



# Raven's Bread

*Food for Those in Solitude*

Volume 20, No. 3

August 2016

## Thoughts In Solitude

When Thomas Merton discusses peace in his earlier writings, the focus usually is on peace as a spiritual quality, an interior state. In *Seeds of Contemplation* he emphasizes that interior peace requires detachment, even from the desire for peace itself. To seek God's will alone will bring peace even in the midst of conflict and upheaval, while to seek some sort of inner tranquility as an end in itself, to cling to some "feeling" or "experience" of peace, is to risk misinterpreting God's will. Peace is present because God is present but it may not always be experienced as present.

Here as elsewhere in his writings on inner peace, Merton's emphasis on the connection between the divine will and peace recalls Dante's famous line from the *Paradiso*, "In His will is our peace." As he writes in his pamphlet *Praying the Psalms*, "Peace in the will of God ... is the foundation on which the psalmists build their edifice of praise ... the peace that comes from submission to God's will and from perfect confidence in him."

The relationship between inner peace and the peace of society is suggested in *No Man Is an Island*, where Merton points out that it is important to be at peace within oneself if one is to contribute to a peaceful world. "A man who is not at peace with himself necessarily projects his interior fighting into the society of those he lives with, and spreads a contagion of conflict all around him." Even the good such a person attempts to do will be spoiled because it is being done not as a fruit of peace but as an attempt to achieve or accomplish some good work and so escape one's own unhappiness by one's own efforts. His point here is very similar to one he will make later in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, when he discusses the temptation to a kind of demonic activism and overwork as a form of violence: "The frenzy of the activist neutralizes his work for peace. It destroys his own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of his own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful."

The true solution, Merton believes, is to "learn to be detached from the results of our own activity ... It is only when we are detached from ourselves that we can be at peace with ourselves" (*No Man is an Island*). This is a lesson that he will find exemplified above all in Gandhi,

who shows with clarity the connection between inner and outer peace. For Gandhi the way of peace is the way of truth, and the "first and fundamental truth is to be sought in respect for our own inmost being, and this in turn implies the recollectedness and the awareness which attune us to that silence in which alone Being speaks to us in all its simplicity" (*Seeds of Destruction*).

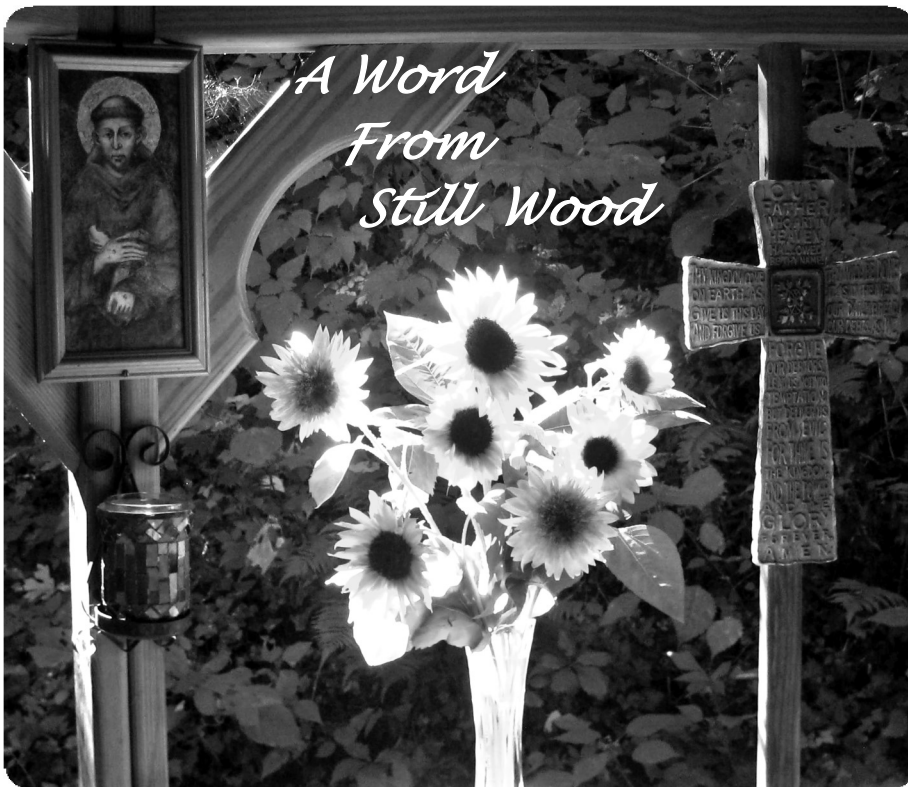
True peacefulness therefore requires a certain distance and detachment from the busyness and overstimulation of a society that measures worth by achievement, and thus requires, in the classic Hindu formulation, detachment from the fruits of one's actions. Thus, in the development of Merton's own thought on peace there is a recognition of an intrinsic and crucial connection between inner and outer peace, between peace as gift and peace as task. The idea of working, or even "fighting", for peace can readily lead to justification of virtually any form of violence and coercion in the name of making peace. Merton suggests, "If you are yourself at peace, then there is at least *some* peace in the world. Then share your peace with everyone, and everyone will be at peace" (*Guilty Bystander*). He recognizes that such a program may sound simplistic, but it emphasizes the primacy of the spiritual rather than the political, in peacemaking; political action is certainly necessary but it is insufficient, indeed counter-productive, if not rooted in a commitment to peace as a spiritual reality.

