

THOMAS MERTON: MEMORIES OF A BROTHER MONK

HUMAN MEMORY MYSTERIOUSLY takes on a wide variety of forms in every person's life. The nature and workings of memory in each of us are rightly qualified as mysterious for many reasons. For one, accessible memory is notoriously selective. The nature of its selectivity is not arbitrary but is governed by laws operating for the most part unconsciously. What events and features we consciously remember often suggest a strongly subjective influence dependent on our values, moral commitments, and goals. These and a broad variety of emotions color our memories to a considerable extent. The memories a person has of the past exert a large influence on the individual's sense of identity and worth, with the result that each of us has firm commitments to the meaningful past as actually remembered. Add to these features of memory's functioning, the fact that as a priest and a physician I have an obligation to exclude some matters from my account of the remembered past. These comments are certainly applicable to my recollections of Father Louis, the name we knew Merton by in the community; they also find wide application in regard to Fr. Louis himself.

Before I entered the monastery at Gethsemane and came to know Fr. Louis in person, I formed a lively image of Merton that is rooted in an encounter with his autobiography shortly after its publication in 1948. I was in the last intensive years of medical school at the time and so had little opportunity for reading anything but medical literature. While waiting for a friend to present herself for an evening together I picked up a book lying on the table next to me so as to pass the time usefully. It was the *Seven Storey Mountain*, published recently. The opening pages struck me with such forceful impact that I experienced the actuality of God's reality with a fresh, awareness of His transcendent existence. Resulting from that rather haunting impression was the persuasion that it is possible so to live as to enter into a fuller relation to Him. That, after all, is the major theme of the book, giving purpose to the story described in its pages. Associated with this insight was the desire to know the man who could convey so convincingly the existence of the world whose center and horizon is the living God.

Once I entered the Community of Gethsemane as a novice I was curious to know which of the monks was the author of that book that spoke so eloquently of God's presence in the world. Since we observed a strict silence and as novices were encouraged to attend strictly to our own affairs, it was only some months after my entering the monastery that my curiosity was satisfied. When Fr. Louis began to give us novices a series of conferences on monastic life I finally was able to identify Merton. He was very different type of person than I had imagined the author I had read to be. He was very lively, direct, and simple in manner; not in the least solemn or seemingly introverted. He, for one thing, did not hesitate to give way to his friendliness and possessed a ready sense of humor, judiciously employed so as to lighten up the atmosphere; he displayed nothing of the aloof or ponderous intellectual that I had fancied the

author of so serious a story to be. At the same time, he spoke of weighty topics such as the discipline needed for the spiritual life and prayer, displaying a facility of communication and a personal conviction that rendered the classes once interesting and informative. He obviously enjoyed meeting with us and speaking of spiritual matters. His classes were lively, well prepared, and awakened our interest. As a result of the stimulation we received from him a number of us novices developed a serious interest in monastic studies as a way of prayerfully seeking union with God. His classes were appealing as well as a help to entering into the life of prayer. Monastic observance and discipline were presented in the service of the personal growth in the interior knowledge and love of the living God.

My personal relations with Fr. Louis, however, began only after I made simple vows two years after entering the monastery. He had been appointed Master of Juniors only about a year before. Since he was the first one to fulfill this role he was quite free to create its style adapting the formation to the needs and possibilities of the newly professed monks. This office had been established in our Order rather recently, not being mentioned in the Rule of St. Benedict in which there is no provision for temporary vows. The purpose of the Juniorate, as this three year period with simple vows was called, is to prepare for final vows and to assist in adapting to the concrete community in which the monk will live for life if he makes final vows. The program that was followed consisted in the usual manual labor, but for a shorter period than the solemn professed. The rest of the work period was provided for private study and for attending the lectures that introduced us to such fields of knowledge as the Bible, Liturgy, and Monastic History among others. We already had more basic exposure to these fields in the novitiate, and had learned sufficient Latin to follow the Office in choir which was completely in Latin. We were able to do some of our reading and monastic study in Latin as well as in English. The text books for priestly studies of philosophy, law, theology; and original Patristic texts were available in Latin and some in Greek, though a number were provided in translation. Mercifully the talks were given in English. Later, when I studied some theology in Rome, the classes were not only taught in Latin, so were any questions or comments by students.

