

Time on our hands

Thomas Merton has written so much, some good, some not so good. Others have written about Merton and tried in their way to help us through to an understanding of what Merton was teaching about prayer. Some knew him personally, others knew him through their research. As I did in Holy Week I am going to give some quotations for us to ponder in this week. Most come from Merton himself, the first quote is from someone who knew him personally.

Prayer begins when we go to our place of prayer as to a sacred place, when we realise that our own heart is the place where Jacob's Ladder touches the earth.

James Finley "Merton's Palace of Nowhere"

The community is holy and its members work together to make it more holy, by helping one another to grow in holiness. This can only be done by mutual love based on the faith which sees Christ in the community and Christ in every one of its members.

Thomas Merton "The Rule of St Benedict"

We must be persons who can give ourselves, because we have a self to give. How can we give Christ, unless we have found Him, and how can we find Him, if we cannot find ourselves?

Thomas Merton

We may spend out whole life climbing the ladder of success, only to find when we get to the top that our ladder is leaning against the wrong wall.

Thomas Merton

Prayer and love are really learned in the hour when prayer becomes impossible and your heart turns to stone.

Thomas Merton "New Seeds of Contemplation"

A person knows when he has found his vocation, when he stops thinking about how to live and begins to live.

Thomas Merton "Thoughts in Solitude"

To know is to know that you're known.

Thomas Merton

What is the good of trying to teach people to love God without preaching through those wounds?

Thomas Merton "The Sign of Jonas"

If we contemplate these and other thoughts of Merton we will deepen our prayer life and our journey into God. So, Merton has to have the last word about why we go on this journey in the first place:

To be lost in God's face.

Thomas Merton