

jhs

Gethsemani
Trappist, Ky.

Sept 22, 1955

Dear Mrs Pellegrini.

Bob wrote to me just before leaving that you were ready to go ahead on Silence in Heaven pointing to January publication. He asked me to send you at once the table of contents and material for a blurb, as well as the rest of the manuscript.

I am sending you the contents, the material for an announcement, the preface and as soon as I can lay hands on it I am sending the new chapters on St Benedict, the Benedictines, and the Cistercians. I see no reason why you shouldn't start getting the material you have there typed up. The copy you have is marked not ~~setting~~ copy, but that was because it had not yet been censored. By the time the typist reaches the beginning of part two, I ought to have the material for that part there. You have the last part of part three, on the Camaldolese.

About the title-- Bob wants to keep Silence in Heaven. That is strictly speaking the title of a volume appearing in French and consisting of the first chapter of this text, plus a lot of pictures and other material. Now the French publisher is acting very jealous about this, and though he is making no difficulty about our using the chapter which he has printed, he has sold the book (his book) to an English publisher who will doubtless be bringing it out under that title. In order to avoid untold complications we must take another title. I have put Living in Silence over the table of contents, but I sent a whole list of possible titles in a letter which has, I think, reached you. Take your pick-- or suggest another. Or let's get together on it in some other way. I imagine that it is just about the first thing we have to do at this point.

I am also sending you some fine new photographs of the Benedictines of La Pierre qui Vire. I do hope we will be able to use as many photographs as possible. I have not put any titles on them, I expect to do so when you have proofs. I hate to write on the back of pictures for fear of spoiling them. Bob tells me you already have some pictures of a Cistercian monastery in Switzerland. Do you have the pictures of Camaldoli which I sent last spring? I forget if I sent them to Bob or to Naomi. I have more pictures coming, of Trappists, to complete our documentation, although I also think it would be a nice idea for someone to grab a camera and run up to Elmira N.Y. and take a few pictures of the Primitive Benedictines at Mount Saviour.

Now: when you have all this typed up, will you please send me a copy of your typescript along with my own original, in order that I may go over it all and insert corrections suggested by censors. Final okay has not come through from them and we can't make a contract until it does, but I am sure it will arrive any day.

This book has been an awful lot of trouble but I feel that it is worth trouble. I mean from the point of view of the material. America still knows practically nothing of the real wonder of monastic life. Having heard about a few Trappists is not even a fair beginning. I feel much better about this book than about any other I have done along the same lines, and I really hope it will help a lot of people to find their vocations or to enter more deeply into the ordinary Christian life. Needless to say, I am happy to be working with you. Dan Walsh spoke of you when he was here, and I hope some time you will come down and we can chat together.

This is a meditation, by a monk, on the monastic way of life-- that is to say on the life of men who consecrate themselves entirely to God. ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~monks~~ ~~of~~ ~~today~~ ~~are~~ ~~the~~ ~~spiritual~~ ~~descendants~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Fathers~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Desert~~, and their horizons are always those of solitude, education, even though they may engage in ~~scholarship~~, ~~the~~ ~~liturgical~~ ~~apostolate~~, or scientific agriculture.

Books have been written on the monastic spirit and other books have been written on ~~each~~ ~~monastic~~ ~~order~~. The unique feature of this work ~~is~~ ~~that~~ ~~it~~ ~~treats~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~monastic~~ ~~spirit~~ ~~in~~ ~~general~~ ~~and~~ ~~then~~ ~~goes~~ ~~on~~ ~~to~~ ~~devote~~ ~~a~~ ~~chapter~~ ~~to~~ ~~each~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~great~~ ~~branches~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~monastic~~ ~~family~~: first the cenobites- Benedictines and Cistercians, and then the hermits, Carthusians and Camaldolese. It is the first book of its kind to have appeared in English, and it will ~~satisfy~~ ~~something~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~curiosity~~ ~~of~~ ~~those~~ ~~who~~ ~~have~~ ~~heard~~ ~~the~~ ~~admirable~~ ~~records~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Gregorian~~ ~~chant~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~monks~~ ~~of~~ ~~Solesmes~~ ~~and~~ ~~want~~ ~~to~~ ~~know~~ ~~more~~ ~~about~~ ~~the~~ ~~Benedictines~~. It tells also of the Primitive Benedictine Observance which is just beginning to exist in America, of the Cistercian ideal, which is that of the Trappists. It ~~gives~~ ~~a~~ ~~detailed~~ ~~account~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~spirit~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Carthusian~~ ~~hermits~~, the most solitary and austere Order in the Church, and finally it ~~brings~~ ~~to~~ ~~light~~ ~~the~~ ~~almost~~ ~~unknown~~ ~~Order~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Camaldolese~~ ~~hermits~~ who have kept alive more perfectly than any other group the spirit and observance of oriental monasticism in the Western Church.

At a time when the monastic life is ~~experiencing~~ ~~its~~ ~~most~~ ~~remarkable~~ ~~revival~~ since the Middle Ages, and when the presence of the monk reminds other believers of the loftiness and uncompromising exigencies of the Christian ideal, ~~this~~ ~~book~~ ~~will~~ ~~doubtless~~ ~~inspire~~ ~~many~~ ~~with~~ ~~a~~ ~~deeper~~ ~~appreciation~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~life~~ ~~of~~ ~~prayer~~, ~~of~~ ~~charity~~, ~~of~~ ~~liturgical~~ ~~praise~~ ~~and~~ ~~solitary~~ ~~meditation~~ which should be part not only of the monk's life but also, in some degree, of every Christian's.

I have been urging Bob to come and he thinks he will be here next spring at the latest. Why not come along with him?

With every best wish, and begging God to bless you--

Devotedly yours in Christ

P.S. I have found the copy of the chapters I was looking for. They are on their way surface mail. The pictures also in another envelope.