush on canvas panel with stained glass border)

#### SEE MORE: MOUNTANGELABBEY.ORG/MONASTERY/AR'

As a young monk, Fr. Vincent first studied calligraphy with Benedictine Sr. Grace Taylor. Later, he studied at Reed College under the renowned calligrapher Lloyd Reynolds. Fr. Vincent and Sr. Grace raised awareness of beauty in the ordinary through their works and, for many decades, by teaching the art of calligraphy. Among the students of Fr. Vincent is Fr. Philip, who now teaches calligraphy to a new generation at Mount Angel Seminary.



Following in the footsteps of Sr. Grace Taylor and Fr. Vincent, Fr. Philip, at front with easel, teaches a class in calligraphy to students at Mount Angel Seminary.



#### Brewery news

We've had a busy year at Benedictine Brewery. Despite the pandemic and the summer heat, sales through September were up 83% over the previous year! We even built a new patio to provide comfortable seating for all our guests. And it's been a joy to see our regular guests bringing their visitors to the taproom. They consider our brewery a special place they want to share.

This summer, we introduced food carts at the taproom. A variety of local nonprofit organizations have offered their specialties each weekend. The sales help support their ministries and good works while giving our guests new treats to enjoy.



We also launched our first Belgian IPA this summer. Our popular Oktoberfest lager returned in October, and we anticipate the first batch of our Scottish Ale sometime this winter. We are launching new recipes while tinkering with old ones, trying to make them the best they can be. Ever ancient, ever new. It always seems a good time to "taste and believe"! - FR. MARTIN GRASSEL, O.S.B.



#### *Guesthouse reopens – again!*

After a lengthy closure for renovation and expansion of the Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center, dedicated in June 2019, we anticipated a few slow months as we eased into the reopening. Instead, we saw immediate activity – and then a rapid slow down due to the coronavirus restrictions.

Late last spring we were able to reopen again, gradually this time. And it was amazing - we had not just a stream but a river of souls come through, for a weekend, a week, a day, or just an evening of prayer, reflection, and fellowship. In-between, we've welcomed family members and friends of monks entering the novitiate, taking first or final vows, or celebrating priestly ordination or an anniversary.

We have also expanded our monastic presence in the guesthouse, with Fr. Philip Waibel, O.S.B., as guest master, and Br. Louis Nguyen, O.S.B., as director of spiritual ministries. Br. Gregory Benavidez, O.S.B., keeps an eye on all things operational, Fr. Aelred Yockey, O.S.B., welcomes guests, and Br. Charles Gonzalez, O.S.B., ensures that each person has what he or she needs for a retreat of spiritual rest and restoration.

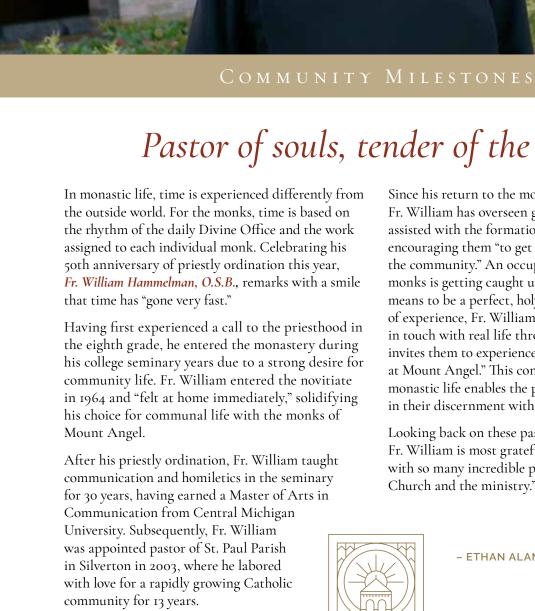
### Who yearns for life?

"Seeking his workman in a multitude of people, the Lord calls out to him and lifts his voice again: 'Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see good days?""

