“Listen readily to holy reading and devote yourself often to prayer.”

– Rule of St. Benedict
If you want to be good priests, then continue to be good monks.

Benedictines find God within books.

A monk reflects on contemplative reading.

Making music for the Lord.

'The Word becomes flesh' in study of theology.

Pedaling for the Priesthood.

LISTEN . . . The monk, indeed any Christian, needs to be a careful listener. It makes sense, doesn’t it? If it is the monk’s profession to seek God, as St. Benedict would have it, he must in loving obedience open his mind and heart to the God of his seeking, more and more attentive to the desire of his Beloved. Wonderfully, we have a God who speaks — and the Word that he has spoken to the world is no less than Jesus, who in turn, in the Spirit of his Father, has spoken a saving Word to the world, the Gospel of peace.

Now, what else should one do before the God who speaks a Word of love than to listen . . . and respond! The Rule of St. Benedict begins with these words:

Listen carefully, my son, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. This is advice from a father who loves you; welcome it, and faithfully put it into practice.

With these tender opening words of the Prologue, our holy father Benedict begins to lay out the spiritual wisdom that has endured these past 15 centuries as a sure guide to holiness and wholeness for monastics and non-monastics alike! Fortunately for us, Benedict expanded upon his wisdom in the following 73 chapters of the Rule, but in a sense he said it all in those two opening sentences. How wonderfully they capture the spirit of Benedict — and the spirit of any true disciple of his!

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Monks’ Corner

Excerpted from a letter to Abbey monks, written by Br. Stephen Cox, OSB, a former abbot at Mount Angel Abbey

• The annual monastic retreat went off well I think. This year, partly by design, we didn’t have any retreat master save for the Holy Spirit. I think many, perhaps most, would agree that the Holy Spirit did a great job. Many people used the opportunity to pray and read quietly in the presence of the Lord, and Compline at 7:00 closed the day.

• The chapter [all professed monks] met to consider the petition of four of our junior monks. Brothers Gregory Benavidez, Jesus Maria Leija and Andre Love petitioned for solemn vows, and Novice Hoan Tran petitioned to make first vows. For solemn vows, and Novice Hoan Tran petitioned to make first vows. Gregory Benavidez, Jesus Maria Leija and Andre Love petitioned for solemn vows, and Novice Hoan Tran petitioned to make first vows.

• On July 13 we hosted the annual oblate picnic. Sunday dawned cloudy and ominous. By afternoon, lightning flashes and the rumble of thunder were directly overhead. In fact, this oblate retreat was full of surprises. On Saturday evening, just as everyone was coming out of church after Vigils, a loud CR-R-R-R-RA-ACK was heard. Then, right before our eyes, one of the big oak trees fell over right across the main walkway, exactly in the direction it had been listing for years to an ever-greater degree. The tree snapped probably out of sheer exhaustion.

• Three of the junior monks, Brothers Lorenzo, Niels and Louis were away for two weeks at Saint Vincent Archabbot, attending the annual junior monks conference. The conference is hosted by a different monastery each year. Surely part of the educational benefit is the experience of living in another monastery with different customs and lifestyles.

• There have been some noteworthy projects taking place this summer, including reconstruction of the playing field. Over the years gophers have made the playing field their happy home and have busily been making tunnels. It had become so bumpy that just running full tilt was hazardous. Soccer is one of the great sports of the seminary; so improving the field was high on the Seminarians’ wish list.

• Bill Coleman plowed it up, and trenches were dug and drainage pipes buried. The next thing on the agenda is to reseed the field. The team was pretty good last year and ended up with a winning season. Everyone has hopes for this year, so we will be peering out over the field watching anxiously as the new grass grows.

• A new floor has been laid on top of the old one in the Damian Center, but of course, the biggest project at the moment is the infirmary renovation on the second floor of the monastery. Demolition began, and there is a lot of clanking and banging going on throughout the day, but the monastic prayer schedule has not been too seriously disrupted. As promised, some 70 new windows are in the process of being installed. When I first heard that 70 windows were being installed, I naively thought to myself that that should about take care of the whole monastery. Have you ever counted how many windows there are in the monastery? … I can imagine that when the project is completed global warming will be forestalled a bit in northern Marion County. Mount Angel Abbey is no longer contributing most of the heat our boilers generate to the surrounding atmosphere.

