meaning which we apprehend without fully understanding them" (147).

This is important work. This is the climate of prayer the Church needs both communally and individually, that is, prayer that strikes an attitude of love as it seeks truth, prayer that expands rather than constricts. This is the climate of prayer that has sustained the heartbeat and spiritual essence of the Church ever since Our Lord told us, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you" (Jn. 14:27), the climate that spawned Vatican II's hope for "a spiritual renewal from which will also flow a happy impulse on behalf of human values such as scientific discoveries, technological advances, and a wider diffusion of knowledge" (Abbott 5).

Merton's "last manuscript" is a *prayer book* for every prayer-prone person who knows that the way of the seeker is the way of prayer. It speaks to the heart of the Christian aware that the way to Christ's peace is the way of prayer, a path with milestones, signposts and fellowship, a journey on which the faithful follower finds solace, consolation and, ultimately, salvation. Merton observes that "Religion always tends to lose its inner consistency and its supernatural truth when it lacks the fervor of contemplation" (149). That is why we need more Zossimas than Theraponts to enliven our current climate of renewal. This book could be a resource for nurturing more Zossimas. With more Zossimas, the fellowship can thrive, and faith will continue to flourish.

George G. Kehoe

MOSES, John, editor, *The Art of Thomas Merton: A Divine Passion in Word and Vision* (Cincinnati OH: Franciscan Media, 2019), pp. xxv + 162. ISBN: 978-1-6325-3184-1 (paper) $15.99.

An exhibition of Thomas Merton's photography in Toronto several years ago sparked my interest in his art. I pursued the interest by reading *Angelic Mistakes: The Art of Thomas Merton*.[1] The title of John Moses' book, *The Art of Thomas Merton: A Divine Passion in Word and Image*, led me to hope I might investigate further Thomas Merton's visual art. I was both right and wrong. The book is actually an anthology. Merton's drawings, calligraphies and prints form the heart of the book, but they do so not as subjects of analysis and critique, but as points of departure for prayer and meditation with Merton's writing.

The author, John Moses, is an Anglican priest, the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London from 1996 to 2006 and currently the John Macquarrie Professor of Anglican Theology at the Graduate Theological Foundation

1. Roger Lipsey, *Angelic Mistakes: The Art of Thomas Merton* (Boston: New Seeds, 2006).

in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He has authored several books, including *Divine Discontent: The Prophetic Voice of Thomas Merton*.[2] Moses previously edited three anthologies. One focuses on the letters and sermons of John Donne, the seventeenth-century spiritual poet (and also a Dean of St. Paul's). The other two, *The Desert: An Anthology for Lent*[3] and *The Language of Love: Exploring Prayer – An Anthology*,[4] are aimed at deepening spiritual life through resources from across the centuries. Thomas Merton figures in both.

The Art of Thomas Merton is clearly intended to expand the work of the Lent and Prayer anthologies. Moses notes in his Preface that his purposes are to provide an introduction to Merton's thought and create "an aid to private devotion" (xix). Paul Pearson agrees, writing in his Foreword, "This is not a book to speed-read, to read for study or for the acquisition of knowledge. No, it demands for the words to be read, and the images gazed upon, in the manner of the practice of *Lectio Divina*" (xv). The intention to provide an aid to prayer did not narrow Moses' focus to only Merton's contemplative works. He draws on those works, but also from every other possible source: journals, poetry, literary writings, essays on social criticism, interviews and letters.

The project is carefully organized. There are six Parts: "Encountering God" (1-19); "Living the Gospel" (21-48); "Learning to Pray" (49-69); "Embracing the World" (71-108); "The Church Looks beyond Itself" (109-23) and "On Being in Christ" (125-141). Each part begins with a three-to-four page introduction, situating the subject in the context of Merton's life and writing. The introductions get to the heart of Merton's thinking, focusing on events from his life and aspects of his writing, and are remarkable for being able to do so with such brevity.

Following the introduction, each Part is then divided into several themes. Within Part Two: "Living the Gospel," we find themes such as "The Priority of Love" (46-48) and "The Desert" (39-42). Each theme is divided into sub-themes. Under the theme "The Priority of Love" are found sub-themes such as "Being Alive" (47), "A New World in Christ" (47-48) and "The Ground of All" (48). Each sub-theme then has a short anthology of passages. Every Merton quotation includes a footnote referencing its origin should the reader desire to review it in its original context.

There are twenty-eight themes, and each one commences with an

2. John Moses, *Divine Discontent: The Prophetic Voice of Thomas Merton* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014).

3. John Moses, *The Desert: An Anthology for Lent* (New York: Morehouse, 1998).

4. John Moses, *The Language of Love: Exploring Prayer – An Anthology* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2007).

example of Merton's visual art. The images are not large. Some are as small as one inch by two inches; others as large as three inches by three inches. They have a reasonable amount of detail, but would be more compelling and better enable the reader's involvement were they half- or full-page reproductions.

Moses comments on each image, but his comments are not those of a professional art critic. They are simple observations, accessible even to anyone who has not formally studied visual art. He will note the randomness of a sketch, the materials used, or the strength and directness of a line, to draw the reader's attention into the image. His comments include a brief reflection that connects the image to the theme of the quotations.

