

Remembering Bill Shannon: Stories and Tributes

Memories and Prayers

Christine M. Bochen

I first met “Msgr. William Shannon” in December, 1967 when I interviewed for a teaching position at Nazareth College. Little did I then know that “Msgr. Shannon” would become much more to me than my department chair and colleague. He was my “boss” for fourteen years though there was nothing “bossy” about him. His style of leadership in the department and the college was that of a visionary – seeing and responding to “the signs of the times” long before the rest of us did – and urging us forward. He saw that the time was ripe for the move from being a Theology Department to a Department of Religious Studies. He recognized that our students needed to know about the religions of the world, and that he did as well. So he drove to McMaster University where he took courses in Hinduism and Buddhism. Committed to a collegial model of leadership in the college (as well as the church), he became a strong advocate for faculty governance and modeled candidness and conviction in his interaction with administration and trustees. He developed new courses and tweaked existing ones, always in ways that responded to student needs as well as reflecting his own reading and learning, including his study of Thomas Merton. In the mid-seventies, Thomas Merton made his way into a course Bill entitled “Religion and Self-Discovery” which explored the “self and search for autonomy, authenticity and community” and included some “central religious personalities” such as Buddha, Jesus, Augustine, Luther, Merton etc., as well as Teresa of Avila, Jeanne d’Arc, Dorothy Day. By 1976, encouraged by enthusiastic students, Bill was devoting an entire course to “Thomas Merton: Mystic and Prophet.” He described it as a “study of writings of Thomas Merton – Merton the Mystic who helped secular America discover the dimensions of prayer and contemplation in human life; Merton the Prophet who became the social critic of America at peace with neither the world nor itself.” Five years later, Bill introduced a seminar centered around “Themes from Thomas Merton’s Writings” that promised to examine “selected themes from Merton’s prose and poetic works” as well as “insights into contemporary Christian spirituality, world-wide ecumenical perspective, the Christian relation to the world.” Reading these course descriptions, it is easy to see “the seeds” of Bill’s own writing on spirituality and peace. I recall how Bill delighted in pointing to the Merton reading by Smith College students, which Amiya Chakravarty organized in 1967 as “the first class” on Merton, even as I realize that Bill Shannon was certainly in the vanguard of those teaching courses on Merton. When Bill retired in 1982, he bequeathed the “Merton course” to me and so I began teaching a course which, for a few years, I entitled “Faith and Violence” before returning to Bill’s title of “Thomas Merton: Mystic and Prophet.” I saw I could not do better than that. Bill was my mentor, my “go-to guy,” when I had questions or just wanted to “talk Merton.” And so our friendship grew and before long became collaboration inside and outside the classroom. We co-taught Merton Elderhostels and graduate courses on Merton at St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry. I well remember my trepidation the first few times I taught in Bill’s presence. My anxiety was self-induced, of course, because Bill was nothing but affirming of my efforts. What a delight it was when I realized we were a team and that our teaching styles, however different, were compatible nevertheless. Eventually, we became collaborators when, as general editor of the Merton letters, Bill invited me to edit Merton’s letters to writers. Later, we worked with Patrick O’Connell to produce *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*. There was no doubt in Bill’s mind that Merton deserved to have an encyclopedia devoted to him! More recently, we worked together on editing Merton’s

Cold War Letters and Thomas Merton: A Life in Letters. What a gift it was to spend time with Bill – even in the tedious tasks of proofing texts. That had to be done but the conversation and laughter that punctuated the reviews of galleys made the task fun. What I treasure most is Bill’s sharing work in progress and our discussing what he had written. One of my most poignant memories is that of Bill talking about and reading sections of his last book, *How to Become a Christian Even*



If You Already Are One, which he published just weeks before he died. His delight in the title, his pleasure in sharing passages was so apparent and so contagious and rightly so: in telling the story of his conversions, he was preparing for the final conversion! And as he told us again and again, he was “ready.” Being in Bill’s presence was gift because he made of presence a gift – a gift he readily shared with his many friends – old friends and new. Among the new friends were the Shannon Chair in Catholic Studies lecturers who met with Bill for what I liked to call “an audience.” Though unable to attend their presentations, he was keenly interested in learning about their work and sharing his own. Sadly, he was too ill to meet with the last lecturer of this year’s series, Brother Paul Quenon, OCSO of the Abbey of Gethsemani, someone with whom Bill would have enjoyed an immediate kinship. Grateful for what Bill

termed our “long and beautiful friendship,” I am stumped when it comes to expressing his legacy but I am confident that the broad strokes of that legacy come through in the prayers of intention that Susan Nowak, SSJ – a Nazareth colleague and dear friend of Bill’s – and I read at his wake service:

Inspired by Bill’s lifelong embrace of the Gospel call to see God everywhere and always, may our desire be deepened to seek God in the daily ordinariness of our lives as husbands and wives, siblings, colleagues, and neighbors as surely as in those moments suffused with silence of contemplative presence, we pray . . .

Encouraged by Bill’s radical witness to freedom, faith, and the primacy of conscience, may we discover within ourselves the courage to engage in lively debate within the church, between communities of faith, and among all people of good will in the hope of justice, through a commitment to reconciliation, for the sake of peace, we pray . . .

