Behold, I am making all things new.

(Rev. 21:5)
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On the Cover: Fr. Augustine DeNoble and Br. Alcuin Walch work together in the Mount Angel Abbey Library’s ancient manuscript collection.

Editor: Theresa Myers
Dear Friends

If I were asked to choose a verse from Scripture to characterize this spring at the Abbey, this comes to mind: "Behold, I am making all things new."

This spring at the Abbey, we have experienced the Paschal Mystery over and over, entering the darkness of the tomb only to find ourselves reborn in the brightness of life in Christ.

A most significant ending was the death of our dear brother, Fr. Cosmas White, O.S.B. He was 88 and lived a full life as a monk of Mount Angel Abbey and pastor of many parishes in the Portland area. His last assignment was at Mount Angel Towers, where he ministered to the elderly residents. He spent his final years here in the infirmary of his monastic home and died peacefully on the morning of April 27.

At about the same time Fr. Cosmas was ending his earthly journey, we were blessed with four men asking to join us as postulants. Two more have joined since then, forming a solid group discerning their call to our monastic life.

The seminary celebrated the ending of its 128th year of forming men for the priesthood, graduating the class of 2017 with Commencement Exercises on May 13. The seminary has seen steady enrollment numbers the past few years, with a total of 194 students this year, including 156 men studying for the priesthood. The commencement group included 18 deacons who are candidates for priestly ordination this summer.

In addition to celebrating graduation, the seminary also bestowed its highest honor, the Lumen Gentium award, upon my predecessor, Abbot Gregory. In both the monastic community and the seminary, Abbot Gregory has spent his monastic life guiding young men through the work of spiritual and human formation.

Each day brings us new challenges, new joys, new opportunities to experience the dying and rising of Christ to new life in God. That is the project of our monastic vocation. As new men seek to join us, our challenge is how to best pass on the treasure of this Benedictine way of life. In this issue of Mount Angel Letter, a few of our younger monks share how they feel connected to the 1,500-year-old legacy of Saint Benedict.

Reading their thoughts, seeing the joy on the faces of our new seminary graduates, reflecting on the many years of generous service of Fr. Cosmas, and the very special review of the gentle, consistent formation work of my predecessor, Abbot Gregory, I feel hope. I feel confident that in faithfully living our monastic life hidden in Christ, all things will indeed be made new.

May God bless you,

+ Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.
The Right Reverend Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.
Abbot and Chancellor
Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary
Follow the Trail of the Holy Family with Fr. Odo

At the end of the fourth century, St. Theophilus of Alexandria had a dream in which the Blessed Virgin Mary revealed to him the route the Holy Family followed during their journey into Egypt. Churches and monasteries were built as shrines to commemorate the places they stopped. And from ancient times, pilgrims have traveled what has become known as the Trail of the Holy Family.

Next October, Fr. Odo Recker will lead a pilgrimage along this trail.

It’s a route familiar to Fr. Odo as he has led many such pilgrimages over the years. Highlights include visits to the Coptic Christian monasteries, where monks have lived and prayed since the first centuries of Christendom.

The pilgrimage which Fr. Odo will lead this year, October 24 to November 13, comes with an added bonus. At the invitation of Tawadros II, Patriarch of Alexandria and 118th successor to St. Mark, the Evangelist, the members of the pilgrimage will conduct two two-day medical check-up clinics for the poor in Egypt. Medical professionals are welcome to join the pilgrimage, but you don’t need to be a professional to participate in this mission of mercy.

If you are interested in more information about this opportunity to serve the sick and poor along the Trail of the Holy Family, see the story at www.mountangelabbey.org/hilltopnews or call 503-845-3242.

Library Greets Distinguished Guests

In April, Mount Angel Abbey Library had the honor of a visit from the Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, who was in Oregon for the opening of a new complex he had designed for the Japanese Gardens in Portland. Mr. Kuma spent several hours at the Abbey and said that the work of Alvar Aalto, the architect of the library, was a great inspiration to him on the Japanese Garden project. He was especially influenced by Aalto’s work with light in the construction of the library.

In May, several members from the American Institute of Architects visited. Fr. Augustine spoke with them and shared his memories of Alvar Aalto and the design of the library. Several members of the group posted their impressions of the visit and photos of the library on social media. A common theme in their comments was that the library visit was a “truly sacred experience,” and “at once serene and uplifting.”

CREDIT: Daniel Rollet, AIA
Will You Accept the Challenge?

