

Thomas Merton

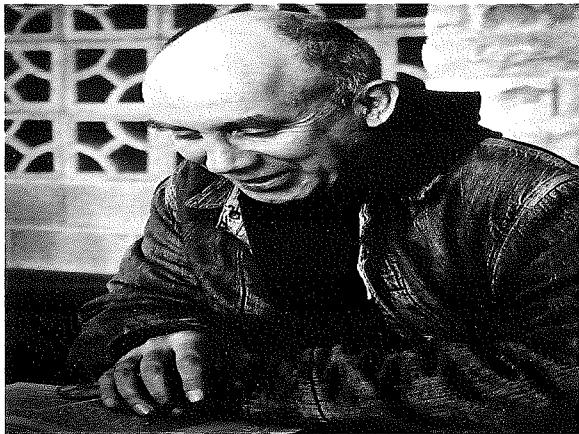
Merton and Journaling

When My Books Are Read at Me

Keeping a journal has taught me that there is not so much new in the interior life as one sometimes thinks. When you reread your journal you find out that your newest discovery is something you found out five years ago. Still, it is true that one penetrates deeper and deeper into the same ideas, the same experiences. 10 July 1949 (*A Year with Thomas Merton: Daily Meditations from His Journals*)

Staying Found

What I need most of all is the grace to really accept God as He gives Himself to me in every situation. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Good Shepherd, You have a wild and crazy sheep in love with thorns and brambles. But please don't get tired of looking for me! I know you won't. For You have found me. All I have to do is stay found. 11 April 1948 (*A Year with Thomas Merton: Daily Meditations from His Journals*)



God is the Room I Rest In

God's love takes care of everything I do. He guides me in all my work and in my reading, at least until I get greedy and start rushing from page to page. God has put me in a place where I can spend hour after hour, each day, in occupations that are always on the borderline of prayer. There is always a chance to step over the line and enter into simple and contemplative union with God. I get plenty of time alone before the Blessed Sacrament. I have gotten into the habit of walking up and down under the trees, or along the way of the cemetery, in the

presence of God. I did not come to Gethsemani for myself but for God. God is my order and my cell. He is my religious life and my rule, He has disposed everything in my life in order to draw me inward, where I can see Him and rest in Him. He has put me in this place because He wants me in this place, and if He ever wants to put me anywhere else, He will do so in a way that will leave no doubt as to who is doing it. 14 January 1947 (*A Year with Thomas Merton: Daily Meditations from His Journals*)

The False Self

Thus I use up my life in the desire for pleasures and the thirst for experiences, for power, honor, knowledge and love, to clothe this false self and construct its nothingness into something objectively real. And I wind experiences around myself and cover myself with pleasures and glory like bandages in order to make myself perceptible to myself and to the world, as if I were an invisible body that could only become visible when something visible covered its surface. (*New Seeds of Contemplation*)

There is no evil in anything created by God, nor can anything of His become an obstacle to our union with Him. The obstacle is in our "self," that is to say in the tenacious need to maintain our separate, external, egotistic will. It is when we refer all things to this outward and false "self" that we alienate ourselves from reality and from God. (*New Seeds of Contemplation*)

It is not true that the saints and the great contemplatives never loved created things, and had no understanding or appreciation of the world, with its sights and sounds and the people living in it. They loved everything and everyone. It was because the saints were absorbed in God that they were