

MOUNT ANGEL | Letter

SUMMER 2026



*Celebrating Ten Years
of the Work of God*



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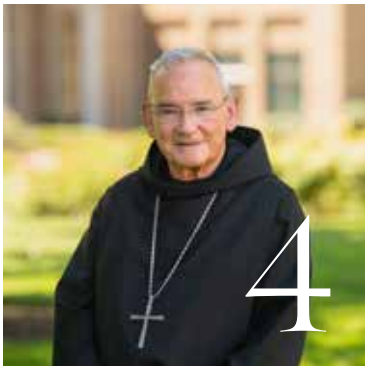
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Please note our mailing address: Mount Angel Abbey & Seminary, PO Box 497, Saint Benedict, OR 97373-0497. All other Abbey mail should be addressed to 1 Abbey Drive, Saint Benedict, OR 97373.

Would you like to receive our publications, invitations and news? Visit mountangelabbey.org/update to sign up.

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Calendar of Events

AUGUST



- | | |
|---------|--|
| 24 | Mount Angel Seminary Mass of the Holy Spirit & Inaugural Address |
| 24 – 26 | Faith & Writing: Praying & Writing with St. Augustine Retreat |

SEPTEMBER



- | | |
|---------|---|
| 5 | MAI Christian in the World Lecture: <i>Intro to Spiritual Practices</i> |
| 8 | Mass of Simple Profession of Monastic Vows |
| 12 | Mass of Solemn Profession of Monastic Vows |
| 18 | Mount Angel Seminary Diaconate Ordination |
| 18 – 20 | Oblate Retreat with Fr. Ephrem Martinez, OSB |
| 19 | MAI Autumn Organ Concert by Charles Tompkins |
| 25 | Encounter Young Adults Ministry |
| 29 | Solemnity of the Archangels (<i>Special prayer schedule</i>) |

OCTOBER



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|---------|---|
| 5 – 7 | Keeping a Journal with God Retreat |
| 17 | MAI Christian in the World Lecture: <i>Open Myself to God</i> |
| 21 | Mount Angel Seminary Mass of Candidacy |
| 23 | Encounter Young Adults Ministry |
| 23 – 25 | Inner Healing with St. Thomas Aquinas Retreat |
| 30 | Abbey Foundation Day (<i>Special prayer schedule</i>) |

NOVEMBER

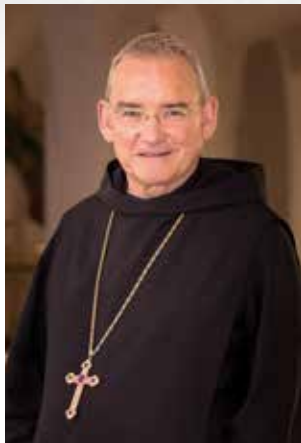


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| 1 | MAI All Saints' Relics Pilgrimage & Display |
| 6 – 8 | Oblate Retreat with Fr. Michael Shrum, OSB |
| 7 | Mount Angel Seminary Benefit Dinner |
| 13 – 15 | 2 Become 1: A Retreat to Explore the Beauty & Truth of Catholic Marriage |
| 20 | Encounter Young Adults Ministry |
| 21 | MAI Christian in the World Lecture: <i>Hear God's Word</i> |
| 26 | Thanksgiving Day (<i>Special prayer schedule</i>) |

Learn more at MOUNTANGELABBEY.ORG/EVENTS



MAI events are sponsored by the Mount Angel Institute.



Dear Friends,

Summer is a special season at Mount Angel Abbey. As the sun shines on the Hilltop, the blessings of the Lord illuminate our spirit. In addition to beautiful weather and longer days, we enjoy annual gatherings on the Hilltop, cherishing moments with family and friends in this precious season as “imitators of God as we walk in love, as Christ loved us” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

This is an especially joyful time, as we have so much to celebrate and so many blessings for which to be grateful. Like many of you, travel has been a significant part of my summer. In late May, I was in Rome for my work with the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Then in June I traveled to Canada for the General Chapter of the Swiss-American Congregation. This was held at our daughter house, Westminster Abbey in Mission, B.C. Gratefully, July was a month to enjoy the blessings of life on the Hilltop with the Saint Benedict Festival on July 11, the actual feast day of Saint Benedict, and the Abbey Bach Festival from July 29 – August 1. At the Saint Benedict Festival, we also shared with friends the plans to renovate Saint Joseph Chapel, the Seminary’s main chapel, an inspiring project that will enhance that sacred space for generations of seminarians.

As I reflect on my ten years as abbot, I am especially grateful for the opportunities for growth we have experienced on the Hilltop, made possible by the love and support of many who have contributed to our monastic life and helped secure its future. This issue features an interview that details some of the graces and milestones that have marked the past ten years.

While we look with gratitude on the past, we look with hope toward the future. Young monks making vows like Br. Lazarus Sturm, OSB, encourages our monastic community. Witnessing Mount Angel seminarians graduate and be ordained for priestly ministry shows that the Lord continues to provide shepherds for his Church.

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.” –2 Corinthians 9:8

Please enjoy this commemorative issue highlighting the Lord’s work at Mount Angel Abbey.

Wishing you a peaceful and restful summer season,

+ *Jeremy Driscoll, OSB*

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



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

While the summer offers some rest and renewal, here at Mount Angel Seminary, it is also a season of welcoming and preparation. At the beginning of July, we welcomed 33 new seminarians from 15 (arch)dioceses for the propaedeutic stage, the first stage of seminary formation. Several seminarians arrived in late July for our annual Intensive Spirituality Program (ISP), a three-week retreat for those beginning the configuration stage, the third stage of seminary formation. Now we are preparing to welcome the entire student body who will soon return to the Hilltop for a new academic year, beginning with the Mass of the Holy Spirit and Inaugural Address on August 24. Dr. Anna Lesiuk-Cummings, Associate Professor of Humanities and Languages, will give this year’s Inaugural Address. As we prepare for the work that lies ahead, we do so with gratitude for all the Lord’s blessings and trust in his guidance.

