

Thomas Merton's Social Conscience in Formation – Correspondences with Czesław Miłosz, 1958-1962

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Introduction

On 10 November 1958, Thomas Merton wrote a letter to Pope John XXIII offering congratulations from the novitiate of the Trappist Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani in rural Kentucky upon his election on 28 October 1958. In his letter, Merton set out his special vocation as a monk. He confided to the new pontiff that he had begun to engage in a letter correspondence with 'a circle of intellectuals from other parts of the world' comprising his 'apostolate of friendship.'¹ Lawrence Cunningham highlights the importance of this letter for understanding Merton's rationale for social engagement.² Merton proposed reinvigorating a dynamic spiritual and secular dialogue. This proposal was issued during a period in American Catholic history when a debate was raging, triggered by an essay written by Monsignor John Tracy Ellis, noted Roman Catholic historian at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., who was critical of American Roman Catholics for their intellectual timidity and problematic commitment to higher education. Ellis's thesis was that American Catholics had been defensive about their faith and so concerned about the issues of caring for a largely immigrant church that they had neglected the scholarly life. That neglect had resulted in an under-representation of American Roman Catholics in public life and in the world of public intellectuals.³ The Catholic question was hotly debated during John Fitzgerald Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1960 and contributes to explaining why Kennedy downplayed his Catholicism during his presidency. Merton's phrase, 'apostolate of friendship', echoes an earlier phrase, 'friends in the world', in Merton's history of the Cistercian Trappists entitled *The Waters of Siloe* originally published in

1949. Merton dedicated the book to Evelyn Waugh who had published *The Seven Storey Mountain* for a British readership as *Elected Silence* in 1949. Waugh had advised Merton to make an art of letter writing.⁴ For Merton, correspondence was the ground of authentic political engagement and social solidarity. In *The Waters of Siloe*, Merton noted the providential role of correspondence with reference to the intervention of Dom Augustin de LeStrange, novice master at La Grande Trappe, who by 'carrying out a correspondence with friends in the world'⁵ had managed to save his community during the Reign of Terror following the French Revolution. Monks from Dom Augustin's Swiss community of La Val-Sainte pioneered a two-year Tappist experiment in New York. Following the downfall of Napoleon in 1815, Dom Augustin returned to France to re-establish there the Order of Cîteaux.

Thomas Merton engaged with the pertinent social issues of the 1960s from a bystander's remove of a Trappist monastic community in rural Kentucky. His writings typify the interests of radical intellectualism by showing concern for the effects of technology on culture and the environment, racial segregation in America, conscientious objection to the Vietnam War and Christian-Marxist dialogue. Letter writing was a medium by which Merton was able to define and refine an authentic civil engagement through a network of trusted correspondents. It is undisputed that Thomas Merton used letter writing to forge friendships in order to form the basis for an authentic social dialogue, but I will invert this truism by asking: how does Merton's 'apostolate of friendship' with 'friends in the world' help us to chart the dialogical processes that played a key part in the formation of Merton's social conscience? Correspondence from 1958 to 1962 between Thomas Merton and Polish dissident poet Czesław Miłosz will be chosen to illustrate dynamic stages in Thomas Merton's social conscience in formation.

Thomas Merton first wrote to Lithuanian-born Polish writer Czesław Miłosz, a fellow Roman Catholic, having read Miłosz's *The Captive Mind* in November 1958.⁶ Miłosz wrote this controversial book in Paris during 1951-52 while he was in exile from Poland. *The Captive Mind* articulates Miłosz's denunciation of Stalinism. Miłosz narrates the fates of believers who enthusiastically align themselves with an ideology that ultimately denies them freedom of expression.⁷ At the time this book was first published Western intellectuals were debating between genuinely competitive social models – whether social democratic, social market or regulated market variants of liberal capitalism. Merton was one of the first to read the book in English and to acknowledge its wider

significance. In a journal entry dated 18 November 1958, Merton, reflecting on his impression of *The Captive Mind*, writes: 'What matters is not to line up with the winning side but to be a true and revolutionary poet.'⁸ To Merton, the book signified the potential of totalitarian mentalities existing on both sides of the Iron Curtain. This contrasted with an American consensus that viewed Soviet Russia as enslaved by totalitarianism while America stood as moral guardian of the 'free world'.

