

MOUNT ANGEL | Letter

FALL 2022



"Teach me your way, O Lord."

– PSALM 86:11



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Contributors to this issue include Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, Br. La Vang Nguyen, Fr. Michael Shrum, Br. Ambrose Stewart, and Ethan Alano

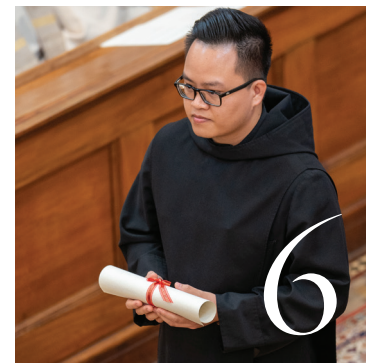
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A Chaplain
for All



God Has a
Plan for Me



Welcoming a New
Academic Year

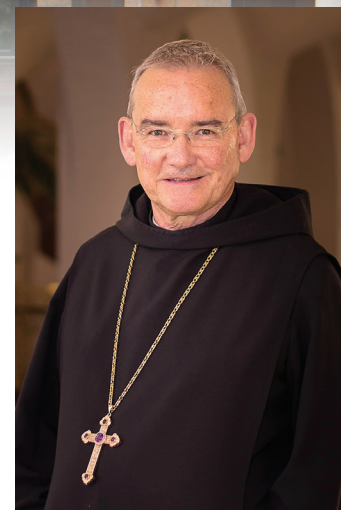


Alumnus
Named Bishop

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DEAR FRIENDS,

In the late summer and fall, we monks often celebrate new beginnings. We have brothers making first or final vows, and men return to the seminary to continue their path to priestly ordination. These occasions are about beginning new chapters in life, but they also mark the culmination of our efforts to correspond to grace through the ups and downs of life. In this issue of *Mount Angel Letter*, we share a few of these moments with you.

One recent celebration was the elevation of our daughter house, Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, in Cuernavaca, Mexico, to that of an abbey. After nearly 60 years as a priory, on the feast of the Archangels, September 29, the monks in Cuernavaca elected Fr. Hildebrando Castro, OSB, as their first abbot. This event is a cause of great celebration for us Benedictines as well as the entire Church in Mexico.

Here at Mount Angel, in early September Br. La Vang Nguyen professed his solemn vows, and Fr. Michael Shrum and Br. Ambrose Stewart made their first vows. On September 25, we celebrated the jubilees of the monastic profession of Abbot Peter Eberle (60 years), Br. James Bartos (60 years) and Br. Simon Hepner (50 years). Their combined 170 years of faithful commitment represent all who have made Mount Angel a vibrant community, radiating the rich ways of Benedictine spirituality to the Church and world.

As we mail this newsletter, our seminarians – gathered at Mount Angel Seminary from across the western states – are well into the fall semester. Each day, they begin anew to respond to the grace of God as he invites them to discern a call to priestly ordination.

The work of responding to grace doesn't end, but the Lord generously gives us opportunities to celebrate new beginnings along the way.

In Christ,

+ *Jeremy Driscoll, OSB*

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





From left, front, Abbot Peter Eberle, Deacon Br. James Bartos, and Br. Simon Hepner receive a blessing from Abbot Jeremy during their Jubilee Mass in the Abbey church.

WHAT'S IN A floor?

Virtually everything a Benedictine monk does in the Abbey church has a corresponding ritual in the monastery refectory. In both places, monks break bread, listen to the Scriptures, and chant prayers to God. This correspondence extends to significant milestones in a monk's formation. A monk kneels before his abbot in the church when he begins the novitiate or professes simple or solemn vows. Shortly after all of the solemnly professed monks have voted to affirm a monk's progress in his monastic vocation, he kneels on the refectory floor to express his gratitude to his brethren.

The connection is further demonstrated every evening as the monastic community kneels upon the refectory floor to pray the Litany of Saint Joseph for vocations. The monastic refectory may not be as visible as the Abbey church, but it is no less significant as a sign of our communion in Christ.

In April 2021, we appealed to our friends and benefactors to assist us in replacing the broken and warped tiles on the refectory floor at Mount Angel. We praise God and offer prayers of gratitude for all who responded with generosity and made the project possible.

Deo Gratias!



During Mass in the Abbey church, September 25, three monks of Mount Angel celebrated their jubilees of monastic profession. Abbot Peter Eberle, OSB, and Br. James Bartos, OSB, commemorated 60 years. Br. Simon Hepner, OSB, observed 50 years.

