



A Well-Kept Secret

“Although the life of a monk ought at all times to have about it a Lenten observance, yet since few have strength enough for this, we exhort all, at least during the days of Lent, to keep themselves in all purity of life, and to wash away during that holy season the negligences of other times.” Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 49

Lent 2007

Dear Friends of Clear Creek Monastery,

While most Catholics and Christians of every denomination look upon Lent as a rather unhappy time of restrictions and poorly held resolutions, the monk often discovers, or rediscovers, a hidden joy, even amid the penitential severities of the season.

Although Lent is not without its darkness, for the monk it is more like a kind of tunnel. It is a darkness emerging upon a light that has no equal, and it brings him a freedom most human beings rarely experience this side of eternity. As the physical universe begins to come alive with spring and the monk’s own bones begin to warm up again after the rigors of winter, as the stars he watches on his way to Matins begin to shift toward the order of their equinox, something truly wonderful occurs.

Of course, the season signifies something more than rebirth. Better, this rebirth of nature points to a rebirth of spiritual things, which comes only through Redemption, through the blood of the Passion. The spiritual joy which comes into the monastic heart at the outset of Lent is conditioned by the necessary journey to Calvary crowned by the Cross. Nonetheless, for the heart in tune with the season there is the secret but unmistakable presentiment of a jubilation still hidden beyond the horizon.

In fact, in the chapter of his *Rule* concerning the observance of Lent, St. Benedict speaks twice in one paragraph about the impending joy:

“In these days, then, let us add something to the usual meed of our service: as private prayers, and abstinence from food and drink, so that everyone of his own will may offer to God, with joy of the Holy Spirit, something beyond the measure appointed him: withholding from his body somewhat of his food, drink, and sleep, refraining from talk and mirth, and awaiting holy Easter with the joy of spiritual longing.”

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

After the Storm: Ora et Labora

This year at Clear Creek that monastic Lenten joy is all the more intense, following a somewhat rigorous winter, which has left its mark all around us in the form of broken tree limbs, victims of the ice-storm. Fortunately, our annual “Work Weekend” will see the arrival of dozens upon dozens of volunteer workers, who will clear fallen branches and repair fences among other jobs. It rather amazes us to see so much generosity surround the monastic community (people arrive even from out of State).

I suppose this can be explained in part by the fact that the secret monastic joy of Lent somehow communicates itself to those who frequent the monastery and share in the fundamental rhythm of our life as expressed in the Latin phrase “Ora et Labora” (“Pray and Work”).

The same applies to those who, although unable to be present physically, offer the sacrifice of their spiritual and material alms for the success of the goal we are still pursuing, which is to build something truly beautiful for God in America’s Heartland.

I will let Father Cellarer complete the picture of Lenten “Ora et Labora” at Clear Creek. Let me just say in closing that we hope to send you a colorful newsletter after Easter, so as to give as good a glimpse as possible of the progress at the monastery, especially on the construction site. As always, we humbly ask that you continue to support our efforts both spiritually and financially, as this adventure cannot continue without your help. In return you can count on a place in our prayers and in our Lenten joy looking forward to an even greater one.

May Our Lady of the Annunciation, Our Lady of the “Fiat”, which is the great “Yes” to God, guide you through Lent to the light of Christ’s victory over death.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Br. Philip Anderson, Prior". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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

A Note from Father Cellarer

Although we cannot build our own monastery, the monastic community has gotten “into the act” as of late by providing beams for the construction of the future cloister. To date, 45 of the 50 beams needed have been cut out of trees the monks harvested themselves on the property, mostly red and white oak. Furthermore, our wood shop is already in motion making wardrobe closets for the future cells of the monks and for the guestrooms.

Progress on the residence building has been rapid, now that the weather has become more favorable. As I write this, the walls of the building have reached the level of the windows of the second storey, and the floor of the same second story has been poured. We hope you will soon have photos of it all.