The two writers shared an engaged correspondence between 1958 and 1962, but only sporadically corresponded between 1963 and Merton's death in 1968. Merton and Miłosz met twice: first in September 1964 when Miłosz visited Merton in Gethsemani and again in October 1968 when Merton met Miłosz, then teaching at Berkeley, and his wife, briefly in California before departing for Asia. Through the decade, both writers corresponded on a wide range of topics of mutual interest including candid critiques of each other's work, suggestions for reading, reflections on nature and history, on religion and the Roman Catholic Church, on mass media and American culture and society.⁹

The ethical ground of friendship

Thomas Merton, as novice master in Gethsemani Abbey (1955-65), engaged himself in reclaiming the wisdom of early Christian monasticism for the late 20th century. Aspects of his project converged with the *Ressourcement* movement then seeking to re-appropriate the values of Christian tradition in conversation with the modern world. *Ressourcement*, as a return to the sources of Catholic tradition, contributed to the reformist impulse of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Merton, through his social writings, interrogated the problems of late 20th-century secularism through the lens of Roman Catholic tradition.¹⁰ His appreciation of friendship was shaped by this historical consciousness.

Paul Ricoeur, with whose writings Thomas Merton was familiar,¹¹ understood friendship in Classical Greece as an ethical position halfway between the solitary individual and the citizen.¹² Michel Foucault, whom Merton first read in 1967,¹³ considered reciprocity as the defining characteristic in the Classical philosophy of friendship.¹⁴ Roman Catholic intellectual Ivan Illich, who briefly corresponded with Merton in 1964,¹⁵ acknowledged the reciprocal ethic of friendship in Classical thought, but highlighted the impact of Christian ethics for disrupting the Classical *ethos* of friendship in order to transcend the *ethnos* or kin-group. Christianity opened possibilities of entering into voluntary relationships

outside the kin-group as exemplified through the early monastic movement in Egypt and the Middle East.¹⁶ Illich highlights the influence of St. Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Spirituali Amicitia* in his exposition on Christian friendship. Merton was familiar with this 12th century Cistercian writer.¹⁷ Aelred's influential treatise argues that friendship involves the whole person: body and mind, senses and spirit. Friendship is not limited to reason or emotion; it is somatic, experiential, sensuous, uniting all of a person to friends and to God.¹⁸ To Illich, the philosophy of personalism, as espoused by Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker movement in America, was a secular manifestation of the spirituality of monastic friendship.¹⁹

While Ivan Illich generically classified Classical and Christian friendship as *philia*, Thomas Merton perceived friendship as a mysterious encounter that implicitly grounded his dialogue with friends in the world. Merton's seminars on John Cassian, a medieval ascetic who translated Egyptian monastic ideas and practices to the Latin West, delivered between 1955 and 1962, briefly discussed the virtues of friendship. Conference 16, 'On Friendship', discusses Cassian's reflection on the Egyptian Abba Joseph's meditations. Here, Merton considered the reciprocal quality of friendship as constituting its ethical ground. The dynamic of 'spiritual friendship' is created by mutual empathy conjoined through a shared virtuous purpose. Merton characterizes the conviviality of virtuous friendship as *diathesis*, a special superabundant love directed to those with whom we have most in common spiritually. In this context, *diathesis* also incorporated *agape* or universal love that included even the love of enemies.²⁰ Christian friendship was thus interpreted as the perfection of charity and peace with an imperative to heal all anger in a brother through meekness.²¹

