

particular his efforts as the director of the Latin American Bureau of the US Catholic Bishops from 1960 to 1967 as well as his leadership of the Papal Volunteers for Latin America (PAVLA) and the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP). Noting Considine's intention to make way for a new generation, Hurteau sheds light on Considine's retirement years and the continued beating of his "worldwide heart" amid the challenges of declining health and diminishment that marked his final days.

Throughout the book, Hurteau delves deeply into the details of Considine's extensive network of relationships with individuals, groups, and institutions and meticulously examines the ways in which these relationships contributed to Considine's ability to offer creative, constructive, and timely contributions, not only to the study of missiology and the training of missionaries, but also to the urgently needed ongoing formation of church leaders—bishops, priests, religious and lay activists. In this regard Considine, through his personal presence, eyewitness experiences, and provocative inspiring reflections, elicited in the hearts and minds of his many audiences a higher degree of global consciousness as well as a heightened awareness of the complex realities, competing claims, and hope-filled aspirations of a world church made up of diverse peoples and cultures. Observing the ways in which Considine was both a beneficiary of a culturally constituted American exceptionalism and one of its most incisive critics, Hurteau underscores the tensions and ambiguities reflected in the interactive dynamics of church-state relationships, of American foreign policy and the policies of the US Catholic Conference of Bishops, of U.S. foreign missionaries, and the dramatic socioeconomic and geopolitical changes taking place in fields afar.

Scholarly, yet accessible to a variety of audiences, this book draws on a fascinating and impressive collection of archival documents, historical records, and personal accounts related to the formidable figure of Fr. John J. Considine, MM. For those whose ecclesial imaginations are stirred by the prospect of tracing the evolution of world Christianity during the twentieth century from a US Roman Catholic perspective, this book is a tour de force when it comes to providing both a method and a compelling narrative for doing missiology as biography.

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Thomas Merton: Selected Essays. By Patrick F. O'Connell. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013. xviii + 493 pages. \$50.00.

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As we near the centenary of the birth of Thomas Merton in 2015, Patrick O'Connell has once again given us a volume in which to hear a richer

sounding of the mature and sonorous voice of a great spiritual master of the contemporary age. One of the finest Merton scholars among the many who populate the International Thomas Merton Society (www.merton.org), which he cofounded, O'Connell is simply unmatched in the depth and scope of his familiarity with the weighty, rangy Merton corpus, as all his peers will agree. Undoubtedly, it is to him and his dedicated colleagues that we owe a debt of gratitude for the richness and availability of a vast library of wisdom produced by the exceptional monastic writer, Thomas Merton.

Seasoned Merton readers will be grateful for, and novices to this canon will be well instructed by, this latest volume of selected essays penned by Merton, mostly during the last decade of the spiritual writer's life. The volume gathers together from the gross of 250 articles, 33 of the most elegant, challenging, and exploratory articles Merton published in a variety of predominantly Catholic journals and magazines during a peak phase of his writing career. Together they resonate in a voice distinct from the one that echoes in his more mystical, monastic, intimate, didactic, or epistolary writings. In this collection we hear rather the deep thinker following the paths of his own curiosity and passion. Here we encounter Merton, the public intellectual, engaged in his "vow of conversation" with the postmodern world.

As O'Connell underscores in his instructive introduction to the collection, Merton grew in ease with the essay form. It allowed him a mode for deep inquiry into the countless issues of his concern. It gave him permission to research a question rather than produce an answer for his largely Catholic audience, who expected piety from their favorite spiritual teacher. As Merton's existential faith matured during a season of midcentury destruction—and from his vantage point, apocalypse—he needed to satisfy both the alluring and the unsettling movements of his own lived experience, his own insatiable curiosity. For him such intellectual work was his particular contemplative practice—to think long and hard and deeply about the human condition, human destiny, and humanity's proclivity to self-destruction. In a journal entry from 1958 he poses this question to himself: "Is it better to write fast, easy (useless) articles for nuns or slow, difficult, important articles on Le Douanier Rousseau, Pasternak, etc.?" (xiii).

His question is answered by this collection of perhaps least read but most revelatory works, catalogued by O'Connell as ranging from "interreligious dialogue to racial justice, from the laconic *verba* of the fourth-century desert fathers to the novels of Faulkner and Camus, from the nuclear threat to the 'philosophy of solitude'" (x). Yet, for all their disparate surface features, "the one root truth" in Merton's words is the mystery of God's call to human persons to divine union.

Like most Merton disciples, I have been tutored in the richness of his teaching by the recent one-volume selections of his journals, letters, and poetry. And though familiar with most of the essays in O'Connell's collection, reading them in a gathered volume was to discover them anew in all their power. The opportunity to engage with Merton in these succinct explorations into the myriad valences of human experience—in the light or shadow of the sacred—really brought me into conversation with him, myself, and the world—as was and is their intent. My now heavily annotated version of this collection attests that one cannot but be drawn into the great intellectual work of thinking toward enlightenment that Merton's brilliance arouses, as he brings readers before the horizons of their own deepest questions and desires, offering them a rich and solitary lectionary in which to read the book of their own human experience.

Especially as we move toward the centenary of Merton's birth in 2015, professors of religious studies and theology will perhaps be wondering how to celebrate this milestone in the history of Christian spirituality academically. No doubt there will be a host of Merton courses or units prepared to introduce the uninitiated into the legacy of his wisdom. Halfway through the collection I realized I had found a text for my own regularly scheduled Merton course, and also for my Spiritual Masters class. Whereas the fine volumes of Merton's select writings available for texts serve well for presenting a sampling of his writing on various themes and in different genres, none afford the in-depth engagement with Merton that these brief selected essays allow. Each one is whole in itself, suitable for a weekly assignment and as the matter for class-time explication and discussion. While the essays require some historical and cultural contextualization, they serve well to illumine the intellectual genius of this spiritual teacher as one facet of his multifaceted nature gleaned from his biography. The collection is a must-read for a student of the Merton canon, and a most welcome pedagogical aid to offer yet another generation of young scholars a profoundly illuminating experience of what goes on in the mind of a spiritual master—for the life of the world.

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When the Gospel Grows Feet: An Ecclesiology in Context. By Thomas M. Kelly. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013. xv + 279 pages. \$29.99 (paper).
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Many North American theologians, particularly those teaching introductory courses in theology, Catholic social teaching, and liberation theology,