

Muriel Manning writes from East Sussex in an attempt, she says, "To try and get some correspondence 'off the ground'."

How I first came to know Merton!

"many years ago there were small articles by him [Merton] in the diocesan insert in a parish magazine where I was living at the time, and although these articles made a lasting impression, I did not follow them up with any further reading of Thomas Merton.

During a very long period of very severe trials in my personal life, often bringing me to despair, I knew that despite everything that was happening to me, and sometimes I couldn't even pray, I was being taught in the depths of my being and my faith was strengthening without any effort on my part.

The darkness and the desolation were very great indeed, yet to hear myself talking with such absolute knowledge and certainty when challenged about my faith, was such a surprise to me; especially thinking as I did, that I was failing God as I seemed unable to take my troubles to Him and lay them at His feet.

Suddenly I knew I had to read St. John of the Cross. This was an incredible experience for me and as I read the words, I found myself almost shouting "Yes, Yes, This is Me". It was such a relief to know that I was not 'odd' after all. Later I became aware of Thomas Merton's 'Ascent to Truth' which I read with joy and again feeling that almost every word was speaking directly to me. From then on I became very interested in Thomas Merton's other works which continue to speak to me and guide me."

Thank you Muriel. I wonder how many of us have similar stories to tell?

The following are extracts from a letter which is too long to include in full: Monica Costello writes from London.

"I would like to have more factual info. on the resources that, for example, the T.M. Study Centre has. Are there any 'audio-visual' aids/material which would help me to follow my interest? I note that there was a retreat advertised in the U.S.A., but is there anything a little closer to home?"

further meetings planned for the U.K.? As my interest is primarily spiritual, and not intellectual, I would value material which focuses on that, and not so exclusively Merton orientated.

What I would find helpful to me is a simple book-list, a tape library, and access to people who know more about Merton than I do.

Thank you for such a candid letter Monica, I shall try to include in future issues material which has appeal to both academic and lay followers of Merton though you will appreciate that this is quite a tall order. Perhaps you might find the following reflections of interest?