After the homily, Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, prayed a blessing over them for their continued perseverance. Each then read his profession document anew and laid it on the altar. Standing with arms outstretched, they sang the *Suscipe*, as they had done during their solemn professions many decades ago.

Benedictine Brewery celebrates 4TH ANNIVERSARY



On Sunday, August 21, the Benedictine Brewery and taproom hosted a special celebration to commemorate its first four years of being open to the public. Fr. Martin Grassel, OSB, general manager of the brewery and head brewer, opened the gathering by welcoming all present and invoking God's blessing upon everyone.

The celebration included several competitive games of cornhole and lawn Jenga with monks, seminarians, and taproom visitors. Br. Charles Gonzalez, OSB, served as DJ for the event, playing crowd favorites on the monastery's vintage record player. Many guests were first-time visitors to the brewery, unaware of the day's significance but happy to join in the celebration.

We invite you to visit the Benedictine Brewery and enjoy our monk-brewed beer, food, and fellowship, nourishing to both body and spirit.

Taste & believe!





“As we progress in this way
of life and in faith, we
shall run on the path of
God’s commandments, our
hearts overflowing with the
inexpressible delight of love.”

— THE HOLY RULE OF ST. BENEDICT



A chaplain FOR ALL

“You’re not just the Catholic chaplain; you’re the chaplain for everybody assigned to you,” says Fr. Basil Lawrence, OSB, a monk of Mount Angel currently serving as a Navy chaplain. In spring 2022, Fr. Basil served his second deployment in support of operations in Europe, where the need for a Catholic priest chaplain was great. One ship on which he celebrated the sacraments had not had a priest on board for five years.

While Fr. Basil serves the sacramental and spiritual needs of Catholics in the Navy, much of his time consists of caring for and counseling military members of different faiths or no faith. Given that many service members are young, Fr. Basil helps them navigate the challenges of being away from home, which he sees as an evangelical opportunity.

“They may not be Catholic or even believe in God, but they will always appreciate and remember later in their lives that it was the Catholic priest who took care of them,” he reflects.

In spring 2023, Fr. Basil’s next duty station will likely be on an aircraft carrier in San Diego before his next deployment overseas. While he has become accustomed to moving and change, he appreciates returning to the stability of monastic life at Mount Angel about once a year to experience beautiful liturgy, the chanted Divine Office, and to spend time with his brother monks.



Please rejoice with us as we welcome Br. Andrew Brand into his year of novitiate at Mount Angel Abbey!

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



Daughter house becomes an abbey

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS ABBEY in Cuernavaca, Mexico, founded in 1965 as a daughter house of Mount Angel Abbey, was elevated to the status of an abbey on September 29, the Feast of the Archangels. After the celebration of Mass, the monastic chapter gathered with Abbot Vincent Bataille, OSB, the President of the Swiss-American Congregation, for its first abbatial election. The monastic chapter elected Abbot Hildebrando Castro, OSB, as their first abbot.

Becoming an abbey was a careful process of preparation and discernment. Fr. Konrad Schaefer, OSB, prior of the monastery since 1995, with a brief intermission from 2015 to 2017, submitted the proposal to the community for consideration in 2019. “I did this because I had to put it on the horizon of people’s minds that we’re not going to be

a priory forever,” explains Fr. Konrad. In November 2021, the monks had a canonical visitation from members of the Swiss-American Congregation, who told them, “You’ll know when you’re ready.” In May 2022, the monks of Our Lady of the Angels voted in favor of becoming an abbey. At the beginning of August, the Swiss-American Congregation approved their request.

Fr. Konrad thinks that, for the Church in Mexico, Our Lady of the Angels’ new status as an abbey “is a statement that the Benedictines are coming of age.” Among the 28 professed monks in the community, only four, including Fr. Konrad, are above the age of 47. “The investment that will be made in the community in the next stage of our identity,” he says, “will be forming leaders more consciously.”

— ETHAN ALANO

Top photo: The Benedictine community of Our Lady of the Angels Abbey in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Front row, center, wearing his pectoral cross is newly elected Abbot Hildebrando Castro, OSB, standing next to Abbot Vincent Bataille, OSB.



