



PAX

NEWSLETTER No. 28 SPRING 2023

Benedictine Monastery

## Notre-Dame de Toute Confiance

(Our Lady of Complete Confidence)

**Dear Friends and Benefactors,**

It is once again time to wish you a holy and happy New Year, even if perhaps you will not receive this letter until after Lent. It is always the time to wish you the strength to help Jesus to carry the cross of our redemption and the cross which still saves us every day. It is always the time to assure you of our prayers, melodious and grateful, for your friendship and faithful support. It is always the time to thank you, because our gratitude is immense, and you are the instruments of Divine Providence.

Let us begin by thanking the Good Lord! "And Thou, Lord, be blessed for having created me!" (St. Clare's last words before she died.) Thank you for having created us, thank you for having redeemed us and in such an overwhelming manner! God, though He did not need us, willed to unite Himself to us, poor creatures of flesh and bone. But "God is a spirit" (St. John 4:24). How can the spirit unite to the flesh? God could have raised us up to Himself, by transforming us into angels or by restoring us to the primitive state of Adam and Eve before they sinned, by a simple decree of His Mercy. He preferred to "descend" to us, to become flesh Himself: "And the Word was made flesh." (Prologue of St. John) So that we could "understand God," He put Himself at our level; He became man and even a child. This is what the Preface of Christmas proclaims: "For through the mystery of the Word made flesh, new radiance from Thy glory hath so shone on the eye of the soul that the recognition of our God made visible draweth us to love what is invisible."

However, there is an objection, the one that Philip made: If the Word was made flesh, if the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity has taken a human form, how do we know the Father or the Holy Ghost? "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." (St. John 14:8) And we hear Jesus' reply: "He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also." (St. John 14:9) Nevertheless, in His infinite Mercy, God has given us even more. He willed that in a way, the Father should also have a human face, and in a way, that the Holy Ghost should have a human face too...What a mystery!... However, the Father is not incarnate and neither is the Holy Ghost incarnate...That

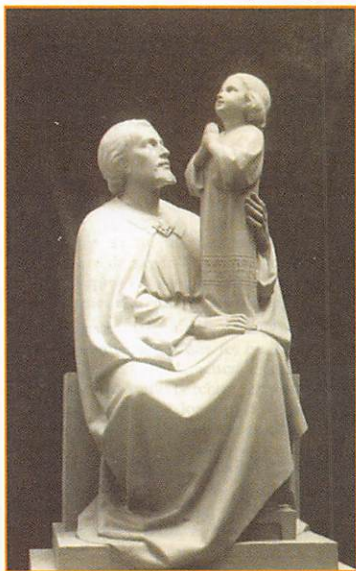


is true, but...the Holy Ghost has taken as a face the human face of Mary, His spouse: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." (Luke 1:35) It is as if the Most Blessed Virgin Mary is the shadow of the Holy Ghost. Her Immaculate Heart is the furnace of the love of the Holy Ghost. And the Father? Well, we were able to contemplate, during our last community retreat (cf. chronical) the vicar of the Eternal Father, the shadow of the Father, the image of the Father, the "face" of the Father in St. Joseph. "He is like a reflection of the Heavenly Father and a sort of divine form....There are striking analogies between the life and soul of Joseph and the bosom of the Eternal Father. The bosom of the Father is the uncreated place where the entire mystery of Jesus and Mary is born, blossoms, and is consummated. The soul and the life of St. Joseph are, in their way, the created place where this same adorable mystery begins, lives, and grows (...) Alone amongst all creatures, Joseph is the vicar of God (...) he is the living and consecrated image of the Eternal Father." (Msgr. Gay)

Here is another comparison of St. Joseph with the Father. God the Father eternally says only one word, His Word. St. Joseph (in the Gospel) said only one word, "Jesus," at the time of the Circumcision.

