

Summer 2014

MOUNT *Angel Letter*



Mount Angel Seminary celebrates 125 years as a
SCHOOL OF THE LORD'S SERVICE



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COVER: Mount Angel faculty and seminarians, 1889

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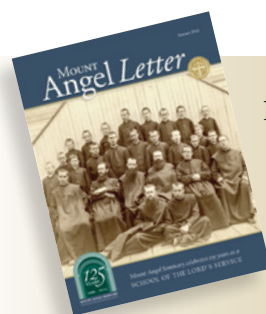
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Editor: Nadene LeCheminant

MOUNT ANGEL LETTER



Class of 1900

Dear Friends



As I begin this letter I feel a touch of nostalgia, having just journeyed down “memory lane” in the pages of the 1964 booklet that was published for the 75th anniversary of Mount Angel Seminary. Most of the personalities whose pictures fill the pages of that booklet are now long gone to their reward, but they are the ones whom generations of priests have remembered as their teachers, their personal mentors, their spiritual guides and their inspiration as they made their journey to priesthood at Mount Angel Seminary. The ordination class of that jubilee year of 1964 is also shown in the booklet, and in the photograph of that year’s eleven ordinands I happily find myself included! Yes, that was 50 years ago, and as Fr. Paschal and I made plans for the celebration of our golden jubilee of ordination in May, Mount Angel Seminary was celebrating its jubilee too – now for its

125 years as a school of the Lord’s service!

These 125 years reach back to April 4 of 1889 when William H. Gross, the Archbishop of Oregon City, made a memorable announcement:

With a heart filled with gratitude, we announce the establishment of an institution for the severe training requisite for the priesthood. With deepest respect we most cordially invite their Lordships, the Bishops of the Pacific slopes, also to send to Mt. Angel Seminary young aspirants to the honors of the altar. ... Let us all pray that Mt. Angel may indeed be worthy of its name, and from its beautiful summit send forth angels in flesh and blood to promote, as not even angels in heaven can do, glory of God on earth. May that sacred Mother, who merited to give to the world Him in whom all the glory, strength and grace of the priesthood have their source, earnestly bless and pray for Mt. Angel Seminary.

And so it has been for 125 years! In this century and a quarter, hundreds of men have spent time in this school of the Lord’s service, deeply encountering and learning of the Lord Jesus, who called them to share in his mission of reconciliation, and they have gone down from this holy mountain readied for priestly ministry on the plain. Fired with zeal to be channels of God’s abundant mercy and to proclaim his saving Gospel, they have walked among God’s people in the Name and in the Spirit of Jesus the Priest and Lord of the harvest! For these 125 years of grace and blessing in service of the Church, Mount Angel is profoundly grateful to our great God and Father and to his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB
Mount Angel Abbey

Community

NEWS ABOUT MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS ELECTS NEW PRIOR

In April, the Abbey's mission in Cuernavaca, Mexico, elected one of its own Mexican monks as prior, Fr. Evagrio Pónico López Álvarez, OSB. The subprior, Br. Hildebrando Castro, OSB, will assist Fr. Evagrio in leading Our Lady of the Angels through a three-year transition toward independence. Fr. Konrad Schaefer, OSB, who has served as prior for 20 years, will remain in Mexico and continue to serve as a link between Mount Angel and the priory.

"Twenty years ago, in his characteristic spirit of obedience and generosity, Fr. Konrad Schaefer, OSB, agreed to interrupt his experience at Mount Angel Abbey in order to serve the Cuernavaca community with his many talents," said Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB. "His wise leadership as prior has brought the community to the present significant point in its history. Now, I believe the community will continue to thrive under the pastoral leadership of Prior Evagrio and Subprior Hildebrando."



The monks of Our Lady of the Angels in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Prior Evagrio Pónico López Álvarez, back row, second from left. Subprior Hildebrando Castro, middle row, second from left. Fr. Konrad Schaefer, back row, second from right.

The primary work at Cuernavaca is Benedictine hospitality. The monks provide rest and retreats to missionary groups who work with the poorest of the poor, to diocesan and religious priests, to nuns and religious, and to lay persons who are seeking God. They welcome and offer food and clothing to the needy people who continually come to their door; many locals have been touched by the cartel violence that plagues the area, and there is a continual need for listening, consoling, blessings and prayer. The monks also grow and produce coffee, as well as citrus fruits and avocados, and their homemade granola, yogurt, honey and candles draw visitors.

Our Lady of the Angels was founded as a daughter community of Mount Angel in 1966.



Washing of feet on Holy Thursday



Monks' Corner

Excerpts from a newsletter written by Abbot Peter Eberle, a former abbot at Mount Angel Abbey and vice-rector of Mount Angel Seminary

☞ March 19 is the traditional time when the swallows are supposed to return to Capistrano, and March 20 is the time when postulants come to Mount Angel Abbey. This year we welcomed three new candidates. The first is Br. Joseph Klange. Joseph is 35 years old; he came to us from Florida, where he managed operations at a video production company. Br. Marvin Ramos, 48, is from Manila, Philippines. He has a background in directing human resources. I always think that anyone in that field should get a fistful of purple hearts before he even starts. Br. Stephen Cox, who just turned 23 a day or so after he arrived, is from Concord, Calif. He has considered a religious vocation since his early youth.

New postulants Br. Stephen Cox, Br. Joseph Kalange and Br. Marvin Ramos



☞ The old bells – the four that we used before the bell tower was built – are gone. We donated them to Saint Edward's in Keizer, and on April 9 they were hauled away. I'm glad Saint Edward Parish is getting them, but their removal pulls at the heartstrings a little. I can remember how, as a child, we would come up on Sundays to visit Fr. Luke and Br. Ben, and before going home we would swing around and watch the fraters ring the bells. Later I became one of the bell ringers, and inevitably there were spectators watching me. Sigh. ... Pray for us as we do for you.



A QUARTER CENTURY IN THE STACKS!



Librarian Emeritus Josef Sprug celebrated his 92nd birthday in April. He announced he wouldn't be

able to "spend quite as much time in the Abbey library" as he used to – meaning, probably, only 40 volunteer hours per week instead of 60. Sprug has served in the library for almost 25 years, cataloguing more than 24,000 books and showing rare books to visitors from around the world.



SEMINARY BESTOWS LUMEN GENTIUM AWARD ON BELOVED MONK

Mount Angel Seminary named Rev. Paschal Cheline, OSB, the recipient of its highest honor, the Lumen Gentium award. Fr. Paschal is a much-loved monk who came to the Abbey at age 14, studied at the seminary, and became a priest and professor of art history, literature and liturgy. He has served in numerous positions, including dean of formation, vice-rector of the Seminary College, spiritual director and executive director of the Abbey Bach Festival, and has also offered retreats. The award recognizes Fr. Paschal's 50 years of devoted service, his desire for God and his love of learning.



Pioneer monks, 1891

Mount Angel Seminary celebrates 125 years as a SCHOOL OF THE LORD'S SERVICE

—————→ 1889–2014 ←————

An hour before midnight on a rainy October night, four Portland priests stood on a wharf peering out into the dark, waiting to welcome the first Benedictines to the West Coast of America.

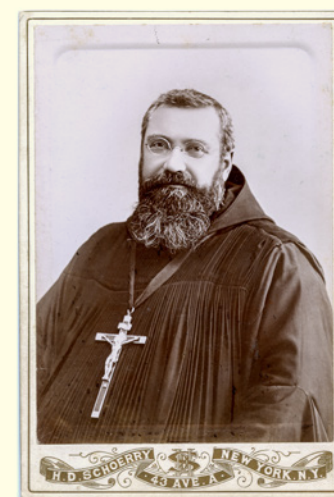
The SS Columbia was headed north from San Francisco, carrying a small band of monks and nuns in search of a new home. One of its passengers, Fr. Adelhelm Odermatt, OSB, had recently written a nostalgic letter to his abbot at Engelberg Abbey in the mountains of Switzerland, saying, “I hunger and thirst for mountains, for during seven years in America I have not yet seen a decent hill.” But Oregon, he wrote, “is said to be a kind of Paradise, if one can speak of such a thing on this earth.”

The morning after their arrival, Fr. Adelhelm's sermon created almost as much of a sensation as his black beard. The long-bearded monks were given a blessing by Archbishop Francis Blanchet, who had established the Church in Oregon, and they soon found their new home – at the foot of a fir-clad mountain, a place where Native Americans had worshipped their own Great Spirit. The locals warned that the incessant winter rains turned the valley into a “frog pond,” but Fr. Adelhelm countered, “That does not permit a missionary zealous for souls to be discouraged.”

German Catholics in the nearby town of Fillmore – soon to be renamed Mt. Angel – were so eager to have the monks as neighbors they pledged a cow and \$1,200 toward a monastery within the space of two days. More cows were to follow.

In 1882, Mount Angel Priory was founded. A mere five years later, the pioneer monks opened Mount Angel College, and in 1889, Archbishop William Gross, CSsR, of the Diocese of Oregon City – later renamed the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon – asked the monks to establish a seminary. Breaking with academic tradition, the Benedictine monks chose to honor their namesake and opened their doors, not in the autumn, but on March 21, the Feast of St. Benedict.

And then a story began to unfold on this holy Hilltop. It would be told in many chapters. Between 1887 and 1979, the monks would open a preparatory high school, a seminary high school, a seminary college and a school of theology. As the Church's needs changed, so did the educational programs at Mount Angel. The school would go through different metamorphoses, faces and buildings would come and go, and the monks would face hardship and setbacks. And yet they would show remarkable resilience.



Fr. Adelhelm Odermatt, OSB

Through two devastating fires, two world wars, depressions and recessions, Vatican II, the gradual secularization of society, and the challenges and blessings of a 21st-century, globally connected, highly diverse Church, monks and rectors and teachers and students have kept the faith. In a region known for its lack of religious affiliation, they pursued a love of learning animated by the search for God and enriched by the Benedictine charism.

Mount Angel Seminary – now the oldest and largest seminary in the West – has been in existence

since 1889 and has played an integral role in the development of Catholicism in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The school has never wavered in its central mission, the education and formation of men for the priesthood.

In this 125th anniversary commemorative issue of the Mount Angel Letter, we want to introduce you to some of the people who prayed and studied and taught at Mount Angel. Over the years, much has changed, but much has endured. We invite you to celebrate with us.

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1889-2014

1882

Benedictine monks from Engelberg Abbey in Switzerland, led by Fr. Adelhelm Odermatt, OSB, established a monastery at the foot of the Hilltop, naming it "Mount Angel" after their monastery in Switzerland. Within 15 days of their arrival, they began to chant the Divine Office, which has been offered in an unbroken succession for 132 years.

1887

The monks opened Mount Angel College and a preparatory high school.



Fr. Dominic Waedenschwyler, OSB

1889

Archbishop William Gross, CSsR, of Oregon City asked the monks to establish a seminary to train "aspirants to the honors of the altar." The financial outlay was enormous and the school too new and untried to attract wealthy donors, so the monks built Mount Angel Seminary on faith. Fr. Dominic Waedenschwyler, OSB, became the first seminary director, for a class of five seminarians. Courses included, among other subjects, philosophy, theology, astronomy, natural history, geology, Latin, Gregorian chant and bookkeeping.

1892

On May 3, a fire that began in the kitchen chimney destroyed the priory, church and seminary, sparing the college. Students, "from the biggest to the smallest," helped the monks as they desperately tried to save books and furniture, but much was lost.



Abbey complex at the foot of the hill, 1889

Looking at the devastation, Prior Adelhelm said he would never have suspected such a cross to be given to him in his lifetime, but he immediately set out across the country, raising funds to replace the complex. Parishioners, business people and local mayors opened their hearts, and their doors, to keep the school going, and the Benedictine sisters at the nearby Queen of Angels Convent took on the task of feeding monks and seminarians. Remarkably, classes resumed by the second day.

1893

The first three bachelor's degrees were awarded.

1898

The community began plans for a new monastery building on the top of the hill. As the building took shape over the next five years, it became the daily habit of students and faculty to walk up and inspect progress.

1901



The Mount Angel College Band (depicted here in 1888) made quite a splash at a mammoth parade in Portland, held in honor of President Theodore Roosevelt's 1901 visit.

1903

On Christmas Eve, the entire community took possession of the new monastery, college and seminary. Constructed of basalt stone quarried on-site, the new building was five stories high, and from its windows one could see a green-mosaic panorama stretching out in every direction.

1909

The seminary enrolled a record 36 seminarians. The majority came from Oregon, with a small showing from other Northwest states, but some came from across the country and even Canada. The enrollment lists began to feature the names of future leaders in the Pacific Northwest.



Second monastery, seminary and college building, circa 1920s

1915

A "fine boulevard for the automobiles to spin over" was being constructed from Mount Angel Depot to the base of the Abbey hill, and in 1917, the first automobiles chugged up the new cement road to the monastery. The road would bring new students, along with "graduates who are now clergymen laboring in the vineyard of the Lord."

