

8/6/2026

Another year in the books! I finished my second year of seminary at Mt. Angel in Oregon this past May and I look forward to returning in late August to begin studies as a Discipleship III seminarian. There were many changes from my first year of seminary, my Propaedeutic year; though the most significant changes were transferring from Conception Seminary College in Missouri to Mt. Angel Seminary for the Discipleship stage and beginning philosophy courses.

When I arrived at Mt. Angel, it felt both familiar and foreign. The seminary sits on a peculiarly large hill in the middle of the beautiful farm country of Willamette Valley surrounded by long stretches of mountains and hilly forests with stunning waterfalls. On a clear day you can see Mt. Hood, Adams, Rainer and St Helens while walking from class to the dining hall... quite a different landscape from the plains of northwest Missouri. However, despite the change of scenery, the learning environment was familiar because like Conception, Mt. Angel is attached to and run by a Benedictine monastery, both belonging to the Swiss-American congregation. In fact, Mt. Angel was founded by monks from Conception in 1882 after seeking a place that was more like their homeland of Engelberg, Switzerland ('Engelberg' meaning 'Mountain of Angels'). So, it was an easy transition in that I was used to the similar chanted liturgies and being in the presence of many holy monks.

The second biggest change was starting courses in philosophy, which takes up the bulk of my courseload since I'll finish the Discipleship stage with a bachelor's in philosophy; an important field of study for the seminarian because a priest should not only pray well but reason well too. We covered topics in epistemology, some basic logic, and many philosophers from ancient Greece to the late Medievals. Alongside philosophy I took history, literature, and language courses. Some of my favorite classes this past year were ancient literature, epistemology, and Thomistic system. I was excited to dive into philosophy even though it seemed a little daunting, but it turned out not to be as difficult as I initially thought since - like any new endeavor - there's a learning curve. It was an important reminder for me to be patient while trying to grasp each concept because they take time to really sink in after some rereading and reflection. I don't think I'll ever understand Duns Scotus' metaphysics no matter how much I study him—so I think I'll stick with Thomas Aquinas and Plato.

Given all the changes, it was overall a good year of seminary. There were certainly challenges but what good thing is done without a few trials? I've enjoyed being back in the Diocese of Tucson this summer working at St. Joseph's Parish in Hayden and Infant Jesus of Prague in Kearney; both much smaller and rural communities compared to St. Thomas or my last summer assignment at St. Mark, but nonetheless edifying being among the faithful and learning what it means to be a good shepherd to those kinds of unique communities. I will long remember the kindness and generosity of those who welcomed me and those whom I got to know these past few months. But soon enough I'll say goodbye once more and return to Oregon to continue my studies. I am very grateful for all those who have prayed for me and for the support these last two years. Please be assured that I keep you all in my prayers as well. What a journey it has been so far, thank you!