

## Bridges to Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton

Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup>

Seeking God in all Things

**Psalm 94**      *(The Psalms, A New Translation, arranged by Joseph Gelineau)*

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us.  
Let us come before him, giving thanks, with songs let us hail the Lord.

Come in: let us bow and bend low; let us kneel before the God who made us  
for he is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture,  
the flock that is led by his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!  
Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert  
when your fathers put me to the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work.

### **Merton's Voice from *Seasons of Celebration***

We must in all things seek God. But we do not seek Him the way we seek a lost object, a 'thing'. He is present to us in our heart, our personal subjectivity, and to seek Him is to recognise this fact. Yet we cannot be aware of it as a reality unless He reveals His presence to us. He does not reveal Himself simply in our hearts. He reveals Himself to us through one another. He reveals Himself to us in the Church, in the community of believers, in the *koinonia* of those who trust Him and love Him.

Seeking God is not just an operation of the intellect or even a contemplative illumination of the mind. We seek God by striving to surrender ourselves to Him whom we do not see, but Who is in all things and through all things and above all things.

We seek God by surrendering ourselves to His will. But His will is not just a matter of blind decrees and laws external to ourselves. It is the law of love which is implanted in every nature, and the revelation of spiritual love in freedom. The fruit of this love is the restoration of all things in Christ, the union of all beings with God, through man, by the exercise of man's freedom.

Man's freedom is therefore the instrument of divine redemption and reconciliation. This work of reconciliation requires the formation of a living body of [individuals] who are united by the Spirit of God. God's work is to form a living mystical body, which will be His Son, the One Christ, Head and Members, in which all the members share One Spirit, One Sonship, and are 'One in Christ'.

For this, each member must undergo a transformation by the Holy Spirit. Each must undergo a renewal in the depths of his [her] being ...

This renewal is to be seen from many points of view: as renunciation, as pardon, as conversion, as 'justification', as self-surrender, as thanksgiving, '*eucharistia*'. The word 'love' in the sense of *Agape*\* perfectly covers and includes them all (pp 224-225).

\*Agape love is **selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love**. It is the highest of the four types of love in Christian scriptures. The others being eros (sensual/romantic), philia (friendship), storge (familial)

### **Reflect and Dialogue**

What words or sentences in these readings most resonate with your life's experiences?

By what means does God most clearly reveal His presence to you?

What is your personal rule of prayer? How do you pray regularly?

Has your way of praying changed during this season of Lent? How?