

Reflections on 'He is Risen'

Anthony Purvis

'He has risen, he is not here ... he is going before you to Galilee (Mark 16: 6-7).' Christ is risen. Christ lives. Christ is the Lord of the living and the dead. He is the Lord of history. Christ is the Lord of a history that moves. ... [H]e is in history with us, walking ahead of us to where we are going. He is not always in the same place.

Thomas Merton, 'He is Risen'¹

Memoria Passionis

For Thomas Merton, it is Mark's gospel of the passion that inspires his homily. In the life of the church, the memory of the passion (*memoria passionis*) is foundational, occupying the central place in the earliest *kerygma* or proclamation, and in the affirmations and hymns which paved the way for the Christian creeds.² The key sources deployed in what we now know as Mark's gospel revolve around Jesus' ministry and passion. Mark's status as a text to be 'read' or studied is secondary to its primary function as 'good news' to be spoken and shared. Mark's gospel was read out loud among the first community of believers. The spreading of the gospel in this way underpinned the early church's commitment to the public re-telling, the 'keeping alive the memory', of the good news of the passion, the *memoria passionis*.

The idea of *memoria passionis* that I deploy in my reading of Merton's homily is adapted from work by Johann Baptist Metz. He provides a basis for showing how the evocation of freedom and community must emphasise the memory of suffering. The significance of 'telling' or 'speaking' these memories of the passion is not lost on Merton; and it is the centrality of this *memoria* in Mark that makes it the toughest gospel.³

But there is an abiding paradox attached to this *memoria passionis*: the act and moment of Jesus' suffering is simultaneously the revelation of

the hope which is divine glory. In moments of intense suffering, hope of redemption is present. This is the story spoken and shared across the communities of all the faithful from earliest times. Historically, the recalling, or 'not forgetting', of the passion among Christians is marked in very pronounced ways during the commemoration of Holy Week, particularly the days of the sacred *triduum*. It is also deeply liturgical, providing the core theological structure for all Eucharistic celebrations.

Forgetting

Today, however, Easter is spoken of in other ways, where the memory of suffering with its redemptive potential seems, on the surface at least, lost or largely forgotten. This amnesia is not necessarily chosen. Adam Curtis in his award-winning documentary has demonstrated that in the construction and telling of stories, we need to understand something of the motives which underpin the ways information is shared and transmitted in contemporary culture.⁴ Sometimes, forgetting isn't forgetting so much as a form of manufactured, albeit unconscious, consent. Forgetting emerges as an after-effect of a social system governed around technologies for the promotion of the false self. Despite the global scale of suffering in our own time, cultures organised around technologies for the promotion and advertising of the self will never seek to construct Easter in terms of 'suffering'. People go to extraordinary lengths, says Merton, with 'pious images' and 'abstract concepts' in order to 'make up fantastic tales' (p. 6).

Of course the debate, as Merton himself knows, is far bigger than the question of representing 'Easter'. By choosing Mark 16:1-8, Merton is suggesting that Easter concerns profound and universal questions about the truth of human relationships. The women at the tomb are forced to rethink what they believe. Do they choose to believe a stranger? Will they go to Galilee? The questions they are faced with concern fundamental truths about the direction of their lives.

Are these questions asked today? What do we 'do' with Easter? Perhaps the seemingly innocent advertising associated with Christian or other religious feasts is an indicator of something far more pervasive. Easter is yet another time and space for production and exchange, symbolised in the consumption of gadgets and throwaways, chocolate eggs and hot-cross buns. These observations are by no means intended to make a quick, cheap point. There is no conceit here. I don't live outside

this system. But when 'Easter' is signified by candy-coated eggs and pretty greetings cards, we are in danger of forgetting the deeply serious, hope-filled mandate to remember the truth of the passion. Merton's powerful and moving homily reminds us never to forget its truth or its bearing on life today. What does he say?

