



OUR LADY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF CLEAR CREEK MONASTERY

Benedictines of the Solesmes Congregation

Ecce Fiat

Easter 2007

LETTER FROM THE PRIOR

Jerusalem Rising

Dear Friends of Clear Creek Monastery,

Now that the "Alleluia" of Easter has broken the holy sadness of Lent and heralded the Savior's victory over death — a victory over its very shadow — what more is there to say? How pleasant it would be to remain by the Empty Tomb and contemplate the eternal consequences of this victory in loving and contemplative silence. However, as with the holy women on Easter morning and the other disciples, there is felt a certain urgency to spread the news abroad that "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." (Lk. 24:34)

At Clear Creek too, indeed, there is something to rejoice about, something more considerable even than the rebirth of nature in spring: the warmth and light of the Paschal mystery are augmented for us by the now quite visible growth of our monastery. I do not quite know how to express the thing, but as I watch, day by day, the walls of our monastery rise from the ground it is rather hard to believe what I see.

After preparing for this for well over thirty years, it seems hard to think that the thing we are so used to hoping for and dreaming about has actually begun to happen. Of course, there remains much to be done: we are seeing only the first building go up. Nonetheless there is something truly wonderful for me and many here in this rising of the walls. It is just a small monastery and will always remain so, but for the monks here it is our own little Jerusalem, our own little "vision of peace."

Of course, you have helped us come this far. Together with all our good friends we hope to continue progress. But this endeavor is something bigger than the monks or the great family of friends around the monastery. It is my hope that the present newsletter will permit you take a step back and, for just a moment, share in the wonder of the beautiful thing God is working before our eyes.

br. Philip Anderson, Prior

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

LOAD-BEARING LESSONS: CONSTRUCTION update

The new phase of construction at Clear Creek has been moving ahead unhindered since the terrible ice-storm last February. A very close collaboration between the Monastery, the architect, and Manhattan Construction Company with all its subcontractors has worked wonders.

By the time this letter reaches you, all of the cinder-block masonry should be finished and the brickwork well on its way to completion. Inside too, the progress is fast now as the studs go up in the various rooms, awaiting the drywall. The monks are making the wardrobes for their cells and the guest-rooms in their own carpentry shop.

We intend to do some of the painting and flooring as well.

Our metal shop recently acquired new equipment which will enable our local blacksmith (with help from the monks) to make a large, wrought-iron railing to go around the ramp leading to the basement behind the monastery. This will be a similar construction to that used to make our communion rail (which will be transferred from the Oratory to the Crypt). The beams cut from the trees on our property for the cloister gallery are finished and ready to be put into place.

The current time-line foresees a completion date before the end of October, but there will be many details to take care of right up until Christmas. We hope to move into the new monastery in January.

Although we are not certain whether it will be financially feasible, we hope very much to continue construction right away with the Porter's Lodge or Gatehouse, a most vital part of a monastery. This is the place where the faithful come to ask to see a monk or to ask to have a Mass said. The Gatehouse is essential to the proper order of the monastery as it protects the necessary separation between the monastery and the outside world. This is important for conserving monastic silence and peace.

As the construction moves forward, we are learning to appreciate the competence and generosity of so many skilled professionals in the secular world, and we hope that a bit of the monastic grace is rubbing off on them in turn. I think many lessons are being learned on both sides.

Father Cellarer



f all the Seasons
of the Liturgical
Year, Eastertide
is by far the
richest in mystery.

We might even say that Easter is the summit of the Mystery of the sacred Liturgy. The Christian who is happy enough to enter, with his whole mind and heart, into the knowledge and the love of the Paschal Mystery, has reached the very centre of the supernatural life.
— Dom Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year*, Paschal Time, Vol. 1



A MONK'S STORY

Fasting, you know, is not that hard at the beginning of Lent, but as Holy Week approaches it seems like there is a hole in your stomach, no matter how much you eat at the one full meal of the day. This is especially true when you are working at manual labor, like the cutting down of trees. And, of course, spring is the time of year when thousands of ticks emerge and try to burrow into your skin. But then, they're hungry too, I guess.