The new academic year offers new possibilities, which I am eager to share with you in this issue. As a Seminary that serves the whole Church, we are blessed to welcome two seminarians from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church from the St. Nicholas Eparchy in Chicago. We also have a new Seminary faculty member, Dr. Sean Haefner, whom we congratulate for having earned his doctorate from Boston College in June.

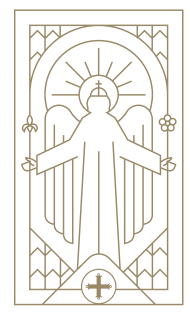
The Saint Joseph Chapel renovation, which you will hear more about in the interview with our architect, William Heyer, is a major undertaking for our Seminary community, but one that will bear much fruit for our seminarians and for the glory of God. On September 18, we will welcome Bishop Thomas Daly, of the Diocese of Spokane, as he ordains some of our seminarians to the transitional diaconate. This will be the first transitional diaconate ordination for the Seminary celebrated on the Hilltop in many years, an opportunity for the Lord to pour out new graces on our Seminary community.

As Abbot Bonaventure stated in an earlier *Mount Angel Letter*, “*We need divine guidance to help us prepare our young people for the work of service in the Church of God that they will, God willing, some day undertake.*” Abbot Bonaventure’s words are just as important today as they were when he wrote them four decades ago. The seminarians at Mount Angel are devoting their lives to God’s work, and I pray that the Lord will guide us, allow us to remain joyful throughout each new season and strengthen us as we continue to glorify him.

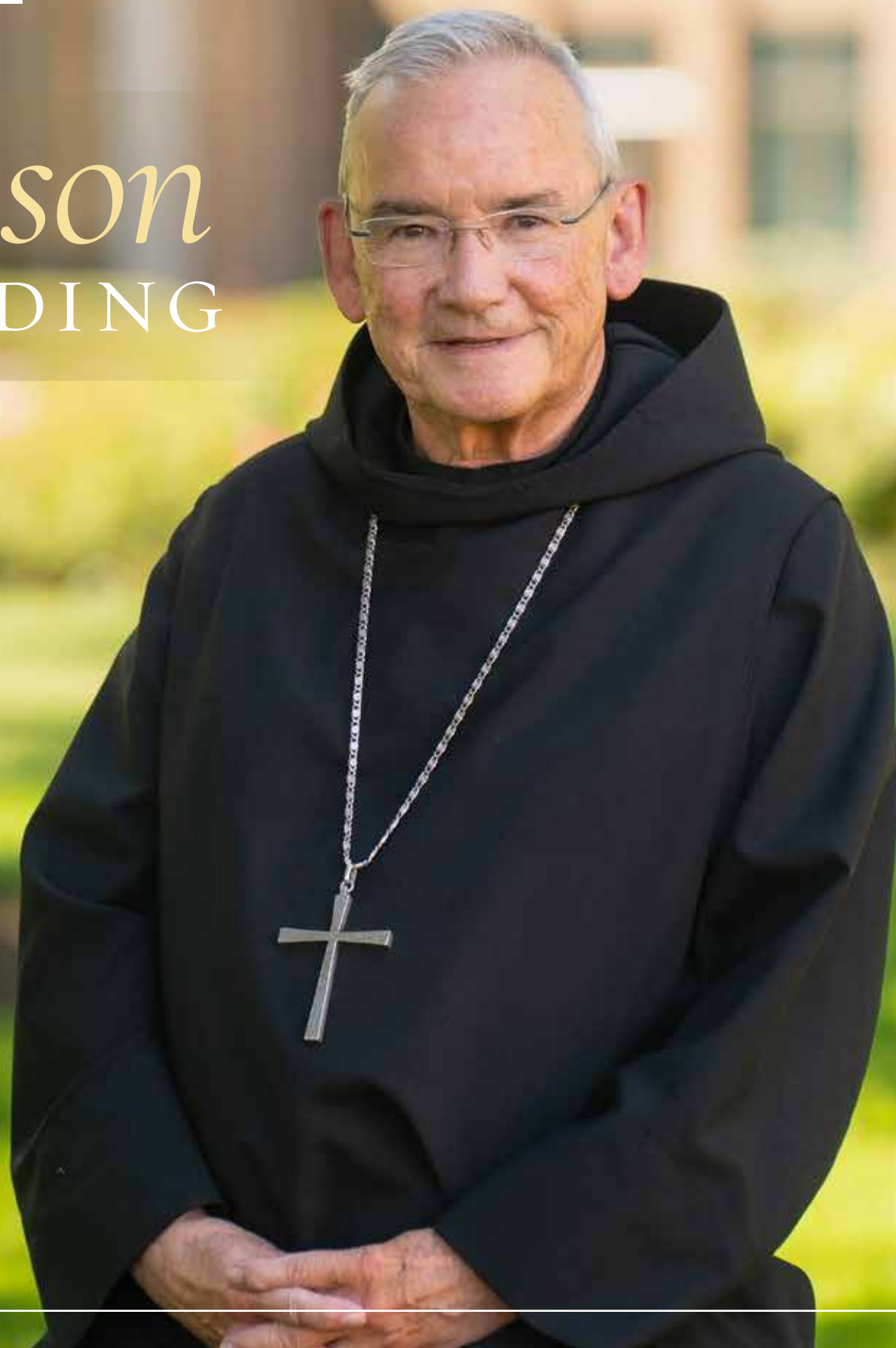
Blessings,

Rev. Jeff Eirvin

The Very Reverend Jeff Eirvin
President-Rector
Mount Angel Seminary



A Season of BUILDING



One only needs to walk on the Mount Angel Abbey Hilltop once to notice that there is something incredibly special about this place. Walking on a summer day in the sunshine is especially enchanting. Combined with the scent of freshly cut grass and blooming roses, the knowledge that generations of monks and seminarians have walked this path for nearly 150 years fills the heart and reinvigorates the soul. It is a place to get lost in thoughts and found in prayer. And, though it was built in 1882, that knowledge never gets old.

When Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Synod at the Vatican, visited the Abbey in 2025, he named it a “spiritual oasis.” This is a feeling shared by many for a place that is so unique. It is here, in this place of quiet reflection and prayer, that Benedictine monks, led by Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, work and live according to the Rule of St. Benedict. Since his election as the 12th Abbot of Mount Angel Abbey in March 2016, Abbot Jeremy has revitalized the Abbey and Seminary. He has called his ten years as abbot, “a season of building,” bringing fresh ideas to the Hilltop while respecting 1,500 years of Benedictine traditions as father to a thriving monastic community. He embraces humility and often references The Rule of St. Benedict as his guide as abbot, stating, “we have been given this together.”

continued...



Below, Dr. Amanda Staggenborg, Director of Communications, interviewed Abbot Jeremy about his experience as abbot and the growth of Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary under his leadership:

Q: As you reflect on your ten years as Abbot, what are the areas for which you are most grateful?

“For my community of monks. I’ve seen the monastic community grow, and we have grown together in monastic virtues, called the Rich Ways. I’ve grown in understanding the why and how of monastic practices and understanding how important it is that we grow together to the Lord. The community is much more aware of our impact and importance for the rest of the Church and the world. I’ve tried to heighten their awareness of that. There is a clear identity for us as a monastic community, and there is a wide knowledge of us and appreciation of us.”

Q: Pope Leo XIV said recently that, “when the Lord calls you, you have to say yes.” How did you feel when you heard the Lord’s calling as Abbot?

“I felt like my patron, Jeremiah the prophet, who said, ‘Not me, Lord, I’m too young.’ But I wasn’t young. I was sixty-four when I was elected (previous abbots had been elected in their forties), and that started the biggest challenge of my life. I experienced it as a call from the Lord. When a monk makes a vow of obedience, he has to practice it all his life, and this was something I thought I had to be obedient to. In Chapter 7 of the Holy Rule, under the fourth step of humility, it states, ‘in this obedience under difficult, unfavorable, or even unjust conditions, his heart quietly embraces suffering and endures it without weakening or seeking escape.’ This was the most difficult act of obedience in my life.”

Q: In this “season of building,” what have been some major changes at Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary in the last ten years?

“The renovation of the Guesthouse and its program as well as the Brewery and Tap Room. Those are changes that enhance our ability to reach the community and show what Mount Angel Abbey

has to offer. In the Seminary, under Fr. Eirvin’s leadership, the faculty is among the finest. The establishment of the Mount Angel Institute has enabled the various touchpoints to establish common language. Everyone now knows what the Seven Rich Ways and what the Seven Touchpoints are and knows that the monastery is the center and everything comes out from that.”

Q: As a Benedictine monk, you refer to the Holy Rule as a guide. Are there some verses that are especially helpful to you in your daily tasks?

“To me, the biggest guide is Chapter 64: ‘By this we do not mean that he should allow faults to flourish, but rather, as we have already said, he should prune them away with prudence and love as he sees best for each individual. Let him strive to be loved rather than feared.’ You can’t just be loved by not correcting faults. You can’t let faults flourish. Not just for the good of the monk, but his faults could hurt others, and you can’t have that atmosphere. At the same time, St. Benedict goes on to say, ‘Excitable, anxious, extreme, obstinate, jealous or oversuspicious he must not be.’ Also, St. Jacob says, ‘If I drive my flocks too hard, they will all die in a single day.’ ‘Therefore, drawing on this and other examples of discretion, the mother of virtues, he must so arrange everything that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak nothing to run from.’ The verses guide me deeply.”

**Note: During the interview, the Abbot also referred to and quoted Chapters 2 and 72.*

Q: How has your role as Abbot shaped your understanding of your monastic vocation?

“It is a new dimension to my own vocation. Being responsible for every monk as abbot gets you thinking about how the whole thing is supposed to work. I see how important it is to have an open relationship with the abbot. As St. Benedict says

in Chapter 64, ‘let him strive to be loved, not feared.’ This makes me think of all the monks’ vocations. As abbot, I have found it important that I continually articulate for them what it means to be a monk and what are the monastic, Mount Angel ways of doing things. We grow in our vocations if the abbot is constantly teaching.”

Q: What elements of being the spiritual father to your monks have you found most meaningful?

“Seeing a monk one-on-one and seeing grace at work in him. Seeing, as the years have gone on, how The Abbot’s Teaching in Chapter 2, is meant to permeate the minds of the disciple, I have seen evidence that it does. And that is very gratifying. One of the ways it is evidenced is in the common language we speak. Seeing it so widely used is the Lord’s way of saying, ‘See, it’s working and I am making it fruitful.’ Jesus says in Chapter 15 of John’s gospel, ‘Remain in me as I remain in you. Without me, you can do nothing. But if you remain in me, you will bear much fruit and you will do even greater things than I.’ Remaining in him as best I can and trying to get the monks to remain in him and all of us to remain in his commandments. I see those fruits, and that has been wonderful.”

Q: What do you see as Abbot going forward?

“I see these last ten years as a time of building, both exteriorly and interiorly. Going forward, let us ‘prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life.’ The ten year mark can be an opportunity for fresh moves for the community and the abbot, a deepening of all that we have worked to do in these ten years.”

— DR. AMANDA STAGGENBORG





DEACON OWEN CUMMINGS

After Deacon Owen Cummings received Mount Angel Seminary's highest honor, the *Lumen Gentium* award, at the 2025 Commencement Exercises, Abbot Jeremy addressed Deacon Cummings with these heartfelt words:

"The last 30 years of my monastic life, working side by side with you, is one of the great graces of my life as a monk of this house, to have had you as a friend and colleague. I thank you, and thank you for announcing together that Jesus Christ is the light of the world."