Merton emphasizes that authentic peace is found in the hearts of those "who are wise because they are humble, humble enough to be at peace in the midst of anguish, to accept conflict and insecurity and overcome it with love, because they realize who they are, and therefore, possess the freedom that is their true heritage" (*Monastic Journey*).



Excerpted from:

*The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia:*  
Dr. Christine M. Bochen, Professor of Religious studies,  
Nazareth College, Rochester, NY



Sitting on a steep hillside, stripping blueberries from our neighbor's heavily laden bushes, a profound sense of well-being filled us. There were enough berries here to supply all the local families, as well as the coons, the squirrels, the birds, and even the occasional bears who wandered out of the nearby woods to satisfy their innate craving for blueberries. As their sweetness dissolved in our mouths, we watched birds flitting through the branches, while sated bees bumbled by and hummingbirds speared the lush fruit. For a brief spell, it seemed all was right with the world.

But, of course, that is far from true. Around our planet, the cultures of violence and retribution are wreaking havoc upon millions of lives. People cringe in fear, live in desperation and a sense of helplessness, that breeds deadly anger. Amidst this, we feel compelled to cry out: STOP! ALL LIVES MATTER, not just some lives. No matter the color, shape or size, All LIFE matters: the environment, the creatures of land and sea and sky, even you and I.

This peace-less, precarious state of things can evoke fear and anxiety in even the most grounded of us. But as people of the Beatitudes, we cannot allow dread to overtake our hearts lest we unknowingly

increase the level of hatred surrounding us. We must cultivate forgiveness and show mercy to all God's children, even those driven to acts of horrendous violence in every place on earth. Like Quan Yin, the Hindu goddess of compassion, we need to be persons "who hear the cries of the earth." As sentinels, hidden but alert and resolute, we must wait, watch, and pray; be witnesses in silence, solitude, serenity so that the Word of Compassion CAN be heard amid the chaos and clamor. The saying of St. Seraphim of Sarov still echoes true today: "Acquire a peaceful spirit and then thousands around you will be saved."

All of this highlights the "ministry" of hermits to which more and more of you seem to be called. In turn, the value of sources like **Raven's Bread** seems to grow more critical, so that those who live in solitude may be encouraged and strengthened to stand fast. We are truly delighted by the number of responses **RB** received to the questions posed for this issue. Perhaps it is not so much the eloquence, the insights, or the wisdom that is offered as it is the mere fact that others *know you are there*, that they are not alone in their solitary vigils. A single "word" can mean so much; a whisper in the dark that murmurs: "Courage, friend, go on; this is but the underside of dawn."

Thank you, good friends, who have taken time to contribute this issue. We all truly appreciate it! A further thanks to everyone whose generous support enables **RB** to reach out to all who seek "food for those in solitude." To all of you we plead: Stand firm in your resolve to remain SILENT in the face of the incessant chatter of social media; ALONE in the midst of a crowd mentality and superficial interactions; and SERENE despite the panic, anxiety and knee-jerk reactions to crises and suffering. Let us all cultivate tranquility in the fields of peace that love may flower on our earth.