• In July, Father Odo hosted a Vocations Retreat, one of about three or four he organizes each year. This time some 20 fellows showed up, ranging in age from 18 to 50 or so. Father Odo said there were some real “keepers” in the group. Several had come early to spend a few days as observers in the monastery and several stayed a few days afterwards for the same purpose. Pray for vocations!

Well, that’s it. Take care and keep us in your prayers, as we do you for.

Music draws a crowd

The Tudor Choir performs in the Abbey Church at the 43rd Annual Abbey Bach Festival. Held in July, the Bach Festival welcomes guests to Vespers, a church recital and picnic supper, and classical music performances. Join us next summer on July 29–31.

We’re online at mountangelabbey.org/bach.
‘If you want to be good priests, then continue to be good monks’

In June, three Mount Angel monks were ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Alexander K. Sample, from the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon. Our blessings and congratulations go to Fr. Andrew Schwencke, OSB, Fr. Teresio Caldwell, OSB, and Fr. Basil Lawrence, OSB.

For a reception following the ceremony, the Samoan community, which claims Fr. Andrew as one of its own, toasted an entire pig in the traditional island manner – underground.

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB, counseled the three men, “Being both a monk and priest is a blend of the contemplative life and the active life. In ministry, a monk can share the fruits of his life of prayer. If you want to be good priests, then continue to be good monks.”

You may meet Fr. Andrew at the Abbey Guest House, where he serves as Assistant Guestmaster, and you can hear Fr. Teresio, the community’s Choirmaster and organist, play at services. Fr. Basil works in the Development Office as an Abbey Relations Officer, focused especially on parish appeals. The new priests also have been assigned to parish ministry.

— Jim Thompson

Benedictines find God within books

More than 700 years ago, an Italian monk sat in a drafty room and painstakingly transcribed a Bible. His hands were often cold as they dipped his quill into the inkwell, his eyes ached from following the lines of miniature print and ornate gilt ornamentation, and his back grew tired from bending over a hard desk. The fragile Bible was read and reread, copied and recopied, and when its leather cover tore, it was carefully stitched back together with a needle and thread.

Centuries later, the monks at Mount Angel Abbey are taking the same care with that same 13th-century Bible, preserving the work of their long-departed brother. The ancient Bible is part of a 225,000-volume collection at Mount Angel Abbey Library that has grown into one of the most significant theological libraries in the Pacific Northwest. It covers the breadth of human knowledge, but specializes in philosophy, theology and the humanities, and includes hundreds of ancient books.

The Benedictine love of learning and libraries can be traced to the sixth century, when St. Benedict himself encountered monks who couldn’t read the psalms or take part in the Divine Office; he set about teaching them to read. But literacy wasn’t his only concern. Before the invention of the printing press, books were scarcer, and so even though transcription was a laborious process, manuscript writing became a common occupation in monasteries.

During the Middle Ages, Benedictine monks nurtured a love of reading, writing and contemplative study, and their monasteries became beacons of learning. As time went on, monasteries established schools for children and accumulated illuminated manuscripts and works of sacred art. While some monastic libraries were small enough to fit in a sacristy cupboard, others held more than a thousand volumes.

That love of learning continues at Mount Angel Abbey. Five years after the first monks arrived in 1882, they followed the example of their motherhouse in Switzerland,
whose school traced its roots to the 12th century, and founded Mount Angel College. Two years later, they founded the Seminary, and they soon established a press and a German-language newspaper that was distributed to readers across the U.S. And the books they had brought from their motherland became the nucleus of a small library.

After their library went up in flames during the 1926 fire on the Hilltop, Abbey monks bought thousands of volumes from a German bookseller who was declaring bankruptcy, and shipped them home to Oregon.

In 1970, a sleek, new modernist-style library, designed by renowned Finnish architect Alvar Aalto and made possible through a significant gift from Howard and Jean Vollum, was dedicated. Students carried thousands of books to the new building from Aquinas Hall. “The students were proud of their new library, and glad to help move everything,” said former Assistant Librarian Fr. Augustine DeNoble, OSB.

“In the Middle Ages, monasteries would lend their books to other monasteries so they could be read and copied,” said Fr. Augustine. “Now digital technology helps us make books available to others. What once took years now takes minutes. Some people think all of our information will go digital, but books will continue to be precious.”