Abbot Jeremy's words express what many Mount Angel Seminary faculty and seminarians have found in Deacon Cummings over the years: a friend, a colleague, a professor who announces Jesus Christ with faith seeking understanding.

A little over a year after his retirement, Dr. Amanda Staggenborg, Director of Communications for Mount Angel Abbey, interviewed Deacon Cummings about the tenth anniversary of Abbot Jeremy, the uniqueness of Mount Angel Seminary and his ongoing theological reflection in retirement.

Q: In the ten years since Abbot Jeremy Driscoll was elected as abbot, Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary has expanded and grown. What are some significant areas of growth that you've experienced as a professor at Mount Angel Seminary?

"That's not difficult to answer. Since I first met him in 1995 and began to hear about what we were calling, 'Eucharistic Ecclesiology' (now called Communion Ecclesiology), I was alerted to something that would be of great significance to the church in general and of value to seminarians. What I've seen in the ten years since Abbot Jeremy's leadership is a greater intensification of that theological and liturgical impulse...a greater intensification of Communion Ecclesiology as the heartbeat of the theological curriculum in the Seminary."

Q: Can you share some highlights of your experience developing Mount Angel Seminary's curriculum centered on Communion Ecclesiology with then-Fr. Jeremy and others?

"In 1995, I attended a conference called, 'The Inauguration of the Society for Catholic Liturgy.' Abbot Jeremy was in attendance as well and that's where we met. I already knew something about the Seminary curriculum and was thrilled by the idea of a theological curriculum centered on the Eucharist making the Church. That was the start of a good, fruitful relationship. I was invited for an interview later that year and was offered a position at Mount Angel Seminary beginning in the fall of 1996.

We were invited as a Seminary community to Colorado to discuss the curriculum, along with other seminaries. We came together to discuss possible updates in curricula development. We realized that we were the only ones interested in expanding the curriculum with this Eucharistic focus. Later that year, we continued the conversation with all of the faculty. The faculty embraced it. Since then, it has grown significantly and been quite successful."

Q: You've recently written a book called, Evil, Suffering and God. Can you tell us a bit about the book?

"It is meant to be a companion for traveling through the pilgrimage of suffering for Christians. I have written around 30 books, and everything comes out of a practical situation. My own practical, personal experiences and teaching required me as theologian to think through why these things happen. And the answer is, no one knows.

But the point of the book is to withdraw from a purely intellectual approach of why bad things happen to good people, but to a more experiential approach from the liturgy. Identifying with Christ enables one to move through the travails of suffering that come into one's life by saying that Good Friday of the Lord's death was not the end of the Lord.

If you choose to embrace your identify in Christ, it won't make the suffering go away, but it will provide you with a foundation for hope and wisdom in the midst of suffering."

Q: In your experience, what makes Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary unique compared to others you've worked at?

"I've worked at two other seminaries. What makes it special here is the liturgical focus. It is taught in the classrooms and lived out in the monastery. There is a sense in which students and faculty see it performed and taught on a daily basis. That makes it very different from other seminaries."

Q: You retired in 2025 after 30 years of teaching at Mount Angel Seminary. How has retirement been for you, and how do you stay connected with Mount Angel in your retirement?

"As emeritus, I retain my office and come to the Hilltop as often as I can. Retirement has been a commitment to ongoing research, study and prayer every single day."

— DR. AMANDA STAGGENBORG



THE STATE OF OREGON ACQUIRES *Abiqua Falls*

In February, the Abbey Foundation of Oregon (AFO) listed Abiqua Falls and the 40 acres surrounding it for public auction. With the listing came a significant amount of media attention, more than the Abbey has experienced in nearly two decades. The questions many reporters, producers and editors had was... why? The below piece highlights the uniqueness of Abiqua Falls and why this story garnered national media attention.

What is Abiqua Falls? Where is it?

Located in Marion County, Abiqua Falls is a 92-foot waterfall surrounded by basalt columns popular with outdoor enthusiasts who appreciate a rugged, natural trail. The waterfall's beauty is breathtaking, recently described by outdoors writer Adam Sawyer as, "a waterfall that A.I. wanted to be when it grows up." Sawyer goes on to state that, "it is a perfect, almost 100-foot cascade accented by the most Oregon of rocks...it paints this perfect picture and it happens to reside within the world's most perfect amphitheater." It has been described as "perfection" and "the most beautiful waterfall in Oregon."

After the property was listed, the media attention grew from regional, local outlets to national publications in a matter of days. The story of the waterfall reached USA Today, The New York Times, The Associated Press, People, and many others. The listing of the property and subsequent media attention prompted Oregon legislators to respond "to public concern over Abiqua Falls potentially being privatized, ensuring access for all Oregonians."

Why was the property acquired by the state of Oregon?

Senator Fred Girod (R-Silverton), House Majority Leader Ben Bowman (D-Tigard, Metzger, S. Beaverton) and Representative Rick Lewis (R-Silverton) offered \$600,000 in a bipartisan effort to acquire the waterfall and surrounding 40 acres owned by the AFO. The state legislators worked collaboratively with representatives from Mount Angel Abbey and the AFO to ensure

transparency throughout the bond process. Girod is the Co-Chair of the Capital Construction Committee. Dr. Amanda Staggenborg, Director of Communications for Mount Angel Abbey, wrote positively about the collaboration, stating, "It is with deep gratitude and hope for the future that the Abbey Foundation of Oregon entrusts the stewardship and legacy of Abiqua Falls to the state of Oregon." The state's interest, as stated in their press release, was to "bring Abiqua Falls into public ownership."

How long has the Abbey and the Abbey Foundation of Oregon owned Abiqua Falls?

