

MOUNT ANGEL | Letter

SUMMER 2021

A SUMMER
of Gratitude





DIRECTORY

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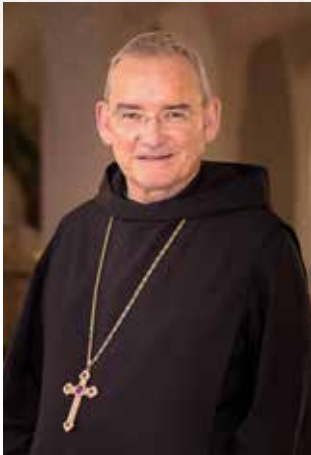


Seminary
Commencement

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,
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497, Saint Benedict, OR 97373-0497.



DEAR FRIENDS,

Here at Mount Angel, we monks are preparing our Saint Benedict Festival, taking place on Sunday, July 11. Similar to last year, we'll have a short video about our Benedictine monastic life. Then we'll livestream a procession and vespers in honor of our Holy Father St. Benedict. Details for how to tune in and join us for the online Saint Benedict Festival, as well as the Abbey's Bach Festival at the end of July, are on page 3 and the back cover.

Despite the challenges of the past two years, we find there is much to celebrate and be grateful for. We've shared some of our gratitude and joy with you in this issue of the *Mount Angel Letter*, beginning with the ordination to the priesthood of our brother, Fr. Israel Sanchez.

Mount Angel Seminary celebrated its 132nd Commencement on April 24! The seminarians, faculty and staff pushed through the spring semester without a break and finished about three weeks earlier than usual. We've included some reflections on this past year from a few seminarians and introduce you to our three new professors.

In this year dedicated to St. Joseph, we have some special activities and an art exhibit to share with you. And we also have news about some monastic updates in the Abbey's library and bookstore. In the fall issue, we'll have updates for the guesthouse and Seminary.

Of course, the spring had its trials and even near catastrophe. In February, there was an intense ice and wind storm that wreaked devastation all across the mid-Willamette Valley. You can see photos in this issue of some of the damage it caused here on the Hilltop. The cleanup work will continue through the summer, and the sound of chain saws and wood chippers have become familiar.

If you join us on July 11 for the Saint Benedict Festival, you will see at the end of the video that we reflect on the beauty of "community and ordinariness." After what we have all lived through these past several months, it seems good to pause and find beauty in the ordinary, in family and friends. After all, that is what Christ chose to do in coming to dwell among us.

God bless,

+ Jeremy Driscoll, OSB

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

A YEAR DEVOTED TO St. Joseph

On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis announced and inaugurated a year dedicated to St. Joseph, thus commemorating the 150th anniversary of the proclamation that established St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. The Holy Father also offered a word of gratitude and recognition for all “ordinary people” who, like St. Joseph, have worked in obscurity, especially those working in difficult and dangerous conditions to aid those suffering the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.



The Annunciation of St. Joseph, by Br. Claude Lane, O.S.B.

“St. Joseph,” wrote Pope Francis, “reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

St. Joseph is one of the principal patrons of Mount Angel and the monks welcomed the year in his honor with enthusiasm. “Every day, at least since the 1940s,” said Fr. Nathan Zodrow, O.S.B., “we monks have knelt after dinner and prayed the Litany of St. Joseph.”

Pope Francis, in Patris corde, says of St. Joseph, “Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the Church!”

Living the best of both worlds



When Abbot Jeremy assigned Fr. Ralph Recker, O.S.B., in January 2021 to become the pastor of St. Mary Parish in the town of Mt. Angel, he became the first Mount Angel monk to serve as pastor and retain his primary residence at the monastery up the hill. It is different from his fellow monk, Fr. Philip Waibel, O.S.B., who was pastor of

the parish for the past 18 years and resided at the parish rectory. “This is a new model,” says Fr. Ralph.

