

Harvesting from last session of “The Seeker and the Monk,” Oct. 31, 2023

“Merton has returned to me as beloved guide and friend. Sophronia has led me back to texts I have loved for a long time, and helped me see them in a new light.”

“RE the prayer, “O God we are one with you...”—that sums it up for me. We need to understand our oneness and be love,

Sophronia is so wise and so deep. Thank you to all for this class.

I was helped by knowing how much God loves us in all of our flaws. Merton showed us what being human and being love looks like.

Thanks to all. I return to this line of Sophronia’s, “There’s something of the divine in how a friend shows up.” I’m grateful for those who have shown up in my life.

Our relationships, our creations across time and space seem to be everything, all within the divine flow.

I’m grateful for the reinforcement of practicing silence and solitude. I want space and time for all of these ideas and insights to settle in.

I’m grateful for the joy that comes from engagement and love. Thanks for all that has been offered.

Thanks to all—I feel like I’ve been reaffirmed to be a contemplative seeker. And I’ve realized how important relationships are in the faith journey.

I’d never done a zoom retreat/class. I decided I had to sign up. I loved the book and I loved being in the one on one groups. Sophronia mentioned The Screwtape Letters—“our job is to keep people so busy that they don’t have silence.” I need to learn to cultivate and respect silence.

We don’t need to fear anything, including death, because there is safety, real safety, in opening our hearts to one another and to God.

Sophronia wrote, “I still think about how much it matters who travels with me.” Friends will be there when they are needed.

I loved this class. I’ve pondered what is it to be truly human and to live as God would have us live. We CAN love and BE love to others. I will be staying with this book for a long, long time.

We are all seekers and monks. The natural habitat for our faith is in interpersonal relationship. I love the image that Sophronia gave of the man in the cave who said, "Come to the cave when you want to talk." We are all in that cave in this class.

I learned that silence is the presence of God. When it comes, breathe it, be it and stay in the silence. I'm grateful for the story offered about a mother dying and saying, "I need a push."

I've long been intrigued by Merton. Merton was kind of "out there" and far away from me, though I studied him a lot. Now the space between what he offers and what I need are closer together. His words help me know I can make a difference.

I was deeply touched by his words on death. The last chapter is so beautiful. Merton was ready for death. I love that his brothers sat around his coffin. I hope that I will be that ready.

I was drawn to this class to continue to be a seeker and to deepen faith. I'm grateful for this last chapter. I want to have no regrets

Thanks to all—to leaders and facilitators and the class. Merton's human-hood allows me to be real to myself and to my God, who knows me fully and lovingly.

I'm considering the ongoing conversation with those who have gone before us, and who have been guides along the way.

I'm grateful for this time together. I want more exposure to Merton. I see the importance of love for everyone, which isn't easy. I am also more aware of the eternal presence of the divine waiting to surprise us.

I've known Merton forever. The piece from *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* about the safe harbor really speaks to me. I was reminded that we need to pay attention. My goal is to be better at paying attention.

I realized I've been too long in isolation. I've become more amiable with Thomas. Great love can rock our world at any time. I love Sophronia's reference to Hermione. I will be remembering that I need to take all of that book learning out and let it bear fruit in real life.

I have thought a lot about writing, thanks to Thomas and Sophronia. This came through Thomas' journals. It's been a reminder about the power of story and the word. I keep hearing, "Trust your writing and trust God for the way forward" Thanks to all, and to Mary and Rosalyn for inviting us to think deeply.

I've loved Merton for some time. He's like the big brother that I don't always understand. Thomas co-authored this book! He is still writing! We are enough, despite our confusion, suffering and love. Our journey to God is our lives. How blessed we are just being who we are. Holiness and wholeness are who we are.

Thanks to Mary and Rosalyn and to all. I loved this line: “We need only offer ourselves in openness in prayer and God does the rest.” I want to be practicing intentional listening.

The chapter that spoke to me was “The Soul Seeks Its Own Society.” I am struck by the idea that we are all in the Body of Christ, in fellowship with brothers and sisters in heaven and on earth. Sometimes God does send us a friend.

I’ve discovered some of the knots in my own heart and spirit that needed to be undone. This contemplative community has allowed me to do this.

Thanks for everything. There’s a deep profound tugging at my whole being—to be, to be with the One who is and therefore united with all.

To be full human with joy and struggle and to share that with each other is what life is all about. Deep silence allows us to know our connection in love.

In chapter 4, p. 51, “I am a bird waiting.” Merton asked permission to go out into the forest by himself. I am a grown woman! I don’t need to ask permission, and yet I still do. I’m in my 70s. Now I just state where I am going. I used to ask permission of God when I had difficulties with illness and reactions to medications. I learned to force myself to get up, and then find something to do. God says: You don’t need my permission. You are free to do what you want. This is one of the most beautiful book I’ve ever read. Part of it is Thomas; most of it is Sophronia, who is such a fine writer.

I am so grateful for this time. What a fine book! I’m still mourning Merton’s death. I’m grateful for the last chapter, and the sense of ongoing connection between the living and the dead. I was working for a long time on a big project, and I would feel the accompaniment of my deceased husband, my sister and my friend.