

Letter from MLK to Rosa Parks goes on sale

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(RNS) A 1960 letter from civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. to Rosa Parks went on sale Tuesday (March 25) for \$125,000.

“It’s the only letter I’m aware of from King to Parks,” said Gary Zimet, curator at Moments in Time, which is selling the letter. The website deals in historical letters and documents, as well as signed photographs and autographs.

In the letter, dated April 12, 1960, King writes that he is responding to correspondence he received from Parks on March 14. Explaining his delay in answering, he writes, “An extremely crowded schedule has stood in my way.

“In the midst of constant harassment and intimidation because of my involvement in the civil right struggle I often find myself asking, ‘Is it worth it?’” King writes. “But then a friend of good will comes along with kind and encouraging words that gives me renewed vigor and courage to carry on. Your letter serves such a purpose.”

In 1955, Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus to a white passenger in Montgomery, Ala.

The arrest sparked the 13-month Montgomery bus boycott, a protest that culminated in a Supreme Court ruling that declared segregation on public buses unconstitutional. From the protest emerged a young civil rights leader: then-26-year-old King.

Zimet did not provide details of how he received the letter but said, “It emanates from the Rosa Parks family. Beyond that, I cannot be more specific.”

He said he is not reproducing the letter online.