

Spiritual Formation & 'Progress in Prayer' in the Merton-Gullick Letters

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Introduction

An editor of Merton's letters, William Shannon noted that Merton's correspondence with Etta Gullick was 'the most charming set of all'.¹ Those who enjoy the historical and literary voyeurism of reading 'other people's mail' (albeit published) will find it an interesting example of epistolary friendship. It is also a significant and under-represented source in the secondary literature of Merton studies, especially valuable for his thinking about prayer and its nurture. In what follows I shall remind readers of Gullick's biography and the genesis of her correspondence with Merton,² then, as one example of the riches in this correspondence, briefly explore their discussion of 'progress in prayer', especially contemplative prayer with its attendant difficulties of self-consciousness and distractions.

Etta Gullick and the Merton Correspondence

Etta Gullick was born in St. Andrews, Scotland in 1916. In 1935 she went up to Oxford, earning a B.A. (Hons.) in theology in 1938. In the same year she married C.F. W.R. (Rowley) Gullick, University Lecturer in Economic Geography and, from 1950, fellow of St. Edmund's Hall.³ In WWII she worked in naval intelligence. After the war, the Gullicks returned to Oxford where they raised their son (Charles, b. 1944), and she wrote articles for *Chamber's Encyclopedia*. In the 1960s, Mrs. Gullick began to assist with the training and spiritual formation of Anglican ordinands at St. Stephen's House and was, by all accounts, wonderfully hospitable to those students and to her husband's. (His obituary mentions 'their kindness and hospitality' and 'Etta Gullick's powerful but deceptively mild-tasting punch'.⁴) Her letter to Merton of June 26, 1962 describes

social life in Oxford and includes this reflection about undergraduates, 'Contact with them gives one life. ... It's no use writing of mysticism separated from people.'

About 1958 Gullick's spiritual director, Dom Christopher Butler of Downside Abbey, suggested she prepare an English edition of 'The Rule of Perfection' by Benet of Canfield, a 16th C. Capuchin. In 1960 she wrote to Merton hoping he would write a preface for the book which, as it transpired, was never published,⁵ although she provided scholarly articles on Canfield for *Collectanea Franciscana* and *Laurentianum*. Gullick was what we would now call 'an independent scholar'. She provided the original index for J.N.D. Kelly's classic study *Early Christian Creeds* (1958). She published serious articles in journals like *Sobornost*, *Clergy Review*, and *Theology* (published by SPCK), and, with the Roman Catholic Priest (and sometime Catholic Chaplain at Oxford) Fr. Michael Hollings,⁶ edited in the 1970s several collections of prayers and books on prayer, including *The Shade of His Hand*, *The One Who Listens*, *You Must be Joking Lord*, *It's Me O Lord!* and *as was his custom*.⁷ Later she wrote *Getting to Know You*, a book on prayer. Files at the Merton Studies Center in Kentucky and the archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Rochester, New York indicate that she provided extensive scholarly glosses for Shannon's edition of Merton's letters to her in *The Hidden Ground of Love*.⁸

The 'scholarly' correspondence between Merton and Gullick blossomed into an epistolary friendship. In addition to sharing her prayer life, she sent him entertaining accounts of Oxford and of her family's travels, quipping in a letter of April 27, 1967, 'You like chatty letters about things.' The Gullicks visited Merton at Gethsemani in April, 1967. The correspondence with Merton continued until his death in 1968; her last letter to him was February 13, 1968, his to her, April 26, 1968. In 1972 Gullick and her husband retired to the Isle of Man, where in 1973 she became a Lay Reader in the Church of England (and at his request, conducted her husband's funeral service). She died in 1986 after a short illness.

Merton's correspondence with Etta Gullick was more than a conduit from the England of his youth and a way to maintain contact with Europe.⁹ Gullick was an intelligent and charming interlocutor, a well educated, and well read woman with an occasionally acerbic tongue and with whom he shared not only a lively interest in the classical spiritual writers of the Western Church (references to whom fill their letters), but in Eastern Christianity.¹⁰ And they were engaged in similar work. Both were training young men for the priesthood, and, in Merton's case, for

monastic life. Merton's assignments as Master of Scholastics (1951-55) and Master of Novices (1955-65) paralleled to some degree Gullick's work at St. Stephen's House. Before turning to their discussion of 'progress in prayer', a brief section on their respective responsibilities will set the context for their correspondence.