As a teacher Merton conveyed not only lively interest in these fields of knowledge but a real enthusiasm. He was invariably well prepared for his classes and had an informal manner of delivery that resulted in a friendly spirit that we carried with us into the various activities of the day that included attendance at choir offices and manual labor in the fields and vegetable gardens.

Fr. Louis in his role as Master of the Junior Professed would regularly meet with us individually to discuss our lived experience as members of the community. One session I had with him remains rather sharply etched in memory. Hanging on the wall of his office he had a copy of a landscape painting by one of the recognized masters. Our exchange somehow introduced the

topic of art so that he discussed this painting with me in some detail. He pointed out in particular how the artist had not depicted the scene as presented by nature, but rather had so arranged certain elements as to achieve a more satisfactory expression of a harmonious balance. Thus he made the helpful point that a painting is not, like a photograph, a representation of a scene so much as it presents a personal conception of the subject, influenced by a way of understanding as well of seeing. A painting by van Gogh conveys quite a different view of nature, for example, the night sky, than one by an artist who stresses classical form rather than affective impression. There is a particular insight being conveyed that gives a special meaning to the theme, such as the majesty or nobility as perceived by the artist.

I recall also a discussion in his office in which he mentioned to me that he recently had a session with one of the juniors in which the subject of chemistry arose. Merton mentioned to me that the explanation of basic principles by the junior was so obscure and involved that he could make nothing of it. Since I had studied chemistry in college as well as in medical school, I assured him that it really was quite accessible and that he would find it easy to grasp and confidently assured him he would have no trouble in understanding it. I let him know I would be quite willing to explain it if he cared to explore it further. Since he never raised the subject again the matter was left in the shadows.

Merton not only met us in the classroom and for private discussion, he also worked with us in the fields and forests. In those days he had not as yet developed the bone problem that later resulted in surgery on his spine. I recall how energetically he wielded a hoe working in company with a group of us juniors. During that same period of time (1952-1955) he would take a group of us simple professed out to the woods outside the cloister enclosure where a former tool shed had been adapted to serve as a hermitage where he had permission to stay and do reading and some of his writing. As we set out on one such occasion I remember his quoting a passage from the Scriptures that took up the theme of escaping into solitude. I am not sure of the precise passage, but recall distinctly the flavor of his exhortation. It is captured by the following text from the prophet Jeremiah: "Flee and save your soul, be like the wild ass in the wilderness." (31:6), upon which proclamation we scattered, in the adjacent fields and woods to spend time in silent reflection and prayer.

On a later occasion, having had considerably more contact with Fr. Louis so that we knew one another better, he invited me to join him at his newly constructed hermitage so as to participate in a meeting he had arranged with a Hindu monk, member of a monastery in India who was visiting him. The three of us had a protracted exchange concerning various religious matters. Naturally one topic we covered in some detail was Hindu belief and monastic practice as well as our own. The discussion proceeded in a friendly climate that Merton was adept at creating. However, his contribution at times was too sympathetic and yielding; giving the

impression he had no objections to certain Hindu beliefs that are clearly not acceptable to Catholic teaching. After the Hindu monk left us to return to the abbey I pointed out to Fr. Louis that his comments and manner went too far at some point. He could give a false impression as to the Catholic teaching. He readily replied: "Sometimes you have to go along with those guys", making it evident by further comments and his whole manner that he did not at all agree with the Hindu position on the matters that are objectionable for a Christian; rather, he was making himself agreeable by dissembling any disagreements. This kind of accommodation does not seem honest to me or even productive in the end. Merton, at an earlier time, had intended at Cambridge University to qualify for the British diplomatic service. Had he pursued that course with application he surely could have competed with the best! Americans have not always agreed with this feature of the English style. Michael Mott has commented on this persistent tendency to adapt himself to others in ways that could be misleading. This tendency to accommodate himself without a serious commitment to the impression he made was operative in more subtle ways and in a variety of situations as his diaries and some letters clearly establish.

However, this incident was the only one of its kind involving a point of faith that I, at any rate, witnessed. There was no such equivocating when I was with him at an encounter with Sidi Abdesalam, the Sufi master from Algeria. Fr. Louis invited me with two or three other monks to join in a meeting to discuss prayer and spiritual experience. The conversation was cordial, open in spirit, and without any equivocal statements by any of us. Merton was a capable, reliable, and facilitating presence. On another occasion, Fr. Louis expressed to me in private sharp criticism of a prominent priest friend who visited at the Abbey with a group of Protestant ministers for his excessively liberal behavior at a liturgy with that group. My impressions were that the tendency to make himself agreeable to others had strong roots in Merton's character, a tendency that contributed to his friendly manner as well as to his strong sense of sympathy for human suffering. This trait in my opinion, played a prominent role in Merton's increasing contributions to causes of peace and justice.

