

Speaking of Contemplation: a Matter of Metaphor

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Preface

I HAVE BEEN TEACHING a course on Thomas Merton to college students for more than a decade. That has been a privilege, a joy and a challenge. Taking my cue from Merton's own title for a collection of essays in which he grappled with urgent social issues in the light of his Christian faith, I recently renamed the course "Faith and Violence." Beginning with *The Seven Storey Mountain*, published 50 years ago, and selections from his early journals, we immerse ourselves in Merton's story.

At first glance, the gulf between his world and ours seems too wide to cross. So we focus on the externals of his journey — "from Prades to Bermuda to St. Antonin to Oakham to London to Cambridge to Rome to New York to Columbia to Corpus Christi to St. Bonaventure to the Cistercian Abbey of the poor men who labor in Gethsemani."¹ We explore the monastic world Merton entered when he became a Trappist, touching on the wisdom of the desert fathers (and mothers) as well as the Rule of St. Benedict and the way it frames a monk's day with a balance of prayer, work and study. Though the exterior aspects of Merton's way of life — in the monastery and in the hermitage — are new to my students, his way of life is not entirely inaccessible to them. Nor is his stand as a social critic. Reading a selection of letters, poems, and essays written in the early sixties, my students applaud his urgent resolve to speak against all that stands in the way of peace.² Most identify easily with Merton's opposition to war and racism. Remarking that he could have been writing today, they are struck by the timeliness of his message, his passion for peace, and his witness to non-violence.

But when we probe more closely Merton's inner journey and read his writings on contemplation, my students struggle to grasp his meaning. On first reading, what Merton has to say about contemplation seems to elude them and *New Seeds of Contemplation*

mystifies them. So I focus their attention on how Merton speaks of contemplation — namely the metaphors he uses — as a way of getting at what he is saying. As we decode Merton's message, our understanding is enriched.

What is Contemplation?

Thomas Merton uses the multivalent term to name a practice of silent, wordless prayer; to describe a way of life, inside and outside the monastery; and, most important, to express the direct experience of God's presence. The three meanings are interrelated. The practice of contemplative prayer opens persons to the discovery of God's presence within them. Life lived in the awareness of God's presence — whether it be in the monastery or outside it — is "contemplative life."

Contemplation — in all these three senses — is central to Merton's thought because it is central to his experience. The fervent young monk enthusiastically embraced the life of a contemplative. He learned about that life by studying it and living it. He persevered in contemplative prayer. As he matured, he discovered that a contemplative way of life is open to all. Merton's inner journey informed what he had to say about contemplation to his readers. And he invited his readers to join him on the journey — not necessarily by following him into the monastery but by joining him on the journey of the heart. Beginning with *What Is Contemplation?* and *Seeds of Contemplation*, published in the late forties, continuing through the fifties with *The Inner Experience* and the sixties with *New Seeds of Contemplation*, *The New Man* and *The Climate of Monastic Prayer* as well as numerous essays and prefaces, Merton made contemplation a reality his readers might not only learn about but actually experience and nourish in their own lives as he had in his own.³ He began by breaking open the wisdom of patristic, monastic, and mystical writers, translating their insights for contemporary readers and, then, added his own, searching for fresh and effective ways to speak about contemplation. At first, he wrote for a Catholic audience; eventually he addressed religiously and culturally diverse readers worldwide.

A number of Merton scholars, including Donald Grayston and William H. Shannon, have shown the development of Merton's thinking on contemplation by documenting the development of his understanding as he wrote and rewrote — refining, expanding and

deepening his ideas along the way.⁴ They have shown how Merton's ideas about contemplation grew under the influence of his own prayer life and his exposure to new perspectives such as Christian personalism, Zen Buddhism, and his deepening engagement with social issues. Their work and that of many other Merton scholars set the groundwork for my approach and the context for this paper.

The purpose of this paper is to explore how Merton spoke of contemplation, paying particular attention to some of the metaphors he used: diving deep, waking up, and being born again. Growing out of his own experience, these metaphors enabled Merton to express what the experience of God was like and to articulate "contemplation" itself as a metaphor for the Christian life, fully lived. Merton's metaphors invite readers (including my undergraduates) to glimpse the mystery of God's presence within themselves and others and to live aware of God's presence in the ordinariness of daily life.

