

BURTON, Patricia A., *A Merton Vade Mecum: A Quick-Reference Bibliographic Handbook* (Louisville, KY: Thomas Merton Center Foundation, 1999), pp. 166. Paperback. \$20.00.

Patricia A. Burton's *Merton Vade Mecum* is a welcome publication, which is absolutely essential for either the Merton researcher or casual reader. The *Vade Mecum* closes the gap since the 1986 publication of the Breit/Daggy bibliography¹ and extends the list of publications by Merton up to the end of the seven-volume edition of the *Journals* completed in 1998. As Burton explains in her introduction, 'the *Vade Mecum*' is designed to provide a quick-reference guide to Thomas Merton's writing in the context of his life'. That is exactly what Patricia Burton has accomplished so meaningfully. She has constructed a fascinating tool, which allows the user to trace the phenomenal amount of material produced by Merton chronicling the publications and correspondence from 1931 to his death and beyond.

As a foundation Burton uses the published volumes of Merton's letters and journals, dividing the *Vade Mecum* handbook into three sections plus three appendices. The first section is the 'Timeline' (pp. 1-86), a concise listing of biographical and bibliographical information, where the user may follow the progression of Merton's seven volumes of *Journals*, five volumes of *Letters* plus the Merton-Laughlin correspondence. Merton book-length titles are included, e.g. *Thirty Poems* (November 1944), *The Seven Storey Mountain* (October 1948), *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (October 1968). Sprinkled throughout the publications and the correspondence in the 'Timeline' are 'Life' notations, which are brief entries, describing key events occurring in Merton's life. While this handbook is not a critical work by its obvious nature, the 'Timeline' is fascinating for perusing the details given for publications, letters, and Merton life passages. The user might also find it interesting to compare a time in his/her own life or other historical event to ascertain what Merton was writing and thinking at a particular time.

For each essay and poetry piece in the 'Timeline', there is a column providing which Merton publication contains the work cited, the pagination within that Merton publication and numerous references to the Notes section (pp. 125-38) where Burton provides other pertinent information concerning specific writings.

The second major section of the *Vade Mecum* is the 'Publication Lists' (pp. 87-120). This section includes titles of Merton's books (in upper case), essays (in lower case), and poetry (designated by a lower-case 'p'). Only the most recent version of Merton's book titles is referenced. This section is further enhanced with both 'See' and 'See Also' references, and the inclusion of Merton works published posthumously in the *Collectanea Cisterciensia*, *The Merton Annual* and *The Merton Seasonal*. The arrangement is presented alphabetically with the same helpful features contained in the 'Timeline' section. The publication date, when available, is included in the first data column and references to the Notes section continues to be utilitarian in unraveling the often varying titles given reworked Merton pieces.

The last major section is 'Notes'. Burton states 'the intent is to identify the intercommunication of various versions of Merton's works, and also to provide other

1. Marquita E. Breit and Robert E. Daggy, *Thomas Merton: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986).

bibliographic material which may be of interest'. Note 27 is an example of the historical progression of a Merton essay. On p. 109 in the Publications List there is an entry for 'Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives'. The entry refers to Note 27 and indicates it is in mimeo format. Note 27 also indicates when the original version was completed, when and where it was originally published plus further revision and title changes including when and where it was later published. These types of historical publishing notes are invaluable to the serious Merton scholar.

Appendices I–III complete the Burton work. Appendix I lists titles in Merton publications containing essays and indicates where many of those essays have appeared in other publications, e.g. 'Mount Athos' is included in Part I of *Disputed Questions*. It was also published under that title in the periodical *Jubilee* in August 1959. Later in December 1960, it was published again in *Catholic Digest* as 'A Mountain of Monks'. This section also contains references back to the very useful Notes section.

Appendix II collects the many short 'bulletins and chroniques' Merton produced for *Collectanea Cisterciensia* and *Cistercian Studies*. Previously unpublished Merton works, which gradually were included in *The Merton Seasonal* and *The Merton Annual*, are indexed in this section.

Finally, in Appendix III Burton discusses the history of the ban placed on Merton's writings on nuclear war in April 1962. Merton was forbidden to continue writing on the subject. Burton writes that Merton was allowed to send out mimeographs and letters, so he put the two ideas together and developed a collection of his own letters called *Cold War Letters*. Copies were mailed to anyone he thought might be interested. Eventually all were published in the five volumes of Merton's collected letters. The complete list of the letters is given in *Witness to Freedom* (pp. 17–22).

