

No Mirror, No Light – Just This! Merton's Discovery of Global Wisdom

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*A polished mirror reflects great light;
a broken mirror generates even more;
the greatest light arises from no mirror, no light – just this!*

With superficial comprehension of its meaning, I wrote this Zen-like koan thirty years ago. As my mind wrestled with it over the ensuing years, this koan illumined my understanding of the spiritual journey. I came to realize that the light of a polished mirror reflects our true self. The light of a broken mirror is generated from our growth in compassion through the ground of our brokenness. And the great light that arises from "just this" emerges from the depths of our emptiness where there is no light or mirror, just this – God's own "suchness." In this essay, I will refer to the imagery of this koan in meditating upon Merton's writings and his path to global wisdom.

A polished mirror reflects great light . . .

Thomas Merton chose to become a mirror of love through an actualized life. His early developmental meanderings knew a woman's embrace and the intoxication not only of alcohol, but also of youthful passions which fueled his mind to interrogate the meaning of his life. That enquiry led him, in his words, "*from Prades to . . . Oakham . . . to Rome . . . to Columbia . . . to St. Bonaventure to the Cistercian Abbey of the poor men who labor in Gethsemani: That [he] may become the brother of God . . .*"¹ Within the monastery, he sought to amputate the old Merton from the monastic Fr. Louis. Instead, he discovered that Fr. Louis was an enlightened old Merton who still enjoyed the passionate pursuit of scholarship and writing, the exploration of life's meaning, and, when the occasion allowed, renewed his enjoyment of alcohol and the hugs of a young woman. He came to Gethsemani to lose himself and find God. Instead, Merton found his true self, and discovered this self was also the

1. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948) 422-23; subsequent references will be cited as "SSM" parenthetically in the text.

hiding place of the God he sought.

The path to this discovery is a spiritual journey nurtured by unseen Energy to guide and shape us into the individuality of ourselves and the personhood we become through our interactions. Always present in potentiality, it glides beneath the surface of our awareness and participates in our unconscious formation, urging us to awaken to who we are. In some, like Thomas Merton, it erupts into consciousness, enticing them into a fuller realization and exploration of their true self, translating its potentiality into actuality, becoming the person we can fully become. For Merton, this meant becoming a monk who passionately sought the Face of the living God. For him as well as for us, this spiritual exploration begins with polishing the mirror of our interior which is the conscious pursuit of purity of heart, for "Happy the pure in heart; they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8). We begin to seek purity of heart in earnest when we awake to the reality that we have a false self whose identity is built upon a lie. At its core, this false self sees itself as a god. In *The Silent Life*, Merton comments on this primal lie:

The inner, basic, metaphysical defilement of fallen man is his profound and illusory conviction that he is a god and that the universe is centered upon him. . . . Yet in our desire to be "as gods" – a lasting deformity impressed in our nature by original sin – we seek what one might call a relative omnipotence: the power to have everything we want, to enjoy everything we desire, to demand that all our wishes be satisfied and that our will should never be frustrated or opposed. . . . It is a radical falsity which rots our moral life in its very roots because it makes everything we do more or less a lie.²

Sin is at the foundation of our false selves and causes us to dedicate our life to something that God does not know. In *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton says: "And to be unknown of God is altogether too much privacy. My false and private self is the one who wants to exist outside the reach of God's will and God's love – outside of reality and outside of life. And such a self cannot help but be an illusion."³

Sin causes us to worship our false selves as an idol and es-

2. Thomas Merton, *The Silent Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1957) 13-15.

3. Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961) 34.

tranges us from our true selves. In *Thomas Merton in Alaska*, Merton observes: "When you think about what happens if our life is really dedicated to something other than God, then we are first of all alienated, and in a certain sense we are worshipping an idol. We are giving our total allegiance to something that is unreal, something artificial that is not the ultimate reality. That again is the meaning of alienation."⁴ In addition to alienating us from our true selves, sin and its effects strike at the very depths of our personality. It disrupts our orientation to God which is the foundation of personhood and personality. Merton writes in *No Man Is an Island*:

Sin strikes at the very depth of our personality. It destroys the one reality on which our true character, identity, and happiness depend: our fundamental orientation to God. We are created to will what God wills, to know what He knows, to love what He loves. Sin is the will to do what God does not will, to know what He does not know, to love what He does not love. Therefore every sin is a sin against truth, a sin against obedience, and against love.⁵

Sin predicates our false selves upon a lie whose roots Merton traces to original sin. This lie insinuates that if we eat the apple of the knowledge of good and evil we will be like God. However, the knowledge of good and evil is to "will to do what God does not will, to know what He does not know, to love what He does not love." Hence the lie creates a false self which in fact is that which is not like God.

