

Let me greet you this morning with those ancient words
which express the whole of the Church's Easter faith:

Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia!

Christ has risen, as He promised, alleluia!

It is his light that we see reflected in the flame of the Paschal candle;
his absolute triumph over sin and death that we shared in the waters of Baptism;
and in that ancient delirium of joy,

our sung 'alleluia,'

the Church expresses her wondrous faith that Christ is the Lord of History.

"Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia!" we cry out,

for Christ holds in His nail-marked hands the whole of history.

The reply comes back to us *"Alleluia!"* for our whole future belongs to Him alone.

No longer limited by space or time,

Christ reveals himself today at Mass as both victim and priest,
our absolute beginning and our perfect end.

This is our Easter faith,

a faith to which the martyrs have given witness with their blood,
the Church's confessors have upheld with their constancy, and
the virgins of every age have preserved through their holy purity.

It is the same faith which countless monks and abbots
have preserved through their single-minded commitment
to prefer nothing to the work of God.

I wish to acknowledge on this happy occasion
the presence of James Conley, my brother bishop,
the various abbots and priors who have joined us today,
plus the monks and the friends

of Our Lady of the Annunciation of Clear Creek Abbey.

All of you have a right to rejoice in the Lord this day
for we have seen that his "kindness towers to the heavens
and his faithfulness reaches to the very skies."

And finally, with consummate affection and deep respect,
I should like to acknowledge the presence of my dear friend,

Father Abbot Antoine Forgeot of Fontgombault Abbey.

He has overseen this foundation with fatherly care,

“with equal charity for all,”

“exhorting the obedient, the gentle and the patient

so that they may progress to higher things.”

This is a day of great joy for you, Père Abbé, and I am happy to share it with you.

On February 11, 2010,

the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes,

Père Abbé named Father Philip Anderson,

as the first abbot of this house,

which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year,

and as we gather today for Abbot Anderson’s Abbatial blessing

it would be well for us to consider the *meaning*

a monastery offers to the world outside its cloister.

One should not imagine that St. Benedict’s 5th century

was much different than our 21st.

Surely the suave corruption of Rome

had not been completely replaced yet by the brutality of her new rulers,

and one must assume that the cycle of one good harvest

being followed by two or three hungry years

was as true then as it is in so many parts of the world today,

such that the poor,

whom Christ promised would always be with us,

must have found life a terrible struggle,

oppressed by their rulers and hungry at each day’s close.

Just as in our day,

Benedict’s world was too corrupt to acknowledge the presence of God,

too defeated by violence and too hungry to even imagine his Providence.

And yet in the midst of this chaos,

Saint Benedict founded a school of the Lord’s service,

a city of God,

whose citizens would discover the freedom

that comes from complete surrender to Christ,

a workshop of charity

where a man might be wearied with labors for God's sake.
Since then, in every culture and nation,
monastic life has shaken men into a holy silence,
into the realization that they are more than machines built for human activity.

Man is made for love - *divine love* -
and this divine love is always quiet, gentle, and new.

God created Benedict,
and like us, Saint Benedict was the result of a conscious decision by God
to extend His life in creation.
Called by God to do His will,
Benedict had no way of knowing the extent to which God would use him
to save and shape our world;
but that is what God called him to do,
spending his life in defending the fruits of the incarnation
– not with the power of arms –
but with men mobilized to use the weapons of silence and stillness.

The monks of Saint Benedict
give silent witness to the presence of God in the world.
Equally at home in the chapel,
 the scriptorium,
 the chapter room
 or the garden,
the monk teaches both the necessity of prayer and the sanctity of work.
He thoroughly confounds the assumptions of the world
that prayer is useless and labor a punishment,
and in his toil to bring forth the simplest harvest of wheat and grapes,
the diligent monk lives in the expectation
that the Eucharistic transformation of bread and wine
 into the Body and Blood of Christ
is a promise
 that everyone who is willing to take Christ at his word
 will also be transformed on the last day.

If the world is a desert of meaningless noise and unrelenting motion,
then the monastery is an oasis of silence
where only God speaks and where man listens.
In the monastery, Christ, the Lord of History, makes time stand still.
For each day is much like the day before and the day after.
At each morning's altar, Christ gives Himself to His Father
as an acceptable offering on behalf of all the world,
even though that world is too distracted to pray.

Here at this holy oasis,
as in the time of St. Benedict,
the world is saved by the blood of Christ.
The world – with all its distractions of
 engineering,
 technology,
 chemistry and
 entertainment
– is revealed as the present and future Kingdom
where Christ reigns in silence
and where his many monks ponder the meaning of this mystery,
eventually falling on their knees in whispered awe.

St. Benedict is perhaps the greatest hero of western civilization,
since by his intercession and his Holy Rule,
our world continues to be shaped and renewed in Christ.

It doesn't matter if that renewal is done
far from the centers of worldly power and influence.
By God's providence,
monks who live in rural Oklahoma,
 on land that made bootleggers rich,
can have a profound impact on the world around us
as long as their work and their prayer is offered day after day
in worship of the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.

From Hulbert and Lost City, to Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Denver and beyond, this

monastery which began 10 years ago
with just 13 pioneering monks
and has grown since to 34 members

has begun to shape and renew our contemporary culture.

This renewal has begun - *as it must* - with the renewal first of the liturgy
and then of the Christian family.

But the meaning of this monastery
goes beyond those families which have gladly exchanged
the world's treasure for treasures in heaven,
and have moved here to raise their children
within the sound of Clear Creek's bells.

The meaning that Clear Creek holds
can only be grasped by those who have experienced a conversion of heart,
and a renewal in the faith,

by those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
and are willing to live their lives in the certainty

that "*if we have died with Christ, so also shall we live with Him.*"

Such a conversion will bring joy to our modern day civilization.

It will bring us beyond our shell of cheerfulness.

It is difficult in a world so focused on power, money, prestige, and pleasure.
Indeed, such a conversion is impossible without God's intervening grace.

But today we are here to remember exactly
that the resurrection of Christ is the source of that grace.

God Who raised His Son from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit,
will raise us up along with Him.

Benedict believed it and his monks live it - then as now -
in a daily round of prayer and piety.

The holy Rule of St. Benedict
provides the world with models of moderation in a time of excesses,
of fruitful labor in place of the extremes of austerity and pleasure,
of discipline in place of uncontrolled enthusiasm,
and of mildness of mind and heart in place of anxiety.

The Rule of St. Benedict continues to transform life in the monastery into a family where charity reigns supreme.

Unlike the frantic activities of modern man
that leave him tired and distanced from the fruit of his labor,
the monk eats the food he plants,
prays on the benches he has hewn,
wears the clothes he has sewn,
and sees the joy on the faces of his brothers for whom he has prayed.

Father Philip, as I impart the abbatial blessing today,
I promise my prayers for you and all the monks of Clear Creek.
May this monastery continue for a thousand years
as all the monks who work and pray here should know
that they are changing the world
by convincing men of their dignity
because the Son of Mary has risen from the dead
and is now the Lord of History.

Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia!