

PANEL OF JOURNAL EDITORS Introduction

TOMMIE O'CALLAGHAN

GOOD AFTERNOON. It's delightful to be here. Kentucky sends all of you her very best. Before I introduce the speakers I'd like to introduce a friend and a new trustee of the Merton Legacy Trust. As perhaps many of you know, we lost J. Laughlin in the Fall and the Trust and the Abbot have chosen Anne McCormick who many of you know through her rights work. If you have done any publishing or wanted to investigate further any of the Merton papers you have had to write to Anne McCormick to get permission. Well, Anne very happily has accepted the title of the third trustee of the literary estate. Anne, would you stand? [Applause]

This is Anne's first TMS meeting and she is very excited to know all of you and to become as proficient as you are on the Merton business. I'm not that proficient. So, without further ado, we will start with Brother Patrick Hart from Gethsemani who has been General Editor of the Journals and himself has edited Volume One and Volume Seven. He will speak about Volume One now and then he will speak about Jonathan Montaldo's volume, Volume Two, as Jonathan cannot be with us today. So, Pat...

PATRICK HART OCSO

Volume One: *Run to The Mountain* (1939-1941)

THANK YOU, TOMMIE and Ladies and Gentlemen. It's a great honour to be here especially to participate in this editor's panel at Oakham School where it all began for Merton. He began writing short stories here — in fact one of them was recently published in the Merton Seasonal — 'The Haunted Castle' — which is very much like Winnie the Pooh. Anyway I am fearful that if the archivist is here in our midst, he might say, "Come and see me afterwards. I've discovered some unpublished Merton Journals from his days at Oakham." This could disturb our Harper Collins publisher's schedule.

Anyway, we begin with the first of the Journals. This actually covers the period 1939-41 and consists of his pre-monastic journals. The first part is the Perry Street Journal. It begins with an entry of May 2nd 1939, so that's really the earliest entry we have of Merton's. It begins with an ungrammatical question. "This is May. Who seen any robins?" Interesting that he should begin this way with an ungrammatical question. The Journal reflects the life of a young intellectual living at Perry Street in Greenwich Village, teaching at Columbia where he received his Master's degree in 1938 on Nature and Art in William Blake and was contemplating a doctorate on the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. In fact he had purchased in '39 or '40 the letters and journals of Hopkins. It never became a reality because he began teaching at St. Bonaventure. But the notes he took on Hopkins are there in the archive at St. Bonaventure's.

After his reception into the Church in '38 he must have discarded his previous journals. As he mentions,

these are a few selections (in the Secular Journal) taken from a diary I kept when I was a layman, a graduate at Columbia teaching in university extension, later when I was an instructor at St. Bonaventure's. This was written like most diaries informally, colloquially and in haste. The whole diary filled two or three volumes. One of these still exists...

to quote Merton:

...the other three were thrown away or destroyed after I typed out a few excerpts which are given here along with part of the surviving volume.

Actually Merton was mistaken, because Mark Van Doren had deposited two journal volumes at St. Bonaventure covering this period. One was the Perry Street Journal. The middle was the Cuban Journal. The last was the St. Bonaventure Journal. We've always questioned in our minds what about the missing journal...there was no real journal from the Cuban episode. That was transcribed by Merton many years after Merton had entered Gethsemani. Actually he had given a manuscript to a Monsignor Fitzgerald who had kept all these transcripts for years and was retired and living in Florida. He wrote to St. Bonaventure and again this was before the Merton Center at Bellarmine College was begun, and said, "I have some journals of Merton that he kept in Cuba. Would you be interested in having these?" Of course Father Irenaeus [Herscher] said that St. Bonaventure were delighted and so were all of us when we discovered that he did have transcriptions that Merton

had typed out and given to Monsignor Fitzgerald who had in turn deposited them at St. Bonaventure.

In going through these transcripts, there was a problem. Were they really raw journal or were they something that Merton had revised before publication in the *Secular Journal*? So there was only one way to discover definitively as far as I could tell and that was to check out the journals with Bob Lax. Now Bob Lax was a friend of Merton who had spent summers at the cottage at Olean, New York, and was in daily communion with Merton. And so I spent a few days with Bob Lax on Patmos where he had lived for about twenty years and we agreed, taking each page as it came along, that these were authentic primary journals from the Cuban period, and that they should be included in this first volume, *Run to the Mountain*. And then the third part was the St. Bonaventure Journal, written for the most part at St. Bonaventure's. Again it was Mark Van Doren who turned these volumes over to St. Bonaventure. The first person to actually discover them was Michael Mott. And thank goodness he did. With their survival established, we could include them in the collected journal project.

Towards the end of the journal there are references to the Baroness who had given a talk to the Friars of St Bonaventure under a lay apostolate. Merton was somewhat torn between a possible vocation to her work with the poor as a staff worker at Friendship House and a vocation to become a friar or a monk. The matter is finally resolved as the Journal closes and he departs from St. Bonaventure's for the Abbey of Gethsemani in the knob country of Kentucky where he would spend the next twenty seven years. And...