*With our grateful love,  
Karen & Paul*

**Raven's Bread** is a quarterly newsletter (FEB-MAY-AUG-NOV) for hermits and those interested in solitary life published by Paul and Karen Fredette. It affirms and encourages people living in solitude. As a collaborative effort, it is written for and by hermits themselves, and delivered by postal mail or email. Please send your written contributions, address changes, and subscription donations to: [pkfredette@frontier.com](mailto:pkfredette@frontier.com) or **Raven's Bread Ministries**, 18065 NC 209 Hwy., Hot Springs, NC 28743 or via PayPal at our website.\* Our phone number is: 828 622 3750.

An annual donation is appreciated, each giving according to their means. Please send payment in US dollars (PayPal converts foreign currency to US dollars). Anything extra goes into a fund to insure that all who want **Raven's Bread** can receive it.

**Raven's Bread** derives its name from the experience of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17: 1-6, where a raven sent by God nourished him during his months of solitude at the Wadi Cherith (The Cutting Place).

\*Our website is :<http://www.ravenbreadministries.com> ; email: [pkfredette@frontier.com](mailto:pkfredette@frontier.com) and Blog for Lovers of Solitude: [www.ravenbreadministries.com/blog](http://www.ravenbreadministries.com/blog).



# Raven's Forum



We are happy to report that **RB** received a significant number of responses to the question of doing a Survey, with some very insightful caveats and suggestions.

**Silvana Bertocchi** wrote from **Montreal, PQ** to say: I am FOR your survey, but I don't write in English. I can answer a survey though. Just send it and you may be surprised by the number of responses you will get. The people against it will simply not answer. I live alone, pray alone, and love God Alone. I connect myself to all of suffering humanity. But I feel I am not a hermit since I work in a University 40 hours a week. How I would cherish to live in a log cabin in the deep wood!

I am grateful for l'Esprit of **Raven's Bread**. Even though I sometimes get tired of the bla-bla of the people writing in it. Sometimes, I can't even find why they write in your journal in the first place. For me, social and political comments should not be given space in this type of publication. We can find it everywhere else. Let us talk about prayer, spiritual life and God. Point final. All the rest is noise to me.



**Sr. Dorothy Deising, PCPA** contacted us from **Washington, DC** to say: Re: Survey. What a shock to receive only three direct responses! My response would be "Yes with no doubt!" Sharing experiences gives so much freedom—needed freedom—in making decisions...if there's any openness.

The May 2016 issue, p.7: sigh...It has some beautiful "thoughts". Some really raise questions. Wood B. expresses one that really struck me hard. Maybe it's like the New Age mix I used to hear about. It recalls questions I had long ago re **RB**. At first I would have preferred only Catholic material but then I did open to all different traditions and I find it enriching.



Writing from **Bronx, NY**, **David Lasky** offers this: If you do a survey, I would be happy to participate. I can't help but think of myself as hermit/non-hermit, but I am a faithful follower of **Raven's Bread** and would be more than happy to fill out a survey that would give you both a better idea of who we all are and where we are trying to go. I am currently enjoying some reruns of your Internet broadcasts. They really encapsulate for me **RB's** hermetic teachings and I never tire of hearing your voices; it makes it that much more personal and meaningful.



**Margaret Liggett** reaches us from **San Diego, CA**: I

would love to see another survey and would hope there might be a good response to it. I'm celebrating my first anniversary of seeking solitude and still appreciate learning all I can about how others live out this life. I am beginning to feel comfortable in my lifestyle and great joy in my growing awareness of God all about me.



From **Buford, GA**, we hear this from **F. J. Schwindler**: The May **RB** reiterated the question about a survey. I had not responded because I thought most folks would. *Mea culpa*. I think it could be a useful project—especially if you compare responses with those of the last survey. It seems reasonable to me that you should know who your "consumers" are—and that these "consumers" should know amongst whom they are gathered. I have a gut feeling that the audience has changed rather a lot over the past ten years. That is neither a good nor a bad thing. It simply is what it is. There is, however, an inherent risk involved in evaluating any survey and which is that things can always be read *into* or *out* that result in major refocusing that are frequently not merited. (e.g. the "fact" that most solitaires are older, white females—which I suspect is true—ought not cause a redirection of **RB's** focus to issues of interest to older white females any more than should be the case if the majority were to be elderly ultra-traditionalist men.) There is always a risk of reading such factors as definitive when, in fact, there is just as great a likelihood that some other factor explains both groups. (These sorts of things were drilled into my head when I did graduate work involving surveys and interpretation thereof.) So my vote is "do the survey" but do not try to use it as a focus group, etc..



