

Erasmus and Merton: Soul Friends

By Ron Dart

The name of Erasmus will never perish.

– John Colet¹

Erasmus has published volumes more full of wisdom than any which Europe has seen for ages.

– Thomas More²

I am halfway through the *Ratio Verae Theologiae* of Erasmus, loving the clarity and balance of his Latin, his taste, his good sense, his evangelical teaching. If there had been no Luther, Erasmus would now be regarded by everyone as one of the great Doctors of the Catholic Church. I like his directness, his simplicity, and his courage. All the qualities of Erasmus, and other qualities besides, were canonized in Thomas More.

– Thomas Merton³

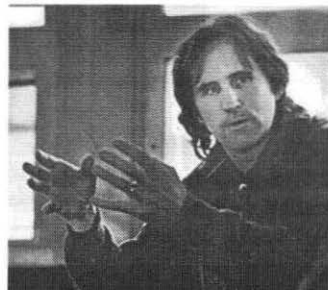
There was never anybody else on earth like Thomas Merton. I for one have never known a mind more brilliant, more beautiful, more serious, more playful.

– Mark Van Doren⁴

There is no doubt that Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) and Thomas Merton (1915-1968) are two of the most significant and towering peaks along the ridge of the historic Christian mountain range. The slow ascent up such peaks takes much time, but the scenery seen from such heights opens up full vistas of beauty, insight and clarity. Although separated by centuries, the two can be described as soul friends. Many of their concerns were the same, and both articulated these concerns in a most articulate and evocative manner.

It might seem quite reasonable to suggest that Erasmus and Merton had little in common, hence the folly of such an essay. Erasmus was raised in Holland by the Brethren of the Common Life, became an Augustinian monk at an early age, left the order a few years later and spent the remainder of his years as one of the most prominent scholars in sixteenth-century Europe. Merton, on the other hand, was raised by bohemian artistic parents, lived a rather indulgent early life, joined the strict Cistercians in his mid-twenties and remained a Trappist for the rest of his life. These outer differences, though, conceal deeper affinities, and it is these deeper affinities between Erasmus and

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Ron Dart

Merton that this essay will examine and explore. One might say that Merton was the Erasmus of the twentieth century just as Erasmus was the Merton of the sixteenth century. What is it, though, that makes Erasmus and Merton soul friends? At least nine areas that bind Erasmus and Merton together may be highlighted.

First, Hannah Arendt, in her classic work of political theory, *The Human Condition*,⁴ argued that a reversal of contemplation and action had come into being in the modern world. The *vita activa* had trumped and marginalized the *vita contemplativa*. Erasmus lived at the beginning of this historic process, and Merton resisted and opposed it in its more degenerate form. This reversal altered how both theology was done and lives were lived. Both Erasmus and Merton were suspicious of doing theology in a certain way. Both saw through the limitations of a type of scholastic and propositional theology that tantalized the mind but never, at a deep level, transformed lives. Theology had to touch a moral and contemplative depth for both men. Erasmus sliced to the core of the weaknesses in the late Medieval church and scholastic theology in his *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (1501).⁶ This tract for the times exposed much of the folly and foolishness of the age, and prepared the way for the reformation. The *Enchiridion* is a brilliant work that cuts to the depths of the human soul and spirit with surgical precision. The virtues and vices are clearly and cleanly brought into focus, and a path is pointed to that leads to substantive integrity. Erasmus argues that real wisdom is about a solid and sane understanding of the self, and most of this tract for the times outlines twenty-two rules for distinguishing between wheat and chaff, gold and dross in the outer and inner journey. The ego is exposed for what it is, and the path of inner transformation is well laid out for the attentive reader. Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*⁷ has the same probing, insightful and challenging tone to it that the *Enchiridion* does. Merton leaves no stone untouched or unturned in *New Seeds of Contemplation*. He highlights how the seeds planted in the soil of our soul can wither and die if we do not attend to them. In painstaking detail, he clarifies and highlights all the ways we do and can destroy such seeds, and he is as faithful as Erasmus in applying such an analysis to the inner life as he is to questions of war and peace, tradition and revolution. There is no fragmentation in either the *Enchiridion* or *New Seeds of Contemplation* between the sacred and profane, spirituality and politics or the inner and outer journey. Erasmus and Merton wrote from a perspective of contemplative and moral theology. Merton was, perhaps, more contemplative than Erasmus, and Erasmus emphasized the moral dimensions more, but both men integrated the contemplative and the moral, the *unio mystica* and the prophetic. They are very much soul friends in this approach to knowing and living the Christian journey.

