MOUNT | Letter



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Seek Things Above



MOUNTANGEL SAINT BENEDICT GUESTHOUSE & RETREAT CENTER

Monastery & Church

The church is the heart and soul of the Hilltop where monks live and pray. All are welcome to our sanctuary to join the monks in the ancient rhythms of monastic prayer and liturgy.

Guesthouse & Retreat Center

Whether as an individual seeking refuge and reflection, or a group gathering in conference, we welcome people of all faiths to come away to a quiet place to pray and rest.



MOUNT ANGEL SEMINARY

Since 1889, Mount Angel Seminary has formed and educated generations of priests, sending them to serve in nearly 100 dioceses and religious communities.







Visit the Abbey's renewed website at www.mountangelabbey.org



Mount Angel Library

Designed by Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, our modernist style library is home to the largest theological collection in the Pacific Northwest.





"Come away to a quiet place and rest awhile."

MARK 6:31

New look. Ancient tradition. Eternal faith.

270



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Seeking God in the Wilderness



Abbot Christian Leisy, Alumnus

Please note our mailing address: Abbey Foundation of Oregon, PO Box 497, Saint Benedict, OR 97373-0497. All other Abbey mail should be addressed to 1 Abbey Drive, Saint Benedict, OR 97373.

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DEAR FRIENDS

We are about to begin the season of Lent with the observance of Ash Wednesday on March 6. Above all, Lent is 40 days of fasting, prayer, penance, and listening closely to the Scriptures we hear in the daily liturgy. These Scriptures are rich in meaning and bring home to us the story of our redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As a community, we monks have been deliberately reflecting on our story as a community since last August. That is when we began to consider how we, today,

share the story of Mount Angel Abbey to the outer world. It is a complex story, including the long tradition of living the monastic way of life according to the Rule of St. Benedict. That is over 1,500 years of tradition, lived now on this Hilltop for more than 130 years!

Having a common understanding of who we are and how we present ourselves to others is important. In the front of this issue of *Mount Angel Letter* we have included some of the images and language that we have settled on to tell the world who we are today. I believe these reflect the Benedictine values of beauty, stability, and place. They represent our monastery and our main apostolic works of the seminary, retreat center and library. They convey the richness of our Benedictine Rule of Life and Catholic faith. These images and words are expansive, uplifting, emblematic of a community made up of individuals who seek things above.

You will (hopefully) notice a somewhat refreshed and new look as you read through this magazine. If you go online to our website (www.mountangelabbey.org) you will see the same. Because we are the same community, with a long and rich history, we hope that you recognize us in this new look!

Within a few weeks of receiving this magazine, we will also celebrate the grand reopening of the renovated and expanded Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center. It has been one of the largest building projects in our history and continues to require all the faith, prayers and support of all who know and love Mount Angel. I can't begin to express my gratitude to each of you who have helped us with your prayers and support. Watch for the summer issue of this magazine for a full photo review of the "new" Guesthouse and of many exciting new programs and retreat offerings.

Peace in Christ,

+ Jerenz Dricoll, OSB

The Right Reverend Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B. Abbot and Chancellor Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary

MONKS' CORNER

NEWS FROM THE HILLTOP

Forever in the Peace of Christ

Late last year, the community of Mount Angel Abbey laid to rest two senior monks. Each was beloved and admired for his way of living his Benedictine vocation. With gratitude, we pray that they enjoy eternal rest and peace with our beloved Savior, Christ our Lord.



BR. FRANCIS WEIGAND, O.S.B.

July 6, 1932 to October 24, 2018 Professed September 1, 1980

Br. Francis Weigand, O.S.B., was a professed monk of Mount Angel Abbey for close to 40 years when he died last October at the age of 86. Known for his dry wit and a wry smile, he was also a man of service who lived a quiet life as a Benedictine monk. Br. Francis came to monastic life somewhat later in life, after having been married and having established a career as a construction inspector. He was a beloved father of three, and at the time of his death, a grandfather and great-grandfather several times over. His brother, Bishop Emeritus William K. Weigand of Sacramento, recalled how many

people knew Br. Francis as "a friendly, affable brother who mowed the lawns and taxied people back and forth from the airport, appointments, etc." A profoundly spiritual man, Br. Francis loved to pray the rosary and to read the lives of the saints. May he now rejoice with the angels and saints for all eternity.



FR. BENEDICT SUING, O.S.B.