From **Ashland, OR**, **Scott Free** offers: I am willing to help with the survey, though my computer use is limited.



**RB** also received a number of affirmative responses by phone and email: **Maria Sanchez** from **Santa Fe, NM** approves and adds that maybe a Directory of Contact Information be made available for those interested in further interaction among **RB** readers. **Anne May** from **Kansas City, MO** also sees value in doing another survey and offers to help where she can. Thanks, Anne, and to all of you! We hope to include a Survey Questionnaire in the November issue, both the paper edition and the email one. The collated results will be made available during 2017.

# Hermits ask...✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦✦...and Respond

## Discussion Topic for August 2016:

What incident, or personal experience first led you to consider a life of solitude and silence? Someone you met? Something you read? Somewhere you went?

I was 21 years old and living in San Francisco on Kearney street just below Coit Tower. I often walked up to the gardens and trees surrounding the base of the Tower, thinking over my life's direction. I was living in an elite neighborhood, in a city beloved by the avant-garde people of my generation—everything my conditioning had led me to believe was desirable. But on one day in particular, I remember walking up through the gardens and then back down to the steep pavement to sit down on one of the steps. I smoked a cigarette. It was a weekday and the street was quite empty. As I sat there in the shade of a tree, I realized that all of the supposedly desirable features of the city and its inhabitants did not really interest me. Given that, I asked myself what I ought to do with my life? In response I felt a very distinct "invitation" to embrace a life of silence and solitude. This seemed possibly crazy to me, especially as I looked around me at the sidewalk, the trees, the buildings of the city spread out below me. I felt nothing, no spiritual presence, no uplifting sentiment, just a deep interior sense that silence and solitude held some great gift for me, but I also knew I'd have to wait for a long time, and be faithful and attentive to this call, before I would know the true nature of the gift. I decided very determinedly that I would say "yes" to this invitation. Basically, I had to say "yes" to this commitment over and over again in my life, but that day was the first time the call was formulated so clearly.

**Karen Nielsen Mattern,  
Berkley, CA**

Strolling alone on a dirt road outside a small town in Southern Iowa, I heard...Nothing. The first and only time in my life I did not hear a single sound. It was an experience I felt at the core of my being. Trying to describe or label it is something I cannot do. This happened about 4 1/2 years after my Los Angeles journey ended (see RB May 2016 issue pp 4,5). In Los Angeles I was confronted with longings to "move to the woods." Could this have been an escape plan my brain came up with to leave the stress of L. A. or was it something else, maybe something from deep within, coming from the Source?

When I lived in Iowa, I felt at home in the quiet space that it offered. I didn't stay long, moved back to Boston after a month, but I continued to have strong feelings for that place, that atmosphere. I returned to Iowa three times, living there for a few more months. Something resonates deeply within me when I am in an environment of quietness; just hearing the sounds of Divine Creation. Maybe I'll live in a small town again, or maybe the woods, but more importantly, what if I could carry that quietness, that peace I felt that day wherever I am?

**Scott Free,  
Ashland, OR**

Between 20-25 years ago, I thought I had a calling to the priesthood? Part of the process was reading books that interested me. Well, I stumbled on Thomas Merton's "Sign of Jonas" and ever since then I have been hooked on Thomas Merton. I asked who he was and was told he was a hermit!

The other process for selection was to find a spiritual director which I did after being sent to a Poor Clare Monastery near Oxford and I met Sister Michaela. Seeing me, she said she saw the book **Poustinia** in me. So I got a copy and to my surprise,

Catherine deHeuck Doherty, too, was a solitary. Then I was sent to a selection conference and after all the interviews and being told I was a holy person and as there were few in the world, I should stay as I was!!! I then tearfully walked into the foyer and saw another book: **A Tide that Sings**, by Sister Agnes Soli. I felt the Lord Jesus was asking me to spend my time more and more in solitary prayer and silence. He was showing me the way.

Each of the above authors have had a huge impact on my life. I now spend at least three hours in solitude and silence each morning—very early. I do the Divine Office for half of the week and the Monastic Office for the other part of the week as I am called to pray for the Church. I pray seven times a day each day, attend daily Mass and try (when health allows) to do one hour of Adoration. I pray for all sorts of intentions the Lord Jesus puts on my heart and have a network of intercessors who support me and my family in prayer. My husband supports me enormously, too. We live a very quiet life on the west coast of Scotland.