Jenga is a game the monks discovered recently and to which they will challenge all comers at the Saint Benedict Festival on July 8. The game is simple: Build a tower with 54 blocks. Then, use one hand only to remove a block from the lower levels and place it on the top … without causing the tower to come crashing down. The festival is also simple: Come to the third annual Saint Benedict Festival at Mount Angel Abbey and enjoy an afternoon of spirituality, fun, good music and great food with the monks. Highlights this year include noon prayer and Vespers with an introduction by Abbot Jeremy, thoughts on Benedictine spirituality by Fr. Martin, a Swiss-themed outdoor picnic, live music, plenty of Benedictine Brewery beer made by the monks, and local Willamette Valley wines. The festival is for ages 21 and older; tickets are $50 each and available online at www.mountangelabbey.org/sbf-ticket-form or call 503-845-3030.

New Postulants Begin Journey of Discernment

The Solemnity of Saint Joseph, March 19, was an exciting day this year as Mount Angel Abbey admitted four new postulants to the monastery. In the photo, from left to right, Emilio Gonzalez, Victor Ochoa-Gonzalez, Fabio Magalhaes da Cruz, and Joshua LaPorte receive a blessing from Abbot Jeremy as they begin their period of discernment at Mount Angel Abbey. They were joined later by Miguel Olivarez and David Buttrick (after publication deadline for this issue). As postulants, the men enter a six-month discernment period, designed to test their vocation and introduce them to the Benedictine way of life. During these months, they will take part in the life of the monastic community, participating at Mass and in the Divine Office, and learning to perform tasks common to monastic life.

Mount Angel Seminary Alumnus Preaches Abbey Retreat

Each year, usually in May, the community of Mount Angel Abbey gathers for a week of retreat. This year, the Retreat Master was Fr. Bernhard Eckerstorfer, a Benedictine monk of Kremmünster Abbey in Austria, and an alumnus of Mount Angel Seminary. Fr. Bernhard is novice master at Kremmünster and (in the photo, above) held some conferences with just the youngest monks at Mount Angel: the postulants, novices and juniors, along with Abbot Jeremy and the team of senior monks who guide them.
A Pontifical Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on May 1, followed by his burial in the Abbey cemetery.

Fr. Cosmas was born January 6, 1929, in New York to Francis James and Marie Mary (Masterson) White. After attending Catholic grade and high schools in New York, he served in the Army before earning a Bachelor of Science degree from Fordham University.

Surrounded by his brother monks and many of his former parishioners, in 2011 Fr. Cosmas celebrated 50 joyful years as a priest. As his health declined in his last years, he was cared for by his fellow monks and by the health care staff of Mount Angel Abbey. Two days before his death, Abbot Jeremy anointed Fr. Cosmas with the whole community present. He opened his eyes joyfully in recognition of the presence of the praying community, and, though unable to speak at the end, he expressed his “Amen” to the prayers by squeezing the Abbot's hand.

As they have for many years, the members of the Willamette Master Chorus performed two concerts in the church at Mount Angel Abbey in May. A special feature this year was the premiere performance of “A Mass for Unity and Peace,” written by Fr. Teresio. The version sung by the Master Chorus was very well received. Fr. Teresio, who has been a member of the Chorus since 2008, said that his next project is to compose a version of the Mass that is equally beautiful but more accessible to a parish congregation as well as to the monastic community at Mount Angel.

Fr. Cosmas entered Mount Angel Seminary in 1953. He made his profession in 1957 and was ordained a priest on May 11, 1961. Following his ordination, Fr. Cosmas served faithfully in a number of assignments, but is best remembered for his many years as a pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Tillamook, St. Agatha’s Church in Portland, St. Paul’s Church in Silverton, and finally at Mount Angel Towers retirement home.

Longtime Pastor, Beloved Brother Laid to Rest

Fr. Cosmas White, O.S.B., a monk and priest of Mount Angel Abbey, died April 27. He was 88 years old.
Candles Provide Light, Connection with Monastic Tradition

A small, old, stone building that sits below the library on the hilltop is commonly known as the Old Fort.

For many years, it was used as a wine cellar. Later, the space was divided into workrooms where monks have practiced various crafts, including pottery, brewing, and candle-making. Currently, the candle-making equipment has been getting good use as a few monks are busy making hundreds of candles.

Some of the candles are for the monastery bookstore. But the larger quantities are for the upcoming Saint Benedict Festival in July and the Seminary Benefit Dinners in November and March.

Br. Ephrem, a junior monk at Mount Angel Abbey, says that candles and monastic life have a relationship that goes back to the Desert Fathers. “When pilgrims went into the desert to find the monks, they would first hear a humming noise. From a distance, it sounded like bees working on a hot day. But as they drew closer, they could begin to hear words and realized that the noise was that of monks chanting the Psalms in prayer.”

