

MOUNT ANGEL | Letter

SUMMER 2024



Msgr. Joseph Betschart, President-Rector

— 12 YEARS OF HUMBLE, SERVANT LEADERSHIP —



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Summer 2024 | Volume 77, Number 2

DIRECTORY

MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY
503.845.3030
www.mountangelabbey.org

BOOKSTORE
503.845.3345
abbeystore@mtangel.edu

DEVELOPMENT
503.845.3030
development@mtangel.edu

ALUMNI RELATIONS
503.845.3030
alumni@mtangel.edu

GUESTHOUSE
503.845.3025
retreat@mtangel.edu

ABBAY LIBRARY
503.845.3303
circulation@mtangel.edu

OBLATE PROGRAM
Fr. John Paul Le, OSB
johnpaul.le@mtangel.edu

MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY
503.845.3951
seminaryinfo@mtangel.edu

VOCATIONS
Fr. Odo Recker, OSB
vocation@mtangel.edu

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
503.407.8175
volunteer@mtangel.edu

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

Contributors include Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, Br. Isaiah Vargas, and Ethan Alano

Photo Contributors include Br. Isaiah Vargas, Dale Peterson, Marcos Alvarado Trasmonte, Karen Jacoby, and Ethan Alano

Editor: Theresa Myers
Design: Karen Jacoby

Mount Angel Letter is printed using paper milled from responsible FSC approved sources and agri-based inks.



Divine Liturgy with
Bishop Benedict
Aleksiychuk



Humanitas &
Holy Leisure



Apostolic Nuncio at
135th Commencement

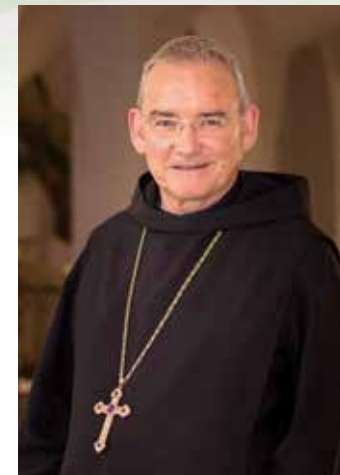


Farewell to Msgr.
Joseph Betschart

Please note our mailing address: Mount Angel Abbey & Seminary, 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.

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



DEAR FRIENDS,

Looking through the stories and photos in this issue of *Mount Angel Letter*, you may say, “These monks are doing all kinds of things!” I would respond, “Yes, we are!” As you can see in the center spread, monks of Mount Angel do all kinds of perhaps surprising things, like writing calligraphy and icons, woodcarving, playing music, and beekeeping.

In early May, several monks – students and teachers – were preparing for the end of the Seminary’s academic year. On May 11, we celebrated our 135th Baccalaureate Mass and Commencement with His Eminence Christophe Cardinal Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States. About a week later, we settled quietly into our annual monastic retreat.

I’ve watched as monks involved with the Mount Angel Institute and Seminary faculty members coordinated and organized a week-long international Fellowship of Scholars that recently gathered at Mount Angel’s guesthouse to discuss Professor Piero Coda’s theological work on the Holy Trinity.

It could sound like we are awfully busy, but these are simply the rich ways of our life together, paced and laced with the rhythms of silence and prayer. Last fall, we had a visit from Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO, who re-introduced us to the Benedictine sense of *humanitas*. In one of his books, Fr. Casey writes: “A genial spirit of *humanitas* underscores the whole Rule of Benedict.” Broadly, that can mean we are called to live a fully human life, a life made possible for us by Christ Jesus. The term *humanitas* is sometimes also understood as “holy leisure.”

We monks strive to accomplish this Benedictine spirit of *humanitas* by balancing prayer – our primary work – with the work required to keep this Hilltop thriving, as well as by practicing holy leisure, as our Rule of Life requires.

We practice holy leisure at Mount Angel, in part, by choosing to engage in times of quiet and of work that brings joy, relaxation, or the creation of something beautiful. I hope you can do the same in these summer months. There may be lots to do, but in this sometimes inhumane world in which we live, let’s try to live with *humanitas*, in loving relationship with God and one another.

