

Thurston opens alternative angles for thought. The result broadens and refines our understanding. In the Foreword, Br. Paul Quenon, OCSO describes “a lucidity and balance, an engaging counterpoint of themes that does justice to Merton’s multifaceted thought yet retains basic simplicity” (xii) in his reading of the book. Thurston’s achievement invites and challenges readers to meet Merton as a fellow traveler, a fellow seeker and a fellow human being.

Bernadette McNary-Zak

MALEWITZ, THOMAS E., *Authenticity, Passion, and Advocacy: Approaching Adolescent Spirituality from the Life and Wisdom of Thomas Merton*, Foreword by Thomas Del Prete (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020), pp. xxi, 184. ISBN: 978-2-5326-8222-3 (paper) \$24.00.

“Trust the process” is a rather vague phrase that we often hear when it comes to the discomfort inherent in personal and social change and growth. But in his book *Authenticity, Passion, and Advocacy: Approaching Adolescent Spirituality from the Life and Wisdom of Thomas Merton*, Thomas E. Malewitz unpacks a process for us that, like much good teaching and direction, is rooted in a deep acknowledgement of, and appreciation for, the whole human. Malewitz seamlessly brings together the practical and the mystical. He does this by showing us how by practically making time and space for the mystical, the mystical becomes a quite practical aspect of our lives that is accessible in our daily activities and unfolds in the context of our relationships.

In any given society, the welfare of our children ranks high on our lists of stated priorities. However, the lack of comprehensive well-being among many individuals and groups in our societies does not reflect that priority and suggests that desire alone cannot create desired outcomes. Many of the maladies in our families and societies arise from the lack of an intentional formation of the whole individual: body, mind and spirit formed in the context of an openness and mutuality that can only exist in loving community. Lack of formation can lead to a disconnect from the awareness of the divine image living in each of us.

Malewitz has written a book for our time and place precisely because it is a book for every time and place. It is a book about the timeless made manifest in human character in real-time in a particular time and place. Practical, wise, grounded, but with an ear to the mystical and transcendent, this book is a must-read for parents, educators and those seeking to recover lost aspects of their earlier selves. As a psychotherapist and father of three, I am aware that the child within each of us is always present and often calling out to us in some way. As Anne Lamott has said, “We are

every age we have ever been.”

In this book, Malewitz often mentions the passion of Merton, but it is also the passion of the author, a life-long educator, that guides this well-crafted treatise with grace, care and concern for the life of each individual. Adolescents are presented here as both discoverers in the world and citizens of the world. With the skill of a seasoned educator, Malewitz points the reader toward a simultaneous focus on the inward journey, the outward manifestation or fruit of the journey, and the space where the inner and outer meet in the relational realm. As modern educational systems largely continue to reflect their roots as formed in light of, and in response to, the Industrial Revolution, the author calls us to a higher vision and a more holistic practice of education.

Though they may balk at times, adolescents crave the firmness of true conviction and depth of character in the adults around them. The author’s inclusion of correspondence between Merton and those seeking his guidance during developmentally difficult times in their lives provides a glimpse of how tender, but also how straightforward and concise, Merton was in his reflections and responses. In his correspondence with teen readers, Merton advocated for service-mindedness and an appreciation for the psychological nature of humanity as the basis of wisdom, character development and a life that bends towards justice. Malewitz highlights how these qualities of being were exemplified in both Merton’s guidance and his embodied practice. Therefore, this model is available to the reader as an example of how one can live in such a way that is authentic in that it considers both our unique capacities and unique limitations.

Merton is presented here as not merely seeking justice through actions or writing, but through self-development and embodied practice, by “doing good” while grounded in a deep knowing of who we truly are. Merton as advocate for unitive consciousness is presented here as well. Addressing our dualities, our splits, is how we create real justice. As an advocate for unitive consciousness, Merton points the way for healing the splits in our own consciousness as our contribution to the healing of the collective.

Addressing cultural deficiencies related to adolescent spirituality means we must acknowledge that rites of passage are largely missing in our time and place. Acknowledging this truth, and the grieving and loss of soul related to this truth, is a necessary step in re-establishing meaningful rhythms for adolescent development that can aid adolescents in their transitions into adulthood. The lack of positive initiatory experiences creates a void in which the more destructive rituals of this life-stage take center stage during the formation of identity and depth of character. No

one escapes this life-stage unscathed, and Merton's own struggles with abandonment, bullying and excess are addressed here both in contrast to, and as a catalyst for, his vision for a more holistic formation of body, mind and spirit.