The arrangement is working fine, according to Fr. Ralph. Depending on parish needs and activities, he can stay at the rectory; when his schedule allows, he heads up to the monastery to join his brothers for prayer, meals, and a good night’s sleep in his monastic cell. “I’ve got a foot in both worlds,” he says. “I’m at the parish house at least once a day to fix a quick meal or pick up mail. But I still have community time with my brothers, and they are always interested in what is going on in the parish.”

Saint Benedict Festival 2021

When I first heard we were doing another video for our online Saint Benedict Festival this summer, I was excited and a little worried. Excited because what we did last year stands as proof that new technology and social media can be used for good. It allowed us to share our joy with the world! But I was also concerned. A new video would take creativity and a lot of work.



The more I listened to my fellow monks, the more I realized that life lived for Christ is always new, and that there are no “repeat performances.” This year, we want to show how our Benedictine life at Mount Angel plays itself out in individual monks. How does that brother live this life in Christ, hidden, yet now shared through a video? How are each of these unique brothers living the monastic life here at Mount Angel? Who really are these people?

Join us online July 11, from 4 to 5:30 pm, for *The Cloister of the Heart* video, followed by a procession and vespers for the feast of St. Benedict! All at mountangelabbey.org/sbf.

– BR. ANSELM FLORES, O.S.B.

In Honor of St. Joseph

Virtual Art Exhibit	www.mountangelabbey.org/art
Books and religious items	www.mountangelabbey.org/bookstore www.mountangelabbey.org/marketplace
Retreats at the Saint Benedict Guesthouse	www.mountangelabbey.org/retreat-calendar



ORDINATION OF A PRIEST Father Israel Sanchez, O.S.B.

The community of Mount Angel gathered in the Abbey church on the morning of May 29 for the ordination to priesthood of their brother, Israel Sanchez, O.S.B.

Archbishop Alexander K. Sample, of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, was principal celebrant for this solemn rite; Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B., was principal concelebrant. The Mass was attended by dozens of family members and friends of Fr. Israel and is viewable on Mount Angel’s YouTube live stream channel.

Fr. Israel was raised in Yuma, Arizona, and came to Mount Angel as a seminarian for the Diocese of Tucson in 2011. He joined the community of Mount Angel in 2015 and made his first profession in 2016.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PLACE *Happens To Us*

In the earliest light of dawn on a morning last February, we monks looked out of the monastery windows at a cloister garden covered in branches and trees sagging low under the ever-increasing weight of growing ice. I asked Fr. William if he would like to drive around the Hilltop after our morning community Mass. Cautiously, we made our way from the monastery to the base of the hill, stopping to cut through obstructing debris and trees and avoiding the limbs as they continued to crash down in every direction.

We returned to the monastery for noon prayer, looking like we had just survived some apocalyptic battle, covered in gas, oil, mud, sawdust, and sweat. At first, the chaos kept us moving from one critical site to the next. As the cleanup became less pressing, the loss took on painful new dimensions. We began to see the individual trees that we could now only remember as once so beautiful.

As far as cleanup goes, there's no end in sight. The Hilltop has undergone God's blunt pruning knife, and nothing comes out of that process the same.

Monasteries have always sought out beautiful locations looking for the *genius loci*, the place that has the Spirit, or where God is. Because we Benedictines make a vow of stability, never to leave until death, the view better be good. What happens to the place happens to us, and it affects us deeply. But we keep going, we keep working, we keep praying, suffering everything, and we still have reason to sing our praises to God.

— BR. NOVICE TRAVIS GRAVES



At Mount Angel, one attends to the hill, to the trees, to the views, to the light of the passing hours of day and night, to the seasons and their weathers. And why? Because monks are meant to listen for God everywhere. (Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.)

“We lost a lot of oaks on the south side of the hill, and one huge oak by the grotto went down. Our ornamental trees were hit hard, including the flowering plums.” Sorrow was palpable in the voice of Fr. William Hammelman, O.S.B., when he spoke about the devastating ice and wind storm of February 2021.

