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OUR LADY OF GETHSEMANI

Trappist-Cistercian Abbey

TRAPPIST, KENTUCKY

March 6th 1951

Dear Mr Thompson-

Many thanks for your kind loan of the books. I am hugely enjoying Mayor Garner, also Bluegrass and Rhododendron. I will get around to James Lane Allen later. I also glanced through your Kentucky Poets and was happy with the two bits of Jesse Stuart with whom I feel a certain kinship-- especially in his attitude toward "The City". I think there are a lot of people who feel that way in Kentucky and that is probably one of the reasons why the Commonwealth feels like home! What is Jesse Stuart doing these days?

You say you have never visited Gethsemani! You must do so by all means. Father Abbot extends his cordial invitation to come down and see our library at any time. Big feast days of the Church or Sundays are not too convenient for us, but any ordinary week day is perfect. It happens that the place assigned to me for my work happens to be the rare book vault. I assure you it is a very inspiring little room. Your mention of the Fathers of the Church, and the bibliography of Isidore tells us that our libraries have something in common. No doubt we can help one another. We are beginning to enter more seriously into Patristic studies here than has been done in the past. Fortunately we have Migne, at least the Latin.

Here are a few more scraps of notes and mss. You will be pleased, perhaps, to see that I was able to dig up a little fragment of the Seven Storey Mountain after all. The remarks in pencil are observations of the censor. You will be amused. There is also a sketch for an illustration for a forthcoming book, Bread in the Wilderness, and some rejected pages from another forthcoming book, the Ascent to Truth. Finally I include some rough notes of the Orientation lectures of which the mimeographed copy has reached you by now.

Why doesn't the U. of Kentucky start something as ambitious as the Sewanee Review or the Southern Review? Or the Virginia Quarterly? Perhaps you have, since my retirement to Gethsemani! In any case, this will be another assurance of our interest and mutual good wishes. Please let us know in advance if you are coming down.

I really feel that Kentucky has a lot to offer and ~~ix~~ that we should be second to no other southern state-- the south has produced some of the most serious writers of our day! -- in the literary field. I also feel that Gethsemani is very much a part of Kentucky, and that therefore it is good for us to be in communication with university circles here. This is therefore a token of our best wishes and an assurance of our continued prayers for your welfare.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*J. M. Harris*