It happened some few years later, on an occasion when I was free to spend the day alone, I took the customary path to the more distant hermitage. As I proceeded on my way I traversed a wooded area and observed Fr Louis walking alone. I remained partially hidden by the trees not far away from him. Due to the disposition of the trees he did not see me till I was rather nearby so that I could clearly perceive by his features and his preoccupied way of walking that he was burdened , preoccupied with some quite distressing matters in his thought. As I drew nearer he suddenly noticed my presence and abruptly altered his whole manner and features. He greeted me with a warmth of expression and smile that characterized his customary behavior in the presence of others, displaying but briefly the embarrassment he felt at having allowed something of his darker interior self to be observed. This dividedness was so well concealed in

daily life as to remain unrecognized by even close associates in and outside the monastery. Nor do biographers give prominence to the considerable suffering it created for him or recognize the role it played in what was to be a crisis in his life some time later. The circumstances are quite involved, and I found myself at the height of the situation dragged into the matter. Before discussing the events associated with this scene, another happening made me further aware of a feature of Merton's ways that contributed to further knowledge of his character.

As I recall that scene in the woods, I associate it with a statement Merton made some years later in a letter he wrote to me concerning a discussion we had shared the day before. The meeting we had was occasioned by events resulting in a rather acute inner crisis for him. When in the hospital for surgery on the spinal problem he had become emotionally involved with a young student nurse. He remained in communication with her after returning to the monastery following convalescence. Predictably these activities became known to a brother in the community who brought it to the attention of Dom James. The abbot upon learning of the phone calls engaged Merton to break off their relationship. Shortly after this happened, I, knowing nothing of these events, received a letter sent to me by a priest I knew through earlier professional contact. He expressed concern for Merton's well-being having been consulted by some layperson who sought his help for the monk acting in so irregular a manner. This is some of the background that led to my being asked by the abbot to speak with Fr. Louis so as to be of some assistance this situation. At his same time, another related circumstance resulted in my being brought into the situation and occasioned my intervention by way of a confrontation rather emotionally charged.

The day after this initial discussion, he wrote me a letter to give his reflections on our exchange. He begins his observations in the following terms: "Our talk yesterday has been fruitful in this: it has suggested some helpful perspectives anyway." But he soon qualifies this statement in a way that gives the unfounded impression that I had implied he was previously without inner conflicts: "Anyone who thinks that I was whole and consistent before simply does not know me." However, as he copied this letter into his diary (cf. "Learning to Love", 106, 107), he makes a further comment, the result of more reflection on my criticisms and advice with a quite positive decision: "However, there is no harm in taking seriously his (Fr. Eudes) advice . . . I'll accept the fact that it is perhaps a much bigger problem than I realized. And try to work it out." Subsequent course of his behavior reveal the results of his efforts in this direction that led to his inner resolution of this crisis.

He in fact did follow through with serious application to gain more insight into his involvement with the student nurse and his continuing clandestine contact with her after returning to the monastery following the hospital stay. The inner dividedness he made reference to in his letter to me following our exchange, made him vulnerable to the attentions of a young nurse assigned

to his care during a painful convalescence following spinal surgery. She had responded readily to her patient's engaging charm of manner and gifts of speech. Merton had a painful convalescence that rendered him depressed to some degree. He was unable to follow his customary monastic activities nor was he sufficiently well to continue his intellectual pursuits and writings. So that he was troubled by some depression during this period. Her sympathetic response under the circumstances of the monk's vulnerability soon led to their increasingly affective relationship. With characteristic enthusiasm the monk entered whole-heartedly into the relation. For a time, even after he had returned to the abbey from the hospital, Merton maintained contact with her, arranging for clandestine meetings and telephone contacts. Dr. Wygal, a psychiatrist whom Merton was seeing during this period, met with her in his office informally and in strongly expressed criticism of her personality and character he attempted to disillusion him about her. She at 23, was nearly thirty years younger than he, and had little of his sophisticated culture nor any of his broad intellectual interests and religious commitments. Dr. Wygal failed to persuade him, as Merton recounts in his diary ("Learning to Love", 96) that he was making a serious mistake in getting so involved with her. He considered her obviously not in any way suited for the role she was assuming in his current life. Merton could not see this. In my opinion, he was under the influence of an illusion that for a time eclipsed his judgment. He was to recover from this unfortunate lapse, however, quite fully, as he makes evident in his diaries.