May God bless you,

+ *Jeremy Driscoll, OSB*

The Right Reverend Jeremy Driscoll, OSB
Abbot and Chancellor
Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary



A Divine Liturgy celebrated at Mount Angel

In April, among those on retreat at the Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center was Bishop Benedict Aleksyichuk of the St. Nicholas Diocese in Chicago for Ukrainians and a number of clergy from the Ukrainian Catholic eparchy, which extends from the Midwest to the Western United States. While at Mount Angel, the Ukrainian clergy celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in the Abbey church, with Bishop Benedict as the principal celebrant. Abbot Jeremy concelebrated the liturgy, along with several of the Ukrainian Catholic priests. Father Deacon Justin Coyle, professor of theology at Mount Angel Seminary, assisted in the liturgy with other Ukrainian Catholic deacons. During the homily, Bishop Benedict said, "It's important for us to be more and more in a deeper relationship with [God]. When we have this relationship with God, we will find a solution for everything."



Abbot Jeremy, Bishop Benedict,
Father Deacon Justin Coyle

NEW year brings NEW roles

A number of monks on the Hilltop received new appointments this past winter and spring. Please pray especially for those noted here who are taking on key roles for the monastery and the works of the Abbey.



Fr. Teresio Caldwell
Prior



Fr. Philip Waibel
Procurator



Fr. Vincent Trujillo
Guest Master



Soaking in the summer at BENEDICTINE BREWERY

Anytime is a great time to visit the Benedictine Brewery, but our generally sunny summer weather means visitors can take full advantage of our expanded outdoor seating areas. New pergolas, completed in the spring of 2024, provide a bit of shade from the sun and cover from occasional showers. Visitors to the brewery can take advantage of the scenic views of the hop fields across the road while enjoying a pint and a bite.



Fr. Martin Grassel, OSB, brew master of the Benedictine Brewery, has four new beers to feature at the Saint Benedict Festival on July 13. This includes the premiere of a brand-new Belgian wheat beer, Psalmody. The other beers on tap will be Magdalena (Maibock Lager), Half Cloak (Monk's Single Ale), and the Haustus Sour (Sour Pale Ale).



JULY 24 – 27



For the first time in 53 years, the Abbey Bach Festival

is introducing a Children's Concert! Guy Mintus of the Guy Mintus Trio and Alon Goldstein, the festival's artistic director, will play for the young audience on Saturday morning, July 27, at Mount Angel. Following a short performance, the children and musicians will have time to talk, take a closer look at the instruments, and enjoy a snack together.



The festival promises beautiful classical music, vespers with the monks, and a picnic supper on the Hilltop lawn each evening, July 24, 25, and 26. Highlights include a Thursday church performance by the women's vocal ensemble, In Mulieribus. The feature performances include plenty of Bach throughout, plus music from Philip Glass, Mozart, and more.

Tickets are available now at
MOUNTANGELABBEY.ORG/BACH



SUMMER EVENTS

offered by the

MOUNT ANGEL INSTITUTE



ICONOGRAPHY EXHIBIT
Classical Iconography Institute
July 2 – 29
Library foyer



SAINT BENEDICT FESTIVAL
July 13 | Noon to 4 pm



CHILDREN'S BOOK CLUB
The Little Way of a Pilgrim
A book reading with Jennifer
Anna Rich and monks
July 20 | 3 – 4 pm
Library auditorium



ABBAY BACH FESTIVAL
Bach to Gershwin! July 24 – 26
Children's Concert July 27



Engaging the whole person: MOUNT ANGEL INSTITUTE

The Mount Angel Institute, whose mission is to share the rich ways of Mount Angel's monastic life with the Church and the world, provides opportunities for the whole person to be informed and engaged. It was "mission accomplished" in a big way from late May through June when



events included an international Fellowship of Scholars who gathered for a week at the Abbey's guesthouse to discuss theology, an organ concert by Dr. Charles Tompkins in honor of the Blessed Trinity, a discussion on Thomistic Psychology, and a daylong symposium on Ecumenical Encounters led by Abbot Jeremy.

The Mount Angel Institute now posts select presentations by monks and guest speakers on its podcast channel, Seek Things Above. Available on major podcasting platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts, listeners can subscribe so they never miss new content from Mount Angel.



After Mount Angel Seminary's academic year ended, serious study continued with Mount Angel Institute's Fellowship of Scholars. Theologians and philosophers (including seminary professors from Mount Angel) practiced the Sophia University Institute (Italy) method of "Trinitarian Ontology," as developed by professor Msgr. Piero Coda. This way of doing theology invites the Holy Spirit's help for participants to listen and dialogue with one another's research. To learn more about this exciting week of "deep thinking," see the full story at mountangelabbey.org/news.



