

Winter 2014

MOUNT *Angel Letter*



*“Listen ... with the
ear of your heart.”*

– Rule of Saint Benedict, Prologue



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Produced using ecologically responsible paper

MOUNT ANGEL LETTER

Dear Friends



Over the years I've advised young men preparing for priesthood to find the deepest awareness of their calling through prayerful reading of the Gospels, profoundly recognizing how Jesus carried out his priestly mission of reconciliation. The calling and the empowerment to share in that mission must find their deepest appreciation and meaning in the contemplation of Jesus the Priest. And it is in the pages of the Gospels that one finds the compassionate and merciful Jesus engaged in those priestly deeds that brought pardon and peace, healing and conversion, indeed, life and salvation to all who received him in faith.

Now, the reason for considering the above is that the contemplation of Jesus as Priest finds him not only "doing" saving deeds; it also finds him, at times, alone in the silence

of the mountain or out in the desert, pouring out his heart to his beloved Father in loving communion, even finding strength for the mission that would one day lead him into the unspeakable agony of his passion and death. St. Luke writes that in those days Jesus "departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God." Yes, Jesus, the Priest and Savior, was also a man of prayer, and may we not conclude from this powerful image of Jesus at prayer that if he, who is Incarnate Love, is compelled to be in prayerful communion with his Father, who is the God of Love, then shouldn't our own love for God be the compelling reason for us to be people of prayer? St. Benedict says "unhesitating obedience comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all." And so does prayer.

What, then, would inspire and give rise to such a compelling love? The answer, I believe, lies in the awareness and experience of God's abounding love for us, a love that is incarnate in Jesus Christ, a love that is ultimately defined by him on the cross, a love that abides within us as the Spirit, as our Inner Master, a love that may be experienced as a graced moment of awareness, or may well be mediated by loving encounters with significant others. Have we not often realized the in-breaking of Jesus into our daily experience ... in times of *lectio* and times of silence, in Eucharist and in contemplation of Jesus' Gospel of love, in those significant others whom the Lord draws into our lives with gifts of tender love and healing friendship? And, paradoxically, even in the cross which Jesus shares with those whom he loves? If the answer to such questions is "Yes," then we know something of God's abounding love for us! And then, too, we have every reason to pray, for prayer is the very communication of love for love. It is the necessary word of love that rises like a flowing fountain from the wellsprings of the heart, like incense that rises before the Lord from the burning coals of love.

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB
Mount Angel Abbey

Community

NEWS ABOUT MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY

Newly Professed Monk Finds His Path

Br. JoÚ Paul's path to solemn profession, taken in September, didn't follow a straight line. In his care to discern God's will, he spent an extra year as a junior monk. "I needed to be sure I could thrive here," Br. JoÚ Paul said. "Ultimately, that question was answered by the older monks. Their lives witnessed this possibility: One could find God. One could live with God. Seeing that in my confreres allowed me to believe it was possible for myself as well."

The son of Vietnamese immigrants, Br. JoÚ Paul grew up in Texas surrounded by a loving Catholic family who prayed the rosary together and shared a deep devotion to Mary. He remembers being on the sea with his father, a shrimp fisherman. "I enjoyed the solitude, the chance to feel close to God – not unlike a monastery!" he said. But it was in praying the rosary that he experienced God as close and intimate.

Following studies at the University of Portland, Br. JoÚ Paul served as a volunteer with the Salesians of St. JoÚ Bosco – initially in East Timor, a country in Southeast Asia that has been devastated by civil war – and then in Texas. Between

these assignments, he participated in a Monastic Vocation Discernment Retreat at the Abbey. He left without sensing a call to the Benedictine life, but said, "God put a longing in

on his monastic vocation, and is open to the Lord's call, wherever it may lead. In addition to his studies, he works in the sacristy and assists in the infirmary at the monastery.



my heart, and slowly that longing blossomed." In 2008, Br. JoÚ Paul entered the monastery. "I remember receiving the tunic and thinking I've done nothing to deserve this," he said. "But the younger monks and Abbot Gregory, then the monastery's prior, were very encouraging."

Br. JoÚ Paul is currently a third-year theology student at Mount Angel Seminary. He places priority

And he creates rosaries for the Abbey Bookstore, a simple task that complements his devotion to our Blessed Mother and echoes his first spiritual experiences as a child.

Please give praise to God for this newly professed monk, and pray for all those who are seeking to know God's will for their lives.