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“Many seminaries and religious houses closed and sold off their collections, and most libraries no longer have these rare books,” said Fr. Augustine. “We bought many of these books, which added valuable titles that had been out of print, for years or for centuries.” Now, staff members regularly track down out-of-print books and conduct research for Catholic and non-Catholic scholars from around the country.

“We are blessed with this library, with the breadth and depth of the collection,” said Fr. Paschal Cheline, OSB. “Benedictines have always valued books and art for their power to uplift the spirit.”

The monks at Mount Angel have created a place where God can be encountered, not only in the Abbey Church and on serene walkways, but also in spiritual retreats, arts and music events, and theological lectures. And they offer an opportunity for visitors to find God within the pages of books that inspire faith and tell the human story – books that include a spiritual depth that goes beyond our feverish, frenetic activities and nurture the contemplative side of our nature.

—in August, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Vollum Library, which is home to 50,000 titles and more than 5,000 volumes published before 1900.
Parish priest named Vice President for Administration

Rev. Stephen Clovis, a priest of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon who has served parishes in Scappoose, Eugene and Corvallis, has been named Vice President for Administration for the Seminary.

Fr. Clovis will bring his energy and passion and the to the classroom, teaching courses in pastoral ministry and Scripture.

“I really believe that Mount Angel is the place where I am called to be,” says Fr. Clovis. “I love coming up the hill each morning knowing I will spend the day with the community here.”

Fr. Clovis grew up in Portland and attended Central Catholic High School, the University of Portland, and Lewis and Clark College. He was a seminarian at the North American College while attending the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, earning a License in Biblical Theology in 1989. In addition to parish ministry, he previously taught at Central Catholic High School and served as an Adjunct Teacher at Mount Angel.

Other new appointments include Br. Ansgar Santogrossi, OSB, who will teach science, Dr. Jerome Farley, who will teach mathematics, Fr. Jeff Eirvin, who will help seminarians hone their preaching skills in his homiletics course, Fr. Peter Arteaga, MSpS, who will serve as a Formation Director while also helping with teaching duties, and Fr. John Boyle, who will teach Canon Law.

New Master of Arts in Philosophy program offered

A new fully accredited graduate program in philosophy will deepen the intellectual formation of students and offer opportunities for philosophical research. The two-year program, offered solely to seminarians in the pre-theology search, will examine the dialogue between faith and reason in a prayerful environment, and students will supplement their philosophical coursework with religious studies. The program is headed by Dr. Andrew Cammings.

Symposium honors the Consecrated Life

Rev. Msgr. Kevin Irwin will conduct a theological symposium on November 24 and 25. Because the Holy Father has asked that 2015 be dedicated to the consecrated life, Msgr. Irwin has chosen to speak on “Benedictine Liturgy, Theology and Life.”

Msgr. Irwin formerly served as Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America (CUA), where he continues to teach. His most recent book, What We Have Done, What We Have Failed To Do: Assessing the Liturgical Reforms of Vatican II, won an award from the Catholic Press Association. Msgr. Irwin now serves as an associate editor of Ecclesia Oratio, the journal on the study of the liturgy published at Sant’Anselmo in Rome, where he will be a visiting scholar in the spring.

Seminary welcomes 34 new students

Mount Angel Seminary came alive as new and returning students arrived for orientation, some from as far away as Argentina, Alaska and Hawaii. The youngest is 18 and the oldest is 58. Five seminarians are enrolled in the Seminary’s new Master of Arts in Philosophy program.

The Most Rev. Smith ’01, recently ordained an Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, was the principal celebrant of the Mass of the Holy Spirit on August 25. In his homily, he thanked the Seminary for the excellent formation and education he received as a student here and – noting how well it prepared him for his priestly life and ministry – encouraged the seminarians to take full advantage of everything available to them during their seminary years.

Later in the morning, Professor Mark Woolman, head of the Philosophy Department, offered the inaugural address on “Taking Humor Seriously,” proposing that good humor can open us to the transcendent, enable us to be more compassionate, and provide a point of re-adjustment of our view of the world.

A reception followed the Mass, allowing students to congratulate Bishop Smith, who was also a well-loved teacher at Mount Angel.

Making music for the Lord

A diverse group of Mount Angel seminarians has joined talents to spread the good Word, performing at Seminary and community events since 2012. Voces Fidei features five seminarians who share their love of music – and God – through a cappella singing.