As Fr. Louis became distanced from the young nurse following his return to the abbey, he was able to be more objective. On June 12, 1966 he wrote in a burst of honest insight: "Could anything be more dishonest?" By October 31 of that year he was able to acknowledge that "I am much more ready to admit that the whole thing was a mistake, a subtle well-meant seduction. . . . this must never happen again. Also it is clearly over." (Learning to Love", 154) Subsequently, having been free of contact with her he made a final entry in his diary as he prepared for the trip to Asia. His comments reveal how fully he had come to realize how the two of them had deceived themselves in their relationship: "Today, among other things, I burned M.'s letters. Incredible stupidity in 1966! I did not even glance at any one of them. High hot flames of the pine branches in the sun!" ("The Intimate Merton", 336)

In his comments to me Fr. Louis made the point that he was not whole, but suffered from inner dividedness that had made him so vulnerable. Reflecting on this statement, I am reminded of a talk I had with a good friend, an experienced government official, who for some years served as a driver at the abbey. On one occasion, when driving Merton to town, he told me how Merton had shared with him the fact that for him the monastery had become the first real home he ever had. His mother's death when he was five, his fathers' artistic interests and various and prolonged travels in the service of his career as a painter, and then the father's death when Merton was in his mid-teens, resulted in his feeling abandoned and left largely on his own. He

entered the adult world feeling he was isolated in his most personal center. In his autobiography, he touched only lightly on this matter, but he continued to suffer from it affectively. A young child commonly perceives such absence, whether by death or prolonged distancing from the parent, to mean he is not lovable, and feels guilty. He interprets it to mean he must be at fault, not good enough, lacking in some essential quality or he would not be left to himself and abandoned. This deep self-doubt is at the source of inner dividedness that Merton speaks of in his note to me. It accounts for more of his behavior in life than anyone has as yet explored in adequate detail. Few remarked on it and accepted Merton's criticisms too readily.

One who recognized and analyzed in detail the role it played in his relations with his abbot, Dom James, was Michael Mott (*The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* 278-84). Abbot James knew Merton the man and the monk in certain respects more fully than anyone else. He appreciated his natural gifts, his depth of commitment, and the sincerity of his spiritual life. He chose Merton as master of the junior monks then appointed him novice master –the two positions most influential for training the young generation. Both roles entailed close collaboration and required the giving of advice as well as accepting it. In addition he took Fr. Louis as his own confessor. Dom James knew Merton's earlier family history and realized keenly that along with the strengths he possessed in abundance, he suffered from the painful loss of each parent and from the resultant lack of intimate support and needed guidance. This lack was a need that was to haunt the adult Merton, though unconsciously acting on him most of the time. It was self-defensively kept hidden from himself as well as others. At a time of the crisis following his dealings with the young nurse he wrote me: "Anyone who thinks I was whole and consistent before simply does not know me. My fall into inconsistency was nothing but the revelation of what I am." Obviously, this is a gross exaggeration, being true only in a limited part of his character.

I am reminded by this statement of an incident that illustrates strikingly this same tendency for exaggerated expression. Merton having completed a series of talks to the monks on Albert Camus' writings began a fresh series on the German writer, Rilke. He introduced the new series by saying: "Forget about Camus, he is old hat; we are going to focus on the great poet Rilke." The next day one of the junior monks came to my office as Master of Juniors. He was upset at Merton's comments, and told me he did not know what to make of Fr. Louis, for after giving with enthusiasm a number of insightful talks on the outstanding writer Camus, he dismissed him in so decided a manner. I am not sure I fully persuaded the monk, but I explained that Fr. Louis was given to strong feelings once he took an interest in a subject and would express his current impressions with wholehearted conviction. Should he be questioned, as I knew by experience, he would give a considered reply, appropriately qualifying his words. As I came to realize, this same tendency marked in varying degree, much of his writings and exchanges with