— Jim Thompson

COMMUNITY IN GOOD SPIRITS AT OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS

Prior Konrad Schaefer, OSB, reports from Mount Angel's daughter house, Our Lady of the Angels in Cuernavaca, Mexico, that the roof of the priory guesthouse sustained serious damage from a torrential downpour during hurricane season. On a more positive note, the community, including four novices and two postulants, is in good spirits. Br. Esteban Jaimez Flores, OSB, is in school in Mexico City, leaving the community without a musician, but several of the younger monks have stepped up to accompany at Mass and the Hours. A music instructor comes once a week to instruct them in the keyboard.



Monks' Corner

Excerpted from a newsletter written by Abbot Peter Eberle, a former abbot at Mount Angel Abbey

of us were, the results of the poll usually were remarkably consistent.

Lots of people have already heard

we are "going into the beer business," and they want to know when. So already we have a customer base and if the product is to their liking we might do all right.

We made it through the Thanksgiving Day banquet in fine shape. There was one

small glitch. The menu indicated the veggie would be fresh asparagus. Now, that is something to look forward to! But sad to say, it was a no-show. Whatever happened, our plates had a lot of white, and no green. None of us starved.

Father Paschal Cheline, OSB, continues to plug along but his illness is taking its toll. A generous benefactor bought him an electrical wheelchair. He is not teaching this semester, but he does receive visitors in his office in Anselm Hall, where a sign has been posted above his wheelchair spot: "Parking for Swedes only. All others will be towed."

One fine innovation has taken place at the Jubilee Mass. A couple

of seminarians conceived the idea of "greeters," and everyone who counted thought it was a great idea. (So do I, for the record, though I hardly qualify as "one who counts"). Anyway, the greeters made their debut. I wonder why it took 125 years for someone to think of it.

October: As I write these lines, our confrere Br. Maurus Kreutzer is lying on his deathbed in the room on the south end of the first floor. If he doesn't hear the words, "Welcome home, good and faithful servant," in a few days time, none of us ever will. How we will miss him!



The monks take turns serving meals in the refectory. On Thanksgiving Day, they enjoyed good company and good food.

The monks have had several opportunities to judge the types of beer the Benedictine Brewery might produce. A gentleman was on the Hilltop to teach us how to discern the taste of beer. It involved looking at it for color, swishing it about in the glass, smelling it, swirling a small taste in the mouth to discern its qualities. Sad to say, I would be disqualified as a competent judge the moment the smell test came. I don't smell much. However, I sniffed as if I could get the full impact of the hoppiness, and swirled it in my mouth as if I could discern the subtlest of flavors. Inexpert as many



Special thanks go to the four children of Lynde and Marsha Roberts! They hand-delivered a homemade card to the Abbey, complete with an enclosed donation for the seminary and the health care of the monks.

Formation

NEWS ABOUT MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

New Candidates at Seminary Say 'Yes' to Lord's Call

The soaring descants of "Salve Regina" filled the Abbey Church in October, greeting a procession of visiting bishops, priests, seminary faculty and 17 men about to be admitted to Candidacy for Ordination as deacons and priests.

The Most Reverend Alexander K. Sample, Archbishop of Portland, presided at the Mass and Rite of Admission, which committed the seminarians to a deeper level of preparation for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood.

"This is a holy and mysterious journey to the priesthood," said the Archbishop in his homily. "This is another 'yes' to the call of the Lord. The Church needs men to light the fire. We have been lukewarm for too long."

The candidates were from 11 dioceses, in Oregon, California, Michigan, Montana, Utah and American Samoa. The seminary is currently forming 154 seminarians for priestly service.

Four Deacons Ordained



José Isaac Alejandro de la Cruz was among those ordained in October.

Four Mount Angel deacons were ordained in October, consecrating their lives to God. New deacons include Br. Teresio Caldwell, OSB, and Br. Andrew Schwenke, OSB,

of Mount Angel Abbey, José Isaac Alejandro de la Cruz, of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, and Br. Leonel Varela, of the California-Arizona Province of the Discalced Carmelites. Archbishop Sample was the celebrant.

In addition to their studies and other duties, the newly ordained deacons serve in local parishes where they assist with pastoral services. Br. Teresio will spend weekends serving as a deacon with St. Mary's Church in Mount Angel. Br. Andrew looks forward to serving weekend Masses at St. Paul's in Silverton and Deacon Isaac will serve at St. Alexander in Cornelius. Br. Leonel resides at the Carmelite House of Studies in Mount Angel and will serve at St. Juan Diego parish in Portland.



MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

Mount Angel Seminary celebrates its 125th anniversary this year!

Watch for stories and news about the seminary in the summer issue.



Congratulations ...

to Rev. Richard Keolker, STL, a seminary faculty member and much-loved spiritual director who recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

Seminary Benefit Dinner Breaks Fundraising Records

The tenth annual Mount Angel Seminary Benefit Dinner, held in November at the Oregon Convention Center, brought in more than \$800,000, a record amount that topped last year's dinner by 20 percent.