June 19, 1926 to December 7, 2018 Professed September 8, 1949

When Fr. Benedict Suing, O.S.B., passed peacefully to the Lord this past December he was 93 years old and the oldest member of the community. He was 70 years a Benedictine monk and 65 years a priest. For the first decade after his ordination, Fr. Benedict taught English in the Abbey's prep school. But for most of his life as a monk, Fr. Benedict lived and worked outside of the monastery. He first served as a pastor at the parish of St. Mary's in Mt. Angel, where people still remember him as "a kind and patient soul" and, "a wonderful priest and pastor." He also was pastor

> of Sacred Heart Parish in Portland for several years. Upon his retirement, Fr. Benedict served as chaplain to a small religious community in the east before retiring into the prayerful quiet of his final years. Now, he is laid to rest in the cemetery at Mount Angel Abbey, forever in the peace of Christ with his brothers.



Resurrection: Going Deep

Just in time for Lenten reading and in preparation for the Easter Triduum, Liturgical Press has published Abbot Jeremy Driscoll's new book, *Awesome Glory: Resurrection in Scripture, Liturgy, and Theology.*

With the clarity of an experienced teacher, Abbot Jeremy offers readers a deep dive into the mystery of the resurrection of Jesus. Starting from the conviction that the liturgy is meant to offer an immediate and effective contact with the resurrection, this profound and beautifully accessible book draws out the liturgical riches of the period from the Paschal Triduum through Pentecost. Abbot Jeremy focuses particularly on the Scripture texts of Mass, but also on important rituals like the washing of feet, and the Lucernarium (Service of Light).



Awesome Glory is a beautiful, reflective read for anyone who wants to better understand, teach, and live the startlingly good news of Christ's Resurrection.

You can order Awesome Glory from the Abbey's bookstore by calling 503-845-3345 or email abbeystore@mtangel.edu. Awesome Glory is also available on Kindle from major online booksellers.

What the Monks Read in Lent

BR. CHARLES GONZALEZ

The Noonday Devil: Acedia, the Unnamed Evil of Our Times by Dom Jean-Charles Nault

BR. ISRAEL SANCHEZ

The Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis

Earthen Vessels: The Practice of Prayer According to the Patristic Tradition by Gabriel Bunge

The Heart of the World by Hans Urs von Balthasar

PRIOR VINCENT TRUJILLO

Story of a Soul by St. Therese

FR. JOHN PAUL LE

Everybody Needs to Forgive Somebody by Allen R. Hunt

FR. AELRED YOCKEY

Passion Narratives from the Gospels

The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ by Anne Catherine Emerich

Mystical City of God by Mary of Agreda (17c)



COMMUNITY is really important to Benedictine monks. They live together, eat together, pray together, work together. Their shared pilgrimage models what authentic Christian community looks like.

BR. SIMON HEPNER

Professed vows 1972.

"When I was a novice, I looked to the senior monks as an example of how to live the monastic life, how to make this my home, my family. Now the young monks look at me in the same way. It's learning how to live the monastic life to the best of your ability so when the time comes you can set an example for the younger guys. So they can say, "He's been here 50 years and he's still happy. Maybe there is something



to this life." To this day, I am still happy. If you are doing what God wants you to do, you are going to be happy and peaceful."

Br. Israel Sanchez

Professed vows 2016.

"Fr. Augustine has been a dear friend to me for the last eight years and I love him dearly. I was Abbot Gregory's driver during his treatment (for cancer). During that time I realized that this man is more than just *him*. He has been carried along by

those who came before him, by the tradition and history. I've learned to appreciate that. I think it helps me to live my life alongside these elders a little more consciously."

Fr. Augustine DeNoble

Professed vows 1950; ordained 1955.

"I know all the junior monks.



They are fun to live with. The men entering now are charitable, kind and helpful - it's really very distinctive. It makes it more of a family. When we go to prayer, for instance, they will say, "Here, let me help you." Singing the Divine Office is important for us and the young ones seem to want to do that. They are the strong voices and those in the Schola (choir) do very well and enjoy it. I hear them practicing and it gives me joy."





The Holy Rule of St. Benedict admonishes them to go "altogether to everlasting life." This also means intentional hospitality — welcoming every stranger as Jesus. In Mount Angel's community, nearly half of the monks are relatively new to religious life. How do the eldest monks welcome those who are younger? This kind of welcome also must be intentional, resulting in inter-generational friendships such as those expressed in the photo essay below.

Abbot Gregory Duerr

Professed vows 1958; ordained 1964.

