

Thomas Merton's Canonization Process

By Declan Deane

DA (Devil's Advocate):

God's faithful people gladly bend their knees
To saintly Umbrians and Genoese
Or sturdy Manfredonian stigmatists.
It does not seem the hour has come
When Christendom
Should toll her anthems on the Lateran Hill
For some odd anchorite from Louisville.

GA (God's Advocate):

O good *Advocatus Diaboli!*
Given the well-known case of Peter, James and John
("Could you not watch even one hour with me?"),
Is there a corner of your Pantheon
For one who knew no slumber in Gethsemani?

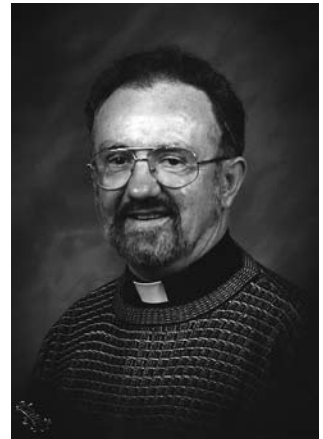
DA: We like our saints cleancut, all-Catholic,
Destined from birth for stained-glass windows,
So plaintive widows
Can lift their eyes and ferry their novenas
To where they see a shimmering of angels
About the pedestal of Heaven's Queen.
The Dalai Lama somewhat mars the scene.

GA: Oh wise *Advocatus Diaboli!*
I fear our very Savior would not qualify
To figure in your martyrology.
A motley fellowship was at his side
Both while he lived
And while he died on Calvary.

DA: The Vatican is eager for a sign.
What graves has Merton opened, raised what dead?
Has he changed stones to bread
Or water into wine?
Where are mountains Thomas has removed?
Show us a sign and then we shall believe.

GA: Oh good *Advocatus Diaboli!*
He was a gentle thaumaturge with courage to renew
The contours of our world's geography.
In faith he carried off Mount Tabor to Tibet
And brought the Himalayas to Gethsemani.

Declan Deane is a native of Achill Island, County Mayo, Ireland. He studied for the priesthood in Ireland and France as a member of the Jesuit order, and was ordained in 1972. He did post-graduate studies in Berkeley, CA, where he encountered the work of Thomas Merton through Fr. Daniel O'Hanlon, SJ. He ministered in Northern Ireland during the troubled 1980s, and is currently a priest of the Diocese of Oakland, CA.



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