Dare to be like Christ

Structurally, the homily's register is ever-alert to contemporary cultural contexts as much as it is to the situation in which the three women in Mark find themselves at the empty tomb. Mark 16:1-8, alongside references to Paul's letters, inform the thematic content of the homily. The structure is uncomplicated, with a key opening claim, Mark:16:6-7, followed by development and amplification of its substance, and a conclusion which re-cites the first quote. Of the 21 minute address, the bulk directly relates to or amplifies his opening quote from Mark. The register remains mostly homiletic, but without didactic overload, blending provocative points with ethical, pastoral and ecclesiological concerns. These structural dimensions, however, are always secondary to his aim of demonstrating that the ending of Mark, specifically the dialogue surrounding the women's encounter in the narrative space signified by the empty tomb and Galilee, poses a lasting challenge.

The homily is delivered in the belief that this challenge speaks to us for all time. Merton is not aiming to expound a theological argument, or to delight in paradox, despite the homily's rich theology. Rather, there is a sober urgency which can be heard as we listen to Merton's voice. It's Easter, and so we place Good Friday, as it were, behind us in the timeline. But Merton speaks very deliberately. Such evocative speech underlines that we are present at an act recalling the passion and, thereby, keeping alive its memory as the source of salvation. He speaks with great insistence and force, almost as if he is approaching the gospel message for the first time. At times he provokes us. Knowledge, at this celebration of the Paschal mystery, is also action. 'The Christian ... who is risen in Christ must dare to be like Christ: he must dare to follow conscience even in unpopular causes (p.3).'

This *memoria* requires us to follow by daring to journey with the women who, gathering at the tomb, quickly move on. They are challenged to imagine a different route, to Galilee not Jerusalem, one that also calls forth a new community. The sepulchre is empty and there is no time to

waste. Merton's voice compellingly restates that the stone and the tomb are proof of nothing. Jesus is not a lifeless object to be venerated, by way of 'overkill', for there is no dead body (p. 4). Merton repeats that Christ lives and goes on ahead of us, for all time.

Where is Christ? Has he gone ahead of us?

My questions are not posed rhetorically or in isolation. Surely this is not simply a challenge because, once Lent is past, we can celebrate Easter? I know many will ask these and related questions about the celebration of the passion. It is a strengthening and convincing aspect of one's hope, knowing the questions are always being asked by others, regardless of the liturgical season. Merton's appeal to similar questions is at once individual and collective. If I – if we – don't believe and act on the truth of the passion then for Merton, citing Galatians 5:1, no amount of religious observance and correctness will help us.⁵

How do I make sense of the suffering which is yet the hope of redemption? This underlying question in Merton's homily is arresting, not perhaps the sort of register that might be heard in homilies in many parish churches on Easter day. This is not a homily that seeks to domesticate the risen Christ, somehow locating him as 'here' or 'there', as if, using Merton's imagery, the resurrection were some illusion or magic trick (p. 6). In the moment of reading or listening to Merton's words, we attend to them in the present tense of that action. The recording is itself very challenging where, as is often the case with the spoken word, an intimate sense of presence is conveyed. We are caught up in the memory of the first Good Friday and the first Easter.

But this suffering is not, so to speak, over and done with. The dates on the liturgical calendar marking Holy Week and Easter are not the reason we celebrate the passion. There can be no such uncritical outcome or easy fulfilment. 'We must never let our religious ideas, customs, rituals and conventions become more real to us than the Risen Christ (p. 6).'

Rather, in recalling the passion narrative, Merton's imagery speaks to his own time and, through the same events, loudly speaks to ours. Whose story, whose words are being spoken? Whose suffering is vocalised and heard? These questions are urgently present, in time of pandemic, in time of airlifts, on front lines in all wars, and in the devastation and cruelty that civilised modernity has naturalised. There is no quick point to make out of human suffering.

Dear child of God

So the suffering needs to be questioned. Sometimes, as with the women at the tomb, it is impossible to speak or find words. Victims of abuse in the Belgium church movingly installed a statue in 2017 to commemorate the lives and memories of all victims of sexual abuse. The statue is entitled 'Esse et Percipi' (to exist is to be recognised).⁶ Silence on this occasion was more profound than any words.