Humanitas

To live in welcome
and compassion



Benedictine monasteries are places where monks seek God, and in the process, they discover their potential and fulfillment as men created in God's image. As St. Irenaeus says, "The glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God."

Being fully alive in God means becoming more fully human, since God created us to live wholesome and harmonious lives. Fr. Michael Casey, OCSO, writes that, "A genial spirit of **humanitas** underscores the whole Rule of Benedict." That spirit flows from the liturgy, personal prayer, and living out the Gospel in community. This sense of *humanitas* creates in the monastery the space for Benedictine hospitality, "all are welcome."

continued ...





In our life as Benedictine monks at Mount Angel, *humanitas* also includes “*holy leisure.*”

This means living in the present and slowing down to be more receptive to God. One of the ways that monks have practiced holy leisure at Mount Angel is by doing life-giving things such as woodworking, pottery, iconography, calligraphy, playing instruments, composing music, making rosaries, and painting. In our necrology, which is a collection of short biographies of monks who have gone before us, there is a quote about a monk who returned to his hobby in later years: “His stamp collecting was another aspect of a man who just loved to be ‘human’ without diverting his attention from the divine!” Here we would like to share with you some of the ways in which monks today practice holy leisure. — BR. ISAIAH VARGAS, OSB



BR. SHERIF *Painting icons is something that helps me be contemplative and meditative.*



BR. TOWNSEN *Woodcarving is a very meditative thing... Art helps us to focus on creation, which is a part of who God is.*



BR. AMBROSE *The text that I feel inspired to write has already struck me; I feel compelled to continue meditating upon it. A reminder of that word, phrase, Scripture ... will keep speaking through the finished piece of calligraphy.*

FR. ODO *I’m getting older. Doing puzzles helps me to keep my mind sharp!*



BR. BRANDON *Getting to know how the bees work and how each one has its own way of supporting the hive makes me appreciate life in the monastery.*



BR. ANSELM *The same listening, attention, awareness of body and mind, of notes and time, somehow translate to the act of listening and speaking to other people, who are just as complex and beautiful as the music one plays. Conversation and being together is a sort of symphonic act, where one listens, waits, and then plays one’s own particular instrument with others.*

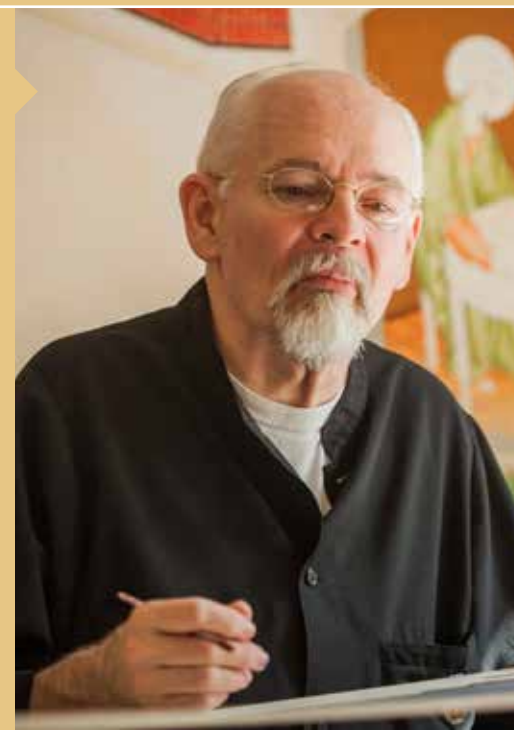


BR. LORENZO *Recycling used malt bags from our brewery, making them into useful bags that others can use, is relaxing for me. It gives me time to be reflective. It’s a very creative, tactile work, and the bags can be shared with others when they are done.*



FR. CHARLES *A good drumming session helps me get my mind off things for a bit and lifts my spirit. It also brings joy to others; it’s a way of giving back to the community.*

BR. CLAUDE *When I was a little kid ... I used to have this fantasy of being a monk in a monastery and painting icons. Back in the 1990s, when I had been into icons for 8 or 9 years, suddenly it hit me ... I said to myself, “You’re doing it!”*



FR. VINCENT WITH BR. ISAIAH *Lloyd Reynolds, when he was teaching me at Reed College, used to emphasize the spirit (breath). He used to say, “The letter kills but the spirit gives life.”*

New priest alumni thankful for Mount Angel



Since graduating on May 11, each of the four men above have been ordained to the priesthood in their home diocese. From left to right: Fr. Anthony Shumway, Fr. Michael Williams, Fr. Maximiliano Muñoz, and Fr. James Ladd

“We really are formed at Mount Angel to be servants of the people.”

