

the best and be as English a Catholic as one in my position can be" (26).

Clearly, the mature Merton has repudiated the rigidly critical attitude toward the Church of England so strongly expressed by the youthful Merton in *The Seven Storey Mountain*. He made this very clear in an April 2, 1965, letter to Mrs. Mycock:³ "Your supposition that if I wrote that book (*The Seven Storey Mountain*) again today I would speak differently of Anglicans was both charitable and correct. My thought at the time of writing was hardly matured and I just said what came to mind, as people so often do, and more often did in those days. It is, unfortunately, so easy and so usual simply to compare the dark side of someone else's Church with the bright side of one's own. Thank heaven we are getting over that now, I hope" (*Witness to Freedom*, 319). WHS

SEE ALSO CHURCH, ROMAN CATHOLIC;
ECUMENISM.

Notes

1. See *The Seven Storey Mountain* (176), where Merton describes his feeling about the Zion Episcopal Church, where his father had played the organ.
2. "The Poorer Means: A Meditation on Ways to Unity," Haywards Heath, England, Holy Cross Convent, 1965.
3. Not otherwise identified.

ENTERING THE SILENCE: *Becoming a Monk and Writer*

The Journals of Thomas Merton, vol. 2:
1941–52. Edited by Jonathan Montaldo.
San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.
xvii + 501 pp.

This second and longest volume of Thomas Merton's complete journals begins with the day of his official reception into the Abbey of Gethsemani as a postulant and concludes over a decade later with the famous "Fire Watch" passage, in which Merton, now Fr. Louis, master of the newly professed monks, journeys literally through the darkened monastery and metaphorically through his own history as a member of the Gethsemani community.

In actuality, however, the journal does not cover this entire period. The first of the volume's three parts consists of a mere six entries

between December 13, 1941, and April 3, 1942, fragments saved from an otherwise destroyed novitiate journal,¹ for the sake of the seven poems recorded on these pages, although the adjacent prose material, fortuitously preserved, does provide some interesting observations, as when on December 18 Merton reflects that the meaningfulness within the monastery lends meaning to the larger world (*Entering the Silence*, 4), prays on January 9 to be lost in God (5), and on Good Friday meditates on seeking obscurity and letting go of results (10–11).

There is no journal material between April 1942 and sometime early in 1945, when "A Journal-Memoir: Dom Frederic Dunne" begins.² This is a gathering of entries, most of them dated, written over the course of three years, all focused in some way on Merton's first abbot and intended to serve as notes for whoever would one day write Dom Frederic's biography; they were discovered among the papers of Fr. Raymond (Flanagan), who did indeed write a memoir of the abbot after his death and to whom Merton must have given the material.³ The reflections make clear Merton's respect and affection for the abbot who admitted him to the monastery and encouraged his writing.

The third, major part of the journal, entitled "The Whale and the Ivy" after the tentative title of what eventually would be published as *The Sign of Jonas* (see 237), runs from December 10, 1946, the fifth anniversary of Merton's entrance into Gethsemani, through July 5, 1952, the date given for the fire watch. The main lines of this material have long been familiar from *The Sign of Jonas*, but the previously published journal contains only about half of the original material, much of it revised and polished. Eighty-eight of the 405 dated entries of the original journal were omitted completely (including twenty-five consecutive entries from December 31, 1947, through March 12, 1948), but the more typical strategy was to cut material within an entry, as with the two sentences on surface distractions and underlying recollection and the entire following paragraph on Duns Scotus from the first, December 10, 1946, entry. The complete journal for this period is more mundane, containing many details of or-

dinary daily routine, Merton's readings, and so forth not found in *The Sign of Jonas*, and also more conflicted, more frank about Merton's struggles to reconcile his desire for solitude with the busyness of Trappist life in an overcrowded monastery and his dual vocation as monk and writer.

These years are marked by a number of significant milestones in Merton's monastic life, beginning with his profession of solemn vows on March 19, 1947 (49), and culminating with his ordination to the priesthood on May 26, 1949 (317). In November of the same year he begins giving classes in Scripture and in monastic history and spirituality to novices and young monks (372), and in May 1951 he is appointed the first master of students at Gethsemani, in charge of the education and formation of newly professed monks (459).

Important events in the life of the monastery also have their impact on Merton, particularly the death in August 1948 of Dom Frederic (222) and the election of Dom James Fox (227–28), who will be Merton's abbot for most of the remaining two decades of his life; the arrival of Dom Gabriel Sortais to supervise the election also results in Merton's first trip to Louisville in the seven years he has been at Gethsemani (223–24). The celebration of the abbey's centenary at the beginning of June 1949 not only leads to various writing projects (96, 272), but also coincides closely with the time of his ordination (320–21). Growth in the size of the community (339), up over two hundred by September 1949 (369), is relieved somewhat by new foundations in Utah (87) and South Carolina (372).

These are also, of course, the years when Thomas Merton suddenly became a household name. No less than nine books, along with a number of shorter booklets, appeared during the period of this journal, most significantly *The Seven Storey Mountain*, which is accepted for publication shortly after the journal begins (34) and "change[s] a lot of things" (102), as Merton suspected it would, when it is published, leading the way for various other books, among them *Seeds of Contemplation*, *The Waters of Siloe*, and *The Ascent to Truth*, over which Merton agonized for many months (282).

