



Letter after the Move: Broad Thoughts from Home

January 2008

Dear Friends of Clear Creek Monastery,

If an uninformed observer had happened upon the scene at Clear Creek on the cold morning of January 2, 2008, he or she might have thought that something similar to D-day was underway. Thankfully, no actual ships were involved, but throngs of vehicles, including trucks hauling every manner of trailer, could be seen lining up and pulling into position between the metal barn that had become our Oratory for the past eight years and the big log cabin, where we had taken our monastic meals since the first days. Instead of soldiers headed for the coasts of Normandy, the human figures here were a mixture of laymen, including teenagers and younger boys, and of monks, all arrayed in their most unpretentious work clothing.

Suddenly this observer would have heard the bells begin to ring and seen monks and laymen alike fall to their knees, as Father Prior brought the Blessed Sacrament out of the Oratory to a waiting car. The monastery's treasure of holy relics was also in this car, which was to spearhead the fleet headed for the nearby hill, where the new monastery now sits.



Father Subprior oversaw the loading of the vehicles. Men, like giant ants, emerged from the various buildings carrying tables and chairs, desks and beds, altars and rugs, choir stalls and pews, pots and pans, and things too numerous and too varied to be described. All of this was placed upon the trailers, and the drivers were each given a piece of paper specifying a particular unloading point.

Up at the new monastery, several novices under the guidance of their Father Zelator, received these trailer-loads of the monastery's earthly possessions. The contents of each trailer were placed in the cloister or simply on the ground, and then back went the vehicle for more.

By noon the new kitchen was a scene of such chaos that the Governor of Oklahoma might have declared it a disaster area had he stumbled upon the place. The new sacristy, located in the northern transept of the crypt, was even worse than the kitchen, and confusion there was increasing with every truckload.

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



As planned, we stopped to say the Hour of Sext about 12:50, remaining in our work habits. Much to our relief, a kind lady of the neighborhood had overruled our insistence that we could fend for ourselves somehow at lunchtime, and there on the table were many boxes of pizzas (without meat, as this was an abstinence day for us), which disappeared in short order. Other kind hearts prepared the dinner that evening. This was indeed fortunate, for the plumbers had not succeeded in getting any running water going in the whole kitchen, not to mention several other practical challenges that we faced. Our first meal in the new refectory was more of a picnic than a formal monastic meal, but we did have the monastic prayers and the habitual reading from Scripture.

After working all morning in the cold — with a north wind blowing most of the time — we were already tired, but too “wound-up” to even realize it. Recreation consisted in a kind of “war council” to determine what still had to be done in order for us to be able to stay that night at our new home. Most of the afternoon was spent taking all the objects we had moved during the morning hours up into the residence through various staircases, or down into the crypt of the church.

Vespers were chanted in the crypt. It was amazing to see that most of the essential things had somehow been put in place, including the choir stalls themselves. After Vespers we sang a special antiphon, *Ecce Ancilla Domini*, in front of the altar of the Blessed Sacrament dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The founders of Clear Creek had sung this same antiphon upon arriving at Clear Creek in 1999. It is from the Feast of the Annunciation, under the patronage of which our monastery is placed.



You can easily imagine how happy the monks of Clear Creek are to have taken up residence in their new home, in a true monastery, after living for many years in a setting which was very delightful but not well suited to monastic life. For those who have not awaited the realization of this dream for some 35 years, it may be more difficult to fully comprehend the sentiments that arise in our hearts. The continuing story of this foundation makes us realize, as it unfolds, how deep and broad is the plan of Our Father in Heaven compared to the near-sighted projects of the human ants which we all are.

The foundation and life of Our Lady of Clear Creek Monastery is something bigger than any of its human actors. It rests on the prayers and sacrifices of a great number of souls, of countless friends, both known and unknown to us. There remains much work before us before the monastery will be complete, but I want to offer our special thanks to all of you on the occasion of our coming into possession of a permanent monastic home. May God bless you and yours, and may Our Lady of the Annunciation intercede before her Son for all your special intentions.

br. Philip Anderson, Prior

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