To recover our true selves, we have to acknowledge this lie. Merton observes in his essay "The Recovery of Paradise" in *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, "Once we find ourselves in the state of 'knowledge of good and evil' we have to accept the fact and understand our position, see it in relation to the innocence for which we were created, which we have lost and which we can regain."⁶ We recover our innocence by grace – choosing growth and integration over division and death, by choosing to love rather than to hate, by choosing to create rather than to destroy. We polish our

4. Thomas Merton, *Thomas Merton in Alaska: The Alaskan Conferences, Journals, and Letters*, ed. Robert E. Daggy (New York: New Directions, 1989) 76; subsequent references will be cited as "TMA" parenthetically in the text.

5. Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955) 84.

6. Thomas Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (New York: New Directions, 1968) 128; subsequent references will be cited as "ZBA" parenthetically in the text.

interior mirror by following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, our source of grace, our guide and our destination. By our choice to follow or reject the Spirit, we are either the mirrors of love and life or of hate and death.

Thomas Merton chose to become a mirror of love and life. He tells us in *The Seven Storey Mountain* of his own journey to escape the lie of his false self. In the silence of a Cistercian monastery, he sought in earnest to live the proclamation of Ephesians 5:8: "you were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be as children of light." He became a prayerful penitent and seeker of grace, which he found to be a constructive and integrative energy. He opened himself to the grace transmitted through the sacraments of the Church but also hidden in nature and in one another. Realizing that the "only source of the spiritual life is the Holy Spirit,"⁷ Merton believes grace prompts us to seek the truth of ourselves and our lives as we seek the Truth that is God.

He sought the guidance of that source to recover his true self. He followed the Spirit's inspirations to the core of his being where he awakened to his true identity in Christ. In *The Inner Experience*, we read:

But in fact the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, the New Adam, completely restored human nature to its spiritual condition and made possible the divinization of every man coming into the world. This meant that in each one of us the inner self was now able to be awakened and transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit, and this awakening would not only enable us to discover our true identity "in Christ," but would also make the living and Risen Savior present in us. . . . Each one of us, in some sense, is able to be completely transformed into the likeness of Christ, to become, as He is, divinely human, and thus to share His spiritual authority and charismatic power in the world.⁸

Our true self and identity is a one-of-a-kind mirror of that babe held in Mary's arms. When we come to know our true selves, we,

7. Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971) 271; subsequent references will be cited as "CWA" parenthetically in the text.

8. Thomas Merton, *The Inner Experience: Notes on Contemplation*, ed. William H. Shannon (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2003) 38; subsequent references will be cited as "IE" parenthetically in the text.

in some degree, have returned to paradise as a new man with a measure of the innocence present before the fall. Merton states in "The Recovery of Paradise": "This . . . is what the Fathers called 'purity of heart,' and it corresponds to a recovery of the innocence of Adam in Paradise" (ZBA 120).

Through our fervent pursuit of God, which in reality is our response to God's pursuit of us, we arrive at the realization that our identity is hidden in the identity of Christ. Grace enables us to break through our false self to discover that the true identity of self is a unique and individual expression of our personhood in Christ. This is our true self. With this realization, we have polished our interior mirror which reflects much light. It reflects the light of truth – the truth of who we are, the truth of how we should live, and the Truth of the Presence of God, concretized in our existence. However, this is not the end of our journey but only the preparation needed to make a true spiritual beginning. Merton continues in his essay, "The Recovery of Paradise":

Purity of heart is not the *ultimate end* of the monk's striving in the desert. It is only a step towards it. . . . Paradise is not the final goal of the spiritual life. It is, in fact, only a return to the true beginning. It is a "fresh start." The monk who has realized in himself purity of heart and has been restored, in some measure, to the innocence lost by Adam, has still not ended his journey. He is only ready to begin. (ZBA 131)

Our recovered true self is an infant and like the infant, Jesus, must mature. In the spiritual journey, which is the trajectory of life itself, every arrival is the beginning of another departure.