1925

Mount Angel Seminary became the first independent college to be accredited by the Northwest Association of Colleges and Universities.

1926

In September, a second fire destroyed the monastery, seminary, church, college, gymnasium and sisters' home. The wind whipped the flames until the Abbey became a giant inferno, visible for miles.

Fr. Augustine Bachofen, OSB, wrote, "Alas! What a period of grief and terror followed. From all parts of the building Fathers, fraters, brothers, students, and townsfolk snatched furniture and belongings that were near at hand and tried all too late to save something from the blaze.



Only the walls remained standing after the 1926 fire.

Driven from floor to floor, from room to room, by the advancing circle of fire, they could do but little, could save but little ... It was a ghastly sight."

By the next morning, all that was left was a smoldering ruin. Two hundred students and seminarians were sent home. Less than two weeks later, makeshift seminary classes resumed in a nearby home. Eight months later, the first

"Mt. Angel was about six years old and I was just turned fifteen when first we made each other's acquaintance in September, 1890. ... After forty years my memory of it is still fresh and vivid, still dear and delightful.

"It was on a clear, calm starry evening that I came to know Mt. Angel. ... In those days, a wagon transported the students, old and new, from the depot to the school. I was one of three lonely youths that arrived by the little train ... I took passage in the wagon and trundled noisily and none too comfortably over the planked highway that connected the college with the town. ... I vowed by the stars that I would study mightily ...

"Dispersed through the land are many former 'boys' of Mt. Angel now - like me - gone gray, and far away in years and miles from that scene of their joys and adventures."

- Alumnus Grattan Kearns, Director of the Apologetic Bureau of the National Council of Catholic Men, The Pacific Star, 1929

concrete was poured for the new monastery, which would house seminarians as well as monks. College classes were reopened within a year.



Aerial view of the Hilltop during construction of the current monastery, 1927

1929

Student writers for *The Pacific Star* expressed gratitude to "Brother Benedict," who installed the first radio on the Hilltop, allowing them to hear sports and musical concerts.

1933

The school gained four-year accreditation from the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools.

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Study Hall, date unknown



"Scholz at bat," date unknown

1935

"A sure sign of spring is a bat and a ball. Therefore, we conclude that spring is here again."
– *The Pacific Star* (February issue!)

"Every night a goodly number of seminarians have been leaving immediately after supper to congregate at the most beautiful spot on the hilltop, the grotto of the Blessed Virgin. In her honor they sing a hymn and recite the 'Ave Maria' three times. This constitutes their special devotion to Mary during the month of May."

– *The Pacific Star*

1941

Shortly before Pearl Harbor was bombed, a student survey showed that the most popular student reads included *Treasure Island*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (by Mark Twain) and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Students were active in the "Arch-Angels" archery club, skating parties, sports, band, orchestra, glee, drama and the college senate, which offered opportunities for discussion of national issues, including whether the U.S. should enter the war.

The Pacific Star would soon begin tracking students and alumni who had joined what one student editorialist called "a Civil war of the whole world." During blackouts on the West Coast, seminarians used flashlights to find their way into the chapel for prayers.

1945

The Abbey bells rang in celebration of victory in Europe, and the monks and seminarians gathered for thanks and praise.

1947

Burdened with growing costs and complexity, the monks made the painful decision to close the lay college and focus on the seminary, which began a period of steady growth.



Students mark the completion of their third-year Latin class. Six years were generally required, and many textbooks were written in Latin.

1951

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB, entered Mount Angel as a 14-year-old boy. Fr. Paschal came a year later, "which means we've been good friends for many years," Abbot Gregory says. They played muddy ball games on the mall, which was then a boulder-strewn field, and Fr. Augustine DeNoble, OSB, who entered the school in 1946, remembers hiking down through the countryside to the Abiqua River on weekends.



Fr. Paschal Cheline, OSB, as a student in 1953 typing class, last row, far right

All three monks recount some of the happiest days of their lives.

"My intellect came alive here," remembers Fr. Paschal. "My teachers inspired me to write well and speak well." His lifelong love of art history, which he later taught at Mount Angel, grew from a teacher's assignment. "Most importantly," Abbot Gregory says, "the Hilltop became a place of encounters with God."

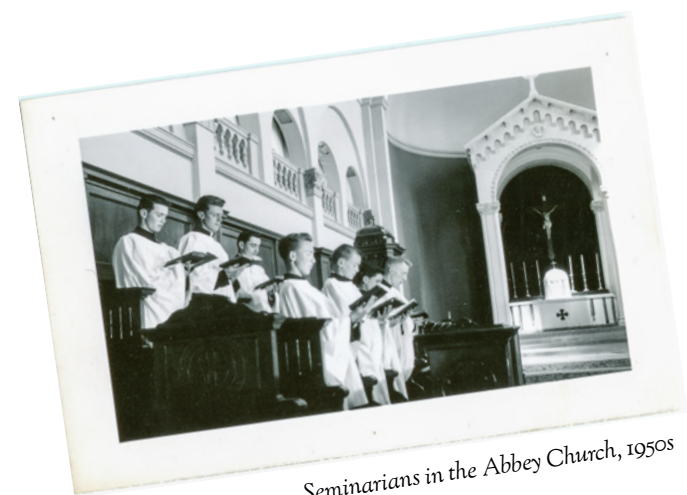
1954



Solemn blessing of Anselm Hall, attended by "bishops of the Province," 1954

1957

A handful of Chinese and Vietnamese seminarians found their way from "the Orient" to Mount Angel, heralding the beginning of what would eventually become an international student body.



Seminarians in the Abbey Church, 1950s

1960

On Vocations: What Does Life in a Seminary Mean?

Published by students in The Angelus

"In the seminary everyone plays [sports] ... Like anywhere else, there are some in the seminary who are good, and then there are others who can't catch anything but a cold. ..."

"It is very strange sometimes to hear what made different men come to the seminary. Some fellows wanted to be priests ever since they can remember; others came to the seminary on a whim ... Some of those who came without thinking stayed to think harder. ... The only way to know if God is calling is to answer, and see."

"The priesthood isn't like medicine or accounting or electrical engineering, where you know exactly what your job will be like. The difference is that the seminarian is not studying to learn a new skill – he is learning to be a new person. ... All the time in the seminary your ideas are shifting and deepening and clearing up and broadening."

1959

"Tape recorders are no longer a novelty ... The seminary has had several machines for quite a while. Now some seminarians are buying their own recorders."

