

# Rt. Rev. Abbot William John Damian Jentges

## 24<sup>th</sup> State Chaplain of Oregon 1956-58



William John Damian Jentges was born November 25, 1902 in Herndon, KS to John and Mary Block Jentges.

Soon afterward his family moved to Idaho and from there he enrolled in Mt. Angel Seminary for his high school and college classes. After his graduation from college he entered the monastery in the summer of 1925. Damian took his Benedictine vows and was professed as a member of the Abbey on Sept. 8, 1926. After a year of theological studies, he was sent to the University of Salzburg in Austria, where he completed his studies and received the degree of doctor of sacred theology.

Abbot Damian was ordained to the priesthood in the abbey church of St. Gallen in Switzerland on Sept. 21, 1929, and sang his first high Mass in Goesdorf, Luxembourg on Sept. 29, 1929.

After his return to the Abbey he was appointed to many positions in the Abbey and in the schools conducted by it. He was choir master and sub prior of the Abbey. He was chaplain to the students and later rector of the seminary. In 1945 he was appointed pastor of St. Mary Church in Mt. Angel.

On August 16, 1950, he was elected coadjutor abbot of Mt. Angel Abbey, when Abbot Thomas Meier, OSB, asked to be relieved of the administration of the Abbey. He was confirmed in that of office and installed on the day of his election. On Oct. 5, 1950, he received the blessing as abbot from Archbishop Edward D. Howard in St. Mary church in Mt. Angel.

During Abbot Damian's administration, much building was carried on at the Abbey. In 1952 the nave of the Abbey church was completed. St. Anselm Hall, a dormitory and classroom building for the seminary, was built in 1954 a new plant (the present J. F. Kennedy High School in Mt. Angel), was built for the Abbey's day high school in 1959. Benet Hall, the guest and retreat house at the Abbey, was opened in 1960, and in 1970, the Mt. Angel Abbey library was dedicated. Two new monastic foundations, one in Twin Falls, ID, in 1965, and the other in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1966, were made under Abbot Damian's direction.



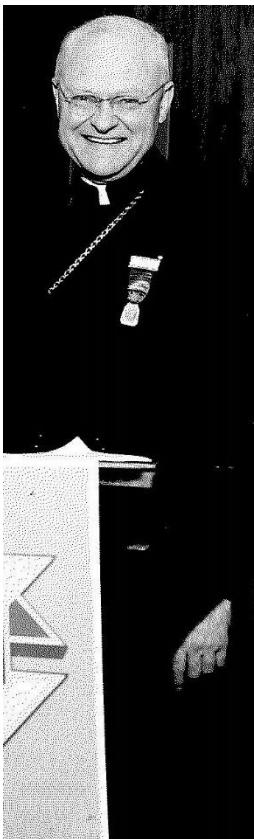
Rt. Rev. Abbot Jentges was the Oregon Knights of Columbus State Chaplin 1956–58. In the 1960's he urged the Knights of Columbus to take a new approach in battling communism.

A week before his death Abbot Damian had announced his resignation, effective Sept. 9, 1974 from the office of Abbot.

Rt. Rev. Abbot William John Damian Jentges died September 1, 1974 in Maryville nursing home in Beaverton, OR. He is buried at Mt. Angel Abbey Cemetery, Mt. Angel, OR.



*"I sincerely hope that our efforts to reach out to young people in their searching will help them to find their way home to their Father's house."  
Abbot Damian Jentges, December 1971, Mt. Angel, OR*



K of C State Convention, 1960  
Roseburg, OR