Damage on the Hilltop included broken church roof tiles and bent railings along the guesthouse. The iconic Cedars of Lebanon trees were damaged, and the chestnut trees lay split and broken. Several stations of the cross on Abbey Drive were hit by falling branches. On the hillsides of Mount Angel, hundreds of oaks, firs, birches, and maple were shattered.

In the days immediately after the storm, a small army of monks and seminarians helped with the clearing of trees strewn across the Hilltop, and the whirring grind of the wood chipper remains the constant soundtrack of the ongoing cleanup.

Not all the damage, however, is waste. The wood chips are being spread as mulch along the Hilltop pathways and flower beds. And a Mount Angel Seminary alumnus and local parish priest, Fr. Peter O'Brien, has brought his portable sawmill over on his days off to help clear some of the good hardwood. Several yards of beautiful lumber are now stacked, waiting to be used in the monastery's woodworking shop.

— CHRISTY NEWLAND

A RENAISSANCE OF *deep reading*

The doors of the Mount Angel library are open to all who come to seek wisdom from the treasures it holds. This monastic library is a magnet for international scholars and the public with its vast collection of theology and Scripture. It is also a place of culture, beauty, and wisdom from centuries of writers and thinkers.



The library's director, Dr. Brian Morin, is working to focus more closely on the link between the monastery and the library: "The monastic library you enter into is not just a data chunk repository, not just disparate pieces of knowledge. You are entering the home of the monks of Mount Angel – a place of deep reading and research, a very slow, methodical engagement with the text."

The involvement of monks in the workings of the library is key to maintaining and deepening its primary focus on the Benedictine ideal of *lectio divina*. Br. Albert Klotz, O.S.B., now studying for his Masters of Library Information Science, works every day in the library and is always aware of that focus. "In the Benedictine tradition, the whole point of keeping a library well-stocked is to come to a greater knowledge of God. To love him better, you need to know him better. A monastic library aims more toward wisdom than knowledge of facts. We want to bring about a renaissance of deep reading in our library."



Recently joining the library staff is Abbot Peter Eberle, O.S.B., who begins a new role as the Library Dean. Abbot Peter notes, "We want a library you come into and feel that you are in a place of prayerful study. Dr. Morin, Abbot Jeremy, Br. Albert, and all of us will work on making the library a quieter place – a place of silent meditation to be alone with God and the Word of God. If you are searching for the truth, and opening yourself to the treasures of the past, you are opening yourself to God."

– CHRISTY NEWLAND



Learn more about Mount Angel's library, designed by Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, at mountangelabbey.org/library.



Abbot Peter Eberle, O.S.B., overlooks the Mount Angel library.



Abbot Jeremy writes about the relationship between visitors and the Mount Angel library: "From deep inside the book I hold, I want to be able to offer a word to this troubled world and Church and return my eyes to the book for further nourishment. A quiet word, an attractive word, a word of power, an effective word, a word that changes things. The world and Church need this kind of word, a 'monastic' word."

Our Lord guides us every step of the way

During the Mount Angel Seminary Commencement Exercises in April 2021, President-Rector Msgr. Joseph Betschart commended the students and the entire seminary community for their “character, dedication, and commitment” in difficult times. “It’s certainly been a year full of challenges like no other. But it’s also been a year full of opportunities and graces like no other, as our Lord continues to guide us, sustain us, accompany us, and provide for us along the way.”



“I expected my duties as College Division President to include things like making speeches and running meetings. I was even prepared to adapt to the changes the pandemic might bring. I did not expect that it would include dealing with floods and fire and ice storms. But I learned what’s true when we commit to following the Lord: We agree to set out on the adventure, and we can dream of where it might take us, but we don’t get a say as to how we get there. That’s the Lord’s job. This year has provided ample opportunity to get used to that, and while I am still trying to catch my breath, I am also grateful for the wonderful opportunities the Lord has provided me this past year through Mount Angel Seminary.”

