

that garments are being produced and commodified in ways that create grave eco-social harm. Next, she considers St. Clare of Assisi's insights, by attending to her relationship to and treatment of textiles, including through her own devoted practice of sewing linens. Lastly, Kealty reflects on our capacity for envisioning and enfleshing a more just and sustainable garment industry, inspired by the life of St. Clare.

In "Thomas Merton, Original Unity, and Indigenous Eco-Theology" (135-49), Kaitlyn Lightfoot reflects on Merton's sense of the "original unity of creation" (136), as well as his engagement with Indigenous wisdom, particularly the wisdom of the Zapotec People. For Lightfoot, Merton guides his readers to recognize that in order to move through ecological catastrophe, we need to convert away from the selfishness of the false self, and the selfishness of the systems of sin that the false self forms and is formed by. We need to convert toward our original unity, our "communion with God, humanity, and all creation" (139). Lightfoot emphasizes that Merton gained deep insight by studying and reflecting on the Zapotec people. She proposes that those who are interested in recovering our original unity should turn to listen deeply to the wisdom of Indigenous peoples and traditions, a wisdom that has been "suppressed and silenced by the colonizing church and society" (142).

As we navigate the entangled crises of our moment while reclaiming our place in the wider web of life, this book can be a powerful guide. As we strive to resist and replace worldviews, practices and systems that breed injustice and ecological degradation, while envisioning and enfleshing a more just and sustainable future, this book can be a powerful guide. We can turn to the green saints lifted up by this book as our friends and our guides, our companions on the path of ecological conversion.

James Robinson

HORAN, Daniel P., *Fear and Faith: Hope and Wholeness in a Fractured World* (New York: Paulist Press, 2024), pp. xviii + 97. ISBN 978-0-809-5693-1 (paper) \$16.95.

In this short but compelling book, Daniel Horan examines a natural emotion and offers hope as an antidote to its exploitation by some contemporary church leaders and politicians in the United States and elsewhere. Following his brief introduction (ix-xviii), in chapter 1, "Natural and Unnatural Fear, Rational and Irrational Hope" (1-24), Horan draws on works by contemporary analysts as well as an essay by Thomas Merton, "Advent: Hope or Delusion."<sup>1</sup> As summarized by Horan, Merton de-

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1. Thomas Merton, *Seasons of Celebration* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux,

constructs the banality of popular expressions of hope and lays bare the seriousness of authentic Christian hope.

Chapter 2, “Prophetic Faith in the Face of Fear” (25-52), draws from the Bible, the Gospel of Mark in particular, and contemporary sources including Stephen Sondheim’s musical *Into the Woods* and Merton’s essay “The Root of War Is Fear.”<sup>1</sup> Horan highlights two pertinent insights in the latter. First, Merton challenges readers to resist polarization and vilification that come with succumbing to fear of the Other. Second, Merton presents to us as fact, that “only love – which means humility – can exorcise the fear which is at the root of all war” (36-37).

In chapter 3, “Developing a Theology of the Spirit in a Time of Crisis” (53-72), Horan argues that fear can lead to apathy. Humans express such lethargy when they close themselves inwardly to avoid suffering, build walls to shut out others, or protect themselves narcissistically at any cost, even the loss of capacity to live joyfully.

As he concludes (73-87), Horan highlights his concern that fear is contributing to the fracturing of our Christian identity and relationships. He cites examples by which we cultivate a spirit of distrust and selfishness and/or attitudes that paralyze us in the face of the divine call to interdependent living. In response, Horan reflects on the importance of the Holy Spirit in our embrace of the Christian life, notably its role in nurturing the communion of saints. He writes:

God became human to show us how wrong succumbing to that sort of mentality really is, but we – Jesus’ siblings . . . refuse to listen. Our ancestors were threatened by Jesus’ message then, and Jesus’s self-proclaimed followers too often ignore the challenge of his message today. The choice before us now is the same one Jesus presented to his hearers two millennia ago: Will you follow God’s will or your own? To follow God’s will is to pursue the path of wholeness, of interdependence, of hope. . . . The rational hope of Christianity remains the goal and mission placed before us. The beauty of God’s call is that it is never too late to begin again, to renew oneself in the commitment to live the gospel and walk in the footprints of Jesus Christ, to prioritize wholeness over fracture, to heed the Spirit’s call, and to become people of hope. Fear is not going away, but our response to its presence in our lives and community can and should change. (86-87)

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1965) 88-100.

1. Thomas Merton, *Passion for Peace: The Social Essays*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Crossroad, 1995) 11-19; originally published in *The Catholic Worker* 28 (October 1961) 1, 7-8.

A prolific author, Horan teaches and directs the Spirituality Institute at Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. He was the site coordinator for the ITMS Eighteenth General Meeting held there in 2023. I commend this book for general readers, as a reminder of a powerful emotion we all experience and of the Biblical injunction not to be afraid during troubling times. Witnesses cited include Hildegard of Bingen, Etty Hillesum, Oscar Romero, Thich Nhat Hanh, Dorothee Soelle, Dallas Willard and others, as well as Merton, who encourage readers to live faithfully and vulnerably, confident that God is strengthening hope.

Paul R. Dekar

BROWN, Jason M. *Dwelling in the Wilderness: Modern Monks in the American West* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 2024), pp. 169. ISBN 978-1-59534-979-8 (paper) \$18.95.

The cover of this engaging book is a picture of a strong tree whose healthy branches extend like antennae, feeling the foggy darkness that surrounds the trunk and roots. It is an image that represents the last chapter's epigraph, a poetic insight from Thomas Merton: "In the night of our technological barbarism, monks must be as trees which exist silently in the dark and by their vital presence purify the air" (123). This last chapter, "Monastic Wisdom for the Anthropocene" (123-46), considers contemporary moral and political responses to global warming and evaluates them in light of monastic practices like stability, conversion, liturgy, place-making and silence. In this way, the author's conclusion invites readers to become more intentional about wedding their spiritual practices to their ecological responsibilities. The writing is an invitation to detach from problem-solving, advocacy and public policy work, work which very often reflects or even mimics "technological barbarism," to become more fully rooted in the places, habitats and regions that sustain us. The author provides us with a model of such reflection in the epilogue (147-51), as he describes where he lives in Vancouver, and wrestles with the "settler" mentality born of colonialism that endures even in those of us practicing what he calls "contemplative Christianity" (6).

Merton is cited initially in the introduction, where the author gives us the context for his research, the result of a visit to a Carthusian monastery in Slovenia where he wandered from the tour group. Entering a grove of trees, he faced his existential anxiety and was given comfort by being present in that monastic space. In helping the reader to understand a bit of monastic history, he cites Merton's description of the first monastics