



Something Like Perfection

“I myself feel that there is nothing more delightful than when the festive mood reigns in a whole people’s hearts and the banqueters listen to a minstrel from their seats in the hall, while the tables before them are laden with bread and meat, and a steward carries round the wine he has drawn from the bowl and fills their cups. This, to my way of thinking, is something very much like perfection.”

— *The Odyssey*

Feast of the Epiphany 2006

Dear Friends of Clear Creek Monastery,

Although differing in many ways from Homer’s description above, the banquet which was held in support of Our Lady of Clear Creek Monastery — on November 5th in Tulsa — was, in its own order, “something very much like perfection.”

We began this memorable evening by chanting a solemn Vespers service in the Tulsa Cathedral, in the presence of His Excellency Edward J. Slattery, Bishop of Tulsa. The Cathedral was packed to overflowing, with the multitude of the faithful filling the pews and even spilling outside onto the porch. Afterward, a great many of you joined us a few blocks away for the special dinner prepared for this unique occasion.



In light of the fact that it is unbecoming of a monk to wax eloquent over the fine points of a banquet, I will simply say that this one was delightful. A special cheese produced by the monks at Clear Creek found its place on the menu, as did a fine wine produced and donated by the family of one of the monks. This wine had been christened, appropriately enough, “Abbot’s Table.”

Foundation for the Annunciation Monastery of Clear Creek

5804 West Monastery Road • Hulbert, OK 74441 • Phone: (918) 772-2454 • Fax: (918) 772-1044 • www.clearcreekmonks.org



Throughout the course of the meal, the banqueters were treated to the minstrelsy of *Celtic Spring*, a very talented family of musicians from California who provided wonderful entertainment in the form of Irish and Scottish folk music.

The Abbot of Fontgombault Abbey, our 'Motherhouse' in France, spoke the heartfelt thanks of the monks for so much help received during these past six years, from our many faithful friends. He also expressed our expectations, filled with faith and hope, for the future.

Father Richard Neuhaus, as keynote speaker, shared his insight and wit

with comments about the radical nature of the monastic vocation and the radical need for such a calling in the context of our times.

Bishop Slattery compared the hidden life of the monk with that of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Nazareth:

“We...thank God for leading the monks of Our Lady of the Annunciation to this country, to this diocese, to this hidden, unknown place named Clear Creek right in the center of the United States.... The silent presence of the monks speaks. They remind us to value and cherish that hidden life that was given in Baptism. We need the monks, who, like Mary, live a hidden life. Their very hiddenness challenges us to be like Mary, the lowly handmaid of the Lord, silently listening and waiting for the Lord to speak, like a never-ending Advent, waiting and watching for the Lord.... Thus by his very existence the monk is an instrument of God in a world that hungers for silence in its desperate search for an interior life.”

This joyful evening came to a close with the blessing of Bishop Slattery, after the chanting of the *Salve Regina* before the statue of Our Lady, brilliantly illuminated with candles.

The Construction of a Monastery: Telling it like it is (or almost)

A Carthusian monk once wrote to a Benedictine Abbot, who was in the process of constructing his monastery in France, that “to build is to suffer, bâtir, c’est

pâtir”. This adage has been borne out in the history of our own constructions: the challenge, in particular, of building a church worthy of its calling as “dwelling-place of God” and “gateway to Heaven” in the twenty-first century has been daunting, if not overwhelming.

We are pleased to announce, nevertheless, that plans to start up construction again this year are taking definite shape. The date seems to be constantly postponed, but there is a sense of coming into “striking distance,” to use the military metaphor. Although limited resources will not yet permit us to undertake the church, the idea is to proceed with the residence building at this time. This should take about a year. Upon completion of this stage of construction, the monks could then move to the new monastery. The already existing crypt (basement of the church) would serve as our oratory until we can build the church. The transfer of the monastic community to these more spacious and better-adapted living quarters will be a great



encouragement to all, despite the absence of a real church.

Friends sometimes ask if we plan to make known to the public the exact state of our assets and the details of our financial strategies. The answer lies in the *Holy Rule* of Saint Benedict. A

monastery is a true hierarchical society. Saint Benedict places a great deal on the shoulders of the Abbot, who is revered as the father of the monastery and holds the place of Christ. The *Rule* provides the Abbot with a counsel of elders, and important matters are voted upon by the Chapter: however, when all is said and done the Abbot governs with the authority conferred upon him by the Church.

Even the wider community of monks is spared the knowledge of all the monastery’s financial transactions. Therefore, neither do we wish to burden you with the weight of all that is involved in this undertaking, but we greatly depend on your prayers and continued support of every kind.

As we continue to live the liturgy of Christmastide, moving toward that turning point of the Liturgical Year which is the feast of the Purification of Our Lady and

the Presentation of the Lord, already the Divine invitation resounds in our hearts and souls:

“Adorna thalamum tuum, Sion... O daughter of Sion, adorn thy bridal-chamber, and welcome Christ the King; greet Mary with loving embrace, for she, who is the very gate of heaven, bringeth to thee the glorious king of the new light. Though in her arms she bears a Son begotten before the day-star, yet she remaineth a pure virgin. Hers was the Child whom Simeon, taking up into his arms, declared unto all peoples to be the Lord of life and of death, the Savior of the world.” (*Antiphon for the procession of Candlemas Day*)

May we continue through the new year of God’s grace with these noble sentiments.

br. Philip Anderson, Prior

br. Philip Anderson, Prior