Second, both men were critical yet loyal to the Church. It has been said that Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched. Colet, More and Erasmus (the Oxford Reformers) were at the cutting edge of reform in the Roman Catholic Church years before Luther, Calvin and the Anabaptists. They dared to raise all the hard questions about the faults and failings of the Church. Most reformers thought Erasmus would join them on the schismatic trail. But this was not the path Erasmus was to take. He had a hard trail to tread. Many in the Roman Catholic Church turned on him for being too critical, and most Protestant reformers turned on him for not leaving the Roman Catholic Church. The Index of Paul IV (1559) proscribed all of Erasmus' works, whereas the Tridentine Index (1564) forbade the *Colloquies*, *Praise of Folly*, *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio* and an Italian edition of the *Paraphrases of the New Testament*. It was not until Paul VI in 1966 when the Index was suppressed that Erasmus was vindicated.⁸ Merton, like Erasmus, often nudged the Roman Catholic Church

in directions it was not comfortable in going. The Thomas Merton of the late 1950s and 1960s pointed the way to political and interfaith places many Roman Catholics were ill at ease with. The publication of Merton's poem, "Chant to Be Used in Processions Around a Site with Furnaces"⁹ in Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Journal for the Protection of All Beings* in 1961 did raise serious problems within Merton's Cistercian monastic order.¹⁰ There were times when Merton was told to halt his writings in certain areas. There were those who called on Merton to leave the monastery and enter the fray and trenches in a more committed way. Merton, like Erasmus, knew and lived hard tensions. They were ever critical yet ever faithful to the Church. Both men are soul friends in their view of the Church, and their roles in reforming such an institution.

Third, both Erasmus and Merton realized, only too well, that an experienced life in God meant that God's life was meant to be lived in the Church and world. Both men were loyal and yet critical of the Church, and both men were engaged, as prophetic types, in the world, also. The contemplative and the prophetic were two sides of the same coin for them. *The Praise of Folly*¹¹ and *The Colloquies*, by Erasmus, asked all the hard and troubling questions of the religious Sanhedrin of the time. *The Education of a Christian Prince*¹² was addressed to the future emperor, Charles V, and *The Complaint of Peace*¹³ is a blistering critique of the sheer folly and foolishness of war. Erasmus never flinched from addressing the powerful in the religious and political establishment on issues of justice and peace. In *The Better Part of Valor: More, Erasmus, Colet, and Vives on Humanism, War, and Peace, 1496-1535*,¹⁴ Robert Adams highlights, in painstaking detail, the difficult role Erasmus and other Christian Humanists played in the sixteenth century as makers of justice and agents of peace. Thomas Merton was, like Erasmus, at the centre and forefront of the larger issues of peace and justice in his time. The civil rights movement in the 1950s, the Vietnam War in the 1960s, the struggle for indigenous justice for those in Latin America, the folly of nuclear war and the central role of peacemaking in a polarized world all held Merton's attention. Merton did not identify with either a Roman Catholic tradition that was Republican or Democrat. It was more the radical tradition of Dorothy Day, the Catholic Worker and the Berrigan brothers to which he turned his gaze and affection. The recently published *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*¹⁵ brings into sharp focus Merton's view of peacemaking, just as his "Letter to a young activist (to Jim Forest)"¹⁶ unpacks the complex nature of being a peace activist. *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* is, in many ways, a fit and fine companion piece to *The Complaint of Peace*. In *Thomas Merton: Theologian of Resistance*,¹⁷ Kenneth Leech amply illustrates Merton's political journey. Erasmus and Merton had strong pacifist leanings, and this was not a convenient position to hold in an age dominated by hawks or bourgeois just war theorists. Erasmus and Merton were very much soul friends as prophets to their times.