Br. Ephrem said he likes to think of the connection between himself and the early monks in the desert, as well as his Benedictine forefathers, when he joins his fellow monks in chapel for the Divine Office. At the earliest prayers of the day, Vigils, the church remains in darkness. But with Lauds, at 6:30 a.m., candles are lit, signifying a new day and providing light to read the Psalter.

The making of candles provides a tangible connection between his life in the monastery and the life of those who will purchase and burn them. “I think many people who buy our candles will pray with them,” muses Br. Ephrem. “Or the candle will remind them of the Abbey and remind them of their visit here. People need light. The world needs light. These candles are a small sign of that need for the Light of Christ.”

– Theresa Myers
Benedictine Monasticism spans 15 centuries of prayer, of labor, of a culture of learning. Monk scribes throughout history recorded not only their own lives, but also preserved the great works of every civilization they encountered. From barbaric tribes to pagan empires, the monks saved whatever wisdom the ancients had acquired, so that I in 2017 can draw from a great treasury.

One of the most tangible ways for me to come face to face with this wisdom at the Abbey is by working with our manuscript collection. Students from all over the country are able to learn something in an encounter with the manuscripts the monastery preserves. The rich Benedictine tradition that I enjoy today is heard in our daily chanting of the Psalter. It is found in our sacramental life and listened for in the silence of the cloister. Without these things, the precious treasures of our library don’t make sense to me. But through these tools, monastic wisdom like a light on a hill, offers the fruits of Wisdom to an increasingly forgetful age.

– Br. Alcuin Walch
Community Leaders Convey Tradition of the Ages

After some forethought and consideration, the people in my life here at Mount Angel Abbey who help me feel connected to the broader Benedictine heritage are both Father Abbot Jeremy and Father Abbot Gregory. The former because of his teachings and exhortations to live our monastic vocation authentically by faithfully putting into practice the little but Holy Rule of Our Most Holy Father Saint Benedict, by "seeking the things that are above." And the latter, by practicing "Lectio Divina" faithfully, as not only the answer to life but the means to remain centered and in contact with Christ – the true love and ultimate good in a monk’s life.

– Br. Benjamin Tran

Desert Fathers Find New Life at Mount Angel

Today, here at Mount Angel Abbey, I read the works of the Desert Fathers, the words of those holy monks who left everything so that they could hold fast only to Jesus Christ, the Word of God. It is that same Word, and those same words, that made a saint out of our father, the Abbot Benedict. And through him came the gift of my monastic life. That’s right: over 1,500 years ago, God was preparing to give me this gift of my vocation, and he did this by calling all those holy monks. That’s amazing! Thousands of miles away and centuries later, their words today, here at Mount Angel Abbey, keep my monastic life grounded in that story, in the story of men who seek to hold fast to the Word.

– Br. Israel Sanchez
Inheriting a 1,500-year-old tradition is both something that causes worry and something that one takes pride in. Being connected in this way – having ancestors and a lineage that one can trace back for centuries – is awesome. But there is something within the tradition – within the life – that transcends the merely human and connects us not only to our ancestors in faith, but to all the faithful around the world and in heaven. It is that which monks gather in church to do everyday, multiple times a day: the liturgy. It connects us to the entirety of the Benedictine heritage and the entirety of the treasury of our faith. It connects us to God.

By means of the liturgy, time and space are broken; they are transcended. Eternity becomes the “now,” and we insignificant monks are suddenly brought up to the Divine Majesty and connected with the heavenly choirs and with all our brothers and sisters on earth. Our whole history of 1,500 years becomes present and actual. One can just imagine a massive chorus of all the faithful who have ever lived joining together to praise God. This is at the heart of the monastic life, and it is a great privilege and a great burden.

It’s a privilege because I, who am just one person, become a voice that contributes to the eternal and unbroken praise of Almighty God. It is a burden because I, who am weak and frail and sinful, become present to the same unblemished, untainted, and all-holy God.

This is the legacy we have inherited. It is not the great libraries, schools, minds, artists, philosophers, theologians, and all else that we have contributed to the world that is at the heart of our legacy. The true core from which all these things spring forth is that never-ending praise that monks do day-in and day-out. The individual monk, useless like a screw or gear by itself, becomes part of the intricate beauty of a clock, without which the clock may not be able to operate. He is needed, because he is loved.

This is the true legacy that causes me to be in awe whenever I stand in my choir stall. Something happens there that has been done for centuries, which is much greater than all those centuries combined and multiplied many times over. God is there, with all those men and women who have sought him in years past, and I am there with them.