TAYLOR MITCHELL, DIOCESE OF HONOLULU



THE ABBEY BOOKSTORE

A warm welcome to the Hilltop

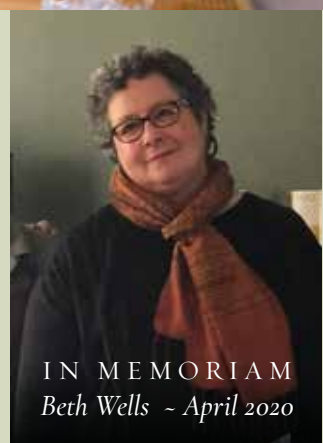
For close to 20 years, visitors to the Abbey’s bookstore were greeted by the friendly voice of Beth Wells, bookstore manager. When Beth died in April of 2020, it was for many the passing of an era. She has been missed by monks, seminarians, and bookstore patrons. After Beth’s passing, Abbot Jeremy appointed Fr. John Vianney Le, O.S.B., and Br. Alfredo Miranda, O.S.B., to oversee the operation of the bookstore.

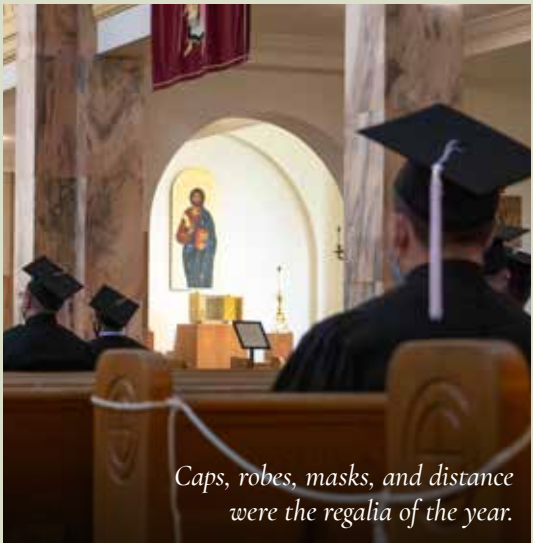
The bookstore is often the first door entered by visitors to the Hilltop and their initial introduction to Benedictine hospitality. It is that hospitality, extended to all by Fr. John Vianney and Br. Alfredo, that assures the bookstore is more than a self-service retail space. Br. Alfredo notes, “We are receiving Christ through our guests. We are receiving the mercy of the Lord through our guests; through them, Christ is coming to us.”

For Fr. John Vianney, maintaining a distinctly Benedictine bookstore flows naturally from living according to the Rule of St. Benedict. “Liturgy plays a big role in the life of a Benedictine monk and an abbey,” he says. “It shapes the character of monks and their ministries. In the bookstore, we communicate this Benedictine value through what we offer, often guided by the liturgical year.”

Br. Alfredo has created special displays for the feast days connected to the liturgical year. These not only provide a connection to the Church’s liturgical calendar, but they also help orient customers to spiritual reading and gift ideas. As Br. Alfredo notes, “We welcome our visitors, and are glad they come. I would say that what we offer is Benedictine customer service!”

– CHRISTY NEWLAND

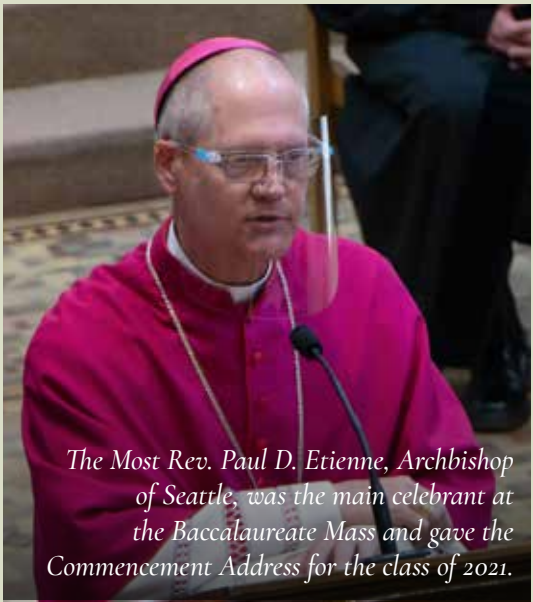




Caps, robes, masks, and distance were the regalia of the year.

