



The Intimate Merton: His Life from His Journals

By Thomas Merton

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In this diary-like memoir, composed of his most poignant and insightful journal entries, *The Intimate Merton* lays bare the steep ways of Thomas Merton's spiritual path. Culled from the seven volumes of his personal journals, this twenty nine year chronicle deepens and extends the story Thomas Merton recounted and made famous in *The Seven Storey Mountain*. This book is the spiritual autobiography of our century's most celebrated monk -- the wisdom gained from the personal experience of an enduring spiritual teacher. Here is Merton's account of his life's major challenges, his confrontations with monastic and church hierarchies, his interaction with religious traditions east and west, and his antiwar and civil-rights activities. In *The Intimate Merton* we engage a writer's art of "confession and witness" as he searches for a contemporary, authentic, and global spirituality.

Recounting Merton's earliest days in the monastery to his journey east to meet the Dalai Lama, *The Intimate Merton* captures the essence of what makes Thomas Merton's life journey so perennially relevant.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

If you like your saints packaged without the messiness of an actual error-filled life, this book is not for you. If, however, you want a glimpse inside the mind and spirit of a splendid writer and thinker who tried live his life as honestly as he could as a journey into God, then this is a grace-filled beauty. Subtitled "His Life from His Journals," these selections--dating from 1939 (before he entered the monastery) to 1968 (within days of his death)--remind us how much of Merton's life unfolded precisely in and through his own writing--how he made himself through his writing. As he says, "it seems to me that writing, far from being an obstacle to spiritual perfection in my own life, has become one of the conditions on which my perfection will depend." Merton contends that writing--honest writing--is his way to move more and more deeply into the truth. In these very honest pages, covering everything from his meeting with the Dalai Lama to his experience of falling in love (25 years after entering the monastery), Truth unfolds itself through the act of writing. These pages are a thread into the center of that labyrinth, which is where he meets his God. Now we're invited along for the ride. --*Doug Thorpe*

From Publishers Weekly

"A path through the woods" is the description Hart and Montaldo (Merton's last secretary and a Merton lecturer, respectively) give to this condensation of the diaries faithfully kept by Merton before and throughout his 27 years as a Trappist monk at Our Lady of Gethsemani monastery in Kentucky. "Woods" serves as metaphor for Merton's full body of autobiographical work, encompassing the journals published during his life and the seven volumes that remained unpublished for 25 years after his death in 1968. This manageable portrait of Merton's inner and outer life, beginning in 1939, is condensed from the seven volumes and will likely suffice for all but Merton scholars and the most devoted aficionados. Merton's restlessness, his frustration with censorship of his anti-war writings and his affinity for nature are portrayed here. Readers are privy to his dreams and his experiences of divine and human love, including details of his secretive love affair. The volume ends as abruptly as his life, cut short at age 53 by accidental electrocution in Bangkok, where he was exploring Asian religions. The path cleared by Hart and Montaldo, worthy guides to this terrain, is a boon for busy readers, who will turn to Merton's journals not only for information about his life but to learn, from his spiritual self-scrutiny, more about themselves. (Dec.)

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From Library Journal

This is a one-volume condensation of Merton's journals, which have been published over the last few years; its seven chapters correspond to the seven volumes of Merton's complete journals. Hart, who was Merton's last secretary, and Montaldo (*Entering the Silence*) have maintained all of Merton's central themesAincluding the controversial ones, like the relationship with the nurse identified as "M." and Merton's doubts about his vocation. Unfortunately, owing to deletions, the transitions are sometimes abrupt and jarring, and footnotes from the original identifying persons and terms have been removed. But this is certainly not an attempt to sanitize Merton's journals; all of Hart and Mantaldo's condensing is intended to make their riches available to those who do not want to wade through all seven volumes. A nice selection of photographs is included. Because Merton is probably the most widely selling American spiritual writer, this title is sure to be in great demand. For most libraries.AAugustine J. Curley, O.S.B., Newark Abbey, NJ
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Megan Snyder:

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Ellen Jorge:

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