– Br. Matthew Flores
Abbot Gregory Honored with Lumen Gentium Award

At this year’s Commencement, held May 13, Mount Angel Seminary’s highest honor, the Lumen Gentium award, was given to the Right Reverend Gregory Duerr, O.S.B., former Abbot of Mount Angel Abbey and Chancellor of the Seminary. The Lumen Gentium award honors significant contributions to the pastoral mission of the Church and the good of the seminary.

Abbot Gregory was directly involved with the seminary for 25 years and holds a Master of Arts in classical languages from the University of Washington and a Master of Arts in formative spirituality from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. As Abbot, he drew his motto from the prophet Micah: “He shall be peace.”

In bestowing the award, Msgr. Joseph Betschart, president-rector of Mount Angel Seminary, said that during his tenure, Abbot Gregory “served with the gentle heart of the Good Shepherd.”

Reflecting on the award, Abbot Gregory noted the joy he has experienced in his 60 years of monastic life, devoted almost entirely to formation work. That work included both spiritual and human formation in both the monastic community and the seminary.

“Over the years,” commented Abbot Gregory, “I came to see the importance of human formation. At the seminary, we are helping the students to grow as persons who know how to relate well with people. If a person can’t relate to others in a meaningful way, in a loving way, that’s a great lack. To be able to relate well is especially important for priestly ministry. Priesthood is about people. Priesthood is a people business.”

When asked how life as a Benedictine prepared him for formation work in the seminary, Abbot Gregory said: “As Benedictines, we have something to share with those studying to be diocesan priests; things that are part of the Benedictine charism, such as liturgy, community, prayer, Lectio Divina, fraternity. Elements important to Benedictine monks can also be of value to those preparing to work with the people of God. If we can give the seminarians a sense of appreciation and love for community, for prayer, those are all things that, without becoming monks, they can carry into their ministry as priests in the parish.”

– Theresa Myers
The words of life, the words of Christ, contain power, he continued, vitality and vision. Reflecting on his life of more than 47 years in priesthood and 16 as bishop of Las Vegas, Bishop Pepe acknowledged that life took him to places “where he did not expect to be.” But marveling at the events and wonders of his priestly life, he said, his life is a testament to what “God can do when you believe.”

The class of 2017 represented 17 dioceses and six religious communities. Presenting the Senior Farewell, Deacon Nathan McWeeney, from the Diocese of San Diego, noted that beginning his life at Mount Angel Seminary demanded courage and he confessed reluctance along the way. But from the moment he found himself seated in the choir among the monastic community of Mount Angel Abbey and heard them chanting the Divine Office, “Things got real.”

During his address, he reflected on the words of Christ to Peter along the seashore: “Put out your net into
the deep waters.” Starting at Mount Angel was like putting his net into the deep waters, he recalled. There was a certain fear initially, but he discovered that saying yes to Christ yielded an abundant catch of joy, wonder, learning, and growth. He learned over his years at the seminary that being fully alive is what reveals the glory of God.

Graduation, McWeeney told his classmates, brings them back to the shore. And the Lord is again calling them to put their nets out into the deep as they venture further along the path to priesthood.

Abbot Jeremy, Chancellor of Mount Angel Seminary, reminded the graduates of the great gift they have received in the call to priestly ordination. “Immense is God’s mercy, lavish his graces.”

“Don’t lose sight of what you have done here,” said Abbot Jeremy, “nor for whom you were doing it.” He told the seminarians that in the fall, the monastic community welcomes each new class with joy, and in the spring they send the graduates off with pride. And while the graduates go out, the monks remain on the hilltop and continue to pray for and hold them all in their hearts.

– Theresa Myers
By the time he was in second grade, Fr. Martin Luther King knew he was called to the priesthood. He put off his call until one memorable moment when God refused to be ignored.

Stationed in the Philippines while serving in the U.S. Air Force, Fr. King was walking home from choir practice when he heard, audibly and clearly, “It’s time!” He knew exactly what that meant.

After considering where he’d like to spend the rest of his life, Fr. King, now pastor at St. Thomas More in Portland, Oregon, applied to join the Archdiocese of Portland and subsequently was accepted to the seminary at Mount Angel Abbey.

When he arrived to begin his education, he was petrified. “I was sure I was going to fall flat on my face,” he recalled. But he needn’t have been concerned. Once classes began, he discovered that he loved every moment of learning about his lifelong faith.