**Jean Smith,  
Ayrshire, Scotland**

I was first led to seriously consider a life of silence and solitude in 1995. I was volunteering at a local religious community where I met a woman who was working in the infirmary at the time. She was preparing to move to West Virginia to pursue formal vows as a consecrated hermit under Canon 603. I was deeply affected by our conversations. In addition, she introduced me to a newsletter for hermits called *Marabou* (which became *Raven's Bread*). Thanks to *Raven's Bread*, I came to understand that the call to a life of deeper silence and solitude can be expressed in more than one way. It is not confined to the stereotype that Wood B. Hermit presents. It has

many more faces — many of which are unrecognizable and truly allow being hidden while in plain sight!

It has been more than 20 years now, and I am still learning and growing from those initial encounters — encounters that took me totally by surprise and yet have had a lasting impact on my life as a religious solitary who “lives in the world but is not of the world.” I strive to remain open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I live out my vocation on a daily basis. It has been a journey full of surprises, for which I am most grateful.

**Anne May**  
**Kansas City, MO**

I don't doubt for a minute that the 9-1/2 years I lived with my father — a widower who put a high premium on simplicity and quietude — had an immense impact on me as I was growing up (how much by nature, how much by nurture, I don't know). Recently though, I've come to feel that my tendency to turn inward may have taken root earlier when, as a preemie, I was left to fend for myself in an incubator (in a “deprivation tank” of sorts, it might be said, given I was born in an age when “blue baby” research had yet to be conducted). Although later in life I necessarily got tossed into what Zorba the Greek refers to as “the whole catastrophe of life, I cannot remember a time when I fully lost a sense of connection with a higher power; a time, either, when I *sensed* as much as *saw*, when my “outside observer” was very much in place. I've been told that, as a tyke, I could sit for hours entertaining myself on practically nothing. Happily, 70+ years later, I'm still able to do the same.

**Margaret**  
**NE Iowa**

From my early childhood, I was never “one of the crowd”, so to speak. I liked playing “nun” with a towel on my head—as a veil. I had a little altar with candle sticks and used bread cut by a cookie cutter. I

loved reading about saints and pretending I also was one! A saint I was not! Growing older, I always wanted to be a contemplative, but due to circumstances, God had other plans for me. Years later, a letter and a newspaper clipping: *First Modern Hermit in Ireland*, hit me like a “tongue of fire.” This is what was being nurtured all these years in my soul. There has been peace and quiet; and total love for this life of solitude and silence since vows offered 28 years ago!

*To other Ravens: For those timid souls—don't be shy to share your lives with others. Sometimes it might help to know your words can be a light in the darkness or a window to let in a breeze or the Voice of God through you.*

**Marie Jean Bird,**  
**Tobyhanna, PA**

Solitude and silence have always been my friends; where I've always been at peace, but for most of my life did not know why. I can look back to the many hours alone in the woods as a young boy, or similar time spans on our family home's front porch simply watching the world go by and I can identify special, connected moments: moments of peace in solitude and silence. I can look at moments later in life, moment after I was able to label and name God and His presence and even later when I was able to give thanks for the ability to connect the two: God, and His Peace in solitude and silence. Then came moments after I had put these things together when I actively sought solitude as I knew whom and what I would find there. Then came the moment when someone else spoke to these gentle nudges and alignments, and I felt an acknowledgement that can only be deemed a gift of the Holy Spirit: “The pleasure of aloneness, initially deemed to be just a natural preference, gradually comes under the light of faith and therefore gains a new meaning.” (*The Eremitic Life* by Fr. Cornelius Wencel) Now, thankful-

ly, come moments easily recognized as the fruit of a life of solitude and silence; gifts once not clearly understood but always sweet.

**Duane N. Morrison,**  
**Stafford, VA**

Unconsidered personal experience: birth to a couple who travelled; no further children; no school for me till Grade 6. Growing up in a time without background music or much TV...silence to grow and observe and reflect and to see things and people as they really are ...reading, writing, amusing myself in play, and drawing...solitude of an only child without siblings or school companions. Solitude and silence were normative; large parts of my daily life in early and middle childhood.