Frankie Villanueva, from the Diocese of Honolulu, established the group, which includes Stephen Cieslak and John Hesla of the Archdiocese of Portland, Phillip Shifflet of the Diocese of Orange, and Greg Snyder from the Archdiocese of Seattle. They all got their start in choirs and parish ministries, and Villanueva was a former member of the Hawai’ian band, the Fab 4.

“Singing and glorifying God with voice is a unique and loving form of prayer,” says Cieslak. “This experience will carry over into our formal ministry, drawing people closer to him who loves us.”

Visiting scholar helps inaugurate new Master of Arts in Philosophy

A visiting philosopher helped inaugurate the Seminary’s new Master of Arts in Philosophy program in September, giving addresses to students and professors. In “Witness and Being Truthful,” Dr. William Desmond addressed the importance of being truthful in both a philosophical and religious sense. He also spoke to philosophy students about “Soul Music and Soul-Less Selving.”

Dr. Desmond serves as professor of philosophy at the Higher Institute of Philosophy at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. He has written on ontology, metaphysics, ethics and religion, and is past-President of the American Catholic Philosophical Association.
The Word becomes living Word.

By Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB

When students of Mount Angel Seminary enter their classroom building, they can read in large letters etched over the portal the words “Verbum caro factum est” – the Word was made flesh – a phrase taken from the opening chapter of John’s Gospel. They enter a building we call “Annunciation” and see immediately a large mosaic depicting the Angel Gabriel’s Annunciation to Mary – the moment when the Eternal Word first took flesh. These words and this image describe the process of theology study within this building and on this Hilltop. The Word is meant to take flesh in the minds and hearts of the students. Something is conceived there and grows slowly, just as does the child in Mary’s womb.

For more than 20 years now, the graduate theology faculty has worked diligently to create a program of study that integrates the dozens of classes of the four-year curriculum. Academic theology today is characterized by specialization into different fields, and without a synthesizing vision that holds the specializations together in a single whole, students can find themselves faced with a bewildering range of topics, all called “theology.”

A theological curriculum based on communion ecclesiology begins by showing how all the master themes of the Catholic theological tradition have their roots in the eucharistic celebration. Students are shown how the master themes unfold from the Eucharist into specific disciplines, all under the force and direction of faith seeking understanding.

The first year lays a crucial foundation. If students begin to see a variety of theological subjects – Scripture, the emergence of doctrinal questions, moral dilemmas, saints growing in holiness – they are likewise learning methodically to relate these to the Church celebrating Eucharist. Here, the Scriptures become living Word. Here, doctrine is an expression of the deepest sense of that Word. Here, the Word becomes sacrament, becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.

In the second year the curriculum moves to understanding the nature of the human person, created in the image and likeness of divine communion, with all the moral and spiritual implications of this. Students then explore Christology and Trinity. Jesus Christ reveals the trinitarian communion as well as the divine intention of bringing us into that communion. Christ brings humanity to fulfillment through sharing in the divine life.

In the third year students move to a synthesis of the entire theological exploration in courses called Eucharistic Ecclesiology – that is, a study of the Eucharist in such a way as to see that its very celebration brings the Church into being, and that the Church exists to celebrate the Eucharist continually and to call more and more people into its communion.

In the fourth year the pastoral implications of this vision are explored. Those students destined for ordination as priests see now in a forceful way that the celebration of the Eucharist will be the center of their priestly ministry. They will celebrate it well and with understanding, nourishing their people by preaching the Word and sound doctrine, feeding them with the Word become flesh in the Eucharist.

From this, all the rest of life in the Church flows, and so they will lead their people in an evangelizing mission in our troubled world, in works of charity, in upright living, in facing trials and difficulties, in celebrating life’s joys. The community that lives this way will be sustained in this life of communion in the communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

At Mount Angel, the Word becomes flesh in Annunciation.
Generosity
News for Benefactors and Volunteers

Hilltop blessed by talents of local couple

“I saw my right hand go up.” That’s how Marge Doleac described the beginning of her extensive volunteer activity at Mount Angel Abbey. “I had prayed for two years for something meaningful to do. It was by just getting started that my prayer was answered,” said Marge, who was recruited as a volunteer by monks at a gathering of Abbey friends. She soon received a formal invitation from Abbot Nathan Zodrow, OSB, to serve as coordinator of volunteer services.

