

Winter 2016

MOUNT *Angel Letter*



The Year of Mercy at Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary



INSIDE *This Issue*

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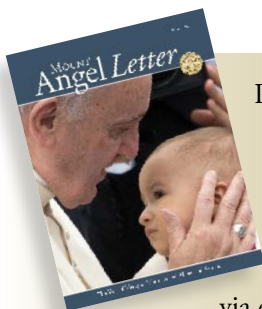
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- 2 Monks' Corner
- 4 Becoming a Monk
- 6 Papal trip changes perspective on priesthood
- 8 The Year of Mercy at Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary
- 10 Migrant ministry: Pastoral formation in the orchards



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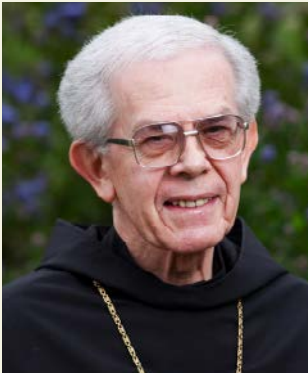
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Editor: Nadene LeCheminant



Dear Friends



Dear friends, this will be my final letter to introduce the *Mount Angel Letter*. Advancing years and failing eyesight beckon for younger blood to carry on the spiritual leadership of our monastic community, and in these closing words I can do no better, perhaps, than to echo the theme of our Holy Father Pope Francis in raising a clarion call to MERCY! The abounding mercy of God has ever been unfailing. What has been failing, though, has been the world's mindfulness of its dire need for the divine benevolence. In a world where Godliness has grown cold, where worldly pursuits prevail, where human life is little respected and where spiritual transcendence is dulled, there comes from Pope Francis a call to conversion – and conversion, indeed, to the God of Mercy!

What, after all, is mercy? It seems to me that mercy is love ... love making its gracious response to human need. It's of the nature of love to be merciful; it's how true love is. What was it that the Lord said of himself to Moses on Mt. Sinai? *"The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity, continuing his kindness for a thousand generations ..."* (Exodus 34:6). It is how God is; it is how Love is, and mercy follows love's law of reciprocity – which is to say that when it is received, it should inspire the recipient to give that same gift of mercy to others. The failure to do so is called ingratitude. Hopefully, the following pages will illustrate some of the works of mercy of our seminarians and monks, while my present purpose is to draw attention to that most gracious and beautiful Face that inspires our every other reflection and experience of mercy in the compassionate encounters we have with our brothers and sisters in community, friendship and loving service.

Yes, in wondrous condescension the God of Mercy has taken on our humanity and has shown to the world the very Face of Mercy – and it is the Face of the Lord Jesus, Son of God, born of Mary! The opening words of Pope Francis' Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy proclaim this:

Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. ... Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him. The Father, "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4), ... sent his only Son into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to reveal his love for us in a definitive way. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. John 14:9). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person, reveals the mercy of God.

Yes, dear friends, let us contemplate the Face of Jesus – "his words, his actions, and his entire person" – and we will know the meaning of Mercy ...

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB

Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB

Community

NEWS ABOUT MOUNT ANGEL ABBEY

RHYTHM OF MONASTIC AND PARISH LIFE APPEALS TO MOUNT ANGEL MONK



Fr. William Hammelman, OSB, has a Divine Office app that calls him to prayer six times each day. His cell phone bells aren't as inspirational as the Abbey bells, but they do mark the hours. After a lifetime in the monastery, the Mount Angel monk now lives among his parishioners at St. Paul, in nearby Silverton, Ore.

This year Fr. William celebrates his 50th anniversary as a monk. He grew up on a small farm near Mt. Angel, and entered the seminary as a teenager. He joined the monastery in 1964, making his profession the following year. "I sometimes got homesick and snuck off to visit my family, but community life appealed to me," he said. "I liked the rhythm, and the balance of work and prayer."

As a seminarian, he experienced the tumult of the 1960s, and welcomed the Second Vatican Council. He remembers the mimeographed sheets right off the press as the seminary shifted away from teaching theology in Latin. "That council opened up everything for me," he said. "All of us seminarians were so excited. We would stay up half the night talking."

Back then, Fr. William said, the seminary didn't have a formal

pastoral formation program; in their newfound enthusiasm, the seminarians just volunteered. He taught religious education up at Crooked Finger, a mission of Mount Angel, although he insisted that he drive, as he didn't trust the driving of the priest, a fellow monk.

