



T*he* BROTHERS *of* CLEAR CREEK

Photography *by* Shane Brown

JUST EAST OF Fort Gibson Lake, where right-angled grid roads meander into the foothills of the Ozarks, is a little-known community, Our Lady of the Annunciation of Clear Creek Monastery.

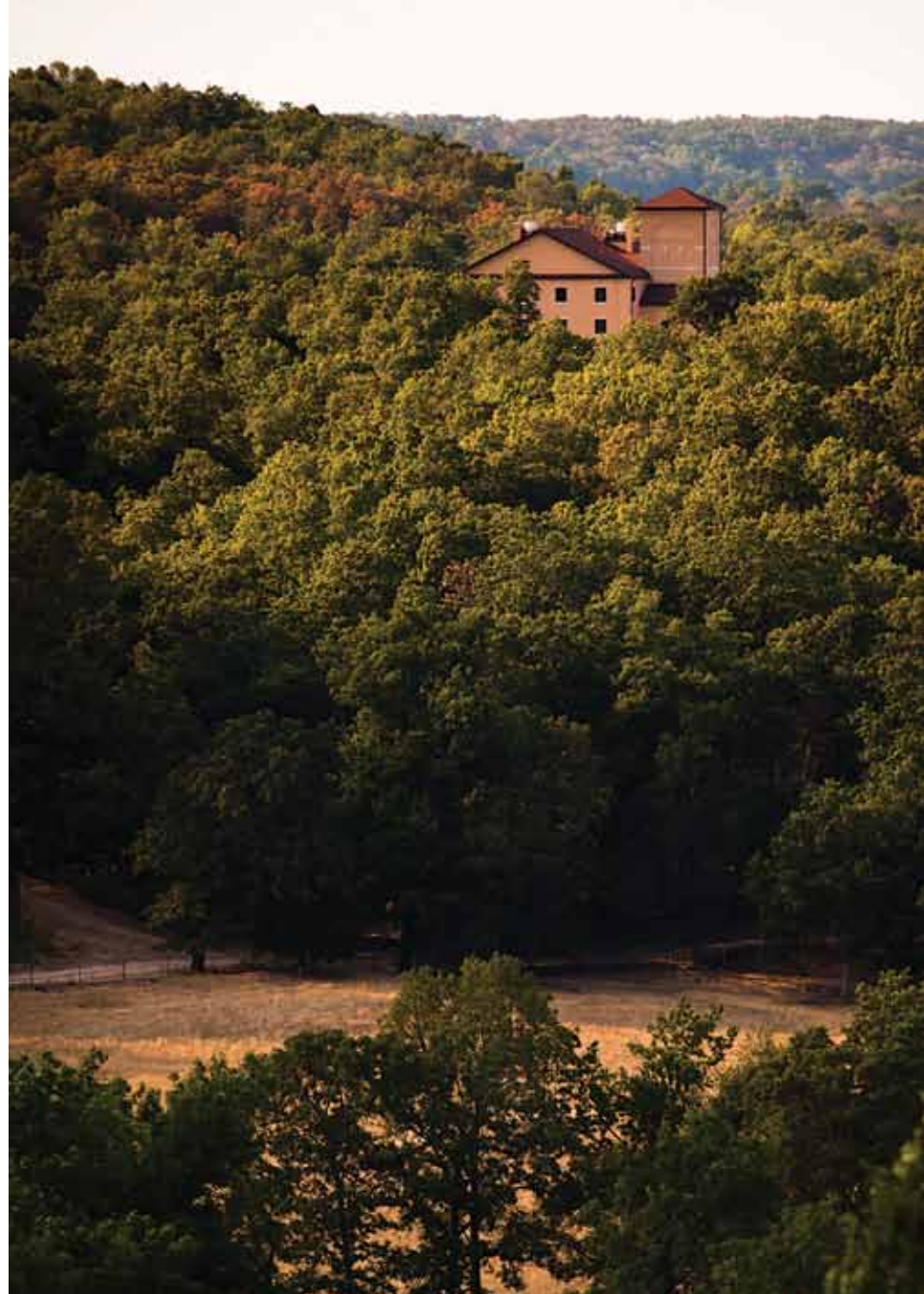
Here, more than three dozen monks are part of the only traditional men's contemplative Benedictine monastery in the United States. What they express through their brotherhood within this Catholic order is, in a word, reverence—through prayer, a simple life, and all-encompassing love of and service to God. These men's cloistered monastic existence, characterized by vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, is lived almost entirely within the 1,000-acre, European-style abbey founded by a dozen monks in 1999.

Every moment of the Benedictine monastic life is invested with meaning. From the most mundane household chore to a celebration of the most sublime holy office, every aspect of the daily round inspires prayer because for Benedictines, everything is in service of God and therefore an act of love.