After a decision that the monks in simple profession needed a more organized formation program, Merton became the first Master of Scholastics at Gethsemani (1951) and taught courses on Scripture, liturgy, and monastic history to the novices and young professed.¹¹ On January 10, 1952 there is a long entry in Merton's journal reflecting on this work and his own desire for solitude. He notes, 'They [his 'students'] refresh me with their simplicity.'¹² In October 1955 Merton became Master of Novices, 'taking responsibility for the formation of the young men just beginning their monastic life'.¹³ His conferences followed the two year cycle of the novitiate and were primarily on monastic history and practice. According to Patrick O'Connell they were 'predominantly practical rather than academic',¹⁴ to which, in the mid-1960's Merton added lectures on other subjects, including Sufism and modern literature. On November 27, 1961 Merton's journal reflects on the goodness of the novices, 'the wonder of each individual person among them, ... to have loved them and been loved by them with such simplicity and sincerity. ... From this kind of love necessarily springs hope.'¹⁵

In an autobiographical note for William Shannon, Gullick writes: 'About 1965 I started teaching on prayer at St. Stephen's House (an Anglican Theological College) and later lectured on great spiritual writers.'¹⁶ St. Stephen's House, a High Church Anglo-Catholic theological college, was an affiliate institution of Oxford University, and which trained a series of subsequently distinguished Anglican priests. Those at St. Stephen's House (popularly known as 'Staggers') were studying for General Ordination Exams. All were preparing for the ministry, most for parish work. To say the least, they had very different lives from Merton's young monks. In a letter to Merton on July 1, 1961 Gullick explains that 'the men I teach are practical types with comparatively simple minds.'

In the late 1960's her weekly lectures at Pusey House, a mainstay of Anglo-Catholicism, were part of the theological faculty's provision. She also had Thursday sessions with the ordinands in addition to informal contact at chapel and in her home. As noted, her teaching focused on the works of 'great spiritual writers' (one student remembered lectures on the Flemish and Rhineland mystics, who were also of interest to Merton) and on the practice of prayer. Two of her former students with whom I

spoke remembered a quip: 'Pray bettah with Etta.' Another admitted that 'we weren't terribly cooperative.'

A student of Gullick's in the late 1960s kindly provided me with texts of two of her presentations, one in September 1968 and the other in February 1970. I may be mistaken, but if these are characteristic of her lectures, having taught American graduate seminarians for 7 years myself, I suspect her young men had not yet had enough experience in prayer to recognize much of what she was talking about. However, on June 4, 1965 Gullick wrote to Merton of 'a great wave of silence coming into the prayer of devout Anglicans'. 'It is a gift of God to this age,' she noted, and thought silent prayer was critical for her ordinands, 'critical for parish ministry'.

How one prepares others for monastic life or for ministry, or if, indeed, prayer can be 'taught' at all, are matters for debate (and subjects that appear in the correspondence). They form part of the backdrop for the following epistolary discussion of 'progress in prayer' which exemplifies the energetic give and take in the Merton-Gullick correspondence.

Progress in Prayer

The subject of contemplative prayer entered their correspondence about six months after it began with a caveat from Merton who wrote on September 9, 1961:

I do not think strictly that contemplation should be the goal of 'all devout souls'. ... In reality I think a lot of them should be very good and forget themselves in virtuous action and love and let contemplation come in the window unheeded. ... They will be contemplatives without ever really knowing it. I feel that in the monastery here those who are too keen on being contemplatives ... make of contemplation an 'object' from which they are eternally separated.¹⁷

Having returned from a meeting in Istanbul with the Ecumenical Patriarch, Gullick's long reply (8 hand written pages) of October 8, 1961 concurs. 'I am sure you are right about letting contemplation come in through the window unheeded. If one looks for it one becomes self-conscious which is surely always fatal.' She responds to Merton's assertion that solitude is 'unavoidable and imperative'¹⁸ by agreeing that "'Solitude" seems to come on one. I think it is hard to escape from. ... It is

less of a possession than most God given gifts.' She closes the letter by confessing, 'I am overcome with distractions which no doubt must be accepted with abandon — this is easier in theory than in practice.'