A Word on Metaphor

Speaking of God and our relationship to God is a daunting task. Speech about the holy strains language and reveals the poverty of our words. That is why many Christian spiritual masters embraced the apophatic way, the way of silence. A sense of the inadequacy of words to express the divine is apparent across the world's religions as well. Recall how Hindus modify their speech about the divine with the phrase "neti, neti"—"not this, not that." Note how Muslims attest to the poverty of language as they chant the names of Allah in a litany of affirmations celebrating Allah's attributes, ninety-nine, until in silence they acknowledge the one-hundredth name that can only be spoken in the silence of the heart. It is clear that Merton shared with his brothers and sisters in the world's religions the realization that words cannot adequately express deepest Reality. Contemplation, as the experience of that Reality, is a knowledge too deep to be grasped in images, in words or even in clear concepts. It can be suggested by words, by symbols, but in the very moment of trying to understand what it knows the contemplative mind takes back what it has said, and denies what it has affirmed.⁵

The true language of contemplation is the language of silence. While Merton knew that words could never adequately convey the experience of deepest Reality, he celebrated the power of human

language to express something of that Reality. He recognized that metaphoric language best expresses the Mystery that is God and our relationship to God. Metaphors do not define, limit or exhaust the realities they describe. Metaphors do suggest, hint at, evoke, and intimate. They speak to head and heart. They stir the imagination, which is an essential ingredient in spirituality. Imagination "has the creative task of making symbols, joining things together in such a way that they throw light new light on each other and on everything around them."⁶ Writing about contemplation for two decades, Merton gave free rein to his imagination as he invented fresh metaphors and recast familiar metaphors to reach a growing circle of readers to express what he knew well: contemplation. Merton readers must do likewise, reading imaginatively and allowing Merton's words to stir their imaginations and touch their hearts. Readers with a penchant for the concrete and literal may at first resist Merton's metaphorical language. But working with Merton's metaphors is a way to "break open" his writing even on this most elusive of subjects. Nevertheless, Merton's readers need to be mindful that metaphors remain just that: metaphors. "One may isolate the reality in a symbol, but then one must remember that it is not the symbol and the symbol itself is incapable of communicating the full reality."⁷

Diving Deep Within

An early metaphor for contemplation is found in the closing pages of *The Sign of Jonas*. Fittingly, given the controlling image of the book, Merton elaborates a nautical metaphor as he reflects on his experience of prayer on Shrove Tuesday, February 26, 1952:

The blue elm tree near at hand and the light blue hills in the distance: the red bare clay where I am supposed to plant some shade trees: these are before me as I sit in the sun for a free half hour between direction and work. Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday and today, as I sit in the sun, big blue and purple fish swim past me in the darkness of my empty mind, this sea which opens within me as soon as I close my eyes. Delightful darkness, delightful sun, shining on a world which, for all I care, has already ended.

It does not occur to me to wonder whether we will ever transplant the young maples from the wood, yonder, to this bare leveled patch — the place where the old horsebarn once stood. It does not occur to me to

wonder how everything here came to be transformed. I sit on a cedar log half chewed by some novice's blunt axe, and do not reflect on the plans I have made for this place of prayer, because they do not matter. They will happen when they will happen. The hills are as pure as jade in the distance. God is in His transparent world, but He is too sacred to be mentioned, too holy to be observed. I sit in silence. The big fish are purple in my sea.⁸

In the paragraphs that follow Merton amplifies the experience with a reflection which he introduces with the phrase: "Different levels of depth."

Merton describes three levels. The first is "the slightly troubled surface of the sea" where people pass each other like liners. This is the level of action and plans. "I speak to the scholastics. I make resolutions to speak less wildly, to say fewer things that surprise myself and them." This is where the "ego self" lives and moves. Real enough in one sense, this first level is just the surface. Diving below the surface into the darkness, he sees "big blue, purple, green, and gray fish swim by." The darkness is beautiful and peaceful; it is a watercavern, a cave in which he easily lives. Eyes closed, he enjoys a second level of consciousness; it is a place of natural prayer: restful, comfortable, peaceful, "almost slumber." It is about this level that Merton thinks God intends him to write even though this is the realm of silence not speech. He notes that while the Desert Fathers talked about purity of heart, obedience, solitude, and God, "the wiser of them talked very little about anything."⁹

Diving deeper still Merton discovers "positive life swimming in the rich darkness, which is no longer thick like water but pure, like air. Starlight and you do not know where it is coming from. Moonlight is in this prayer, stillness, waiting for the Redeemer." Darkness becomes light. "Everything is charged with intelligence, though all is night." It is a level beyond speculation where everything is Spirit. "Here God is adored." Here God is and is not. "Everything and Nothing. Not light, not dark, not high not low, not this side not that side."¹⁰ Paradox turns into negation. In the deep, all is transformed and duality is transcended — even in metaphor.