Mount Angel Abbey purchased the Abiqua Falls property in 1908 and, in 2002, transitioned ownership to the Abbey Foundation of Oregon.

What happens now?

Governor Tina Kotek signed the Cap Senate Bill 5701, which includes the property owned by the Abbey Foundation of Oregon, along with another 160 acres owned by Weyerhaeuser. The Bill includes many other projects and will be funded in the state's next fiscal year. Until then, the Abbey Foundation of Oregon will maintain its current status. After funding, Oregon Parks and Recreation will oversee the property, including possible updates for public safety. A spokesperson for state parks told The Oregonian's Jamie Hale in April that, "Our understanding is the intent for this property would be to remain a rural, rustic day-use park. Even with that understanding, this property would likely need additional work before it could be operated by a public agency."

— DR. AMANDA STAGGENBORG



Saint Benedict Festival 2026

FEAST • PRAY • MEET THE MONKS

Named in honor of Saint Benedict of Nursia, the 6th century founder of the Benedictine Order and father of Western monasticism, the Saint Benedict Festival at Mount Angel Abbey always falls on the Saturday closest to Saint Benedict's feast day, July 11th. In God's Providence, the 2026 festival fell on the feast day itself, which the monks celebrate as a solemnity, making this year's festival especially memorable. The last time the festival landed on July 11th was 2020, when the festival was online only due to COVID-19 restrictions. Because of leap years, the next

occurrence of the Saint Benedict Festival on Saint Benedict's feast day will be 2037.

While the festival traditionally begins with Midday Prayer and ends with Vespers, the monks also invited festival guests to come early for a Solemn Pontifical Mass. Abbot Jeremy preached about Saint Benedict's teaching on hospitality, saying that "the real hospitality that Jesus longs to receive, that our guests and our brothers in the monastery all long for, is love, love that is sincere and extravagantly expressed."



View more photos at [flickr.com/mountangelabbeyseminary/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mountangelabbeyseminary/albums)



Highlights from this year's festival included former AFO president John Limb speaking about Abbot Jeremy's 10 year anniversary, live jazz on the lawn by the Hilltop Jazz Collective, an introduction to the Saint Joseph Chapel renovation, an iconography exhibit by the Classical Iconography Institute, an organ storytelling performance of "The Last Conversation of Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica," and the premiere of the new "1892" rauchbier (smoked beer) from Benedictine Brewery.

For returning guests and first-time attendees, the Saint Benedict Festival provides an opportunity to learn more about the monks themselves and the Benedictine spirituality that drew them here. "The monks' way of life is relatable to many kinds of people because many kinds of people are monks," says Br. Thomas Buttrick, OSB, the head of the festival's executive committee. "But at the same time, it's a call to be close to God, so we hope to go together to God with all of our guests."

— ETHAN ALANO

Save the date for next year's Saint Benedict Festival on Saturday, July 10, 2027.



LEARN MORE



Abbey Bach Festival 2026

Having just completed its 55th season, the annual Abbey Bach Festival is Mount Angel Abbey's longest running festival from its beginning in 1972. In the Benedictine tradition of stability, the basic structure and purpose of the festival have remained largely intact. Speaking about it in 1977, Abbot Anselm Galvin, OSB, Mount Angel's 6th abbot and the president of the festival at the time, spoke words true to the festival then and now: "[The Abbey Bach Festival] gives us at the Abbey a singular opportunity to share with our friends some of the beautiful things that can be found on this hilltop. After sharing the

praises of God in the church, we can share in the view of the Willamette Valley and then share in the music of the masters. It is the Abbey's privilege to provide this opportunity." Nearly 50 years later, this remains the Abbey's privilege.

The 2026 festival from July 29 – August 1 was exceptionally popular. The popularity of the sold-out festival, both this year and in other years, speaks of the caliber of musicians and the desire to listen to beautiful music amid the Hilltop's beauty. Alon Goldstein, the festival's artistic director, says that "each performance is an invitation to

listen deeply, to be moved, and to experience the profound beauty of live music in a place where tradition and community meet."

Performers at the 2026 festival included local musicians like In Mulieribus, a Portland-based women's vocal ensemble, and organist Paul Klemme, who directs the Salem-based Willamette Master Chorus. It also featured pianist Alon Goldstein (Israel), cellist Luiz Fernando Venturelli (Brazil), the Cerus Quartet (saxophone, Ann Arbor, Michigan), and the Galvin Cello Quartet (Brazil, South Korea and

the United States). The Cerus Quartet and Galvin Cello Quartet also performed at the Saturday Bach for Kids concert, a newer tradition for the festival now in its third year.

Reflecting on this year's festival, Father Teresio Caldwell, OSB, co-executive director of the Abbey Bach Festival, said that he is "really grateful to have [the festival] here and to have it be such a part of our tradition of cultivating the arts and promoting that and inviting people to share in that experience."

— ETHAN ALANO



View more photos at [flickr.com/mountangelabbeyseminary/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mountangelabbeyseminary/albums)





GRATITUDE

The Lasting Impact of the Renew Campaign

Thanks to the friendship, prayers, and generosity of 252 benefactors, the Renew Facilities Campaign successfully concluded in the fall of 2025. Their commitment throughout this three-year journey has addressed long-deferred maintenance needs at the Abbey and Seminary facilities.

By supporting the physical upkeep of the Hilltop, our benefactors are not just repairing buildings; they are preserving a way of life rooted in the Benedictine values of stability and faithful stewardship of our beloved Abbey and Seminary facilities.

Preserving Our Places of Prayer and Community



A major project was the restoration of Anselm Hall's roof, a \$1 million undertaking that took two summers to complete. To replace the underlayment and insulation, the work crew carefully removed the Spanish tiles in sections, cleaned them, replaced any broken tiles, and reinstalled them. Thanks to this meticulous work by craftsmen, Anselm's new roof will house future generations of seminarians for 50 years or more.