Fourth, both men were convinced that if the Church and society were to be reformed and renewed, there had to be a return to the sources (*ad fontes*) and beginnings of the Great Tradition. How was the Great Tradition to be interpreted, though? Both men turned to the Patristic era of the Greek East and Latin West as a fount of insight and inspiration. Erasmus was indebted to both Jerome and Augustine, although he had a greater fondness for Jerome. The Fathers of the Greek East were also held near and dear, and he wrote a great deal about them, and translated many of their important works. John Olin's article, "Erasmus and the Church Fathers" in *Six Essays on Erasmus*,¹⁸ speaks clearly to this issue. Olin also said, in his Introduction to *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Desiderius Erasmus*, that "All through the 1520s he [Erasmus] labored on new scholarly editions of the writings of the Fathers – Cyprian, Hilary, Irenaeus, Ambrose, Augustine, John Chrysostom

– and at the time of his death in 1536 he was completing an edition of Origen, his favorite among the Greeks.”¹⁹ Merton was drawn to Origen, also. In fact, he wrote a lovely poem about Origen (*CP* 640–41). Merton had a fondness for the Alexandrian tradition of Christianity that we find in Clement and Origen. In fact, Merton even penned an engaging book on Clement.²⁰ There is a sense in which both Erasmus and Merton are children of the more gracious and generous Alexandrian perspective on Christianity that we see thought and lived through in the Christian Humanist tradition of the sixteenth century. Merton turned to the ancient and time-tried ways as did Erasmus. He had a fondness for the early desert tradition, and in the *The Wisdom of the Desert*²¹ and his novitiate conferences, *Cassian and the Fathers*,²² Merton makes it quite clear why he thought the Classical Patristic tradition still had much to speak to the modern world. Merton also had an abiding interest in the Orthodox hesychastic way,²³ and such an approach was rooted and grounded in the old ways. I think it can be argued that both Erasmus and Merton were deeply conservative (they sought to conserve and keep clear the ancient paths), but they read the Patristic tradition in a radical way. This means both men were radical conservatives. They were, in short, very much soul friends by the fact they returned to the sources, and by the equally important fact they interpreted such sources in a more radical and demanding way.

Fifth, Erasmus and Merton stood, in a most impressive and uncompromising way, within the best of the Christian Humanist Tradition. This means that their understanding of the faith journey had a great deal to do with that which was truly humane and made for the fullness of a good human life. Erasmus was front and centre, in his time, in embodying the Northern European Humanist tradition. The best ideas of the Renaissance and the Reformation were brought together by the Christian Humanists into a wise and judicious synthesis. It is significant to note that C. S. Lewis, in his classic book *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century excluding Drama*,²⁴ draws deeply from the Humanist well of Erasmus and More. Lewis argued that both Erasmus and More reflected the best of the Classical Christian Humanist way. Merton stood within such a tradition, also. Two essays in *Love and Living*, “Christian Humanism” and “Christian Humanism in the Nuclear Era,” cover this terrain well.²⁵ The ideas covered in these essays unpack and unravel what it means to articulate the Christian Humanist tradition in an age that is, at depth and core, in a popular and sophisticated way, anti-human. Erasmus would have smiled kindly at Merton’s attempt to speak and live in a fully human way in the midst of much that would betray and cut the heart out of such a notion of the good life. Erasmus and Merton were soul friends on the Christian humanist journey.