"O glorious St. Joseph, we come to celebrate your glory and rejoice with you at your predestination to be the Shadow of the Eternal Father for Jesus, and to be the virginal Spouse of Mary. (...)

Confident in your powerful goodness, which is a living reflection of that of the Father, we humbly request you to show the same paternal Providence to us as that with which you surrounded Jesus and Mary.



"O St. Joseph, we glorify your paternal goodness by our calm confidence and our filial love, and we are sure that your attentive providence will not be lacking to your children and will lead us to an ever-greater intimacy with Jesus and Mary, and by Them, to intimacy with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." (Fr. Jacquier)

That is what we wish for you this year with all our heart, so that by contemplating the visible faces of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we may will be led to the contemplation of the invisible face of the Father.

Sr. Claire, Prioress

## LIFE OF SISTER CLARE OF JESUS (1894-1923)

This March 20, 2023, will be the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the death of a young Benedictine nun who died in the odor of sanctity at the Abbey of Our Lady of Angels and Saint-John of Angély in France. It is an occasion to tell you about one who was called “the new little Sister Therese,” but who had, at the beginning of her life, a certain doubt and religious skepticism. The course of this soul towards the eternal light, and her intercession during this centennial year will certainly help us, each according to needs, to follow our course towards our true goal, Heaven!

The second of three girls, Sister Clare of Jesus was born October 22, 1894, at Saint-John of Angély and seemed to have received the average Christian edu-

cation of the time. Her mother and older sister were pious and her father fulfilled his religious duties. But as she later wrote: “I was not pious, but I made a very good First Communion,” (May 20, 1906) “and soon after, skepticism came upon me. Doubt invaded me slowly, but surely. I had never had, I think, anything but a pale faith.” And finally, “I was on the point of abandoning the religion I was raised in but of which I knew nothing.” Thus, during her youth, from 12 to 21 years, the divine life was obscured in her. It languished, like a lamp close to being extinguished due to a lack of oil. At the heart of this night of doubt, nevertheless, came a prayer: “O my God, if truly You exist, grant me the faith; if the Catholic Church is Your Church, willed and established by You, let me believe in her.” Except for noticing her lack of religious fervor, her family did not suspect the crisis and suffering in the depth of her soul. “God alone acted in me. And from this night which enveloped me so completely, He brought forth, little by little, very slowly, some rays of light...and then a great light! When I began to see that there was a Heaven, that God exists, and that it was true that Jesus lived, suffered, and died, then I wished to love Him with all of my strength and to give myself entirely to Him who had given me all.”

“What is the use of life, if it is not in love?” Her daily, faithful response to the divine embrace, to the constant presence of God in and around her, prepared her to enter the monastery. “To nourish my heart with Thy Word and then suffer much with Thee and for Thee, O Jesus, it is the ardent desire which torments my soul. Thus, the religious life alone appears compatible with the desires of my heart, and I wish to be separated from the world forever.” She reflected, weighed the arguments,



Suzanne B.  
(The future Sr. Clare of Jesus)

## LIFE OF SISTER CLARE OF JESUS

and searched for the will of God. But while she waited she made efforts to live a fervent Christian life, worked on virtues (in the heart of her family and relations, she tried to be more thoughtful, gentle, smiling, and patient), and she drew up a daily schedule with the help of a priest. Even though she devoted herself during this time to works in her parish, her desire of the religious life was directed more and more towards silent contemplation.