A broken mirror generates even more . . .

This departure parallels the maturation of Jesus who grew in "wisdom and grace" which leads to suffering and the cross. The path involves a connatural identification with nature and immersion in the sacraments themselves as well as the living sacraments which are those we encounter – all animated by the Spirit, the source of wisdom and grace. The signature of our growth is an increase in love and compassion. Realizing one's true identity makes one more acutely aware of one's humanity, its fragility and brokenness, and one's kinship with others. As we become more aware of the divine spark of love at the center of our being, we become more human, not less. The presence of this love allows us to identify with our

brothers and sisters. In *The Wisdom of the Desert*, Merton observes: "Love demands a complete inner transformation – for without this we cannot possibly come to identify ourselves with our brother. We have to become, in some sense, the person we love."⁹

This love, through prayer, also opens us to a deeper level of conscience which manifests God's life in us in which we and God work together for the benefit of our neighbor. In *Thomas Merton in Alaska*, we read: "The deepest level of conscience is beyond both consciousness and moral conscience; it is beyond thinking and self-awareness and decision. It is the conscience of God in us, it is where the Holy Spirit operates. . . . Prayer is opening up this deepest conscience and consciousness, . . . in which God and I work together" (TMA 130-31). This conscience leads us to join those who labor in the vineyard, those who choose peace over war, equality over inequality, laws that promote unity and justice over those that foster division and greed. We join those who stand with the poor, the disenfranchised, the victims and refugees of society. We build a community which radiates the light of the truth of the redeemed human condition and the proper relationships of men governed justly.

Our growth in wisdom and grace propels us to grow in Christ's compassion whose essence centers on the reality of the Word becoming Flesh that man may become divine. This compassion for ourselves and neighbors urges us to desire what He desires, that we all may be joined to His Divinity. The path to that quest leads through the heart of our own brokenness and allows us to identify with the brokenness of others. We explore our own brokenness as a prerequisite for healing and discover the deep wounds within us which must be lanced before they can heal. This exploration provides the ground of compassion for the brokenness of our fellow men and even enables us to experience their sin as if it were our own. In his book, *Gandhi on Non-Violence*, Merton provides this insight:

In St. Thomas Aquinas, we find a totally different view of evil. Evil is not only reversible but is the proper motive of that mercy by which it is overcome and changed into good. Replying to the objection that moral evil is not the motive for mercy since

9. Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century* (New York: New Directions, 1960) 18; subsequent references will be cited as "WD" parenthetically in the text.

the evil of sin deserves indignation and punishment rather than mercy and forgiveness, St. Thomas says that on the contrary *sin itself is already a punishment* "and in this respect we feel sorrow and compassion for sinners." In order to do this we have to be able to *experience their sin as if it were our own*. But those who "consider themselves happy and whose *sense of power depends on the idea that they are beyond suffering any evil* are not able to have mercy on others" by experiencing the evil of others as their own.¹⁰

If we are in mystery one body in Christ, we are also one body in brokenness. As we seek the integration of our body, mind, and soul, we become the source of integration and reconciliation for others. Animated by the Spirit, we increasingly become living sacraments of reconciliation for one another and become a force for unity and integration in the world. As we reorient ourselves to God, we reorient ourselves to the natural world and our relationships with our neighbors. We are assisted in this by Jesus who not only possessed the unique flesh of his body, born of Mary, but in mystery clothed himself with the flesh of all humanity. We are all one body, his family, reconciled through his intercession. We become the persons described in *Thomas Merton in Alaska* who realize that the "foundation of our life is that the Spirit is given and that we are led by the Spirit. Our life should flow from the presence of the Spirit in us, from the freedom of the Spirit in us" (*TMA* 77). Living a life flowing from the presence of the Spirit within us, we assist step by step, and imperceptibly, in building up the Kingdom of God. Our participation in this task is essential according to Merton, who wrote in "The Recovery of Paradise": "The world was created without man, but the new creation which is the true Kingdom of God is to be the work of God in and through man. It is to be the great, mysterious, theandric work of the Mystical Christ, the New Adam, in whom all men as 'one Person' or one 'Son of God' will transfigure the cosmos and offer it resplendent to the Father" (*ZBA* 132).