The reciprocal and convivial qualities of friendship can be detected in Thomas Merton's initial letter correspondence with Czesław Miłosz in December 1958. Merton wrote of his encounter with *The Captive Mind* as being 'spiritual' in that he felt guided to read the book as a consequence of much thought, meditation and prayer about his own obligations to the rest of the human race.²² In the Merton/Miłosz correspondence we detect the poet seeking to intellectually shape the monk and *visa versa* as Merton struggled to find an authentic voice in which to enter into a meaningful social dialogue. What emerges, during their correspondence between 1958 and 1962, is Merton's growing awareness of the psychological complexity of American Cold War culture. Their correspondences on mass media in American culture and the

political implications of an emerging American peace movement helped Merton to reformulate his perception of himself as a paradoxical bystander²³ who stood apart, but who could not turn away from social injustice because it manifested suffering in which he too was implicated.

Tuned to the world

The history of the late 20th century is defined by the bringing into being of the atomic bomb and the networked computing system. Forged in wartime these technologies framed the uneasy peace known as the Cold War.²⁴ Thomas Merton's critique of technological society captured a *zeitgeist* of technological anxiety threading through the discourses of the New Left in France, Britain, and America during the Cold War. Merton reflected on technological society where propaganda, slogans and advertising had become the culturally dominant modes of communication adapted to the need for speed and immediacy. His conjectural approach offered him opportunities to question the technological anxiety that dominated his own lifetime and that still continues to resonate today. Although Merton was a prolific writer, many of his social reflections were not written as sustained polemics, but rather as sketches revisited over many years which makes them especially challenging for critics to assess in their entirety.

Recent publications by Paul Dekar²⁵ and Phillip Thompson²⁶ discuss Thomas Merton's critique of techno-positivist determinism and the value he placed on dialogue for authentic civic engagement. Throughout his career, Merton engaged in sustained meditations on the effects of technology on culture. These most prominently feature in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, originally published in 1966,²⁷ and *Faith and Violence*, originally published in 1968.²⁸ The social implication of technology, influenced by Merton's reading of the French social critic Jacques Ellul,²⁹ was discussed at the 'Spiritual Roots of Protest' retreat for peacemakers, hosted by Merton in mid-November 1964, attended by prominent members of the Evangelical Left as exemplified by the presence of Abraham J. Muste, dean of the American peace movement, and an emerging Catholic Left as exemplified by the attendance of Daniel and Philip Berrigan, Robert Cunnane, James Forest and Tom Cornell.³⁰ Merton's most sustained exploration of the wide variety of socio-cultural effects of technology features in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*.³¹ The book amplifies reflections drawn from his private journals kept during the previous decade.³² To Merton, the American 'post-Christian era' was manifested through an unquestioning faith in techno-rationality. This

argument resonated through the Merton/Miłosz correspondence.

Christopher Hitchens, in his obituary for Czesław Miłosz in 2004, highlighted the continuing relevance of Miłosz's critique of the enslavement of aesthetics in the service of ideology that was so central to *The Captive Mind*.³³ In the book, Miłosz employed 'Ketman', a Persian loan word, to signify the self-delusions of intellectuals through acts of public hypocrisy, at the expense of individual conscience, under Communist régimes in post-war Europe.³⁴ In a letter to Merton written in late 1960, Miłosz criticized Roman Catholic moral theology for undervaluing the role of society in the formation of individual ethics. To Miłosz, a very concrete instance where ethical corrosion was evident in American culture was through television.³⁵ Charles Van Doran, son of Mark Van Doran, Merton's teacher at Columbia University, had confessed his part to a TV quiz show deception in 1959. Yet, television was also a moral medium. It contributed to defining the Holocaust as an historical event through American telecasts of the trial of Adolf Eichmann from Jerusalem during 1961. In the psychological Cold War, television was tactically deployed as an information weapon as, for example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. Television could operate as a politically disruptive medium. Images of race riots in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 reached the Soviet Union, relayed by the Telstar 2 telecommunications satellite, where they served the Communist Party to undercut the Kennedy administration's self-styled legitimacy as moral guardians of the 'free world'.³⁶ Echoing *The Captive Mind*, Miłosz cast the medium of television as an aesthetic Ketman in his criticism of the American culture industry. Merton, in a journal entry dated 28 March 1961, notes: 'Wrote two letters to Czesław Miłosz. He is a terrific correspondent, full of wise insights, shrewd judge of the sickness of America, wants me to campaign against TV.'³⁷ Merton interpreted television as a cultural medium feeding and reinforcing America's techno-scientific solipsism comparable with Miłosz's portrayal of aesthetic Ketman. *The Captive Mind* exemplified for Merton the 'struggle to keep awake on this island of Lotus Eaters.'³⁸