people, including his abbot. He felt strongly about having opportunity to have personal contact with monks whose writing Zen master, in New York for some days. Knowing Merton had become a celebrity in certain circles, he was convinced it would be counter to his witness as a monk were he to respond to most of these numerous requests. He did allow Merton to invite those he chose to see to come to the Abbey. Dom James could prove quite broad-minded when he was convinced that travel for legitimate purposes such as study or teaching at a monastery of the Order would be helpful and when consistent with the Trappist way of life. The abbot gave his permission to Fr. Chrysogonus, a liturgical expert, to do research and give conferences at various monasteries and libraries in Europe as well in the USA. When assigned the task of examining the candidates for entering the community I told Dom James I required further training to do an adequate job. He readily gave permission to do further studies in psychiatry at the university hospital in Washington, D.C. where I had been on the staff in Internal Medicine before entering the monastery. One day, after I had returned from some trip, Fr. Louis in the course of a conversation asked me: "How do you manage to get the abbot to allow you to travel?"

At the same time, Merton obviously, as well as uncommon gifts of mind and imagination, possessed decided strengths of character, and also had considerable practical, organizational powers when his circumstances called for them. I observed this in his work with us juniors when he was our Father Master. Once he found his monastic and priestly vocation these endowments served him well in his interior life as well as in his priestly work and relations with persons of varied social and professional background. He was uncommonly able to communicate his interests with a friendly and sympathetic spontaneity. But the vulnerable self was not healed altogether and accounts for some of the prominent conflicts and inconsistencies that marked his life. I recall a conversation with Fr Louis one day earlier in our relations when the subject of consistency arose. He stated that it is not important to be consistent; rather, we should be honest in what we share at any time and in the end it will all balance out. Some time later I read the same point of view in Emerson, stated with a similar conviction.

Very few persons had sufficient insight into this correctly judged the ready friendliness of his manner. One man who did grasp this psychic structure was Dom James, his abbot. A major reason, I am convinced, that in his diary and in comments made in public and private, Fr Louis made complaints about Dom James was the fact that his abbot was shrewder in his assessment of Merton's character and its emotional strengths and weaknesses than were his other contacts, including some quite intelligent associates. His way of perceiving his abbot's behavior and manner was highly distorted all too frequently while being accepted without question by many as legitimate insight. The fact is that Dom James clearly understood this weakness in Merton's make up. Unlike so many others, even close friends, the abbot was not deceived by

the friendly charm and learned insights that were real enough and sincere as far as they went. However, as Merton stated in his letter to me, there was a self-doubt that was in the deep back-ground that had the secondary, largely unconscious, effect of concealing the profound need of being recognized in his most intimate self that he adverts to in his letter to me.

I still consider this trait a weakness that at times influenced his judgment and behavior. It accounts in good part for the period of involvement with the student nurse discussed above. It also led him at times to be too free in his way of welcoming outside friends when visiting. In other circumstances and for the most part Merton's spontaneous and sincere friendliness contributed to a wholesome communication and fruitfulness in his ministry.

This wound that he admitted to in our exchange, was circumscribed and in most circumstances remained in the background, only indirectly influencing his behavior. It was submerged beneath the gifts and strengths that remained prominent and dominant but exerting some measure of stimulus that made him so readily responsive to people. Fr. Louis was not by any means soft or unable to take strong stands in various relations and in daily affairs. I recall how one visiting friend complained that Merton was being neglected when he discovered how austere his diet was at supper when he saw him at the hermitage on some occasion. Merton was quite capable of expressing disapproval when any of us juniors deserved it and our behavior came to his notice. I speak here with the authority of personal experience.

This strength of conviction and quiet firmness of character are manifest also in his dealings with people of recognized reputation and strong character. Among other instances, his persistent, yet obedient stand in treating with the General of our Order when there was a difference of opinion regarding certain ideas in his books. The correspondence shows firmly expressed disagreement with Rosemary Reuther efforts to influence him to leave the cloister for a more active vocation, witnesses to the strength of character that sustained his fidelity to his convictions.

As Fr. Louis prepared to go on the trip to the Bangkok he traveled briefly to Washington, D. C. to meet with the Ambassador of Indonesia, Dr. Soedjatmoko. In what proved to be my last personal meeting with Merton, he came to the infirmary to meet with me. After he told me of his travel plans he asked for some medicines he would need when in Asia. I wished him a safe and fruitful trip and provided him with a supply of medicine that he would need in that part of the world. In fact, it turned out he would require further supplies and from India wrote for supplements.