- PROLOGUE 14-15, RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

This fall, Jose Quninones of Las Vegas, Fr. Jack Shrum of the Archdiocese of Seattle, and Brody Stewart of Seattle responded to God's call and began their year of novitiate at Mount Angel. As novices, they will study the Rule of St. Benedict and live the monastic rhythm of prayer and work more intentionally. They will also participate more fully in the community life of the monastery than they did as postulants.

If you are interested in learning more about vocational discernment at Mount Angel, see mountangelabbey.org/vocations.



## Pastor of souls, tender of the earth

Since his return to the monastery five years ago, Fr. William has overseen groundskeeping and assisted with the formation of the newest monks, encouraging them "to get in the rhythm of life and the community." An occupational hazard for new monks is getting caught up in idealism about what it means to be a perfect, holy monk. Sharing a wealth of experience, Fr. William helps the postulants get in touch with real life through manual labor and invites them to experience "how monastic life is lived at Mount Angel." This contact with the reality of monastic life enables the postulants to move forward in their discernment with greater peace and clarity.

Looking back on these past fifty years as a priest, Fr. William is most grateful for "being able to work with so many incredible people dedicated to the Church and the ministry."

- ETHAN ALANO



## Solemn profession of monastic vows







"The Clothing of St. Benedict." by St. Romanus



"The Prodigal Son" @ 2021 Athanasios Clark | Eyekon.



"Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-Bearer," printed with permission.



"Death of St. Benedict," by Br. Claude Lane, O.S.B.

When a monk professes his Solemn Vows at Mount Angel it is customary that he chooses an image for a remembrance card. Below, each of the new solemnly professed monks shares some insight into his choice of image.

#### Br. Thomas Buttrick, O.S.B.

I was raised in suburban New Jersey and joined the Catholic Church as an adult. I felt called to teaching and loved that work, but it was all-consuming; my relationship with God was in danger of becoming lip service. I decided to try monastic life, hoping it would provide balance and structure and help me pray more purely. That has indeed been the case!

My image is the "Tree of Jesse," showing the unfurling of God's plan in history from King David's father, Jesse, through all his descendants until the Blessed Virgin Mary and her royal Son. This dreamlike rendering by Marc Chagall roots the tree in the cool, comforting images of his rural upbringing and the simple and pure love between man and woman. By contrast, the tree of history itself is a violent riot of colors and symbols of God's story: the snake, the sacrificial animal with the Jewish menorah, the Virgin and Child, the crucifixion. All of life links to this tree; nothing in history can be exempt from divine intention. And it is love, especially human love, that brings this truth near to us. All around and beneath the bizarre and beautiful mess of life is this sustaining fact: God first loved us and gives himself to us. No fire or water can ever sweep it away.

#### Br. Charles Gonzalez, O.S.B.

I was born and raised in Bakersfield, California. I felt an attraction to religious life since I was about 16, but the call to the monastic life grew out of a desire to seek guidance in the Christian life and to put my life and gifts at the service of the Lord in his Church. In the monastery, I have been assigned to pursue studies for the priesthood and to work in shoe repair. (Monks like their Birkenstocks!) This year, I am spending a pastoral year ministering at the guesthouse and at St. Mary Parish in the nearby town of Mt. Angel. Up until now, I have seen and experienced this monastic life as a gift. I hope to keep opening up this gift day in and day out. God has been gracious to me. Amen!

My image is of the clothing of St. Benedict by St. Romanus. It is dear to me because it shows a young St. Benedict full of zeal seeking to dedicate himself fully to the Lord. The traditional place where this clothing happened is in the town of Subiaco where St. Benedict resided in a cave for three years. I visited this cave – now a monastery – and I felt deeply moved by the young Benedict. While there, I was inspired to follow in his footsteps and serve the Lord completely.

#### Br. Jesse Ochoa, O.S.B.

I was raised in California until I was 16 and then moved to Kansas where I worked as a welder. When I entered the monastery, I was simply "giving the life a shot." I was 25 years old when I became a novice at Mount Angel. After several years of formation, I realized I wanted to be a solemnly professed monk of this community.

At Mount Angel, I work in the brewery and help with building maintenance on the Hilltop. I also teach our Spanish-speaking oblates a class on Lectio Divina and attend seminary classes when school is in session.

