



University Libraries Special Collections & University Archives

Thomas Merton Collection

Collection Summary

Title:	Thomas Merton Collection
Call Number:	MS 2016-10
Size:	2.0 linear feet (2 boxes)
Acquisition:	Donated by Michael D. Heaston, 2013
Processed by:	JZ, 3-2016
Restrictions:	None

Literary Rights

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Content Note

This collection consists of writings by Catholic priest and Trappist monk Thomas Merton, who became well known for his publications on religion and spirituality, as well as his pacifism, social activism, and promotion of interfaith dialogue. Record types include manuscripts and correspondence on the above topics, and material related to Merton's life and the monastery where he resided and worked.

Biography

Thomas Merton was born on January 31, 1915, to Owen Merton, a New Zealand painter, and Ruth Jenkins, an American Quaker and artist. Following a childhood spent in various European and American locations, Merton entered Clare College at Cambridge University in 1933 but eventually left and enrolled at Columbia University in 1935. He majored in English while developing a deep interest in Catholicism, to which he eventually converted in 1938. Merton earned a B.A. the same year and then remained at Columbia, attaining an M.A in 1939 while also considering a vocation as a priest.

Following his attendance at a retreat held during Holy Week in April 1941 at the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani in Kentucky, Merton came to believe that the Cistercian Order (also known as the Trappists) was the most suitable path for him. In December of that year he was accepted as a

candidate at the Abbey; during his training, he was also encouraged by the abbot to keep a journal in order to record his experiences. In 1948, the year before his ordination, Merton published his autobiography, *Seven Storey Mountain*, which narrated his journey to Christianity and the Cistercian Order. The book became an unexpected bestseller and was influential in leading many men to the priesthood.

In subsequent years Merton authored many publications on religion and spirituality, becoming noteworthy in the 1960s for his pacifist views concerning the conflict in Vietnam and his writings in support of the Civil Rights Movement. He was also a pioneer in encouraging Westerners to understand and appreciate Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Taoism, going so far himself as to meet with the Dalai Lama in 1968. While attending an interfaith conference later that year in Bangkok, Thailand, Thomas Merton died on December 10 after an accidental electrocution. His body was buried at the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani in Kentucky.

Series Listing

Series 1	Boxes 1 and 2	Writings. This series contains material on Christianity, Eastern religions, social issues, literary authors, and philosophy, as well as some of Merton's prayers and poems, 1940-1968. Contains two subseries.
Subseries 1.1	Box 1 FF 1-82, Box 2	Non-Fiction. Contains non-fiction writings; most were published during or after Merton's lifetime. Unpublished items are noted as such. Material is arranged alphabetically.
Subseries 1.2	Box 1 FF 83-93	Poetry. Contains manuscripts of poems. Arranged alphabetically.
Series 2	Box 1 FF 94-102 , Box 2 FF 1	Other. This series contains correspondence, ephemera, and a bibliography of Merton material held in Special Collections at WSU, 1948-1991, n.d. Arranged alphabetically.

Box and Folder Listing

Series 1 – Writings

Subseries 1 – Non-Fiction

Box 1	FF 1	"Adaptation of the Monastic Life: Some Personal Observations" (unpublished essay), 1964
Box 1	FF 2	"Advent," n.d.
Box 1	FF 3	"The Answer of Minerva: Pacifism and Resistance in Simone Weil," 1965
Box 1	FF 4	"Blessed Are the Meek: The Roots of Christian Non-Violence," 1966
Box 1	FF 5	"Camus and the Catholic Church," 1966
Box 1	FF 6	"The Cell," 1966
Box 1	FF 7	"The Christian and the World . . ." (unpublished conference notes),