2020 – 2021 AT A GLANCE

128	Total Enrollment
98	Seminarians
17	Dioceses
5	Religious Communities
28	Graduating Class of 2021
7	To Be Ordained Priests
8	To Be Ordained Deacons



The Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, Archbishop of Seattle, was the main celebrant at the Baccalaureate Mass and gave the Commencement Address for the class of 2021.



FR. CHEEYOON CHUN, DIOCESE OF ORANGE (ordained June 12)

Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary has been a place where we come to encounter the love and peace of God. On this holy mountain, I have witnessed the intimate love of God. Thanks to the education, formation, prayers, and friendships that I procured here at Mount Angel Seminary, I am ready and confident in laying down my life for my friends.



FR. TONY GALATI, ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND IN OREGON (ordained June 26)

My years at Mount Angel Seminary are among the most momentous years of my life. I am looking forward to priestly ordination and service to the good people of the Archdiocese of Portland. And I know that I have the Seminary, friends, and classmates who will continue to be a part of my life no matter where I will be assigned in my future ministries.



DEACON FRANKLIN UBOCHIOMA IWUAGWU, ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE (ordained May 19)

Mount Angel has instilled in me a deeper meaning of the Mass and its theological meaning. My formation has reinforced my spiritual life, especially through the Seminary’s formation program, to identify practical ways to cultivate and develop the priestly heart of Jesus. I thank all those at the Abbey for their support and prayers.



SCOTT BORBA, DIOCESE OF FRESNO

My biggest takeaway will be how the Seminary community did not back down to the COVID-19 challenge. I watched true leaders of God at work at Mount Angel. They showed us by example that, as future priests, we are not to leave our flock in challenging times. We are to forge ahead, trust in God, work hard and be creative in all circumstances.



IVAN LARA, DIOCESE OF LAS VEGAS

The biggest takeaway for me this year is the significance of hope in our daily lives as disciples. The road to hope isn’t only for seminarians or those discerning a vocation, but it’s meant to be the way we walk every day to fall in deeper love with God and to better serve the people around us. This year gave me the opportunity to live out this spirituality.



FR. JOSHUA FALCE, DIOCESE OF BOISE (ordained June 3)

Each academic year, seminarians are assigned to a ministry which they go to one day a week. I’ve served as a volunteer at a youth correctional facility, a food bank, an RCIA program, and as a 4th-grade religious education teacher. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, I’ve grown and changed via those I have encountered in these ministry placements. I can go out in pastoral service in my own diocese now, knowing that God will guide and provide for me in the new situations and new ministries that await.



BR. JOSEPH MARY TRAN, O.C.D., ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES

My six years at Mount Angel Seminary have been a blessing from God, surrounded by people who are kind, caring, and compassionate. Mount Angel Seminary has helped me develop a solid foundation to begin my journey of ministering to God’s people.



FR. VAL PARK, ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE (ordained June 26)

At Mount Angel, I came to know Christ intimately by learning to enter deeply into the Sacred Mysteries we celebrate at Mass. When I was finally able to visit the parish I was assigned to as a deacon, I saw the people of God lining up to be fed by him [at Holy Communion]. I could see and feel their hunger for communion with God. I realized at that moment why I chose to respond to God’s call – the hunger of the people for God, and the hunger of God for his people.