Growing in that identity has been something I’m very grateful to Mount Angel for helping me with,” says Fr. James Ladd, who was ordained for the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon on June 22. For Fr. Ladd and his classmates, the Hilltop has been an intentional, formative community where they have learned to develop the priestly heart of Jesus Christ.

Central to that development has been the life of prayer and liturgy, which undergirds everything at Mount Angel. Fr. Maximiliano Muñoz, ordained for the Archdiocese of Seattle on June 1, learned that his priestly ministry must be “sustained by daily, consistent, personal prayer, and the rhythm of prayer of the monastic community around me all the time was like a constant reminder throughout these years.”

Experiencing the beauty of the liturgy celebrated well every day on the Hilltop has been a guiding light for these new priests. Fr. Anthony Shumway, ordained for the Diocese of Salt Lake City on June 28, is grateful for “coming [to Mount Angel] and seeing [liturgy] being done well and then being trained so that I can take it to the people of God.”

Although they have left the seminary, these priest alumni carry Mount Angel and its values with them. Fr. Michael Williams, ordained for the Archdiocese of Las Vegas on May 25, has noticed how the younger priests in his archdiocese who were formed at Mount Angel have a special camaraderie. “One of the things I’m excited to bring to my priesthood is the sense of community,” says Fr. Williams. Through prayer and community, Fr. Williams has discovered how God gives him “the freedom to be who he’s called me to be.”



The Joy of Mission

From left to right: Msgr. Joseph Betschart, Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, His Eminence Christophe Cardinal Pierre, Bishop Kevin Vann.

MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY COMMENCEMENT 2024

From almost six thousand miles away, the Holy Father Pope Francis expressed his spiritual closeness, care, and affection for Mount Angel Seminary and the graduating class of 2024 through the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, His Eminence Christophe Cardinal Pierre. The Holy Father’s personal representative celebrated the Baccalaureate Mass and gave the commencement address at Mount Angel Seminary on May 11 at the invitation of Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, OSB.

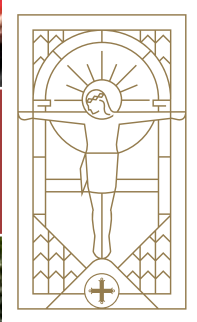


In both his homily at the Baccalaureate Mass and his commencement address, Cardinal Pierre emphasized the importance of joyfully encountering the Lord as the blueprint for bringing the Gospel to the world. He remarked that, “Today is the day of joy, a chance to remember the love by which Christ first encountered us, to draw strength and energy from that encounter, and to keep approaching the Eucharistic celebration as a renewal of our friendship with Jesus and with one another as well as a sign of the way forward.”

Abbot Jeremy had extended an invitation to Cardinal Pierre because of several milestones this year at Mount Angel Seminary: its 135th commencement, the conclusion of Msgr. Joseph Betschart’s tenure as president-rector, and the graduation of Bishop Kevin Vann, of the Diocese of Orange, from the Doctor of Ministry program. For all 25 graduates and their families, the presence and warmth of Cardinal Pierre made for a memorable day, especially for the many who spoke with His Eminence afterward and took photos with him.

Before giving the final blessing at the end of the commencement exercises, Cardinal Pierre expressed his gratitude to the monks for their dedicated life of prayer and work. Addressing the seminarians, he shared that their time in a seminary connected to a monastery is “an exceptional experience.” Turning to the monastic community, and to the younger monks in particular, Cardinal Pierre expressed, “We need you. The world needs you.”

– ETHAN ALANO



135TH COMMENCEMENT AT MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY



PROPAEDEUTIC YEAR:

Foundational to priestly formation

For a group of men entirely new to seminary, the academic year 2023-24 began last July as they came to the Hilltop to begin the propaedeutic stage of their seminary formation. This stage of formation provides new seminarians – at whatever age and from whatever background – with the groundwork they need to engage fully in the following stages of priestly formation: discipleship, configuration, and vocational synthesis.

