

jhs

Gethsemani
Trappist PO.

Jan 4th, 1960.

Dear Victor:

In this short note I want to make to you two large proposals. First of all, as a possibility for printing, I propose to you the accompanying text on solitude. It would have perhaps a different and better title. I think though it has the character required for a small, simple tract-- printed perhaps in the same ~~times~~ type in which you set your notes on classic art, but in a larger size. Read it, please, and tell me what you think. The only thing is that it will eventually be printed in a book in New York, but not I think this year. I believe we have time for it, then.

The other proposal is to buy the crucifix-- the large one. Now that we have it in the chapel, and see that it is indeed so perfect for the place and purpose, there is no alternative but to ~~mask~~ mask for it permanently. I know you once gave us a smaller price than you had been asking elsewhere, but forget exactly what it was. Was it a thousand dollars? I have received the approval of Father Abbot to buy it, if possible, for that sum.

And of course I hope this would be an added reason for going ahead with the tabernacle and candlesticks. I believe that eventually we could panel the chapel also, as you suggested. But that would have to be rather a long while off, I fear.

At any rate, please tell me what you think of selling us the crucifix ~~at~~ at that price, and if there is any other proposal you would like to make.

Please thank Carolyn for so promptly sending the books on the Shakers. I am very interested and will certainly do an article on them if I can. You know, I wish something could be done to make Shakertown a permanently protected place-- perhaps the University could take it over and use it as a study center of some kind. It could become a kind of summer writers' and students colony, perhaps. Do you think that would ever be done? I would hate to see it fall into ruin, or just become a kind of state museum, though that would be better than nothing.

I spoke to Father Abbot about making paper, and he was very non-committal, as I expected he would be. I have no indication that he would be at all interested in such a project. One of the novices is very interested in it, though. And I really think it has possibilities. In itself it is wonderful, but in the concrete situation here there are too many obstacles. The mentality of the house is just not propitious to craftsmanship, and that is a great pity.

As usual, with very best wishes-- God bless you both

Faithfully in Christ

J. M. Lewis