

JANUARY 31, 2025



Thomas Merton was born on this day in 1915. He arguably the most influential American Catholic author of the twentieth century. His autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, has sold over one million copies and has been translated into over fifteen languages. He wrote over sixty other books and hundreds of poems and articles on topics ranging from monastic spirituality to civil rights, nonviolence, and the nuclear arms race.

After a rambunctious youth and adolescence, Merton converted to Roman Catholicism whilst at Columbia University and on December 10th, 1941, he arrived at the Abbey of Gethsemani, a community of monks belonging to the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (Trappists), the most ascetic Roman Catholic monastic order. The twenty-seven years he spent in Gethsemani brought about profound changes in his self-understanding.

This ongoing conversion impelled him into the political arena, where he became, according to Daniel Berrigan, the conscience of the peace movement of the 1960's. Referring to race and peace as the two most urgent issues of our time, Merton was a strong supporter of the nonviolent civil rights movement, which he called "certainly the greatest example of Christian faith in action in the social history of the United States." For his social activism Merton endured severe criticism, from Catholics and non-Catholics alike, who assailed his political writings as unbecoming of a monk. Source: <https://merton.org/chrono.aspx>

## FR. BILL PETRO

- recommends The Merton Book of Hours by Kathleen Deigan which includes excerpts from all his writings arranged in prayer for DAWN, DAY, DUSK, DARK.
- invites you to a Merton Discussion Group which meets on the third Tuesday on ZOOM. For more information, please contact Fr. Bill at [frbpetro42@gmail.com](mailto:frbpetro42@gmail.com)

Fr. Paul

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Phone: Office (304) 744-5523

Cell: (304) 433-7472.

Email:

[pjw424@gmail.com](mailto:pjw424@gmail.com)

Parish website

<https://www.blessedsacramentwv.org>

Faith in West Virginia

<https://faithinwv.org/latest-bulletin/>

This Sunday's Readings

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/020225.cfm>

Wednesday Bible Handout

This Sunday's Bulletin

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## TIME IS RUNNING OUT . . .

. . . to complete the Disciple Maker Index (DMI) survey in order to strengthen Blessed Sacrament Parish and better prepare us for the future! We need your perspective as a parishioner as we work to identify our greatest strengths and opportunities. Complete the survey today and help our church family thrive! The deadline is February 5, 2025. Click on the link to take the survey today. <https://portal.catholicleaders.org/d/x1a236>

## **PRAYER** by Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that  
I think that I am following your will  
does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you  
does in fact please you. And I hope I have  
that desire in all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.  
And I know that if I do this you will lead me  
by the right road though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore, will I trust you always though I may seem  
to be lost and in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and  
you will never leave me to face my perils alone.  
— Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude

## **MYSTIC MORSELS** from Thomas Merton

- Our real journey in life is interior.
- What we have to be is what we are.
- Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.
- The greatest need of our time is to clean out the enormous mass of mental and emotional rubbish that clutters our minds.

## **CARBONATED GRACE**

There was this Christian lady that had to do a lot of traveling for her business, so she did a lot of flying. But flying made her nervous so she always took her Bible along with her to read and it helped relax her. One time she was sitting next to a man and when he saw her pull out her Bible, he gave a little chuckle and went back to what he was doing. After a while he turned to her and asked, "You don't really believe all that stuff in there do you?" The lady replied, "Of course I do...it is the Bible."

He said, "Well, what about that guy that was swallowed by that whale?" She replied, "Oh, Jonah. Yes, I believe that it is in the Bible." He asked, "Well, how do you suppose he survived all that time inside the whale?" The lady said, "Well, I don't really know. I guess when I get to heaven I will ask him." "What if he isn't in heaven?" the man asked sarcastically. "Then you can ask him!" replied the lady.