The image I chose is the prodigal son, but here Jesus takes the place of the father in the story. The upper left details the son's rejection of Jesus' love. The top right relates the son's squandering of his inheritance. The middle section captures the moment Jesus embraces the son in the midst of jubilation, preparing to clothe him in a new vestment which symbolizes the son's return into his household.

I chose this icon because it is an image of my life. Through God's mercy, he led me back to the father's house, where he vested me with a new garment.

#### Br. Ignatius Olivarez, O.S.B.

I was born and raised in the Dominican Republic, but I lived in Brooklyn, New York, with my family before entering the monastery. I worked as an operations supervisor in a catering company for five years and entered Mount Angel Abbey in 2017 at age 31.

After making my first vows, I was a student in Mount Angel Seminary and am finishing my bachelor's in philosophy this year. In the monastery, I am the kitchen master, refectory assistant, and special events manager.

The image in my remembrance card is my patron, Saint Ignatius of Antioch. He is shown with lions because, in Rome, he was devoured by lions. The quote I chose is from his letter to the Ephesians: "Remember me as Jesus Christ remembers you." It is short but meaningful. I want the people who will have a copy of my card to remember me as Jesus himself remembers them.

#### Br. Alfredo Miranda, O.S.B.

I was born and raised in Santa Ana County, El Salvador. I felt called to the consecrated life since early childhood. When I was 19, I left school to join the Abbey-Cathedral of Esquipulas (in Guatemala), where I made my simple profession of monastic vows in January 2015. In March 2016, I transferred to Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon. Here I am junior sacristan and the church florist. I am also the assistant manager in the Abbey bookstore and work with the Spanish-speaking oblates of Mount Angel.

The image I chose shows Jesus and St. Benedict united in an embrace in which Benedict shares Christ's death and resurrection.

The cross is the cross of the Victorious Jesus Christ, but it is also the cross of our Holy Father St. Benedict.

The Eucharist is shown as the fountain from which monastic life is born. It is the context in which it develops and is nourished in sharing the sufferings and imitation of Christ.



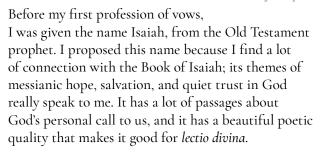
#### I CALL YOU BY NAME

In the biblical world, it was important to know the name of God. How else were we to call upon him? And how wonderful that God reveals his name to us and thereby allows us to address him. And he addresses us too by name. "I have called you by name," God says, "and you are mine."

When monks profess their first vows, they receive a new name from the Abbot. This signifies a radical break with the life they had led until then. The Abbot often gives the name of an important biblical figure or a monastic saint, or one of the great saints in the history of the Church. In this way, when we say the other's name, it reminds us of these biblical stories and histories, and their memory lives with us as we walk through our days together.

## BR. ISAIAH (Jason) Vargas, O.S.B.

I grew up in California, in the Stockton area. My family was devoutly Catholic, and I was involved in the Charismatic Renewal and various youth activities. I never considered religious life or becoming a priest until a friend invited me to go to Mount Angel Abbey for a monastic vocation retreat. The experience captured my heart. My family was not enthused when I told them I wanted to go to Oregon and become a monk. But now they are very happy I am here. They love the beauty and peace of Mount Angel.



Abbot Jeremy gave me the name Isaiah because he recognizes that I have a gift for interpreting the Old Testament. The Book of Isaiah has a strong Christocentric character, and a close connection to the liturgy. Abbot Jeremy also challenged me to make the spirituality of this book my own and to encounter Jesus Christ in it throughout my life.

- BR. ISAIAH VARG**AS**, O.S.B.



Br. Isaiah, left, and Br. Stephen, right, are led to the altar by Fr. Liem Nguyen, novice director, during their Mass of Simple Vows.

## BR. STEPHEN (Travis) Graves, O.S.B.

Raised in Missoula, Montana, I felt drawn to ministry early in my childhood. When I was 18, I attended a bible school in the Midwest and did missionary work in Southeast Asia. In searching for a radical way to live the gospel, I became Catholic and felt the call to religious life.