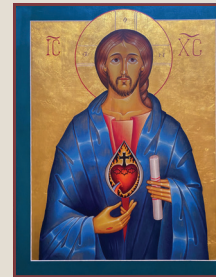
God has a perfect plan for me



God creates beauty in our lives

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us... (Jn 1:14)

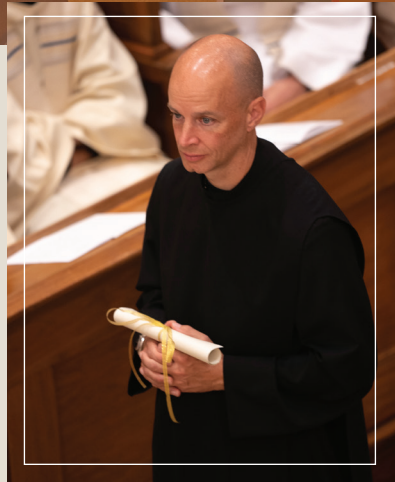
In my second year at Mount Angel Seminary, in the fall of 2002, I met with my spiritual director, Fr. James Geoghegan, OCD. I shared with him how the beauty of the art and architecture of the Italian peninsula had influenced my conversion and vocation. He recommended, rather, he insisted that I sign up for classes in iconography with Br. Claude Lane, OSB. I had never tried to paint or even thought I had the ability to do so. God surprised me then and continues to do so now.



Twenty years later and I have taken my simple vows with the community of Mount Angel, promising to stay here and grow in my monastic vocation. Again, I would never have imagined that this would be part of God's plan for my life.

There is a point when the image is finished. It takes on the form that it was meant to have, even though flawed, through my hand. It is truly a blessing to participate in the creation of beauty with the help of God. And, so it is in our lives. God continues to “write” the story and invites us to follow him on the way. He paints something beautiful and only he knows when he has finished.

– FR. MICHAEL SHRUM, OSB



When I first came to Mount Angel Abbey for a discernment retreat in October 2017, I received a bracelet with a scripture quote: “For I know the plans I have for you, declared the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). I hoped this plan would be better than what I had planned for myself, to be a medical doctor. This plan to seriously discern a religious vocation, I thought, had better not be a waste of time.

Now that I am a solemnly professed monk of Mount Angel Abbey, I realize there is no plan more perfect than what God has prepared for me. Unworthy though I am, God draws me closer to himself out of his merciful love. He gives me a new life and identity.

The picture above was taken at a vocation fair at my parish in Vietnam when I was about ten years old. I am with my sister, who is now happily married.

I still remember how excited I was to put on that little Benedictine habit. I remember praying to God that I would be his priest when I grew up. (I did not yet know the difference between priests and monks.) Twenty years later, God has fulfilled my desire by allowing me to “dwell in his house all the days of my life” (Psalm 27:4).

In his homily at my solemn profession, Abbot Jeremy reminded us that “God loves a cheerful giver.” In religious life, I thought I would lose everything, my family, mother, father, and sisters (cf. Matthew 19:29). Instead, I gained the “treasure hidden in the field” of monastic life. I have found another family with my brothers at Mount Angel, who look past my flaws and support me with unconditional love in my journey as a monk.

With all my heart, I now sing with Our Lady of La Vang and all the angels and saints: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord” (Luke 1:46) for the rest of my life.

– BR. LA VANG NGUYEN, OSB

My life proclaims the works of the Lord

A triptych within a 15th-century *Biblia pauperum* (an illustrated “Bible of the poor”) depicts three scriptural scenes: Joseph being lowered into a well, Jesus being laid in the tomb, and Jonah being thrown into the sea. From the central panel, the mystery of Christ's life-giving death ripples outward, reverberating in the lives of both Joseph and Jonah.

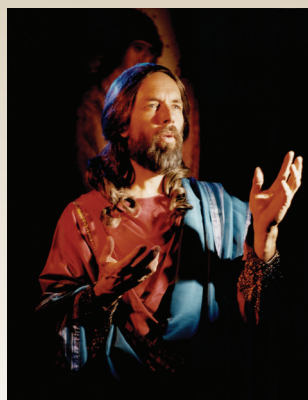


As I contemplate this triptych, I imagine my monastic vocation as a panel in the series. I am surrounded by the crowd of friends and formators who encouraged my radical desire to seek Christ in the monastery in lieu of my imminent ordination to the diaconate (and later priesthood) in my home diocese. I am leaning into the yawning maw of an industrial washing machine, my hands steeped in prayer, loading it with the monastery's laundry. From my mouth snakes an unrolled scroll, upon which is printed the text we chant at every Mass of solemn profession: “I have died, and my life is hidden with Christ in God. I shall not die but live, and proclaim the works of the Lord” (cf. Colossians 3:3; Psalm 118:17).