In his own attempts to understand the experiences of suffering, Desmond Tutu offered this prayer:

Dear Child of God, I am sorry to say that suffering is not optional. Suffering is part and parcel of the human condition, but suffering can either embitter or ennoble us. It can ennoble us and become a spirituality of transformation when we find meaning in it. We mustn't romanticize suffering.⁷

There is no resistance or denial here, no stone blocking the way ahead, not even the 'dead past' which, although present in the memories and lives inscribed by apartheid, is not the end. Tutu converts suffering precisely in the act of recalling the suffering itself. The healing of memories will serve the cause of redemption, opening a new space beyond the empty tomb in which we encounter each other. This space of encounter, suggests Tutu, which we map in and on to the present, is also our future, the space and time opened around forgiveness.⁸

Merton reminds us that it is our obligation as Christians to confront the 'opening' posed by the empty tomb. We can choose to believe that 'there is a massive stone blocking the way' such that we are prevented from confronting devastation. In which case, we stand forever in fear and trembling. Or we can hold out hope for another option or choice, where our faith is not 'a cult of the dead body' or the empty tomb but is animated around the suggestive imagery of the journey to Galilee. Merton indicates that this journey is enlivened inside and outside church institutions (pp. 5-6). It is precisely in the suffering wrought by devastation that we are faced with the challenge of rebuilding, possessed by a hope which is both urgent yet patient, stronger than the 'anguish and desperation over the problem of moving the stone' (p. 5).

In history with us

Merton reminds us how the women at the tomb are traumatised by fear. Mark's gospel writes this trauma into a history that cannot be erased. As Merton repeats, 'Christ is in history with us.' The women are not permanently immobilised by the trauma, but are thrust into a forward movement, following Christ in the future-present as history. This is not the past tense. Two thousand years on, Merton suggests, we haven't left these events in the past. They are always present in history because Christ is in this same history. The liturgical calendar allocates a date each year for Lent and Easter. Is this in case we forget? Or do we pursue as fully as possible Merton's reading of Mark, where the suffering of Good Friday and redemptive hope of Easter are built into our daily living?

As we follow his reading of New Testament sources, so the passion-resurrection as historical fact is ever-present because the moment of faith is always 'now', and the moment of faith will see redemption in the suffering we witness now. How might we understand this mandate to be always present in the memory of the passion?

I read Merton's Easter reflection for the first time many years ago. I've had a copy of the *Argus Communications* (1975) copy for as long as I can remember.⁹ I liked the feel of the book, and the layout appealed to me at the time. And whilst the *Argus* version might not meet the needs of everyone, the text and the colour photographs are a reminder that Merton's words were being used in catechetical and prayerful ways, signifying a time when the hope-filled synodal vision of Vatican II was still relatively fresh. Indeed, Merton references the council constitution on the church, and there is very much a sense that Christian social teaching is an underpinning foundation to his words (p. 3). This is also a work by Merton which circulated well beyond the confines of the monastery and the Roman Catholic Church. True to the ecumenical aspects of the Council, Merton reached a wide audience after his death, and the *Argus* publication was important in that regard. One review comments how "'He is Risen'" almost serves as a thesis or mission statement for Christians. Amidst all of the squabbles between Christians, the importance suggested by the title is often forgotten.¹⁰

Like many others, I too was moved on my first reading, and remain so. Merton's simplicity is powerful and direct. The book's back cover appeals to the author's 'eloquence and power', his 'energy and vision of an authentic Christianity'. I am challenged each time I recall the Gospel

words that inflect Merton's own faith and sustained his journey. So part of the mandate to recall the passion comes via the strengthening of one's own hope, affirming with others the truth first heard by the women. The recording of Merton's voice as he speaks resonates hope grounded in a daily reminder of the Easter story. Christ is risen; and the Christian is risen in Christ, says Merton. By the power of love and encounter, we are called to live the resurrection in our own lives. 'To be risen with Christ not only means that one has a *choice* and that one *may* live by a higher law – the law of grace and love – but that one *must* do so (p. 2).'