– *The Angelus* student newspaper

Early 1960s

Faculty monks were now being trained at prestigious universities in the U.S. and Europe, and academic departments became specialized. The first lay people were hired at the seminary, beginning with Anna Marie Till, whom Fr. Paschal remembers as a "little bit of a mother, but mostly Fr. Bernard's secretary." The Benedictine sisters would staff the Abbey and seminary kitchen until the early 2000s.

1962–65

The Second Vatican Council issued its *Decree on Priestly Training*, leading to new guidelines for the holistic formation of priests, focusing on spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral dimensions. These four "pillars" became the core of the curriculum at Mount Angel.

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1964

Against a backdrop of social turmoil, landmark civil rights legislation, and Beatlemania, Mount Angel Seminary celebrated its 75th anniversary. Five thousand students had passed through its halls, and 425 priests, abbots and monsignors had been formed, along with one bishop. Mount Angel had also educated doctors, lawyers, engineers and “workers of the soil and of machinery.” At a celebration Mass, Msgr. John Tracy Ellis quoted orator Daniel Webster, saying, “It is, Sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet there are those who love it.”

“Yes, on the twenty-first of this month, I’ll be seventy-five years old ... I figure I’m just about the oldest continuous seminary in the western United States ... I started my career with twelve fellows in the Grand Seminary and five in the Petit Seminaire ... But you know what I’m proud of? It’s my boys. So far, over 1800 young men have received at least a portion of their education from me. I have contributed to the training of over 400 priests. They’re all dear to me – all those who have left me to become good Catholic laymen and all those who have left me to become good priests.”

– As told to Neal Brogan, Class of 1966, The Angelus, 1964

1965

“We eat all our meals in a big dining room. ... We all take turns being waiters at the meals. Most of us are lucky enough to sleep in dormitories with bunk beds, but the college men have to live in rooms. Occasionally a few pillows find their way into orbit, but normally we just sleep there.”

– The Angelus

1969

Mount Angel Seminary, the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Theology were combined, and headed by the first president-rector, 34-year-old Fr. Boniface Lautz, OSB. Since 1972, beginning with the Most Rev. Elden Curtiss, all president-rectors have been diocesan priests, and 80 percent of the seminarians are now diocesan as well.



Fr. Vincent Trujillo, OSB, assists a student with calligraphic design and layout. He taught art and calligraphy classes in the old Fort on the Hilltop. Photo circa 1985



1970

Mount Angel Abbey Library, a sleek, modernist-style building designed by internationally renowned Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, was dedicated. It now houses one of the most significant theological collections in the Pacific Northwest, with holdings that span 1290 A.D. to the age of the Internet.

Interior, Mount Angel Abbey Library

1971

Women religious were admitted to the theology graduate school.

1979

The monks made the difficult decision to close the seminary high school, enabling them to focus more resources on priestly formation. Fr. Vincent Trujillo, OSB, is still nostalgic about the high school youth, who brought their own brand of vitality and liveliness to the Hilltop. He taught calligraphy and art for 35 years, and played classical music each morning to wake the students. Many, he said, still keep in touch.

1993

The seminary hired its first lay academic dean, Dr. Ernest Skublics. The first woman to serve as academic dean, Dr. Elaine Park, was appointed in 2000.

1995

The seminary began developing a unique curriculum based on Communion Ecclesiology, the Vatican II teaching that identifies the celebration of the Eucharist as the source and the summit of the Church’s life. The Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist.

2002

Mount Angel became the only remaining Catholic seminary in the Western United States to offer both a college and a graduate school of theology.

2003

The seminary began offering the Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology, through the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant’ Anselmo, the international Benedictine college in Rome.

2006

Annunciation Hall, which houses most seminary classrooms, was dedicated. The building was designed with arches, a central skylight and natural light throughout. It has been featured in magazines and newspapers as a model of sustainability, and received the Northwest Construction “Best of 2006” Sustainable Award and Grand Award.



Aerial view of the Hilltop taken in 2007



2014

Special guests attended the seminary’s 125th anniversary celebration, which included Vespers and dinner. From right to left: Rev. Msgr. Joseph Betschart, Most Rev. Liam Cary, Most Rev. Alexander Sample, Rt. Rev. Gregory Duerr, OSB, Most Rev. John Vlazny, Most Rev. Elden Curtiss, Most Rev. Peter Smith. Francis Cardinal George was to be the honored guest and speaker; we were sorry he was unable to join us.



His Eminence William Cardinal Levada offered the address at the 125th Commencement Exercises on May 10.

This year, Mount Angel is home to 154 seminarians. The youngest is 18 and the oldest is 57. “I see in our seminarians more quiet self assurance and maturity than in previous generations,” says Fr. Vincent.

The increasingly diverse student body echoes that of the larger Church; one fifth of the seminarians are international students. The school also supports non-seminarians who are preparing for some aspect of ministry; 30 lay, religious

and other students are currently studying on the Hilltop. Beginning in the fall of 2014, a new Master of Arts in Philosophy program will augment the school’s offerings for pre-theology studies.

This “school of the Lord’s service” is now the oldest and largest seminary in the Western United States. During the past 125 years, the school has sent thousands of priests to serve the people of God in nearly 100 dioceses and religious communities throughout the U.S. and around the world. “Millions of lives have been touched by what happens on this Hilltop,” says Abbot Gregory.

The seminary is still the primary mission of the monks at Mount Angel.

– Nadene LeCheminant

Monk, student, priest, teacher and rector,

Fr. Alcuin represents the best of Mount Angel

Fr. Alcuin Heibel, OSB, was recognized by Catholics across the world for his extraordinary vision, and yet he almost missed his calling – due to poor eyesight. He was one of Mount Angel College and Seminary's most inspired leaders, but he only came to Mount Angel after being dismissed from another seminary.

Alfred Heibel was born in 1897 in the attic of a crowded Minnesota farmhouse, the twelfth child of an impoverished German-immigrant family. By age 10, he was carrying his share, selling religious pamphlets door to door, helping promote Catholic missions.

Praying alone in the woods, Alfred promised God he would try to become a priest, but his schooling was often interrupted by farm work, and after he began studies at a Wisconsin seminary, he was asked to leave. His eyesight had begun to fail, and a doctor had written the rector, warning, "This boy, Alfred Heibel, cannot possibly go on for the Priesthood. His eyes are absolutely too weak."

The young Alfred remembered seeing the German newspaper from Mount Angel Abbey, *St. Joseph's Blatt*, and became entranced by the romance of faraway Oregon. Perhaps, he thought, Mount Angel would

have a place for him. Alfred was not only welcomed, but was met at the depot by the abbot himself, and was soon balancing farm and kitchen chores with seminary classes. In 1917, upon his simple profession as a monk, he took the name Alcuin.