The deep sea opens to the sky. From the "holy cellar" of mortal existence, one glimpses the sky: "It is a strange awakening to find the sky within you and beneath you and above you and all around

you..."¹¹ This passage echoes lines found in a poem Merton wrote in the forties, entitled, "A Psalm":

When psalms surprise me with their music
And antiphons turn to rum
The Spirit sings: the bottom drops out of my soul

And from the center of my cellar, Love, louder than thunder
Opens a heaven of naked air.¹²

Like the passage in *The Sign of Jonas*, this poem recounts a personal experience in prayer. This is what the experience is like.

As a metaphor for contemplation, "diving deep within" is vivid, colorful, compelling. Speaking of diving deep within, Merton calls attention to our capacity for deep consciousness, for exploring reality beneath the surface, for tapping into the "deep self within." Contemplation involves experiencing a new level of consciousness and the contemplative life, living beneath the surface of life in touch with the depths. The contemplative life is the life of the deep self — alive and swimming beneath the surface. But, as Merton gradually realized, one surfaces from the depths to return to the first level — the level of action — buoyed up by the experience of the deep.¹³ Aware of the deep, one does not deny the significance of the ordinary; rather one discovers that the ordinary is transformed. This dynamic characterizes the spiritual life: it is a movement of withdrawal and return. Having experienced life beneath the surface, one returns to the surface able to see with clarity and to act with courage. That was Merton's personal experience: having known God's loving presence in prayer, he returned to the world he thought he had left behind when he entered the monastery and became a witness to freedom. Thomas Merton discovered that God intended him to write about the first level after all.

Waking Up, Becoming Aware

New Seeds of Contemplation is full of metaphors. Contemplation is "being touched by God," a response in which we become God's echo, a gift of God who "completes the hidden and mysterious work of creation in us."¹⁴ Merton likens contemplation to "a journey through the wilderness," a journey from the "region of unlikeness" to "our own land."¹⁵ Contemplation is "Love Living in Freedom."¹⁶ It is an invitation to join in the "General Dance."¹⁷ Among all these provocative metaphors, one stands out. Contemplation is waking up

and becoming aware. Contemplation "awakens us to a new level of awareness."¹⁸ This metaphor, threaded through two decades of writing, becomes especially prominent in *New Seeds*, as Merton sets his understanding of contemplation within the framework of his understanding of the human self. Merton's distinction between the false self (external, exterior, superficial, illusory) and true self (real, interior, hidden, deep) enables him to speak of the true self as the center, the point or spark of God in us and so to speak of contemplation as the awakening of the true self. Awakening is a matter of realizing who we are, who we have always been.

"Awake!" The imperative is direct and familiar. We all "wake up"—each in our own way, whether roused by an inner clock or summoned by bell or buzzer. Some bound up without a moment's hesitation while others linger abed, toying with snooze alarms and bargaining for just a few more minutes. Once up, some of us are wide awake while others stumble about half asleep until we drink that first cup of coffee or tea. But there is more to waking up than getting upright and mobile. Being awake is a matter of being aware, of being attentive and mindful to the present moment and resisting to distractions, daydreams, and illusions. Spiritually speaking, there is a level of consciousness beyond the ordinary states of wakefulness, sleep, and dream. "Waking up and becoming aware" is a natural way of speaking of the spiritual life. The Buddha is the one who woke up. His awakening becomes an invitation to follow his example. Jesus instructs his disciples to be vigilant and stay awake and the early Christian hymn, possibly from a baptismal liturgy, which St. Paul cites in his letter to the community of Christians at Ephesus (Ephesians 5:14), urges wakefulness:

"Awake, O sleeper,
and rise from the dead,
and Christ will give you light."