Solidarity

Mark's words, and the words of the passion, Merton contends, invite encounter with the women who stand trembling in 'terror and amazement'. The direct address to the women by the stranger, the young man sitting by the tomb, takes the form of a call to action. It's not a soliloquy hidden for all time, but an injunction which speaks of solidarity across the ages. 'The experience of the holy women at the tomb,' says Merton, typifies 'the dynamics of Christian faith' (p. 5). The moment of crucifixion and death does not produce a lifeless body or an empty tomb but something vibrant. Both suffering and redemption are produced in the same *kairos*, which is at once the occasion for the act of faith. We share something of this suffering on the basis that we ourselves know suffering. We don't hear the stranger's voice as we can Merton's. Yet, held by the same *sensus fidei*, we surely do hear those injunctions, spoken by the stranger, to make our way to our own Galilee, or to a place we didn't always imagine.

The words spoken to the women come from someone they didn't know, but something of the quality and the fidelity of the truth spoken by the stranger caused the women to fundamentally re-think their surroundings. In his *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe*, Johny Pitts similarly describes how once-familiar voices and landscapes became strange.¹¹ His experiences bring about a shift in his vision. He listens to stories of suffering. And it is in these acts of speaking and listening that new communities emerge, born of a suffering transformed by hope. But there is another realisation for Pitts. He begins to perceive that the strangers, now friends, were actually speaking to him, recounting his life, narrating his identity. Like the women, he is immobilised, stunned by the realisation that he didn't need to travel to Africa to embrace his African

heritage. Yet he too learns he must move on, ultimately to return to his native Sheffield, where his journey started, but with a different insight into that which was once familiar. He, too, begins to conceive community as an experience discovered and forged in the acknowledgement of suffering, displacement and exile.

No stone blocks the way

Mark's contribution to the *memoria passionis* is important, and as we have seen, Merton attaches importance to the women of faith in the context of the apostolic journey of all believers. We are, with the women and each other, sometimes immobilised by fear, caused to rethink the familiar and mundane. The challenges of disease, poverty, and conflict in Johny Pitts' account are very real and cannot be dismissed. They contrast starkly with other images in his account, not least the urban and urbane capital cities including Paris, Berlin, London and Lisbon. These are also cities which remind us of the journeys made in the name of mission, both Christian and colonial. European governments have repeatedly struggled to address the realities and impact of colonisation. The voices and protests from the centre and from the margins become all the more urgent and vital.

What is forgotten is that we can move forward. To borrow Merton's tone and register: There is no stone blocking the way. Besides, Christ is not there. Merton is reminding us to attend always to this invitation, to journey on the path where Christ is ahead of us, with the Gospel as guide. This entails listening, as Tutu suggests, to the voices and stories which take us on unanticipated, unexpected journeys. In solidarity with the women, we can listen. This is not some metaphysical or mystical journey, taking us to a plane of permanent contentment. The hope-filled paradox, that suffering is bound up with resurrection, might be a realisation that the first women never fully comprehended. Good Friday is not distinct from the empty tomb. This is a notion and experience of suffering, however, that compels community, not on the basis of comfortable 'togetherness' slogans promulgated in sales talk, but on the basis of a mission to be free.

People go to extraordinary lengths, says Merton, so that Christianity is 'no longer life in the Risen Christ but a formal cult of the dead Christ' (p. 5). There is no resurrectionist optimism for the ego, none of the 'you're-worth-it' logic of mass advertising, in Mark's account. Yet, following the

words of Desmond Tutu, there is no glory in suffering for its own sake. The voice which points us in the direction of Galilee speaks not of a false optimism or false news. Rather, the message invites the women to make the journey of anticipation, expectation, and hope.

