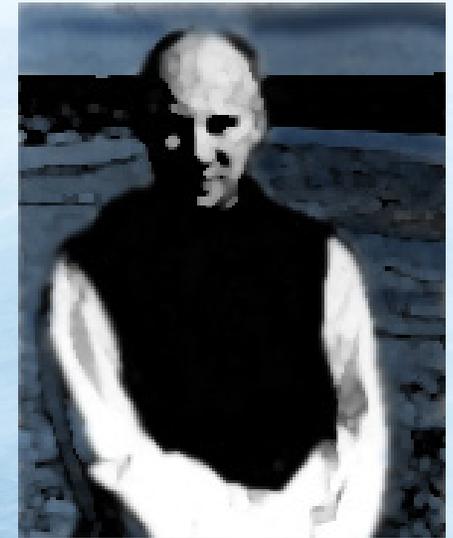


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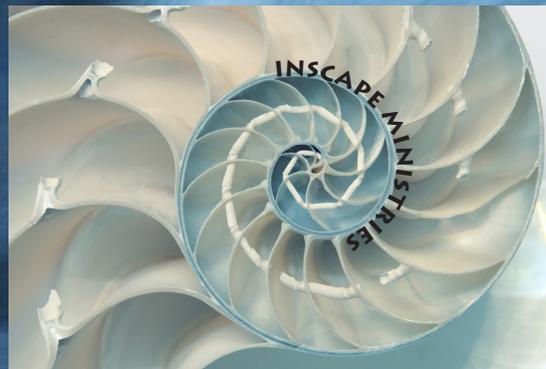
“Let me seek the gift of silence, of poverty, and solitude, where everything I touch is turned into prayer: where the sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer, and the wind in the trees is my prayer—for God is all in all.”

Thomas Merton

Thomas Merton



Presented by David Hoover. David is currently on the staff of the Center for Spiritual Development in Orange, CA. He teaches in the School for Spiritual Directors as well as offering retreats and workshops on prayer and spirituality. He has a Masters degree from the Franciscan School of Theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.



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*Pilgrim*  
and  
*Prophet*

+ of peace

## Format of the Presentation

After a brief introduction about Thomas Merton, we will learn about Thomas Merton's life and spirituality in the form of a *Reader's Theater* performance. This is a form of theater in which there is no full memorization: the script is openly used during the performance. In many ways it is similar to oral storytelling in which the ears and the imaginations of the audience are central to helping to bring the performance to life. So, relax and surrender yourself into the oral world which the performer creates for us. Hand yourself over to letting the life and spirit of Thomas Merton come to life for us this evening.

## Background

Thomas Merton was born in France in 1915 and died of accidental electrocution while at a gathering of monks in Bangkok, Thailand in 1968. He was a Trappist monk and one of the most important and influential Christian writers of the 20th century. He was the acclaimed author of more than 70 books on spirituality, prayer, poetry, social justice, and inter-religious dialogue. His first book was his best-selling *Seven Story Mountain* in 1948 which chronicled his years of searching and final conversion to Catholicism and entering a Trappist monastery in 1941.

## Thomas Merton: Pilgrim & Prophet of Peace

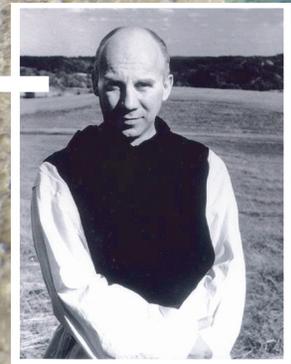
### Setting

The setting of the play is in a liminal twilight zone between life and death, heaven and earth, this life and the next. It is the space between death and eternal life. The place where the communion of saints and human life mysteriously intersect each other. From this space Thomas Merton remembers the entire panorama of his life's journey. He takes stock of his life by a final truthful gaze on all that has happened on his way home to God. The play is a reflective memory poem about his life.

In the play, Merton is right at the brink of that eternal threshold where we each can cry out to God with the Psalmist: "Let your Face fill me with delight, your Face—the vision of which is where all roads lead." ....Yes, where all roads lead. We eavesdrop on the intimate conversation he is having with himself—and by extension with us. We join with him as he remembers his journey into the embrace of the Love of God.

WHAT IF THE DOOR TO  
PARADISE IS WIDE OPEN  
AND WE WALK RIGHT PAST IT?

**Thomas Merton**



## Notes to the Audience

Once again, remember that this is a "reader's theater" format of performance (as described above.) In order to shape the story of Merton's life, his life has been divided into a number of themes (or "scenes".) Namely, the themes of:

- Life and death
- Conversion
- Prayer
- Mystical experience
- Peace and Non-violence
- Conclusion:  
The Cosmic Dance

During the play, each theme will be transitioned by the ringing of a monastic mindfulness bell.