



In the Valley of Wormwood: Cistercian Blessed and Saints of the Golden Age (Cistercian Studies)

Thomas Merton OCSO

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Shortly after entering the monastic life in December 1941, a relatively unknown Trappist monk called Frater Louis—who would later be known to the world by his given name, Thomas Merton—began to pen biographical sketches of early Cistercian blessed and saints. These were initially collected, printed, and bound inexpensively, with no mention of the author, by the Abbey of Gethsemani. They are now published here for a wide audience for the first time.

This work of the very young Merton perhaps takes on added significance when one considers the writing that lay just ahead of him at the time. In 1948, his autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, was published and soon became an unexpected national bestseller. This long-awaited publication of *In the Valley of Wormwood* offers a window into Merton's thinking and his spiritual life just a few years before his phenomenal autobiography would see the light of day.

Thomas Merton (1915–1968) was a monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani, Kentucky. He was a renowned writer, theologian, poet, and social activist.

Patrick Hart, OCSO, a native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, entered the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1951 and served as secretary to Thomas Merton during the last year of his life. He has edited many books by and about Thomas Merton during the thirty-eight years since the latter's death on December 10, 1968. He has served on the board of directors for Cistercian Publications for the past thirty years.

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