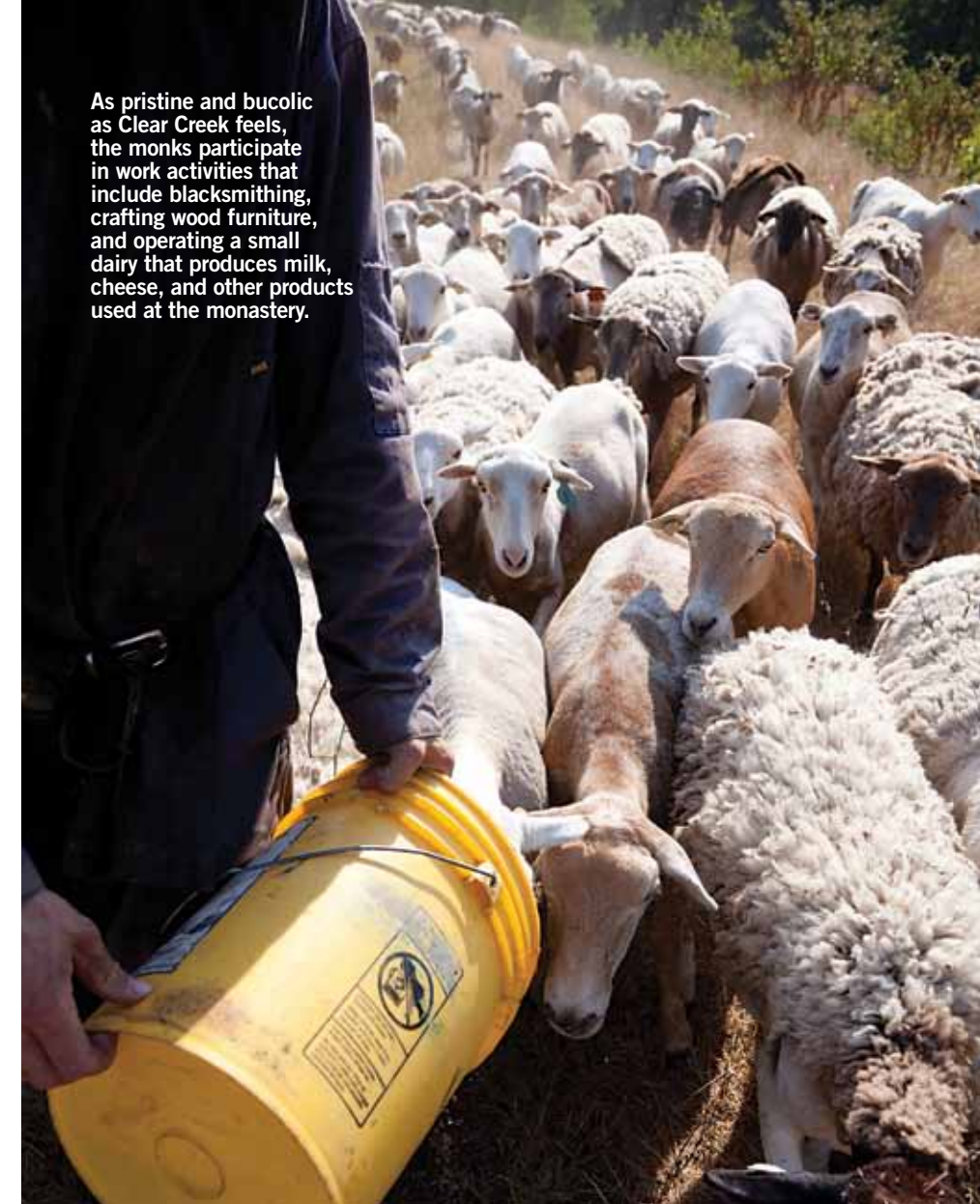
Another of the virtues of the Benedictine order is hospitality. Clear Creek Monastery welcomes guests, who are invited to conduct their own spiritual journeys and share in some of the monks' worship services.

—SHANE BROWN

Overnight stays may be arranged through Father Bachmann, Clear Creek's Father Guestmaster. Clear Creek Monastery is located at 5804 West Monastery Road in Hulbert. (918) 772-2454 or clearcreekmonks.org.



Clear Creek Monastery is located on the west rise of a valley near Fort Gibson Lake. The main buildings—including the church, gatehouse (the welcome area that includes the gift shop), and residence—rise above the native oak, sycamore, and pines at the edge of a meadow. When completed, Clear Creek's church, currently under construction, will be a massive structure, standing 114 feet tall and with a bell tower for three large bells from France, where the monastery's mother house, Fontgombault Abbey, is located.