Other work included replacing the roof over Aquinas Hall's refectory, along with brick and mortar washing and tuckpointing on seven Hilltop buildings: Anselm, Aquinas, the Monastery/Abbey church, the Guesthouse, Annunciation, the Damian Center, and the Press Building. These long-overdue improvements were essential to preserving the strength, beauty, and sustainability of the Hilltop for generations to come.



Our goal for the campaign was \$3.1 million, but our benefactors' generosity brought us to \$3,194,000.

Because of this, we were able to dedicate \$1.2 million to establish the Mount Angel Abbey Facilities Endowment. As a perpetual fund, it will directly sustain the ongoing care of the Abbey and Seminary for generations to come.

The successful conclusion of the Renew Facilities Campaign demonstrates the generosity of Mount Angel Abbey & Seminary's benefactors and the love they have for this place and its prayerful mission. It also reflects the Benedictine values of stability and faithful stewardship of material goods for the glory of God.

— MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

PLANNING FOR ETERNITY

A Legacy of Prayer, Formation & Hospitality

What does Mount Angel mean to you?

Whatever brought you here, you have become part of a legacy that has endured for over 140 years—and that, with your help, will endure for generations to come. A planned gift is one way to make that support everlasting.

Joining the Legacy Society

Legacy Society members have included Mount Angel Abbey in their estate plans through:

- A bequest in a will or living trust
- A charitable gift annuity
- A beneficiary designation on a retirement account, life insurance policy or bank account
- A gift of appreciated stock
- A gift from a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)

Your gift sustains the prayer of the monks, the formation of future priests and the care of the Hilltop.

Your Next Step

Request your free estate planning guide—a simple resource to help you think through your goals. No obligation, no pressure.

Have you already included Mount Angel Abbey in your estate plan?

Please let us know so we can thank you and welcome you into the Legacy Society.

We would love to hear from you

All conversations are held in the strictest confidence.

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Learn More

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MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY *Commencement 2026*

“Joy is a grace from God and, fundamentally, a choice,” reminded The Most Reverend Frank Schuster, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Seattle, as he addressed this year’s graduating class of Mount Angel Seminary. “Defiant joy is an attitude, rooted in faith, that tethers us in our ups and downs, rooted in the idea that being a fundamentally joyful person isn’t about how dark it is or by the news channel or by any other current event in our lives. It is about refusing to define our joy on what is happening outside in the world around us. Our joy comes from within, born of faith.” As the graduates continue their vocations, he encouraged them to remain open to learning from the communities they are called to serve. On Saturday, May 9, twenty-five graduates joyfully celebrated both the completion of one chapter and the start of another in the journey of their sacred service.

Very Reverend Jeff Eirvin, president-rector of Mount Angel Seminary, delivered the invocation and presided over the commencement exercises. With the support of faculty, family members, friends, fellow seminarians, and the monastic community, graduates received degrees and a certificate across multiple academic disciplines from bachelor’s to doctorate, including philosophy, theology and ministry.

Father Eirvin also presented the *Lumen Gentium* award to Thomas G. Greene with gratitude for eleven years of service as a Seminary board member and eight years of leadership as Seminary board chair. Right Reverend Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, abbot and chancellor, concluded the exercises with a special blessing, stating, “Mount Angel is always a place for you. You know the rhythms...the rhythms of prayer and the rhythm of our way of life. Mount Angel Seminary is a wonderful place to come back to because you find the same rhythms of life, always still here.”

— DR. AMANDA STAGGENBORG

View photos of the
Baccalaureate Mass
& Commencement



BACHELOR OF ARTS

Caleb Peltzer, *Diocese of Fresno*
Ralph Antonio Tronci, *Diocese of Sacramento*

CERTIFICATE OF PHILOSOPHY

Robert James Maximilian Currall, *Archdiocese of Seattle*
Shane Michael David Duffy, *Diocese of Orange*

THE MASTER OF ARTS (PHILOSOPHY)

Mauricio Duran, *Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon*
Gino Esposito, *Archdiocese of Las Vegas*
Daniel Kemper, *Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau*
Jacob Tomas Means, *Diocese of Reno*
Br. Damien-Joseph Rappuhn, OSB, *Saint Martin's Abbey*
Ernesto José Juárez Urquilla, *Archdiocese of Las Vegas*
Michael Weight, *Diocese of Salt Lake City*

MASTER OF DIVINITY

Rev. Mr. Shawn Raymond Daniel, *Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon*
Rev. Mr. José Luis Gómez Díaz, *Diocese of Salt Lake City*
Rev. Mr. John Paul Langsfeld, *Archdiocese of Santa Fe*
Rev. Mr. José Francisco Orozco Cárdenas, *Diocese of Fresno*
Br. Damien-Joseph Rappuhn, OSB, *Saint Martin's Abbey*
Rev. Mr. Jaime Zuazo, *Diocese of Salt Lake City*

THE MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGY)

Sean Kawashima Akroyd

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Rev. Alex De Paulis, *Diocese of San Diego*
Lynda Lee Sander Olsen

BACCALAUREATE IN SACRED THEOLOGY through the Pontifical Atheneum of Sant'Anselmo

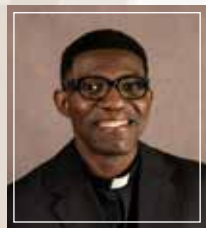
Rev. Anselm Flores, OSB, *Mount Angel Abbey*
Rev. Maximiliano Muñoz, *Archdiocese of Seattle*
Brody Stewart
Rev. Michael Shrum, OSB, *Mount Angel Abbey*
Rev. Anthony Shumway, *Diocese of Salt Lake City*

MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY PRIEST ALUMNI

We give thanks to God and pray for our seven recently ordained priest alumni from Mount Angel Seminary, representing four (arch)dioceses and one religious community. Six are from the class of 2026, and one is from the class of 2025.



