

DAN WALSH and THOMAS MERTON

August 28 will mark the fifth anniversary of the death of Daniel C. Walsh in 1975. It is fitting that we dedicate this issue of the SEASONAL to Dan Walsh, long-time friend and mentor of Thomas Merton's.

In Merton's remarks, subsequently printed as "Concerning the Collection in the Bellarmine College Library," read by Walsh at the ceremony opening Bellarmine's Merton Room, Merton spoke of Walsh and the intertwining of their lives.

"It is more than strange that the man who will read these words to you, Dan Walsh, is the one who first told me of the Abbey of Gethsemani. It is he, therefore, who first turned my thoughts in this direction. It is partly due to him that I came to this diocese and this state 22 years ago. But he is no more a native Kentuckian than I am and if he is here now, it is partly because of me. I am quite sure that neither he nor I were ever able to foresee that he would one day be speaking here, on such an occasion as this. One of the most awesome things about this event then is that it indicates to me that when Dan and I were talking together over a couple of glasses of beer in a New York hotel years ago, God was present and was doing his work in us. Therefore, we can trust He still continues to be just as present and active here, in all of us now!"



Dan Walsh

Born in 1907, Daniel C. Walsh received his B. A. degree from the University of Toronto in 1930 and an M. A. in philosophy and Latin paleography in 1931. He was then awarded a Carnegie Fellowship to attend the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto and received his Ph. D. in philosophy and history in 1934. He served as Professor of Philosophy at Manhattanville College and was a guest lecturer at Columbia University where Merton first encountered him. In 1960 he helped reorganize the philosophy instruction at the Abbey of Gethsemani and, for a time, was on the faculty of Bellarmine College. He lectured at Harvard University, New York University, Smith College, and the University of Louisville.

In a singular event, Walsh was ordained a priest on May 14, 1967, at the age of 60 and after only two months of seminary training. Thomas Merton sponsored Walsh at his ordination. His death came suddenly on August 28, 1975.

Always more the teacher than the writer, Walsh did not leave behind a large body of written work, but his intellect and influence in the classroom were extraordinary. As Merton wrote in THE SEVEN STOREY MOUNTAIN: "I pray to God that there may be raised up more like him in the Church and in our universities."