

TOPPING OFF

March 2022

Dear Friend of Clear Creek Abbey,

As the noise of war rumbles across the world and the social fabric of our nation continues to unravel in many places (but that would have to be for another letter), we monks are building in the backwoods of Oklahoma, the best we can, a little corner of peace—almost heaven—as our way of restoring and renewing all things in Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth. More concretely (the word is very apt), we are pursuing, with the help of brave and competent workers, the erection of our Chapter House, a very important part of the monastery, as mentioned in our newsletter of last October.

In a few weeks the “topping off” ceremony will take place, once the highest point in the edifice is reached. On that day there will be a bit of a celebration, both for monks and for workers and friends (without unduly departing from the austerities of the Lenten season), as we stop a moment to contemplate the progress made and the road that still lies ahead before completion. Once the roof is over the building, protecting it from the elements, the finer work can start inside and the brick exterior will begin to rise.

Thanks to your prayers and contributions, we are not too far from having the funds necessary to complete this precious construction project, but this is not yet a “done deal,” especially with recent challenges to the American economy. In the end, we trust that Divine Providence, by the intermediary of Our Lady and the good Saint Joseph—not to mention your own kind support—will allow us to reach our goal.

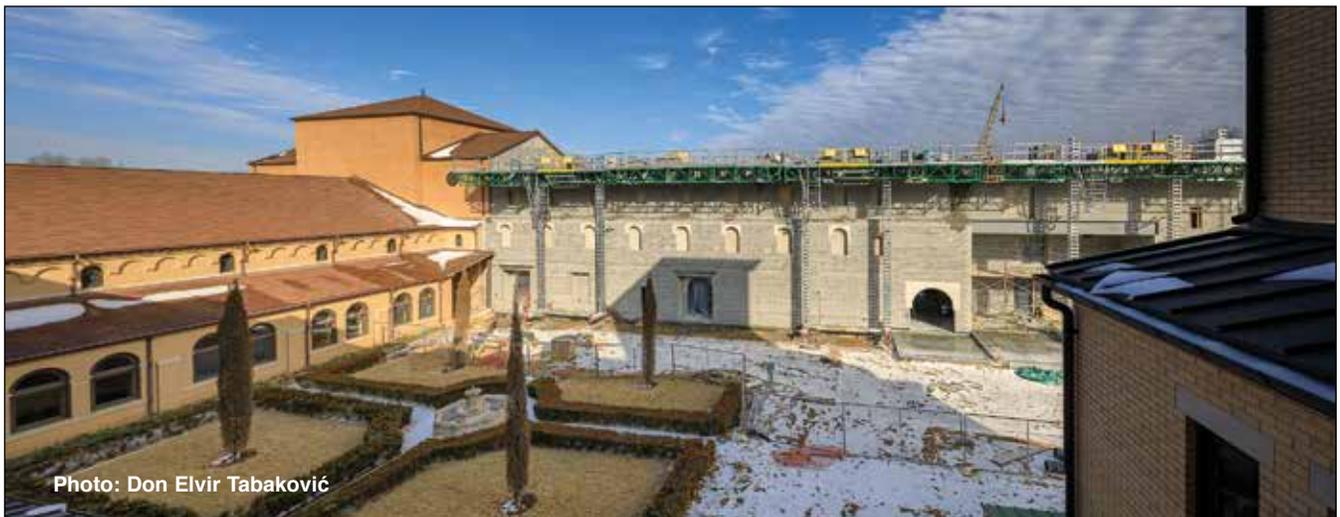


Photo: Don Elvir Tabaković

Chapter House after rough completion of three of the four stories above ground.

The Chapter House is critical, not only because of the Chapter Room itself and the other vital spaces that are necessary for the conduct of monastic life, but also for the many cells it will provide—“cells” in the monastic sense—not like prison cells, but like the cells in a healthy body. For the moment we are quite full, with many monks still living in primitive conditions, and so the postulants desiring to enter will have to wait until this building (which includes 33 new cells) is complete. As people tell me, this is “a good problem to have,” but I say that it is still a problem!



Photo: Don Elvir Tabaković

Otherwise, the Lenten season invites us all, monks and friends of monks, to enter once again into the desert of spiritual combat, where we are called to perform, along with the entire Church, true penance as we participate in the very Passion of Christ. Far removed from the world and its noisy distractions, this is the time when the great challenges of life are faced with greater lucidity and, by the grace of God, overcome. I know you will join us, each according to his or her strength, in this very monastic effort.

Of course at the end of the tunnel, there is always the incomparable feast of Easter, which we await, in the words of Saint Benedict, “with the joy of spiritual longing.”¹ We will meet you there...

¹ Rule of Saint Benedict, Chapter 49.

+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot

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