Interestingly, accepting distraction 'with abandon' is exactly Merton's advice in one of the conferences he gave in Alaska in 1968. 'What do you do with distractions?' he asked. 'You either simply let them pass by and ignore them, or you let them pass by and be perfectly content to have them. If you don't pay any attention to them, the distractions don't remain.'¹⁹ Similarly, Gullick wrote in a 1966 article on prayer in *The Clergy Review*: 'Distractions may make us think that we are separated from God but provided they are not followed this will not be so. We must simply and humbly throw ourselves on God's mercy, and ... not attempt to fight them.'²⁰

Early on the Merton-Gullick correspondence raised perhaps the two most important practical difficulties in contemplative prayer: self-consciousness and distraction. Distractions are the thoughts that intrude when one attempts to pray, and they are inevitable. On June 26, 1962 Gullick wrote a long letter that included material on mysticism and 'inturning', what she termed 'introversion in prayer', noting that it is strange to 'have a kind of union with God, and a flowing into Him and of being God', and yet so quickly 'become concerned with self in most foolish ways'. Merton thought that distraction in prayer has its tap root precisely in self-consciousness. In another of the Alaskan conferences in which he criticizes the use of the term 'mystic', Merton warns against 'reflecting upon one's self as an object. ... The whole essence of contemplative prayer is that the division between subject and object disappears.'²¹ Here one hears the echo of Merton's studies of Buddhism.

Self-consciousness is a particularly insidious distraction, especially self-consciously worrying about making progress in prayer. Writing to Gullick on October 29, 1962 Merton noted:

There is too much conscious 'spiritual life' floating around us, and we are too aware that we are supposed to get somewhere. Well, where? If you reflect, the answer turns out to be a word that is never very close to any kind of manageable reality. If that is the case, perhaps we are already in that where. ... We should let go our hold upon our self and our will, and be in the Will in which we are.²²

For Merton, as for Gullick, worrying about whether one is making

progress in prayer makes one self-conscious, which deflects from the truth of the Presence in the present, God's ubiquitousness.

Perhaps with her students' rudimentary grasp of prayer in mind, in her letter of November 2, 1962 Gullick notes: 'I've got rather a large number of pupils this term. They are a most interesting lot.' She goes on to remind Merton that 'when one is in the position of having no spiritual life as it is all life, it is hard to write about stages in the spiritual life.' Merton responds on January 18, 1963: 'What I object to about "the Spiritual Life" is the fact that it is a part, a section, set off as if it were a whole. It is an aberration to set off our "prayer" etc. from the rest of our existence as if we were sometimes spiritual, sometimes not. ... It is an aberration, it causes an enormous amount of useless suffering.... Our "life in the Spirit" is all-embracing, or should be. ... There is no spiritual life, only God and His word and my total response.'²³ One remembers Merton's dictum in *Thoughts in Solitude*: 'If you want to have a spiritual life you must unify your life. A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all.'²⁴ Even one who agrees with Merton might reflect on how differently that assertion would sound in the ears of monastic novices and of secular priests in training.

For several years the subject of progress in prayer seems to go underground in favor of discussions of classical and contemporary spiritual writers, current affairs, Gullick's and Merton's respective work, and his move to the hermitage. It reappears in Merton's letter of August 1, 1966, a response to her 'letter from St. Andrews [which is not in the Bellarmine file] and ... the others too'. Merton reiterates his earlier position, writing that

the chief obstacle to progress is too much self-awareness and to talk about 'how to make progress' is a good way to make people too aware of themselves. In the long run I think progress in prayer comes from the Cross and humiliation and whatever makes us really experience our total poverty and nothingness, and also gets our minds off ourselves.²⁵

Gullick replied to Merton on August 8, 1966, 'I agree with you about loss of self', and called it one of her themes. Her agreement was existential as well as theoretical. In her early, October 8, 1961 letter to Merton, Gullick had noted that becoming self-conscious 'is surely always fatal'. She had written to Merton on January 22, 1962 of her own growth in contemplative prayer that when she lost feelings of self-consciousness,

God consciousness took its place. In the January, 1966 article 'Short Prayers' in *Clergy Review* she wrote, 'The soul and its prayer somehow, and seemingly naturally, get lost in God.'²⁶ In a January, 1967 article, 'Intercession', in the same journal she writes: 'We have to cease being self-centered ... and become God-centered. This is what losing our life to find it seems to mean, for we live more fully when we cease to be worried and concerned with ourselves.'²⁷ In the text of a lecture in September, 1968, Gullick wrote, 'I do not think that the really great writers of prayer laid down fixed schemes of progress, for they always drew attention to the fact that it is the Holy Spirit that leads us in the way He thinks best.' Later in the same essay she said, 'Self ... has to be forgotten so that God can be known. ... Prayer should be an act of self-surrender to God in love.'²⁸