Lynn Jones, Abbey foundation president, welcomed 800 guests, including 140 seminarians and Archbishop Sample as a speaker. The program was emceed by Deacon Lauro Minimo, of the Diocese of San Diego, who serves as chair of this year's Student Pastoral Council at the seminary.

A moving testimonial was offered by Deacon Minh Do, of the Diocese of San Diego, whose journey to Mount Angel began more than 8,000 miles away. He was only seven when his family fled the communist takeover in Vietnam. They landed in California, where, as a young man, Deacon Do

established his own financial services business. But even after he had found his version of the "American Dream," he sensed a lack of fulfillment, and began to feel the Holy Spirit nudging him toward the priesthood. "When I found out I was accepted to the priestly program of formation, a sense of peace and joy came over me, and it has never left me since," Deacon Do said. "And this spring, God willing, I will be ordained a priest. I can't wait."

"Our sponsors and guests filled the room with a spirit of love and generosity," said Stephen Zimmer, a trustee of the Abbey Foundation of Oregon who chaired the event.



Mount Angel seminarians sing to 800 guests at the recent Seminary Benefit Dinner.

Next year's dinner, scheduled for Nov. 2, 2014, will celebrate the 125th anniversary of Mount Angel Seminary. For information about sponsorships, tickets or volunteer participation, please contact the Development Office at SBD@mountangelabbey.org or 503-845-3066.



Seminarian Andres Guerra, from the Diocese of Orange, led the Guardians to a winning season.

Winning Soccer Team Shows Spirit

A winning season for the Mount Angel Seminary Soccer Team surprised many, including some of the players. At a small school like Mount Angel, sports teams are generally organized and coached by students themselves and budgets are bare bones.

The Guardians finished 6-2-2 in the Cascade Collegiate Soccer League while competing against area rivals such as Oregon State University, Lewis & Clark College and Willamette University. It helped to have a former professional player on the roster; seminarian Andres Guerra had a brief career with Chivas USA in Major League Soccer before scoring the bulk of the Guardian goals this season. And a diehard supporter who ran along the field with a Vatican flag brought laughs and raised spirits.

The roster of 20 men, coached by seminarian Daniel Miller, enjoyed the victories, but more importantly, they cultivated character through competition on the field.

PRAYER

The Open Window

“In the desert of the heart, let the healing fountain start.”

– W. H. Auden

When you first visit Mount Angel Abbey, whether you are carrying a suitcase, guiding a toddler or pushing a walker, you discover it’s a long trek across the Hilltop to the church. You might call it a pilgrimage. Depending upon the time of year and day, you may be surrounded by a host of seminarians – or you may walk alone.

Where have you come from and where are you going?

You wonder about the monks who live here. Are they permitted to speak? (Yes.) Do they really pray six times a day? (Yes.) Do they truly welcome visitors as Christ, even me? (Yes.)

You enter the church, perhaps for noon prayer, and hear these words intoned, “God, come to my assistance. Lord, make haste to help me.” It’s likely you page fruitlessly through a prayer book, confused by the ancient composition of the Liturgy of the Hours; a monk or another guest will make haste to help you.

As you step into the river of psalmody, all the hopes and fears of the human heart roll by. You have joined a chorus of pray-ers across continents, across time. In every hour and place, the chain is unbroken, and now you are one of the links.

You gaze at the icon of Christ, written by Br. Claude, and recognize it as a window to the divine. The icon shows us Jesus, and Jesus – as the icon of God – shows us the Father.

You hear a brief word of scripture, read carefully, as though it was chosen for you. It was. The monks, robed in black habits, bow to the altar and retreat to their refectory for lunch.

These men of God may seem impossibly remote from your daily life. Then you get to know them. You see Br. Cyril biking up the road. You catch Fr. Augustine planting bulbs by the Stations of the Cross. Fr. Pius regales you with stories about the British monarchy. Br. Basil gives you a Hilltop tour and recalls the question most frequently asked by visiting eighth-graders: “What do the monks wear to bed?” They are real men, full of life, here to seek God, available to you.

Yet, underlying the chanted prayers and friendly conversation, there is a deep silence. Like many others who came before you, you will describe this silence as “peace.” It is real. It is what you came for.

Listen with the ear of your heart, as St. Benedict instructs us all. Gaze through the icon, the open window, upon Christ. He has been waiting for you, all along.

– Jodi Kilcup



‘Come to me, seek me, find me’

I grew up in California and was educated by the sisters of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. I knew, from seventh grade on, that I wanted to be a sister, and entered the convent at age 18. I eventually ended up with the Benedictine Sisters of Mount Angel. I was a Los Angeles girl coming to a small, rural Swiss-German town, but I believe I was meant to end up here.