I joined the rest of society when I did go to school and we had a stable home life; but I always unknowingly cherished the solitary state. As an adult I was drawn to monastic communities; Yoga centres, and Buddhist and Christian monasteries. I was already at home in the silence and solitude. Many books found their way into my hands, notably perhaps, the writings of Thomas Merton. The rest, as they say, is history. I am not convinced that we choose this lifestyle. I believe it is chosen for us and we can go along with it not. It is a calling, a vocation.

**Karen Ann McKinna,**  
**Ottawa, Canada**

Classical music, my first love, became for me the door opening to a longing for a deeper relationship with God. After much searching, I entered an international religious congregation working with the poor, and was very happy. But I loved the times of prayer and opportunities to be alone. Though in later years, the search for social justice in society allied to spirituality was where my heart lay.

*Continued on page 7*

# BULLETIN BOARD

## A Gathering in the Service of the Contemporary Emergence of the Antonian Vocation August 21—24, 2016 Queenscliff, Victoria, Australia

A retreat of listening for those living the life of the Spirit of Solitude in communion. By listening to and sharing our stories of how God draws us into this life, we seek to discern what the Holy spirit is saying to us through this contemporary and ancient way of Christian living.

For further emailed information, see contact information below. Please include a brief account of what you would like to learn from and contribute to such a gathering in light of how this vocation is unfolding in your life and/or in the lives of those you accompany.

Fr. Peter Martin  
Anglican Parish of St. George & St. James,  
Queenscliffe  
PH: +61 (0)3 5258 4264  
Email: paroff11@tpg.com.au

*We ask all Ravens to keep this special retreat in prayer, as well as consider what they may contribute in the way of written insights and words of encouragement for all who seek to follow St. Antony of the Desert's way of life "down under".*

### A NEW NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the discussion of CREATIVE CONTEMPLATION

Produced by Raven's Bread reader SCOTT FREE.

Contact Info: PH: 541-321-6398  
Email: scottsfunshop@gmail.com  
Res. P. O. Box 1271  
Ashland, OR 97520

## AN OLDIE BUT GOODIE!

### THE HERMIT OF CAT ISLAND: The Life of Fra Jerome Hawes

by Peter Frederick Anson

*This is (still) an inspiring account of a man who longed for solitude and silence. His struggle to live it—including a long search for a place in which to be apart from humanity—makes for fascinating and instructive reading.*

286 pp.; hdbk; \$16.00, pbk \$26.70;

Pub. P. J. Kennedy, 1957

ASIN: B0007DSM4G

Available through Amazon.com

*(Available from the Raven's Bread Library)*

## Wood B. Hermit



"Hermit Media" (free downloads)

*Continued from page 5*

About a year after my mother's death—an extremely stressful time for me—I was diagnosed with a reactive depression. Nine months later I managed to get some space away from family and friends, and began to realize that God seemed to be inviting me to live a solitary life, depending on God, and on God's Word. I received enormous support from my former religious congregation, and, of course, had the support of my spiritual director throughout. Several friends said that I had always had a "contemplative streak". To God, I said, "If you want me to do this, you have to look after me". I had no salary, no place to live, no marketable skills to offer, and hadn't yet reached retirement age, although it was looming! I found an apartment, and eventually was gifted with a small terrace house. I am not a hermit. I pray, and treasure the silence that living alone offers. I don't have a TV, nor do I have a car. Public transport suffices where I live. I have a small income, both from some spiritual accompaniment work and writing, plus social security. Silence is always relative, as I keep in touch with family and friends, and also with current affairs via radio news. All of these can frequently become reasons for special prayer. I have no doubt that my faithful God looks after me.

**Carol Dorgan,  
Cork, Ireland**

At age six I walked into the kitchen and asked Mom: "Why don't other people like to be alone?" She explained why people liked to be together." I asked again and getting the same answer, told her I knew why people liked to be with others. I wanted to know why people didn't like to be alone. Frustrated with her answers, I blurted out: But don't they miss it, Mom, don't they miss it?" She stopped her cooking, walked over and bent down, hands on knees and face to face, and asked, "Miss what, Becky?" Instantly I

knew even Mom didn't find what I was finding when alone and still. I had no words to tell her what I was finding.

Decades later my spiritual director asked what as a child I thought I was finding and I said, "Oh, the best thing ever!" She was instrumental in letting me know there was a vocation of hermit and assured me that anyone seeking God will discover their calling. Over the next few years I changed my exterior life to align with the call to live in the silence of solitude.

