

The True Spirit of Advent

Advent 2006

Dear Friends of Clear Creek Monastery,

Every Christian heart must grieve at the outset of Advent, before the seeming impossibility of living the spirit of the season, amid the hustle and bustle of buying and selling and the inevitable distractions of our material preparations for Christmas. If you like, come with me for just a moment into the inner sanctuary of monastic prayer. It will only take an instant. We will gaze into the crystal vision of God's majesty, as mirrored in one of the masterpieces of the holy liturgy. In less than an instant, as if on angels' wings, we will be drawn into the true spirit of Advent.

~ **"O Rex Gentium. . . O King of nations, and their Desired, the Cornerstone Who dost make both one: come and save mankind whom Thou didst form out of clay."**

(Antiphon "O" ad Magnificat for December 22nd)

Yes, we are expecting a king, the King who will, at long last, have the power to resolve the endless conflicts by which the world is sorely afflicted, even to this day. Christ is the cornerstone upon which the one Church is built, the stone "which the builders rejected, the same [which] is made the head of the corner." (Psalm 117:22) As the peoples of the Middle East — and the rest of the world around them — struggle, more or less in vain, to resolve their ancient antipathies, we Christians await Him who alone can make both the Gentiles and the Jews who accept Him into one people, under the new and everlasting Covenant ruled by Christ the King.

Did you ever think of Advent in the dreadful perspective of preparation for the Last Day of Judgment? It hardly seems to occur to Christians anymore. And yet the solemn anticipation of the Messiah, which is the meaning of Advent, has no real depth unless we become aware of that other coming and of our need to be saved: *"come and save mankind. . ."*

Still, it is to the Infant of Bethlehem that our hearts are attracted. In Him we all can become children once more in accordance with the saying of the Savior: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 18:3) It is by this Divine Infant, this Child-King that we want to be saved from sin and despair. It is He who will know how to transform the mortal clay of our human weakness.

With this disposition of heart we will be ready to count the blessed days of Advent, until the Nativity. Combining a spirit of penance and thought for our final end with the joyful expectation of the King of Peace, we will be in good measure prepared to celebrate on the darkest day

Foundation for the Annunciation Monastery of Clear Creek

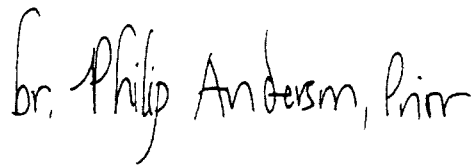
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of the year (winter solstice) and at the darkest hour (midnight Mass) the mystery of the true Divine light “which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.” (John 1:9) With such a perspective, even our more “down-to-earth” celebrations will take on a new meaning and we will live as best we can in the true spirit of Advent.

As we prepare ourselves during this solemn season of Advent for the joyful coming of the Infant King, please be assured of the prayers of the monks for you and all of your intentions.

We are especially grateful this year to see our monastery under construction again after more than two years of delay. One of the supervisors told me recently that they hope to have completed the Residence building for the monks by Christmas of 2007. What a Christmas present that would be!

As always, we are eternally grateful to you for your ongoing commitment toward the monks of Clear Creek — both materially and spiritually. Please remember us especially during this blessed season, and please help us to complete our Benedictine monastery, built to honor and worship the One who had nowhere to lay His head.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Br. Philip Anderson, Prior". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

br. Philip Anderson, Prior of Our Lady of Clear Creek

P.S. Our Christmas Gift To You

Included with this letter is a copy of a recording made at Fontgombault in honor of Saint Benedict and dedicated to Pope Benedict XVI. I hope these accents of Divine praise will help you lift up your heart throughout and beyond this blessed season. In any case, please be assured of our prayers for you and your family before the Infant King, through the intercession of His Blessed Mother.