Ambiguity of Action

A tension is detectable in Czesław Miłosz's reservations to Thomas Merton's involvement with the peace movement at the beginning of the 1960s. Merton reveals his patience and openness through correspondence when faced with reservations expressed through a spirit of friendship.

Intellectually, Thomas Merton was at the forefront of a nascent

American Catholic peace movement emerging out of the Catholic Worker as the Catholic Peace Fellowship in 1965. Between 1958 and 1962, Merton's correspondence network included the Catholic Worker movement, the largely Protestant Fellowship of Reconciliation, British PAX, a Roman Catholic peace movement, and American East Coast intellectuals loosely affiliating themselves as a 'Committee of Correspondence', a moniker of protest from the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), to lobby for nuclear arms reduction.³⁹

Thomas Merton's writings on peace and war had commenced in earnest by late 1961. Merton's early essays addressed national fears of a surprise Soviet nuclear attack on America. Merton's writings did not sit well with Miłosz, shaped as he was by his brutal experience of the Second World War in Eastern Europe and his distrust of post-war Communist projections of peace. Miłosz's experiences shaped his skepticism towards any moral action, appearing to be utopian, that could be usurped by state authoritarianism. Miłosz, writing to Merton in January 1962, commented: 'Any peace action should take into account its probable effects and not only moral duty. It is possible that every peace manifesto for every 1 person converted throws 5 persons to the extreme right by a reaction against "defeatism".'⁴⁰ Merton responded seriously to Miłosz's reservation. In a journal entry dated 6 February 1962 he wrote: 'A very important letter from Miłosz, in reaction to the articles on peace I sent him. It touches me deeply because I respect his judgment more than that of anyone I know, on this question. For he has been through it. And we have not.'⁴¹ Merton then makes notes to himself, summarizing the main points of Miłosz's letter. He takes the latter's point. 'There are awful ambiguities in this peace talk and I do not want to end up by simply crystallizing the opinion I think is immoral.' Merton struggles with what his involvement should be. At the end of this journal entry, the whole of which reveals his wrestling with these questions, he had found again the voice of a contemplative, even if he had not resolved the ambiguities. He says, 'The reality of my life is the reality of interior prayer, always, and above all. There is a large amount of delusion in all inordinate concern with action. Yet there must be the right action.'⁴²

Thomas Merton responded to Czesław Miłosz's reservations in good faith. He edited his own letter response to Miłosz in March 1962, as 'Cold War Letter #56' of the *Cold War Letters*.⁴³ This letter allowed Merton to justify his position, from within institutional Roman Catholicism, on the nature of Christian responsibility to society as a matter of personal conscience, and as a response to his detractors, many

being American Roman Catholics. Merton privately circulated the *Cold War Letters*, in the *samizdat* fashion of Soviet dissident writers, among his network of trusted friends.

Conclusion

William Shannon and Christine Bochen have observed that letter correspondence had a deep significance for Thomas Merton: 'Letter writing, as Merton came to see it, was an extension of the monastic vocation.'⁴⁴ The Merton/Miłosz correspondence is an example of the processes Merton engaged in to foster an intellectual correspondence network from the remove of a Trappist abbey in rural Kentucky. Merton considered the Christian responsibility of contemplative and cloistered religious, 'to be attuned to the deepest problems of the contemporary world.'⁴⁵ Letter writing was for Thomas Merton a way to connect with people, a way to learn from others, a way to try out new ideas, a way to reflect on his work, and a way to engage in the pertinent moral and social issues of the day. Thomas Merton's intellectual activism was grounded in contemplation and supported by a judicious network of correspondents who comprised his 'apostolate of friendship' with 'friends in the world'.

