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ABBAY OF GETHSEMANI
TRAPPIST, KENTUCKY

Jan 17, 1961

Dear Graham Carey:

It was indeed kind of you to put me into contact with Dona Luisa Coomaraswamy. She has been very obliging and has sent me some material to work on. I have written to her and told her how greatly I esteem the work of AKC and how important I believe it to be. I am sure the exchange of ideas between us will be of great value, at least for me personally. I do want to get on with more study of his work, and so I will start by availing myself of your kind offer to lend me some more of his offprints. According to the list you sent, there are still a few I have not seen: Mahatma, The Darker Side of Dawn, The Yaksa of the Vedas, Buddhism, Recollection Indian and Platonic, Rgveda 10. 90.1. and Self Sacrifice. That brings it to the mystical number of seven, and this time I shall try not to keep them so long. If I get down to work systematically on AKC there will be no problem. Last year I was doing many other things besides.

Yes, I saw that Dona Luisa had confused the four causes and the four senses of Scripture. But no matter, I shall take to heart her meaning. I think something does need to be done on symbolism, typology and so on. But something much deeper than the rather conventional, almost arbitrary schematism with which we are familiar. The utter loss of all sense of symbolism-- due to the bastard slogans and types used in advertising-- is a phenomenon that amounts almost to a spiritual pestilence in our day. It is a big question. I shall keep it in mind as I go on through the work of Coomaraswamy.

I will certainly let Dona Luisa censor anything I write about AKC. And I do not intend to rush into print, in any case. I thought it would be best if I timed my work to coincide with the appearance of the Bolligen volume, or the first of several as there will probably be more than one.

Photos of Peter Watts' work will come to you soon. I am still trying to extract them from our Brother Architect.

W, Shewring's Carmen was a delight to me. The Latin is very pure and noble, he handles it very well and I am sure it must have been very moving to AKC. A very fitting tribute. Thank you for sending it. I shall preserve the copy diligently. I shall keep Rama Coomaraswamy's little girl in my prayers.

Thank you again for all your kindness. I will try to get the Watts photos to you soon. God bless you always, and happy New Year.

Cordially yours in Christ

Thomas Merton

Dona Luisa sent me AKC's play of the "Toll" with the lovely ancient carols in the introduction about God dancing with man in the Incarnation. I am trying to trace down the carols, they are wonderful examples of the highest level of theological meaning and symbolism.