FR. DAMIEN-JOSEPH RAPPUHN, OSB
Ordained June 6, 2026
St. James Cathedral
Saint Martin's Abbey



FR. MARTIN NCHEDO UMEATUEGBU
Ordained May 23, 2026
Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi
Archdiocese of Santa Fe



FR. JAIME ZUAZO
Ordained June 19, 2026
Cathedral of the Madeleine
Diocese of Salt Lake City



FR. JOHN PAUL LANGSFELD
Ordained May 23, 2026
Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi
Archdiocese of Santa Fe



FR. JOSÉ LUIS GÓMEZ DÍAZ
Ordained June 19, 2026
Cathedral of the Madeleine
Diocese of Salt Lake City



FR. JOSÉ FRANCISCO OROZCO CÁRDENAS
Ordained May 23, 2026
St. Charles Borromeo Church
Diocese of Fresno



FR. SHAWN RAYMOND DANIEL
Ordained June 20, 2026
St. Mary's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon

The President of the Governorate of the Vatican City State VISITS MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

On February 6, 2026, Sister Raffaella Petrini, FSE, President of the Governorate of the Vatican City State, gave a lecture for Mount Angel Seminary's Pastoral Symposium and dialogued with members of the Seminary community. Sister Petrini's keynote talk, *Complementary Gifts: Collaborative Leadership in the Church*, was part of the Seminary's Archbishop Robert J. Dwyer Lecture Series, an ongoing formation series named for the 5th Archbishop of Portland in Oregon.



Sr. Raffaella Petrini, FSE

Vatican City State. "The fraternal *agape* is an essential part of our activities," said Sister Petrini.

She also described the unique experience of serving as President of the Governorate from the death of Pope Francis to the election of Pope Leo XIV, a time of profound grieving and new graces. "The city was literally still. Everything stopped. It was like an empty world for just a few days," said Sister Petrini, describing the moment of Pope Francis's

passing. The immense amount of work and care involved during the official period of mourning and preparing for the conclave made it "a very prayerful time, a very sacred time," she said.

In the second part of her talk, Sister Petrini outlined five principles for collaborative leadership from her administrative experience: presence, formation, diverse gifts, complexity and service. "As priests and religious, we do need to care about competence, skills, when we go out there," she said. "We are called to work with resources that are not ours." **Sister Petrini highlighted that a servant leader brings out the best in others to serve the common good. "The greater talent of a modern leader in any ecclesial or non-ecclesial context is the capacity to have people work together, to bring the skills together," she said.**

At the conclusion of the symposium, Fr. Jeff Eirvin gave an icon on behalf of Abbot Jeremy to Sister Petrini in appreciation for her visit. Written by Br. Claude Lane, OSB, the icon, "Our Lady of Mount Vernon," is based on a painting of the Virgin Mary reading a book that originally hung in the home of George Washington.

— ETHAN ALANO



Saint Joseph Chapel RENOVATION

Saint Joseph Chapel, Mount Angel Seminary's main chapel, is located beneath the Abbey church. Here, seminarians encounter the Lord daily through the celebration of Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic adoration, spiritual conferences and personal prayer. When the chapel was envisioned, it was to be a place where "prayer would be as natural as breathing" (St. Joseph Magazine, 1953). Seventy-five years later, Saint Joseph Chapel remains the spiritual heart of the Seminary, continuing its mission of forming new generations of priests to faithfully serve a world in need of the richness of Catholic tradition.



LEARN MORE

Below is an interview with Fr. Jeff Eirvin, president-rector of Mount Angel Seminary, and architect William Heyer:

■ Tell us why the Saint Joseph Chapel is being renovated.

Fr. Eirvin: For nearly 75 years, the chapel has been central to priestly formation. Today, its importance is greater than ever. Providing a renovated chapel has long been a priority for the Seminary and monastic community, and the bishops who entrust their seminarians to us have expressed a strong desire for a sacred and fitting space where they can pray, celebrate the Eucharist with reverence, and be formed for their future ministry.

■ How was William Heyer chosen as the architect?

Fr. Eirvin: We interviewed several architects and William Heyer stood out because of his past work on seminary chapels and Benedictine monasteries. He brings not only expertise in Church architecture, but

also a deep love of the Catholic Church and priestly formation. When we interviewed him, he mentioned that he was praying over the liturgical texts of the Mass for Christmas for inspiration for his work. That showed a man whose life and work are deeply affected by the Paschal Mystery.

■ What is the main goal and hope for the renovated chapel?

Fr. Eirvin: The main goal and hope is that it serves as a sacred space in which the liturgy is celebrated with profound devotion and timeless beauty. It is also important that the seminarians find the space inviting and enjoy spending time in personal and liturgical prayer. We are also excited that this space will be able to teach and speak to the seminarians about the mysteries they contemplate, particularly Communion

Ecclesiology that is at the core of our Theological curriculum. The chapel itself should evangelize!

William Heyer: From my perspective, the main goal and hope for the renovated chapel is to deepen the prayer life and priestly preparations for the seminarians at Mount Angel Seminary. The improved and dignified interior design with artwork, symbolism, better lighting, heating, cooling, more dignified materials as well as new liturgical furnishings will be appropriately a setting for this goal.

■ What are some unique features in the renovated chapel?

William Heyer: Unique features include new stained glass representing saints and sacraments, artwork medallions with Old Testament precursors to the sacraments, new mosaics of Saint Joseph and Our Lady of Guadalupe, a new chapel organ and improved Sacristies with beautiful cabinetry.

Fr. Eirvin: Additional unique features of the renovated chapel include natural materials such as a marble altar, custom made wood pews and tile flooring. Previous storage areas will be opened up to increase space and natural light, and an improved archway with columns at the entrance of the sanctuary will focus attention on the celebration of the Eucharist.

■ What is the timeline for the renovation?

