

A LETTER FROM GEORGE BUSH

At the First General Meeting of *The International Merton Society* in May 1989, the members voted to send a letter to President George Bush, Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev, Chairman Deng Xiano-ping, and Premier Li Peng. The letter pledged "support for those movements — in the Soviet Union, in the United States of America, in the Peoples' Republic of China and everywhere in the world — which are striving, through non-violent means, to achieve human freedom, justice and equality." The letter with the signatures of 180 members of the *ITMS* appeared in *The Louisville Courier-Journal* on June 4, 1989. To date only George Bush has responded to the letter.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 3, 1989

Dear Monsignor Shannon:

Thank you for your warm and thoughtful letter of support on behalf of the International Thomas Merton Society. I regret the long delay in responding. I salute your efforts to promote the ideals Thomas Merton shared with the world in his insightful literary works -- the ideals of peace, justice, and equality.

I was especially touched by your inclusion of the piece from Merton's work, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. When I speak of the thousand points of light around this country, I mean the potential service and contributions that lie at the heart of all people. Thomas Merton said, "It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely." I share his faith in people. I am confident that when we tap that point of light in all Americans, we can solve so many of the problems facing us today.

Barbara and I are grateful for your support and friendship. God bless you.

Sincerely,