The need for priests was severe, and at age 23, after only three years of theology, Fr. Alcuin was given a special dispensation from Rome, and ordained. On his birthday, Abbot Bernard Murphy, OSB, said, "I have a birthday present for you. You are now pastor of the Milk Ranch, Crooked Finger and all the territory up to the Cascade Mountains." Fr. Alcuin visited the parish by horseback on the weekends, and taught in the college during the week.

No sooner had he dedicated his first parish church, he was called, at age 25, to be rector of Mount Angel College. In a pattern that would repeat

itself throughout his life, he threw himself into the challenge with idealism and pragmatism. Fr. Alcuin set about revising the curriculum and laid plans for the systematic training of faculty. "As I think back, I often marvel at the humility of the older men [the monks], because I had been the youngest on the faculty and yet they gave me such cooperation," he wrote.

Enthusiasm ran especially high on registration day in September 1926. The college had just achieved its first accreditation, new courses had been added, and enrollment had reached a new high. But the monks and new students – who had not even unpacked – would lose their home by morning. A Model T Ford parked in a garage caught fire and the flames spread, until a giant inferno began to consume the monastery and school, leaving the Abbey in smoldering ruins.

Before the embers even cooled, the monks were engaged in somber discussion about the future of Mount Angel. Fr. Alcuin was determined to rebuild the school, and the primary task of fundraising fell to him. "The begging was hard at least for a man as proud as Father Alcuin, but eventually he got used to it," he wrote. His door-to-door penny sales as a child had prepared him well, and for the next five years, Fr. Alcuin traveled the country in search of funds to rebuild the monastery and school. While fundraising in New York City, despite constant headaches from poor eyesight, he earned a Master of Arts in history from Columbia University.

In 1933, after five years on the road, Fr. Alcuin returned to Mount Angel College, to again serve as rector. "My ambition was that [Mount Angel] should be a Bachelor of Arts College," he wrote. He succeeded that same year, with the college receiving full accreditation.

The following year Fr. Alcuin was named pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Mount Angel, and he began his ministry to families who had been devastated by the Great Depression. "These were hard times," he said.

"The Sunday collections were mostly nickels and dimes or quarters." He must have remembered his own early poverty. In spite of a full load – he was still teaching history at the college – he responded by establishing farm co-operatives. They became so successful that it wasn't long before Catholic families began arriving from the Midwest, pulling up in front of the parish house, trailers loaded with belongings.



The third, and current, monastery building, during construction in 1927. The building, completed the following year, housed seminarians until Aquinas Hall was completed in 1930, during the Great Depression.

From that point on, Fr. Alcuin's life was consumed with helping the poor and needy. "You must put food into the stomachs of the hungry before you start preaching about Divine Providence," he said. His relief efforts spread to farmers in Mexico, and then to post-World War II refugees in Europe. His stint as a fundraiser for Mount Angel College helped him develop the skills to raise millions of dollars for Catholic missions in Africa, India, Asia, and Central and South America. He was dubbed the "Father of Catholic Charities" and recognized by two popes for his work, and yet he would finish his career where he had begun, teaching students at his *alma mater*, Mount Angel.

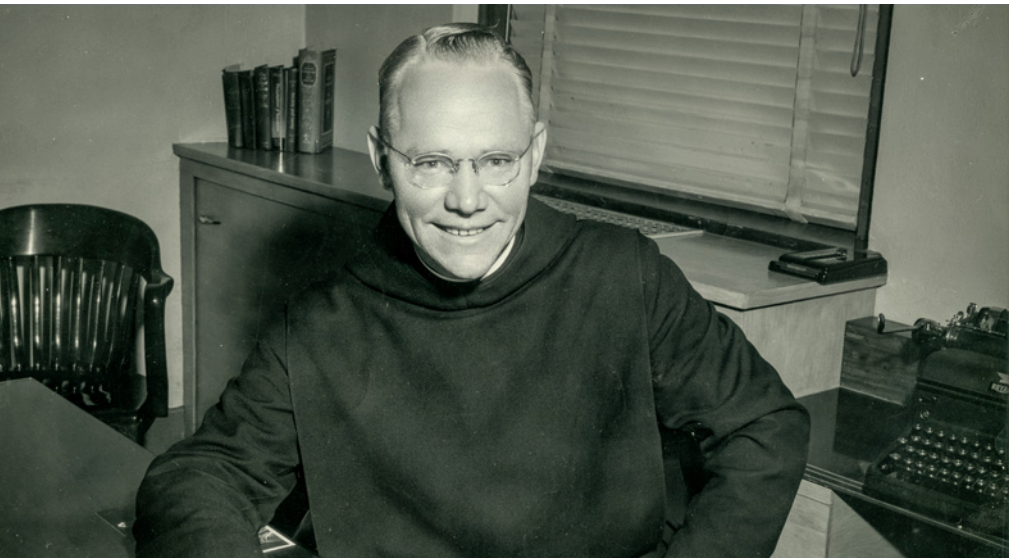
The warm, kindly monk died in the summer of 1985, at age 88, and was buried with his confreres in the monastic cemetery on the Hilltop.

– Jim Thompson and Nadene LeCheminant

Seminary Leadership Through the Years

Directors 1889–1934,
Rectors 1934–69,
President-Rectors 1969–present





LONGEST-SERVING RECTOR
LEAVES LEGACY OF SPIRIT,
SOCIAL RELEVANCE

One of Mount Angel’s most legendary leaders found his vocation under humble circumstances – in a farm field. “My vocation started when I was in Tillamook living on a dairy farm,” remembered Fr. Bernard Sander, OSB. “I had a lot of time to think when I was working in the fields with a team of horses.”

Fr. Bernard, who passed away in 2008, served as a rector at Mount Angel Seminary longer than any other leader (1952–70). His seven decades on the Hilltop occurred during an era of enormous growth and change, and much of that growth was the product of his remarkable vision.

George Raymond Sander, as he was baptized, was born in 1918. His parents, of German-Swiss ancestry, had moved to a Tillamook farm from Southern Oregon in order to live near a parochial school. Surrounded by

a large Catholic family, George was impressed by the piety of his grandmother, his parents and his priest uncle. His own call to the priesthood came early. “The idea of giving my life to God was uppermost in my mind since I was about 15,” he recounted.