1966

- Box 1 FF 8 "Christian Humanism," 1966
- Box 1 FF 9 "A Christian Looks at Zen," 1966
- Box 1 FF 10 "Christian Worship and Social Reform" (unpublished), n.d.
- Box 1 FF 11 "Clement of Alexandria: Selections from *The Protreptikos*," c. 1962
- Box 1 FF 12 *The Climate of Monastic Prayer* (revised edition), 1965
- Box 1 FF 13 *Cold War Letters*, c. 1963
- Box 1 FF 14 "Concerning the Collections in Bellarmine College Library," 1963
- Box 1 FF 15 "Contemplation and Ecumenism," 1965
- Box 1 FF 16 "The Contemplative and the Atheist," 1967
- Box 1 FF 17 "The Council and Monasticism," 1965
- Box 1 FF 18 "Danish Non-Violent Resistance to Hitler," n.d.
- Box 1 FF 19 "Dialogue about the Hidden God" (translation of *De Deo Abscondito* by Nicholas of Cusa), n.d.
- Box 1 FF 20 *Disputed Questions* (mimeograph of typescript), c. 1960
- Box 1 FF 21 *Disputed Questions* (uncorrected proof), 1960
- Box 1 FF 22 "D. T. Suzuki: The Man and His Work," 1966
- Box 1 FF 23 "Edifying Cables," 1966
- Box 1 FF 24 "Events and Pseudo-Events: Letter to a Southern Churchman," 1966
- Box 1 FF 25 "Examination of Conscience and Conversatio Morum," 1963
- Box 1 FF 26 Extract from *Thoughts in Solitude*, n.d.
- Box 1 FF 27 *Faith and Violence* (additions to paperback reprint), 1967
- Box 1 FF 28 "Faulkner and His Critics," 1967
- Box 1 FF 29 "For a Renewal of Eremitism in the Monastic State," 1965
- Box 1 FF 30 "A Foreword to *Marcel and Buddha*," 1967
- Box 1 FF 31 "Franciscan Eremitism," 1966
- Box 1 FF 32 "The Hot Summer of Sixty Seven," 1967
- Box 1 FF 33 "Introduction to *Selections from the Sermons of Isaac of Stella*," 1966
- Box 1 FF 34 "An Introduction to the English Mystics," 1962
- Box 1 FF 35 "Ishi: A Meditation," 1967
- Box 1 FF 36 "Is the World a Problem?," 1966
- Box 1 FF 37 "Love and Need: Is Love a Package or a Message?" 1966
- Box 1 FF 38 "Love and Solitude," 1966

- Box 1 FF 39 "A Martyr for Peace and Unity: Father Max Josef Metzger," c. 1960s
- Box 1 FF 40 "Marxist Theory and Monastic Theoria," 1968
- Box 1 FF 41 "Message to Poets," n.d.
- Box 1 FF 42 *Monastic Observances*, c. 1959.
- Box 1 FF 43 "Monastic Reform: A Memorandum," c. 1964
- Box 1 FF 44 "The Monastic Theology of St. Aelred," 1968
- Box 1 FF 45 "Monastic Vows: A Memorandum" (unpublished), n.d.
- Box 1 FF 46 "The Monk in the Diaspora," 1964
- Box 1 FF 47 "The Mystery of the Church in St. Ignatius of Antioch," n.d.
- Box 1 FF 48 "A New Christian Consciousness?," 1967
- Box 1 FF 49 "Note on Vatican II Pastoral Constitution: Gaudium et Spes, Article 18," c. 1964
- Box 1 FF 50 "Notes by the Artist for an Exhibit of Drawings," n.d.
- Box 1 FF 51 "Notes on the Earthly Paradise" (unpublished), n.d.
- Box 1 FF 52 "Oratio" (from Cassiodorus' *De Anima*, translated by Merton as "Prayer of Cassiodorus), n.d.
- Box 1 FF 53 "Orthodoxy and the World" (book reviews for *Monastic Studies*), 1965
- Box 1 FF 54 "Passivity and Abuse of Authority," c. 1962
- Box 1 FF 55 Prayer delivered at the Vatican Pavilion during the New York World's Fair, 1964
- Box 1 FF 56 "Prayer for Peace," 1962
- Box 1 FF 57 "Preface to *Redeeming the Time*," 1965
- Box 1 FF 58 "Preface to the Japanese Edition of *The Seven Storey Mountain*," c. 1965
- Box 1 FF 59 "Preface to *The Lotus in the Sea of Fire* by Thich Nhat Hanh," c. 1967
- Box 1 FF 60 "Prophetic Ambiguities: Milton, Camus, Teilhard de Chardin," c. 1965
- Box 1 FF 61 Review of G. M. Columbas's article on the revival of eremitism, c. 1967
- Box 1 FF 62 Review of Gregorio Penco's article on the monastery-as-prison, c. 1966
- Box 1 FF 63 Review of Maximino Arias's article on Benedictine monasteries, c. 1966
- Box 1 FF 64 Review of *Varieties of Unbelief* by Martin E. Marty, 1965
- Box 1 FF 65 Review of *Why We Can't Wait* by Dr. Martin Luther King (unpublished), c. 1964
- Box 1 FF 66 "A Ruler's Examination of Conscience: Some Texts from François Fenelon," (unpublished) n.d.