Notes

1. Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love: Letters on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*. William Shannon (ed.), (London, Collins Flame 1990), pp. 481-83.
2. Lawrence Cunningham, *Thomas Merton and the Monastic Vision*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), pp. 64-65.
3. John Tracy Ellis, 'American Catholics and the Intellectual Life', *Thought* 30, (Autumn, 1955), pp. 351-88.
4. Thomas Merton, *A Life in Letters: The Essential Collection*. William Shannon and Christine Bochen (eds.), (Oxford: Lion Books, 2009), p. ix.
5. Thomas Merton, *The Waters of Siloe*. (London: Sheldon Press, 1976), p. 53.
6. Thomas Merton, *A Search for Solitude: Pursuing the Monk's Life*. Journals, 1952-1960, vol. 3. Lawrence Cunningham (ed.), (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 230.
7. Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2001). The book appeared in English in 1953, translated by Jane Zielonko and originally published by Secker and Warburg.
8. *A Search for Solitude: Pursuing the Monk's Life*, p. 231.
9. Thomas Merton and Czesław Miłosz, *Striving Toward Being: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Czesław Miłosz*. Robert Faggen (ed.), (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997).
10. For a discussion of Thomas Merton's engagement with the *Ressourcement*

movement see Ron Dart, 'Thomas Merton and *Nouvelle Theologie*', *The Merton Journal* 19:1 (Eastertide, 2012), pp. 26-35.

11. Ross Labrie, *Thomas Merton and the Inclusive Imagination*. (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2001), p. 165.
12. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (trans.), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 131.
13. Robert Inchausti, *Thinking through Thomas Merton: Contemplation for Contemporary Times*. (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2014), p. 31.
14. Michel Foucault, 'On the genealogy of ethics: an overview of work in progress', interview with Paul Rabinow and Herbert Dreyfus in Berkley, April 1983 in Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Paul Rabinow (ed.), (London: Penguin Books, 1994), pp. 257-58.
15. Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky. Section A - Correspondence, Illich, Ivan D. 1926-2002 [Online] Retrieved 12 January 2015 from <http://merton.org/Research/Correspondence/y1.aspx?id=956>.
16. Ivan Illich, 'Friendship' in David Cayley (ed.), *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*. (Ontario: Ananse, 2005), p. 146.
17. Thomas Merton, 'St. Aelred of Rievaulx and the Cistercians, I-V', *Cistercian Studies* 20:3 (1985), pp. 212-223; *Cistercian Studies* 21:1 (1986), pp. 30-42; *Cistercian Studies* 22:1 (1987), pp. 55-75; *Cistercian Studies* 23:1 (1988), pp. 45-62; *Cistercian Studies* 24:1 (1989), pp. 50-68.
18. Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*, Cistercian Fathers Series, no. 5. Lawrence Braceland (trans.); Marsha Dutton (ed.), (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010), p. 47.
19. *The Rivers North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich*, note 16, p. 148.
20. Thomas Merton, *Cassian and the Fathers: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition*. Patrick F. O'Connell (ed.), (Abbey of Gethsemani: Cistercian Publications, 2005), p. 257.
21. *Cassian and the Fathers*, note 20, p. 258.
22. For a wider discussion of this correspondence see Jeremy Driscoll, 'The Correspondence of Thomas Merton and Czesław Miłosz: Monasticism and Society in Dialogue', *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 11:3, (Summer, 2008), p. 19.
23. For an analysis of Thomas Merton's correspondence with Czesław Miłosz on the ethical implications of bystanders as witnesses see James G.R. Cronin, ' "No such thing as innocent by-standing": the bystander motif in the social writings of Thomas Merton.' *Universal Vision: A Centenary Celebration of Thomas Merton*. Fiona Gardner, Keith Griffin and Peter Ellis (eds.), *The Merton Journal* (Advent, 2014) 21: 2, pp. 72-84.
24. For a wider discussion of early Cold War techno-culture see George Dyson, *Turing's Cathedral: The Origins of the Digital Universe*. (London: Allen Lane, 2012).
25. Paul Dekar, *Thomas Merton: Twentieth-Century Wisdom for Twenty-First*

Century Living. (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2012).