Fr. William was ordained a priest in 1971. After earning a master's degree in communication, he taught speech and preaching for 30 years in the seminary, where he also served as a formation director. He facilitated Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter workshops on weekends, and served as prior of the monastery, where one of his favorite activities was managing the cherry, apple and pear orchards, along with the Abbey tree farm. "I always liked working

outdoors as a balance to the rest of my life," he said.

Now the parish priest offers Mass in English and Spanish each week to 450 families. "Parish life is never boring," said Fr. William, who has served at St. Paul for 13 years. "One morning you're fixing the heat and the next morning you're preparing a funeral homily. I have always loved pastoral work. I like encouraging people on their journey, bringing them closer to God. This work has been a blessing for me."

Fr. William's Golden Jubilee took him by surprise. "I don't know where half a century went," he says, "but I'm a lifer."



Each night the monks gather around the "Blessed Mother" statue in the Abbey Church, singing hymns in her honor. Mary was particularly beautiful during the Christmas season.

MONKS' CORNER

Excerpted from a letter to Abbey monks, written by Abbot Peter Eberle, OSB, a former Abbot at Mount Angel Abbey



This year six postulants entered the novitiate. Already three of them are sporting new names, and they received their hoodless scapular. So they are off and running. ... Brothers Joseph Kalange and Marvin Ramos, now Brothers Timothy and Bede, made their

first profession, and Brother Lorenzo Conocido and Brother Louis de Montfort Nguyen made their solemn professions.

In September, busses ran from the Mt. Angel Oktoberfest to the Abbey, so we had our usual swarm of visitors. One of the seminarians, Neil Guan, baked 1,600 cookies, and the college seminarians set up a little welcoming booth and offered coffee and cookies.

Some freshly pressed grape juice showed up in the dining rooms for breakfast. Word soon got around that Chef Paul and the novices went out to Goschie Farms and picked five thousand pounds of donated

grapes, but the novices probably weren't asked to stomp them!

We had our usual Thanksgiving Day observance. The Recessional hymn at the Mass was "America the Beautiful," and after Midday Prayer we sang the *Te Deum* and the bells pealed throughout.

Work has continued on installation of new windows in the monastery, with almost 151 done and 27 more to go. All that will be left are the arched windows. We are thankful for the generous Abbey friends who have made this work possible.

In November food had to be carried up and down the steps from the kitchen to the dining room because the kitchen elevator wasn't working. In a sense, that elevator can be called Old Faithful because it has been in operation for, I assume, about as long as the monastery has been in existence. However, part of its fidelity is that at least once or twice a year it can be counted on to break down. But Old Faithful keeps plugging along, hoisting its heavy load day after day. In her own way she is a great witness of monastic fidelity.

Keep us in your prayers as we do each day for you.
Abbot Peter

Br. Cyril Drnjevic grew up hiking the coastal rain forest in Washington State, so when Pope Francis offered his encyclical, "On Care for Our Common Home," Br. Cyril put his love for creation into action, giving public talks on the topic.

Br. Cyril's Peace Corps work in Liberia brought him face to face with human suffering, so he also offers retreats about healing. "I want to help people move away from suffering and toward healing in Jesus," he says. The former college debater offers lectures, interviews and retreats locally and nationally.



January brought snow to the Hilltop. Who says monks don't like snowmen?

Br. Lorenzo Conocido, OSB

BECOMING A MONK

Some people wonder how to become a monk because they're considering monastic life. Others are simply curious: Where does one begin? What's it like to go through the process of leaving the world and entering the cloister?

"The process seemed slow at first, and I wasn't sure where things were going," said Br. Christopher Walch, one of the Abbey's six new novices. "It was like the entrance road to the Abbey – slow, winding, and slightly

Fr. Odo Recker, OSB, Abbot Gregory Duerr, OSB, and other members of the Abbey's Monastic Formation Council they were formally invited into the community as postulants.

In a traditional Abbey ritual, they knocked on the monastery door, were welcomed by the Abbot, were given black habits, and were presented to monks and guests at a simple ceremony. After several months, with the blessing of their brothers, the

Fr. Odo describes the process as a courtship. "You arrange for a date, and if a relationship evolves, you and the community move closer to one another. Then there is a proposal, and eventually vows. This is not just the adoption of a way of living; it is entering a new home, a new family."