She received the definitive light on her vocation on June 20, 1918: "These irresistible attractions, this love of solitude tells me enough of what God wills. The cloister draws me; it is there that I should go." She wrote to the Reverend Mother Abbess of the Abbey of Our Lady of Angels, who gave her information on different orders. The young girl studied the rule of each. She wished to combine the effacement of the Visitation order, the detachment of the Poor Clares, the contemplation of Carmel, and the life of praise of the daughters of St. Benedict. She announced her desire to enter the cloistered religious life to her parents on November 17<sup>th</sup>. In order to conquer the resistance of her father, she gave him for Christmas a painting of the Crucifixion which she had painted herself, accompanied with this letter. "He asks you for your daughter. Tell Jesus that you say yes. Tell him that you believe, without understanding, in this call full of mystery and love. God, Papa, asks you for your daughter. What an honor! Do not refuse me to God who calls me!" She was then allowed to make a retreat at the Abbey in 1919. Before she made it, she had already asked St. Benedict to accept her in his order: "O St. Benedict, will you accept me as one of your children? Will you lead me to Jesus? Will you teach me to please Him whom I wish to love so much? O most holy Father, I implore your blessing." She was finally able to call herself a daughter of St. Benedict and her entrance into the monastery took place on the evening of June 26, 1919, during the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for the Feast of the Sacred Heart.



Suzanne before her entry  
into religion .

“ O St. Benedict,  
will you accept me  
as one of your children? ”

“ By entering religion,  
the virgin enters and establishes  
herself in the Sacred Heart .” St. Gertrude

Before leaving her father's house, the young girl had written down these lines which are attributed to Saint Gertrude: “By entering religion, the virgin enters and establishes herself in the Sacred Heart.” She received the habit on December 27<sup>th</sup>. The preacher said on this occasion, “For your engagement with Christ, you have chosen the feast of Saint John. Could you have a better patron saint than the disciple of Love of the Last Supper and of Calvary?” She was then given the name of Sister Clare. To explain the choice of this name which had surprised her parents, one religious from within the cloister, talented in writing poems composed the following lines which explained the mystery: “You are going to be called Clare. The angels whisper it among themselves... They say to each other: when her name is Clare, her soul will be inspired by this name. She will be among her sisters a little soul, all pure, radiating the Divine Sun... In her eyes we will see Heaven, in her heart one will find Christ Who will impress His image in her as in a faithful mirror. ” (To be continued...)



Benedictine Abbey - Saint John of Angély, France

**October 12<sup>th</sup>:** It is a Feast Day in Brazil (Our Lady of Aparecida), and it is also a feast-day at Perdechat because a very small part of Brazil comes to attend the taking of the habit of our postulant. This is nothing extraordinary we are told, this ceremony is only the continuation of that of Baptism. The religious life is only an immersion in God, a hidden life in God. Dear Sister Marie-Madeleine, at your Baptism, your first clothing, the priest gave you a white garment. Today your habit is black; it is up to you to whiten it in the Blood of the Lamb.

**October 21<sup>st</sup>:** The Psalter is the book we read the most. Our Holy Father Saint Benedict wants us to recite it entirely in one week and has wisely arranged in his Rule the order in which we do it. Thus, the weeks following one after another, the ear of our heart hears over and over again these prayers with which it becomes familiar. And even apart from the Divine Office, Saint Benedict plans in his double division of the day (ora et labora) that the monks "will devote themselves to their reading or to the study of the Psalms." (Holy Rule, Chapter 48 ) Today Father Portail talks to us about the Psalms and especially about Psalm 21. He comes to help us to dive deeper into the ocean in which we bathe, to better see the One we are looking for: Jesus suffering, Jesus despised, merciful Jesus, glorious Jesus... Jesus living in us.



Gift sculpted by the novitiate for the feast of St. Gertrude (monastery's motto)

**November 17<sup>th</sup> - Saint Gertrude:** "La part du Pauvre," a play by Elise Humbert, is the little theatrical performance that the sisters present to us this year for the feast of the novitiate. The warm fire and the Christmas decorations, the Provençal costumes, (and even the Provençal accent!) everything is ready; we are only waiting for the poor man...There he is, but how awkward it is! The husband and wife don't know what to do; only little Louis gives him a warm welcome. Midnight strikes and the poor man reveals his identity - it is Saint Joseph! Every year, on Christmas Eve, he returns to earth and stops at a house to ask for hospitality in the name of God. Before returning to Jesus and Mary, he reminds us that, "The kingdom of God is not of this world; it belongs to little children, and to those who resemble them. "

