

Thomas Merton in France

Prades, France
June 11–21, 2014

A pilgrimage program offered by the Thomas Merton Society of Canada

A PILGRIMAGE TO PRADES, FRANCE,

for longtime lovers of Merton and his writings as well as new friends of this great and mischievous hermit ...

“On the last day of January 1915, under the sign of the Water Bearer, in a year of a great war, and down in the shadow of some French mountains on the borders of Spain, I came into the world.”

This is the memorable first sentence of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Thomas Merton’s autobiography. And as he says, it was on January 31, 1915, that he was born at Prades in the department of Pyrénées-Orientales, in the Midi, the sunny south of France.

Prades is a lovely town, now twice as populous (currently about 6,000) as it was when Merton was born there. The house in which he was born still stands at the corner of Rue du 4 Septembre and Rue du Palais de Justice, where in the summer, a beautiful bougainvillea grows in the narrow walled garden.

Merton’s parents took him to the United States early in the war. But he returned to France in 1925, to live and go to school

in St. Antonin Noble Val, and later to a boarding school in Montauban which he very much disliked, the Lycée Ingres.

After a few years in Britain, he spent the rest of his life in the United States. But he was very proud of being French by birth, and was identifiably French in many of his sensibilities.

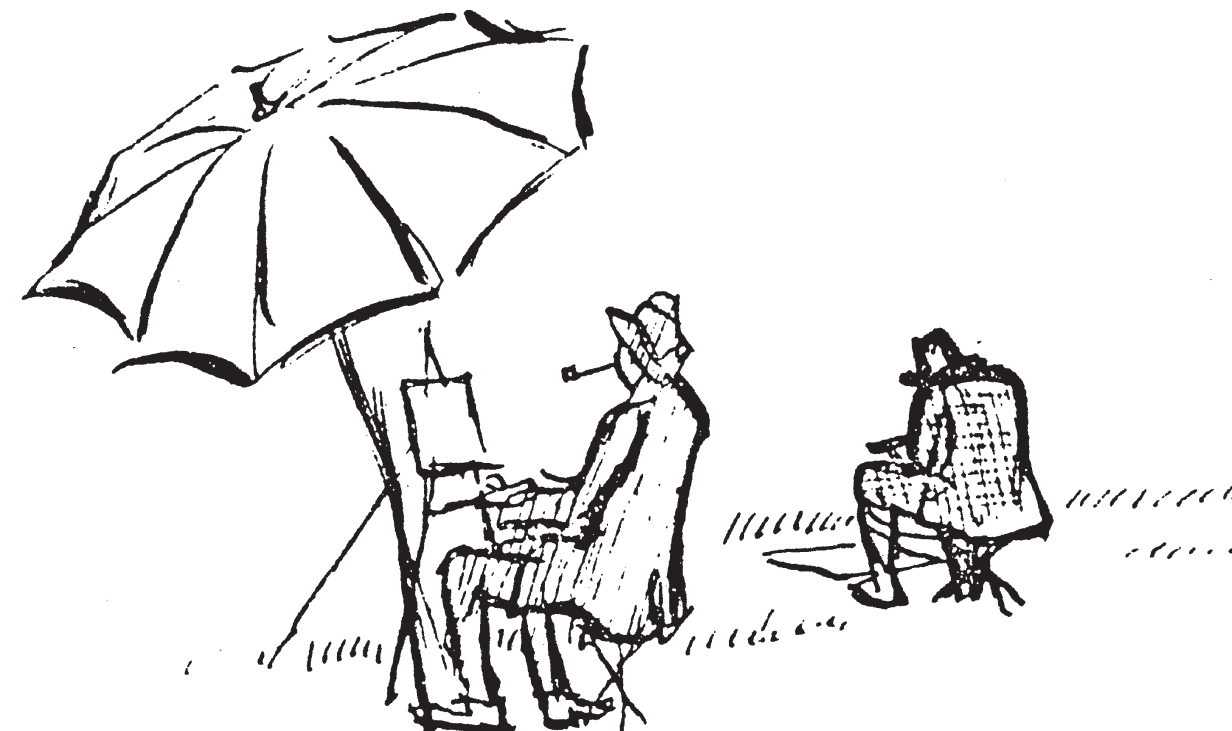
Merton was many things in his all-too-short life (he died in 1968, in Thailand)—poet, photographer, essayist, social critic, Zen calligrapher, theoretician of monastic renewal, ecumenist. Most of all, however, he was a contemplative—both as monk and writer. He is arguably the most significant spiritual writer of the western Christian tradition in the second half of the 20th century.