Sixth, the Humanist Tradition meant that when Erasmus and Merton turned to the larger intellectual and philosophical world, they were willing to concede that insight and wisdom could and did come from many places and people. This meant that both men had a rather generous notion of natural theology and general revelation. All was fulfilled and crowned in Christ and the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, but this did not mean other philosophical and intellectual traditions could not inform and teach the Christian Tradition much. Erasmus could say “St. Socrates pray for us,” and he walked the extra mile to draw from the well of Greek and Roman thought. It is virtually impossible to read Erasmus’ *Adages*²⁶ and *Colloquies* and not find passages from leading Roman and Greek thinkers and from myths and legends of both Classical civilizations. Merton thought along a similar path. Merton would, again and again, interact with major writers, poets and novelists, spiritual leaders of other faith traditions and political thinkers that had much to teach and say. *The Behavior of Titans* is classic case in point. In “Prometheus,” the opening essay of this collection,

Merton unpacks and unfolds diverse ways to read the Promethean myth, and he sees in a certain read of Prometheus a Christ-like myth and figure.²⁷ It is interesting to note that Merton begins the essay with a discussion of Erasmus and Colet. It seems Merton could not get too far from Erasmus. *The Behavior of Titans* concludes with an insightful reflection of “Herakleitos the Obscure” (BT 73-106). This particular section is significant for three reasons: Merton again turns to Classical sources for insight and inspiration; like Heidegger he was drawn to an important pre-Socratic contemplative philosopher, and Herakleitos reminds Merton of the aphoristic and wisdom way of Zen, Taoism and the Christian Desert tradition. Merton was, indeed, eager to dip his bucket in many wells. It is impossible to read Erasmus and Merton without being taken by their lavish attention to the compelling and evocative power of other cultures and ways of interpreting the human journey. As already mentioned, this had a great deal to do with their Humanist Tradition that was open to that which was truly human and fully humane throughout time and in other cultures. It is this Christian Humanist way that holds high general revelation and natural theology while arguing that there is yet something higher and more ultimate in the ascent to truth. Erasmus and Merton were soul friends in such a tolerant, welcoming and gracious way.

Seventh, the Christian Humanist path was also a literary way. There have, in the main, been two ways that theology has been done. Such approaches need not be either-or, but, sadly, there is a tendency for this to occur. There is the mystical/contemplative way, and there is the rational/scholastic way. Many authors have noted this division, including Merton’s close friend Jean Leclercq, whose fine book *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*²⁸ highlighted this dilemma. Leclercq pointed out how and why the monastic tradition, in principle, was more meditative and the scholastic tradition, in principle, was more rationalist. The conflict and clash between Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Abelard embodied this tension. The monastic/scholastic approaches to knowing and being were, by the Enlightenment, played out as the romantics and rationalists often turned on one another. This need not be a case of either-or, but ideologues of both tribes often make it so. Erasmus and Merton were literary thinkers who refused to be drawn into either clan. Erasmus wrote many short stories and parables and his rhetorical approach was largely dependent on the use of myth to massage both head and heart. He would have been most supportive of what we call narrative theology. Merton was also a literary person. He was a contemplative poet that thought in images and metaphors, as the recent edition of his selected poems by Lynn Szabo, *In the Dark before Dawn* reminds us. It would be silly to argue or suggest that the literary way is not intellectual. Such an approach merely has a different and deeper way of understanding how the mind works and processes life-giving insights. Our minds, at their deepest levels, are concerned with information and facts, insight and wisdom. Different means must be used to awaken and tap into different ways of knowing. A mature literary approach draws together the best of the rational and imaginative while taking both ways of knowing to a deeper and more substantive level. Erasmus and Merton knew this, and their literary bent took readers to a deeper and richer mother lode within the longing soul. Both men were, therefore, soul friends in their literary approach to knowing and being, and they refused to genuflect to a narrow way of knowing and living the human journey.