In the Prologue to his *Rule*, St. Benedict quotes St. Paul's directive to Christians in Rome: "Let us get up then, at long last, for the Scriptures rouse us when they say: It is high time for us to arise from sleep (Romans 13:11)."¹⁹

The awakening of which Merton speaks is threefold: we awaken to our inner selves, we awaken to God's presence within us, and we awaken to our unity with others. Contemplation is an experience of heightened consciousness, encounter and communion. Our inner

self is who we are — who we really are. It is not just a part of our being, “like a motor in a car.” It is our entire substantial reality itself, on its highest and most personal and most existential level. It is like life, and it is life... It is the life by which everything in us lives and moves... If it is awakened...it becomes a living awareness of itself; and this awareness is not so much something that we ourselves have, as something that we are. It is a new and indefinable quality of our living being.²⁰

The inner self is “the true indestructible and immortal person, the true ‘I’ who answers to a new and secret name” known only to oneself and to God.²¹ Contemplation, Merton writes, is “life itself, fully awake, fully active, fully aware that it is alive.”²² Contemplation is the awareness of our very being as “a free gift of love.”²³ Awakened, we are alive to “an interior dimension of depth and awareness.”²⁴ It is God who awakens in us this awareness that “Creating Spirit (*Creatus Spiritus*) dwells in us, and we in Him.”²⁵

Awakening to the inner self, we discover God within, or rather we allow God to discover us. We discover God, not as an object external to us, but as the very ground of our being — the Hidden Ground of Love. “We awaken not only to a realization of the immensity and majesty of God “out there” as King and Ruler of the universe (which He is) but also a more intimate and more wonderful perception of Him as directly and personally present in our own being...”²⁶

We do not merely know about God; we actually know God dwelling in us in Love. “Contemplation is the awareness and realization, even in some sense, the experience, of what each Christian obviously believes: ‘It is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me.’” Contemplation is “awakening, enlightenment and the most amazing intuitive grasp by which love gains certitude of God’s creative and dynamic intervention in our daily life.”²⁷ Awakening to God within, we awaken to our unity with others in God with whom we are one in that “Hidden Ground of Love.”²⁸ Merton invoked that Love as he invited all those present to join him in prayer at the First Spiritual Summit Conference in Calcutta in October 1968. He asked them to be “aware of the love that unites us, the love that unites us in spite of real differences, real emotional friction” and to remember that “things that are on the surface are nothing, what is deep is Real. We are creatures of love.”²⁹ Earlier, in an informal talk, he insisted

that “communication on the deepest level is possible.” Such communication is actually “communion”:

It is wordless...beyond words...beyond speech...beyond concept. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover an older unity...we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are.³⁰

Waking up to our selves, to God and to others is an experience — a breakthrough. But the metaphor lends itself to describing more than a discrete experience: it names a contemplative way of life, a way of living that nurtures wakefulness and awareness, a life enriched by many moments of awakening.³¹ Though this way of living is certainly exemplified by monks, the values that inform the life of a monk are open to all who seek God. Contemplation has a place in the world of action. Writing to college students, Merton described the contemplative life as “a special dimension of inner discipline and experience, a certain integrity and fullness of personal development” which, though “not compatible with a purely external, alienated, busy-busy existence,” certainly is essential to living a life committed of service to others.³²

Being Born Again

Another image that Merton uses to express the discovery of our true identity in God is that of being born again. Merton’s use of this metaphor is an example of his speaking of contemplation, without actually using the term, to a new audience in the “Preface to the Japanese Edition to *The New Man*,” written in October 1967.³³ *The New Man*, published in 1961, reads as a companion to *New Seeds of Contemplation*, published in the same year. The “new man” and the “new woman” realize the image of God within as the “highest peak of self-realization.”³⁴ They experience an “inner awakening.” (Note how frequently Merton employs one metaphor to explicate another.) They recover their true identity. “The recognition of our true self, in the divine image, is...a recognition of the fact that we are known and loved by God.”³⁵ Christ lives in the “new man” and the “new woman.” They experience “the great existential awakening of Easter morning.”³⁶

Merton reads the imperative uttered by Jesus in the context of the world’s religion — eastern and western — noting that “spiritual rebirth” is an aspiration shared by Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism,

Islam, and Christianity. "There is in us an instinct for newness, for renewal, for a liberation of creative power. We seek to awaken in ourselves a force which really changes our lives from within." That change is actually "a recovery of that which is deepest, most original, most personal in ourselves. To be born again is not to become somebody else, but to become ourselves." This rebirth, Merton insists, is not accomplished through psychoanalysis or psychiatry; nor is it achieved through identification with mass movements; it is "a spiritual and religious transformation."³⁷

Though rebirth begins with sacramental baptism — "birth by water" — which occurs once, the birth in the Spirit which baptism initiates happens many times as one "passes through successive stages of spiritual development." This is the rebirth of which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus: "not a single event but a continuous dynamic of inner renewal."³⁸ Being born again is essential to Christianity.