As a parent and practitioner, I have witnessed the cruelty of bullying and the attendant suffering it creates. I believe that the section of this book dedicated to Merton's experiences of being bullied as well as his remorse for having bullied others is alone worth the price of the book. Having bullying and its effects framed in spiritual terms in Merton's own words is a balm that I will be pointing others toward and will be returning to myself again and again. Merton here refers to bullying as sin itself in that it is a rejection of love because "we simply do not want it" (138). Furthermore, Malewitz and Merton guide the reader to the inward surrender and outward opening that lead to true healing, intrapsychically as well as interpersonally. Merton then points the reader to the hidden ground of love with the reminder that the "great thing" is "to be used by God's love" (xiv-xv).

At the heart of Malewitz's offering is the mantra that education must provide for self-discovery. One's education is a foundation for life-long growth. Education can spark or stifle, expand or confine, accelerate or arrest one's unfolding as an individual as well as one's ability to unfold into the collective in a healthy and life-giving way. Education, at its best, is the launchpad for a life of meaning, purpose, depth, and the ability to be other-focused while continuing to expand as an individual and as a global citizen across the life-span. In essence, providing the container necessary for maturity and character development are two of the most profound things that education and educators can provide at such a developmentally crucial time with life-long consequences.

Merton himself taught in the university and monastery settings. He also supported others in their development via his voluminous correspondence. Drawing from indirect mentor/teacher exchanges in his correspondence with teen readers posing questions about life and how to live it, we see Merton setting these budding humans up for the task of living into the question of how one is to define themselves authentically and spontaneously in relation to their world.

The moral component of education is something that we truly need if we are to be a sane and rational species. A commitment to the dignity of self and other in relationships seems like a lost art so much of the time, and it can be difficult to know where to start – so much so that many of us, despite our best intentions, often become stuck when it comes to translating spiritual concepts into daily embodied practice. The educator

Malewitz, knowing this, provides ample opportunities for self-reflection at the end of each chapter, complete with links to media-based examples of core concepts covered in the chapter as they are represented in popular culture. This is a brilliant method of reinforcing the material from an archetypal perspective in ways that can be enjoyed by a single reader or shared by a classroom, family or study group. At the end of each chapter, readers will also find questions and reflections that are fertile starting places for internal processing and/or group processing.

As a psychotherapist who spend my days helping repair the ways in which we suffer across the lifespan due to the ways in which our trajectories are impacted during adolescence, I sincerely believe that this is a book that could change the world one person at a time and will be of great value to anyone touched by the wisdom and vision contained within its pages.

Tony Caldwell

PYCIOR, Julie Leininger, *Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and the Greatest Commandment: Radical Love in Times of Crisis*, Foreword by Rowan Williams (New York: Paulist Press, 2020), pp. xxix + 233. ISBN 978-0-8091-5515-6 (paper) \$29.95.

Julie Leininger Pycior's book on the friendship of Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton is clearly a labor of love, on more than one level – both personal and professional, both as topic and as motivation. It developed, as the author relates in her Prologue, from a sleepless Christmas Eve in the late 1990s as she wrestled with the question of how to live out the scriptural “greatest commandment” in her own circumstances as a secure Manhattan College history professor in her comfortable suburban home. Recognizing that this struggle for faithful discipleship takes many forms, she descends to her living room and pulls from her bookcase Thomas Merton's *The Hidden Ground of Love*, which contains his letters to Dorothy Day. Reading them, she reflects on the very different lives of the Cistercian contemplative Merton and the radical Catholic Worker activist Day, who nevertheless recognized and supported one another's efforts “to bear witness to love of God and neighbor” (xiv) through a decade of correspondence in the particularly turbulent atmosphere of the 1960s, the “times of crisis” of her book's subtitle. She finds in them a complementarity, a “powerful synergy” (xiv) in which Day's love of neighbor, the marginalized and despised “least of these,” is rooted in and sustained by love of God, and Merton's love of God, expressed in monastic prayer and contemplative silence, leads to compassion and prophetic advocacy for those oppressed by war, poverty and prejudice (see 8). This insight led to more than two decades of research and reflection culminating in