In the spirit of Joseph and Jonah, I have embraced “death” and “burial” in the monastery so that I too can become a more vivid image of him “who has loved me and given himself up for me,” Christ Jesus my Lord (Galatians 2:20).

– BR. AMBROSE STEWART, OSB





HOLY DRAMA: *Leonardo Defilippis*

“We consider Mount Angel as our spiritual home, the origin of what we do,” says Leonardo Defilippis, founder of Saint Luke Productions. A Catholic live production organization, Saint Luke Productions began in 1980 with the encouragement and support of monks at Mount Angel Abbey.

Trained as a Shakespearean actor, Defilippis first visited Mount Angel in 1979 and befriended the late Fr. Bernard Sander, OSB, and then Br. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB. Recognizing his talent, Fr. Bernard encouraged Defilippis to perform a one-man dramatization of the Gospel of Luke for a family conference held at the Abbey in October 1980. Receiving an enthusiastic response, the production was the launch of Saint Luke Productions, with Defilippis performing it forty times in the next two months.



In the meantime, Defilippis spent time in prayer and discernment, considering whether or not God was inviting him to be a Benedictine monk. He ultimately embraced married life with his wife, Patti, to whom he proposed in the Mount Angel guesthouse in 1982. Their relationship with Mount Angel continued to be strong, and that same year, Defilippis and Patti organized the first retreat designed for artists at the Abbey’s guesthouse.

Defilippis says he admires the Benedictine tradition for having “cherished and preserved works of art through the centuries.” The monks of Mount Angel, he continues, “were able to inspire us to do something that was not being done in the Church at the time.” In fact, the genesis of Saint Luke Productions is a direct consequence of Mount Angel Abbey’s support of art and artists.

In 1990, Saint Luke Productions became a nonprofit organization with first Fr. Bernard and then Fr. Jeremy serving as members of the board, a role Abbot Jeremy continues to fill to this day.

– ETHAN ALANO

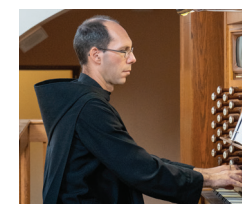


Sharing the rich ways of Mount Angel

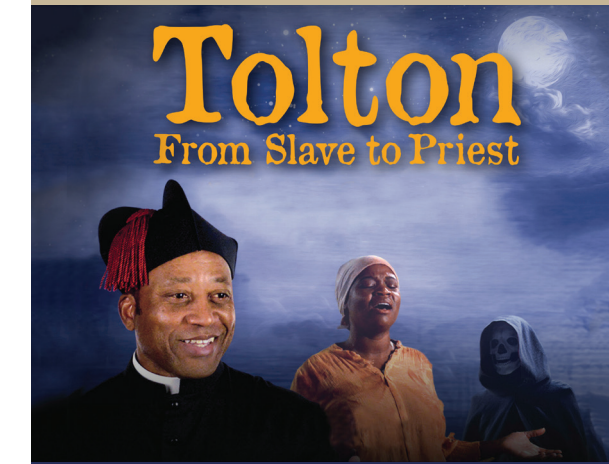
A recent initialism is fast becoming familiar to the Hilltop community. The recently launched Mount Angel Institute (MAI) at Mount Angel Abbey is entrusted with the mission, “To share the rich ways of Mount Angel’s Benedictine monastic life with Church and World.”

Under the direction of Abbot Peter Eberle, OSB, the MAI fulfills its mission in several ways. Primarily, it coordinates the ways Mount Angel shares the richness of the Benedictine life through the seminary, guesthouse, library, bookstore, Benedictine Brewery and taproom, St. Mary’s parish in Mt. Angel, as well as through the witness and example of close to 600 oblates of Mount Angel Abbey.

The MAI also initiates efforts to bring events to the Hilltop. For example, the MAI was instrumental in bringing Saint Luke Productions’ live stage play, *Tolton*, to Mount Angel for a public performance in November. (See story at right.)



You can find more information on past and future events coordinated by MAI here:



On November 21, Saint Luke Productions will present the multimedia live production, *Tolton: From Slave to Priest*, in the Damian Center at Mount Angel Abbey. Actor Jim Coleman portrays the title character, Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, the first Black Catholic priest in the United States.