Dr. Phil and Marge Doleac (at right) first came to the Hilltop in 1993, bringing their children to a summer conference. They came to love the Abbey, and in 2000 Marge became an Oblate of St. Benedict. Marge would go on to volunteer countless hours for many events, usually taking on an invaluable leadership role. She has stepped in as Secretary to the Abbot and volunteered for two years as Administrative Assistant to the President-Rector of the Seminary, easily a full-time position. With just as much enthusiasm, she saw the need for improvements in the grounds, enlisted the help of others, and helped create a beautiful garden outside the Guest House. Another of Marge’s projects was caring for the Daily Office books used by visitors, under the watchful eye of Fr. Augustine DeNoble, OSB.

For the past 10 years, Phil Doleac, an orthodontist, along with a colleague, Dr. Doug Ainslie, has provided his professional care to monks and seminarians, entirely free of charge. “They come from all over the world, and some have never had access to orthodontic services,” he said. The outcome often includes not only a healthy smile, but a growth in self-confidence.

The Doleacs’ gifts of time, funds and resources have abundantly blessed the Abbey, but Marge affirms, “We get so much in return. One has to jump in and experience it. Raising my hand did it.”

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The Doleacs have come to regard the Abbey as their spiritual home. Marge said, “When I turn onto Abbey Drive, the world falls away, and I enter into the ancient tradition of St. Benedict.”

Jim Thompson

All of us stand on the foundations of those who have invested in our lives, whether they be family, friends or teachers. Mount Angel is a place where lives can be formed and faith in God deepened.”

— Bishop Peter Smith ’01, JCL, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon.

Fellowship
News for Alumni and friends

Alumni pedal 200 miles for the priesthood

In July, Mount Angel alumna Keefe Piper and graduates Jonathan Cheever ’13 and the Very Rev. Gary Zender ’80 put some sweat equity into their love of the Lord, biking more than 200 miles in Washington to promote vocations to the priesthood.

They joined Fr. Bryan Dolejsi, Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Seattle, for the annual “Pedaling the Priesthood” ride. The foursome pedalled up challenging hills, along the Columbia River, past Mount Hood, and through rural countryside in southwestern Washington State. Along the way, they visited local parishes, where they celebrated Mass and shared their vocation stories.

Seminarians hail from far-flung places

This year Mount Angel is once again blessed to have seminarians from numerous dioceses and archdioceses, and religious communities from the West and beyond. The group includes four from Baker, seven from Boise, nine from Fresno, four from Helena, five from Honolulu, 22 from Portland, three from Sacramento, two from San Diego, six from San Francisco, six from Salt Lake City, two from Samoan Pago Pago, six from San Diego, two from Santa Fe, 13 from Seattle, four from Tucson, three from Yakima, and one from Hajdudorog, Hungary. Twenty-six non-seminarian students are also enrolled in Mount Angel’s classes and programs.

May God bless them! Seventeen newly ordained priest-alumni from Mount Angel have been called to serve parishes in California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington.

Find friends and information at new Alumni website

Visit your new alumni website! You can find news and updates by going to the home page at www.mountangelabbey.org and clicking on “Alumni.” In the news and information section, you’ll find “Alumni on the Move,” which lists the 2014 priest assignments for Oregon, Washington, California and New Mexico. There is even a link to a transcript request form if you happen to need one.

We would love to fill the pages with your pictures and stories! Please send updates to Jeanne Holbon at jeanne.holbon@mtangel.edu, 503-845-3057 or 800-845-8272.

We look forward to hearing from you!

— Jeanne Holbon, Alumni Relations Coordinator
Celebrate with us!

Join us in celebrating the 125th anniversary of Mount Angel Seminary at the Seminary Benefit Dinner in Portland on November 2, 2014, or the Seminary Benefit Dinner in Eugene on March 15, 2015. The Most Rev. Carlo Maria Viganó, the Papal Nuncio to the United States, will be the guest of honor at the Portland event.

For information, call 503-845-3064 or 800-845-8272.

Visit the new Abbey website!
The new and improved Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary website went live in August. With a few clicks on a keyboard and a huge sigh of relief on the Hilltop, the new website, home to more than 200 pages of information, was launched.

Be sure to check out the “Visit Us” pages, which help guests plan ahead. Visitors can enjoy quiet time in the Abbey Church, join the monks for prayer, stay at the Guest House, check out the museum and library, or enjoy an espresso in the Bookstore and Coffeehouse. We hope your visit to our beautiful Hilltop, whether virtual or in person, will be a source of peace and blessing.

www.mountangelabbey.org