

OUR STORY

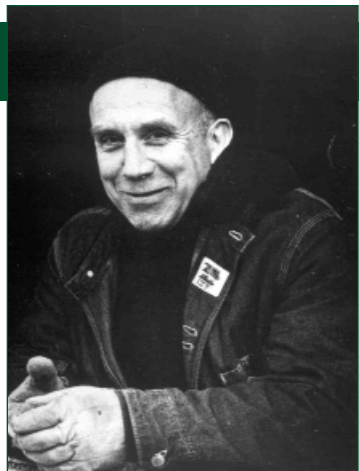
Vocation

In 1949, *The Seven Storey Mountain* surprisingly hit the bestseller list. The autobiography of Thomas Merton tells the story of his conversion from a life of excitement and freedom to the life of a Trappist monk. His life and many books have inspired millions of modern Americans. Here is a brief selection from his *No Man Is An Island* (Harcourt).

“Each of us has some kind of vocation. We are all called by God to share in His life and in His Kingdom. Each one of us is called to a special place in the Kingdom. If we find that place we will be happy. For each one of us, there is only one thing necessary: to fulfill our own destiny, according to God’s will, to be what God wants us to be....

“In any case, our destiny is the work of two wills, not one. It is not an immutable fate, forced upon us without any choice of our own, by a divinity without heart.... It is hopeless to try to settle the problem of vocation outside the context of friendship and of love...for He loves us more than we love ourselves, as if we were Himself....

Continued on the back...



Thomas Merton

Courtesy Catholic Advocate

The Holy Spirit and the Church

Jesus was the greatest gift God could give us. He became truly human just like us. Jesus showed us how to live our life on earth and he made it possible for us to share eternal life. After the Ascension, when Christ returned to heaven, he didn’t abandon us. Just as he promised, he sent the Holy Spirit to be with us always. Several times—including in the Gospel of St. John—we have Jesus’ own words of promise: “...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth...” (14:16-17). “[T]he Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (14:25-26).

In the Acts of the Apostles we are assured that the presence of the Holy Spirit is not weak and timid, but given generously. As St. Peter proclaims at Pentecost, “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear” (Acts 2:33). Just as a parent generously pours forth the milk that their child needs to be sustained and to grow, the Holy Spirit is poured forth with generosity. We can be confident of this, that we have God’s presence and extraordinary gifts with us at all times to sustain us and help us grow.

The Holy Spirit has been given to the Church to ensure the truth of God’s revelation to his people. We are given the Holy Spirit so that we can continue Christ’s work, his mission, even though he ascended to heaven. Both as individuals and as a Church, we are to continue this mission of Christ, which is to spread the Good News of God’s love for us, and to provide a vision of how we are to try to live as a human race.

The Holy Spirit is with each of us as members of the Church, the people of God, in many wonderful ways. When we think of the gifts the Spirit brings: wisdom, understanding, fortitude, counsel, knowledge, piety, and respect for the Lord, we realize we have everything we need for our whole life. We have the presence of God with us at all times. We have but to ask, to pay attention and look and listen, to discover these gifts in ourselves and in those around us.

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit that you most need at this time? What will help you listen for it so that you can discover it in yourself and others?

Reflect

- How do you do your part to continue the mission of Jesus in your neighborhood?

Jean Marie Hiesberger

BLESSINGS

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and enkindle in them
the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit
and they shall be created
and you shall renew
the face of the earth.

Our Story

Continued from the front...

“In planning the course of our lives, we must remember the importance and the dignity of our own freedom. A man who fears to settle his future by a good act of his own free choice does not understand the love of God. For our freedom is a gift God has given us in order that He may be able to love us more perfectly, and be loved by us more perfectly in return.”

Excerpt from *NO MAN IS AN ISLAND* by Thomas Merton, copyright © 1955 by The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani and renewed 1983 by the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust, reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Inc.

TABLE TALK

- We pray, “Come Holy Spirit.” How do you experience the coming of the Spirit in your daily life?
- What person comes to mind as one who shows forth a gift of the Spirit?
- Wisdom and understanding are gifts of the Spirit. Do you know any wise or understanding persons?

Pondering the Word

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.”

I Corinthians 2:12

The Spirit is given to you for understanding the gifts of God. Pray to accept this understanding and to live according to God’s gifts.

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PARENTING

Emotional Intelligence

In family relations, emotions need to be expressed and need to be healthy. Emotions complement reason but do not require its rationalizations. Emotions offer us an intuitive, pre-reflexive logic, and one that can be brought into the open upon reflection and made explicit. Emotion, not reason, is what moves us to face the deep and central questions of our existence.

Adapted from *Executive EQ*, Putnam



Courtesy Julie Jones

Reflect

Emotions are good. Healthy emotional experiences nurture success in life. Name examples of emotional experiences that you found healthy and helpful. Recognize some examples of unhealthy emotions. You form your children emotionally. How do you do this? How do you help them link their emotions and their thinking?

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

What is Love?

Saint Paul tells us that if we have the gift of prophecy and do not have love, we are nothing. Then he tells how to love. Proclaim 1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13. Have a family discussion about how God is talking to us today in this reading and how well family members are doing the things Saint Paul mentions. Discuss the following:

- Are we kind to our brothers and sisters, our parents, our spouses, our neighbors?
- Do we envy others who have more toys, bigger homes, or special talents?
- Do we turn angry when things do not turn out as we wanted?
- Do we forgive others when they hurt us?

During this week, practice the ways that Saint Paul teaches us to love. Later ask these questions again and see if your answers have changed.

from *Family Time*

“...[T]he Church is sent to announce, bear witness, make present, and spread the mystery of the communion of the Holy Trinity....”

Explore the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. See paragraph 738.

“...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth.... You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned....”

John 14:16-18