In summary, we as the broken body of Christ seek healing through our individual and collective reconciliation. Through our growth in integration and wholeness, we grow in love and compassion. We heal as we are healed, and we become living sac-

10. Thomas Merton, ed., *Gandhi on Non-Violence: Selected Texts from Non-Violence in Peace and War* (New York: New Directions, 1964) 12.

raments of reconciliation, one to another. In the process, we share in the healing light generated by Christ on the Cross, captured by a phrase in the song, "Small Two of Pieces": "Broken mirror, a million shades of light." However, there is even a greater degree of integration possible and a brighter and more mysterious light.

... the greatest light arises from no mirror, no light – just this!

Merton points the way. Within the confines of a monastery and his vocation as a monk, he journeyed in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit. It led him to the restoration of his true self and his unique identity in Christ. It led him to become a brother of God by knowing the "burnt men" through his identification with the suffering of the oppressed and the poor (SSM 423). It led him not only to reconciliation with God, but also to his neighbors of many cultures and religious traditions. It led him to global wisdom and it led him to a final integration giving birth to a comprehensive self which accepts all mankind. In *Contemplation in a World of Action*, we read Merton's oft-quoted description of final integration:

The man who has attained final integration is no longer limited by the culture in which he has grown up. "He has embraced *all of life*..." He passes beyond all these limiting forms, while retaining all that is best and most universal in them, "finally giving birth to a fully comprehensive self." He accepts not only his own community, his own society, his own friends, his own culture, but all mankind. He does not remain bound to one limited set of values in such a way that he opposes them aggressively or defensively to others. He is fully "Catholic" in the best sense of the word. He has a unified vision and experience of the one truth shining out in all its various manifestations, some clearer than others, some more definite and more certain than others. He does not set these partial views up in opposition to each other, but unifies them in a dialectic or an insight of complementarity. With this view of life he is able to bring perspective, liberty and spontaneity into the lives of others. The finally integrated man is a peacemaker, and that is why there is such a desperate need for our leaders to become such men of insight. (CWA 212)

Integrated persons such as Merton appear open to the unity and traces of wisdom which speak to them through nature, other individuals, other cultures and other religions. Merton communicates,

through his journals, books, and correspondence, an openness to global wisdom, which is "the one truth shining out in all its various manifestations" wherever it may be found. His search for that one truth appears to be a vital part of his vocation, expressed in his wish to reconcile to some extent these disparate traditions by deeply entering into them and reconciling them within himself. In his journal we read of Merton's desire to "emphasize, clarify the living content of spiritual traditions, especially the Xtian, but also the Oriental, by entering myself deeply into their disciplines and experience, not for myself only but for all my contemporaries who may be interested and inclined to listen. This is for the restoration of man's sanity and balance, that he may return to the ways of freedom and of peace, if not in my time, at least some day soon."¹¹

A. M. Allchin comments on this aspect of Merton's vocation:

Here we find Merton beginning to realize something of the catholicity, the universality of the human person, discovering his own vocation to become, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that truly universal catholic person whom we see at the end of his life. His vocation is to cross frontiers, to cross frontiers in time, searching back into the past, and to cross barriers in space, barriers of language and culture and political situation and deep historical prejudice. We see here his sense that he is called to unite in himself the vision, the experience, the understanding of many times and many places, to hold them together in one and to share them with his own contemporaries.¹²

As a fruit of this openness to global wisdom, Merton explodes with creativity and spontaneity in his works, prototypic of the Zen man. It is the spontaneity and dance of the Spirit in creation, moving with minimal impedance in the fully integrated person. As Jesus proclaims, "The wind blows wherever it pleases . . . That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit" (Jn. 3:8). And it can blow a responsive individual like Merton into some unexpected corners. Merton's intellectual, artistic, and spiritual enquiries were truly vast as well as his receptivity to global wisdom shown in these

11. Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward the World: The Pivotal Years. Journals*, vol. 4: 1960-1963, ed. Victor A. Kramer (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996) 155 [8/22/61].