There will never be a perfect place or a perfect time to pray. We have to open ourselves to be more and more mindful of God’s presence in our life. If we do that, we’ll recognize opportunities for prayer. Those moments are already here, waiting for our awareness. They can come in the kitchen, or in the car, or with our families. When we are intent on listening to another person, that moment of listening can ultimately become a prayer. Who am I to say that God is not speaking to someone through that experience?

As for me, a Benedictine, the focus of our communal prayer will always be the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist. This is the “school of the Lord’s service” in which I come to recognize more fully the Lord praying in myself and others.

I think all humans, myself included, want to control everything. If we learn the correct prayer technique, our prayer life will be perfect. We pay attention to the structure and form of prayer, whether it’s communal

prayer or contemplative prayer, and that helps us get in touch, but ultimately, we only need to listen. God is the one who is seeking us. He is going to follow us and care for us, picking us up every time we fall.

We all need to grow. We have many miles to go. When we realize we have wronged another or made a mistake, we sometimes come to a deeper awareness of self. Our imperfections don’t mean God is absent. God is present, in all of us.

One person I would like to meet in heaven is Saint Ambrose of Milan. He was one of the Church’s early mystics, and wrote some of the most beautiful words I have ever read: *Come then, Lord Jesus ... Come to me, seek me, find me. Take me in your arms, carry me.*

My dearest Lord Jesus is truly the Lord over this whole world, carrying each of us Home.

Sr. Judith Bloxham, OSB, received her master’s degree in theology, in 1978, at Mount Angel Seminary, where she now serves as associate director of Human Formation.



Freedom comes from giving yourself to God

I was introduced to prayer as a child, but the rote memorization lacked meaning, and when I joined the army at age 17, I gradually drifted away from my Catholic roots.

In my early 30s, I began to realize that something profoundly important was missing from my life. I had everything I should need in order to be happy, yet I was miserable. At the edge of despair, I began a journey of seeking God, and I slowly began to realize this: I am a child of God. I am loved. I deserve peace and happiness.

I looked at all the major religions, but although I knew nothing about the Bible, that is where I eventually turned, because that is my religious heritage. I read the Bible from cover to cover, and in its pages, I found my story – the story of rebellion and sin, and the story of redemption and salvation.

Although I didn’t yet know the name for it, I began the practice of lectio divina. Back and forth in a dialogue with God, I can just sit and be still. I go back to the Word, not so much trying to interpret the words but to just accept them, to be led into praise and thanksgiving. To reflect.

Through lectio divina, I discovered my relationship with Christ, I truly embraced my faith, and I began to try to “walk the walk.” I was no longer authorized to judge and condemn. I was called to be compassionate. I saw God moving and working in my life and in the people around me, and felt more and more drawn into a relationship with him until, eventually, that relationship was the only thing that truly mattered. I got rid of distractions, began to immerse myself in silence, and gradually realized that I was called to the monastic way of life.

Now I chant every day. I get up at 4:30 to pray the Divine Office. It doesn’t seem like a sacrifice. This is the paradox: Letting go of attachments is the greatest exercise in freedom. There is freedom in willingly giving yourself to God. In the beginning, regular prayer sometimes takes discipline, but at some point it becomes natural, and you discover that prayer at the center simplifies everything.

My prayer life here has mellowed. My once fierce, burning fervor has been replaced by a quiet calm, a trust that is sustainable over a lifetime. I know exactly where I’m supposed to be. God is good.

Br. Andre Love, OSB, is a watercolor artist and iconographer who is currently painting the Seven Sorrows of Mary, which will be installed in the cemetery chapel at the Abbey. He serves as curator for the Abbey museum and caretaker for the Abbey art collection.

This is the paradox: Letting go of attachments is the greatest exercise in freedom. – Br. Andre Love, OSB



Recollection

Once a semester we embrace silence on the Hilltop. Cell phones are forbidden, homework is excused, the Internet is discouraged, and the invitation is open to pursue the Lord's love at work in our lives. It's called a Day of Recollection. I like that. Recollecting our thoughts. Reinvigoration of our relationship with Christ. Reengagement with our deeper selves. Realignment of our priorities. Recollection. It fits.

These Days of Recollection usually take one of two directions for me: Either I consciously set aside the activities at hand to offer the day to the Lord, or I go about halfway and sneak a couple of peeks at Facebook, read a textbook for class (but a spiritual one, of course), and maybe watch an episode of TV before going to bed (with my headphones on so as not to disturb the silence for anyone else).

Why is it that we have such a hard time slowing down and letting things go? School activities fill my schedule. I have a full course load. I coach and play for the soccer team, play for the basketball team, and serve as athletic chair for pre-theology and theology. I teach second-grade religious education for my pastoral ministry and tutor in the Writing Center on campus. I take piano lessons. I pray in community with my brothers twice a day and attend daily Mass.