St. Stephen the protomartyr is introduced in the Acts of the Apostles as "full of faith." Jesus told his Apostles if they had faith the size of a mustard seed, they could tell a mountain to go for a swim, and it would. And Stephen was full of it!

Stephen acted with great compassion and care for the needy of the Church. He preached with power and boldness in the face of a doubting, hateful crowd. Because his whole body was charged with faith, the heavens opened before his eyes, and he saw the glorified Christ standing at the right hand of the Father.

I ask St. Stephen to increase my love for the Church, especially the most vulnerable, lonely, and needy. I ask him to increase my faith that I might proclaim the good news of Jesus with clarity, integrity, and boldness. I ask him to increase my trust in God that I can freely offer my mind, body, and spirit to him in every situation. I ask him to increase my capacity to forgive all the pains of injustice and suffer them with Jesus the King of the Martyrs.

- BR. STEPHEN GRAVES, O.S.B.



Each August on the Hilltop, we open the academic year with a beautiful Mass of the Holy Spirit. It is always a joyful event, but this year the students were exuberant. Because of the coronavirus, the Mass on August 23 was the first time in 18 months that the monks, seminarians, and all the seminary faculty and staff were able to be together to celebrate the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Abbey church (wearing face masks).

With students arriving from more than 16 dioceses and seven religious communities, the joyful spirit of community in Christ was palpable. The idea of centering all pursuits in the Eucharist is not unique to Mount Angel Seminary. "Communion in the Eucharist" is a theme that permeates all of life on the Hilltop and – we hope – your life as well as you join us in prayer for the seminarians studying at Mount Angel.

2021 - 2022 AT A GLANCE	
121	Total Enrollment
18	Non-Seminarian Students
82	Seminarians, from:
16	Dioceses
7	Religious Communities

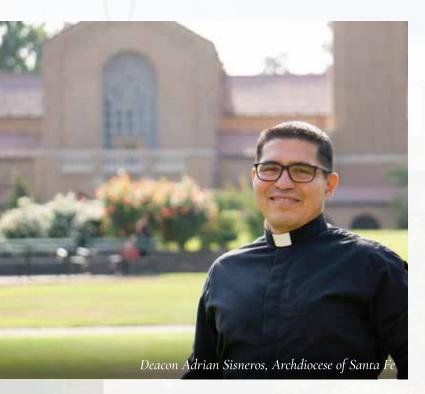


Seminarians and monks rejoiced to be together to celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit in the Abbey church for the opening of the academic year.



Seminarians come from dioceses and religious communities from across the western United States to study at Mount Angel.

# Leadership is a learned skill



In the final year of theology at Mount Angel, one of the required courses is Pastoral Administration, taught by Fr. Stephen Clovis. The focus is on "virtuous leadership," but the class is by no means the beginning of lessons in leadership. From college through pre-theology and the final years of theology, students are involved in the leadership of the Mount Angel Seminary community. Members of the students' Pastoral Council include the chairs of each division (theology, pre-theology and college) and other student representatives largely elected by the students themselves. The council meets regularly to provide a forum where students provide input on seminary life, offer counsel on issues affecting the community, and assist with planning and developing services for the good of the seminary community.

"What's great about the model of leadership at Mount Angel," says Deacon Adrian Sisneros, Archdiocese of Santa Fe, "is that it gives students ownership in this formative environment."

Deacon Sisneros is the theology chair and takes the lead on the council, working closely with the chair of pre-theology, Sylvester Rozario, Archdiocese of Seattle, and the college chair, Patrick Mbuiyu, Archdiocese of Seattle.

"We can all grow in servant leadership," says Sylvester. One of his goals for the year is to help the men in pre-theology realize how they are formed and enriched by one another. "I think of the whole diverse group that we are as a symphony that God is conducting. So, let us invest in each person's growth and let God amaze us."



Whether a seminarian is elected to the student leadership team or participates by being present and engaged at meetings, "the student body leadership model here develops trust between the students and the seminary faculty and administration," says Deacon Adrian.