Anticipation

The crucifixion is not simply a morose or passing prelude to salvation. It is precisely in abjection, condemnation and death that salvation is at once revealed and realised in the community of believers. Merton repeatedly makes this point. It is the resurrection, across history, that points to Jesus' crucifixion as God's conclusive action in history. Merton's 'He Is Risen' is a reminder that it is not something from which we walk away or forget. Rather, the memory unites us in the search for community in human encounter. This is the powerful 'scandal' that so impels Merton's own desire to keep alive the memory of the passion. He weaves his reflections on the gospel around his impassioned relationship to contemporary culture, and we hear his sense of astonishment that the God of Israel would act in ways so defiant and absurd. But the God of Israel acts in history, and this God also goes before us. In seeking the *Missio Dei*, the churches must not waiver in recalling this bold, historical truth of Easter.

In Merton's reading of Mark, 'Easter' functions not as cause for religious ritualism but as an injunction to make common pilgrimage in openness and truth (p. 6). The words of his text are capitalised in order to stress a new relationship: 'HE IS NOT THERE (p. 6).' The pilgrimage we make, like the one made by the women at the tomb, is sometimes made in fear and trembling, but it is also made in hope and faith, alongside the reality of the suffering that cannot be ignored.

In another homily, Merton explores the New Testament imagery of the passion.¹² He sees the cross as foundational for Christian faith as the resurrection. All Christians must 'enter into the mystery of the cross'. He discusses how images of the cross and resurrection are depicted in art. We sense again a theology closely tied to the *memoria passionis* and of the challenging but beckoning space of the empty tomb:

The cross for Christian art and Christian poetry has always been the central theme, more than the resurrection. You can't do as great a work of art on the resurrection as you can on the cross ... the incarnation, yes; the cross, yes. How many great pictures do you see of the resurrection? What would you do [paint]? An empty tomb?¹³

Salvation history as 'encounter'

Merton's emphasis on salvation history, a constant in Mark, is consistent with the Jewish belief that God's saving actions are part-and-parcel of the narration of history itself. History is not static so much as it is a series of on-going relationships, of encounters made in the search for truth. To this end, Merton invites us to perceive three historical viewpoints in Mark's text. Firstly, Merton encourages us to understand the past via the by the image of 'the tomb'. The tomb – now empty – nonetheless represents a world from which we move on. Next, Merton urges us to look critically at the present through the women's encounter with the young man at the tomb. The women's present moment, figured by way of an unexpected meeting, is also a point of departure. They are advised to look elsewhere. Finally, Merton enjoins us, with the Gospel women, to have faith in a future imagined in terms of transition and change. The women don't stay put. The future is imagined as a journey of hope and not a return to the old world, figured as Jerusalem, but to the uncertainties figured in the image which is Galilee. The women are assured that Jesus goes ahead of them in a future history. But the whole story only makes sense because the journey is prefigured and wrought by the passion and that the passion, embedded in collective memory, is not forgotten.

In her *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, French sociologist Danielle Hervieu-Leger proposes that we are not so much living in rapidly changing times as we are living through epochal changes generated in part by new media technologies.¹⁴ Her evidence and arguments are convincing and are now shared by many in the twenty years since the study was published. She considers one aspect of contemporary culture which has significant bearing in any discussion of Merton, namely that today's culture, shaped increasingly by advertising, brings with it the belief that technology equals progress.

She questions this equation, though not as a pessimist. Her

investigation proposes that a default experience of such cultures is 'forgetting'. Human suffering, social exclusion, and abjection are forgotten in a world driven by the faith placed in AI and algorithms, or by technologies whose PR copy tells us that 'the future is bright.' Even the claim of the advertiser implies the present is dark, at best far from bright. There is no such easy optimism in her assessment. She suggests that increased isolation (she could not have anticipated the last two years) has meant that we do not need to bear witness or connect in the same ways as previous generations. That isn't necessarily or wholly negative. It does mean, however, that the stories of our lives are not shared or valued in the same 'in-person' contexts as the recent past.