I'm busy. Most people are. We tend to have full to-do lists, and we stretch our ability to manage our time. In truth, that's why these periods of concentrated, planned rest can be powerful and even vital to our wellbeing. Taking care of ourselves helps us take care of others. This is true not only for seminarians and priests, but for lay people.

Catholic author Matthew Kelly encourages his readers to spend 10 minutes a day in the classroom of silence, for the silence feeds our souls with the Lord's simple presence, giving us strength for the mission before us. To become a healthy, happy and holy priest necessarily means receiving the Lord in Word and Eucharist, but also in silence, in recollection, in others, in the Church. Recollection is both personal – interpreting the call amid the internal chaos, and communal – gathering once the silence concludes to become more fully the Body of Christ.

All of us encounter this journey together, sharing in a profound communion that calls me to become the best version of myself, so I may give myself more freely to others. And so I embrace the silence, putting away the distractions of the day – and find God's embrace awaiting me.

Seminarian Daniel Miller, from the Diocese of Boise in Idaho, is in his second year of pre-theology. He has an undergraduate degree in journalism.



Faith takes root for oblates

Every Saturday morning, Cheryl and Michael Schwartz, with their teenage children in tow, drive from Colton, Ore., to join the monks for Mass. Fifteen years ago Michael didn't believe in God, and for Cheryl, religion wasn't on the radar. "But when Christian friends reintroduced us to Christ, life became new, and gained more purpose and meaning," Michael said.

In a slow but steady progression, faith became part of their daily lives, and they even joined the Abbey as oblates, formally offering their lives to Christ. They set aside a place in their home for prayer, and began praying the Divine Office in the morning and evening – separately. Then they began praying with each other after the children went to bed, until their children, Chelsea and Jason, asked if they could join. Now they pray the psalms as a family.

One thing they have learned is that they shouldn't harbor expectations about what prayer should be. "We petition God a lot, but we need to be receptive to what God can give, without placing expectations," said Fr. Pius X Harding, OSB, director of the Guest House and the Oblate Program at Mount Angel.

Cheryl concedes that, in the beginning, she was sometimes impatient. "I would practice lectio divina, but it seemed like nothing was happening, and it was discouraging," she said. "I think it's a little like the bulbs you plant in the fall. Through the winter they are dormant, and you can't see anything happening, but the bulb is quietly sending out roots, getting established. You have to wait until spring before the shoots come up and then flower. God is gentle. He works slowly."

THINKING WITH GOD

When people go on retreat at the Abbey Guest House, they have an opportunity to unplug. They can turn off the cell phones and computers, and resist the external noises that work their way inside. Retreats allow us to rest, both physically and spiritually. They give us time to recollect – I call it "thinking with God." When we visit the deepest places in our hearts, there is a certain vulnerability. Here, people have a safe place to explore things they are grappling with.

And so we invite others to come share our life, as it is, with both its beauty and its imperfections. Some days the choir is flat, or people may not find perfect silence, but every day the Holy Spirit is at work. This is our meager attempt to love God and live in peace, and hopefully, our life here will in some way point us to heaven.

– Fr. Pius X Harding, OSB, directs the Abbey Guest House.

Hospitality

SHARING OUR WAY OF LIFE

Benedictines Find God Within Books

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

Centuries later, the monks at Mount Angel Abbey are taking the same care with that same 13th-century Bible, preserving the work of their long-departed brother. The ancient Bible is part of a 200,000-volume collection at Mount Angel Abbey Library that has grown into one of the most significant theological libraries in the Pacific Northwest. It covers the breadth of human knowledge, but specializes in philosophy, theology and the humanities, and includes hundreds of ancient books.

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



Biblical characters David and Goliath are featured in a Book of Hours from the 15th century. The Abbey's newest acquisition, a Book of Hours from an anonymous donor, was created in the workshop of the most successful French illuminator of the 1490s.

The first monasteries were established against a bloody backdrop. As the Roman Empire disintegrated, barbarians ravaged their way across the European continent and everyday people lived on the edge of survival. In stark opposition to the social and political chaos, Benedictine monasteries, following the Rule of

St. Benedict, became centers of order and stability.

During the Middle Ages, monks nurtured a love of reading, writing and contemplative study, and their monasteries became beacons of learning. One could often find a rich liturgical life and intelligent

conversation, and as time went on, monasteries established schools for children and accumulated illuminated manuscripts and works of sacred art. While some monastic libraries were small enough to fit in a sacristy cupboard, others held more than a thousand volumes and included the literature of ancient Rome.