Although there are times established for those in leadership to meet with each other and with the seminary administration, each of the chairs also

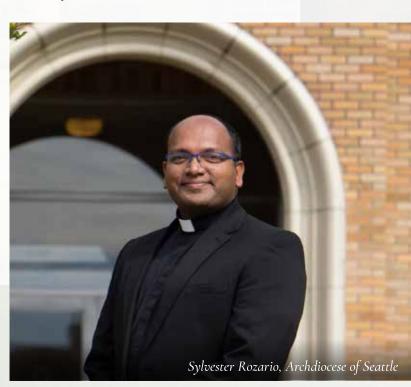
meets and maintains communication within his student group. "As college chair," says Patrick,

"I get to work with all the different groups in the college and ensure that each student is well represented" in the activities of the seminary. All of the college leadership representatives meet once a week, and one of their goals is to hold regular meetings of the entire college student body. "Structure is important," says Patrick. "It helps to foster community."

Servant leadership is a concept that resonates with each of the student chairs, inspiring them to be available to others. "We can all grow in servant leadership," says Sylvester.

"We can be intentional in helping to grow a sense of community, which is a gift from God that instills a sense of family and joyful brotherhood. When you hear laughter in the halls of the seminary, you know something is going right."

- THERESA MYERS



IO II

NEWS FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

## Dr. Liam de los Reyes

Having recently earned his doctorate at Notre Dame, Dr. Liam de los Reyes prayerfully discerned his decision to teach at Mount Angel. He asked for the Holy Spirit's guidance to help him see how Mount Angel would be a place where his family could flourish, and he found peace when he came to visit the Hilltop. Abbot Jeremy's vision for the seminary excited him intellectually and spiritually, and he was



impressed by the seminary's theological program that focuses on "the Church centered around the Eucharist."

The enthusiasm of the seminarians for their studies greatly encourages Dr. de los Reyes in his new role as Associate Professor of Moral Theology. For his part, he tries to "make the content of the course connect to pastoral ministry as clearly as possible." Feeling himself blessed to be at Mount Angel, Dr. de los Reyes is grateful that his teaching has "a concrete connection to the life of the Church." - ETHAN ALANO

#### John Rico

Teaching at Mount Angel Seminary is a true homecoming for Professor John Rico. Having grown up in the Willamette Valley, Rico obtained his bachelor's at Mount Angel in 2004 as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Portland. Returning as a lay student, Rico took Introduction to Theology, taught by then Fr. Jeremy Driscoll. The class, he said, cemented his discernment that the priesthood, which he deeply loved, was not God's plan for him.



A few years later, Rico was studying for his doctoral degree in philosophy at the University of Dallas. In his heart was the constant hope that he would someday return to Mount Angel as a professor. This semester that dream came true as Rico returned as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy.

Rico says he will always remember the sense of joy and peace he felt in response to the welcome he and his wife, Sara, and their two young children have received. "The Hilltop always remained a home away from home for me. To come back and teach and make it home again is truly a blessing." - THERESA MYERS

#### Fr. Nicolaus Thai

When Fr. Nicolaus Thai completed his first four years in a parish in mid 2021, he thought his bishop would assign him to another parish in his beloved home Diocese of Orange. To his surprise, Bishop Vann invited him to change course and fill a need at Mount Angel Seminary as a Human Formation Director.



When asked how parish life and his work at the seminary converge, Fr. Thai says that his experience in parish ministry was good preparation for helping prepare men for the priesthood. Parish ministry is "the end goal," he says. "It gave me a lot of insight into how the seminarians need to prepare to minister and serve the Lord and his Church."