Volume Two: *Entering the Silence* (1941-1952)

TO CONTINUE, I'LL say a few words about the second volume as Jonathan Montaldo who edited it isn't here. This journal was comprised of Merton's very earliest days as a monk of Gethsemani. In fact the first entry — he called it the novitiate journal — is dated December 12th, the day before he entered the novitiate — he became a novice and entered as a postulant on the Feast of St Lucy, December 13th. The Journal is in three parts again. The first part is this so-called Novitiate Journal which again he had entrusted to Sister Thérèse

Lentfoehr who kept her own archives of Merton's work. She decided to turn her archives over to Columbia University in New York.

The second journal was a journal memoir and had to do with the Abbot, Dom Frederick Dunne, who had received Merton into the community. It was something that Merton had given to Father Raymond Flanagan who was a fellow writer who was doing a biography of Dom Frederic Dunne. So Merton wrote a note to Father Raymond saying, 'Here are some notes which might be helpful in your work if you can decipher, if you can read, them. So we have that novitiate memoir which Merton gave to Raymond and it fills in a nice gap there. Fortunately Raymond kept this in his files — he never threw anything out — so we found that in our archives not too long ago.

The third part is what was called 'The Whale and the Ivy,' the first title that Merton gave to *The Sign of Jonas*, which comprises about half of this Journal. It was published as *The Sign of Jonas* by Harcourt Brace in 1953 but with lots of gaps, lots of editing, things taken out that Merton himself edited out, and he used fictitious names...the monks were given names other than their own. Merton dedicates *The Sign of Jonas*, again the third part of the Journal edited by Jonathan Montaldo, to the Most Blessed, Sorrowful Virgin Mary. I think Merton was experiencing solitude, maybe some anguish and of course there was the psychological searching he was doing into his own personality and it was a time of entering into the silence, I think. The title was good for that volume.

As Jonathan says, the editorial interventions in these journals were minimal so he cut very little out, added as much as he could from what was in the archives and, as he says, each emphasis, each ellipsis, each parenthesis in this text is Merton's. In the translating and citing of scriptural passages he used the Rheims Douai version and in these early journals the editor appended to a text a daily schedule at Gethsemani, which was rather helpful. The reader can figure out what Merton was doing during his monastic day. A final word of advice — and I'll quote Jonathan on this as he finishes his introduction...

As you can, he says, reader, doubt everything you believe you already know about Thomas Merton and entrust yourself to his journals with an open heart. As Merton discloses and withdraws himself, as he masters and unmasters his world, as he names and renames himself, remain patiently with the paradoxes and the contradictions, the search

for simplicity becoming more and more complex as Merton's spiritual journey unfolds. Artist as he was, though, Merton seems to be speaking only and for himself. You will soon however find yourself embedded in his web of mirrors. The eyes smiling back at you as you read these journals will naturally be Thomas Merton's but often those eyes fathoming your eyes will be your very own.

LAURENCE CUNNINGHAM

Volume Three: *A Search for Solitude* (1952-1960)

I WAS AIDED IMMENSELY because the man who has the office next to me at the University of Notre Dame is an expert and editor of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He would look at photographs of tiny little fragments in Aramaic and I would ask him to try to decipher Merton's handwriting for me at times. He's a very famous palaeographer.

When Brother Patrick asked me to join the editorial team originally, I had received the Journals from 1956 to 1960, and then because Jonathan's volume was getting a little bit out of line in terms of size, I received partial journals from 1950 to 1953. I received these just at the time that I had been elected Chair of the Department of Theology at Notre Dame which has forty members — it's a very large department. And I made this wonderful discovery...for the benefit of anyone who is going to become an academic administrator, no one ever wants to see the Chair or the Dean before nine o'clock in the morning. They come toddling in at around about that time. So I would come into the office at around about seven and work on these journals for about an hour and a half or two hours every day, trying to get reduced to typescript maybe two pages which maybe would be one page which he wrote on these large legal ledgers. I think he had a very good sense of monastic poverty because he never wasted a line. Sometimes he would even write up in the top like a margin. Surprisingly enough, very, very few times did he ever cross out a line. He wrote rather fluently.

I want to make two points about the journals that I had, especially the journals between '56 and '60, because I think there are two somewhat independent but rather important themes in those journals. The one has to do with his own struggles to understand what it meant to be a monk in the twentieth century. There's a

famous line that I love from the great Cistercian writer André Louf. He says, "What is a monk? A monk is a person who every day asks what is a monk?" There's a lot on insight in that I think and Merton, certainly between '56 and '60, was asking "What is a monk? What does it mean for me to be a monk?" Now everybody who's read Merton knows that he had certain dissatisfactions at Gethsemani. He was not always a 100% cheerleader for the abbot. I didn't know the abbot. I've only seen him at a distance at Gethsemani when he was alive — I think he was in many ways a very wise man.

