

results. The significance of this is huge, both in terms of Merton's own spiritual journey and personal development, and in terms of linking his inner life of contemplation with action and dialogue in the world. Inchausti traces and demonstrates clearly how the two are linked, how one leads to the other, and how the quality of what is seen in the world is indicative of what is not seen in the heart.

*Thinking through Thomas Merton* is not an easy read. Indeed I found it a challenging read (which may of course say more about me than about the book); the argument can be dense at times and Inchausti clearly has a high opinion and high expectations regarding the knowledge and philosophical understanding of his readers. This particularly applies to the concluding chapter, which is one of the shorter chapters and yet one of the most ambitious – “Refiguring the Faith” – “an overview of Catholicism in the light of Merton's witness” (7). That said, a careful reading (and possibly re-readings) and a willingness to follow up the leads and references offered will pay dividends in terms of deepening our understanding of Merton and his continuing significance for the world and times in which we live, and indeed also our own perspectives on the world, our lives and who we are and are becoming. Although challenging, this is one of the most satisfying and stimulating surveys and appraisals of Merton's life and work that I have come across. I warmly recommend it.

Angus Stuart

HIGGINS, Michael W. *Thomas Merton: Faithful Visionary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), pp. xiv + 122. ISBN 978-0-8146-3706-7 (paper) \$12.95.

In the collection of reflections in honor of Thomas Merton's centenary, *We Are Already One: Thomas Merton's Message of Hope*, there is an engaging reflection by Michael Higgins entitled, “Thomas Merton and Me.” Here we may discover the trajectory that brought the book *Thomas Merton: Faithful Visionary* to publication. Higgins intimates that “my interest in Thomas Merton is quite multi-layered: personal, spiritual, intellectual and professional.” His first encounter with Merton in the 1960s was by way of the book by Naomi Burton (Stone), *More Than Sentinels*,<sup>1</sup> which he said “introduced to me a character whose presence in the book was determinative. That character was Thomas Merton. I came to Merton indirectly and by means of a literary genre that would have abiding interest for me: the memoir/conversion story/spiritual autobiography.”<sup>2</sup>

1. Naomi Burton, *More than Sentinels* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964).

2. Gray Henry and Jonathan Montaldo, eds., *We Are Already One: Thomas Merton's*

*Faithful Visionary* is one more work of a devoted Merton scholar who has written in the light of years of reading, research, conversation and love of his subject. For the seasoned Merton reader/scholar the book presents the opportunity to listen again to the familiar voice of Merton himself along with his fellow monks, friends, biographers, editors, activists in the peace movement, artists, historians, psychologists and spiritual writers from the past and present. For the new reader *Faithful Visionary* provides an introduction to these multiple voices in the Merton choir. This conversational biography is structured into seven chapters charting both the chronological life as well as the spiritual/emotional/physical journey. Sustaining the theme of “visionary” the chapters indicate this emphasis: 1. From Prades to Cambridge; 2. The Army or the Trappists?; 3. Fixed but Restless; 4. Abbot Problems; 5. The Making of a Moral Prophet; 6. Seized Love; 7. Summoned by the East. The conversational style creates a heightened sense of the many voices in Merton’s daily life both in and outside of the monastery. Higgins guides the conversation in each instance creating the space for Merton’s own voice to be heard in each stage of his journey.

Considering the brevity of this book (122 pages) it might be easy to treat the charted journey superficially but Higgins employs his years of reading, research, writing and interviews to consider serious and complex issues with a good measure of depth and respect. The primary sources include Merton’s journals, letters, poetry and essays which he draws from in good measure. The secondary sources highlight Higgins previous biographical work *Heretic Blood*<sup>3</sup> and the collection of essays edited with Donald Grayston, *Thomas Merton Pilgrim in Process*.<sup>4</sup> The interviews are impressive. There are a total of nineteen interviews that run the gamut from fellow monks (John Eudes Bamberger, Flavian Burns, Patrick Hart, Matthew Kely and Paul Quenon) to the wider circle of friends and scholars including Daniel Berrigan, Christine Bochen, Amiya Chakravarty, Jim Forest, Robert Giroux, Michael Mott, Tommie O’Callaghan, William Shannon and Gordon Zahn to name a few. These interviews are liberally quoted in the book.

If there is any drawback in Higgins’ work it is that the rich sources/voices, although used well, cry out for a longer hearing. Nevertheless *Thomas Merton: Faithful Visionary* is a testimony to the importance of

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*Message of Hope* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2014) 104.

3. Michael W. Higgins, *Heretic Blood: The Spiritual Geography of Thomas Merton* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998).

4. Donald Grayston and Michael W. Higgins, eds., *Thomas Merton: Pilgrim in Process* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1983).

multiple perspectives in the area of spiritual biography. It might be one thing to collect sources and conduct interviews but it is another thing to know just what to choose for the balanced telling of a life. Perhaps the greatest gift that Higgins brings to the work is his genius for knowing just what to select. He has achieved that balance.

Virginia Kaib Ratigan

ZUERCHER, Suzanne, OSB. *The Ground of Love and Truth: Reflections on Thomas Merton's Relationship with the Woman known as "M"* (Chicago, IL: In Extenso Press, 2014), pp. 115. ISBN 978-0-87946-997-9 (paper) \$14.95.

In writing what would be her last book, Suzanne Zuercher, OSB drew on a rich blend of resources at her disposal: her own experience of monastic life as a Benedictine nun, skills honed and insights gained during years of practice as a psychotherapist and spiritual director, and years of reading Thomas Merton and reflecting on his life. In addition to many presentations on Merton, Zuercher is the author of *Merton: An Enneagram Profile*<sup>1</sup> as well as *Enneagram Spirituality: From Compulsion to Contemplation*<sup>2</sup> and *Using the Enneagram in Prayer: A Contemplative Guide*.<sup>3</sup>

My last communication from Suzanne was in April 2014, just weeks before she died on June 14, 2014. Suzanne wrote to thank me for a blurb I had written for the book. In her email, she repeated what she had written to me earlier and what she also shared in the Introduction to her book: "For some reason I've known I must write this book . . . I hope it adds something to a picture of who Merton really was for all of us." Suzanne's hope is realized in *The Ground of Love and Truth: Reflections on Thomas Merton's Relationship with the Woman Known as "M"* in which she reflects on a time in Merton's life when she believes Merton "became *incarnate*, that is, 'a spirit in flesh'" (10). In Zuercher's view, Merton's relationship with M. "was important, even essential, for him to become a complete human being" (9). Thus, Zuercher reads Merton's relationship with M. in the context of "Merton's journey to spiritual wholeness" (102), regarding it as a chapter in a story of "the maturing of a monastic vocation" (101).

The format of the book is innovative and thus risky; however, in Zuercher's hands, it works well, allowing her to carefully distinguish between

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1. Suzanne Zuercher, OSB, *Merton: An Enneagram Profile* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria, 1996).

2. Suzanne Zuercher, OSB, *Enneagram Spirituality: From Compulsion to Contemplation* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1992).

3. Suzanne Zuercher, OSB, *Using the Enneagram in Prayer: A Contemplative Guide* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2008).