Box 1	FF 67	<i>Seasons of Celebration</i> (uncorrected proof), 1965
Box 1	FF 68	<i>The Secular Journal of Thomas Merton</i> (uncorrected proof), 1959
Box 1	FF 69	"A Sermon of Isaac of Stella," 1966
Box 1	FF 70	"The Shoshoneans," 1967
Box 1	FF 71	"Spiritual Direction," c. 1962
Box 1	FF 72	"The Spiritual Father in the Desert Tradition," 1966
Box 1	FF 73	"The Stranger: Poverty of an Anti-Hero," 1968
Box 1	FF 74	"Target Equals City," c. 1950s
Box 1	FF 75	"Terror and the Absurd: Violence and Non-Violence in Albert Camus," 1966
Box 2		<i>A Thomas Merton Reader</i> (uncorrected proof), 1962
Box 1	FF 76	"Three Saviors," 1966
Box 1	FF 77	"The 'True Legendary Sound': The Poetry and Criticism of Edwin Muir," 1966
Box 1	FF 78	"The Universe as Epiphany: The Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin," c. 1960
Box 1	FF 79	"The Way of Chuang Tzu," 1965
Box 1	FF 80	"Wilderness and Paradise," 1966
Box 1	FF 81	"Writing as Temperature," 1968
Box 1	FF 82	"The Zen Koan," 1965

Subseries 1.2 – Poetry

Box 1	FF 83	<i>Early Poems</i> , 1940-1942
Box 1	FF 84	"Eight Freedom Songs," c. 1964
Box 1	FF 85	First Lesson about Man," n.d.
Box 1	FF 86	"Grace's House," n.d.
Box 1	FF 87	"Le Secret," 1966
Box 1	FF 88	"Man the Master," 1965
Box 1	FF 89	"The Night of Destiny," n.d.
Box 1	FF 90	"Reading Translated Poets, Feb. 1," c. 1965
Box 1	FF 91	"Rilke's Epitaph," 1966
Box 1	FF 92	"Rites for the Extrusion of a Leper," 1967
Box 1	FF 93	"With the World in My Blood Stream," 1966

Series 2 – Other

Box 1	FF 94	Bibliography of Thomas Merton's work in Special Collections, n.d.
Box 2	FF 1	Broadside in support of peace (contains Merton quotation), 1991
Box 1	FF 95	Correspondence from Merton to Shinzo Hamai on the anniversary of the bombing of Japan, 1962
Box 1	FF 96	Correspondence from Merton to unknown person on <i>Seven Storey Mountain</i> , 1948-1949
Box 1	FF 97	CV of Thomas Merton, c. 1969
Box 1	FF 98	"First Christmas at Gethsemani" (typed review of Merton's work), c. 1949
Box 1	FF 99	Letter from the Abbey of Gethsemani to the public following Merton's death, 1968
Box 1	FF 100	"Nuclear Warfare and Your Conscience: A Study Guide for Seniors in Catholic Schools" (contains Merton quotation), c. 1962
Box 1	FF 101	Program for the centennial celebration of the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani, 1949
Box 1	FF 102	"Reading List for the Novices," n.d.

For information, please contact us at:

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