"I've had the opportunity to live a wonderful monastic life, in a tradition that goes back 1,500 years and remains viable. We have quite a few [men] in formation right now – novices, professed, postulants. To me, that is a beautiful thing, something I am very grateful for... I take their presence here as a statement that they find goodness

and integrity in the monastic community and the way of life here."

Br. Thomas Buttrick

Professed vows 2018.

"All too often [the elderly] are shunted aside



in our society. It is important to remember what they have become as men and to emulate that. Fr. Edmund, age 81, has health problems but he has a light spirit and a youthfulness about him that I'd like to have. Fr. Augustine, at 93, is such a physically and mentally active man. Abbot Gregory, now 81, is very gentle and caring – he cares individually about everybody."

Abbot Peter Eberle

Professed vows 1962; ordained 1968.

"The story of the Abbey is about the people who lived here. You pass on stories about the monks you knew, and the monks who were here before told stories about the monks they knew. I think telling stories in the monastery is really important. That's how new men learn what it takes to become a monk of Mount Angel – by hearing the stories."

Br. Charles Gonzalez

Professed vows 2018.

"Seeing the [older monks] with smiles on their faces tells me, this life is worth it. Last year, I was planting flowers with Fr. Augustine and he told me his vocation story. I am struck when I hear an older monk telling me about when he was my age. They are very happy to share; they want us to succeed in this life and they know how difficult it is. They are here for us."



Seminarians Seek God in Wilderness Adventures

"Every day that passes, I fall more desperately in love with the mountains... I am ever more determined to climb the mountains, to scale the mighty peaks, to feel that pure joy which can only be felt in the mountains."

– Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, 1901–1925

Mount Angel seminarians have always been attracted to hiking and other outdoor pursuits. So it was natural for current seminarians, inspired by the life and spirituality of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, to form a fellowship group devoted to seeking God in the wilderness.

The group has organized a number of weekend outings, including one camping trip last fall. On the trip, priests who accompanied the seminarians celebrated the Eucharist at the campsite.

"Two Masses were celebrated on beautiful Merrill Lake up by Mount St. Helens," said seminarian Adrian Sisneros, second year theology student for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and group co-founder.

"We had Mass both days there. What a beautiful 'sanctuary."

Sisneros grew up as an avid hiker and outdoorsman in the mountainous desert of New Mexico. He enjoys seeking out places of beauty in the Northwest and encountering God on mountaintops, rivers, lakes, and beaches. Each Frassati Group trip, he notes, has a strong spiritual component, and helps bond the seminarians.





"Our aim is holiness and fraternity. It's about the opportunity for us to venture out together, as brothers sharing in this journey to the priesthood, allowing the fruits of formation to naturally grow in us."

The group members also recognize that these experiences are great preparation for their future ministries in parishes and other settings. They work together to carefully plan the trips and utilize each person's skills and abilities.

"A lot of it is about [building] character, learning how to be inter-dependent and work well with each other, balancing time and being responsible, and praying for each other," Sisneros said. "Those are great things that we are learning together as a group. We're mentoring each other." Sisneros said even the challenges they've encountered on trips are welcome opportunities for growth.

"The wilderness is beautiful but it can also be rugged. Sometimes you have to dig deep. You might have to help someone else who is feeling a little uneasy. It breaks down barriers between us ... it provides a great opportunity for letting your guard down and entering into authentic fraternity."

The group is grateful for the inspiration of Frassati and Pope St. John Paul II, who beatified Frassati and was an outdoorsman himself as a young priest. As Frassati once wrote, "The higher we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ."

- Steve Ritchie





Responding to the Lord's Call

Seven seminarians of Mount Angel Seminary were accepted as candidates for Holy Orders in the church of Mount Angel Abbey on October 25.

The Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders was celebrated during Mass, with the Most Reverend Alexander K. Sample of the Archdiocese of Portland as the principal celebrant. He was joined by a host of bishops and religious superiors, vocation directors and others as concelebrants, including Abbot Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B., Chancellor of the Seminary, and Monsignor Joseph Betschart, President-Rector.

One of the candidates, Josué Jimenez, from the Diocese of San Diego, captured the essence of the liturgy, saying, "There is a lot of joy and peace reflected in this liturgy, in the music and the way the liturgy was celebrated within the context of the monastic community."

The Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders signals a commitment by each man to enter the final phase of preparation for ordination. In his homily, Archbishop Sample told the candidates: "You are part – and a major part – of the Lord's answer to the peoples' prayers. You have heard the call of the harvest master and you have responded."

