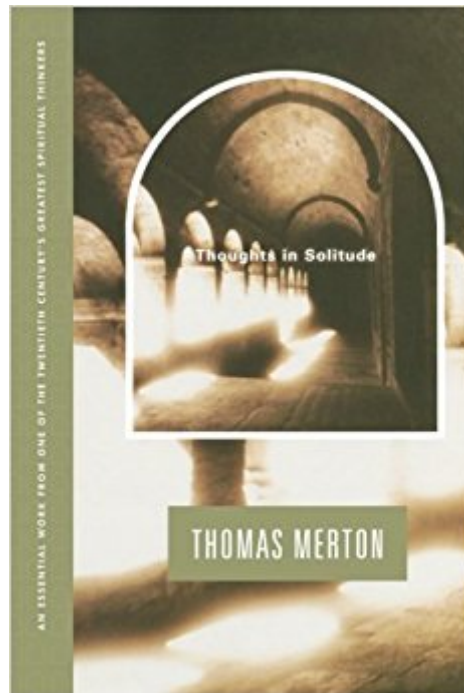




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Thoughts In Solitude



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

Paperback: 129 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (November 29, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374513252

ISBN-13: 978-0374513252

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 87 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #47,678 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 inÃ Â Books > Religion & Spirituality > Worship & Devotion > Monasticism & Asceticism #6 inÃ Â Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Monasticism & Asceticism #46 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Zen > Spirituality

Customer Reviews

The renowned Trappist monk Thomas Merton wrote *Thoughts in Solitude* in 1953 and 1954, when his superiors allowed him extended periods of seclusion and meditation. This elegant gift book, with clean, spare type and graphics, does justice to a 20th-classic (this is its 25th printing). What has made this book such an enduring and popular work is that it recognizes how important solitude is to our morality, integrity, and ability to love. One does not have to be a monk to find solitude, notes Merton; solitude can be found in the act of contemplation and silent reflection in everyday life. Also, this is not a pious book that assumes that a relationship with the divine can be obtained only by

denying our humanity and striving for saintliness. Instead, Merton asserts that connection with God can most easily be made through "respect for temperament, character, and emotion and for everything that makes us human." --Gail Hudson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"The writing itself, uniformly high in quality, seems one great burst of energy -- the lifeward push of a man who loved cities and people but who loved solitude and God more, and who found a tolerable midpoint when he was alone and writing to somebody." -- The New Yorker

I have kept a copy of this book in reach all my adult life. I'm now 68 and this copy I bought to give to a friend who has converted to Catholicism. It is a great book for those who are finding their religious vocation turns towards contemplation and silence. It is in part triggered by Max Picard's THE WORLD OF SILENCE, and takes the reader into the reality of silence, not as something absent but as something active, perhaps creative, perhaps fundamental to human consciousness. Buying this for my friend got me interested in Max Picard's work again, and I searched a used copy of THE WORLD OF SILENCE -- hard to find unless you aim to pay a lot -- but this book is great for meditation and soul nurturing in oneself. Much solace. I would like to add, although I love Picard's book, used it begins to be available about \$40, but this book by Merton distills the key elements of THE WORLD OF SILENCE plus adds Merton's unique touch. Merton, novice master for years as a Trappist and his time spent in solitude in a hermitage, all contributes to a wonderful poetic insight into the soul's needs, and that which can touch the soul is defined and offered in terms we all can relate to. I recommend Merton even to non-Catholics, even to non-Christians, because his wisdom is at the transpersonal and universal level. It can be great food for contemplation. I usually sit, read a short chapter, and then silently sit and meditate upon it. It comforts in these modern times and seems timeless, as well. I have a few other Merton books but this one is the most friendly to meditation along with his THE BOOK OF HOURS. I recommend them as a pair.

A group of men are using this book as a guide for religious education. What I have found is that you have to keep reminding yourself that Merton was a monk when he wrote this and he was responsible for educating aspiring monks. Put in that perspective, there is a lot of good information contained in his writings.

This little volume is simply beautiful and beautifully simple. It was one of Merton's favorites when

he looked back on his earlier writings, before that tragic accident in Bangkok on Dec.10, 1968 . It brings us near to him through his intimate thoughts, the fruit of his contemplation, which led him deep into his interior desert. That desert which was later realized, when he was finally granted permission to live as a hermit on the grounds of his monastery. This beautiful little book is a must for anyone contemplating the Solitary Life... it is a true "handbook for hermits".Bro. John conscrated anchorite (canon 603)

As someone who is beginning a life dedicated to solitude and silence, reading this book was like having Thomas Merton beside me as a wise friend, guide and mentor, showing the way. It is not a how-to book, but a collection of exquisite short reflections, revealing the inner struggles and deep joy of one who has walked this path, and knows where the rocks are, as well as the hidden springs. "The Christian solitary does not seek solitude merely as an atmosphere, or as a setting for a special and exalted spirituality," writes Merton. "He seeks solitude as an expression of his total gift of himself to God. His solitude is not a means of getting something, but a gift of himself." This book is Merton's humble gift of himself to all of us who seek the Holy One. As an example, this book is the source of Merton's famous prayer: "O God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will always lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

This the the first work I've read by Merton. I'm finding his thoughts and lessons to be very valuable and worth much thought and consideration. Moreover, I find that the language can be translated beyond Christianity and Catholicism to life in general. It is a beautiful work on prayer and meditation though not obviously and there are not step-by-step lessons on how to pray and meditate. With a little thought and soul-searching, however, I think most readers would understand that point.

this is an AMAZING book. each chapter took me a week to process. Merton really just digs deep with so little words. A must for any christian.

This little book offers the essence of Merton's views about contemplative prayer. The chapters are short, but each phrase is full of meaning. Some sentences, however, are difficult to follow, so I recommend reading slowly, one chapter per night. This an excellent book for those interested in Christian meditation.

This spiritual book needs to be read and reread. It is filled with deep thoughts to savor whenever or at any time of the day, frankly. This monk is an answer to prayer and I feel fortunate to have taken Pope Francis at his word when he gave this man one of his four recommendations for Americans who have left a profound touch on us all. His relationship with heavenly father, his humility, the love his words convey, are all reasons to return to all!

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