



## LIVING THE LITURGY and the Genesis of an Abbey Church

Dear Friend of Clear Creek Abbey,

It is our great joy to send you a copy of *Living the Liturgy*, a short DVD about Our Lady of Clear Creek Monastery, recently featured on EWTN. Many have found it inspiring, and we hope you will appreciate this early Christmas gift. It is especially informative as to the daily rhythms of the Benedictine life.

We have often said it, but the monk truly lives by liturgical prayer. St. Benedict calls it simply *The Work of God*. This great prayer can be accomplished anywhere, even in a field where the monks may be working too far from the Abbey in order to return for one of the Hours. But the solemn celebration of the *Divine Work* — that is, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass — requires a special setting.

A recurring thought that has haunted the dreams and waking moments of the monks of Clear Creek for the past ten years could be

formulated in words such as these: “Some day we will finish laying the foundation, and actually raise up walls toward heaven.” Of course one might point out the fact that rather imposing buildings have already been constructed. This is true, and we are most thankful. And yet, without the Abbey church, the core of our construction project is missing. Now, at last, the true “heart” of the Abbey is about to rise heavenward.

*Alea jacta est*. “The die has been cast.” On August 27<sup>th</sup>, a contract between Clear Creek Abbey and Manhattan Construction Company was signed for the construction of a significant part of the church. Owing to a rather competitive market in the construction





world, we were able to include in this contract the building of a second side of our cloister, which is to say of the inner courtyard around which the various monastic buildings are grouped in the classic design. This was a great joy for us. Many good things are falling into place.

## ANDREW SMITH, SCULPTOR

Andrew Smith, a sculptor from South Bend, Indiana, is currently engaged in sculpting two large capitals for the great portal of the Abbey Church (see artist's rendering of the portal on p. 3). Here is how he describes the scenes he is carving:

*They show the narrative of salvation history, beginning with the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, then their sin and expulsion from the garden. This leads to the prophecy of Isaiah chapter seven, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.' Then (the capitals) depict as the central scene the Annunciation. That is the moment when the angel Gabriel appears to the Virgin Mary and asks her to be the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God.*

Each capital will be 15 inches tall, two feet wide, and two feet deep. They will rest on columns twelve feet tall.

At the age of sixteen, Andrew served in Scotland as apprentice to Alexander Stoddart, court sculptor to Queen Elizabeth II. He later studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art and at the Florence Academy of Art in Italy. He has completed sculptures for private collectors both in America and in Europe.



This phase of construction is to be completed in twelve months. However, unless Divine Providence sends us a rather unusual amount of financial support we will then have to stop the work for a while. We are quite ready to accept God's will in this matter and His Providence that reaches far beyond our human foresight.

It does seem a favorable moment, however, for me to make a very special request. I have in the past tried not to overburden our friends with urgent appeals for material support — especially while the American economy is still trying to recover from its recent downturn. At the same time, it seems only right to share with you our needs at this crossroads of the development of our monastery — now “come into its own” as an Abbey.

As we all consider both the threats that loom ever

greater over our decadent Western society and the current of faith and generosity that is clearly present in our younger generations, ready to meet the challenge, it seems that the hour has come to “strike a great blow” in favor of what counts most. It might seem slightly quixotic to try to build something of such a strong Catholic identity — something that will last a thousand years — amid the shifting sands of multiculturalism, not to mention the moral and spiritual quagmire that so characterizes vast sectors of the world around us. But is it not Our Lord Himself who tells us that “. . . the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away” (Mt. 11:12)? Don Quixote may not have been so foolish after all.



So here is what I am asking: *Please help us to continue building heavenward.*

This involves, of course, both material and spiritual help, beginning with the latter. I would suggest, as we have in the past, the recitation of the *Chaplet of the Child Jesus* for this purpose. On the material side, many are simply unable to send large donations at this time, due to the financial difficulties with which so many Americans are struggling. *Whatever can be spared will be enough.*

In the end, however, it is your friendship that we value most. The rest is but the fruit that falls from the branches of a life shared in the communion of a great ideal, in the Communion of Saints, in membership of the Mystical Body of Christ. There is really nothing left to say.

May God bless you, and may Our Lady of the Annunciation intercede for you before her Son.

