

jhs



ABBAY OF GETHSEMANI
TRAPPIST, KENTUCKY

Feb 2, 1961

Dear Victor:

Having been very busy, and on retreat, and also sick since I last saw you, I have not yet got around to writing the letter of recommendation. And I am still wondering very much if I am sufficiently master of the mandarin formulas that will be required to make it effective. I would like to see a model of some such letter. Could someone obtain for me an approved form? Then I could follow it. I think that your own prospectus is itself here and there too simple and honest to be up to the required mandarin standard. I don't mean that you should be dishonest by any means, but I don't see that it will help you to say things like: "I can't tell you more than I have just said in these notes," and "maybe I ought to go and talk to Sir Herbert Read too". I would be very definite on each point that it is quite essential for you to do these things or those things, and that you know precisely what you mean and what you want. I think many of the points you make are very well put and telling and I think you have made your classical standpoint seem quite strong. But why not stronger? In a thing like this one must not let modesty stand in one's way. No one asking for a Guggenheim should be diffident about his project or his powers in any way whatever. They should get the feeling that ~~they~~ you are doing them a favor by letting them know about your work so that they can fulfil their purpose, their raison d'etre, by giving you money. I would even ask for more money. But perhaps in this I am too sanguine, as I say I am not in the mandarin class.

There has been some talk about getting someone in to talk to a group of the monks about right attitudes in regard to monastic work, especially in view of the building and remodelling we are doing around here now. Questions of taste, or orientation, of proper outlook, of working like monks, putting up buildings as monks should, furnishing them as monks should. Bro Giles and I both suggested that you would be an ideal person to give one or two talks on this. Would you like to? Some Saturday afternoon. We could first have lunch together as usual, then the talk would be perhaps about one thirty or two, our time. There would be discussion afterward, and the purpose would be enlightenment of monks. I am sure something could be done, though I don't think all problems can be solved by panels and conferences.

Will you please let me know what you think of this, and what other information you would like. Of course, we would not expect you to do this without some remuneration.

I shall be waiting for some ideas about the way to write the letter you want. If you think it is really all right for me to go ahead by my own devices, then I will do so. But I think I ought to have a model to follow. Will they send me some kind of form??

I thought Bob Lax might be coming down but he didn't.

As ever, all best wishes and blessings to both of you

Very cordially in Christ

In Louis