The performance outlines Fr. Tolton’s life, from his family’s escape from slavery in Missouri in 1862, to the racism he experienced while seeking priestly ordination, to his untimely death in 1897 after laboring in the Lord’s vineyard amid continued prejudice. In a society that still wrestles with race relations, Leonardo Defilippis is convinced that Fr. Tolton’s life illustrates that “the greatest answer to healing is that holiness, that wholeness, [that] brings about a true divine mercy.”

Find more information about the production of *Tolton: From Slave to Priest* here:





Welcoming a new academic year *at MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY*

In the Inaugural Address at the opening of the 2022-23 academic year August 22 at Mount Angel Seminary, Dr. Joseph T. Papa, associate professor of philosophy at the seminary, titled his talk, “Christian Humanism: An Oxymoron?” Drawing on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, Dr. Papa emphasized that “everything human, the whole range and scope of human activity, falls under the concern [and] the intense interest of the Son of God.” He affirmed that “the priest is called to appreciate, and in some way, to enter into this engagement. A robust, humanistic development will allow him to do so.”

The inaugural address followed the Mass of the Holy Spirit, celebrated in the Abbey church, and was attended by seminarians and students, faculty, staff, and the monastic community of Mount Angel. It seemed a fitting

start to a new year of men studying to be the future priests of the western dioceses of the U.S., celebrating the joys, achievements, sorrows, and challenges of life with all to whom they are called to minister.

Abbot Jeremy, chancellor of Mount Angel Seminary, served as the principal celebrant and homilist for the Mass. Reflecting on Jesus’ gift of the Holy Spirit, Abbot Jeremy preached that “when [Jesus] puts his Body and Blood into our bodies and blood, he puts Spirit into us so that we may go and announce the Gospel by our lives.”

2022-23 ENROLLMENT

- 122 Total enrollment at Mount Angel Seminary
- 83 Seminarians, from
 - 16 Dioceses
 - 6 Religious communities
- 39 Non-seminarians include
 - 18 Doctor of Ministry
 - 21 Students of Theology



Deacon Caleb Cunningham
 Diocese of Baker

I want to be a priest of prayer, a priest who gets to know people well, so that I am able to be the bridge that brings them to communion with God.



David Hoang
 Diocese of Orange

At Mount Angel Seminary, even though I am studying for diocesan priesthood, being able to interact with the monks has been a blessing.



Anthony Shumway
 Diocese of Salt Lake City

I want [to become a priest] who is able to see Christ in everyone I meet. This means more than just being nice to everyone. It means being willing to give of myself completely for their needs.



MOUNT ANGEL ALUMNUS *ordained first native Samoan bishop*



On August 4, 2022, the Holy See Press Office announced the appointment of Fr. Kolio Etuale as coadjutor bishop for the Diocese of Samoa-Pago Pago. On November 4, 2022, Bishop Etuale was the first native Samoan to be ordained a bishop in Fatu-o-Aiga Cathedral in Tafuna, American Samoa. As coadjutor bishop, he will assist the diocese's current bishop, Peter H. Brown, CSSR, and will succeed him as ordinary of the diocese upon Bishop Brown's retirement.

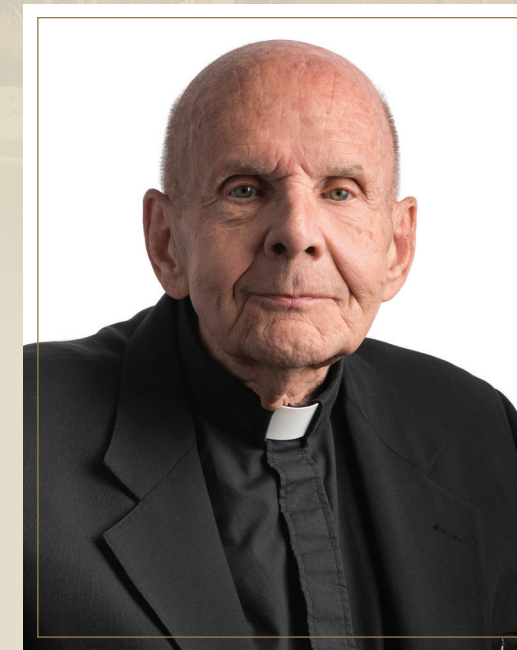
Born in 1973 in Lotofaga, Samoa, Bishop Etuale studied philosophy and theology at Mount Angel Seminary and was ordained a deacon in the Abbey church. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Samoa-Pago Pago in March 2003. For the past three

years, Bishop Etuale has been enrolled in Mount Angel Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program, fitting in the summer course schedule amid his many responsibilities in his diocese. His assignment since 2021 has been as diocesan chancellor and rector of Fatu-o-Aiga Cathedral.