Clearly, diminishment of self-consciousness was one of her themes. Of the matter of progress in prayer, in the August 8, 1966 letter Gullick explained that, after having heard at Wycliffe Hall a lecture by Fr. Michael Hollings, her students

wanted books on progress ... chiefly, I suppose, because it would be unlikely that young moderate evangelicals would know anything about it. They would not know that there was such a thing as progress. This they should know because even if *they* didn't progress some of their flock might and they would not have a clue. Perhaps evangelicals ... are not introspective. ... Romans and High Church are much more so. ... It is hard to write about progress when one has reached a position when progress does not matter.

Gullick clearly has in view the future responsibilities of her ordinands, and gently, obliquely reminds Merton that not everyone's day to day life can be totally directed toward prayer as, at least in theory, life is in a monastery. She summarizes the letter, 'The spiritual life is wonderful — the way one is at peace in the middle of chaos.'

Because of her work with ordinands Gullick raised the question of 'progress in prayer' with Merton. They both were wary of rigid systems of prayer and of 'progress' calculated with spiritual bench marks. Her September, 1968 lecture notes record that 'each of us will have his own approach to God as each of us is unique.' Later in the lecture she says, 'It is ... perhaps daring to refer to progress in prayer — there is only progress in loving God.' The material stresses the point that 'Methods of prayer vary with individuals' and speaks of 'losing of methods'. The

collection of prayers and readings edited with Michael Hollings, *as was his custom*, includes in the introduction a suggested pattern for prayer which ends: 'Only use what is useful. ... Discard it as soon as you have grown out of it.'²⁹

Merton objected to the notion of progress in prayer because he understood prayer as a gift which, consequently, can't be taught. He wrote in *Contemplative Prayer* that it 'is not a psychological trick but a theological grace. It can come to us *only* as a gift, and not as a result of our own clever use of spiritual techniques.'³⁰ Each person must find his or her own way or 'method' to pray. Writing to Gullick on June 15, 1964 Merton said, 'I do not think contemplation can be taught, but certainly an aptitude for it can be awakened. ... It is a question of showing ... in a mysterious way by example how to proceed. Not by the example of doing, but the example of being.'³¹ Merton had answered in advance Gullick's question of September 9, 1964: 'How do you teach your young men to pray?' His implicit answer was 'you don't teach prayer.' One of Merton's Alaskan conferences opened: 'Sometimes I don't think we realize that we have the choice of many approaches to prayer. It isn't a question of there being one right way to pray, or one right answer to the question of prayer, and we should be perfectly free to explore all sorts of avenues and ways of prayer.'³²

For Merton, contemplative prayer was a disposition of attentiveness to God's presence, not mastering a technique of prayer or of 'making progress in prayer' according to some excellent traditional or arbitrarily devised system. In another of the Alaskan conferences he said:

What you have to do is have this deeper consciousness of here I am and here is God and here are all these things which all belong to God. He and I and they are all involved in one love and everything manifests his goodness. Everything that I experience really reaches him in some way or other. Nothing is an obstacle. [God] is in everything.³³

I think Mrs. Gullick might well have agreed. Her lecture notes of September, 1968 stress 'Methods of prayer vary with individuals.' In her 1966 article, 'Short Prayer', she wrote of each person finding 'the words which suit him best', and how 'The stillness and quietness which ... prayer brings to the soul can continue throughout the day, like a kind of gentle background music which assures us of God's continual presence. ... Even in the midst of activity we are not separated from [God]. This

conscious sense of peace and union is a gift which God gives.'³⁴

Closing Reflections

The last regular exchange of letters between Merton and Gullick was in the autumn of 1967. They were still sharing articles. Merton was planning to send her tapes of talks. Between October 10, 1967 and February 13, 1968 when Gullick wrote with concern about Merton's silence, there are no extant letters. Merton wrote once more on April 26, 1968 explaining that 'it is just impossible for me to keep up with mail', and commending her 'piece on mortification which I thought was really very sensible and good'.³⁵ Merton's last recorded word to Gullick seems eerily relevant: 'To accept non-consolation is to mysteriously help others who have more than they can bear.'³⁶ Merton died in Bangkok in December, 1968.