Michael Rizzo, from the Diocese of Orange, appreciated the affirmation he received from the ritual. "You tell yourself, I think I can do this, and I like doing that, and God is leading me in this way... The Rite of Candidacy," he explained, "is a milepost along the way [to priestly ordination]."

In addition to Jimenez and Rizzo, the seminarians admitted to candidacy were Joseph Baltz from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Ryan Mahar from the Diocese of Sacramento, Phillip Shifflet from the Diocese of Orange, Dominic Sternhagen from the Diocese of Salt Lake City, and Thomas Tran from the Archdiocese of Seattle.



The men are scheduled to be ordained to the transitional diaconate later this year, which is typically held in their respective home dioceses. Their ordination to the priesthood will typically come next year after they complete their seminary studies.

- Steve Ritchie



Preparing for Ministry in a Multi-Cultural Church

Mount Angel Seminary now offers a double major program for undergraduate students designed to help strengthen the Church's ministry to Spanish-speaking communities and individuals.

The new major, called Philosophy and Spanish Studies, is the brainchild of Dr. Anna Lesiuk-Cummings, associate professor of Spanish and Latin, who is in her eighth year of teaching at Mount Angel.

"There is a need in the Church for priests who can speak Spanish," Dr. Lesiuk-Cummings said. "We have a lot of bilingual students [at Mount Angel] so that need is partially met by their sheer presence. But there are also students who need to learn so they can minister more effectively to Spanish-speaking communities."

Students pursuing this double major will take core classes in Philosophy as well as classes in a Spanish Studies Concentration. Classes in the latter range from Cultural Diversity in the Spanishspeaking World (taught in Spanish) to The Golden Age of Spanish Mysticism (taught in English).

Dr. Lesiuk-Cummings believes that even the more fluent Spanish-speaking students at the seminary will benefit. "Some of the Spanish speakers who were born in the U.S. often speak fluent Spanish but are not used to reading literature in Spanish.

"We are hoping this program will take off. Right now, it's just a beginning. But we are hoping it will attract students, create interest, and be of service."

- Steve Ritchie

Prayers for Healing

Each month, seminarians of Mount Angel gather for a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration. Their shared prayer intention is for healing of the victims of abuse and sanctification of the Church. In addition, many are offering their prayers and penances each Friday for a similar intention.

At the beginning of the year, when the news was filled with reports of abuse scandals, many seminarians returned to class with a wide range of emotions – concern for the victims, concern for how they, as future priests, can bring healing to the church. They were challenged to be part of the solution to a problem they did not create.

"What we're doing here is the right way to go about it," said Adrian Sisneros, second-year theology student from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. "Specific prayer in the context of Eucharistic Adoration. That's where the solution lies. We must move forward grounded in the centrality of our faith, praying for healing, holiness and sanctification."

FELLOWSHIP

A bbot Christian Leisy, O.S.B., reflecting on his life journey, says with a touch of bemusement, "God does have the last laugh! I can't explain it."

Formerly a monk of Mount Angel Abbey and an alumnus of Mount Angel Seminary, Abbot Christian recently was elected to serve as superior of the Abbey of Christ in the Desert, a Benedictine monastery in Abiquiu, New Mexico.

He left Mount Angel in 1975, before making his solemn profession, although he had "always admired the monks and the Abbey." However, he discerned, as a "very idealistic 23-year-old," that he wanted something else.

"I still felt called and still

ABBOT CHRISTIAN OF CHRIST IN THE DESERT (formerly of Mount Angel Abbey)

wanted to be a monk, but in a smaller monastery, without external apostolates, maybe a Trappist or similar type of monastery," he said.

"God had other ideas, of course, and I have now been a priest for 31 years and have been at Christ in the Desert the past 42 years."

"God does have the last laugh, asking me now to be abbot of an international group of some 60 monks at Christ in the Desert – many of whom are in the time of formation – and two dependent houses in Mexico, Abbot Christian said." His six years at Mount Angel had a major impact, he recalled. When he enrolled at the Seminary High School for his junior year in 1969, "I thought I had died and gone to heaven."

He entered the monastic community after graduation. "What I liked most were the chanting monks in classy black habits, who inspired me to eventually do likewise. The presence of people like Fr. Bernard, Abbot Damian, Fr. Vincent, and Abbot Gregory was so important and nurturing. I still keep in contact with the community of Mount Angel and last visited there with a group of pilgrims in September 2016. We had a wonderful visit,

attending Mass with the monks and enjoying a tour with Prior Vincent, whom I have known since 1969."