According to Dr. Katie Jo LaRiviere, the program's academic dean, beginning the year in the summer had a profound impact. It "proved to be a key component of the program's success," says Dr. LaRiviere, "allowing [the men] to bond and build themselves as a distinct cohort" before the arrival of the entire Seminary community in the fall.

In keeping with Mount Angel's proven experience in priestly formation, the propaedeutic stage is centered on the Eucharist and communion. The men are accompanied by a dedicated team and enriched by the Seminary and Hilltop communities. The prayers and rich ways of the Benedictine monastic community of Mount Angel Abbey enhance and support the seminarians' formational experience.

— THERESA MYERS

PROPAEDEUTIC STAGE TEAM



Fr. Michael Niemczak, STL
Coordinator of
Propaedeutic Stage

Fr. William Dillard, DMin
Director of
Spiritual Formation

Katie Jo LaRiviere, PhD
Associate Dean for
Propaedeutic Stage

WHAT PROPAEDEUTIC STUDENTS ARE SAYING ...

"The propaedeutic program has been a wonderful blessing that is allowing me to grow in holiness through consistent prayer, study, and brotherhood."

"This year, I found that I have significantly improved in my self-knowledge."

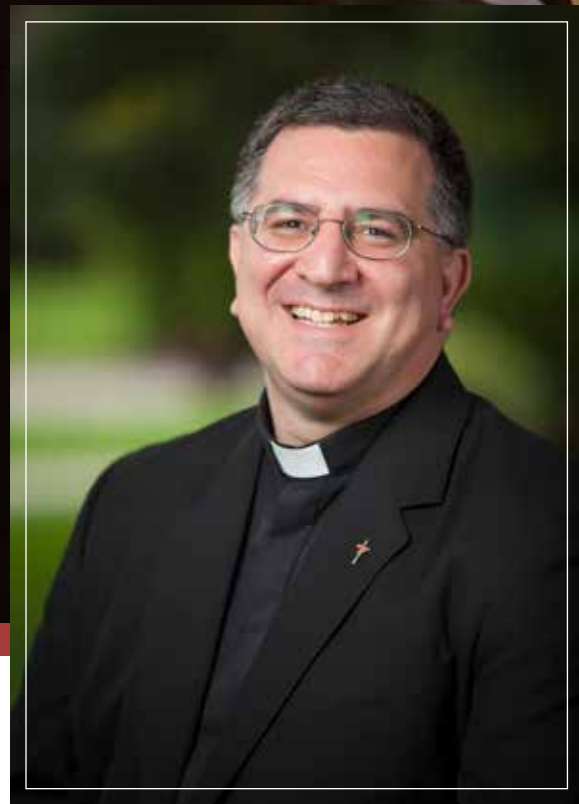


"It enabled me to build a foundation for the rest of my life and provided a stability of life that allowed me to discern this vocation."

"I have developed some of the most deep and healthy friendships I have ever had. I have never felt like I belonged somewhere more. I have never been more joyous to call a place my home."



Learn more about the propaedeutic year at Mount Angel.



Monsignor Joseph Betschart

A faithful servant of Mount Angel Seminary

“I don’t think there’s a greater gift than to be able to share with others what you love the most. I love Christ, I love the Church and the priesthood, and I’m still humbled to this day, 25 years later, being chosen to be a priest,” says Msgr.

Joseph Betschart, “and being able to share these gifts with others in some way is truly a blessing.” Ordained for the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon on June 12, 1999, Msgr. Betschart, himself an alumnus of Mount Angel, faithfully served Mount Angel Seminary as president-rector from July 2012 to June 2024.

Over those twelve years, Msgr. Betschart guided a total enrollment of 534 seminarians from 31 dioceses and 9 religious communities. Under his care, 133 priests who graduated from the Seminary’s Graduate School of Theology were ordained, not to mention the many other priests who began their seminary formation at Mount Angel but completed it elsewhere. While these numbers are indicative of the impact Msgr. Betschart’s leadership has had on the wider Church, they do not get to the heart of the matter. For Msgr. Betschart, it’s “helping us all build up our faith, deepen our relationship with Christ and respond to his call together; that’s the gift.”

