CONTEMPLATIVE LIVING WITH THOMAS MERTON

Learning from the thoughts of American Trappist monk and contemplative thinker Thomas Merton is a cherished part of my faith journey. I’ve attended *Contemplative Living with Thomas Merton* since 2011, and most always look forward to it, as a highlight of my month.

Merton has been described as one of the major religious thinkers of the twentieth century. I believe this. In saying that, I feel it’s fair to say that his writings are accessible, and reach those present for our “Thomas Mertons” in ways that touch our hearts and lives.



The sessions begin in the meeting room, with a welcome, a quiet song, and some prefacing words from the soul running it, currently Loraine. We then are invited to leave the room, and reflect on the readings, the words of Thomas Merton and of another thinker, each month. It’s not onerous, the readings are brief, but they are thought-provoking.

After about an hour, we return to the meeting room, and once everyone is back, we have a time of sharing. People are encouraged to be silent, during the sharing, as a mutual mark of respect. So, there is no discussion, usually.

This is a distinguishing feature of Thomas Merton meetings. Many groups share and discuss, but our way allows for measured personal reflection. Most months, I pen a poem, based on the readings, and recite it.

I encourage you to consider attending for a month or two, to see if it speaks to you.

A picnic lunch on the House of Prayer verandah is a pleasant way to finish, if you are able to stay and bring a plate.

Michael Fitzgerald-Clarke