In his fourth year of high school he entered Mount Angel Seminary, and was clothed as a novice in the monastery at age 20. In 1944, after three years of study, he was ordained a priest. While making up the fourth year of study, he was appointed vice-rector of the seminary. When asked, many decades later, if it wasn’t unusual to be given that position only a year after ordination, Fr. Bernard answered simply, “They were just in need of help.”

It was a critical time for the seminary. World War II had just ended, and Mount Angel only had 46 students in the theology school, high school and college combined.

Fr. Bernard threw himself into his new role. “In those days you didn’t have to have a lot of accreditation to do things, you just did them,” he said.

For several summers, the young man from a coastal farm was sent to the University of Notre Dame, where he was introduced to Catholic Action and the Catholic Family Movement. “This opened up my vision,” he later recalled. “I saw the role of the laity for the first time in my life. I began to see that here is where the strength of the Church is. The job of the priest is to inspire the laity to be fully involved.”

can say, usually meant one was in a bit of hot water.”

“Mount Angel Seminary High School changed dramatically under Fr. Bernard,” said Fr. Paschal Cheline, OSB. “He had a willingness to change and to experiment, and most of what we are today is due to him. The social relevancy, the spirit, these have come to us as a heritage from Fr. Bernard.”

In 1970, Fr. Bernard was named guest master of the Abbey Guest House, and would greatly expand its reach. “It’s impossible to estimate the number of visitors to the Hilltop who received his gracious welcome and

“For any young man who feels called to share in the kind of ministry that I have been privileged to have, my word to him is: By the grace of God, go for it.”

– Fr. Bernard Sander, OSB

Fr. Bernard shared his enthusiasm for lay work with his seminarians, bringing numerous lay organizations to the Hilltop. His vision was to bring back to the seminary the techniques he learned at Notre Dame, convening small study groups of seminarians. “Often, there was so much pressure in the marketplace that people didn’t have time for their religion. Our work was to make it possible, if we could – to give people techniques by which they could bring the Gospel into their lives as they worked,” he said.

In 1967, the seminary was reorganized, and Fr. Bernard, who taught American history, sociology and journalism, led the sports program, and instituted the first student government and *The Angelus* student newspaper, was appointed rector of the Minor Seminary, which included the high school and the first two years of college. He had incredible rapport with students.

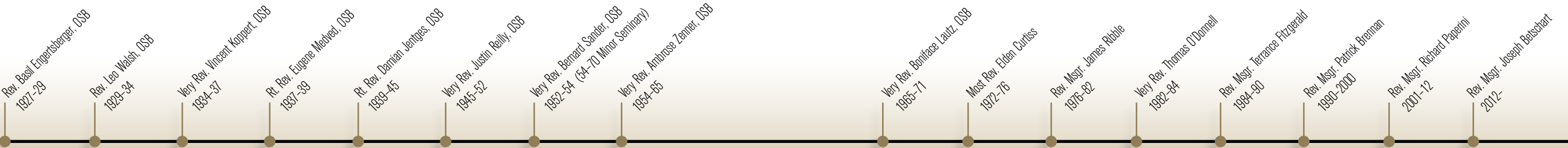
“Father’s gentleness and kindness are the stuff of legend,” said Fr. Paul Thomas, OSB, “but being ‘sent to Fr. Bernard,’ as more than one student from that era

loving counsel,” said Fr. Paul. “The Guest House served as a place of refuge, solace and peace for those caught up in the hectic pace and turmoil of daily life.”

“A lot of people heard of him and made their way to the Hilltop,” said Fr. Augustine DeNoble, OSB. “Fr. Bernard was very calm and peaceful. He loved people, and he was open to everyone.” Students, visitors and staff credited him with transforming their lives or lifting them up when they fell. One woman wrote: “I might have despaired had it not been for you. You cared; you were never too busy; you were a listener, a consoler.”

On the 50th anniversary of his ordination, Fr. Bernard issued a special invitation, “For any young man who feels called to share in the kind of ministry that I have been privileged to have, my word to him is: By the grace of God, go for it.”

– Jim Thompson





Deacon Francisco Bringuela, from the Archdiocese of Portland, greets parishioners and assists with Mass and Faith Formation Classes at Queen of Peace parish in Salem, Ore. “Francisco is one of the most humble and dedicated young men I know,” says Fr. Timothy Mockaitis ’78, pastor of Queen of Peace.

PASTORAL FORMATION BEGINS ON THE HILLTOP, ENDS IN THE COMMUNITY

Many college students spend Friday nights unwinding, but not Jesús Sanchez. The third-year collegian from the Diocese of Tucson spends Friday evenings at St. André Bessette Church in downtown Portland, where he ministers to some of the city’s poorest residents, including the homeless. Sanchez assists with prayers and greets parishioners, and he’s learning that it’s sometimes the little things that make up ministry.

One evening Sanchez was serving carrot cake to Stephen, a middle-aged man in a baseball cap, who told him, “It’s my birthday today, and I was going to be alone, but here I am eating with others.” Sanchez said, “We are all doing little things, not realizing that we are doing so much.”

The Pastoral Formation program at Mount Angel Seminary provides college and theology students some of their first experiences in ministry. Seminarians spend two to four hours each week working in ministry settings, with special emphasis on service to the poor and those on the margins of society. The program is one of four “pillars” of formation, which also includes

human, spiritual and intellectual growth, a format based on the 1992 Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, of Pope Saint John Paul II.

“This has been my first experience of working in a parish, which is essential for discerning whether God is calling me to spend the rest of my life as a parish priest,” said Keefe Piper, a seminarian from the Diocese of Seattle who works with second-graders at Queen of Peace parish in Salem, Ore. “Being there reminds me that I love to talk with people about Jesus, I love to pray, and nothing brings me greater joy than to see someone take a step towards God. This experience has strengthened my sense of calling to the priesthood.”

Spiritual reflection is part of the process, and Piper recalled an incident in his classroom that awakened him to the importance of ministry. The children were rambunctious and seemed uninterested, he says, and when they were asked to share a prayer request, most of the answers were jokes. Then one young girl opened her heart, and said, “There has been a lot of death in

my family.” When asked, “Who died?” she replied, “My two sisters died, and my whole family is sad.”

“Despite all appearances, there is always a deep hunger for God, waiting to be nourished,” said Piper, who believes the gap between graduate level theology and

second-grade catechism is not as wide as you might think. “We are talking about the same God, and Jesus tells us that unless we receive the kingdom like little children, we will never enter.”