Eighth, both men had a great respect for the significance and role of the Bible, but they were also aware that the Bible could be interpreted in various ways and at various levels. Erasmus was, more than Merton, a linguist and translator. Erasmus pointed out that Jerome’s Vulgate had serious problems, and he worked on doing a better translation. His 1516 translation of the New Testament

had a lengthy appendix that justified the reasons for all his changes. It was this 1516 translation that prepared the way for many reformers to translate the Bible into the vernacular. The Roman Catholic polyglot edition came out in 1521, but Erasmus thought there were serious problems with such a translation, so he brought out an updated translation in 1522. Needless to say, this did not please the hardworking Roman Catholic Sanhedrin. Erasmus brought out yet another translation in 1527. It is understandable why he was not welcomed into the inner ring. Erasmus realized that having a Bible that was more faithful to the earliest extant texts did not mean all would agree on how such a text was to be interpreted. Erasmus was a faithful child of the best of the Patristic and Medieval interpretive tradition, and this meant he appreciated the fact that the Bible could be interpreted in a literal, typological, analogical, allegorical, mystical and ecclesial manner. It would be simply foolish and silly to reduce the interpretive process to single vision or a one-dimensional approach. We find this interpretive tendency in Merton. We do not need to read too far or deep into *Bread in the Wilderness*²⁹ or *The Living Bread*³⁰ to see Merton doing his monastic interpretive deed, and doing it well. Both Erasmus and Merton would have much affinity with Northrop Frye's *The Great Code*,³¹ *Words with Power*³² and *The Double Vision*,³³ but there is a contemplative, ecclesial and political depth in Erasmus and Merton that is sorely lacking in Frye's more literary approach. It is important to note that Merton, in *Opening the Bible*,³⁴ goes beyond a more traditional monastic way of reading the Bible yet he builds on it. *Opening the Bible* draws from and interacts with such thinkers as Barth, Bonhoeffer, Pasolini, Faulkner, Fromm, Marx and various classical Eastern texts. Merton suggests that a genuine approach to reading the Bible must be existential, engaged and transformative. This means that a detached scholarly approach or a simple allegorical and mystical reading might be necessary but not sufficient. There is no doubt *Opening the Bible* is a more mature interpretive work than *Bread in the Wilderness* or *The Living Bread*, but when all three books are read together, we get a good sense of Merton's attitude towards how the Bible is an important source of authority and, equally important, how it should be meaningfully read. Erasmus and Merton had a profound respect for the Bible, but they also realized such a text had to be interpreted and read in a thoughtful and nuanced way. They were soul friends in this approach to Biblical interpretation.

Ninth, Erasmus and Merton were men who lost both father and mother at early ages. This loss must have left a lack and emptiness within them. They were orphans at a time of life when children need family and siblings, and for the sensitive, this works its tragic way deep into the recesses and caverns of the soul. It was this loss at a significant and substantive level for both men that could have destroyed them. They could have so internalized the pain and sorrow, the sense of rejection and disconnection that they could have been forever aloof and distant with others. But this was not to be the way for Erasmus and Merton. Both men are well known for their voluminous articles and books, but they are equally known for their rich, generous and gracious correspondence with others. Many of the letters of Erasmus are longer than essays and books that most write, and both Merton and Erasmus reached out in their loneliness, through sensitive and caring letters, to connect with other people. There was a generosity and kindness to both men that emerges from a desire to be charitable but also from a longing to touch and connect with others, to bring into being the family they never had or would have. Both men took the Classical and Medieval notion of friendship seriously, and they became friends, in a meaningful manner, with many. The fact that both men corresponded with so many people speaks much about shared similar longings and the desire to resolve painful losses from their youth. They were soul friends in their approach to create a lost family through correspon-

dence.