Br. Christopher attended several retreats before entering the monastery. His joy at being part of the new class is obvious. "There is excitement in the air – the joy of the monks and the energy that my classmates bring," he said.

Br. Columba Porter, who is making the journey one step at a time, likes being part of the new group. "It's both a joy and a struggle at the same time. Like the journey here, it's grace."

– *Jim Thompson*

This journey is not a straight line. It's more like a hike, where you encounter different terrain, different weather. Like hiking, you take it one step at a time.

– *Br. Columba Porter*

uphill, with the Stations of the Cross marking the progress. But the farther I go, the clearer things become."

He and five other novices, Br. Emmanuel Orozco, Br. Columba Porter, Br. Jesus Sanchez, Br. Anthony Shepard and Br. George Wolcott, attended a Vocation Discernment Retreat, where they prayed in solitude and with the monks, shared their simple meals, and toured the monastery. They listened as one brother, then another, shared stories of personal journeys to the monastery, all the while pondering whether God was calling them, too, to make the same journey.

Six men answered the call – the Abbey's largest class of postulants in memory. After physical and psychological testing, along with interviews with Vocations Director

postulants became novices, and after a year of discernment and formation, they may request to take temporary vows as junior monks. After three years, God willing, they will make solemn and permanent vows.



Vocations Director Fr. Odo Recker, OSB, with new novices Br. Jesus Sanchez (first row), Br. Anthony Shepard, Br. Columba Porter, Br. George Wolcott (middle row), Br. Christopher Walch and Br. Emmanuel Orozco (back row)



STRONG IN BELIEF, GENTLE IN SPIRIT

In October, Fr. Thomas Thiên Dang, OSB, a monk of Mount Angel Abbey, passed peacefully to the Lord after a long struggle with cancer.

Fr. Thiên was born in 1963 into a devout Catholic family, and grew up in a small village in Vietnam. When he was 10, a stray primer of bullet cartridges hit his face during a childhood game. Although the accident didn't leave lasting scars, it did leave a strong awareness of God's grace, and the beginning of a desire to become a priest.

One year later he entered a local seminary. In 1975, the communists took over South Vietnam and seminarians were sent home amidst confusion and chaos, but Fr. Thiên was undeterred. He resumed studies and graduated from a high school in a Franciscan monastery. When the monastery was captured, he went

underground, studying with a friend who later joined Mount Angel Abbey as a monk – Fr. Liem Nguyen, OSB. The Communists sent them to prison for their beliefs.

After more than a year in prison, they escaped the country on a small fishing boat headed for a refugee camp in the Philippines. There they met a Mount Angel monk who helped them come to the U.S., where they began studies at Mount Angel Seminary.

Fr. Thiên entered the monastery in 1988 and was given the name Thomas Thiên after his patron, a Vietnamese martyr. In 1993, he saw the realization of his boyhood dream: He was ordained a priest. He earned Master of Divinity and Master of Arts degrees in Theology, and later studied in Rome and Jerusalem. When he returned to Mount Angel,

he inspired hundreds of seminarians with his spiritual wisdom and love of the Scriptures.

Fr. Thiên was proud of his Vietnamese Catholic culture, which he loved to celebrate. Although he was grateful to be a U.S. citizen, he remained profoundly Vietnamese, the son of a culture and people he loved dearly.

At age 51, Fr. Thiên developed lymphoma. The last months of his life brought pain, but he remained tenderhearted, humorous and deeply devout. The monks sang hymns, in Vietnamese and English, around his hospital bed as he lay, a rosary wrapped around his hand. He was so caring with hospital staff that even the custodian cried when his brothers brought him back to the Abbey for his final Earthly journey. His physician wrote the monks, saying, "He is one of the gentlest, kindest individuals I have met."

The soft-spoken monk will be missed by everyone who knew him. His lifelong friend, Fr. Liem, spoke for all the monks when he bade Fr. Thiên goodbye. "My brother," he said, "you are a true monk and a good priest. Rest in peace."

