



SPREADING THE FIRE

I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled?



June 2013

Dear Friend of Clear Creek Abbey,

There are various types of fire, many of which are highly destructive—for example the firestorm that results from a nuclear blast. The kind that emanates from the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a most unusual one: a fire that purifies, sanctifies and heals. It is really none other than the fire of the Holy Ghost, of the Holy Spirit—the fire of the divinity. The Sacred Heart is a powerful symbol that speaks to us, both of Christ’s humanity, wounded to death for our salvation, and of His divine nature burning with infinite love.

Jesus affirmed that He had come to set the world on fire, not with a destructive fire, but with that divine love that destroys sin, in order to foster life in the noblest sense of the word—supernatural life. The Church, in turn, has inherited this mission of spreading this most beneficial sort of fire across the earth. Beginning with Pentecost, this mission has never ceased, and the number of Christians has ever multiplied since the days of the Apostles. In a given time or place the effects of this fire have sometimes increased or decreased, but in general the fire has continued to spread, although not without encountering many adverse conditions.

It is the purpose of Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey to spread this fire as vigorously as possible, following our own unique mode as contemplative monks. This is why we pray and study; this is why we work and build, with our minds, our voices and our hands. Since the end of the apostolic era, it might truly be affirmed that no single man ever lit a bigger fire than did Saint Benedict. What is still left of Christendom amply attests to the fact. But we desperately need to rekindle the fire in our day . . .



What about the laity? There are many ways in which you can help to spread this wonderful and life-giving fire. In addition simply to living the Christian life as best you can, there are various associations and movements that continue God's holy fireworks. One very powerful means is what is often called "Total Consecration to Mary". There is a most gentle but consuming fire in Her Immaculate Heart. Let him who can understand this understand it.

Another way for those not living in a cloister to spread the fire of Faith, Hope and Charity is by means of secular Third Orders. Although not the first historically, the Third Order of the Franciscans was the best-known of them in the Middle Ages. The Benedictines too have had their equivalent of the secular Third Order, but with a significant difference. Here is a quote from the information we often hand out to those interested in a closer relationship with our Abbey:

The Benedictine secular Oblate as received at Clear Creek is not really the member of a Third Order. He or she does not join a kind of parallel community. The secular Oblate belongs individually and personally to this Abbey. If a spouse or a friend is also an Oblate and wants to pray the Office in common, so much the better, but the bond is to the Abbey. There are not even any regular and obligatory meetings of Oblates, although there have been "Oblate Days" from time to time, for the greater joy of all involved. . . A Benedictine secular Oblate is more than just a friend of monks: this person has been associated with a monastic family in its quest of God. Someone becomes a Benedictine Oblate because he or she wants to serve God more perfectly, find more intimacy with Him, and follow Christ more closely; and thinks the Benedictine style of spirituality will help serve this end.

An Oblate Day, including several conferences, is scheduled this year for October 12th. Anyone interested in this event or in learning more about becoming an Oblate of Clear Creek Abbey may contact our Oblate Master, Dom Francis Bethel by mail:

Dom Francis Bethel, Prior
Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey
5804 W. Monastery Road
Hulbert, OK 74441

May the fire brought by Christ spread as widely as possible, and let each one of us, no matter our state of life, lend our hearts and lives to the great effort. Thank you for all the help you give to the monastic endeavors at Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, intercede for us.

+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot

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