

lies in the Cosmic Christ, the concept that Christ is in all things including ourselves, and finds echoes of this in many passages of Merton and Eckhart.

Opinions differ over the author. For some he is the successor to Teilhard de Chardin, for others the purveyor of New Age esoterica. Wherever you position yourself on this spectrum there is much in this book to inspire and challenge. As Merton said of Karl Rahner, 'a *readable* theologian is dangerous.' Dangerous or not, this book is certainly readable. And it will send you back to Merton's writings to see passages in a new way, and discover/rediscover the writings of Eckhart, Rabbi Abraham Heschel and Thomas Berry amongst others – possibly even Fox himself. I recommend it.

Stephen Dunhill is a retired teacher who lives on the Northumbrian coast overlooking Holy island. He has served on the committee of the Thomas Merton Society since 2008, and was elected Chair in 2016. He is the co-editor of the Merton Journal.

Seeking Surrender – How My Friendship with a Trappist Monk Taught me to Trust and Embrace Life

Colette Lafia

Forward by Daniel H Horan O.F.M.

Ave Maria Press, 2015 — Distributed in UK by Alban Books

ISBN-13 978-1-933495-88-0 (pbk) 160 pages

£9.99

For members of the Thomas Merton Society, the title can be, at first glance, a bit misleading. When I was asked to review the book, I assumed the Trappist Monk mentioned in the title must be Thomas Merton. Probably the publisher's marketing staff were hoping that others would think the same, buy the book and only later realise that it was about another Trappist monk.

Once I had gotten over the disappointment that the book was not about Thomas Merton (and relief, as well, as the prospect of writing a book review on a book about Thomas Merton for the Merton Journal would have filled me with trepidation as I am a complete novice when it comes to all things concerning Thomas Merton), I was heartened by Richard Rohr's comment, 'A beautiful and honest book'. I have read many

of Rohr's books and hold him in high esteem.

Surrender, the topic of the book, is not something that comes easily to me or to many others. We all want our own way, whether we admit it or not. The book follows the spiritual journey of the author, Colette Lafia, from wanting her own way and the frustrations and disappointments that come with such a choice, to acceptance and new beginnings through the process of surrendering to God. Her mentor was a Trappist monk called Brother René. They met when she and her husband had reached a very low point in their lives and had decided to go on a retreat at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. During a chance meeting (or not!) at the Abbey's reception desk they started chatting with Brother René, and she on impulse asked him, 'Are you ever lonely?' – his response to her question led to a deeper conversation during their time at the Abbey. When she and her husband returned home to San Francisco, she wrote to him to ask him to pray for them as they tried one last treatment to conceive. This was the beginning of five years of correspondence between Brother René and the author, initially monthly but gradually tapering off over the years.

The bulk of the book is built on their correspondence and how Brother Rene's words helped her to move from a dark place in her life to somewhere much brighter and more rewarding. She allows us into her secret places of doubt and fear, and encourages us to walk with her as her journey unfolds. By sharing her personal story, her book encouraged me to reflect on my own spiritual journey and to become more aware of how God's hand has led me from dark places to lighter ones through my own surrendering to Him.

The structure of the book is very practical and helpful. She has included exercises and meditations to encourage and support the reader along the way. The exercises are meant to help us build awareness and orient us to how surrendering to God can transform our day-to-day lives and help us experience our lives more fully, more joyfully.

I recommend that you consider using this book if you are part of small study group. I am the Convenor of a Franciscan Third Order group based in North London and I've recommended this book to our small group for study and discussion. I really like the author's mix of reflective and 'hands on' exercises. Even for private study and reflection, the questions and exercises are still helpful and insightful.

In summary, I do agree with Richard Rohr – it is a beautiful and honest book. We are all on a spiritual journey; and by walking alongside

Collete Lafia on her journey, I have been helped to become more conscious of how surrendering to God has and will continue to transform my life for good. I encourage you to walk with her as well.

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'About Merton' - Secondary Sources 2000-2015

Patricia A. Burton

The Thomas Merton Center, Louisville, Kentucky, 2015.

211 pages

It was perhaps Patricia's fine editing and introduction to Merton's *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* (Orbis, 2004) which brought her work before a wider readership, but scholars have long appreciated Patricia Burton's meticulous and relentless gathering, cataloguing and organising of work by and about Merton. Her index to the Merton letters and to *Merton Seasonal* articles, and her invaluable *Vade Mecum* timeline, have long helped readers navigate the ocean of Merton literature. Her 2008 publication *More Than Silence* is a standard bibliographic source for Merton researchers. Some years earlier, the outstanding bibliographic workbook, *About Merton: Secondary Sources 1945-2000* presented researchers with a remarkably accessible record of more than 5600 items about Merton.

At the Centenary Conference of the ITMS at Louisville in June 2015, Patricia handed me a copy of this supplementary *'About Merton': Secondary Sources 2000-2015*, hot off the press. It is a supplement of some 211 closely-typed pages, listing amongst other things more than 100 books about Merton published during a 15-year period, and recording (for example) 'Merton's presence in 270 books by other people, plus 21 entries in general Reference Books' during that same period (p.iii). A section on books about Merton is followed by another on parts of books in which he features; then the longest section on reviews of Merton books precedes a section on articles and essays. Each section is organised by sub-categories for ease of access and, with minor changes, follows the structure of the previous bibliography.

Patricia Burton has built upon the work of Robert Daggy, Marqita Breit, Paul Pearson and others in 'hope that the bibliography will guide