However, his ideas continued to influence Gullick and her work with Oxford ordinands, one of whom kindly gave me a copy of a February, 1970 handout from Gullick entitled 'Prayer, Thomas Merton's Last Message'. Reading it, I recognized that much of it depended heavily upon material from Br. David Steindl-Rast's 'Recollections of Thomas Merton's Last Days in the West' published first in *Monastic Studies* 1969 (and reprinted as 'Man of Prayer' in *Thomas Merton, Monk: A Monastic Tribute* edited by Merton's secretary and con-frère, Br. Patrick Hart, OCSO).³⁷ Her notes close with a verbatim citation of a quotation from Merton in Steindl-Rast's article. Gullick was keeping up with the initial offerings of what is now sometimes called 'the Merton industry'.

The Merton-Gullick letters are a detailed, informed, and literate Roman Catholic-Anglican ecumenical dialogue (rather like the Merton-Aziz letters are an inter-religious dialogue). In common with the monastic inter-religious dialogue, the Merton-Gullick conversation engages primarily at the level of practice. Perhaps the medium of the letter made it easier for a Scotswoman and a boy raised in England, both educated persons to 'open up', to be remarkably candid about that most intimate of subjects, one's private life of prayer. In any case, the theme of 'progress in prayer' is only one of many that could be traced through these letters. It would, for example, be fascinating to explore the references to Eastern Christianity and coordinate that material with Merton's letters to, and studies of, Orthodox theologians. There is a revealing thesis to be written about the interplay of ideas between Merton, Allchin, Gullick and the Orthodox Centre in Oxford. So far as I know, Gullick's work on Benet of Canfield (itself quite fascinating), the apparent entirety of which she sent to Merton, languishes at the Merton Studies Center at Bellarmine

University in fifteen files transferred there by the Abbey of Gethsemani.

In the final analysis, the Merton-Gullick letters are a 'testament of friendship' between two (perhaps unlikely) people, two generous souls, both of whom whole heartedly sought God, and, therefore, were serious about the life of prayer and sharing access to its great gifts and graces with others – some of whom perhaps were not always ready for or interested in that gift. A remark in Gullick's letter of February 3, 1964 to Merton perhaps best summarizes their exchange: 'The gifts of God pass belief.' Surely that is a universal truth.

Notes

1. Letter of William Shannon to Etta Gullick, February 24, 1984. I am grateful to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, New York and their archivist, Kathy Urbanic, for access to the Shannon collection in their archives, the source for references to Shannon's letters to Gullick and to Gullick's letters and autobiographical notes.
2. For fuller treatment see Bonnie Bowman Thurston, 'almost as if I had a sister' – Introducing the Merton-Gullick Correspondence, *The Merton Journal* 24:2 (Advent, 2017), pp.16-25.
3. A full and affectionate introduction to Rowley Gullick is found in his obituary in *St Edmund Hall Magazine* 1980-81, pp.2-6.
4. Rowley Gullick obituary, p.3
5. At the Thomas Merton Studies Center at Bellarmine University there are 15 files of her work on Canfield, including a typescript with Merton's notes, a further 8 pages of Merton's handwritten notes, her footnotes, and relevant letters. I am grateful to Paul Pearson and Mark Meade at the Merton Studies Center for their hospitality, patience, and welcome help in my exploration of the Merton-Gullick correspondence. References to her letters to Merton are from those in the Bellarmine collection.
6. For more on Hollings see his obituary by Peter Standford in *The Independent*, February 22, 1997.
7. Having read several of these books, I found them very much of their time. Although less autobiographical, they reminded me of early writings of the American Episcopal Priest, Malcolm Boyd, *Are You Running with me, Jesus?* or *Book of Days*.
8. Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1985).
9. The file at the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University contains 129 items and runs to 326 pages.
10. This interest was also shared with their mutual friend, Fr. Donald Allchin. Gullick and Allchin were both active at the Orthodox Center in Oxford and with its journal *Sobornos*. Gullick wrote to Shannon: 'From 1958 onwards was much involved with the creating & running of the House of St. Gregory &