Formation

NEWS ABOUT MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY



Mount Angel seminarians greet Pope Francis at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Left to right, in front of His Holiness: Deacon Leon Vigil, Archdiocese of Santa Fe; Zani Pacanza, Archdiocese of Portland; and Deacon Cody Ross and Chad Green, Archdiocese of Seattle. Photo by Jim Bourg, Reuters.

THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM FOCUSES ON THE CROSS

The renowned Biblical scholar and chancellor of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago was the keynote speaker at this year's two-day Theological Symposium, held in November. Spiritual formation has its roots in the experience of the cross, and Rev. Donald Senior, CP, encouraged seminarians to let the cross influence their relationships. "We are to live in the spirit of self-transcending and self-giving," he said. Mount Angel's biannual symposia focus on issues related to theological or human formation.

— Seminarian Phillip Shifflet, Diocese of Orange

PAPAL TRIP CHANGES PERSPECTIVE ON PRIESTHOOD

Last fall 30 seminarians from Mount Angel embarked on a pilgrimage to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., to see Pope Francis, who was making his first apostolic visit to the United States. Their trip, they say, changed their perspective on what it means to be a priest.

College seminarian Preston Castro (right), from the Diocese of Honolulu, attended the papal address to Congress and a White House reception. His coveted invitation came from Sen. Brian Schatz (HI), who offered his single guest pass to Castro in recognition of his volunteer work with the homeless.

“The Benedictine tradition of welcoming all people as Christ is similar to the Aloha spirit,” said the seminarian from Hawaii. “I could see that Aloha spirit in the Pope’s smile. It became more clear how a priest is supposed to care for people.”

Deacon Cody Ross, from the Archdiocese of Seattle, and a handful of other seminarians (left) also had a rare opportunity for an encounter with the Holy Father. They secured front aisle seats for his appearance at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

“I grabbed a spot and guarded it as if it were a child,” said Ross, who is used to quick maneuvers – he’s a rock climber. “We waited for five hours, and then we saw the Pope arrive in his humble little Fiat. As he made his way to the basilica, a silence filled the air, but when the doors opened, the crowd erupted with cheers and the choir belted out a hymn as if their lives depended on it.

“When Pope Francis walked by, I was so close I could sense the Holy Spirit he radiates, and I made brief, but what was for me, profound eye contact,” Ross said.



“I left the basilica that day wanting to be more humble and to witness Christ with an even deeper love. God willing, I’ll be ordained in June, and I now have a better idea of what it looks like to be a true shepherd. As I prepare homilies and serve as a deacon, I want to emulate the Holy Father’s humility and love. This was a capstone to my formation process. It was a gift, a taste of heaven.”



Fifteen men took the next step toward ordained ministry at the annual Mass of Candidacy in the fall. They offered public declarations to complete their formation and prepare for ordination as deacons and, later, as priests. The main celebrant was Most Rev. Alexander Sample of Portland in Oregon. The ceremony was concelebrated by bishops, religious superiors and vocation directors from around the Western United States and as far away as Hawaii and Samoa – Pago Pago, as well as monks and priest faculty members. The new candidates are from 11 dioceses.

Photo by seminarian Eese “Ace” Tui, Diocese of Honolulu. Reported by seminarian Dean Marshall, Diocese of Sacramento



+

mercy

Pope Francis has proclaimed this year the Jubilee Year of Mercy, calling us to a way of compassion that is not just an abstraction, but also a tangible, living thing. “We are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us,” the Holy Father said. “Day after day, touched by his compassion, we also can become compassionate towards others.”

When the doors first slammed shut behind four seminarians who entered the maximum-security ward of the Oregon State Penitentiary, their first reaction was fear. Each week the theology seminarians counsel prisoners one on one and officiate at Communion Services in what they call a cold, sterile place, but once interactions begin, 40 prisoners become animated and the place is full of life. “The volunteer program provides an escape from their reality,” said Joe Paddock, a seminarian from the Diocese of Helena who serves as co-chair of the Peace and Social Justice Committee at the seminary. “We do everything we can to make Christ present to them, and he opens up their hearts for profound conversations.

“Our mission,” Paddock said, “is to respect the fundamental dignity of each individual, to encounter people where they are and accept them for who they are, not who we want them to be. Catholic social teaching isn’t just a class we take in third-year Theology. As Christians, this is what we *do*.”