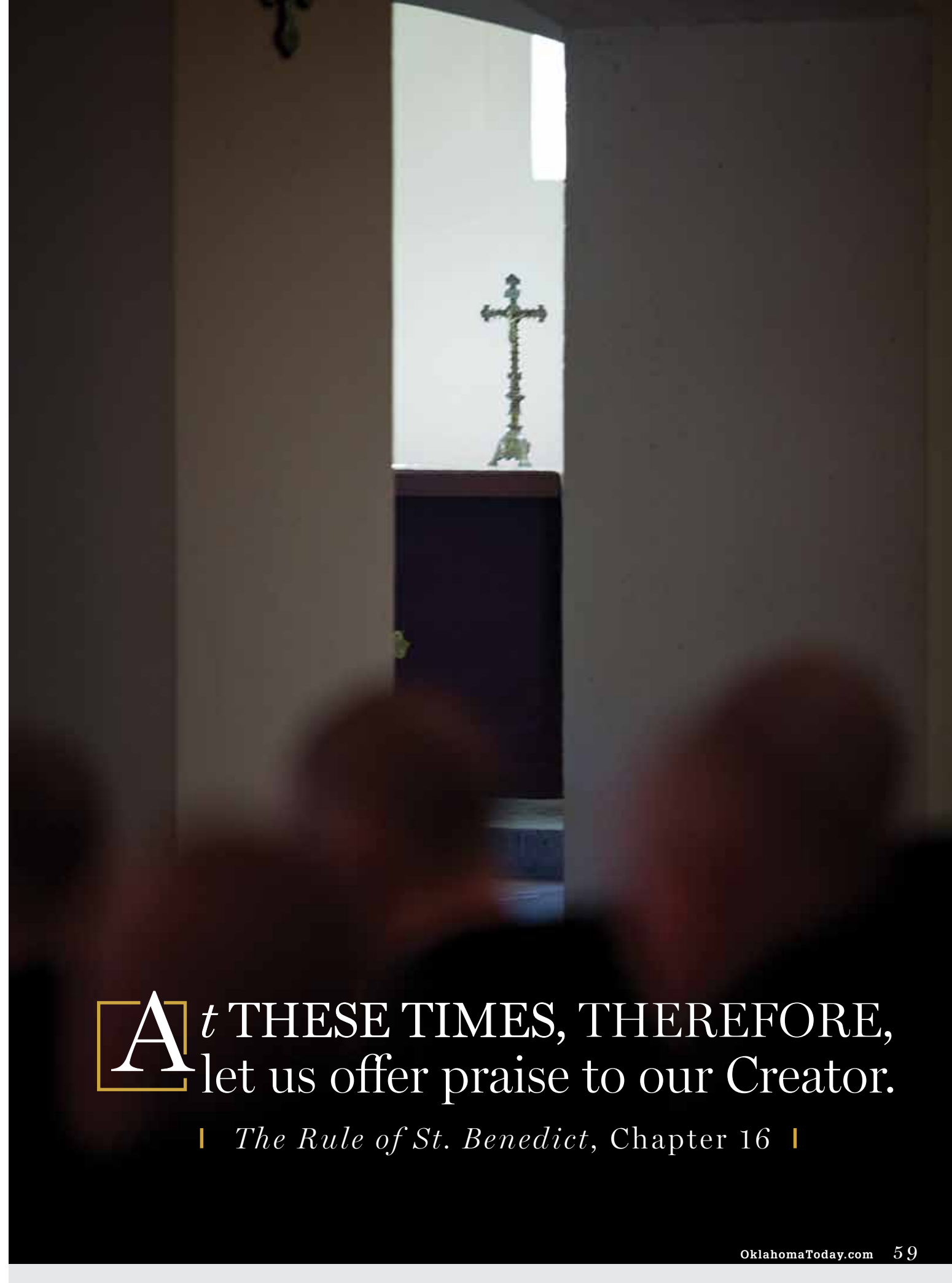


As pristine and bucolic as Clear Creek feels, the monks participate in work activities that include blacksmithing, crafting wood furniture, and operating a small dairy that produces milk, cheese, and other products used at the monastery.





At Clear Creek, the day begins as early as 4:20 a.m. with Matins, the early morning prayer service. In total, the monks participate in eight worship ceremonies every 24 hours, interspersed with meals, work, individual prayer, exercise, reading, recreation, and sleep.



At THESE TIMES, THEREFORE,
let us offer praise to our Creator.

| *The Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 16* |



Self-reliance is an important tenet of the Benedictine order, and the monks find meaning and purpose even in simple household chores.



Rosaries and other accoutrements of religious worship are made on-site by the Clear Creek monks. Some are sold in the monastery's small gift shop.



Work takes many shapes at Clear Creek Monastery and includes creating icons, small pieces of art that depict saints and other religious figures.



During breakfast, the monks dine standing. Because that meal was not mentioned in Benedictine texts, the monks de-emphasize it.

The BRETHREN ARE ALSO to obey one another, knowing that by this road of obedience, they are going to God.

| *The Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 71* |



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