“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 identifiable 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.
JUDITH HARDCASTLE 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, Six People Under the Sun. He is the author and co-author of over a dozen books, including Heroic 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 served 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, j Judithhardcastle@ualberta.ca or visit www.merton.ca.

PILGRIMAGE FACULTY

THE PROGRAM

June 11

Arri re at Villa Lafabrègue in Prades, register, and settle in
6:00 pm Free morning to visit the weekly public market at Le Puy
8:00 pm Apéritif de bienvenue and orientation
Villa Lafabrègue
June 12

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
Afternoon session
6 pm Apéritif poshîde
Dinner out—your choice
June 13

9:30 - 11:30 am Morning session
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 poshîde
Dinner out—your choice
June 14

9 am Chartered bus to Saint-Martin du Canigou
Noon Lunch out—your choice
3 - 4:30 pm Afternoon session
Afternoon session
6 pm Apéritif poshîde
Dinner out—your choice
June 15

Free day
June 16

9:30 - 11:30 am Morning session
3 - 4:30 pm Afternoon session
6 pm Apéritif poshîde
Dinner out—your choice
June 17

Free morning to visit the weekly public market at Le Puy
Lunch out—your choice
Charter bus departs for St. Antonin, where Merton’s father built what is now the Villa Diane
Dinner out—your choice
June 18

9:30 - 10:30 am Morning session
Walking tour of St. Antonin, including a visit to Villa Diane
Noon Lunch at Le Pégion de Babette
1:30 pm Depart for visit to Lycée Ingres in Montauban
4:30 pm Return to St. Antonin
Free evening
June 19

9:30 am Noon Lunch out—your choice
Depart for Prades
Prain lunch on the road
Afternoon free
Apéritif poshîde
Dinner out—your choice
June 20

9:30 - 11:30 am Morning session
Noon Lunch out—Le Puy
4 - 5:30 pm Afternoon session
Afternoon session
8 pm Apéritif poshîde
Farewell dinner at Villa Lafabrègue
June 21

Breakfast and departure
Bon voyage, tout et trés et trés
June 22

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS
Everyone will be making their own way to Prades, and departing on their own. From North America, fly to Paris, take the 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

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

COST
Indicative 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: 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 or cheque 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 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 on your passport)
Address
Day Telephone Evening Telephone
E-mail
Day Telephone Evening Telephone
E-mail
Day Telephone Evening Telephone
E-mail

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

Signature (mandatory for credit card payment)

We respect your privacy. The mailing information you have provided is included in our database and we may use it to contact you with tour updates or updates about our program.

Signature of registrant

For More Information
E-mail
Phone
Signature of registrant

REGISTRATION FORM

June 10 – 21, 2014 (one registration form per person please)

Full Name (as it appears on your passport)
Address
Day Telephone Evening Telephone
E-mail
Day Telephone Evening Telephone
E-mail
Day Telephone Evening Telephone
E-mail

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

Signature (mandatory for credit card payment)

We respect your privacy. The mailing information you have provided is included in our database and we may use it to contact you with tour updates or updates about our program.

Signature of registrant

For More Information
E-mail
Phone
Signature of registrant