True Christianity is growth in the life of the Spirit, a deepening of the new life, a continuous rebirth, in which the exterior and superficial life of the ego-self is discarded like an old snake skin and the mysterious, invisible self of the Spirit becomes more present and more active. The true Christian rebirth is a renewed transformation, a "passover" in which man is progressively liberated from selfishness and not only grows in love but in some sense "becomes love." The perfection of the new birth is reached where there is no more selfishness, there is only love.³⁹

Expressed differently, in what Merton calls the "the language of the mystics,"

there is no more ego-self, there is only Christ; self no longer acts, only the Spirit acts in pure love. The perfect illumination is then the illumination of Love shining by itself. To become completely transparent and allow Love to shine by itself, is the maturity of the "New Man."⁴⁰

Speaking of contemplation, without naming it, Merton nevertheless expresses what is at the core of contemplation and the contemplative life. Rebirth is the heart of the matter. The essence of Jesus Christ's invitation remains clear: Jesus challenges us to become new men and new women by recovering "the interior, the silent, the contemplative, the hidden wisdom" which calls us to move beyond activism to listening in the silence of our hearts to the inner urgings of the Spirit.

In spring 1968, Merton rewrote and enlarged the "Preface to the Japanese Edition of the New Man" and entitled the resulting essay, "Rebirth and the New Man in Christianity."⁴¹ In it, he speaks of "new being" and "new creation" — reflecting the influence of Pauline and Johannine theologies — and of metanoia — the change of heart in which persons are recreated. Metanoia, Merton wrote in *The New Man*, happens when one "comes into intimate spiritual contact with God" and is changed "from within." Metanoia "reorients our whole being." We realize that we are "quite different from our normal empirical selves" and conscious that "this new mode of being is truly more 'normal' than our ordinary nature." Being "out of ourselves" and oriented toward God and in God's self and in others is "natural" to us. "We find ourselves to be most truly human when we are raised to the level of the divine." This change of heart is a gift that "brings us back to the paradisaical state for which we were originally created."⁴²

Merton's use of the metaphor of being born again evokes his own spiritual journey. Recall the well known opening lines of *The Seven Storey Mountain*:

On the last day of January 1915, under the sign of the Water Bearer, in a year of a great war, and down in the shadow of some French mountains on the borders of Spain, I came into the world. Free by nature, in the image of God, I was nevertheless the prisoner of my own violence and my own selfishness, in the image of the world into which I was born. That world was the picture of Hell, full of men like myself, loving God and yet hating Him; born to love Him, living instead in fear and hopeless self-contradictory hungers.⁴³

Alienation — from self, God, and others — characterized his first birth and a world in the throes of war became a symbol of violence he saw in himself. He was enslaved, unfree and longing for liberation, for rebirth. And when he wrote the following, he was expressing autobiography as well as theology:

To be born of flesh is to be born into human race and to our society, with its fighting, its hatreds, its loves, its passions, its struggles, its appetites. To be born of the spirit is to be born into God (or the Kingdom of God) beyond hatred, beyond struggle, in peace, love, joy, self-effacement, service, gentleness, humility, strength.⁴⁴

He saw his initiation into the Catholic Church as a new beginning. Entering Gethsemani marked another beginning. But these

were only beginnings. As a Cistercian monk, Merton committed himself to the practice of *conversio morum*. Conversion became, for him, a way of life. Conversion is a dimension of contemplative life: one is born again and again and the birth of God within signals a new existence, open to depth, silence, and attention to the voice of the Spirit.

Words and Practices

For Merton, writing about contemplation was not a theoretical exercise. His words reflect his own experience and practice. If all we do is write, read, and talk about contemplation, we miss the point of what Merton has to share with us. Contemplation is not about words; it is about experience and practice or, in Merton's words, contemplation is both "gift" and "art."⁴⁵ The gift is the pure awareness of God. The art is living in such a way that we are open to experience God's presence. Contemplation names the experience; contemplative prayer and contemplative living name the practice. While each of the metaphors discussed above — diving deep, waking up and becoming aware, and being born again — expresses something of what the experience is like, each metaphor also invites practice. Practicing "the art" of contemplation includes nurturing interiority, listening to God's Word in scripture and in the heart, praying with and without words, reaching out with compassion in justice — always responsive to the "creating Spirit" within.