**November 19<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>:** Yes, Saint Benedict wants us to receive "with special solicitude and care for the poor, because it is mainly in their person that we receive Christ." (Holy Rule, chapter 53) And here is someone poor: Father François-Marie, Capuchin. But he is the one who gives us the alms of spiritual bread: a retreat spent in the Heart of the more than seraphic Saint Joseph. Ah, this glorious saint has his

place among us, but we did not know the title that his Spouse wanted us to give him here: Saint Joseph of complete confidence! So, let us go to this good father to beg for the graces he wants to distribute to us all, let us love Saint Joseph because he was the first to love us.

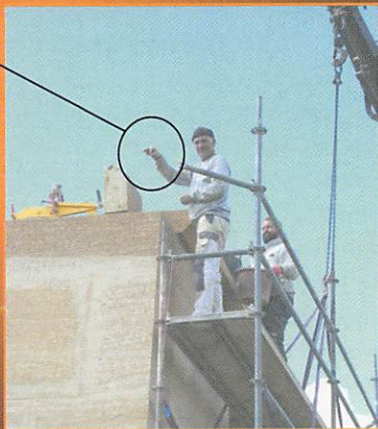
**December 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Definitely, it seems that this year a celestial plot is pushing us towards Saint Joseph: construction, the play on November 17<sup>th</sup>, retreat... But at the end of November, what is happening? The tiles for the roof are a week late, then two, then three. What is Saint Joseph doing? Is he sleeping? We are starting to worry. The carpenter threatens to tarp the roof, leave and come back in the spring! It would be a great waste of time and money (the cost of the scaffolding among others). Good Saint Joseph, once again, help us! Mother Prioress goes to the construction site to find the foreman: "I am consecrating the construction site to Saint Joseph tomorrow!" (It was Thursday evening, December 1<sup>st</sup>). Answer: "What?! Not today!?" But we have to wait for Chapter the following morning, the first Friday of the month, the day when we renew our consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Then Mother Prioress explicitly dedicates the construction site to Saint Joseph (this consecration was already made orally, but we could not find any text or date), promising to dedicate the cloister to him as soon as it is built... All day long, Mother Cellarer talks with the head builder and the carpenter. In the evening, a solution is found: we will move the scaffolding to continue the treatment of the facades and the floors ... while waiting for the tiles. These arrive on December 13<sup>th</sup>, thank you Saint Joseph! Construction is not stopped but only delayed.

**December 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>:** "Et mane videbitis glóriam eius," "And in the morning you shall see His glory." (Introit of the Christmas Vigil) Father Couture prepares us for Christmas by preaching a recollection on the mystery of God's glory. The glory of God, the glory manifested by Creation and the Incarnation, the glory our ultimate end... we will never stop contemplating and being marveled by it. For the glory of God is the whole reason for our life of praise: "Glory to God in the highest heaven...we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!"

**January 6<sup>th</sup>:** A young lady entered the enclosure of the monastery today; she comes from the East (Switzerland!) to adore our God who became incarnate. We taste the joy of our mother the Holy Church to whom we apply these words of the Prophet: "Lift up thy eyes round about, and see: all these are gathered together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged." (Isaias 60: 4-5) The religious life is for the joy and glory of Christ and his Bride. May Jesus, Mary and Joseph be the three stars that guide our new Sister in the desert to the heavenly Bethlehem.

## NEWS OF OUR WORK

We left you in mid-September 2022.  
Since then our courageous stonemasons finished laying the stones on September 30<sup>th</sup>, without forgetting to place a Miraculous Medal under the last stone, so that everything is under Our Lady's protection !



Installing the stone cornice which softens the "stiffness" of the walls!