That love of learning continues at Mount Angel Abbey. Five years after the first monks arrived in 1882, they followed the example of their motherhouse in Switzerland, whose school traced its roots to the 12th century, and founded Mount Angel College. Two years later, they founded the seminary, whose priests have since served more than 11 million Catholics. They established a press and a German-language newspaper that was distributed to readers across the U.S. And the books they had brought from their motherland became the nucleus of a small library.

Abbey monks took turns looking after the library, but were unable to save the thousands of books that went up in flames during the 1926 fire on the Hilltop. They were undeterred. When Fr. Luke Eberle and Fr. Martin

about professionalizing the small Abbey library. By the late 1950s, he had convinced the monks that a new building was needed to house the growing collection, and in 1970, a sleek, modernist-style library,

“Love of learning and the search for God are almost synonymous,” says Father Odo Recker, OSB, subprior of Mount Angel Abbey.

Pollard, studying in Europe, heard about a German bookseller who was declaring bankruptcy, they bought thousands of volumes and shipped them home to Oregon. Lay people donated books and priests willed private collections, and boxes of books soon began arriving at the Abbey.

The library experienced strong growth under the leadership of Fr. Barnabas Reasoner, OSB. Armed with a library science degree, he set

designed by renowned Finnish architect Alvar Aalto and made possible through a significant gift from Howard and Jean Vollum, was dedicated.

Now readers will find Bibles in dozens of world languages – every tongue from Nez Pierce to Ethiopian to Hawaiian – along with eclectic collections for bird lovers or Civil War buffs. In the Antiquarian and Rare Books stacks, visitors will find 5,000 titles published before 1900,

A MONK REFLECTS ON BOOKS AND CONTEMPLATIVE READING

Reading is an essential feature of the monastic life. At 7:30 every night, life becomes very quiet in the monastery. We don't watch television. We read. Our monastic silence makes reading and reflection possible.

People enjoyed reflecting more when the world was quieter. That's how poetry came into existence. Now the world is a noisy place, we have become a fast-paced people, and it sometimes seems that contemplative reading might be in danger of becoming a lost art. We have so many ways of gaining information – films, the Internet, YouTube – but a lot of information on the screen goes by quickly, making it more difficult to reflect. Reading a book lends itself to contemplation – books are the record, the wonder, the way we come to know ourselves, our history and the great mystery of God.

Today, people have to intentionally look to find places of quiet, and they come to the monastery to rest in silence for a while – to read, to walk, and to practice the kind of reflection that comes from the deepest part of our being.

Fr. Paschal Cheline, OSB, is a much-loved monk who has taught art history and liturgy at the seminary. He served as vice-rector of the Seminary College and as a spiritual director in the monastery and seminary, and currently serves as junior master in the monastery.

most of them focused on Roman Catholicism and many written in Greek or Latin. “Many of the books are not only extremely beautiful, they are rare and valuable,” said library administrator Victoria Ertelt.

“Many seminaries and religious houses closed and sold off their collections, and most libraries no longer have these rare books,” said former assistant librarian, Fr. Augustine DeNoble, OSB. “We bought many of them, which added valuable titles that had been out of print, for years or for centuries.

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

continue to be precious. And so we will continue to prudently and carefully build up our collection.”

Last year visitors checked out 22,000 books from a collection that spans 1290 A.D. to the age of the Internet.

The Abbey, true to its Benedictine tradition of hospitality, recently welcomed visitors to a rare books exhibit, and staff members regularly track down out-of-print books and conduct research for Catholic and non-Catholic scholars from around the country.

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

The monks at Mount Angel have created a place where God can be encountered, not only in the Abbey

Church and on serene walkways, but also in spiritual retreats, arts and music events, and theological lectures. And they offer an opportunity for visitors to find God within the pages of books that inspire faith and tell the human story – books that include a tattered volume recorded by a 13th-century monk who sat down with a quill and began copying, “In the beginning ...”

– Nadene LeCheminant



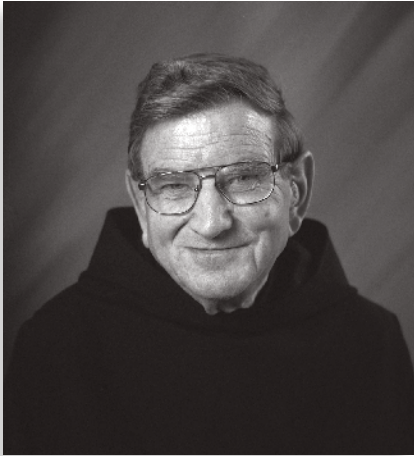
Students from Willamette University toured the Hilltop and library, and also got a first-hand look at illuminated manuscripts. Nearly 40 school groups visit the Hilltop each year.