We had cut some big trees down, mostly red oak, and hauled them over to the place where they were to be cut into beams for the new monastery. They will be beautiful in the cloister gallery, especially since we got permission from the architect to use ones that had just a few irregularities. This is something you wouldn't see in most modern buildings. The little variations will lend real character to it all. There is a charm in using our own wood instead of some hybrid timber of poorer quality.

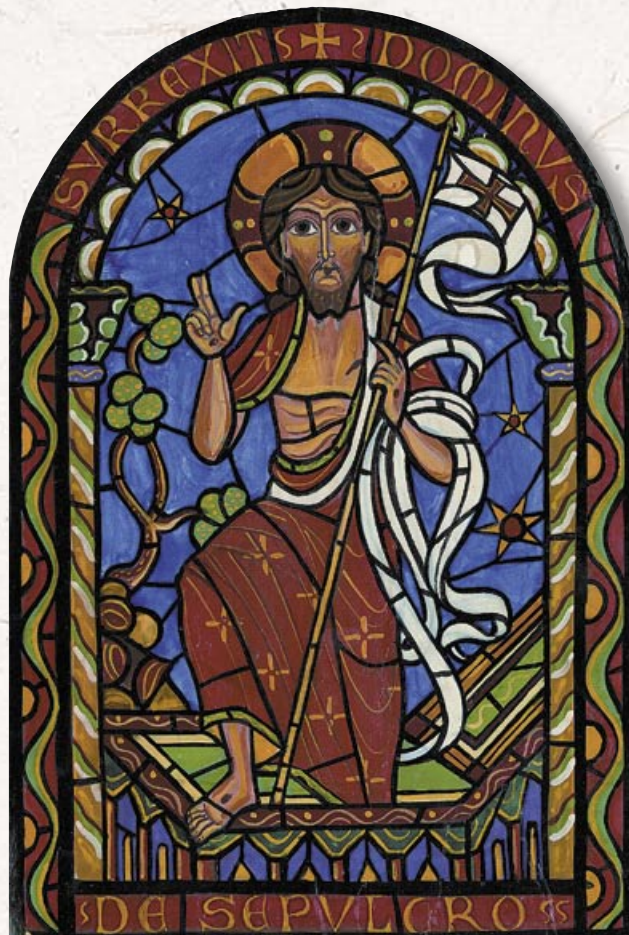
You really wonder how you can get through the Paschal Vigil, after a hard day of work and fasting, but the magic of the liturgy sort of wakes you up — at least enough to remember that this is about something bigger than our tiredness or our poor selves. How can people live without experiencing the rite of the “new fire,” the singing by the Deacon of the Exsultet, the Vigil Mass and the whole transformation of Easter? This is my portion: to rejoice with my Brothers and to carry on in the way monks always carry on.

The high point, of course, is receiving Holy Communion on Easter morning. You think of Jesus' first apparition to His Mother. Everything is different. The soul is at peace despite all the troubles of life on earth. And last but not least, there is breakfast on Easter morning. Doesn't that give some glory to God too? I think it must. This is my portion, and it is precious to me.

— A Monk of Clear Creek

Pictures (beginning at top left and moving counterclockwise):

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| 1 – Planting potatoes | 4 – Building a pump house |
| 2 – Monastic handyman | 5 – Cheese-making |
| 3 – Repairing a wall | |



Icon of the Risen Christ
by a monk of Notre Dame de Fontgombault Abbey.



Pictures (beginning at top left and moving counterclockwise):

- 1 – Father Abbot on a contemplative stroll
- 2 – Crossing the stone bridge in the direction of the new monastery
- 3 – Community walk in the woods along Clear Creek
- 4 – Thursday walk
- 5 – Entering for Mass in the Crypt