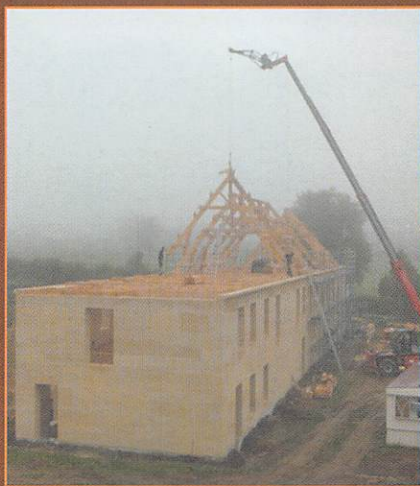
Moktar adjusts the cornice with a saw - it looks easy!

Mr. Mezzone studies the treatment of stone with lime water and does tests with the Karsten pipette.





## NEWS OF OUR WORK



During this time, the carpenters are installing the trusses and the frame for the first dormer window.

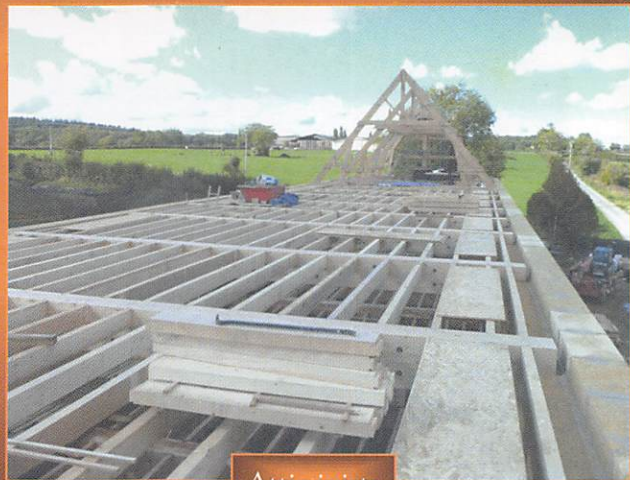
Then they install the rafters so that the roofers



can begin placing the gutter and laying the roof tiles.



Our valiant foreman needs a lot of energy since his role is to watch over the crew at all times! Fortunately, he does not lose his smile and always finds a good word to



Attic joists

lighten the atmosphere and brings us lots of vegetables from his garden! Thank you!

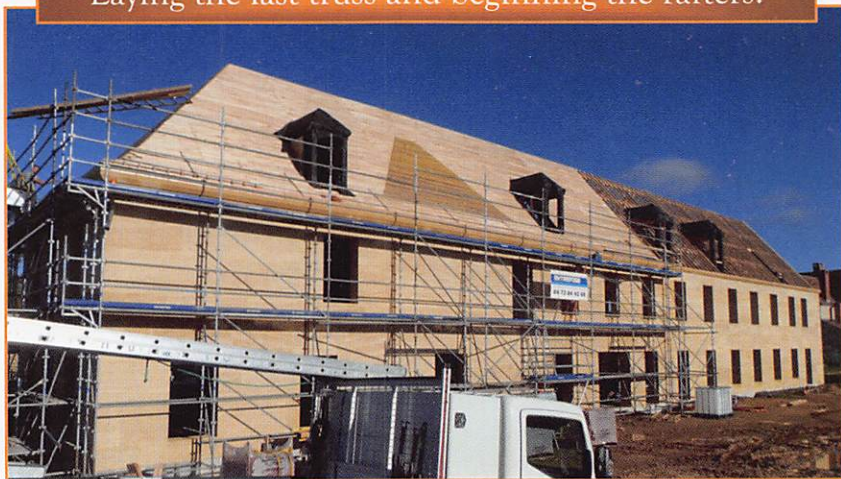
## NEWS OF OUR WORK



The first  
dormer  
window !



Laying the last truss and beginning the rafters.