The call to compassion isn’t new to seminarians at Mount Angel. For several decades, they have been emulating the mercy of the Good Shepherd in ways that are tangible and heartfelt. This year they spend time each week caring for the most vulnerable among us. They befriend homeless individuals and serve dinner to hungry families. They mentor at-risk youth who have lost direction, tutor children, and pray the Scriptures with young offenders in juvenile prisons. They visit people suffering from Alzheimer’s and console the sick alongside chaplains at hospitals.

“When I visit the beloved sick and suffering at Salem Hospital, I am pulled out of my comfort zone into an atmosphere of self-giving through prayer and compassion,” said seminarian Br. Matthias Lambrecht, OCD. “You never know what’s going to happen. In one moment, I’m encouraging and praying with a terminally ill man who’s thinking about returning to the sacraments, while in the next, I’m laughing with the nurses as I explain that my religious habit is not a Halloween costume!”

Altogether, seminarians serve in 50 different placements, following the call of Pope Francis to go to the margins of society, to help bear the struggles of their brothers and sisters. “May their cry become our own,” said the Holy Father, who encourages God’s people to overcome the “globalization of indifference.” True faith, he says, roots itself in the life of people.

This year, the 147 seminarians in formation at Mount Angel are again being taught that ministry extends beyond the pulpit, that genuine compassion means encountering people where they are. Jesus Christ is their model as they put into practice his words, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

Seminarians, including Luis Fernando Trujillo (left), serve at migrant camps each summer. This camp in Central Washington was home to 300 people.



migrant ministry: *Pastoral formation in the orchards*



Most Mount Angel seminarians experience their pastoral formation in parishes, schools, hospitals, prisons or other ministry placements, but for seminarians from the Diocese of Yakima, ministry begins in the orchards and fields, working alongside migrants. They pick fruit and organize evening Masses on soccer fields, and they have perfected what they call “Piñata Ministry,” post-Mass celebrations that bring together hundreds of families.

“Many migrants are hungry for God,” said the Most Rev. Joseph Tyson, Bishop of the Central Washington diocese. “There are thousands of migrants in our diocese, but they don’t necessarily come to church, because they’re on the move, especially during harvest season. So we go out. The Church comes to them.”

Since 2012, Bishop Tyson has been sending his Yakima seminarians into the fruit packing plants and

fields as part of their pastoral formation experience. “Our people live hard lives,” he said. “Our future priests need to know who they are going to serve.”

“Bishop Tyson says that before we lift the chalice, we need to lift a box of apples,” said seminarian Joan Sebastian Silva Coria, who worked at 11 migrant camps last summer with fellow Mount Angel seminarians Kurt Hadley and Luis Fernando Trujillo. “Every penny migrant workers put in the collection basket is hard earned,” Trujillo said.

How hard earned? “Picture 100 degrees, working without shade for up to 13 hours a day, seven days a week,” he said. “No Sundays off or the cherries will rot on the trees. Shifts begin at 4:30 in the morning so people can beat the brutal afternoon heat. That is their life. It’s dirty, hot work.”

Last summer Silva Coria, Hadley and Trujillo rode to the fields with migrant laborers, burned wounds

into their hands putting nets over apple trees, picked and hauled pears, and like their work companions, waited anxiously for water breaks. “As we worked together, the migrants poured out their hearts to us,” Trujillo said.

After work, the three seminarians knocked on modular home doors or called out in front of plastic tent flaps. “Hello, I’m a Catholic seminarian from the Diocese of Yakima,” they each said. “I’m here to invite you to Mass and a party Thursday night.”

Mass was celebrated wherever the three resourceful men could locate an empty basketball court or unused picnic shelter. They borrowed pickup trucks and extension cords from local parishes, coordinated with priests – some drove two or three hours to officiate, cooked homemade meals, and gratefully accepted the charity of religious sisters.

Migrants brought statues of Mary to the liturgy and Silva Coria played “Kyrie Eleison” on his



Migrant ministry team, including Yakima seminarians Jesus Alatorre, Luis Fernando Trujillo, Sister Irma Lerma Cantor, MTI, Sister Maria Isabel Doñate Valdez, MTI, Kurt Hadley and Joan Sebastian Silva Coria

guitar. Mass was followed by a hot meal, and the seminarians gave out free raffle items: donated rosaries, crucifixes and Bibles. And then hundreds of children and adults laughed their way through a Piñata contest.