I arranged for him to stay with a psychiatrist friend of mine whom I knew from my days on the staff at Georgetown University Hospital. Dr. Camera-Peon lived in Georgetown and kindly agreed to meet him at the airport. The visiting monk stayed in Nico's apartment and spent the

evening in converse with his host. Merton met the ambassador the next day with his wife and children at his family home. As another example of Merton's friendly charm, the busy ambassador prolonged their meeting. By the time they parted after a five hour visit, they were on first name terms, Tom and Koko. The Dalai Lama was to have a similar experience after his meeting with the Trappist. He who was wary of speaking with visitors, after a first talk with the American monk arranged for two further exchanges. Merton described the discussions as "very warm and cordial, adding that by the end they had become "very good friends". The Dalai Lama was so impressed him that he spoke of him as a Catholic Geshe, that is the expert in spiritual matters. As Fr. Louis put it "the equivalent of an honorary doctorate."

While on his extensive travels, Merton maintained an ongoing correspondence with his community. Perhaps the most revealing exchange took place with Dom James. The retired abbot wrote from his hermitage a friendly, even warmly-worded letter, expressing to Fr. Louis his support, good wishes, and prayers for the success of his travels. From Calcutta on October 20th, 1968, some few weeks before his death, Merton replied in what was to be his final exchange with the man who had been his abbot during nearly twenty years. His opening words reflect the warmly friendly tone that marked the abbot's message. He thanks the abbot for the message which he finds to be "warm and gracious." He goes on to comment on their past relations when both were in office collaborating in the formation of young monks. After referring briefly to the differences they had struggled with in their collaboration Merton adds that he never felt resentment for the decisions he made and the policies he pursued for he understood that Dom James was "following his conscience." After discussing his current activities and plans as well as the difficulties he has been having with the travels in Asia, Fr. Louis concludes the letter on a very personal note: "Be sure that I have never changed in my respect for you as Abbot, and affection as Father. Our different views certainly did not affect our deep agreement on the real point of life and our vocation. I hope you are enjoying a beautiful quiet autumn out in the wild knobs."

Merton continued his travels, visiting Ceylon and Singapore, and made a solitary retreat in the Himalayas, then proceeding to Bangkok. On December 8th, two days before the fatal accident, He wrote what was to be his last letter to Gethsemane. The more he traveled and the longer his absence from his monastery, the more kindly his comments and the deeper his feelings for the community there found expression. He concludes, after saying the brothers are in his thoughts as he write on this feast of the Immaculate Conception, with the reflection that, as Christmas approaches "I feel homesick for Gethsemane." He could not realize it at the time he wrote, but these words were to be his farewell to the brothers.

When the message arrived at Gethsemane bringing news of his accidental death I was in our monastery in Georgia, preaching the community retreat. Abbot Flavian promptly called to give

the news and telling me to return promptly so as to be on hand when the plane from California conveying Merton's body arrived in Louisville. I was given the charge to view and identify the body. Driving through the snow-covered roads of the mountain country I arrived in time to meet the plane. Upon viewing the corpse I was able to identify Merton's body in spite of the disfigurement caused by the extensive burn caused by the 240 volts of electricity that operated the defective fan. Abbot Flavian also viewed the corpse but was unable to identify Fr. Louis due to the marks from the injury. I considered it prudent to write a brief note to record that I, an M.D. had examined and identified the body, for I suspected someone would deny that it was Merton who was buried at the Gethsemane monastery. That certification I eventually deposited at the Bellarmine University Library where is lodged the collection of the Merton's writings and various memorabilia. Shortly after the funeral I read a newspaper article on Merton's death in Thailand that denied that the body in the closed casket was that of Merton. It asserted that the body had disappeared when an alligator came up from a canal of the extensive Klong in Bangkok as the American monk stood at the bank and devoured it as the holy monk disappeared upon entering Nirvana.

I still pray daily for my fellow monks, Dom James and Fr. Louis, to each of whom I owe so much by their teaching and example. As I write this memoire I see in imagination the two crosses that mark their graves, side by side under the tall pine in the Gethsemane cemetery, in the shadow of the abbey church.

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Written in commemoration of Fr. Louis' 100th birthday January 31, 2015

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