



Pilgrimage to France 2007

February 2007

Dear Friends of Clear Creek Monastery,

It has been said that there is a vocation for places, just as there is a vocation for persons. Notre Dame de Fontgombault Abbey is certainly one such place. Its calling dates back to the high Middle Ages, to the heart of Catholic European history. To go to Fontgombault as a pilgrim is to return to the very sources of our civilization.

In fact, it all began with just that, with a source, a spring. Around the year 1000, a holy hermit named Gombaudo moved into a cave along the banks of the Creuse River, by a spring that flowed out from the rocks. The place soon became known as the spring or “fountain of Gombaudo,” *Fontgombault*. Other hermits came to join him. When the number of hermit-monks was too great for them to remain in the caves near the spring, they moved to the other side of the river and built the Abbey, which still stands.

This trickle of pure water springing from a rock is the telling symbol of the fountain of prayer that would emerge from this place during the following centuries. The motto of Fontgombault Abbey is taken from the Litany of Loretto and aptly reminds us of the vocation of the monastery as a spiritual source of grace: *Fons Amoris, Fountain of Love*.

It is with great joy for the monks at Clear Creek to know that Bishop Slattery of Tulsa will lead a pilgrimage to Fontgombault in late August and early September of this year. Many of us found our own vocation to the monastic life at Fontgombault, near that spring of Gombaudo and are pleased to think that our friends might have the rare opportunity to experience something of the spiritual power of that holy spot.

A variety of other “high places” of Catholic culture are to be visited along the way, during the pilgrimage, not the least of which are Chartres Cathedral and the incomparable Mont St. Michel. At every step the pilgrims will follow in the footsteps of an impressive array of French Saints including Saint Therese of Lisieux and Saint Joan of Arc. Bishop Slattery will be the best of hosts, along with Msgr. Patrick Brankin, who has an uncommon gift for making Catholic history come alive in the light of Faith.

As in most human affairs, however, there are many practical things to attend to in connection with this pilgrimage to Catholic France! The main one is that the pilgrims need to be signed up by April 1st, in order for all the arrangements to be made in time.

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

Those of you who accept to become pilgrims can surely count on receiving the warmest reception from Father Abbot and the monks of Fontgombault Abbey. The prayers of the monks of Our Lady of Clear Creek will accompany you along the way, as you follow Bishop Slattery to the source, to the “Fountain of Gombaud,” the “Fountain” of Divine Love.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Br. Philip Anderson, Prior". The handwriting is cursive and somewhat informal.

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

*A Message from the Cellarer**

Thanks to your prayers, the severe ice-storm that hit us pretty hard did not do much damage except to our forest—mostly oak—and one truck, left just a little too close to the woods, upon which an ice-laden tree came crashing down. We hope to be able to recuperate at least a part of the countless downed tree limbs as fire-wood. By the way, we will be using wood harvested by the monks from our own property to make beams for the cloister adjoining the residence building, a great savings in labor and materials.

Despite very adverse working conditions, construction on the residence has progressed well, with only a little more than a week of interruption so far. The construction team hopes to make up lost time by working extra hours. As I write this, the walls of the first floor are nearly completed, and preparations are being made to pour the floor of the second storey. The monks often walk up to the site during recreation to view progress with wondering eyes. Despite this good news, we count on your continuing generosity to help us complete this beautiful but costly work we have undertaken.

*A cellarer is the officer (himself a monk usually a priest) in a monastery in charge of the cellar and provisions. By extension he oversees work at the monastery and handles financial matters.