“In the U.S., when a person stops going to church, sometimes they also stop thinking of themselves as Catholic,” Hadley said. “A lot of the migrants we met who are from Mexico are not practicing Catholics, but they are still devoted. They consider

themselves Catholics, and their faith hasn’t weakened.”

“People are brought here from El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico with no English skills and no transportation,” Trujillo said. “They are at camps in the middle of acres and acres of fields. They don’t have transportation to Mass and they don’t really know where the nearest church is.

What they do have is a strong work ethic and a Catholic identity – and often, a shared love of Papa Francisco. We answered a lot of questions, and we saw their excitement. We were strangers coming together in an apple orchard. What we had in common was our faith.”

“Many of God’s people live at the peripheries – spiritual peripheries, social peripheries and economic peripheries,” Silva Coria said. “The Holy Father says the Church needs to encounter people where they are. When we were out in the fields talking about Jesus, my abstract ideas about who my people are and how to serve them became very concrete.”

“Seminary life is not always idealized,” said Trujillo during a reflection session. “It’s real. This experience is a reaffirmation of where God is calling me. A summer like this changes your life.”

After classes end in May, Trujillo and other Yakima seminarians will head from the fields of last summer to the fruit packing plants. In this Year of Mercy, boxing fruit with fellow workers will be the next stop on their journey of pastoral formation.

– *Nadene LeCheminant*



Seminarians organized Piñata games that brought together hundreds of families at migrant camps.

Fellowship

NEWS FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



GOD'S CALL COMES IN MANY FORMS

When Bill Marick '62 swapped stories with his former Mount Angel classmates at the seminary's Alumni Day reunion in October, he realized that virtually all of his reunion friends had devoted their lives to Christian service. He talked to classmates who had become priests; he also talked to those who had lived out their Catholic faith through social work, hospice nursing, help in their parish, or even prison ministry.

"At Mount Angel, service was instilled in us in many ways – through classes, homilies, retreats, and the example of the monks and teachers. We learned to ask the right questions, 'Who are least able to care for themselves? What are their needs?'"

Marick's work with the Oregon Youth Authority and the Children's Services Division for the state of Oregon gave him a sense of urgency for the plight of homeless and hurting youth, and after his retirement, he took on the enormous project of helping create transitional housing for at-risk youth in The Dalles, Ore., where he and his wife Darlene live.

Marick was painfully aware that too many teens in his community were leaving foster care and landing on the streets. In 2003, he helped establish the Oregon Trail Transitional Housing Program, which provides a warm, dry, safe place for youth to live. Staff members help young people resolve the emotional aftermath of abuse and neglect, and encourage them to further their education and find meaningful work. Marick is known by local social workers as one of the community's most positive, compassionate volunteers, someone who brings joy and laughter to those who work with him.

Mount Angel Seminary has formed hundreds of priests who serve parishes around the world, but over the decades, especially in earlier years, the school also prepared many men and women whose service in parishes and communities has complemented the work of priests.

Marick looks back on his time at Mount Angel with appreciation. "I was a farm boy and academics didn't come easily," he says, "and in those days things were semi-monastic, with silence in the dorms." But he has fond memories of camping, sports and music, of friendships with teachers and the good company of classmates. Many classmates, both priestly and lay, remain his friends.

For Marick and for hundreds of others, Mount Angel was a formative experience that prepared them for lifetimes of caring for God's people.

— Jim Thompson

Generosity

NEWS FOR BENEFACTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

LESSONS OF YOUTH INSPIRE LIFETIME OF GIVING

Abbey benefactor Larry Epping learned the value of hard work during the Dust Bowl years. His family lost their North Dakota farm and headed to Oregon, where they worked the fields, struggling to stay afloat.

The experience also taught Epping the value of compassion. After he returned home from World War II, he established what would become one of the most successful construction companies in the Willamette Valley, but he never

that has provided direct support for countless community projects, and indirect support for thousands of people across Oregon. The pair gave a tremendous amount – almost all of it off the radar – to causes they believed in.



Larry Epping with his children, (front row) Gary, (back row) Randy Charles, Shawn Engleberg and Daniel

forgot his roots. He built more than 1,000 homes for first-time buyers, helping families afford and purchase their own homes. When banks wouldn't lend buyers money, he did. "His vision was to give back to the community," said son Randy Charles Epping.