'Forgetting' impacts, moreover, on how cultures value human need. One of her most crucial points is the conclusion that religion, previously a source of oral and archived memory, no longer functions in this way. Religions historically 'held' memories in their oral traditions and then in the sacred texts. These texts and traditions primarily served the basic human need for historical connectedness, wonder and meaning, rootedness and sociality. One of the functions of hymn singing and other forms of popular piety, particularly in the early Judeo-Christian tradition, was precisely in this regard. It's important to recall that Mark's gospel was heard before it was read. The gospels were not written as texts to be studied but were proclaimed in public, becoming a key part of the small worshipping communities in the early church. These stories are sacred in part because the truths of the gospel emerged, were revealed, made known, in the real life situations of Palestine.

Inclusion

It becomes more powerful still to recall that Mark's representation has the three women as first at the scene. It is they who are in a position to render the gospel 'news' to the post-resurrection communities of believers. The placing of the women in the gospel narrative is not to be forgotten, despite the institutional churches' exclusion or misrepresentation of women across much of Christian history. The women establish a vital link with an oral tradition as well as the many women who had followed Jesus in Galilee. Whilst their presence undoubtedly points to life-giving moments of intimacy (they had after all ministered to Jesus), the three women represent a much bigger constituency of unnamed followers, a growing community of faith.

In a 'Global Sisters Report' (2019), Benedictines Sr Joan Chittister and Sr Teresa Forcades both highlight the significance of women in Jesus' ministry and in the post-resurrection oral traditions.¹⁵ Neither of the sisters evades the complexities or the politics of this tradition and history. Chittister points out that the Catholic church's record is one which repeatedly seems to deny 'full membership' to its women by way of exclusion, misrepresentation or disregard. Forcades, however, whilst in agreement with Chittister, makes an important point about women in the earliest oral and written accounts. She highlights the vital role played by memory and forgetting in what constitutes 'official' history. Women play a vital if not the pivotal role in the preservation of the *memoria passionis*. For Forcades, the Catholic Church has preserved the memory and history of women going back thousands of years in a way that 'no other institution has done'. The church is struggling to move forward to address the oppression of women [but] 'every day, the church is placing in front of my eyes [an example of] a woman that is highly honourable.'

We trust Mark's account of the women, and we additionally see that it is they who are trusted with the news. Today, news itself is compromised. Indeed, Hervieu-Leger could not have anticipated the extent to which world leaders engaged in 'false news', and conspiracy platforms have contributed to the huge resurgence in populist nationalism. The force of populist lobbies and agendas is not to be underestimated. They bring with them constructions of identity based around exclusion but cast in the name of historical fact. Following the logic of Merton's homily, such populism would root us in bogus understandings of the past and of history. The tomb, which the women thought contained Jesus' body, is used by Merton to signify 'religious ideas, customs, rituals and conventions' (p. 6) which, although outmoded and dead, continue to privilege a dead past over the uncertainty signified by the metaphor which is Galilee.¹⁶ In a society where truths are so easily invented to serve the ends of ever-greater forms of social manipulation, then memory becomes more precious in holding the truths of collective experience.

Standing out from the crowd

However, in such situations, it becomes all the more important that the disciples of Christ speak the truth in the face of power. Tutu describes the influence of Trevor Huddleston on his own life.¹⁷ They both lived and suffered under apartheid. Tutu recalls that it was Huddleston's own re-telling of the *memoria passionis* that inspired him to leave a career in

teaching and train for the Anglican ordained ministry. Tutu was tear-gassed and arrested when he said that in South Africa, 'God is being mocked.' In one of Tutu's obituaries, we read that 'his passport was revoked more than once.' And it was not only supporters of apartheid who criticised him. Advocates of gradual reform thought him too hasty ... and... advocates of armed struggle thought his approach too slow. Communists ... disliked his distaste for their creed.'¹⁸