- St. Macrina (an Orthodox-Anglican centre & Hostel) & during the various negotiations with the Orthodox visited the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul.
11. There were six volumes of notes from the conferences, some of which were circulated to other houses. Merton's conferences are currently being edited by Merton scholar, Patrick O'Connell, and published by Liturgical Press in the USA.
 12. Thomas Merton, *Entering the Silence: The Journals of Thomas Merton, Vol. 2 1941-1952*, Jonathan Montaldo, ed., (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p.466.
 13. Patrick O, Connell, 'Master of Novices' in *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*, Shannon, Bochen and O'Connell, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 288. Material here on Master of Scholastics and Novices is largely taken from those entries in this collection, pp.288-290.
 14. *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*, p.289.
 15. Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward the World: The Journals of Thomas Merton, Vol. 4 1960-1963*, Victor A. Kramer, ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p.183.
 16. In 2017 and 2018 I was fortunate to consult in person and by correspondence several ordinands who knew or attended lectures by Mrs. Gullick. In separate interviews, Canon David Knight and Canon Robert Wright generously shared recollections that were immensely helpful and corrected some errors in the first draft of this essay. Canon Knight provided me with examples of Gullick's notes , hand outs, and books. I am most grateful to them. Any mistakes or misinterpretations herein are my own.
 17. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, pp.345-346.
 18. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.346.
 19. Thomas Merton, *Thomas Merton in Alaska* (New York: New Directions, 1988), p.138.
 20. Etta Gullick, 'Short Prayers', *The Clergy Review* 52 (Jan. 1966), pp.38-39.
 21. *Thomas Merton in Alaska*, p.144.
 22. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.355.
 23. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.357. Due to the vagaries of trans-Atlantic post, and their respective schedules, gaps of several months are not uncommon in the correspondence.
 24. Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux , 1956, 1958), p.56.
 25. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.376. Readers of Merton will recognize this as a major theme in his writing on contemplative prayer especially in *Contemplative Prayer* (1969) and *The Climate of Monastic Prayer* (1969). Liturgical Press is currently bringing out a new edition of the latter.
 26. Gullick, 'Short Prayers', p.38. Although the article was published in January, 1966, in a letter to Gullick on July 16, 1965 Merton wrote: 'Your "Short Prayers"... is very good and I have posted it for the novices to read. There

- has been favorable comment.' (*The Hidden Ground of Love*, p. 371.) Gullick must have sent Merton drafts of her articles before they were published.
27. Etta Gullick, 'Intercession', *The Clergy Review* 52 (January, 1967), p.36. Again, Gullick must have sent her article to Merton before it was published, because in a March 8, 1966 letter Merton wrote: 'Did I ever tell you how much I liked you piece on intercession? I thought you handled it very well.' (*The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.375.)
 28. Pages 6, 8, and 13 of a September, 1968 manuscript by Gullick kindly provided to me by Canon David Knight of Oxford, an ordinand at St. Stephen's during Gullick's teaching there.
 29. Michael Hollings & Etta Gullick, *as was his custom* (Great Wakering: Mayhew-McCrimmon, 1979) p.6.
 30. Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Doubleday / Image Books, 1971), p.92.
 31. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.367.
 32. *Thomas Merton in Alaska*, p.81.
 33. *Thomas Merton in Alaska*, p.140.
 34. Gullick, 'Short Prayers' pp.37-38.
 35. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.379.
 36. *The Hidden Ground of Love*, pp.379-380
 37. David Steindl-Rast, 'Recollections of Thomas Merton's Last Days in the West', *Monastic Studies* 7 (1969), pp.1-10, and Br. Patrick Hart, *Thomas Merton, Monk: A Monastic Tribute* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1974).

This article is the second of two by Bonnie Thurston about Merton and Gullick. The first, "almost as if I had a sister"—Introducing the Merton-Gullick Correspondence', was included in The Merton Journal 24:2, (Advent 2017).

Bonnie Thurston, after an academic career, lives quietly in her home state of West Virginia in the USA. She wrote her doctoral dissertation on Merton and has focused on his poetry and inter-religious thought. A founding member of the International Thomas Merton Society, she served as its third president, and received a 'Louie' award for service to the Society. She has written numerous articles, given retreats, and lectured on Merton widely in the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Europe. She edited *Thomas Merton and Buddhism* (Fons Vitae Press, 2007), *Hidden in the Same Mystery: Thomas Merton & Loretto* (Fons Vitae, 2010) and *Thomas Merton on Eastern Meditation* (New Directions, 2012). Her work on Merton has been translated into Dutch, German, Italian, and Spanish. Her latest volume of poetry, *From Darkness to Eastering*, has just been published by Wild Goose Press (publisher of the Iona Community).