Larry Epping and his wife, Jeanette, earmarked the profits of their companies to establish and fund the Larry and Jeannette Epping Family Foundation, an endowment

Their generosity also renewed Mount Angel Abbey, inside and out. Epping's introduction to the Hilltop came at a young age; he worked his way through high school and college at Mount Angel, where he was mentored by monks and other teachers. "The grounding in morals and values he received at Mount Angel remained with him his whole life," said son Gary Epping, who now oversees the work of the family foundation. "He always felt grateful for that."

Epping's pragmatic approach to philanthropy at the Abbey has funded construction and repairs of virtually every structure on the Hilltop. "The Eppings have been very practical, and their endowment is aimed at protecting the monks' investment in these facilities," said architect Brian Jackson, who chairs the Abbey foundation's Building Committee. "They have been incredibly generous, and thoroughly committed to the monks and the seminary."



Lieutenant Larry Epping, who served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, survived the sinking of his ship during the 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle of the war. After clinging to the rim of a life raft for nearly two days in shark-infested waters, he once recalled, "The old saying goes, 'In a life raft, there's no one who doesn't believe in the Lord.'"

"The Abbey was a grounding place for our father," said Gary. "It's a place for contemplation and reflection, where religious principles can be absorbed."

Larry Epping, at age 94, passed into his eternal rest on October 22, 2015. His absence is keenly felt by hundreds of friends, and by grateful recipients of his goodwill throughout Oregon. His legacy of compassion will live in perpetuity.

– Jim Thompson



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of Oregon



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

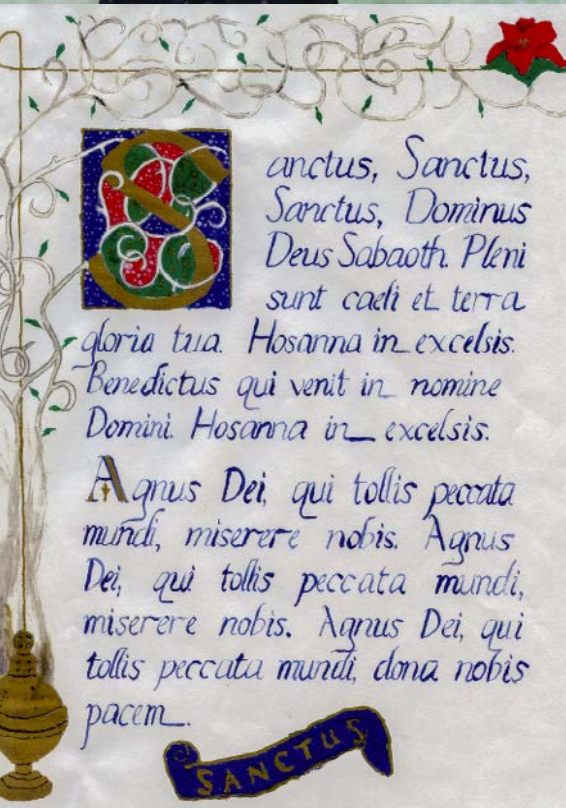
WEEK DAYS

Vigils: 5:20 a.m.
Lauds: 6:30 a.m.
Holy Eucharist: 8:00 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.

MERCY ... MISERICORDIA ... TO RELIEVE THE HEART OF MISERY



The students of Renaissance Public Academy capped their studies of medieval history and monasticism with a visit to the Abbey. Their thank you letter included examples of their own efforts to work as medieval scribes (above).



At the end of World War II, nine million people of German descent fled Soviet-occupied lands to war-torn Germany. Mount Angel monk Fr. Alcuin Heibel, OSB, had already spent years helping the poor in Mexico. He saw this as another opportunity to relieve suffering. "We Benedictines must help satisfy the hungers of the world," he said.

Sacred Heart, his Portland parish with its large basement, became the distribution center for tons of food and materials sent to central Europe. The Abbey newspaper, *St. Joseph Blatt*, helped raise funds for shipping fees, and the people of Mt. Angel canned produce for the effort.

Fr. Alcuin's work extended far beyond Germany. In 1950, Pope Paul VI awarded him the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* for his heroic work in easing the misery of people in Europe, Africa, India, Asia and Latin America, including Mexico.

— Suzanne McKenzie '01