

jhs



ABBAY OF GETHSEMANI  
TRAPPIST, KENTUCKY

April 12, 1960

Dear Victor:

All I can say is that the meaning of the Cross and the Resurrection is just that. Death is destroyed and sin is forgotten. There is a wonderful mysterious text in St Paul somewhere, in which he says "even if my heart reproach me, yet God is greater than my heart." Meaning that (as he says in another place) we do not judge ourselves. And if we do, the answer of His mercy is more final than our self-condemnation. The reason why we talk of remembering sin is that it has to be remembered first before it can be forgotten. We are not birds or animals, living in thoughtlessness. What is done must be brought to mind and judged. But when it is judged the matter ends. It is forgotten. It is only in hell that sin is not forgotten. That is why it is hell. The Cross is not a reproach for sin as so many people make it to be. (So many preachers simply threaten men with the Cross, and belabour them with it.) The meaning of the Cross is that the "writ" that is against us has been nailed to the wood and destroyed. It is that sin can now be forgotten, in so far as we are new men in Christ. If it comes back, then it is again destroyed by His mercy and forgotten. All this is in St Paul, but St Paul is sometimes hard reading. And it is in the First Epistle of St John, which would be a good one to read and meditate around this time, Easter.

Of course someone will say: there must be penance and reparation for sin. Well, the best reparation and penance is to have so much confidence in the mercy of God that one can forget it. But this implies a certain way of life which makes the forgetfulness real and not just a psychological suppression - it must be a new life in Christ. Which does not mean good bourgeois conformity by any means.

Here is a little card, not beautiful, which I got somewhere. The text is nice. I wonder if you would like to make something of it for us, sometime - not necessarily with a picture. I could ask Father Abbot if we could commission you to do a few hundred for us. It is a good word to give to many people.

And here is the proof. Many thanks.

God bless you and Carolyn, and all best Easter wishes.

Cordially in Christ Our Lord

*J. M. Lamin*