In this ten-day program, we will have the privilege of inviting Merton’s presence among us in the place where he was born and spent part of his growing-up years. We will review his life, with

special attention to the ways in which he cherished and expressed his French origin. We will spend time on his great themes—contemplation, non-violence and interfaith encounter—and we will visit St. Antonin and Montauban.

The program is intended both for longtime lovers of Merton and his writings as well as new friends of this great and mischievous hermit. It will

include lectures, discussions and ample free time to explore the surrounding Catalan countryside.



Drawing by Owen Merton, Thomas Merton’s father.

PILGRIMAGE FACULTY

JUDITH HARDCASTLE tour leader, works full-time in ministry at St. Andrew's United Church in North Vancouver where she has been pastor for two years. Founding member and program director of the Thomas Merton Society of Canada, Judith currently serves on the ITMS program committee for *Merton 100: Living the Legacy*, a conference celebrating the 100th anniversary of Merton's birthday in June 2015 in Louisville, Kentucky.

MICHAEL W. HIGGINS is vice president for mission and Catholic identity at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut. Prior to his appointment at Sacred Heart University, Michael was president and vice chancellor of St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo, Ontario. He is a professor of English and Religious Studies, a columnist, a radio documentary maker, a television commentator on Vatican affairs and a regular contributor to *Commonweal* magazine. In addition, he was the chief advisor for the widely acclaimed TV series, *Sir Peter Ustinov's Inside the Vatican*. He is the author and co-author of over a dozen books, including *Heretic Blood: The Spiritual Geography of Thomas Merton*. His next major project will be the official biography of the late Father Henri J.M. Nouwen. Michael serves on the Board of the Thomas Merton Society of Canada, and is vice president of the International Thomas Merton Society.

If you have any questions about this program, contact Judith Hardcastle at 604-669-2546, judithhardcastle@telus.net or visit www.merton.ca.

THE PROGRAM

June 11 WEDNESDAY

6:00 pm Arrive at Villa Lafabrègue in Prades, register, and settle in
8:00 pm Apéritif de bienvenue and orientation
Dinner at Villa Lafabrègue

June 12 THURSDAY

7:30 - 9:30 am Breakfast at the Villa, and so every day except June 18 and 19
9:30 am - noon Opening session
Walking tour of Prades, including a visit to Merton's birth place
Noon Lunch at the restaurant of your choice, and so most days
3 - 4:30 pm Afternoon session
6 pm Apéritif poolside
Dinner out—your choice

June 13 FRIDAY

9:30 - 11:30 am Morning session
Lunch out—your choice
2 pm Chartered bus to the Abbey of St. Michel de Cuxa, 3 km from Prades (from which part of The Cloisters in Manhattan was taken)
6 pm Apéritif poolside
Dinner out—your choice

June 14 SATURDAY

9 am Chartered bus to Saint-Martin du Canigou
Noon Lunch out—your choice
3 - 4:30 pm Afternoon session
6 pm Apéritif poolside
Dinner out—your choice

June 15 SUNDAY

Free day

June 16 MONDAY

9:30 - 11:30 am Morning session
Lunch out—your choice
3 - 4:30 pm Afternoon session
6 pm Apéritif poolside
Dinner out—your choice

June 17 TUESDAY

Free morning to visit the weekly public market at *La Place*
Lunch out—your choice
2 pm Charter bus departs for St. Antonin, where Merton's father built what is now the Villa Diane
Dinner out—your choice

