

## EXPANDING THE HIVE

June 2020

Dear Friend of Clear Creek Abbey,

Amid the social upheavals that have afflicted American society and much of the world over the past months—from the rapid spread of a novel coronavirus that reached pandemic proportions to the tragic death of an unarmed man at the hands of police officers—the monks of Clear Creek continue to serve God and our fellow human beings, however poorly but to the best of our ability, in liturgical praise and hard work: *ora et labora*. This is what we do. This is how monks have lived for fifteen centuries and longer. This is a source of stability. It is like bees tending their hive.

While the egregious act of police brutality mentioned above has understandably led to peaceful protests in many cities, in too many cases other activists (whose motives are questionable to say the least) have crossed the line of righteous anger into a destructive rage that has torched neighborhoods and ruined the livelihoods of honest families. In the face of it all, we Benedictines will continue to build. Yes, that is one authentic way to promote justice and fraternal harmony, even if it takes time and much effort: when monks construct a stone or brick building, with the grace of God they also build their own community at the same time. This leads to what has become the motto of the Benedictines: *pax*, which means “peace.” This is not the peace which is the mere absence of violence, but the peace that is a profound work of justice: “the tranquility of order,” following the ancient definition. It is a peace where men and women of goodwill—of any racial group—can live in harmony under God’s heaven.

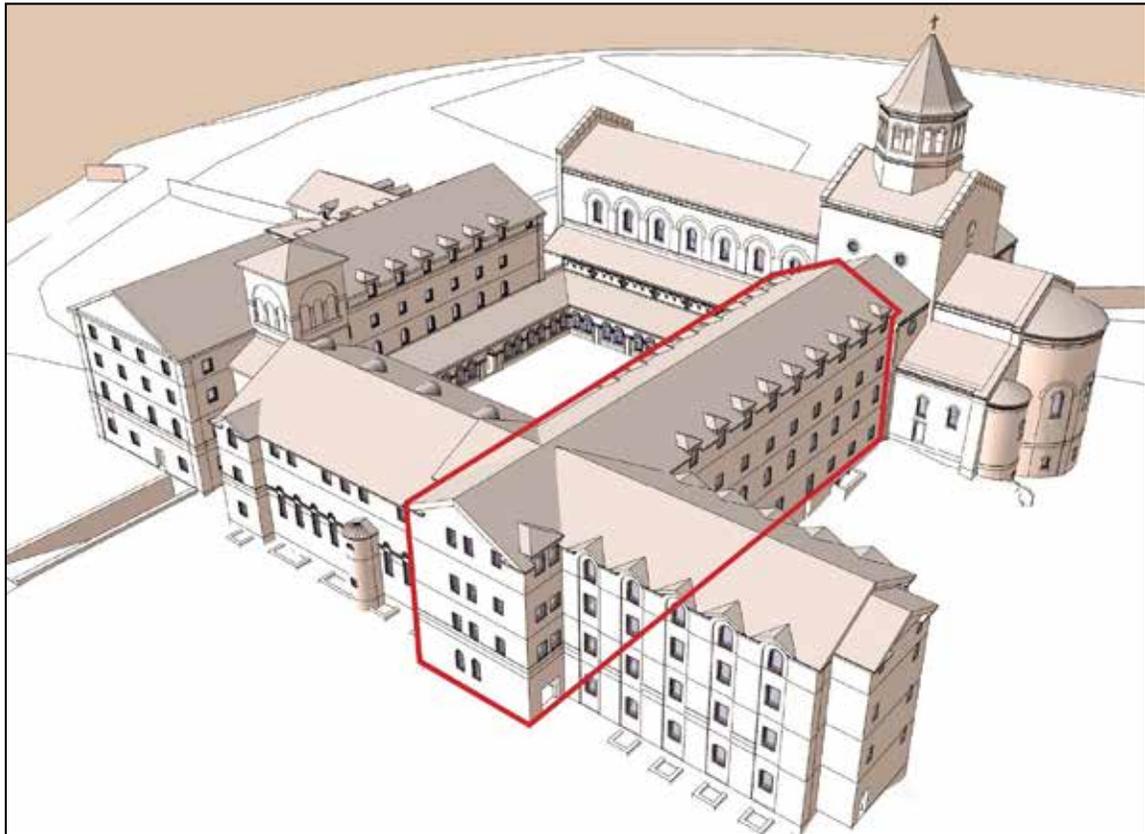
For those who have followed our construction enterprise here at Clear Creek—*Building Something Beautiful for God to Last a Thousand Years*—or who have actually visited us, it is no secret that our construction project, though moving forward, needs to be completed. The main impetus for completion is the fact that over 20 monks (and the number is growing!) continue to live in Spartan conditions (in woodsheds and the like), because there is not a sufficient number of cells within the Abbey. And so it is that we have decided to construct another residential building to the east of the complex, the traditional building we refer to as the “Chapter House.” The Chapter House will provide not only the much needed cells for the monks to live in, but will include the Sacristy, the Infirmary, classrooms, and of course, the Chapter itself, the room where so many important acts of a monastic community take place (such as elections), the room where each day a chapter of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict is read in Latin. Of course our primary objective is to finish construction of our abbatial church, God’s house, but at the same time we have to make space for the vocations that are coming our way. Now is the time to expand the hive, before, perhaps, some day sending out a swarm to start a new monastery.

Our architect, Mr. William Heyer, who faithfully continues to elaborate the plans originally drawn up by his former teacher of architecture and mentor at Notre Dame University, (Professor Thomas Gordon Smith, our first architect), is hard at work filling out the details of the Chapter House Building (see illustration), which we hope to begin constructing, God willing, in 2021.

As in the past, we count both on your prayers (the most important contribution) and on any financial support you can offer for the completion of this next phase of construction, so important to our growth and ability to live an authentic monastic life here at Clear Creek. We pray very often for all our benefactors, great and small. The intention of our conventual Mass on Sundays is always for you. The month of June, when I am writing this letter, is consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. May all we do be consecrated to His Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady.

+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot

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**The Chapter House (circled in red) to be built in 2021, as it is to take its place in the Abbey complex. The next phase will be to finish the church.**