



# OUR LADY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF CLEAR CREEK MONASTERY

Benedictines of the Solesmes Congregation

*Ecce Fiat*

May 2008

## LETTER FROM THE PRIOR

### In the Secret of Thy Face; A Light to Shine to All that are in the House

Dear Friends of Clear Creek Monastery,

There is a passage from the Psalms that is dear to contemplative souls of all ages. In English it is thus rendered: "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy face, from the disturbance of men" (Psalm 30). This is the monk's delight: to dwell habitually in silence, close to God, in order to delve deeply into the treasures of Divine Wisdom and Love.

However, there are moments when a monastery must become a beacon, when it must be the "city seated on a mountain" about which Christ spoke, and which "cannot be hid". Such was the case this past April 12th, when joy abounded as a great number of our friends made their way to the monastery, despite much high-water left by recent storms, in order to celebrate with us our installation in the new and permanent monastery. The sun was shining brightly, and there was certainly a sense of something good beaming upon the whole "House", that is to say upon the whole Church: "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house" (Matthew 5:15).

We can only be thankful for so many visible blessings — the result of many labors and of so much of your own generosity in the past — that forcefully speak of those others, the unseen ones, the secrets of grace, the secrets of hearts. We must also look forward now to the challenges that already appear on the horizon. In contemplating the beauty of the buildings that have now come to completion, one cannot help but see the great empty space, where the most important building of all must take its place, the abbatial church.

As you gaze upon the accompanying images of this great celebration and read some of the words our dear Bishop Slattery addressed to the great crowd of the faithful during his homily, we know you will, not only thank Almighty God with us for the many signs of His Divine Mercy towards us, but will also pray that we continue to find the help we need in order to build that essential part of "something beautiful for God", which is the church. We know we can count on your generosity, both spiritual and material to continue making Our Lady of Clear Creek Monastery both a place of contemplation *in the secret of the Lord's Face* and a lamp to shine upon all that are in the House. May Our Lady continue to keep you in the folds of her Immaculate mantle,



*br. Philip Anderson, Prior*

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

# THE BLESSING OF THE RESIDENCE BUILDING: THE MOST REV. EDWARD J. SLATTERY, BISHOP OF TULSA

Your Excellency, Msgr. Conley, Bishop elect, Father Prior, my brothers and sons of Our Lady of the Annunciation, reverend Fathers and Deacons, and dearest friends, all, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead and present among us.

What an inexhaustible treasury is the Church's liturgy! What a wonderfully rich source of inspiration is the Church's traditional liturgy, in both its Ordinary and its Extraordinary forms.

The whole of the Easter Cycle reminds us that nothing now remains in the darkness of sin, for even death has been made radiant by the obedience of Our Lord's Passion.

What is revealed in that radiance is the mystery of our reconciliation, and not just our reconciliation, but the reconciliation of all creation, for everything that exists has been reconciled to the Father by the obedience of Christ. Even those things which have no life in themselves — bricks and sand and metal and wood, those very things which have been used to build this monastery — have been elevated by the Resurrection of Christ so that even inanimate things — reconciled now to their Creator — reveal the mercy and the pardon of God.

This mystery of the world's reconciliation is surely the faith of the Church, for it has been proclaimed in the life of every saint, taught by every doctor, held inviolate by every virgin and attested to by the blood of every martyr. And it is our faith, too, for that is why we have come to Hulbert today, braving the threat of more rain and the inconvenience of these sodden fields and dripping trees, praying together in this crypt, while we guard in our imagination the building that will one day be erected above us.

We have come today so that through the Church's liturgy we might bless and dedicate a new monastery, sanctifying the work of its construction, and indeed — even hallowing the simple materials of its construction. We have come today to bless the new monastic enclosure, this great work of faith, so that each room and each cell might continually reveal to us — and to a hundred future generations — that all things are illuminated by the obedience with which Christ suffered.

And yet the readings which we hear proclaimed today confront our every expectation, for they speak neither of the resurrection (which might be expected on this Saturday of the Third Week of Easter) nor of the Temple (which Solomon built in Jerusalem according to a heavenly plan).

Instead the Church presents to us that saddest of moments when Mary, disconsolate at the foot of the cross but obedient to the will of God, loses her divine Son and gains in return a universal motherhood, beginning with the beloved disciple and continuing until each of us is also gathered beneath the ample folds of her tear-stained mantle. The Church this morning offers for our contemplation the humility of Our Lady, who loses her Divine Son and embraces in his stead the son of Zebedee. The sinless Mother of

God humbly accepts this sword, this next piercing of her heart, and becomes the mother of all of us who have been redeemed from sin by the obedience of Jesus.

In recalling for us this element of Good Friday's solemn liturgy, the Church does two things:

First, she opens our heart to receive with compunction the great grace which the Father desires to give us today by our participation in the ceremony of dedication. What is that grace? It is to learn through Christ — and by the example of his Immaculate Mother

— that obedience can lead us to humility, and humility will win us the holiness of Jesus, if our humility is such that our hearts echo Our Lady's fiat: "Let it be done unto me according to Thy word."

Secondly the Church reminds us that the triumph of Easter does not undo the suffering of the cross; rather, Easter reveals the fullest meaning of Christ's suffering unto death.

Easter reveals that the cross is not about suffering, but redemption; not about punishment, but forgiveness and mercy. Easter, as the Church teaches us throughout these weeks, introduces us to the

full mystery of the cross, the full mystery of Love which allows Itself to be wounded for sin's sake, scourged for those who will not repent, and nailed for those who feel no contrition or remorse.