Fr. Teresio Caldwell, OSB, and Fr. Andrew Schwenke, OSB, attended Bishop Etuale's episcopal ordination to represent Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary. Fr. Andrew first met Bishop Etuale when he was a seminarian at Mount Angel, and they bonded over their shared Samoan heritage. "He's a very humble priest, always down to earth with people," says Fr. Andrew.

— ETHAN ALANO

"For me, Mount Angel was a gift from the day I arrived," recalls Msgr. Terrence Fitzgerald '62, a Mount Angel Seminary alumnus and former president-rector. On May 12, 2022, Msgr. Fitzgerald celebrated 60 years as a priest for the Diocese of Salt Lake City, where, among other responsibilities, he has served as a pastor, superintendent of schools, diocesan administrator, and vicar general.



ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

Msgr. Terrence Fitzgerald

Msgr. Fitzgerald experienced the call to priesthood early in life, noting that "from the time I went to Mass as a kid, I always wanted to be a priest." After high school, he attended Mount Angel Seminary for eight years, studying philosophy and theology. At that time, all his teachers were Mount Angel priest-monks, whom he greatly admired. "I learned the value of religious life, the power of community, and the value of a routine, which I've tried to follow in my life," shares Msgr. Fitzgerald. The daily chanting

of the Divine Office in the Abbey church inspired him to maintain a consistent prayer schedule throughout his life as a diocesan priest.

In 1984, Msgr. Fitzgerald returned to Mount Angel Seminary to serve as its president-rector, a position he held for six years. When he began his tenure, the presence and activity of monks in the seminary had dwindled from his seminary days. Recalling what a blessing it was to have monks as teachers, one

of Msgr. Fitzgerald's goals, which he achieved, was bringing "the presence of the Benedictines back into the life of the seminary."

Reflecting on his many decades of priestly service, Msgr. Fitzgerald is thankful for having seen "a lot of good things happen through the work I've been involved in." He humbly recognizes that "what we're harvesting today was planted yesterday by somebody else."

— ETHAN ALANO





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CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD

FALL 2022 SERIES

Nature Imagery in the Psalms

Please join Br. Thomas Buttrick, OSB, for the fall Christian in the World series. The series of four talks are historical, literary and theological explorations of the profound and striking imagery of the natural world found in this classic book of prayers. Through appreciating this spiritual poetry together, we can become better lovers of God.

*For as the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return there until
they have watered the earth,
...so shall my word be that goes
out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty...*

The final two talks in this series are Nov. 12 and Dec. 10, at Mount Angel. The entire series will be available as audio recordings on the Abbey's website and YouTube channel. For information, visit mountangelabbey.org/citw.

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

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

WEEKDAYS

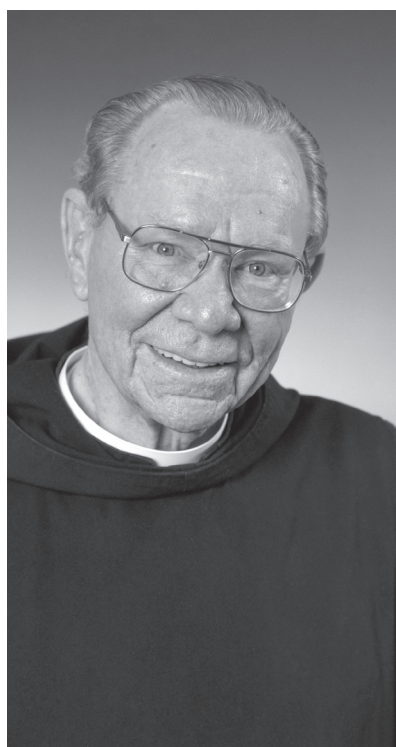
Vigils: 5:25 am
Lauds: 6:35 am
Holy Eucharist: 8:00 am
Midday Prayer: Noon
Vespers: 5:20 pm
Compline: 7:30 pm

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](http://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)

Fr. Bernard Sander, OSB
1918 – 2008