

particularly like the idea of "minute vacations"; space for a warm drink, a piece of music, or a good look at the sky.

The fact that all this takes place within a pocket sized book with a text of 109 pages means that there is enough time to read this splendid and significant book, which could change your life.

Michael Woodward

John Dear, S.J., *The Sound of Listening: A Retreat Journal from Thomas Merton's Hermitage*. pp. 126, New York: Continuum, 1999. ISBN: 0826411894. \$13.95.

The Jesuit priest and peace activist John Dear recounts in this small but beautifully written book a week-long retreat he spent at the Abbey of Gethsemani, for the most part staying in the hermitage Thomas Merton occupied for the final years of his life. Dear combines his Ignatian spirituality and activist lifestyle with the monastic ethos in a deeply moving, intimate and challenging way. He shares insights from his life and spirituality leading the reader onward in their own spiritual journey in a way reminiscent of Merton's own autobiographical style. But this is no false imitation of Merton, it is a genuine spiritual journey Dear is sharing and a journey I felt I could really relate to in combining my own busy life with a strong attraction to monastic spirituality.

Early on in Dear's retreat when a monk turns up at the hermitage to help him fix the wood-burning heater Dear asks for any advice he might be able to offer, referring to the heater, but in a Zen-like misunderstanding the monk offers him a Zen koan to ponder instead: "What is the sound of listening?" (55) This occupies Dear for the rest of his retreat as he listens to God in the scriptures, in the nature that surrounds him at Gethsemani and through his friends and work as he reflects in his retreat on his everyday life. As his retreat draws to a close he prays that he may be able to "live always in the inner house of peace, and pursue the sound of listening." (119) as he returns to the challenges of his life in the city serving the poor and needy.

15 Days of Prayer with Thomas Merton. by André Gozier, O.S.B. pp. 97, Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1999. ISBN: 076480491X. \$7.95.

This book, as the title suggests, is a series of meditations designed to provide the reader with 15 days of guided prayer using Thomas Merton as the guide. It is a very different approach to Merton's spirituality than the one provided by John Dear. Over the course of 15 days the reader is introduced to a wide