There are some significant differences that must be noted, by way of closing, between Erasmus and Merton, also. Erasmus had a certain distrust and suspicion of Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham. He inherited this interpretive leaning from John Colet. Both men thought that Aquinas, Ockham and Scotus (and their epigones) were so scholastic that they reduced theology to a quibbling about logical and propositional details rather than being open to the moral and transformative power of Biblical thought. Erasmus encountered this way of doing theology at Paris, and there were many others who were keen to heed, hear and bend the knee to the revival of Aristotle at the time. The Aristotelian method, it was argued, could be used to enrich and fill out time-trapped aspects of Christian thought. Erasmus had his worries about the way Aristotle was being used, and he thought Aquinas (and his disciples) and Duns Scotus and William of Ockham embodied the problem. Merton moved in the opposite direction from Erasmus in this area. When Merton was teaching at St. Bonaventure College, he met the Franciscan priest Fr. Philotheus Boehner, who helped the young Merton to see that both Ockham and Scotus had much to say and contribute to the theological quest. Merton was also, in a lesser way than Gilson and Maritain, part of the renewal of Thomist thought of the twentieth century, and he saw much good in Aquinas. *The Ascent to Truth* (1951) attempts to bridge the rigorous theology of Aquinas with the mystical theology of John of the Cross.³⁵ Merton also dedicated two poems to Duns Scotus: "Duns Scotus" in *Figures for an Apocalypse* (1947) is, in many ways, a hagiographical song to the beauty, vision and vigor of Scotus (CP 164-65), while "Hymn for the Feast of Duns Scotus" in *The Tears of the Blind Lions* (1949) is yet another energetic song of praise to the grandeur of Scotus (CP 198-99). It's hard to imagine Erasmus being so enthused about Scotus as Merton.

Merton was, being a modern person, much more open to the positive aspect of counseling and psychology than Erasmus. His negative experience with Gregory Zilboorg gave way to a positive counseling relationship with James Wygal. Erasmus lacked both the experience of Abba-novice and the positive impact of a good counselor. Merton was much more stable in body (spending most of his latter life in the monastery), but he was itinerant and cosmopolitan in mind and imagination, whereas Erasmus tended to be a wanderer in body and mind.

Erasmus lived in the sixteenth century, and Merton lived in the twentieth century, but they were nonetheless soul friends. As Merton asked rhetorically about Erasmus and More, "how can one be anything but a friend to such men?" (TTW 340).³⁶ Merton was very much a friend, and indeed a soul friend, of such men. Erasmus and Merton walked on the same path, climbed many of the same peaks, and they saw much of the same scenery. If Erasmus had lived in the twentieth century and Merton in the sixteenth century, Erasmus, I'm sure, would be quick to hear and heed Merton. Erasmus and Merton were men for all times and seasons for the simple reason that the issues they dealt with are part and parcel of our common human journey. They had their differences, but they had much more in common, and it is what they had in common that make them challenging soul friends for our time. We do need, I suspect, a good book on Thomas More, Erasmus and Thomas Merton. Such a tract for the times would highlight how it is possible to be both conservative and radical at the same time, and how a radical conservatism needs to be rooted and grounded in the best of the contemplative way. And, such a timely text would offer an answer to this question: how can one be anything but a friend to such men?