The Cross has become our hope only because the resurrection has revealed it to be the wisdom and power of God's love. This is why St. Paul can write with such assurance, "The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Let me suggest to you today, that the life of the monk is meant to bring together, in the most radical way imaginable, the two mysteries which the Church discovers in the Gospel of the Sorrowful Mother. By his life of obedience, paid out to his superiors in a daily ration of humility, the monk is freed to center his life in the Passion of Christ and thus lives a life illuminated by the obedience of Jesus.

For this reason, my brothers, I beg you: seek to recover each day the original fervor of your vocation. This means that each day you must accept the cross and embrace that day's sharing in the Passion of Jesus. In the morning before your day begins, surrender to the embrace of the cross so that through the whole of the day you might rest with Christ in the will of the Father. And in the evening, when you surrender yourself to sleep, trust that because what the Father wills is love, you can always pray again, "Father, not my will but thine be done."

I wish to thank Father Abbot, Antoine Forgeot for having sent those original 13 monks as a gift from the Church in France to the Church in the United States. Moreover I want him to know how grateful I am that he sent you here, to the Diocese of Tulsa and to us.





Pictures (beginning at top left and moving counterclockwise):

- 1 – Residence Building
- 2 – Monks in Residence Alcove
- 3 – Clear Creek Open House: April 12, 2008
- 4 – Prior Anderson talks with guests
- 5 – High Mass in the Crypt



## CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLES: A BRIEF TIMELINE OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO MONASTIC OPEN HOUSE: APRIL 12, 2008

**MARCH 31:** Dom Secretary notes that the date for the RSVP has passed; we count 767 mouths to feed; there will be a few stragglers so we will add on for the next few days. In the beginning, we thought that it would be a miracle if we had 500 at the event!

Father Prior announces sad news at Chapter: Our Fr Abbot Antoine Forgeot will *not* be coming here for the Blessing of the New Monastery and Open House. Father Abbot's doctors have forbidden him to travel after his exhausting preaching of retreats in Senegal at Kermoussa – just six miles south of the equator! We, of course, feel the loss of his presence but are glad that he will regain his strength for a future visit to Clear Creek.

**APRIL 4:** RSVPs at 856!

**APRIL 7:** RSVPs now at over 950 since the local Fire Chief at the Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Brigade says that they will be out in full force at 32 mouths to feed. Not only are RSVPs coming in by mail but also fax and phone-ins . . .

**APRIL 8:** We have had torrential rain which has already damaged the northern route to the Monastery and flooded the bridge on the southern route. Father Prior has ordered prayers for good weather which will begin tonight for three days after Compline.

**APRIL 9:** The Caterers pitch two large tents, weather predictions speak of more imminent rain storms . . .

**APRIL 10:** Visitors from France arrive but are unable to cross the bridge. Eventually, Br. Joseph shuttles them across over two feet of water appropriately enough in an old American army truck. Who would have thought that again we would be rescuing the French! All appears to be touch and go as we watch water levels rise, and RSVP numbers increase just as rapidly.

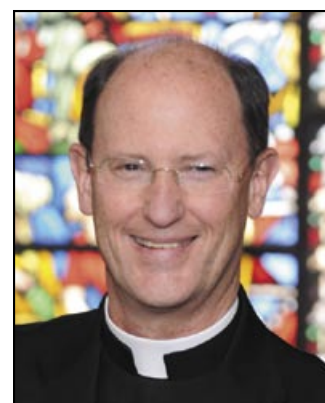
The rains finally cease. Part of a third route to the Monastery has been washed away. Local friends place signs and directions at the approach to Hulbert. We are unable to do so ourselves, this time living in retreat forced on us by nature.

**APRIL 11:** RSVPs at just over 1,000, caterers will aim at 1,100! There were many anxious calls from Tulsans wanting to know the best route to take to get here. Added to the mayhem are the cancellations from long distance travelers unable to take American Airline flights. One Eastern Rite Catholic Bishop is unable to fly in from New York. Father Secretary passes a call to Fr. Prior from Abbot Lawrence wondering if we will lose an abbot too!

**APRIL 12:** The concrete slab which serves as a bridge is barely passable with about eight inches of water flowing over it! It is a relief to see the parking lot start filling even during Prime at 8.00 am by those wanting a good seat for the Ceremonies beginning at 9.30 am.

As regards our dignitaries: Providence does send us an Abbot in the person of Fr. Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen from St. Gregory's Abbey in Shawnee Oklahoma, and besides Bishop Slattery we are sent a

second Bishop — more precisely, Fr. James Conley whose RSVP was post-marked 3/15/08, but who was, in fact, later that very day named Auxiliary Bishop of Denver, Colorado! So as Bishop-Elect, he took Father Abbot's stall while Bishop Slattery celebrated Mass and blessed the Monastery.



**Bishop-Elect, James Conley**

## LONG-TERM GIVING

Each and every gift to Our Lady of the Annunciation Monastery is precious, whether it be one Hail Mary said with fervor and a pure heart, or a bequest of your Last Will and Testament.

Father Abbot and all the monks at Clear Creek consider you very much a part of their extended family. Ora et Labora: our prayers and labors unite with all of our friends for the greater honor and glory of the triune God.

With the completion of the Residence Building, our next big challenge is the construction of the Church. In addition to your prayers, any and all gifts are deeply appreciated. Whether it be stocks, insurance policies, will bequests, vehicles, or even the widow's mite — we cannot thank you enough for your support

In the short term, you can now make donations online at:

[www.clearcreekmonks.org/howtohelp.htm](http://www.clearcreekmonks.org/howtohelp.htm)

(These online donations are especially encouraged because they save the monks much processing time.)