**Thomas Merton’s Monastic Wisdom for These Times**

Friends of St. Benedict 9th Annual Symposium: February 20, 2021; 10:00 a.m. (EST)

(Note: Talk lengths are approximate.  Talks and Q & A will begin promptly.)

10:00 a.m.                Introduction

10:10 - ca 10:40      Talk #1:

                                        What Merton meant by “monk”

*Ora et Labora*: balancing prayer and work

10:40 - 11:00           Contemplative Time/Comfort Break

                                         ~ How enmeshed am I in “the way things are”?

                                         ~In what ways am I a “marginal person”?  Or not?

                                         ~What percentage of my day is taken up with work?

                                               Rest/Leisure?   Prayer/Spiritual Reading?  Sleep?

                                               Be honest.

                                          ~How do I “channel God” to others? (Yes. You do.)

11:00 - 11:30              Talk #2:

*Ora et Labora* (continued)

                                           Cultivating Silence and Solitude: Means Not Ends

                                           Silence isn’t always external

                                           Solitude isn’t always geographic

11:30 - 11:50               Contemplative Time/Comfort Break

                                           ~What have I “taken on” that I don’t really have to do?  Why?

                                           ~What do I do that is genuinely restful/restorative?

                                           ~What is my relationship with silence?  Listening?

                                           ~What has “Covid time” taught me about solitude?

11:50 - 12:20 p.m.        Q & A

12:20 p.m.                    Closing remarks

For Further Reading and Exploration:

Thomas Merton, *Basic Principles of Monastic Spirituality*

*The Climate of Monastic Prayer*

*Contemplation in a World of Action*

*Thoughts in Solitude*

*Wisdom of the Desert*

Michael Casey, OCSO, *Strangers to the City: Reflections on the Beliefs and Values of the Rule of Saint*

*Benedict* (Paraclete Press, 2013/2018)

Patrick Hart, OCSO, *A Monastic Vision for the 21st Century* (Cistercian Publications, 2006)

Bonnie Thurston, *Shaped by the End You Live For: Thomas Merton’s Monastic Spirituality*  (Liturgical

           Press, 2020)

Esther de Waal, *Seeking God the Way of St. Benedict* (Liturgical Press, 1984)