The brevity of Moses' commentary and reflection on Merton's art should not lead the reader to regard these as secondary to the excerpts from Merton's writing. Paul Pearson declares in the Foreword: "The power of the image was as equally important to Merton as the word." The images serve as a gateway to each theme and they should be "gazed upon . . . attentively, peacefully, and reflectively" until an impact has been made on "the imagination or the heart" (xv).[5]

The Art of Thomas Merton should initially be read from cover to cover, rather than dipped into randomly. A reader new to Merton will be able to grasp how fundamental contemplative prayer was to his life, and, if the notes are consulted, come away with the sense of how prayer informed every aspect of Merton's life and every issue he addressed. Readers familiar with Merton will find that the arrangement of themes and passages may highlight aspects of his thought that have been forgotten or previously glossed over. I found, as I consulted the notes, there were essays I wanted to re-read, and essays I had not yet read that I felt must be sourced and reviewed. Reading the book in its entirety also enables familiarity with its structure and themes, enhancing its use for personal prayer.

Kathleen Deignan has already demonstrated in *Thomas Merton: A Book of Hours*[6] that a careful selection and arrangement of Merton's prose and poetry can be crafted into a resource for the daily office. The question with which I approached Moses' anthology was whether it might function similarly as a resource for prayerful meditation? I will attempt to answer the question by sharing my personal experience with the section

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5. Jim Forest also attests to the importance of images for Merton, making particular note of the role they played in his conversion. See "Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen: Western Explorers of the Christian East"; available at: http://jimandnancyforest.com/2005/01/merton-and-henri-nouwen.

6. Thomas Merton, *A Book of Hours*, ed. Kathleen Deignan, Forward by James Finley (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2007).

of the book specifically devoted to prayer.

The introduction to Part Three: "Learning to Pray" (49-52) touches on Merton's pre-conversion experience of prayer as a teenager, then looks briefly at his experience while at Columbia and Gethsemani. Moses speaks of Merton's wit and humor, but also draws on Dom Flavian Burns' recollection that Merton could sit in chapel for thirty minutes without moving a muscle or spend three hours in uninterrupted mental prayer. Moses offers that Merton "knew too well the confusions and the contradictions with which we live, and it was there – precisely there – in the midst of the struggle, in the midst of personal anguish, that prayer must put down its roots" (50).

The theme of "The Experience of Prayer" (56-68) in Part Three begins with an unusual image. The bottom left and upper right sections of the page contain curved strokes, while the lower right and upper left sections are dominated by straight lines that seemingly fade into nothing as they draw near to the page's edge. Throughout the center area the strokes are mixed, lines and curves intersecting. The unusual character of the image comes from Merton's brush strokes. Either his brush was dry or he had intentionally used very little ink. Each bristle appears to make its own separate line, but none are continuous. Within each stroke, though the eye may discern a line, the reality is that the perceived movement is actually a series of segments that never connect. The effect is random, almost chaotic. Moses reflects, "Sister Wendy Beckett speaks of entering God's energy when we pray, and something of what those words might mean is captured for me by this drawing. Could it be that the God who is all in all moves within the nerve endings of our fractured and disconnected prayers, enabling us to touch the rays we cannot see, to feel the light that seems to sing?" (56).

The anthology that follows includes phrases admonishing us to begin "with the realization of our nothingness and helplessness in the presence of God," and to "start where you are" (57). We are advised that "progress in prayer comes from the Cross and humiliation," and told that there are times "when prayer becomes impossible and your heart turns to stone" (59). Nothingness, humiliation and stony hearts are offset with "How I pray is breathe," and "Learn how to meditate on paper. . . . Learn how to contemplate works of art. . . . Know how to meditate . . . when you are waiting for a bus" (58).

I paid particular attention to this image and theme as part of my daily prayer. Following a short period of silence and saying the morning office, I spent time with the image and then slowly read through "The Experience of Prayer." The day that followed was particularly hectic,

dominated by traffic, errands that seemed to go awry and frustrations with technology – a day that did not seem to easily lend itself to prayer. Yet, my mind was brought back to Merton's image again and again, and the sense of my own "fractured and disconnected prayers," where somehow "the God who is in all moves." Could I dare trust I might find God in the midst of the day's frustrations?

The encouragement to "know how to meditate" in a variety of circumstances became a recurring thought. It is certainly something I need to work on, especially when my response to an unsolvable technological glitch was the desire to toss my phone through the nearest window. In the midst of this frustration, while navigating Toronto's perpetual traffic jam, "How I pray is breathe" emerged as a mantra. I had read the sentence many times in *Day of a Stranger*, but never in isolation from "What I wear is pants. What I do is live."[7] The genius of isolating the sentence and placing it beside the image of "the nerve endings of our fractured and disconnected prayers" allowed it to enter my consciousness in a new way, calling me again and again to remain in prayer, even if it was only the awareness that my breathing needed to be more intentional. Since then, the image and sentence have conspired to punctuate my consciousness on multiple occasions.

The Art of Thomas Merton: A Divine Passion in Word and Image can take its place alongside *Thomas Merton: A Book of Hours* as a resource for deepening prayer. John Moses has skillfully integrated image and word in this anthology, inviting these two forms of Merton's artistic expression into focused dialogue with each other. He has, in doing so, helped us see both anew, while creating a framework that beckons us into a deeper experience of prayer. This anthology surprised me. It is not the art study I had anticipated, but it has quickly become a valuable resource for meditation and prayer.

Paul Pynkoski

MERTON, Thomas, *Thomas Merton on Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose: The Philosophy of the Great Latin Fathers* (5 talks: 3 CDs); *Thomas Merton's Great Sermons and Reflections* (4 talks with Afterword by Michael W. Higgins: 2 CDs); *Thomas Merton on Literature: John Milton, T. S. Eliot, and Edwin Muir* (6 talks: 3 CDs); *Thomas Merton on William Faulkner* (6 talks with Afterword by Michael W. Higgins: 3 CDs) (Rockville, MD: Now You Know Media, 2018).

Four sets of audio recordings by Thomas Merton were released by Now

7. Thomas Merton, *Day of a Stranger* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, 1981) 41.