**Becky Evergreen,  
Cuba, NY**

Every single one of my childhood experiences from age 2 –33 led me forward to taste and see that the silent, solitary contemplative life was where the Thrice Holy God was calling me and drawing me. The catalyst for these years was the Catholic Church's holy ambience, (primarily my sacred symbol, the Sanctuary Light perpetually pointing the Way to the Other) and finding the presence of God in a special secluded nature-space and praying there *with* nature to that Presence. (This nestled space was hidden by silent flowing waters and I named it "Praying under Clear Creek Bridge".)

Years later, a graced mystical encounter brought my life to an about face when I reconnected with a Benedictine Monk after almost 23 years. I was longing and yearning for someone able to understand and articulate a deeper dimension of spirituality, when I happened upon a Catholic magazine and randomly read one contribution titled "*The Power of God.*" This missive quickened and quenched my thirsting spirit, and upon seeing the author's name, a distant memory arose and haunted my serene soul. Could this possibly be the same Benedictine monk I knew years ago? Overwhelmed with gratitude and need for this monk's wisdom, I immediately telephoned him. The rest is pure graced history. Everything changed in that moment of charismatic re-connection and

ensuring years of soul sharing.

After graduating from the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program and obtaining an M.A. in Religion, I served as Spiritual Care Coordinator for Mercy Health Partners for over 12 years. While I truly loved this active prayer ministry, still the Lord kept beckoning: "Come back to Me at *Respite.*"

The return to *Respite Oratory* after years spent actually living the reality of being a contemplative Benedictine Nun drew me, as it did my saintly contemplative mentor, Thomas Merton, to choose the eremitical lifestyle as the medium for continuing the intimate encounter of vowed spousal love with the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Prayer was then and is my vocation for all the cosmos. Upon writing and professing special promises of commitment to this sacred lifestyle, the monk/priest received these promises from my hands in the name of the Most Blessed Trinity. He continues to this day to be both soul-friend and wisdom figure for this, my most beautiful Oratorian vocation!

**Mary Jean Wethington,  
Aurora, IN**

### Discussion Topic for November

2016

How do YOU manage the "tension" of being in solitude with/for God and the commandment to "love one another" and "whatever you do to the least of these...."? Is it a recurring or ongoing consideration or have you found a lasting resolution? Has your "answer" changed over time?

**DEADLINE: OCTOBER 1, 2016**

**Word Limit: 300**



## BOOK NOTES AND REVIEWS



**HELP, THANKS, WOW: The Three Essential Prayers** by Anne Lamott *Defining prayer as “communication from the heart to that which surpasses understanding.” If you are uncomfortable addressing God, Lamott suggests praying to “the Good.” The point is to make contact with “the Real, with Truth, with the Light...” With a light-hearted touch, she describes the three basic prayers of asking for help, giving thanks for everything and responding in heartfelt wonder.*

102 pp., hdbk; \$11.99; pbk. \$6.99 Published by RIVERHEAD BOOKS, 2012

ISBN-10: 1594631298; ISBN-13: 978-1594631290

**THE NEW MONASTICISM: An Interspiritual Manifesto for Contemplative Living**

by Rory McEntee & Adam Bucko

*The new monasticism is a call to live in the world with silence, solitude and concern for the poor. It is the phenomenon of living out the spiritual vocation in the world...inextricably linked to the day-to-day reality of most people’s lives—and in an evolutionary sense, to moving our human family into greater depth and maturity. The authors use the best of Catholic Monastic tradition, Sufi, Buddhist, Desert Fathers, Yogi, Zen and more in this development.*

241 pp., pbk; Published by Orbis Books, 2015

ISBN 978-1-62698-126-3. Also available as an e-book through Barnes & Noble

**THE NOONDAY DEVIL: Acedia, the Unnamed Evil of Our Times** by Dom Jean-Charles Nault

*From out of the ancient past of monastic and hermit life, we discover one of the major problems of the 21st century—Acedia! This condition manifests as “a gloomy combination of weariness, sadness, and a lack of purposefulness. It robs a person of the capacity for joy and leaves one feeling empty or void of meaning.” Very few solitaries miss out on a visit from Acedia from time to time.*

200 pp. \$10.16; Published by Ignatius Press, 2015

ISBN-10: 158617939X; ISBN-13: 978-1586179397

*(All of these books are available through Amazon.com)*