

A PORTAL AND A PILGRIMAGE

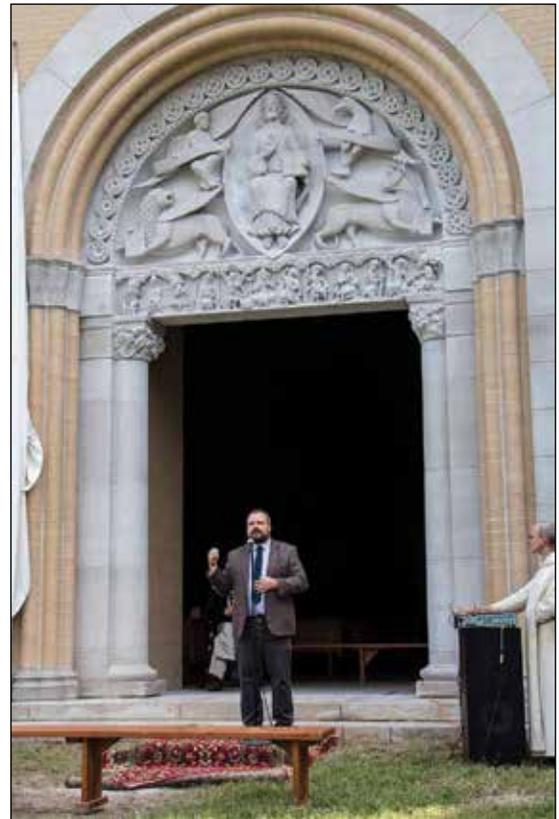
October 2020

Dear Friend of Clear Creek Abbey,

We crossed a threshold—literally—on September 27th, when the portal, the great doorway of our abbey church under construction, was revealed during a ceremony after our conventual Mass. When the white veil that was covering the entrance fell (in fact the Oklahoma wind blew it down ahead of schedule...), our eyes beheld a spectacle not of this world. On two capitals surrounding the door we saw depicted the life and mystery of the Blessed Virgin. A little higher, on what is called the “lintel,” the twelve Apostles commanded our respectful attention—they were most dignified, but with that living expression on their faces that speaks of our Christian joy in the one true Faith. Above the college of Saint Peter and the others, Our Lord reigned in majesty, surrounded by the four living creatures described in the prophet Ezechiel and in the Apocalypse, the same figures Tradition has associated with the four Gospels. Before I blessed the sculpted images, the two artists, Andrew Wilson Smith and George Carpenter, shared with us their personal meditations on this great artistic achievement that required some fifteen years of work, often outside in the heat of summer or the bitter cold of winter.

One week after the unveiling described above, some six hundred pilgrims entered our church through the same magnificent portal at the end of a thirty-five-mile walk described as “half as long as Chartres, but twice as hard,” meaning it included some steep hills between the first campsite near the Illinois river and our abbey.

This was the first Three Hearts Pilgrimage, dedicated to a work of reparation under the patronage of Our Lady Help of Christians and the Three Hearts, that is to say the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the Most Chaste Heart of Joseph. The latter devotion refers to revelations given to a Brazilian university student in the 1990s, which, after much study and reflection, the local Bishop in 2016 declared to be “of supernatural origin”.¹



¹ Cf. Joseph Pronechen, “Major Apparitions of Saint Joseph Are Approved”, *Blogs, National Catholic Register*, August 5, 2016, <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/major-apparitions-of-st-joseph-are-approved>.

During the final Mass of the Pilgrimage it was my joy and honor to read the blessing sent to the pilgrims by His Eminence Cardinal Burke. His words speak for themselves:

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Right Reverend and Dear Father Abbot,

With great joy, I have received the news of the first Three Hearts Pilgrimage, which is now to become an annual pilgrimage. What more beautiful and efficacious way to obtain divine grace for our witness to the Catholic Faith, above all in the family, the incomparable fruit of Holy Matrimony. The devotion to the Three Hearts, which is most dear to me, gives expression to the reality of the inhabitation of God the Holy Spirit in our souls, uniting us in communion with God the Father in God the Son.

Through you, I impart to all of the pilgrims my blessing, assuring them of my prayers for them throughout the pilgrimage and, above all, as I offer the Holy Mass.

Please give my warmest greetings to the pilgrims. I hope that one day I may be able to join in the pilgrimage.

Please pray for me. Please give my warmest greetings to the entire monastic community at Clear Creek. May God bless you and the entire monastic community.

Yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and in the Purest Heart of Saint Joseph,

Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke.

Please join me and the monks of Clear Creek in rendering prayers of thanksgiving to almighty God for the double grace received at Clear Creek of the Portal and the Pilgrimage, in which participated so many of our good friends like you.

+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot

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