Merton was struggling during this period. Energised by his meeting with Ernesto Cardenal, he gets this idea that he's going to start a monastery in Latin America or Central America which is going to be very simple and very plain. All through these journals there are references to Merton looking up places in Colombia and places like that where they might settle and he develops a few theoretical *horaria* about how to spend the day and so on and so forth. Parenthesis from the editor: a totally crazy idea, in my estimation. He couldn't learn how to drive a car. How was he going to run a monastery in the third world? But it does illustrate a point because what Merton was attempting to do, I think, was to understand what it meant to be a contemplative and at the same time somehow pursuing an intellectual vocation that was going to have some particular relevance to the world. I write in the introduction to my volume a great insight that I got. The more he thought about this other project, the more he would become, at least on one page, very critical of life at Gethsemani, etcetera.

While I was working on the journals I was invited down to the Abbey and there was no room at the inn and someone said would you like to live up in the hermitage? Well, yes, indeed, and I spent a week living up in the hermitage and I found in the hermitage a mimeographed copy of Cassian's *Institutes*. And for lack of anything better to do, I sat on the front porch of the hermitage and read these *Institutes* and I ran across Cassian's analysis of *acedia*. And in there he says, "...there comes a time in a monk's life (I would say there comes a time in everyone's life) where one is tempted to be very dissatisfied with where one is..." And Cassian who borrows this from an earlier writer, Evagrius of Pontus, says — and he has wonderful descriptions — he says, "The monk begins to look outside the door of his cell, wondering whether anybody might come by that he could chat with..."

or, "he wonders about whether or not there might be some urgent reason why he should leave the cell and give spiritual direction to somebody," etcetera and "the more dissatisfied the monk becomes, the more he begins to criticise where he is living, insisting that it is impossible for him to advance in the spiritual life as long as he stays in this place, and how things would only be perfect if he could go somewhere else." And I'm looking at this and saying to myself, this is like a psychotherapist's folder on Merton in 1957, 1958, that it was a kind of a temptation that he had to go through when all of these elaborate plans fall through and Rome writes and says no exclaustation, no going to Latin America, no going to an island off the coast of Nicaragua and so on. Merton reads this letter on his knees and just drops the whole project and, in what I wanted to name the volume, he says, "I will find solitude outside geography." It's just a wonderful line but the editors at Harper did not think it as wonderful as I thought it! So it became something else.

That's just one point — this whole struggle for identity as a monk. Here's the other, and I'll be very brief. I think that, beginning in 1956, and I want to study this and maybe write something about it, Merton discovers a way of being an ecumenist in the broadest sense of the term. That is not only an ecumenist in respect of other Christians but an ecumenist in the sense of being in contact with the world and with the world's religions that I would call contemplative ecumenism. There are three instances of it in my journal. The first one is when he begins to read these wonderful Russian Orthodox writers who are publishing in French in Paris, mainly connected with the Academy of St Serge, the Seminary of St Serge — Paul Evdokimov, Vladimir Lossky and people of this nature. He has a paragraph in the journal which later gets reproduced in *Conjectures* in which he says, "I would like to be the person who reconciles, I would like by my study to reconcile the East and the West in my own heart by being appreciative..." And he's reading this stuff very critically. He gets a whiff of Gnosticism in Berdyaev but he has a great interest and a great tolerance for this. Parenthetically, I think it's connected to his great interest in sophianic themes, the theme of wisdom and so on which is also generating during this period.

Secondly, one of the reasons why he was interested in Latin America, and he writes this to Jaime Andrade, the man who makes the great statue of Our Lady of the Andes, he says, "I want you to

make a figure of Our Lady that will move my novices to see that there is a larger America than North America, to reconcile North and South America, to give a great sense of identity for the Americas." So that was a second way and he thinks about this a great deal. It was also Jaime Andrade, by the way, who gives him the best advice about coming to Latin America. He said

Your idea is not a good idea. The Catholic Church here is very reactionary and they wouldn't support what you want to do and all the intellectuals you want to talk to are Marxists and they hate the Church. It would be a fool's errand.

So that was the second thing. The third was his increasing correspondence with D.T. Suzuki and his interest in Zen Buddhism. Now again, parenthetically, I think his interest in Zen was not only because he thought it could teach him better contemplative methods but I think he also loved the aesthetic of Zen which was very much like the Cistercian aesthetic, very spare, almost an-iconic in a way. But as he begins to read Suzuki and he asks Suzuki to write an introduction to *Wisdom of the Desert*, (Suzuki writes it but it never gets edited with *Wisdom of the Desert*) Merton — and this is before the Second Vatican Council, says, "Gee, do I have to think of this person as a person who needs to be baptised in order to be saved?" He said "Am I not dealing with this person at a very deep level that is..." and you see a man struggling at a time when these were not fashionable issues and he says, "I can only enter the deepest dialogue with Suzuki as a dialogue of the contemplative or a dialogue of the heart."

So very briefly, maybe I've spoken too long, I would say this whole business of Gnostic, of what it means to be a monk...by the way, Paul Evdokimov, the Orthodox thinker, has a wonderful theory about interior monasticism which I think is a very interesting theme...that and this idea of contemplative ecumenism are the two great themes among many other themes that run through the journals. I would get irritated with Merton at times as I'm transcribing these things and wondering would I ever get done with them, but I would also say that it's a transforming experience to have been in his presence for the two years that I've worked on the journals.