Other accomplishments under Msgr. Betschart’s leadership include the creation of the Spanish Studies double major, the Master of Arts in

WORDS OF APPRECIATION FOR MONSIGNOR BETSCHART

“I loved working closely with Msgr. Betschart as abbot and chancellor of the Seminary, for I got to see up close his total dedication to the task of forming good and holy priests.”

— ABBOT JEREMY DRISCOLL, OSB

“Msgr. Betschart’s love for the holy priesthood and his desire to form men with that same love is what stands out for me ... He is what we call a ‘priest’s priest.’”

— ARCHBISHOP ALEXANDER K. SAMPLE
ARCHBISHOP OF PORTLAND

“Msgr. Betschart is a fine priest who genuinely loves the Church, a sensitive and caring man, a person gifted in both heart and mind.”

— ABBOT GREGORY DUERR, OSB
FORMER ABBOT OF MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY

“Like all good priests, Msgr. Betschart has embraced a life of humble and unselfish servant leadership.”

— ARCHBISHOP JOHN G. VLAZNY
FORMER ARCHBISHOP OF PORTLAND

“Msgr. Betschart will be remembered in the history of Mount Angel as a pivotal president-rector not only for the growth in programs he oversaw, but the way in which he was a spiritual father to so many and so well.”

— FR. STEPHEN CLOVIS
VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMINISTRATION
MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

“As grateful as I am for his prudent accompaniment, it is Monsignor’s kindness that has had the greater impact on me.”

— SHAWN KEOUGH, PHD
ACADEMIC DEAN, MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

“Msgr. Betschart truly embodies the priestly heart in his care and concern, and we are all the better for it.”

— KATHY AKIYAMA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

“In the spirit of John Vianney, Monsignor did not become a priest for himself, but for others.”

— THOMAS GREENE, PHD
CHAIR, MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Philosophy, the Doctor of Ministry degree, the implementation of the sixth edition of the Program of Priestly Formation, and the renewal of the Seminary curriculum. While there are unique challenges for any president-rector, Msgr. Betschart guided the Seminary with grace and resilience during the exceptional academic year of 2020-21, which included the COVID-19 pandemic, the devastating Oregon wildfires that almost prompted an evacuation of the Seminary, flooding in Anselm Hall, and a winter ice storm that wreaked havoc on the Hilltop’s grounds. Despite an impressive record of achievements, Msgr. Betschart is quick to give all credit to God and acknowledge his gratitude for his colleagues, the seminarians and students, and all who support the Seminary. “In the end,” he says, “it’s all about the Lord and his people.” Reflecting on the

future, Msgr. Betschart adds, “We are truly blessed knowing that Fr. Jeff Eirvin, a brother priest from the Archdiocese of Portland whom I have known for many years, will be appointed rector to succeed me. I cannot think of better or more faithful hands in which to leave the Seminary.”

Starting July 1, Msgr. Betschart will begin a well-deserved sabbatical before starting his next assignment in the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon as Vicar for Clergy in January 2025. “Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary is for me truly a special place to encounter the Lord Jesus and fall ever more deeply in love with him, his priesthood, his Church and her people,” says Msgr. Betschart. “I feel like the Abbey and Seminary is home, and it will remain with me always.”

— ETHAN ALANO



MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY & SEMINARY
Box 497, SAINT BENEDICT, OR 97373-0497

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
MOUNT ANGEL
ABBAY

SAINT BENEDICT FESTIVAL 2024

JULY 13 | NOON – 4 PM

*Spend a summer afternoon enjoying
Benedictine hospitality with live
music and good conversation with
monks, friends and family.*

- Abbey Experience booth
- Iconography exhibit
- Live music
- Musical performances in Abbey church
- Lawn games
- Buffet picnic lunch
- Benedictine Brewery beer
- Local Oregon wines
- Procession in honor of St. Benedict

*Your friendship and generosity
help support our life of prayer,
work, hospitality, teaching,
and learning – and the occasional
day of feasting and fun.*

We hope you can join us!



Tickets are available now at
MOUNTANGELABBAY.ORG/SBF

JOIN THE MONKS OF MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY for MASS AND THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

WEEKDAYS

Vigils: 5:25 am
Lauds: 6:35 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: 8:05 pm

SEE MOUNTANGELABBAY.ORG/LIVE-STREAM SCHEDULE.

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



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 503.312.5425
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)

Abbot Bonaventure Zerr, OSB
1936 – 1988