12. A. M. Allchin, "Our Lives, A Powerful Pentecost: Merton's Meeting with Russian Christianity," in *Merton and Hesychasm: The Prayer of the Heart*, ed. Bernadette Dieker and Jonathan Montaldo (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2003) 130.

few examples. Through the gaze of his interior, Shaker architecture was seen as an expression of the sacred. He could say: "Among the Sioux Indians, together with a very rich and varied liturgical life, we find the curiously moving individual and contemplative mystery of 'crying for a vision'" (IE 29), or "It is well known that in the Orient, in China, India, Japan, and Indonesia, the religious and contemplative life has been fostered for centuries and has known a development of unparalleled richness" (IE 29). In his lecture in Bangkok immediately before his death, he declared:

And I believe that by openness to Buddhism, to Hinduism, and to these great Asian traditions, we stand a wonderful chance of learning more about the potentiality of our own traditions, because they have gone, from the natural point of view, so much deeper into this than we have. The combination of the natural techniques and the graces and the other things that have been manifested in Asia and the Christian liberty of the gospel should bring us all at last to that full and transcendent liberty which is beyond mere cultural differences and mere externals – and mere this or that.¹³

Although unaware of his destination as a young monastic, Merton chronicled his journey in faith as its Light led him in new and creative paths to experience the global wisdom of other religions and Zen. He sought to integrate and reconcile in himself the truths of these other traditions as a forebearer of unity among mankind at a deep spiritual level. His was an ever-expanding retreat from a false self with its illusions to a recovery of his true self which realized that we had to recover what we already are: at our deepest core there is no mirror or light, "just this" immersion of our being in Love where we are already one. In a talk in Calcutta near the end of his life, Merton emphasizes this point: "My dear brothers, we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. And what we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are" (AJ 308).

At the core of Merton's monastic journey was his ever deepening union with Christ and Christ's prayer, "May they all be one" (Jn. 17:21), in which Christ's petition to his Father assures its fulfillment in responsive hearts. As early as July 4, 1952, his poetic "Fire

13. Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journal*, ed. Naomi Burton Stone, Brother Patrick Hart and James Laughlin (New York: New Directions, 1973) 343; subsequent references will be cited as "AJ" parenthetically in the text.

Watch" essay speaks of his union with the Father.

You, Who sleep in my breast, are not met with words, but in the emergence of life within life and of wisdom within wisdom. You are found in communion: Thou in me and I in Thee and Thou in them and they in me: dispossession within dispossession, dispassion within dispassion, emptiness within emptiness, freedom within freedom. I am alone. Thou art alone. The Father and I are One.¹⁴

As this union matured, Thomas Merton and Fr. Louis vanished into the solitude of God. In getting lost in God, Merton became lost to himself. In *The Monastic Journey*, Merton speaks of the relationship of a hermit to God:

Beyond and in all this, he possesses his solitude, the riches of his emptiness, his interior poverty: but of course, it is not a possession. It is an established fact. It is there. It is assured. In fact, it is inescapable. It is everything – his whole life. It contains God, surrounds him with God, plunges him in God. So great is his poverty that he does not even see God; so great are his riches that he is lost in God and lost to himself. He is never far enough away from God to see Him in perspective, or as an object. He is swallowed up in Him, and therefore, so to speak, never sees Him at all.¹⁵

This profound solitude hollowed him out, deepening his interior poverty and emptiness. He illustrates this point, in *The Monastic Journey*, by describing the prayer life of the hermit as a profound unknowing of himself, of beating his head against the roots of his own existence:

the hermit, all day and all night, beats his head against a wall of doubt. That is his contemplation. . . . a kind of unknowing of his own self, a kind of doubt that questions the very roots of his existence, a doubt which undermines his very reasons for existing and for doing what he does. It is this doubt which reduces him finally to silence, and in the silence which ceases to ask questions, he receives the only certitude he knows: the

14. Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953) 361-62.