VICTOR KRAMER

Volume Four: *Turning Toward the World*
 Volume Five: *Dancing in the Water of Life*

I WANT TO CHANGE this subject just a little bit and say just a few things about these journals as journals which Merton, I think, pretty early on, was quite conscious of crafting, in a sense realising that he knew that these journals were most likely going to be published word for word. Now I need to give you just a tiny bit of background. I edited the period 1960 to 1963, *Turning Toward the World*, subtitled 'The Pivotal Years,' and I also need to say a few words about Volume Five which Robert Daggy edited, *Dancing in the Water of Life*.

In those journals, 1960 down to 1966, you have a Merton who is freer, a Merton who is able to write more, let us say, on his own, because his duties within the monastery are beginning to lessen and I think he has more time to think in terms of how he is going to write. In terms of how the seven volumes work together, the fourth one, 1960-63, is truly the pivotal moment in terms of the journals. Now, I had found a phrase within the journal: "...life moves on inexorably towards crisis and mystery..." and I had dreamt that we might call Volume Four 'Towards Crisis and Mystery.' Anyway the publishers wanted to call it by my subtitle *Turning Toward the World*. What I think is going on during this middle period is that he has worked through these years that Larry Cunningham was just talking about and I think that letter from Rome, that definitive letter saying 'You are going to stay put. That's it,' is a very important example of a moment where he's able just simply to say, 'OK, by virtue of obedience I will stay put. It's not necessary for me to go to Latin America. It's not necessary for me to do something else.' But it was necessary for him to work out how he was going to keep writing and simultaneously in some way as a writer turn toward the world and somehow to take this contemplative experience and figure out how to move that towards the world.

I want to talk about this decade just quickly, this decade in the middle, roughly 1953-1963 — which I think is the crucial middle period in his life where he is dealing first with what Professor Cunningham was talking about, the whole dilemma of what does it

mean to be a contemplative, what does it mean to be a monk at this time and do you have to find a particular place or can you somehow make your place just where you happen to be, which is what he decided. But then once he's made that decision, he's still, because he is by instinct a writer, he's still trying to figure out how is he going to best write.

So what I want to do is just quickly go through some of these ideas and move towards the period which is in the middle, Volume Four, which covers 1960 through 1963. I want to say just a word about a few entries in the very middle of that book in December 1961 and January 1962. That's literally in the middle of the middle of these journals. If you read the journals through, the period between Christmas and January 1st is often a critical time for him because [it is a time when] he is kind of reassessing. As a kind of exercise I just looked at a few entries in that period — and you could also check this out at leisure in your own copy of *Turning Toward the World*.

Let me first just make a very quick point about the fact that we have, as editors, choosing titles, or choosing subtitles for divisions of each journal, probably created certain expectations on the part of the reader. You see *Run to The Mountain*, or *Entering the Silence*, or *Turning Toward the World*, or *Learning to Love*; and you figure that's what he's doing for those two or three years. I don't think it's ever quite that simple. It's very, very complicated and if, for example, you look at the journal for 1960-1963 — 'my' journal — I call it 'mine' but it's his — and you watch what's going on, I headed the first year 'The Promise of the "Hermitage"' because he didn't even know what it was going to be. Was it going to be a meeting place for ecumenical conferences or was it going to be a place where he could live part-time or would it be a hermitage? Anyway, that's 1960, 'The Promise of a "Hermitage"' and it did finally end up being that but only many, many years later. I think I called the second section, 1961, 'The Need to Continue Questioning' — he might have the promise of a hermitage but he has to keep questioning. I called the third section, 1962, 'Seeking the Right Balance' — he realises he has to somehow combine whatever it is that he wants to do as a writer and what he wants to do as a contemplative and to combine these two things so that somehow he would not just be turned inward. I think there is something else going on in the Journals which is quite important and I think this is also true through most of Volume Three — and that is that this man

is just constantly asking questions about himself. It's not exactly self-serving but you sometimes get very tired of it because he's constantly thinking what can I do about 'my' monastic vocation, 'my' vocation. And at some point, and it's probably already beginning in Volume Three, 1957/8/9, but gets stronger in the years to follow down through the middle sixties, he's forgetting about himself, he's not worrying about himself and he's thinking more in terms of what he can do to somehow turn towards the world. What I'd like to suggest is that we've imposed a structure on these journals and we could have the journals arranged in some other way.

If we just called them 'Father Louis's Journal' and arranged them in blocks according to the years in which he wrote them, you'd have a volume called 'Early Acceptance of Vocation,' you could have a volume 'Preparation for Ordination,' a volume, maybe 'Teaching Students' which would take you down through the Master of Scholastics period, and then a volume 'Guiding Novices.' Then you would have perhaps a volume beginning around 1963 which would be about writing about the world — as a monastic. You would have the period, 1964-5, about being a part-time solitary and then the seventh or eighth volume in this restructured, imagined way of publishing the journals in which you'd have him living full time as a hermit and full time distracted as a hermit. And finally you'd have the last year — 'Traveller.' The point is that you wouldn't have these good titles that we've come up with and you wouldn't have the emphasis upon 'self.' You would have something that could be read differently. The journals wouldn't be so much our reading them as a record of what Merton does or encounters. They could be read then more as a kind of continual re-examination of what it means to be called to a dual vocation — silence and speaking — during this particular time in the United States.