Seminarians at Mount Angel are learning to minister to

everyone – including the homeless, the poor, the old and the young – with an open spirit. “The heart of diocesan priesthood is radical availability to God and his people,” says Msgr. Joseph Betschart, the seminary’s president-rector. Sanchez puts it simply, “It’s not about you. It’s about the other person.”

– Jim Thompson

Since 2011, Mount Angel’s Pastoral Formation program has been supported with generous grants from the Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund.



“The mystery of God brings us to gather. We are drawn to something greater, more ancient, more lasting than any of the careers or aspirations we might otherwise know. We share a journey in our diversity, a purpose in our presence. The seminary experience is one of intellectual exploration, cultivation of virtue, commitment to prayer and divine relationship, and formation of our temperament, character and skills. We foretaste the fullness of the eternal, immense, diverse Church, and we are invited to explore as far as we are able. I thank God for the opportunity.”

– Seminarian Daniel Miller,
from the Diocese of Boise in Idaho



SCHOOL OF THE LORD'S SERVICE

The hope of the harvest is in the seed

ON THIS, THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY,
WE HAVE MUCH TO BE GRATEFUL FOR AND MUCH TO CELEBRATE.

The seminary traces its heritage to those first monks who came to Mount Angel and, following the example of their Swiss motherhouse whose school was founded in the 12th century, established Mount Angel College. Two years later, in 1889, the pioneer monks founded Mount Angel Seminary, and began what has since been their primary apostolate: educating and forming priests with the mind and heart of Jesus Christ for service to his people.

This “school of the Lord’s service” that came from these humble beginnings is now the oldest and largest seminary in the Western United States, and the only seminary in the West that offers college, pre-theology and graduate theology programs.

Since our founding, Mount Angel Seminary has formed thousands of priests – and many religious and lay men and women, too – to serve the people of God in nearly 100 dioceses and religious communities throughout the United States and around the world.

This year we are blessed to have 154 seminarians from

27 dioceses and six religious communities enrolled in our program of priestly formation. Our graduating class consists of 13 Bachelor of Arts candidates, 16 Master of Divinity candidates, eight Master of Arts candidates, and three Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology candidates.



Mount Angel’s undergraduate program, offering a major in philosophy and possible double majors in literature or religious studies, helps our students understand the human person, the world in which we live, and the God who holds us all together in himself. The pre-theology program prepares those who have already graduated from college for future theological studies. Our

graduate program of theological studies is centered on the Eucharist as the “source and summit” of our faith and life, giving our courses and our entire program unity and cohesiveness. And our English Communication Department helps our international students, undergraduate and graduate alike, adjust to the demands of English in their studies, while also

“The old College has changed. The old times are gone, a new generation is already sitting at our former desks, and another company of students, younger than ourselves, has taken our place in the study hall. ... I remember very well my first sight of the College building, late one evening in the September of 1904, after my brother and myself had made our way up the hill with some difficulty. The sight of the monastery all alight and surmounted by the brilliant cross, emerging suddenly from the wood, will remain with me forever.”

– Noel J. Deisch, Class of 1911, *The Pacific Star student newspaper*, 1915

preparing them to proclaim the Gospel effectively in their future parish ministry.

The seminary’s pastoral formation, the end to which all our efforts are ultimately directed, gives students the experience and preparation they need to be effective in their future ministry. Our human formation seeks to develop the image and likeness of Jesus Christ in our men, so they can personify his love and bring that love to his people in their words and their actions. And our spiritual formation and the faith life of this community, led and stabilized by the monks of the Abbey, open us to the grace of God, which unites us together in Christ and makes all our work possible.

But as good as our formation program is, we are always working to improve it – to form priests who can even more effectively preach, teach, shepherd and sanctify in the name and in the person of Jesus Christ. To that end, we are seeking to enhance our program.

- Next year we will begin offering a fully accredited Master of Arts in Philosophy to our pre-theology students, making us one of only a handful of seminaries in the country to offer a master’s degree at the pre-theology level.
- We are updating our classroom technology to give our students and teachers the best the 21st century has to offer. We are also updating the behind-the-scenes infrastructure to create a stronger administrative network.
- In support of our international students and their future ministry, we are seeking ways to further integrate English language training across the curriculum.
- We are looking for ways to further enhance the Eucharistic focus of our theology studies and integrate it even more fully into our classes and into our lives.
- We are increasing our pastoral placement opportunities and seeking to integrate them more fully into the curriculum, so that practical learning goes hand in hand with academic learning.

And the list goes on. But all of these accomplishments and goals are only possible because of God’s grace and the prayers and support provided by so many. We

cannot do it alone. It is a work that we can only do when we are all united together in Jesus Christ.

First and foremost, then, we offer our praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, for calling us to share in this sacred mission of his Son and sustaining us with his grace. We express profound gratitude for the sacrifices, dedication, prayer and work of the abbots and monks of Mount Angel Abbey, past and present, including our current chancellor, Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB.

We want to acknowledge the many faculty and staff members throughout our history whose dedication and learning still animate the seminary. We are grateful for the many generous board members, volunteers, benefactors and friends who sustain us in our common mission. We are mindful of our co-workers on the Hilltop whose service and support keep us going. We thank the many bishops, religious superiors and vocation directors who have entrusted their seminarians to us for formation.

We honor the parents and families of our seminarians, and most especially, we honor our seminarians, students and alumni, for their labors in the Lord’s vineyard, and the countless people to whom they have transmitted the lifegiving Word and saving mysteries of God.

Almost 20 years ago, I was blessed to be a seminarian at Mount Angel, and I am even more blessed to be back here now. I am constantly awed and inspired by our seminarians and all with whom I am privileged to serve on this Hilltop, and I am immensely proud of each one of them.

As we celebrate the past and look to the future, may the Lord continue to bless us with his grace, unite us in his love and bring to fulfillment the good work he has begun in all of us, as together we move forward in his service. For as our motto reminds us, “The hope of the harvest is in the seed.”

– Msgr. Joseph Betschart,
President-Rector, Mount Angel Seminary

Generosity

THANKS TO OUR BENEFACTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Scholarship fund inspired by heroic Hungarian priest



Abigail and Bela Janko visit with Márton Magyar (center) at Mount Angel Abbey. Magyar, from Haszdudorog, Hungary, is the eighth recipient of the Reverend Geza Havass Endowed Scholarship Fund.

In 1992, Dr. Albert “Bela” Janko established an endowed scholarship fund at Mount Angel for seminary students from Hungary, but his philanthropy was inspired decades earlier – by a heroic Cistercian-educated priest.