15. Thomas Merton, *The Monastic Journey*, ed. Brother Patrick Hart (Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews & McMeel, 1977) 159; subsequent references will be cited as "MJ" parenthetically in the text.

presence of God in the midst of uncertainty and nothingness, as the only reality. (MJ 159)

Beating his head against the very roots of his existence, Merton appears on the threshold of a complete emptiness which he may have realized at Polonnaruwa where the giant statues evoked an interior explosion causing him to exclaim “everything is emptiness and everything is compassion” (AJ 235). In such an empty person, there would be no mirror to reflect light or brokenness to generate light, “just this” very ground of life, itself. (Incidentally, Merton characterized Nirvana in an essay published the year of his death as: “Absolute Emptiness is Absolute Compassion” [ZBA 86].)

Such a person may also have attained perfect prayer. St. Anthony describes perfect prayer when he states that “the prayer of the monk is not perfect until he no longer realizes himself or the fact that he is praying” (WD 8-9). Similarly in *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, Merton suggests: “In either case the highest illumination of love is an explosion of the power of Love’s evidence in which all the psychological limits of an ‘experiencing’ subject are dissolved and what remains is the transcendent clarity of love itself, realized in the ego-less subject in a mystery beyond comprehension but not beyond consent” (ZBA 86-87).

Merton provides us with a Zen-like description of the effect of this profound emptiness in his description of the wise virgins. He states that these virgins wait with lighted lamps with an emptiness containing the suchness of God: “the innocence of the wise virgins who wait with lighted lamps, with an emptiness that is enkindled by the glory of the Divine Word and enflamed with the presence of the Holy Spirit. That glory and that presence are not objects which ‘enter into’ emptiness to ‘fill’ it. They are nothing else but God’s own ‘suchness’” (ZBA 133).

It is “just this” suchness which radiates a brilliant light in those like the wise virgins. In his conferences on Christian mysticism, we find Merton’s description of the light emanating from those who seek to unite the wisdom of God in things with the light of wisdom within themselves:

Man by *theoria* is able to unite the hidden wisdom of God in things with the hidden light of wisdom in himself. The meeting and marriage of these two brings about a *resplendent clarity* within man himself, and this clarity is the presence of Divine Wisdom fully recognized and active in him. Thus man becomes

a mirror of the divine glory, and is resplendent with divine truth not only in his *mind* but in his *life*. He is filled with the light of wisdom which shines forth in him, and thus God is glorified in him. At the same time he exercises a spiritualizing influence in the world by the work of his hands which is in accord with *the creative wisdom of God* in things and in history.¹⁶

A visitor to St. Seraphim, a Russian hermit, describes how blinding that light may be. When he is asked by St. Seraphim to look at him, he says: "I cannot look . . . because lightning is flashing from your eyes. Your face has become brighter than the sun, and my eyes ache with pain."¹⁷ From this visitor's description, it would appear that this light is brighter than that of those who have polished their interior mirror in finding their true selves or those further along the path that radiate the light of a broken mirror in compassionate union with Christ's suffering in humanity. For no light emerges from them except God's own Light which is the Light of the Holy Spirit. In *Mystics and Zen Masters*, Merton comments on St. Seraphim and this light:

an apprehension of the invisible as visible insofar as all creation is suddenly experienced as transfigured in a light for which there is no accounting in terms of any philosophy, a light which is given directly by God, proceeds from God, and in a sense *is* the Divine Light. Yes this experience is not a substantial vision of God, because in Oriental theology the light experienced by the mystic is a divine "energy," distinct from God's nature but which can be apprehended in contact with the *Person* of the Holy Spirit, by mystical love and grace.¹⁸

In directly encountering "God's own 'suchness'" (ZBA 133), this visitor encountered the divine energy as a blinding light emanating from the Holy Spirit. It is the light seen by the apostles on Mt. Tabor and the light perceived by those whose fidelity to the Spirit has given them eyes to see. I believe that Thomas Merton was one of those persons who had eyes to see "just this."

16. Thomas Merton, *An Introduction to Christian Mysticism: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 3*, ed. Patrick F. O'Connell (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2008) 125-76.

17. St. Seraphim of Sarov, *Spiritual Instructions*, trans. Seraphim Rose (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1996) 99.

18. Thomas Merton, *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967) 182.

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