Read this way, the journals would become much closer to Henry Adams's *Education of Henry Adams* where Henry Adams is writing about his life as an emblem of all lives. We would think of these journals much less than as a kind of record of observations. In other words, I think we've got something in the Journals which is much more crafted and much more sophisticated than what Henry David Thoreau did in his journals which is more or less a catalogue. Merton, I would maintain, is always selecting, selecting, selecting. Further, I think this becomes more and more obvious in the third and fourth

volumes in which he becomes more conscious of the fact that every time he writes something down, he is going to be writing probably something that other people are going to read later. My point is that we don't have a diary here, we have very careful selections. We have a man who is becoming aware of the fact that he is selecting and therefore he is also becoming aware of the fact that he is responsible for choosing the words or crafting the sentences a certain way and so you've got a journal which is working on many, many different levels. This gets complicated by the fact that he really does feel a responsibility to move towards the world. You get a combination of all these things. I think it probably shows up best in Volumes Four and Five, because that's where he pivots, that's where he moves, but that's where he becomes more and more aware of the contemplative need.

In Volume Five, *Dancing in The Waters of Life*, you've got a straight chronology which Bob Daggy edited but you've also got two other things there. From another journal, he put in the visit that Merton made to New York City to visit D.T. Suzuki which is not part really of the journals proper but it's made to fit within Volume Five. In the same way, Bob Daggy includes the rough draft for an essay called 'Day of a Stranger.' Technically neither one of those are pure journal but they fit nicely into Volume Five. So again we're kind of giving a story and maybe what we need to be aware of is that Merton was very conscious of giving himself a story which is a very complicated one. Now, if you go and look at December/January 1961/2, you've got about fifteen good entries — you don't have a daily record, in a month you've got about ten good entries, usually. So you look at what's going on and it's very, very interesting.

In that period, mid-December 1961 to 1962, he's asking all kinds of questions about what's wrong with the world, how can he write about peace, why is he so disturbed, is he going to be delated again, somebody's reported him to the Abbot General, is he going to be able to write, what does it mean to write in these circumstances. This is during the Christmas season. He reads a prayer from the Nocturne office. He's amazed at what he sees there and he thinks about Christ's presence. He says the peace of Christ is here right now, right here. My job is not to preach about peace but to somehow be peaceful. But he keeps thinking about preaching. He keeps thinking about whether

he is going to be censored...is he going to figure out a way to publish and so on.

And I was reading, and this is a quick parenthesis, the letters between J. Laughlin and Merton and this is very interesting. If you look at the same period, December/January, 1961/62, and you look at the letters that he is writing to his poetry editor, Laughlin, there is a wonderful long letter written in December where in effect he is writing to Laughlin and he is saying what am I going to do and can you help me figure out a way to publish essays which would have to do with issues of peace and of war and so on. Then you work through that period of December, just those few weeks. It's very interesting because he remains disturbed and unhappy with himself and with the world. But then he'll read Julian of Norwich and he says everything I need to know is right here — (December 27th 1961). Or you look at December 31st 1961, he says life is madder, madder and madder and he's about ready to give up. Then you look at the entries for January 2nd, 3rd and 9th, 1962, he's full of energy, not about publishing projects but about the beauty he sees right there in the monastery. He keeps turning to this 'peace' idea, peacefulness and how he can be peaceful. He, for example, at one point takes the word *majestas*, majesty, the Glory of God, and he then meditates just on that one word.

Now my theory, and it's just a theory, is that you could take these two months and you could watch this kind of roller-coaster event, up and down, and that's an example of how he's working just in two months. And you could do the same thing for Volume Four as a whole, 1960-63, up and down. And what you've got is a writer who's becoming more and more conscious of the fact that he has to somehow write because people are going to read this word for word later and he's going to have to write in such a way that it's interesting and therefore he's not going to put anything in the journal that isn't going to hold the reader's interest later.

There is a passage in Volume Three where he talks about what he's going to write, "I want to write a book about everything" and then he says that doesn't mean 'everything.' That means 'everything that somehow I've been involved in.' He talks about the cosmos and then almost immediately he talks about wilfulness. He says, "That's really the story," wilfulness; what he, Merton, chooses to do. So what I'm

saying is that you've got a book, now seven books, which give us a story which he kind of structured, which we kind of re-structured as editors, but which is moving on many, many different levels. So it's not just *Turning Toward the World*, or *Dancing in the Water of Life*. I think it's the continual story of this monastic trying to figure out how he can remain contemplative while he's also thinking about all these relationships to the world. So you can run an experiment. You can just go and look at a little bit of December/January 1961/62. I think it all kind of comes together. But the same patterns are there in the earliest journal and I think they must also be there at the very end in the *Asian Journal*.

CHRISTINE BOCHEN

Volume Six: *Learning to Love*

I WAS THINKING ABOUT how different each of the approaches have been and I think mine will be different again, but in some ways responsive to all that I have heard. I wanted to share with you this afternoon something of the experience that I had in editing Volume Six, entitled *Learning to Love—Exploring Solitude and Freedom*. The volume covers the period from January of 1966 to October of 1967. It also includes by way of appendices two other works, one called 'A Midsummer Diary,' and the other a portion of Notebook 17, the first part of which is to be found in Volume Five. I've incorporated the segment dealing with the period from January until March. And so the volume sits as that.

