



A Monastic Introduction to Sacred Scripture

Novitiate Conferences on Scripture and Liturgy 1

by Patrick F. O'Connell and Thomas Merton

DESCRIPTION:

Thomas Merton gave numerous conferences during his decade (1955-1965) as novice master at the Cistercian Abbey of Gethsemani. In *A Monastic Introduction to Sacred Scripture*, Patrick F. O'Connell presents one of these, a wide-ranging introduction to biblical studies. Drawing on church tradition, teaching of recent papal documents, and scholarly resources of the time, Merton reveals the central importance of the Scriptures for the spiritual growth of his listeners.

For Merton, at the heart of any meaningful reading of the Scriptures, not only for monks but for all Christians, is the invitation to respond not just intellectually but with the whole self, to recognize the gospel as 'good news', as a saving, liberating, consoling, challenging word, reflecting his fundamental belief that 'the Holy Spirit enlightens us, in our reading, to see how our own lives are part of these great mysteries - how we are one with Jesus in them'. O'Connell's extensive introduction situates this reflection in the context of Merton's evolving engagement with the Bible from his own days as a student monk through the mature reflections from his final years on the biblical renewal in the wake of the Second Vatican Council..

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Thomas Merton, Roman Catholic convert, Cistercian monk and hermit, poet, contemplative, social critic, and pioneer in interreligious dialogue, was a seminal figure of twentieth-century American Christianity. Among his many books are his best-selling autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain* and the modern spiritual classic *New Seeds of Contemplation*.

Patrick F. O'Connell, a founding member and former president of the International Thomas Merton Society, edits the ITMS quarterly publication *The Merton Seasonal* and is co-author of *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*. He has edited thirteen previous volumes of Thomas Merton's writings, including *Selected Essays*, *Early Essays, 1947-52*, *Cistercian Fathers and Forefathers*, and most recently *A Monastic Introduction to Sacred Scripture*, the first of three books in the series *Novitiate Conferences on Scripture and Liturgy*.

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