Reading Merton is an invitation to consider how contemplation can become a reality. Giving witness to his experience of God's presence in the ordinariness of his life, Merton invites his readers to look into their own hearts and lives and to discover God already there.

Notes and References

1. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1948), p.412
2. Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love*, edited by William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1985); Thomas Merton, *Passion for Peace. The Social Essays*, edited by William H. Shannon (New York: Crossroad, 1995); Thomas Merton, *The Collected Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1977).
3. Thomas Merton, *What Is Contemplation?* (Springfield, IL: Templegate Publishers, 1950); *Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1949; revised edition, December, 1949); *The Inner Experience*, unpublished, 1959; *The New Man*

- (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1961); *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1962); *The Climate of Monastic Prayer* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1969); also published as *Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969). For excerpts from *The Inner Experience*, see William H. Shannon, *Thomas Merton's Dark Path* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1981; revised 1987); also see *Cistercian Studies*, 18 & 19 (1983, 1984).
4. Donald Grayston, *Thomas Merton: The Development of a Spiritual Theologian* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985); Shannon, *Thomas Merton's Dark Path*.
5. Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p.1
6. Thomas Merton, "Is the Contemplative Life Finished?" in *Contemplation in a World of Action* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), p.345. In this essay, constituted of notes from taped conferences, Merton acknowledges the importance of imagination in prayer and in the reading of scripture.
7. Thomas Merton, "The Inner Experience: Prospects and Conclusions (VIII)," *Cistercian Studies*, 19:4 (1984), p.343
8. Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1953), p.338. See also Thomas Merton, *Entering the Silence. The Journals of Thomas Merton, Volume Two 1941-1952*, edited by Jonathan Montaldo (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p.467
9. Merton, *The Sign of Jonas*, pp. 338, 339
10. *Ibid.*, pp.339, 340
11. *Ibid.*, p.340
12. Thomas Merton, "A Psalm," reprinted in *Collected Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1977), pp.220-221. The poem was first published in *The Tears of Blind Lions* (NY: New Directions, 1949).
13. I am reminded of the striking title of Carol P. Christ's book on women's spirituality, *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980).
14. Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p.3
15. *Ibid.*, pp.280-281
16. *Ibid.*, p.283
17. This is the title of last chapter of *New Seeds of Contemplation*.
18. *Ibid.*, p.226. Compare with: contemplation "awakens us to a new world." Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*, p.145
19. *The Rule of St. Benedict in English*, edited by Timothy Fry, OSB (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982).
20. Merton, *The Inner Experience* as excerpted in *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master*, edited by Lawrence S. Cunningham (New York: Paulist, 1992), pp.297-298
21. Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p.297
22. *Ibid.*, p.1
23. *Ibid.*, p.3
24. Thomas Merton, *Witness to Freedom: Letters in Times of Crisis*, edited by William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1994), p.329
25. Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p.5
26. Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, p.175
27. Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p.5
28. See Merton to Amiya Chakravarty, April 13, 1967 in *The Hidden Ground of Love*, p.115

29. Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journal*, edited by Naomi Burton, Brother Patrick Hart and James Laughlin (New York: New Directions, 1973), p.318
30. Ibid., p.308
31. Note how the Rule of Benedict functions as a guide for Christian living. The values central to the rule may be embraced and practiced by all Christians: listening, working attentively, and praying always. See the writings of Esther de Waal and Joan Chittister.
32. Merton's "Contemplation in a World of Action," written in April 1968, was first published in the *Bloomin' Newman*, a student publication at the University of Louisville. It is reprinted in *Contemplation in a World of Action* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), p.157
33. Thomas Merton, "Preface to the Japanese Edition of *The New Man*," in "Honorable Reader" *Reflections on My Work*, edited by Robert E. Daggy (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp.127-136
34. Merton, *The New Man*, p.63
35. Ibid., p.124
36. Ibid., p.240
37. Merton, "Preface to the Japanese Edition of *The New Man*," p.131
38. Ibid., p.133
39. Ibid., p.134
40. Ibid.
41. Thomas Merton, "Rebirth and the New Man in Christianity" in *Love and Living*, edited by Naomi Burton Stone and Brother Patrick Hart (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), pp.192-202
42. Merton, *The New Man*, pp.125-126
43. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1948), p.9
44. Merton, "Rebirth and the New Man in Christianity," p.198.45. See Thomas Merton, "Contemplation and Dialogue" in *Mystics and Zen Masters* (NY: Dell, 1967), pp.203-204