I think you are aware of the fact that, as Victor was saying, Merton explored his relationship to the world now in a very different way and that is through the experience with one person. Most people picking up the volume, *Learning to Love*, will already be aware of the fact that in that volume Merton is speaking about a relationship most 'unmonkly' if we can call it that. And that is a very intimate and very intense relationship that occurred when he was hospitalised in April of 1966 and cared for there by a nurse with whom he fell in love. How well the cliché, of roller coaster fits because what we find in this volume is in fact an account of a relationship that raises him to

the heights and brings him down to the depths. We find him elated and excited. We find him confused, bewildered, befuddled. And so it is a volume I think very much informed now by this relationship.

I'd like to say something about the work that I did as editor in selecting titles. I was working, essentially with one journal and so despite the fact that I agree with Victor's construction of the Journals and his recognition that there is a lead that each editor offers the reader, I think it is an important one and I have tried in offering the structure of that journal to be attentive to the cues and clues that I found in Merton's own text. And so I chose to describe and to introduce the four sections really with themes that I see emerging in each segment of the text. The first segment I call 'Being in One Place' and you will recall that Merton had rather recently moved to the hermitage — it was in the summer of 1965 — and he was in the first few months of 1966 tasting what he had longed for for so very long, actually since the time he went in to the monastery — a deeper silence and a deeper experience of solitude. He wrote in January of 1966, the end of the month: "...what matters is to love, to be in one place in silence..."

A wonderful quote. On the one hand it is, without Merton knowing it, a lead into the story that will unfold for him in the months that follow — what matters is to love. It is also a reminder that that love of which he speaks is not only the love of one particular other but the love to which he is called as monk and as Christian, the love which he experiences and tries to learn in the monastery which is the school of charity.

But he says "to be in one place in silence." Being in one place, as you have already been reminded, was not for Merton always an easy thing. Yes, physically and geographically he was rooted in this one place but if there is a vow with which he struggled, I think it is that of stability, the sense that there might have been another place, another way, another order, another location, in which he might be a more faithful monk. And so we see him in those first months of 1966 really dealing with now in a very intense way the challenge as well as the joy of solitude. It is certainly a joy. This is what he has wanted. And yet in that quiet and in that silence and in that solitude he encounters more than one demon. He has to sort out the experience of his own loneliness and he deals interestingly enough again with the Latin American temptation because once more there

is the possibility of going to Latin America. Though he had resolved that issue years before, again there is just that little lead, a little hint that suggests, "Well maybe there..." But not for long. The hermitage was a place he would not easily have given up.

The second part of the Journal, entitled 'Daring to Love,' picks up on yet another few lines from Merton written in late April 1966, weeks after he met M.. And he writes, "I see more and more that there is only one realistic answer, love. I have got to dare to love and to bear the anxiety of self-questioning that love arouses in me until perfect love casts out fear." "I have got to dare to love."

That title 'Dare to Love' for the second section rose very easily from the page. It is in this segment that we deal with this relationship that Merton had with the woman referred to in the volume as 'M.' We see Merton enthused, excited, elated with this relationship. We also see him struggling to make sense of it, for certainly there is, in this, a contradiction. The contradiction is not love itself but a love which invites a kind of exclusivity of relationship which he had chosen to set aside when he became a monk. And so he is in this experience of a somewhat compromised solitude, if we might refer to it in that way, trying to deal with the simple, spontaneous total love that he has experienced for the very first time.

I have had the opportunity to give several interviews to newspaper and radio folk and inevitably the questions lead to the nature of the relationship and people are not too cheerfully disposed when I try to redirect the questions. I think that there is a way in which people come to this text preoccupied, if you want to say it, with the physicality of the relationship, whereas what I find striking and what I think is so present in Merton's experience is an intimacy he knows for the first time. And when I say 'intimacy,' I am referring to that sense of being known and knowing another and sensing that one is accepted as one is in a relationship. For Merton this was a new thing.

You will remember perhaps if you read Volume Five that, as he moved into those later years, he often reflected on an earlier period in his life, a period in which his relationships with women were hardly exemplary. And there was something of unfinished business there. For what he was discovering in this new relationship was something that he had not experienced, or let himself experience, before, and that is to open himself to the experience, to the sense of, intimacy. I think that readers will find this particular section reflecting

some of the struggle and maybe more than a little bit irked with Merton who does revisit ground on occasion, moving back and forth ...and we move with him. Sometimes, some have said, in a way that makes you simply want to say, "Cut it out! Come on, let's get on with it..." And yet what I think we have here, even though we have someone writing for an audience in one sense, is an individual, as he is writing, clarifying for himself where he stands.