+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot

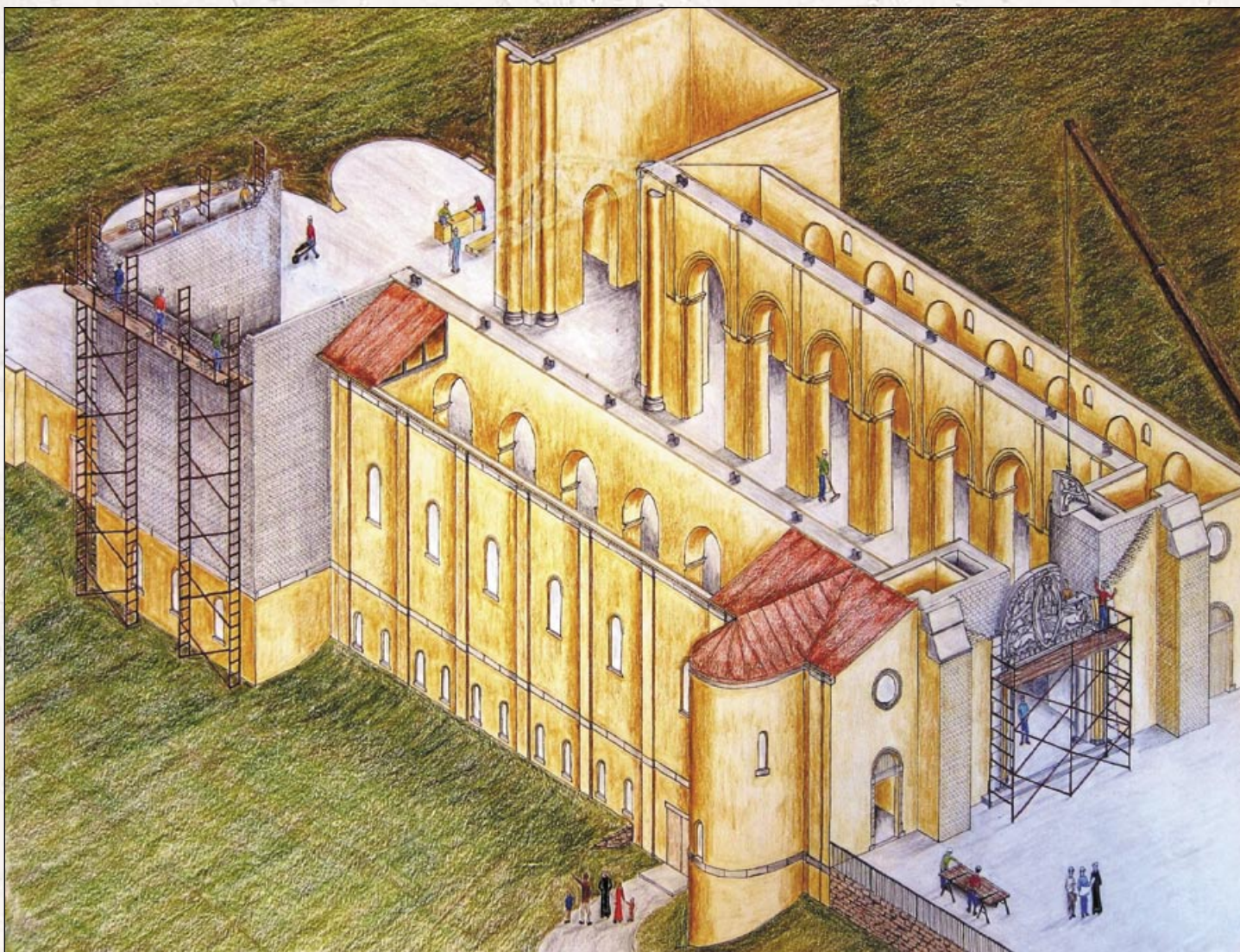
+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot



## THE GREAT PORTAL

The great portal, which symbolizes the entry gate into the Heavenly Jerusalem, is an important feature of any church, but is particularly emphasized in the Romanesque style that inspires our Abbey church. In the drawing can be seen the marble *voussoir* and archivolts around this door (taken from a quarry in our region) and the sculptures. Also seen (one is partially hidden) are the solid oak doors held by wrought-iron hinges to be fashioned in the Abbey forge. The sculpted pieces include two capitals (see photo and sidebar about Andrew Smith on p. 2) that will rest on stone columns twelve feet tall, and the tympanum that spans the space above the door. The scene that will be depicted on the tympanum is that of Christ in majesty, flanked by the symbolic forms of the four evangelists, above the row of the twelve Apostles.





## the abbey church

This colorful drawing depicts the Abbey church currently under construction. This phase of the work includes raising the walls of the nave and choir areas to about half their complete height and putting a temporary roof over the area (culminating at about 34 feet). Also included in this phase of construction is the great portal, or front door of the church that is used only for major ceremonies (see drawing and description of the great portal and the photo and sidebar about the sculptor). The sanctuary area and bell tower are not part of the current construction project, but a temporary roof will cover the sanctuary in order to keep rain out of the crypt below, which the monks will continue to use.