Sunrise from the Hilltop

Remembering Br. Maurus

Sixty-five years ago, back in 1948 when the young 20-year-old George Kreutzer entered our monastery, World War II had ended only three years earlier, Harry Truman was president of the United States, Pius XII was Pope, Thomas Meier still reigned as the fourth abbot of Mount Angel, and I was a little kid in the sixth grade.



Br. Maurus Kreutzer

By worldly standards, our diamond Jubilarian, Br. Maurus Kreutzer, didn't achieve what some might consider a brilliant career, but by monastic standards he was a hero, with 65 years of faithful service to the Lord and to the community he loved.

Of course, I've been in the monastery for only 56 years, but that's long enough to remember Br. Maurus the gardener, the plumber, the maintenance man, the kitchen helper and the mail bagger at our Benedictine Press!

Br. Maurus appreciated being part of a community of brothers who supported one another in a life of prayer and work. And in his later years, when he lost his hearing and struggled with his speech, did he shut himself up in his room? Hardly! Indeed, to the very end he liked “being together,” and you could scarcely go anywhere in the monastery without meeting Br. Maurus in his wheelchair. In his silent world, with the various afflictions of old age, not only did

he not despair or withdraw from his community, he remained very much present, loving and much loved. Some of our fondest memories of him will be his gracious and oft-spoken “Thank you.”

In the end, with his medical options depleted, Br. Maurus didn't waste time in making the journey to his heavenly homeland. He had spent a few days in the hospital, and then we brought him home to the monastery so he could spend his remaining days in the midst of his brother monks, who kept vigil at his bedside to the very end.

The day before he passed away, Br. Maurus asked: “Am I dying?” and he accepted the reminder with a peaceful nod. Death is that ultimate moment of truth when we come before the Lord, not with our bag full of good deeds and accomplishments to impress him, but rather, as St. Therese said, with empty hands. “In the evening of this life,” she wrote, “I shall appear before you with empty hands ... I shall have only my desires to offer him.”

On the memorial of St. Therese, Br. Maurus' soul took its flight into eternal Glory. And what a glorious homecoming it must have been! No longer impeded by ears that could not hear, we trust that our beloved brother heard these words, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

Excerpted from the funeral homily for Br. Maurus Kreutzer, OSB, delivered by Abbot Gregory Duerr. Readers can find more writings by Abbot Gregory at “A WORD from the Abbot,” on the Abbey homepage.

Generosity

THANKS TO OUR BENEFACTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Hobbit Dragon Inspires Giving

Richard Kreitzberg credits a dragon in *The Hobbit* – and a homily – as his inspiration for recent gifts to Mount Angel Seminary that totaled more than \$725,000 dollars.

One of Kreitzberg's first lessons in generosity came from his parish priest, who said God could not be outdone by our generosity. "So I put a quarter in the collection basket," Kreitzberg said. "Later, when I was collecting subscription money for my newspaper route in Missoula, Mont., I found a dollar had been left for me."

As an eighth-grader, Kreitzberg lost his father and was given an early start on making his own way. He left his home in Montana to study aeronautics at the University of Washington and Stanford University, and eventually parlayed his education and experience into the creation of several successful businesses in the Northwest. Now, approaching 80, Kreitzberg has reflected anew on the act of generosity.

"I was listening to a radio homily by Fr. Robert Barron," Kreitzberg said. "He compared wealthy individuals to Smaug the dragon, in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Smaug hoarded and protected treasure for which he had no use." Tolkien implies that this "dragon sickness" afflicts many people in contemporary society, who know the value of everything and the worth of nothing.

"I thought about my own treasure," Kreitzberg said. "Even after providing for the needs of my family, I knew there was more that my treasure should do."

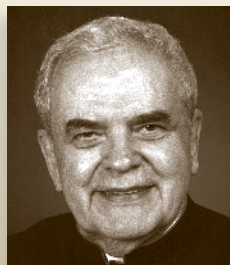
After a fly-fishing trip with a priest in Montana, Kreitzberg created a generous scholarship fund to support Mount Angel seminarians from the Diocese of Helena. He followed up that gift with funds to revolutionize the seminary's student information system, website, security, classroom technology and other critical systems.

"We need to avoid dragon sickness," Kreitzberg said. "We work hard, and we may feel we deserve what we have acquired. But unless we put that which has been entrusted to us to work, we have nothing – like old Smaug, the dragon."

– Jim Thompson



Lord, grant them peace



Msgr. James J. Ribble
(1930–2013),
former
president-
rector of
Mount Angel
Seminary,

served as a trustee for the Wheeler Foundation, which established the Msgr. James M. Ribble President Rector's Endowed Fund. The fund supports the seminary. A member of the Abbey's Legacy Society, Msgr. Ribble included the seminary in his bequest.