Tutu, in standing out from the crowd, did so in faith and hope. In speaking of apartheid as the mockery of God, so his life bears witness to Christ's passion. He acted freely, and – in words from Merton's homily – he did not 'submit to the domination of other people's ideas' (p. 3). Tutu and many unnamed others dared to think 'apart from the crowd' (p. 3). We do not forget them, and others, in bringing to mind the memory of Christ's passion. Thinking differently from the crowd, as Merton knew, brings suffering. But it holds out at the same time the festal promise of a richer hope: 'Come People of God, Christ our Passover is sacrificed, and in sharing his banquet we pass with him from death to life! He has risen ... he is going before us into his Kingdom! Alleluia! (p. 7).'

This message, so rich and hope-filled, was first heard by three women. Their names are Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. We will never forget their names. Early on the first day of the week, just as the sun had risen, they brought spices. They go before us.

Notes

1. Merton recorded his Easter homily, 'He is Risen', in 1967. It can be obtained as part of the collection, 'Thomas Merton's Great Sermons and Reflections', from: www.learn25.com. It may be streamed online at: <https://soundcloud.com/brad-bellomy/thomas-mertons-sermon-on-easter>. The text was published in *The Merton Annual*, volume 9 (1996). A pdf file of the text can be downloaded at: <http://merton.org/ITMS/Annual/09/Merton1-7.pdf>. All page numbers refer to this printed version.
2. The idea of *memoria passionis* – literally memory of the passion – is derived from work by Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988). See also 'Johann Baptist Metz's *Memoria Passionis* and the Possibility of Political Forgiveness', Joas Adiprasetya, *Political Theology*, Vol. 18, 2017.
3. Thomas Merton, *Opening the Bible* (London: Unwin Books, 1972), p. 30 : 'The only Gospel that is tougher [than Matthew's] is perhaps Mark's.'
4. Adam Curtis, (2002) *The Century of the Self*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p00ghx6g/the-century-of-the-self>;
5. Galatians 5:1 - It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

6. Reported in *The Brussels Times*, 9 April, 2017.
7. Desmond Tutu, *God Has A Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Times* (London: Random House, 2004), p. 71.
8. Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (London: Random House, 1999).
9. *He Is Risen* (Allen, TX: Argus Communications/DLM, 1975).
10. <https://www.amazon.com/He-Risen-Thomas-Merton/dp/0913592587> (Jan. 19, 2022)
11. Johny Pitts, *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe* (London: Penguin, 2019).
12. *Prose and Poetry on the Passion* (1965/04/08). It can be obtained as part of the collection, 'Thomas Merton's Great Sermons and Reflections', from: www.learn25.com. It is not available in printed form.
13. *Prose and Poetry on the Passion*, taken from the opening 3 minutes of the homily.
14. Danielle Hervieu-Leger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000)
15. Article by Jesse Remedios, Oct 15, 2019. See <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/people/religious-life/news/benedictines-chittister-and-forcades-delve-womens-role-church>
16. In the homily, Merton alludes to pre- and post-Vatican II notions of the Church, again linking his ideas to metaphors of hope he associates with Galilee. He quotes directly from the *Council Constitution on the Church* (n. 40) on p.3 of the homily text
17. Trevor Huddleston, *Naught For Your Comfort* (London: Collins, 1956).
18. *The Economist*, January 1, 2022. 'Obituary - Desmond Tutu', p. 66

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Sister M. Elena, CSC (Helen Joan Malits)

July 3, 1934 - March 10, 2022

In her fine book, *The Solitary Explorer — Thomas Merton's Transforming Journey*, she wrote of Merton:

He is a symbol of a life that can embrace paradox, live with tensions, and grow into new realizations through constantly reinterpreting the meaning of one's primary commitments. ... Merton's writing articulated his journey, his commitment to continuing conversion. He commands our attention, moves us, prods us to embark on our own pilgrimage. ... His life is a witness to the openness of the Christian quest.

Words that could equally apply to Sister Elena's own consecrated life.

May she rest in peace and rise in glory.