FR. ISRAEL SANCHEZ, O.S.B., MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY (ordained May 29)

For most of my classmates, Mount Angel is a beautiful moment in their journey from which they are sent out to serve the Church. As a monk of this monastery, my experience is quite different. This is where I am called to serve as a priest. This is my home. Mount Angel is both a moment in my journey towards ordination, and also my destination. And this perhaps is the gift of my time in formation, the joyful realization that I will be learning for the rest of my life how to be a good priest, how to be a good monk, how to be a good Christian. God is not done working on me.



A Benedictine thread leads to Mount Angel Seminary

Professor Joseph (Ted) Papa, Ph.D., laughs when he says he “parachuted onto the Hilltop during a pandemic, ready for action” in January 2021. He adds that the Mount Angel seminarians immediately inspired him. “The welcoming spirit of the Benedictines permeates the Seminary, even during these difficult times. I am so impressed with this ethos.”

After a career in Catholic publishing, Professor Papa began a course of study at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C., then transitioned to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. “In the course of my study at the Lateran, I realized I would like to move from theology to philosophy, and ended up studying at the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm in Rome, associated with the Benedictines.”

Now a professor of philosophy at Mount Angel, Professor Papa says, “There is a real emphasis on the charity, the vision, and the stability inherent in the Benedictine way. These values are everywhere at the Seminary and the Hilltop, and establish the context for all of us.”

– CHRISTY NEWLAND



Professor
Katie Jo LaRiviere



Professor
Justin Coyle

A BENEDICTINE *Love of Learning*

“When I came to work at Mount Angel Seminary,” recalls Professor Katie Jo LaRiviere, Ph.D., “I had a sense of coming to work in a vocation, of being called. I felt like I was coming home.”

Professor LaRiviere’s Mount Angel homecoming began when she was studying medieval literature at the University of Oregon. “My professors told me there was a monastery on a hill with medieval manuscripts.” When she came to visit the Abbey’s library in 2018, she knew that teaching at Mount Angel Seminary would be her “dream job.” In the fall of 2020, her dream came true as she arrived to teach on the Hilltop, with a focus on literature and poetry.

Professor LaRiviere appreciates that Abbot Jeremy’s understanding of the centrality of the liturgy “permeates every level of the Seminary and what it is to be human. We work as a community to build knowledge of God, so that we may become closer to him – because we are made in the image and likeness of God. These young men are preparing for the priesthood – everything we do in the classroom is a step along that path.”

– CHRISTY NEWLAND

GOD’S LINGERING *Presence With Us*

“I was so excited when I got the call from Mount Angel because not only was it a seminary and run by a religious community – it was the Benedictines. My confirmation name is Benedict and teaching at Mount Angel Seminary feels like a miracle to me.”

“When I arrived at the Hilltop,” says Professor Justin Coyle, Ph.D., “Abbot Jeremy said to me, ‘This is where God has called you.’ To be given the grace to come into Mount Angel Seminary felt like a vocational call.”

“Abbot Jeremy’s way of framing what the Church is has massive implications for the way I teach Church history,” says Professor Coyle. “What we’re tracing through history is not merely the story of the institution, but we’re tracing the story of God’s lingering presence with us, on the Eucharistic altar, in the persons of the faithful, and in the ascended body of the Lord.”

– CHRISTY NEWLAND

FELLOWSHIP

NEWS FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

Though he was only 50 at the time of his death in 2014, Fr. Stuart Long led a big, adventurous life. As a high school student athlete in Montana, he excelled at wrestling and football. He continued with football at Carroll College in Helena, where he discovered his passion for boxing, winning the state Golden Gloves heavyweight title in 1985.

An injury ended Fr. Stu’s heavyweight professional boxing dreams, and after a succession of short career starts, a motorcycle accident

caused him to spend months in hospital care. In that time of recovery, he realized his vocational call to the priesthood and entered the seminary for the Diocese of Helena. He studied at Mount Angel Seminary from 2004 to 2007 and was ordained in 2007.