Fr. Eirvin: The renovation will begin in August of 2026 and continue for a full year.

■ Why is this so important for the Seminary?

Fr. Eirvin: Spiritual life is the heart of priestly formation. It is through personal and liturgical prayer where the seminarians encounter God's personal love and care for them. A priest's pastoral work flows from this place of intimacy. Seminarians spend hours in the Seminary chapel, and this space lifts their minds and hearts to God in prayer and liturgical action.

■ William, can you discuss how this project compares with others you've worked on? What makes it unique?

William Heyer: We have worked on many small chapel renovations and seminary chapel renovations around the country. What makes this project unique is the depth of meaning instilled in the architectural renovation and new artwork for the benefit of the seminarians. No space we have worked on has taken on such high level development and unification in iconography, materials, identity and spirituality. And all in a crypt chapel!

— DR. AMANDA STAGGENBORG



TRUSTING THE LORD WHO CALLS

Simple Vows OF *Br. Lazarus Sturm, OSB*

I professed simple vows on the Second Sunday of Lent, and before profession Abbot Jeremy encouraged me to pray with the Mass readings for that day. I was particularly drawn to the First Reading, which begins:

The LORD said to Abram: “Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”

God then promises him:

“All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you.”

As a novice I struggled to believe that I could be great or a blessing through a life that seemed so ordinary and unnoticed. Praying with this reading,



I noticed that Abram, too, would be challenged repeatedly to let go of his expectations for the fulfillment of God’s promise.

His subsequent history suggests that letting go was far from easy. When he did manage to do so, it was not by sudden understanding of God’s plan but by trust

in the One who called him. The Christian vocation — of which the monastic vocation is a sign — is found precisely in this surrender, not because God’s plan is fully known but in loving trust of the Lord who calls.

Proclaiming this reading myself at Mass on the day of my profession, I recalled my successes and failures in responding to God’s call. But I knew that by professing simple vows in that same celebration, I was making the final words of the reading my own: *Abram went as the LORD directed him.*

— BR. LAZARUS STURM, OSB

Question Box

ANSWERED BY FR. PIUS X HARDING, OSB

Q: Why do monks wear black?

A: Many monks wear black, but not all of them. Some congregations of Benedictines wear white in honor of Our Lady. There are also communities of monks in tropical regions that wear white due to the very warm climates in which they live. Other monasteries may typically wear black habits, like we do at Mount Angel, but may use black, gray or even denim “work habits” during times of manual labor.

Saint Benedict, in his Holy Rule, didn’t actually designate a color for the monastic habit. He gives his instructions in chapter 55 of the Holy Rule: The Clothing and Footwear of the Brothers. There he states that the clothing of the monks should vary by climate and be made from cloth readily available in the region. Saint Benedict was most concerned that the garments should fit properly. The monastic habit consists of the **tunic** gathered at the waist by a **belt**, a **scapular** and a **cowl** or hood. Because it was very cold in northern regions, Celtic monks had a cowl attached to a full length *cucullam*. Today, our hood is attached to the scapular, which is a type of work apron that hangs from the shoulders (*Latin Scapula*), and the **cuccula** is a multi-pleated choir garment designating the wearer as a monk in solemn perpetual vows. Through centuries of use black has become the color identified with the Benedictine habit. It is a color readily available in most places, wears well in daily use, and brings uniformity to community life within a monastery, and within the larger Benedictine community the world over.



As a good father, Saint Benedict cautions his monks not to complain about the “color or coarseness of all these articles” provided to them in love. The monastic habit descends from the typical clothing of poor working people. Monks are followers of the “poor Christ,” bound in chastity and devoted to prayer. Saint Benedict also reminds his monks to remove their knives from their belts before going to bed – always a good idea (RB 22:5). Chapter 55 closes by quoting the Acts of the Apostles (4:35): “Distribution was made to each one as he had need.” It is an honor to wear the habit of our holy ancestors, and to be a sign in the world today that there are men (and women) in our time who seek to follow Christ with all their hearts.

*If you have a question that you would like to submit,
email communications@mtangel.edu with the phrase “Question Box” in the subject line.*

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WEEKDAYS

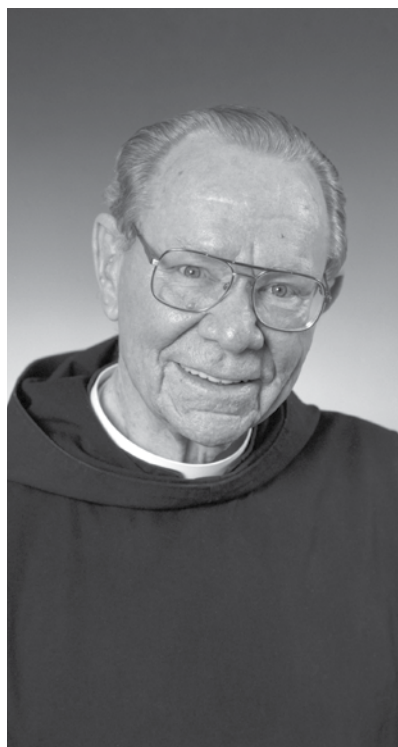
Vigils: 5:25 am
Lauds: 6:35 am
Mass: 8:00 am
Midday Prayer: Noon
Vespers: 5:20 pm
Compline: 7:30 pm

SUNDAYS & SOLEMNITIES

Vigils: 7:30 pm (Saturday)
Lauds: 6:40 am
Mass: 9:00 am
Midday Prayer: Noon
Vespers: 5:20 pm
Compline: 8:05 pm

MOUNTANGELABBAY.ORG/LIVE-STREAM

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



Fr. Bernard Sander, OSB
1918 – 2008

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
Sarah Jordan at 971.343.2728 or
Susan Gallagher at 503.312.5425
plannedgiving@mtangel.edu
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*Please note, when writing your will, please leave bequests and other estate gifts to:
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