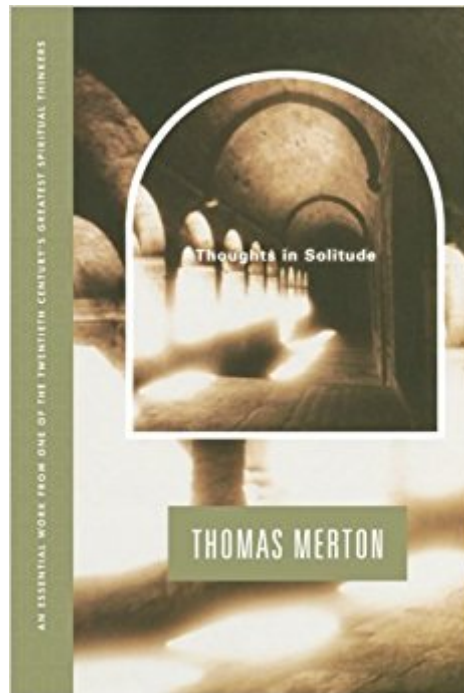




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Thoughts In Solitude



Synopsis

Thoughtful and eloquent, as timely (or timeless) now as when it was originally published in 1956, *Thoughts in Solitude* addresses the pleasure of a solitary life, as well as the necessity for quiet reflection in an age when so little is private. Thomas Merton writes: "When society is made up of men who know no interior solitude it can no longer be held together by love: and consequently it is held together by a violent and abusive authority. But when men are violently deprived of the solitude and freedom which are their due, the society in which they live becomes putrid, it festers with servility, resentment and hate." *Thoughts in Solitude* stands alongside *The Seven Storey Mountain* as one of Merton's most uring and popular works. Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, is perhaps the foremost spiritual thinker of the twentiethcentury. His diaries, social commentary, and spiritual writings continue to be widely read after his untimely death in 1968.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This slender book is one of Merton's best. It contains several brief, luminous, sound, quiet, humble essays and observations gleaned from the labours, prayers, and extensive reading of this century's most prominent and perhaps most mercurial Trappist monk. The tone is sedate. It is loyal to the ecclesia, and contains the unmistakable Merton note: the apologia for solitude as the mother of contemplation, prayer, wisdom, and holy hope. Confident without being preachy, serene without being quietistic or dull, not at all contaminated with the ephemera of politics or with complaints against the rigours of his chosen life, *THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE* is an excellent place for the new

Merton explorer to begin, and a very good place for the veteran spiritual reader to return from time to time: each essay (or prayer) scarcely more than a few paragraphs, sometimes only one paragraph, is a kind of haven from the tumult of the world that can be frequently "too much with us." Merton cautions against, and is wise to caution against, a misanthropy or a cowardice that calls itself religious solitude, because we can come to know, and do come to know God through our neighbours, as uncomely and annoying as some of them are at times (my words, not Merton's)! He relates humility to listening, relates reading to prayer, and relates all things to God. The temptation to quote is overwhelming, but we will leave it to the readers to select their favourite passages. (Section X of part two is a lovely prayer, indeed.) There are more than a few uncritical readers of Merton, "Mertonolaters" if you will, who praise his writing and his thinking in a fashion that would perhaps embarrass the monk himself.

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