



CROWD AROUND THE CRIB

December 2023

Dear Friend of Clear Creek Abbey,

Would you like to flee the calculated madness that dominates much of contemporary society? Or even a certain chaos that troubles the Church? And do this without cultural cowardice, *without escapism*? Would you like to find release by means of a supernatural realism, the surest guard of sanity? Then come to the place where this can happen—come crowd around the Crib. We will find ourselves there in good company, rubbing elbows (most respectfully), not only with the Holy Family, the Shepherds, and the Magi, but also (liturgically speaking) with those perfect champions of the pro-life cause, the Holy Innocents, and that great man, St. Thomas Becket, Chaucer’s “holy blissful martyr,” along with so many others, whose feasts we celebrate in the Octave that prolongs Christmas. Truly a holy crowd!

And how may we do this? Well, nothing beats assisting at Holy Mass and some of the Divine Office (like Vespers), when you can find it, but it is also possible to drink of the liturgical wisdom of the ages by means of the words of a wise guide. Dom Prosper Guéranger, the founder of our Benedictine Congregation of Solesmes, whose cause for beatification recently moved ahead in a significant way (the French bishops voted to send it to Rome), wrote a precious work entitled *The Liturgical Year*.¹ This book can take an individual or a whole family through Advent and Christmas, day by day, in a unique manner. St. Thérèse of Lisieux tells



how this same book was read at her family’s home at Buissonnets: “During the winter evenings at Les Buissonnets we used to play draughts, then the board was whisked away and you or Marie would read out some of *The Liturgical Year* to us followed by a few pages from some other good and fascinating book.”² This wonderful commentary provides meditations for each day, helping us contemplate in turn the figures of those who crowd around the Crib of the Savior.

By whatever means you may make your way to Bethlehem and the Crib, we monks will join you there in spirit. Already, despite the many shadows that haunt a troubled world in our time, we wish you the choice graces of the glorious feast of the Nativity and to know a little better the greatest joy the world has ever known, the Child, who will brush away all dark things like so many cobwebs round about the Crib.

¹ *The Liturgical Year* by Dom Prosper Guéranger can be procured through our bookstore (the entire set or single volumes): clearcreekmonks.org/lit-year.

² *The Story of a Soul*, Manuscript A, Chapter 2.

+ br. Philip Anderson, abbot

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