During his tenure as president-rector, the seminary was awarded full academic accreditations by a number of organizations, including the Association of Northwest Colleges and Universities.



Jeannette Teresa Epping
(1928–2013),
together with
her husband
Larry (who
survives
her), have

made annual gifts to the Abbey and seminary for the past four decades, and are gratefully recognized among the Abbey's most generous benefactors.

Together with their children, Gary, Shawn, Daniel, Randy and Tracy, they established the Larry and Jeanette Epping Family Foundation. Their grants have shaped the historic transformation of the Hilltop, contributing to projects that included Aquinas Hall, Annunciation Hall, Anselm Hall, the Abbey Museum, the Abbey Church bell tower, and the monastery cloister. The Eppings have also been major sponsors of the Seminary Benefit Dinner since its inception. Larry considers his greatest blessing to have met Jeanette, in 1947.

Fellowship

NEWS FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

On Opposite Sides of the World, Mount Angel Alumni Serve Remote Rural Parishes

Fr. Douglas Krings '13 is new to the ministry, but feels like he's been serving for years. "I'm finally doing what I'm supposed to be doing," he says.

Fr. Krings has returned to his beloved home state of Montana, where he serves St. Benedict's Catholic Church in Roundup, along with mission churches in Melstone, Winnett, Broadview and Ryegate.

In addition to services at St. Benedict's, Fr. Krings is able to celebrate Mass with two missions each weekend. "I drive about 40 miles in each direction, like the spokes on a wheel," he said. His drives take him past hayfields and cattle, through the prairie grasslands that skirt the edge of a mountain range.



Fr. Douglas Krings' parishioners plant a memorial tree at Our Lady of Mercy Mission in Melstone, Mont.

"I love my drives through the open country," he said. "Even when it's 20 below zero, it's all beautiful to me."

Now 66, Fr. Krings felt a call to the priesthood after being widowed 11 years ago. He worked in the greenhouse and nursery business before coming to Mount Angel, which he says prepared him well for the ministry.

Being a priest to his parishioners feels natural, and completely right, he says. "I love these people. And they are so appreciative to have the sacraments."

– Jim Thompson



Fr. Dominic Mohapi, OSB, graduated from Mount Angel in 2000 and now serves nine mission churches in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. This small tin structure, St. Luke's Church in the village of Ga-Mothapo, doesn't withstand the rain, and Fr. Dominic hopes to eventually construct a building that will house his rapidly growing congregation.

Mount Angel Seminary alumni, send us your photos and stories! Contact us at alumni@mtangel.edu.



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JOIN US ONLINE!

The new Benedictine Brewery Facebook page is gaining lots of fans. Our favorite posts so far: "May your beers give the Belgian Cistercians worthy competition!" and "Here's to faith, hops and charity!" Readers can also "Like" the Abbey Facebook page, or subscribe to "A WORD from the Abbot," accessed from the Abbey homepage.

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: 12 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.
The Holy Eucharist: 9 a.m.
Midday Prayer: 12 noon
Vespers: 5:15 p.m.
Compline: 8 p.m.

Calendar

MARCH	5	Ash Wednesday, Solemn Day of Reflection
	8	Christian in the World Program, "The Holy Spirit in the Christian Moral Life," Abbot Peter Eberle, OSB
	9	Fifth Annual Seminary Benefit Dinner in Eugene
APRIL	9-14	Benedictine Oblate Monastic Living Retreat
	12	Christian in the World Program, "The Holy Spirit in Evangelization Speaker," Fr. Ignacio Llorente
	15-20	Holy Week, private retreats available Tuesday through Sunday
	16-20	Seminary Spring Break
	20	Easter Sunday Mass at Abbey
	29	Seminary Appreciation Dinner
MAY	9	Baccalaureate Mass
	10	Seminary Graduation
	12-25	St. Paul in Italy and Sicily, pilgrimage with Fr. Odo Recker, OSB
JUNE	28	Eighth Annual Festival of Arts & Wine
JULY	11-13	St. Benedict Day Oblate Family Weekend
	14-16	Oblate Leadership Conference
	23-25	Mount Angel Abbey Bach Festival
SEPTEMBER	10-11	Mount Angel Seminary Homecoming
	23-25	Benedictine Oblate Retreat
	26-28	Benedictine Oblate Retreat
NOVEMBER	2	11th Annual Seminary Benefit Dinner, celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the seminary

8TH ANNUAL

MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY

FESTIVAL OF ARTS & WINE '14

Save the Date!

Join us for the Eighth Annual Festival of Arts & Wine on June 28, and mark your calendars for the Abbey Bach Festival, July 23-25.

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

Find us on Facebook
www.mountangelabbey.org