As a youth growing up in Hungary, Janko was mentored by the Rev. Geza Havass, a parish priest who risked his life to teach Catholic youth during the Communist suppression. In 1960, Fr. Havass was arrested for his teaching, and sent to prison. He was not released to internal exile until 1963, after Pope Saint John XXIII and the United Nations intervened.

Janko was greatly influenced by the dynamic priest.

In 1956, Janko’s own resistance to the Communist yoke forced him to flee his homeland for the United States. He landed in Monterey, Calif., where he met his wife, Abigail, then a student of international studies. He established an obstetrics clinic, which is now in its 45th year.

Shortly before Fr. Havass’ death in 2001, Bela Janko visited his beloved teacher in Hungary. Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, recalls the scene: “I was struck by what I saw when the old priest recognized Bela. I saw immense love and tenderness in his eyes, and between the two of them, in a glance, the many years of suffering and courage were understood. Fr. Havass saw that one of his students had brought to beautiful fruition the faith he first had planted in him.”

Forty-two years of Communist dictatorship left Hungary with a dire shortage of priests, and restrictions placed upon the seminaries made it impossible to provide adequate pastoral studies. “This meant the Hungarian Church was unable to provide a bridge between what the preacher can teach and what the people are living,” Janko said. “A well-trained priest can show them what the Church should be, and can be.”

Janko looked to the West, and Mount Angel, for answers. In 1992, he

established the Reverend Geza Havass Endowed Scholarship Fund, which now totals \$465,000, to help defray the cost of tuition, room and board, and travel for a Hungarian seminarian each year. Sadly, its annual proceeds (4–5 percent) can provide only half of the cost incurred. The monastery struggles to cover the rest. Previous scholarship recipients include the Rev. Ernő Bárkány Kecskemet, whose radio Mass has reached more than a million listeners in Hungary. Other graduates have demonstrated gifts in such areas as preaching, pastoral psychology, ecclesiastical Latin, youth ministry and charitable work.

“Mount Angel Seminary is perfect for this mission,” Janko said. “It is a unique place, free in spirit, understanding what the vocation of a priest is and how the priest can be open to change, leading society to what is productive. This is a solution for Hungary. Indeed, there is no chance for Central European countries to flourish without the influence of the Church.” The Reverend Geza Havass Endowed Scholarship Fund seeks additional contributions to support this mission, one rooted in persecution and love.

— Jim Thompson

Fellowship

NEWS FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



Pope Francis appoints Mount Angel alumnus, teacher, as Auxiliary Bishop of Portland

Our prayers and warm wishes go to Bishop Peter Smith, who was ordained April 29 as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Portland. Bishop Smith graduated from Mount Angel in 2001 and now teaches the canon law class on marriage at the seminary.

“Bishop Smith is a man of deep faith, great intellect and practical wisdom,” said Portland Archbishop Alexander Sample.

Bishop Smith was born in 1958 in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and ordained a priest in 2001. He holds a law degree from the University of Natal Law School, a master’s degree in theology from Mount Angel Seminary, a Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant’ Anselmo in Rome, and a licentiate in canon law from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He has served as pastor of St. Rose of Lima parish in Portland, archdiocesan delegate for the charismatic movement, adjunct judicial vicar, local superior of the Brotherhood of the People of Praise, and vice chair of the Presbyteral Council.

THE MONKS OF MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY HAVE ESTABLISHED SIX DIFFERENT SCHOOLS THAT INCLUDE:

Mount Angel College, 1887–1946
Mount Angel Preparatory High School, 1887–1964
Mount Angel Seminary High School, 1889–1979
Mount Angel Summer School of Theology, 1973–1981
Mount Angel Seminary College, 1889–present
Mount Angel Seminary School of Theology, 1889–present



Mount Angel seminarians, 1960

Mount Angel Alumni Homecoming SEPTEMBER 10–11, 2014

Gather on the Hilltop for reunion, renewal and reconnection with one another and seminary faculty and staff, as well as the monastic community. Attend special presentations by Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, Deacon Owen Cummings and Dr. Shawn Keough, and enjoy Mt. Angel’s Annual Oktoberfest! For information, contact Jeanne Hobson at alumni@mtangel.edu or 503-845-3057.



Greetings!

My name is Jeanne Hobson and I am the new Alumni Relations coordinator. We hope you’ll join us for our Alumni Homecoming celebration September 10–11. We invite you to send memories, stories and photos from your time on the Hilltop, which we’ll share at the reunion. Please plan to help us celebrate the seminary’s 125th anniversary!

Alumni Relations Coordinator Jeanne Hobson was formerly the program manager of the Executive Development Center in the Atkinson Graduate School of Management at Willamette University. She has served as religious education coordinator and business manager at Saint Edward Catholic Church in Keizer, Ore., and a Table of Plenty volunteer at Queen of Peace in Salem.



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ABBEY BACH FESTIVAL
JULY 23-25

The unique festival features national and international performers in the beautiful Abbey setting. Evenings begin with Vespers, followed by two musical performances and a picnic supper on the lawn, served by the monks.

Featured performers include Ensemble Caprice, award-winning pianist Jean Saulnier, French musician Marcia Hadjimarkos on fortepiano, soprano Julianne Baird, Russian organist Sergey Kirillov and the Tudor Choir.

800-845-8272 or 503-845-3064

Bach@mountangelabbey.org

www.mountangelabbey.org/bach-home.htm

Join the monks of Mount Angel Abbey for the Liturgy of the Hours

WEEK DAYS

Vigils: 5:20 a.m.
Lauds: 6:30 a.m.
Holy Eucharist: 8 a.m.
Midday Prayer: Noon
Vespers: 5:15 p.m.
Compline: 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

Vigils: 7:30 p.m. (Saturday)
Lauds: 6:40 a.m.
Holy Eucharist: 9 a.m.
Midday Prayer: Noon
Vespers: 5:15 p.m.
Compline: 8 p.m.

Mount Angel Letter also is available at
www.mountangelabbey.org/newsletter.html

Find us on Facebook
www.mountangelabbey.org



EVENING AT MOUNT ANGEL

Slowly and quietly shades of the evening,
Steal across valley and fields below;
Softly the angelus tells its sweet story,
In music of bells, so softly and low.

The lights twinkle out from the town in the distance;
The wind murmurs low in the sweet balsam air;
The watchdog bays deep as the pale moon creeps upward,
Showering her glory on hillside and lee.

And God speaks again through his wonderful planets;
Of his love and His wisdom, in voice most sublime;
And bids the faint heart to rest in his keeping;
That He is the Father, the Keeper of time.

*J.B., The Pacific Star student newspaper
Mount Angel College and Seminary, 1913*