A similar conflict revolved around 'Peace in the Post-Christian Era'. Originally meant to be a book, 'Peace...' consisted of five published articles on nuclear war plus some new material. Disallowed to proceed, Merton began to send out mimeographs. The entire work was never published as a whole although many pieces were published separately. A table on p. 166 records each piece comprising the work with specifics on formats, titles which have been published, where published, and the publication date for each.

Burton's work has a monumental amount of Merton data packed into 166 pages. Any Merton researcher, Merton reader, or library will find its format very user friendly, portable, and an essential addition to any Merton collection. Perhaps a trade publisher could have offered a slicker format and greater exposure to a larger audience but we have to thank the Thomas Merton Center Foundation for its wise decision to provide the funding, making this exceptional reference publication possible. It is quite obvious that the work was a labor of love for Patricia Burton. Burton has provided other unpublished indexes for the scholars who use the Thomas Merton Studies Center, namely *Index to the 'Merton Seasonal' 1976–1999*, *'The Merton Annual' Index to Volumes 1 (1988)–10 (1997)*, and *Analysis of Six Conferences of the International Thomas Merton Society*. The *Merton Vade Mecum* plus the aforementioned are extremely valuable for providing Merton scholars and readers with a monumental amount of indexing that is a necessary supplement to the world of Merton scholarship. Burton has also created a solid foundation for the next edition of a comprehensive Thomas Merton bibliography and has demon-

strated through her interest and devotion to Merton literature the changes and development of Merton's evolving thought and philosophy.

Marquita E. Breit

DEAR, John, SJ, *The Sound of Listening: A Retreat Journal from Thomas Merton's Hermitage* (New York: Continuum), pp. 125. (Paperback). \$13.95.

Among the names of people thoroughly committed to non-violent resistance and activism for significant change resounding around the United States, if not around the world, is that of John Dear, SJ. His own personal witness gives adequate testimony to his commitment, but others familiar with that name must wonder from where such efforts of his all come.

In *The Sound of Listening* readers can get a glimpse into that part of John Dear that may remain hidden under his activism. This book has as his subtitle: *A Retreat Journal from Thomas Merton's Hermitage*, and unveils John Dear's inner spiritual journey in a quite personal way. His journal is the fruit of spending hours in Thomas Merton's own retreat house, a place Dear finds haunted with the aura of many activists before him, including this reviewer.

Through the years the monks of Gethsemani have been gracious hosts for me and for countless retreatants, and many have visited Merton's grave for a variety of reasons. I remember well one of my own personal epiphanies at that grave site on a spring day in 1982, and Dear's daily visits to Merton's grave seem to have been equally as inspirational to him.

While many visitors to that grave site would be embarrassed to publicize such personally influential moments from a private journal, Dear seems unabashed in doing so. Perhaps he is modeling for other religious activists the depths from which his own activism stems, namely, a spiritual journey that needs to be probed occasionally and regularly lest the roots of religious activism dry up, and religious activism goes dry or sour, or burns out.

It may well be that for some readers his paeans and outbursts of strong feelings of a deep and personal relationship with God and with Jesus are 'other-age' pietistic. Quoting Merton's last conference to novices in 1965, Merton spoke of being 'kissed by God', which makes John Dear discover that 'God bends down from the heavens and kisses me, embraces my soul, holds me in his hand, and then, in Christ, looks on me and smiles' (p. 68).

But then not everyone dares to make his or her own spiritual journal so public. What *The Sound of Listening* can do is to bring the activist reader to go to one's own well and drink from those waters strength needed for the struggle against injustices everywhere.

The Sound of Listening offers readers such a different side of John Dear, one that most people see as a youthful, energetic and non-violent leader, so often arrested for his actions on behalf of social justice. As an activist he runs the great risk of being drained and burned out, but as he admits in his journal (p. 112) '[T]his week, I have regained a peaceful spirit and spent glorious hours in this hermitage.'

It is gratifying to know that John Dear is refreshed and renewed. Perhaps his journal will continue to inspire the rest of us in the ways of active justice work, and help us find our own ways to be refreshed and renewed.

James E. Flynn