26. Phillip Thompson, *Returning to Reality: Thomas Merton's Wisdom for a Technological Age*. (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2013).

27. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. (New York: Image Books, 1989).

28. Thomas Merton, *Faith and Violence*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

29. Jacques Ellul was a French theologian/sociologist and anarchist. He first became well known to American readers when his book *The Technological Society* was published in English in 1964.

30. Lawrence Cunningham, note 2, p. 114. Those in attendance included: Philip Berrigan, Daniel Berrigan, John Oliver Nelson, A. J. Muste, James Forest, John Howard Yoder, Tom Cornell, W. H. Ferry, Tony Walsh, Robert Cunnane, John Peter Grady, and Elbert Jean see Gordon Oyer, *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest: Merton, Berrigan, Yoder, and Muste at the Gethsemani Abbey Peacemakers Retreat*. (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014).

31. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, on technology, pp. 25, 65, 72, 76-77, 157, 222-223, 225, 253, 284; on technological culture, p. 308; on skill and destruction, p. 321; technology and death, p. 241-242; technology and moral reasoning, p. 65; technology and science, p. 75; technology and unbalance, 72, p. 72; mass media, pp. 77, 226, 346.

32. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, p. xiii.

33. Christopher Hitchens, 'The Captive Mind now: what Czesław Miłosz understood about Islam', *Slate* (August 30, 2004). [Online] Retrieved 12 January 2015 from http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2004/08/the_captive_mind_now.html

34. Czesław Miłosz devotes a chapter to the meaning of 'Ketman' in *The Captive Mind*, pp. 54-82.

35. *Striving Toward Being: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Czesław Miłosz*, note 9, p. 101.

36. Gary Younge, *The Speech: The Story Behind Martin Luther King's Dream*. (London: Guardian Books, 2013), p. 30.

37. Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward the World: The Pivotal Years*, Journals, 1960-1963, vol. 4. Victor Kramer (ed.), (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 103. For discussion on Merton's critique of television see Tony Purvis, 'Postmodernism and Television' in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*. 3rd Edition. Stuart Sim (ed.), (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp.156-68.

38. *A Search for Solitude: Pursuing the Monk's Life*, p. 231.

39. For the origins of the 'Committee of Correspondence' intellectual affiliation see David Riesman and Michael Macoby, 'The American Crisis', *New Left Review* 1: 5 (September/October, 1960), pp. 24-35.

40. *Striving Toward Being: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Czesław Miłosz*, note 9, p. 138.

41. *Turning Toward the World: The Pivotal Years*, note 37, pp. 200-201.

42. *Turning Toward the World*, pp. 201-202.

43. Thomas Merton, *Cold War Letters*. Christine M. Bochen and William H. Shannon (eds.), (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), pp. 114-15.

44. *A Life in Letters: The Essential Collection*, p. xi.

45. Alfred Delp, *Prison Writings*, with an introduction by Thomas Merton, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), p. xli.

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Centenary Prayers

Merton said:

'The theology of love must seek to deal realistically with the evil and injustices in the world, not merely to compromise with them.'

In these difficult times may we try to make this a reality in our lives.

.....

Merton said:

'Our job is to love others without stopping to enquire whether or not they are worthy.'

May we always try to live in this spirit.

.....

Merton said:

'If we are to live we must be all alive – body, soul, mind, heart and spirit.'

May we always try to make this our aim.

.....

Finally, in this year of Consecrated Life, let us remember in our prayers all religious communities, especially the Trappists.

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Prayers written by Sr Mary Ross SND for the celebratory mass conducted by Fr Willy Slavin at St. Simon's Church, Glasgow on 31 January 2015.