Abbot Christian succeeds Abbot Philip Lawrence, O.S.B., who led the community for 42 years. Abbot Philip also had been a seminarian and monk of Mount Angel Abbey, going to Christ in the Desert in 1974.

Christ in the Desert is located 75 miles from Santa Fe, in a remote and beautiful area. Though it is 13 miles down a dirt and gravel road, Abbot Christian said, "We are off the beaten path but many, many people come here."

- Steve Ritchie



Seminary Benefit Dinner

For the past 15 years, dedicated friends of Mount Angel Seminary have helped fund the school's annual operations by working with staff on the Seminary Benefit Dinners in Portland and Eugene.

Linda Keizer, who chairs the steering committee for the 2019 Portland dinner, to be held November 3, says she was introduced to the dinner when friends invited her and husband Russ to attend. "The next year," she remembers, "I was asked to join the dinner committee and have been involved since then."

Over the course of 15 years, the Portland dinner has grown to include more than 1,200 guests, and it takes the committee members and development staff most of the year to prepare for it. Reflecting on the work, Linda says it's worth it to have the opportunity to enjoy the evening with the monks and seminarians. "The seminarians sit at our tables and we hear how they received their callings to serve God. This has made the biggest impact on our faith. Just being in their presence and knowing how special they are reinforces our sense of belonging to our Catholic faith."

The Portland dinner has become a million-dollar fundraiser for the seminary. John and Sharon

Meek, who co-chaired the event for the past three years, have experienced spiritual benefits from their involvement. "Our involvement with the dinner has deepened our faith and increased our knowledge of priestly formation. Within our parish, we are simultaneously more at ease with our priests and in awe of what they have dedicated their lives to."

The dinner in Eugene, to be held on March 3, draws around 400 guests, a number that has grown steadily since its inception in 2009. Steve and Sally Killgore, 2019 co-chairs, were early dinner sponsors. Sally says, "My faith has grown through supporting these faithful men, who will in turn become the ones who support, guide and comfort people in parishes everywhere. When wrongs are met with increased effort towards holiness, we all are inspired to do better, to pray more deeply and to restore the Church to what Christ calls her to be. We are honored to be a small part of the support of the men on the hill."

By the Numbers:

Will you join us? Sponsor a table... PORTLAND 2018 attendance: 1,275 Funds raised in 2018: \$1 million +

Portland www.mountangelabbey.org/sbd-pdx EUGENE

2018 attendance: 400 Funds raised in 2018: \$138,000

Eugene www.mountangelabbey.org/sbd-eug

Save the Dates!

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SAINT BENEDICT FESTIVAL SATURDAY, JULY 13

For one summer afternoon each year, the monks of Mount Angel Abbey welcome close to 1,000 guests on the Hilltop to celebrate the feast of St. Benedict. The festival begins with Noon Prayer and ends with Vespers, both in the Abbey church. This year, a highlight will be tours of the newly renovated and expanded Saint Benedict Guesthouse and Retreat Center.

For festival tickets or more information, call 503-845-3030 or see www.mountangelabbey.org/sbf.



ABBEY BACH FESTIVAL JULY 24, 25 & 26

Established in 1971, the Abbey Bach Festival invites national and international musicians for a three-day celebration of classical music. Enjoy vespers with the monks, followed by an organ or choir recital. Then guests will enjoy a buffet picnic supper on the Abbey lawns, and complete the evening with a featured performance in the Damian Center.

Featured musicians this year include Alon Goldstein, joined by the Fine Arts Quartet and the Brahms Quintet, and The Bergmann Duo.

For more information, email: Bach@mtangel.edu or call 503-845-3064.

To see the nightly performance schedule and to purchase tickets online, see www.mountangelabbey.org/bach.

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

WEEKDAYS

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

SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

Vigils: 7:30 pm (Saturday) Lauds: 6:40 am Holy Eucharist: 9:00 am Midday Prayer: Noon Vespers: 5:20 pm Compline: 8:00 pm

IF A MONK, SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR OR TEACHER HAS CHANGED YOUR LIFE...



Abbot Bonaventure, 1936–1988

If mentors at Mount Angel have challenged you or a loved one 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 503-845-3030 or 503-312-5425 susan.gallagher@mtangel.edu.

Please note, when writing your will, our legal title and address is: The Abbey Foundation of Oregon 1 Abbey Drive, Saint Benedict, OR 97373 (Tax ID number: 04-3703021)