As a member of the Human Formation Team, Fr. Thai's role is to accompany each seminarian in his discernment toward priestly ordination. For those unfamiliar with the term "Human Formation," Fr. Thai compares it to spiritual formation. "Our Catholic faith teaches that we are body and soul. We can ask, 'how is my spirit?' The answer can be expressed and is manifest in how I live my life externally. We cannot separate the two." - THERESA MYERS

V Then the COVID-19 pandemic first hit in the early months of 2020, many church leaders felt bewildered and unsure how to minister during this public health crisis. For Fr. Damien Schill, Chief of the Chaplain Service at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, providing pastoral care during the pandemic did not faze him. Ministering in a hospital setting, pandemic or not, is always under the shadow of crisis.

Earlier this year, the Federal Executive Board of Minnesota bestowed its "Civil Servant of the Year Award" to Fr. Schill for his dedicated, pastoral care to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. He was surprised to learn that many patients wrote favorably of his efforts and his concrete concern

for their spiritual well-being, which resulted in the nomination for the prestigious award.

A man of firm determination, Fr. Schill's patient advocacy came in the form of concrete action, especially the continuous celebration of the sacraments.



HEROIC

CHAPLAINCY

in a time of pandemic

the pandemic, "we were the only VA hospital in the United States that still had Mass every day," says Fr. Schill. Due to the level of lockdown measures and uncertainty about the coronavirus at that time, it was no small feat to fight for and win

> have to stand up for what's right," explains Fr. Schill. When much of his chaplain team wanted to work remotely at

patients' access

Eucharist. "You

to the Holy

the beginning of the pandemic, he helped them to stand firm, reminding them that "you can't take care of patients from home."

A longtime friend of Mount Angel Abbey since his time in the seminary, Fr. Schill is creating the Saint Aelred Scholarship Endowment Fund to help seminarians from the Diocese of Fargo attend Mount Angel. "I would not be the man that I am without the education I got from Mount Angel," reflects Fr. Schill.

- ETHAN ALANO



Mount Angel Abbey & Seminary Box 497, Saint Benedict, OR 97373-0497

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## Christian in the World FALL 2021 VIDEO SERIES

Dr. Jeff Thompson, a psychotherapist practicing in Yakima, Washington, and an oblate of Mount Angel Abbey, presents the Fall 2021 Christian in the World program in a three-part video series titled, A Handbook of Healing: The Therapeutic Value of Benedictine Spirituality:

- I. How DID WE GET HERE?

  St. Benedict and the Origin of Self
- **2. WHERE ARE WE NOW?** The Disorders of the Self
- 3. How Do We GET
  WHERE WE'RE GOING?
  The Repair of the Self

We are created to be in the image and likeness of God, yet at some point we realize that we somehow are not quite there. Along the way, we have lost our sense of this self, made to be in the image of God. St. Benedict, in his Holy Rule, offers a path to healing. He tells us, "Return to God." Through his Holy Rule, St. Benedict provides us a process for our return to wholeness in God.

The series is available now for viewing on the Mount Angel Abbey website at mountangelabbey.org/citw or YouTube.com/MountAngelAbbey.

The Christian in the World lecture series seeks to help participants gain a more profound understanding of the Scriptures and the Church, and to support lay people in exploring how to live their baptismal vocation in everyday life.

## Join the monks of Mount Angel Abbey for Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours

#### WEEKDAYS

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

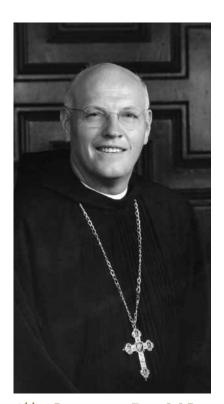
Compline: 7:30 pm

#### SUNDAYS & 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

SEE MOUNTANGELABBEY.ORG/LIVE-STREAM SCHEDULE.

# Was there a moment at Mount Angel that changed your life?



Abbot Bonaventure Zerr, O.S.B. 1936 – 1988

Many recall particular monks, spiritual directors or teachers whose words and presence made all the difference.

If mentors at Mount Angel have helped you or a loved one to grow in new ways and 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 plannedgiving@mtangel.edu mtangel.giftlegacy.com

Please note, when writing your will, please leave bequests and other estate gifts to: The Abbey Foundation of Oregon Box 497, Saint Benedict, OR 97373-0497 (Tax ID number: 04-3703021)