Fr. Pius X Harding, O.S.B., Fr. Stu’s spiritual director at Mount Angel, remembers that Fr. Stu had a “casual, upbeat way about him: very interested in the people around him. He was most generous; as a matter of fact, you had to refrain from admiring things in his presence, or he would buy them for you.”

While Fr. Stu was a seminarian, he was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease that mimics



FR. STUART LONG *Lifelong fighter for Christ*

Lou Gehrig’s disease symptoms, and for which there is no cure.

“He took [the illness] on like the fighter he was trained to be,” recalls Fr. Pius. “And he went on to live the vocation of love. I know several who embraced the Catholic faith due to his kind example and zealous catechetical ministry.”

Fr. Stu’s formation director in his final year at Mount Angel, Abbot Peter Eberle, O.S.B., remembers the progression of his illness. “Finally, it became clear that his condition was serious and incurable.

That’s when Fr. Stu really shone. He took it all in stride, cheerfully accepting what the Lord had in store for him and still willing to minister to the very best of his ability. He was such an example to all of us.”

Despite his illness, Fr. Stu was an active priest, confessor, and friend to many. In the years since his death, Fr. Stu has been on the mind and heart of Mark Wahlberg, actor and devout Catholic. So much so that Wahlberg is working on a motion picture about the conversion and priestly ministry of Fr. Stu. The movie, titled “Stu” (no release date yet), stars Wahlberg as Fr. Stuart Long and Mel Gibson as his father.

– CHRISTY NEWLAND

ABBEY BACH FESTIVAL

JULY 28, 29, 30 | 7 PM

*Celebrate our 50th anniversary with
three free evenings of online concerts at
MOUNTANGELABBEY.ORG/BACH*



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WEDNESDAY, JULY 28 BACH OUTDOORS

Itamar Zorman, violin with piano
Inspiration from the great outdoors.



THURSDAY, JULY 29 VOICE OF HOPE

Camille Thomas, cello with piano
Hope and beauty for the human soul.



FRIDAY, JULY 30 CLASSICAL TO HASIDIC WITH A TOUCH OF KLEZMER

The Goldstein-Peled-Fiterstein Trio
perform an ensemble evening
from classical to klezmer.

JOIN THE MONKS OF MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY via **LIVE STREAM** for the LITURGY OF THE HOURS

WEEKDAYS

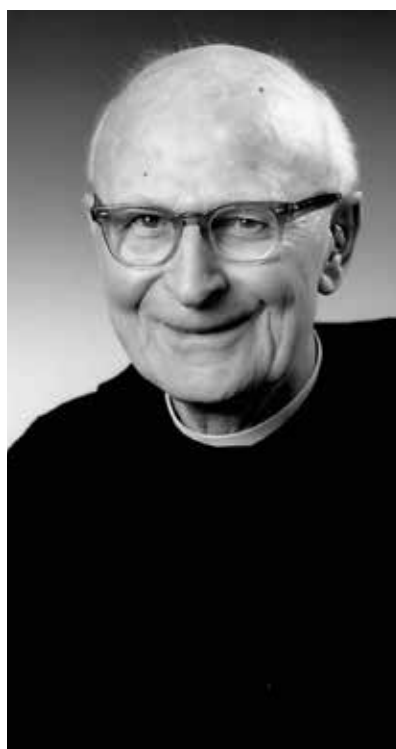
Vigils: 5:20 am
Lauds: 6:30 am
Holy Eucharist: 8:00 am
Midday Prayer: Noon
Vespers: 5:20 pm
Compline: 7:30 pm

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

MOUNTANGELABBEY.ORG/LIVE-STREAM

WAS THERE A MOMENT AT MOUNT ANGEL THAT CHANGED YOUR LIFE?



*Fr. Martin Pollard, O.S.B.
1902 – 1997*

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
development@mtangel.edu.
mtangel.giftlegacy.com

Please note, when writing your will,
our legal title and address is:
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