By September of 1966, encouraged by the abbot who helped Merton to clarify where he stood, and also by his own sense of coming to terms with what was possible and what was not, we really see him moving to another period. And I decided to break the journal with yet another subtitle at that point. I used the subtitle, 'Living Love in Solitude.' Merton was, at that point, trying to reconcile a relationship now transformed but not abandoned, and I think he was honestly trying to see how it was that he could carry the best of that intimacy, that sense of having loved someone and being loved by that person, into a new time and period in his life. We see him accepting responsibility for some of his behaviour which was again perhaps not exemplary, sometimes perhaps even petty, sometimes devious, sometimes informed by illusion rather than by clarity of truth. But in this period that sense of who he is really and the life to which he is committed come clearly into focus for him.

The fourth period, the fourth segment of the Journal, is entitled 'A Life Free From Care.' This time I was drawing on a metaphor that Merton used in the last talk that he gave to the novices before he moved into the hermitage. I was really impelled to capture that metaphor of a life without care by his resolve on December 31st 1966 to get his life back in right order. That sense of right order didn't necessarily mean as it might for me cleaning up my room or sorting that pile of papers which always seems to elude me but rather the 'right order' in the largest sense, being faithful now to what he saw to be his call and vocation and recognising that he must free himself from a kind of attachment and place his life in the providence of God. That is essentially a life lived without care. It doesn't necessarily mean carefree and free of responsibility, but it means a life rightly ordered. And we find Merton in 1967 returning to the norm, or to the normal, such as that might be for Merton, not necessarily our normal. But it is here that we see once again a very strong working writer, a very intense reader – this is the period in

which he immerses himself in Camus for example – and we see that those references, very nice for an editor, which might have been lacking when he was so absorbed in this relationship, references to ideas and to what he is reading, now reassert themselves once more. We find Merton also, in this period, becoming increasingly aware of his own mortality, perhaps another turn of someone at mid-life. He's lost a few friends who have died and the message is not lost on him. So he has a certain sense, according to those last pages of 1967, that life is not without its end.

I won't speak at this point about Midsummer Diary except to say that it's one of those teacher tricks. I'm not going to talk about this but, in not talking, let me say Midsummer Diary is really what I have described as partly journal, partly love letter, that Merton wrote during a week in June. The relationship with M. was still intense and he not only recounts there something of what is in his heart at the time, but also, I think, writes some very profound and provocative things about the nature of solitude. I've often wondered what it would have been like for M. to receive this piece. The part love letter might have worked. The part journal reflection would have been a bit more mystifying. But it is a text, I think, which fits alongside the journal for 1966 and 1967.

I wanted to share with you two other things, if I may. One has to do with the nature of the handwriting. His got worse and mine has also. I have confessed in some other settings that I received the manuscript of this journal in 1993. I was working on the index for the volume of letters entitled *The Courage for Truth* and I could hardly finish that index because I wanted to get into reading the manuscript. But I have to tell you that when it first came I sat there, I think as any of us might have, kind of awed by the experience that I was really encountering a text raw. I mean I was seeing the thing that Merton had written once removed by photo-copying machine. And for a while I just sat there with this stuff on my lap thinking, you know, there's an issue here – an issue of relationship – because I knew what was in it. The fact that the story that I would read would not only be Merton's story but also M.'s. I trod a little lightly into the manuscript, reading a bit here and a bit there, but I finally settled on the fact that I could not, looking at the text, sit between it and in front of a computer or I would lose my mind. So I decided to rewrite the manuscript in my own hand. Now people who know my

handwriting quickly said, "Christine, that is not progress!" But I have to tell you that I don't regret doing it because, as I did, I felt that story unfold. I felt that I had learned how to live with that journal a bit and to enjoy it as a reader not simply as a frantic typist. So for me that was a very good way to approach the text.

PATRICK HART OCSO

Volume Seven: *The Other Side of the Mountain*

THE OTHER SIDE OF the Mountain is not the title we chose nor was it Merton's title. Merton had chosen 'The Hawk's Dream' from Robertson Jeffers, a poem that he wrote, and he said that this should be the title for this volume but Harper Collins in San Francisco says it wouldn't fly. So we ended up with *The Other Side of The Mountain* which is very good because, as we'll find out from the text, very early on in the *Asian Journal* he has a quote:

Last night I had a curious dream about Kanchenjunga. I was looking at the mountain and it was pure white, absolutely pure, especially the peaks that lie to the west. And I saw the pure beauty of their shape and outline, all in white and I heard a voice, saying – or got the clear idea of, 'There is another side to the mountain.'

and then he continues

The full beauty of the mountain is not seen until you too consent to the impossible paradox. It is and is not. Nothing more need be said. The smoke of ideas clears and the mountain is seen.

It is autobiographical as far as I can see. So the seventh volume, like the first, was written in various notebooks and he was travelling as we know. The first was...he was in Cuba and Perry Street and St. Bonaventure's, so we had to put together three or four notebooks. The same can be said with the last of the journals.

It opens with the election of an abbot. The very beginning is dated the last months of 1967. There was the prospect of a new abbot with the resignation of Dom James Fox and Merton feared for the worst. He thought that one of the more conservative candidates would get elected which would mean the end of his hermitage, perhaps, or the end of his writing. So he had all sorts of worries and he just wasn't sure. But he did end up being a kingmaker. His candidate

became abbot and it was Abbot Flavian Burns and of course Flavian was one of his students and they got along very well together. In fact Flavian had been a hermit and he was recalled from the hermitage to become abbot but he said he would accept it only for five years. He thought that if you can't do it in five years, you'll never do it. So he had five years as abbot and then retired.