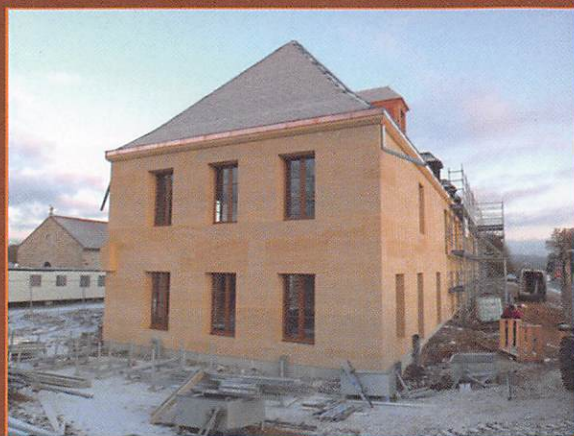


## NEWS OF OUR WORK

At the beginning  
of November,  
we see  
the first tiles on the  
northern ridge.



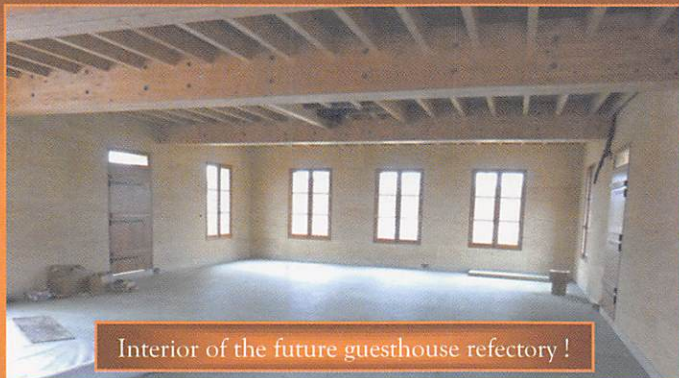
At the beginning of  
December, after moving  
the scaffolding, the  
Laurençon company sur-  
prises us with its presence  
and in the evening we dis-  
cover the first windows  
and, soon after, the doors  
of the guesthouse section.



During January the  
work of covering the  
“Sisters' refectory/  
kitchen” section  
continues. We can't  
wait to be dry!



## NEWS OF OUR WORK



Interior of the future guesthouse refectory !

The coming months should see the work of plumbers and electricians, the plasterer and the mason to allow us to install the interior. But you have to know how to be patient. Everything comes with time! We are still

missing € 200,000 to finish the interior. We entrust the rest of this work to Saint Joseph so that everything goes well, and we continue to count on your generosity! Thank you very much. Once again, a big thank you for all your dedication. We commend each of you to the Blessed Virgin Mary!

## HOW TO HELP US :

### In the U.S.A.:

Checks payable in USD to:  
**Notre-Dame de Toute Con fiance Trust**

And send to:  
**930 Meredith Road  
Plummer, ID 83851**

Contact:  
**Mrs. Mary Therese McQuade**  
(208) 273-2108

Checks payable or bank transfer in USD to:

**Benedictine Project Corporation**

USD Account No. : 0002 2000 0118 9391  
Routing No. : 123 171 955

**Moutain West Bank**

**709 E. Seltic Way  
Post Falls, ID 83854**

For tax deductible purposes please contact:

**Mr. Vince Hughes**

P.O. Box 491-Post Falls, Idaho (ID) 83877

### In CANADA:

Cheques payable in CND to:

**Mr. Larry DONNELLY**  
4447 Yellow Point Road  
LADYSMITH, BC, V9G 1G5  
(250) 245-0508

please specify *"for the nuns"*  
Thank you !

### In ENGLAND (UK):

Cheques payable in GBP to:

**Mrs. Lara MORRIS**  
Speen Lane  
Newburg RG14 1RJ  
England

please specify *"for the nuns"*  
Thank you!

Monastère Notre-Dame de Toute Con fiance  
PERDECHAT -63330 VIRLET

Tel : 00 33 (0) 4 73 52 77 33 / FAX : 00 33 (0) 4 73 52 77 34