1. John Colet, quoted in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) xiii.
2. Thomas More, quoted in José Chapiro, *Erasmus and Our Struggle for Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950) ix.
3. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966) 279; for an earlier version of this passage, see Thomas Merton, *Turning toward the World: The Pivotal Years. Journals, vol. 4: 1960-1963*, ed. Victor A. Kramer (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996) 340 [July 19 1963], where Merton comments, "Humble Erasmus is content to be sainted in his friend [More]. But that's it: how can one be anything but a friend to such men?" Merton also commented on Erasmus earlier in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*: "No one so far has included Erasmus in a symposium on monastic theology. Of course he was not a monk, and got very tired of his little religious community where they were fonder of drinking beer than of intellectual conversation. (After all, Erasmus did a lot better with his secular friends. Thomas More was a saint. I do not recall that any of Erasmus' brethren in the cloister ever got canonized.) In any case, this word of Erasmus is not too wide of the mark: 'True piety, which flourishes only when the spirit spontaneously strives to grow in charity, withers when the spirit sluggishly reposes in external ceremonies chosen for it by others'(227). This passage from Erasmus can also be found in *Turning toward the World* 235 [August 8 1962]. It is impossible to miss Merton's restless affinity with Erasmus in these passages.
4. Mark Van Doren, quoted on back cover of Thomas Merton, *In the Dark before Dawn: New Selected Poems*, ed. Lynne Szabo (New York: New Directions, 2005).
5. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).
6. Erasmus, *The Enchiridion*, trans. Raymond Himelick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963).
7. Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961).
8. See Silvana Seidel Menchi, "Whether to Remove Erasmus from the Index of Prohibited Books: Debates in the Roman Curia, 1570-1610," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 20 (2000) 19-33. Needless to say, Erasmus, as both prophet and sage, was not treated well in the Roman Catholic tradition. It is understandable why Merton had some affinity with him.
9. Thomas Merton, *Collected Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1977) 345-49; subsequent references will be cited as "CP" parenthetically in the text.
10. See Thomas Merton, *The Courage for Truth: Letters to Writers*, ed. Christine M. Bochen (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1993) 267-72.
11. Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, trans. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941).
12. Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. Lester K. Born (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934).
13. Erasmus, *The Complaint of Peace*, in *The Essential Erasmus*, ed. and trans. John P. Dolan (New York: Merton-Omega, 1964) 174-204.
14. Robert P. Adams, *The Better Part of Valor: More, Erasmus, Colet, and Vives on Humanism, War, and Peace, 1496-1535* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962).
15. Thomas Merton, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, ed. Patricia A. Burton (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004).
16. Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love of Love: Letters on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985) 284-97.
17. Kenneth Leech, *Thomas Merton: Theologian of Resistance* (Croyden, UK: The Jubilee Group, 1993).
18. John Olin, *Six Essays on Erasmus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979).
19. John Olin, ed., *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Desiderius Erasmus – Selected Writings* (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1965) 19.
20. Thomas Merton, *Clement of Alexandria: Selections from the Protreptikos*. New York: New Directions, 1963.
21. Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century* (New York: New Directions, 1960).
22. Thomas Merton, *Cassian and the Fathers: Initiation into the Monastic Tradition*, ed. Patrick F. O'Connell (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005).
23. See Bernadette Dieker and Jonathan Montaldo, eds., *Merton and Hesychasm: The Prayer of the Heart* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2003).
24. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century excluding Drama, Oxford History of English Literature 3* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).
25. Thomas Merton, *Love and Living*, ed. Naomi Burton Stone and Brother Patrick Hart (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979) 135-70.
26. Erasmus, *Adages*, trans. Margaret Mann Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
27. Thomas Merton, *The Behavior of Titans* (New York: New Directions, 1961) 11-23; subsequent references will be cited

as “BT” parenthetically in the text.

28. Jean Leclercq, OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961).
29. Thomas Merton, *Bread in the Wilderness* (New York: New Directions, 1953).
30. Thomas Merton, *The Living Bread* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956).
31. Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).
32. Northrop Frye, *Words with Power* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990).
33. Northrop Frye, *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
34. Thomas Merton, *Opening the Bible* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1970).
35. Thomas Merton, *The Ascent to Truth* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951).
36. See also the entry for July 14, 1963: “We have now the new photocopied edition of Erasmus, and I am reading the *Ratio Verae Theologiae*. I admit I am charmed by him. He reads so well, speaks with such clarity and sense, and is so full of the light of the Gospel. I am also reading K. Rahner’s new little book on Mary [*Mary, Mother of the Lord* (New York, 1963)] and I am struck by the similarity – the same kind of clarity, simplicity and breadth of view. It is the same mutual climate without the subdued passion and the humor of Erasmus” (TTW 337).