But the first thing, I would say the most important thing that he did was, and perhaps Merton realised this, was that Flavian would give him some latitude and perhaps the chance to travel after all these years. And so Dom Jean Leclercq had arranged for an invitation, that he should come to Bangkok in Thailand where the Far Eastern superiors, the abbots and abbesses, mainly Cistercian and Benedictine, were meeting. And so he thought it would be a good idea for him to get a feel of Tibetan Buddhism especially. He had been in contact with Harold Talbott through Dom Aelred Graham of Ampleforth, who had put him in touch with a lot of his friends, which was very helpful. He began planning this trip to the Far East and making preparations for it. He had to take his shots and so forth, get his visa, and, above all, get some clothes to travel in. So he managed with Frank O'Callaghan's help to engage in purchasing some jackets and coats that he could put lots of film in and carry his camera because he was planning to document this trip with photographs. Laughlin had said if you do a book like the *Asian Journal*, we can publish it and we can defray the expenses of your trip. So I think he had a travel credit card or something from J. Laughlin to help expenses. One night, before he left, after he had had dinner at the Embassy Club with Frank and Tommie [O'Callaghan] and Ron and Sally Seitz, he went over with the Franciscan friars from St. Bonaventure's where the Merton Center used to be and was watching football. The Green Bay Packers had just beaten the Dallas Cowboys and Merton comments that it was 'damn good football.' He goes on to say:

Football is one of the really valid and deep American rituals. It has a religious seriousness which American religion can never achieve, a comic contemplative dynamism, a gratuity, a movement from play to play, a definitiveness that responds to some deep need, a religious need. A sense of meaning that is at once final and provisional. A substratum of dependable regularity, continuity and an ever-renewed variety. Openness to new possibilities, new chances. It happens. It is done.

I was completely surprised. It was an autobiographical statement of Merton's life as a monk.

Anyway as the days grew closer to his time for leaving he was naturally excited about the prospect. First in May he took a little trip, a kind of experimental trip. I think Flavian wanted to see how he would handle travel in the States before he sent him overseas. So he went to New Mexico and then out to visit the Trappistines of Redwoods out along the California coast and he was looking for a possible site for a hermitage. Flavian had said 'You can have a hermitage far away from Gethsemani but it has to be in the United States. I don't want to be travelling to India or wherever. So he was looking in New Mexico, Christ in the Desert, then along the California coast as well as in Alaska. The Archbishop there was showing him various sites. He didn't especially like the grizzly bears as companions. However he was keeping all that at the back of his mind. He was going to Asia with the idea of returning and discussing the future with Flavian. People often said that he had no intention of coming back with which I completely disagree. He had every intention of returning and working things out because he had an abbot that he could talk to and would listen to his ideas. It doesn't mean that Flavian always agreed, but he would listen to Louie.

So he was off and I think that at the take-off, he says, "I am going home to the home I have never been in this body, where I have never been in this washable suit." He was excited and I remember he refers to the take-off as 'ecstatic' and meanwhile, when he was at the hermitage, he would look at the planes and he would be denouncing their sound barrier booms but once he got on board, he said it was like a pirouette, dancing on the runway ready for the take-off. He stopped in Honolulu and then went on to Calcutta where the poverty really hit him. But he was critical too. He was impressed by the people he met. But he met one Swami whom he said reminded him of Groucho Marx, manifesting contempt for his competitors. Merton comments, "Even his Kleenex is saffron." Merton noticed the detail. So he stopped in New Delhi and of course the great peak experience, I think, was those three interviews he had with the Dalai Lama. There were three hours they spent and they got to know one another very well on the deepest level. It was through Harold Talbott of course who stayed with him and managed to get a good translator. He had his first audience on November 4th, 1968 and then he

returned on the 6th for a second, and then on the 8th for a third which, he says, was in many ways the best. By then, they knew each other very well and the Dalai Lama felt the same way. In fact, in the Dalai Lama's autobiography *Freedom in Exile*, he speaks of Merton as being the first Christian who introduced him to the beauties of Christianity. So it was a breakthrough for the Dalai Lama. They learned from one another.

So finally after Madras, Merton ends up in Bangkok and in his last entry in his journal, just two days before his death he writes to one of the monks,

I think of all of you on this Feast Day and with Christmas approaching, I feel homesick for Gethsemani. But I hope to be at least in a monastery Rawa Seneng [in Indonesia] and then I look forward to being at our monastery in Hong Kong and maybe seeing our three volunteers there. No more for the moment. Best love to all, Louie.

Of course he never did get to Hong Kong nor to Indonesia as he had planned. Meanwhile he writes these lines in the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok just minutes before he left for the Red Cross Headquarters on the outskirts of the city. By Christmas he was, after all, back at Gethsemani lying beside and along the abbey church, overlooking the woodlands and knobs that had become so familiar to him during his twenty seven years of monastic life at Gethsemani.