The journal records not only these and many other events, but also Merton's complex response to them. The two major, and intertwined, issues that he wrestles with throughout these years are his desire for deeper solitude, which periodically prompts him to consider joining a more eremitic order like the Carthusians (33, 141), and the difficulty of trying "to live the spiritual life with the spiritual equipment of an artist" (371). While neither of these issues will ever be resolved completely for Merton, eventually he is able to recognize that no simple answer can do justice to the complexity of a truly spiritual life, a fully human life. He writes in February 1950, "The difference between the moral life and the mystical life is discovered in the presence of contradiction. When we move ourselves as men, morally . . . we end up by choosing one horn of the dilemma and hoping for the best. But when we are moved by God, mystically, we seem to solve the dilemma in ease and mystery by choosing at the same time both horns of the dilemma and no horn at all, and always being perfectly right" (412). A year later he comments on the journal itself in the same vein: "It is useless to drop the thing and say I am solitary just because I am not writing a *Journal*, when, in fact, the writing could help me find my way to where I am supposed to be traveling. So I read about forgetting and write down all I remember. And somehow there is no contradiction here. It is simply a somewhat particular way of becoming a saint" (453). Similarly, he reflects after his first six months as master of students, a responsibility he feared would detract from his solitude, that it "is, in fact, the only true path to solitude," because solitude is no longer seen as an object to be attained or possessed: "Do you suppose I have a spiritual life? I have none, I am indigence, I am silence, I am poverty, I am solitude, for I have renounced spirituality to find God" (463).

Already the neat division between monastery and world is beginning to break down in this vision of a reconciliation of opposites, a process that will propel Merton back into the heart of human struggles and social conflicts by the end of the decade. Speaking of Louisville after a visit to the doctor in No-

vember 1950, he reflects, "There is no reason why a monk should not have a definite attitude toward the place which, in relation to his monastery, is 'town.' I do not think that being a monk means living on the moon" (440). While the major breakthrough experience in Merton's turn toward the world is usually associated with his vision on March 18, 1958, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets in Louisville, which he described as "like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world, the world of renunciation and supposed holiness" (*Guilty Bystander*, 140), in fact a very similar insight had already marked the visit to Louisville to procure naturalization papers seven years earlier. On March 3, 1951, he writes in his journal,

I have come to the monastery to find my place in the world, and if I fail to find this place, I will be wasting my time in the monastery. . . . Coming to the monastery has been, for me, exactly the right kind of withdrawal. It has given me perspective. It has taught me how to live. And now I owe everyone else in the world a share in that life. My first duty is to start, for the first time, to live as a member of a human race which is no more (and no less) ridiculous than I am myself. And my first human act is the recognition of how much I owe to everybody else. There is a world which Christ would not pray for. . . . But the world also was made by God and is good, and, unless that world is our mother, we cannot be saints, because we cannot be saints unless we are first of all human. (*Entering the Silence*, 451)

It is this project of being human, and thus holy, that Merton has come to recognize in the early 1950s as the meaning of his life as monk and writer, and that he will continue to explore in subsequent years and subsequent journals. POC

SEE ALSO SIGN OF JONAS.

Notes

1. After the publication of this volume, a nine-page typescript entitled "Meditations, December 23–30, 1941," consisting of five dated entries from Merton's first month at Gethsemani, was discovered in the Mark Van Doren Collection in the Columbia University Library; it has

been published in *The Merton Seasonal* 25, no. 4 (winter 2000): 3–11.

2. The date assigned by the editor to the first entry in this group is October 1946, but it is clear from Merton's statement that "Next year (1946)" will be the fiftieth anniversary of the abbot's simple profession (17) that it must have been written sometime in 1945, and the references to "This Advent" and "this Thanksgiving" as apparently recent suggest early 1945.

3. Raymond cites Merton explicitly on page 206 of his book (*The Less Traveled Road: A Memoir of Dom Mary Frederic Dunne, First American Trappist Abbot* [Milwaukee: Bruce, 1953]), and seems also to have borrowed from Merton's notes in detailing Dom Frederic's frugal eating habits (205–6, 208–9), in his remark that Utah seemed to be possessed by the devil (228), and perhaps his remark that CARE packages were being sent overseas to Jesus Christ (though Raymond claims to have witnessed this himself) (224).

ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology is the branch of theology concerned with the "last things," traditionally listed as death, judgment, heaven, and hell. It might also be defined as the theology of ultimate things, definitive realities, not necessarily confined to the end of one's life or of historical time. For Thomas Merton, "Eschatology . . . is not simply an 'end of the world' belief, but, in the light of the New Testament, a belief in the decisive and critical breakthrough in man's destiny" (*Witness to Freedom*, 337). Like many modern Christian thinkers, he emphasizes both final and realized eschatology, both the absolute future consummation of the divine plan for creation and the fact that the world already has entered the new age with the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Belief in the general resurrection and eternal life is essential to the Christian vision. "Indeed," Merton writes, "Christianity without this fabulous eschatological claim is only a moral system without too much spiritual consistency" (*New Man*, 6). The doctrine of the parousia, the return of Christ in glory, is an affirmation of the eventual perfect fulfillment of God's design for creation: "The Last Judgment will be the final consummation and revelation of the 'Mystery' — the re-establishment of all things in Christ, that is being accomplished in secret beneath the surface of human history. . . . The Parousia is the great event which will not destroy human

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