June 18 WEDNESDAY

9:30 - 10:30 am Morning session
Walking tour of St. Antonin, including a visit to Villa Diane
Noon Lunch at *Le Fespin de Babette*
1:30 pm Depart for visit to Lycée Ingres in Montauban
4:30 pm Return to St. Antonin
Free evening

June 19 THURSDAY

9:30 am Depart for Prades
Noon Picnic lunch on the road
Afternoon free
6 pm Apéritif poolside
Dinner out—your choice

June 20 FRIDAY

9:30 - 11:30 am Morning session
Noon Lunch out—your choice
4 - 5:30 pm Afternoon session
6 pm Apéritif poolside
8 pm Farewell dinner at Villa Lafabrègue

June 21 SATURDAY

Breakfast and departure
Bon voyage, tous et toutes!

REGISTRATION

As the tour is limited to 16 people, we advise early registration. Minimum age is 19 unless travelling with a parent or guardian.

COST

Inclusive cost: \$2,499 Canadian. A deposit of \$1,000 is due with registration; the balance of \$1,499 is payable by March 31, 2014. A receipt in response to your deposit will confirm your registration.

Cost includes a tuition fee of \$650 which may be income tax deductible and is based on double occupancy. Single occupancy, if desired and available, will be an additional charge of \$350.

Cost also includes: Accommodation for ten nights, breakfast daily, two evening dinners (wine included), group lunch in St. Antonin, picnic lunch en route to Prades, scheduled land transportation, instructors' services, and taxes.

Cost does not include: Transportation to and from Prades (air and land), other meals, health and accident insurance, alcoholic beverages, medical costs, laundry, personal items, excess baggage charges, individual accommodation surcharges, tips, or expenses arising from any causes beyond the reasonable control of the tour leader.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Before February 15: Deposit of \$1,000 will be refunded, less a \$50 processing fee.

Between February 15 and March 31: A full refund, less the processing fee, will be possible only if someone from the waiting list is able to take your place.

After March 31: No refund will be possible.

Original receipts issued by the TMSC must accompany any refund request.

The TMSC reserves the right to cancel the tour in the event of insufficient registration.

HOW TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE

Please complete and mail the registration form with your deposit cheque or credit card number in the amount of \$1,000 (payable to the TMSC) to the Thomas Merton Society of Canada, 1044 St. George's Avenue, North Vancouver, BC V7L 3H6.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Everyone will be making their own way to Prades, and departing on their own. From North America, fly to Paris, take the fast train (TGV) to Perpignan (or fly to Barcelona and take the regular train to Perpignan), then the local train from Perpignan to Prades.

REGISTRATION FORM

Yes! Please register me for Thomas Merton in France.

June 11 – 21, 2014 (one registration form per person please)

Full Name (*as it appears in your passport*)

Address

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Day Telephone

()

Evening Telephone

E-mail

Dietary Restrictions: Vegetarian Other _____

Smoker: Yes No Age group: 19–30 31–45 46–60 60+

Accommodation: Single Share with _____

Arrive via: _____

I heard about the tour from: _____

Deposit of \$1,000 CDN is made by:

Cheque (*payable to the Thomas Merton Society of Canada*)

VISA

Card Number

Expiry Date

Cardholder's Name (*if different from registrant above*)

Signature (*mandatory for credit card payment*)

Balance of \$1,499 CDN is due March 31, 2014.

I have carefully read and accept all the conditions stated in the brochure. I confirm that I am 19 years of age or older, that I will be responsible for any health or travel insurance which I will need on the study tour, and for any person(s) of minor age accompanying me; and that I hereby release and discharge the TMSC and its agents and employees from any and all claims, actions and demands that I or anyone in my charge may have for any injury, accident or loss arising from my participation in the program.

Signature of registrant

We respect your privacy. The mailing information you have provided is included in our TMSC mailing list; however we do not sell our mailing lists.

Please check here and sign below if you DO NOT want to be on our mailing list.

Signature of registrant