Fr. King excelled in his studies and was recognized with the inaugural Saint Benedict Award in 1996. The annual award is given to seminarians who model the Benedictine charism and best exemplify the highest formational ideals of the seminary. He counts the Saint Benedict Award as the crowning achievement of his lifetime and featured it prominently on his official military bio when he was still on active duty.

“Knowing I am not perfect,” he said, “but my hope is that after I am gone, someone will be able to say, ‘He gave the best of himself in every situation and sought the best in everyone he met.’” As a pastor, Fr. King feels privileged to have a parish with a school. “I get to experience the life of Catholicism in the hearts, minds, and lives of children. It’s my happy place,” he says.

Fr. King maintains his connection to Mount Angel as an advocate for vocations as well as hosting a table at the annual Seminary Benefit Dinner in Portland. He also conducts tours of the Abbey for the kids of St. Thomas More Catholic School. Recalling Abbot Jeremy as one of his most beloved professors, he attended his former teacher’s Abbatial Blessing celebration in 2016.

“I’ve traveled the world and been in Rome many times. When I go to Mount Angel, I feel at home.”

– Tara Rodden Robinson
Beauty of Catholicism is Found at the Abbey

When Dr. Mayda Ramos’ husband was trying to convince her to move to Oregon, the first place he took her to was Mount Angel Abbey.

“I hadn’t even interviewed for my new job yet! I hadn’t even seen the hospital [where I had applied to work],” she exclaims. Immediately, she sensed that the Abbey was going to be an important part of her life in Oregon.

Now, almost twenty-five years later, Dr. Ramos thinks of the Abbey as central to her life as a Catholic, a wife, a mother, and a physician.

After moving to her new home in Silverton, she began to attend daily Mass at the Abbey, go on retreats, and meet with a spiritual director there. She came to know several of the monks and later, became a member of the Seminary Board of Directors.

In reflecting about how the Abbey has affected her, she explains that her spiritual life has been pivotal in keeping her experiences in perspective. “To see these men striving to be in union with God—when you see them every day—it brings you to a place to ask yourself: What is God calling me to?” Through the support of the monks and the daily liturgy, she feels able to stay centered in what’s really important.

Over the years, Dr. Ramos and her family have gone on numerous pilgrimages with the monks.

“It’s not tourism. It’s a spiritual experience with culture, relationship and prayer.” Her visit to Turkey with Fr. Odo Recker, O.S.B., stands out in her mind. After walking in the footsteps of Saint Paul, the liturgy experienced at Mount Angel took on new and vivid meaning. “When you visit these holy places in the company of the monks, your faith becomes even more tangible.”

Dr. Ramos says that the Abbey has enriched her life in countless ways. From the monks’ many cultural events, she has experienced the beauty of Catholicism through music, art, and literature. She expresses deep admiration of the way the monks preserve and live out the traditions of St. Benedict’s Rule.

“I encourage everyone who comes to my house – whether they are Catholic or not – to go and visit the Abbey.”

– Tara Rodden Robinson
Join the monks of Mount Angel Abbey for the Liturgy of the Hours

**Weekdays**
- Vigils: 5:20 a.m.
- Lauds: 6:30 a.m.
- Holy Eucharist: 8:00 a.m.
- Midday Prayer: Noon
- Vespers: 5:20 p.m.
- Compline: 7:30 p.m.

**Sundays and Solemnities**
- Vigils: 7:30 p.m. (Saturday)
- Lauds: 6:40 a.m.
- Holy Eucharist: 9:00 a.m.
- Midday Prayer: Noon
- Vespers: 5:20 p.m.
- Compline: 8:00 p.m.

Established in 1971, the Abbey Bach Festival invites national and international musicians for a three-day classical music celebration. Guests enjoy vespers with the monks, a picnic supper and featured performances.

This year, the festival is July 26th, 27th and 28th, beginning with Vespers in the Abbey church each evening at 5:20. The music begins at 6, followed by a buffet picnic dinner served from 6:30 to 8 pm outside on the lawn (weather permitting).

**Abbey Church – 6 PM**
- James Welch, organ – July 26, 27
- Male Ensemble Northwest – July 28

**Damian Center – 8 PM**
- Quatuor Saguenay – July 26
- Elinor Frey, 5-string cello and Lorenzo Ghielmi, pianoforte – July 27
- Fr. Sean Duggan, O.S.B., piano – July 28

*For information and tickets, call 503-845-3030 or see www.mountangelabbey.org/bach.*

If a monk, spiritual director or teacher has changed your life …

If a mentor at Mount Angel has challenged you to grow in new ways or 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 503-312-5425 or susan.gallagher@mtangel.edu.

Please note, when writing your will, our legal title and address is:

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