Honoring Bill’s conversion to non-violence, born of his passion for peace, may we have the audacity to believe that our lives will sow seeds of peace as witness to the unity of persons, one with another, in ways that transform division, temper fear, diminish ideology, and disarm violence, we pray . . .

Stirred by Bill’s conviction that the People of God will lead the Church of today into the future as a community of prophets, reading the signs of the time; a community of compassion, seeking to heal human grief and anxiety; and a community of joy, celebrating humanity’s joys and hopes, may we be transformed again and again by the stirrings of wisdom in unexpected places, the glimpses of truth in unforeseen experiences, and the swelling of grace in unanticipated moments of renewal, we pray . . .

Moved by the intensity of Bill’s experience of God as the Hidden Ground of Love, may our own personal journeys from here to there, from life through death in its

fullness, be shaped by the dignity, trust, and conviction that carried Bill into the fullness of life with his God, True Self united in love with the God of love, we pray . . .

Yes – we tried to incorporate the titles and themes of Bill’s books into the prayers! That seemed fitting since, for Bill as it was for Merton, the best of what Bill wrote was autobiography.

Christine M. Bochen holds the William H. Shannon Chair of Catholic Studies at Nazareth College and is a founding member and former president of the International Thomas Merton Society.

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Compassionate and Gentle Guide

Walt Chura, SFO

Bill Shannon was a gifted and insightful writer about Merton and his works but he was also a compassionate and gentle guide in the ways of prayer and Christian life. He was, in my estimation, not only a gentleman and a scholar but also a saint for our times. When I was studying theology at the Albany site of St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry, we were required to take at least one course at the home campus in Rochester. I was privileged to be among those who were able to study Merton under Bill Shannon. Suffice it to say, the experience changed my life. I went on to study another two semesters with Bill, doing an independent study of Merton’s writings on Asian spirituality. He became a friend and mentor. When I bemoaned the fact that it was impractical for me to go on to a doctorate in theology, Bill humbly reminded me that teaching undergraduates, as he had spent a major portion of his life doing, wasn’t the only thing worth doing with my gifts. The only thing he really pressed me hard on was to start a local chapter of the ITMS in the Capital Region (NY)! And finally I did!

Walt Chura, SFO is a frequent presenter at ITMS General Meetings and director of the Capital Region ITMS Chapter in Albany, NY.

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The Body of Christ

Larry Culliford

I particularly remember Bill’s gracious welcome to include everyone, whether Roman Catholic or not, to the Mass on Corpus Christi Sunday at the close of the 2009 ITMS meeting at Nazareth College. His bold declaration, “You are the Body of Christ!” provided a deeply moving experience, and I would say moment of healing, for me and many present. So, to the comments of everyone else, as an Anglican, I would like to add an especially heartfelt tribute together with an abundance of gratitude for his life.

Larry Culliford is a psychiatrist and author and former chair of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

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Faithful Priest, True Gentleman

Lawrence S. Cunningham

I met Bill Shannon on many occasions, almost all of which involved our mutual interest in the life and works of Thomas Merton. Memories of conversations at the various meetings of the ITMS and more quiet occasions when, for example, we ate at a small restaurant, scouted out by the late Bob

Daggy, on the Old Bardstown Highway in Louisville where the drinks were decent, the food good, and the conversation sparkling. My favorite memory, however, is of the time that I went to Nazareth College in Rochester to speak at the dedication of the “Merton Room” of the Nazareth library, where Bill’s vast collection of Mertoniana was to be housed. During the day I spent some time alone in Bill’s rooms at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Joseph while he went off to take care of one of his many duties as chaplain to the sisters. His study was chock-a-block with books, souvenirs and his well-chosen collection of art, including some fine paintings by Owen Merton, the father of the famous monk. After the festivities were over, we drove out to eat and it was during that time that Bill told me that he had put in his will a bequest to be given to his home diocese to support the first woman accepted by the diocese for ordination to the priesthood. With that characteristic chuckle of his, Bill said that the bequest was bound in legal bands of iron to make it unusable for any other purpose. How sum up the man? Here are a few inadequate phrases: faithful priest; true gentleman; witness for peace; lifelong scholar. Finally, here is a piece of advice he once gave me: always look ahead and do not keep your eye on the rearview mirror. Monsignor William Henry Shannon no longer needs to look ahead. Surely, he is there living in that inaccessible light after which he thirsted all his life.

Lawrence S. Cunningham is the John A. O’Brien Professor emeritus at the University of Notre Dame and author of numerous books, including *Thomas Merton and the Monastic Vision*.

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A Taste of Inner Freedom

Thomas Del Prete

My first ITMS General Meeting was the second one overall, held at Nazareth College. It was there that I first met Bill Shannon. It was actually a brief encounter. Although I had been studying Merton for quite a while, and had received an endorsement from Bill for my book on Merton and education, I felt like a neophyte, certainly more so in the presence of Bill. I had a sense of significant distance from Bill, born of respect and perhaps also of some uncertainty on my part. But that feeling quickly dissipated. Bill greeted me with that cherubic smile and twinkling, kind and knowing look that he had. I felt embraced in a certain way for a moment. There were other similar moments, as well as opportunities to hear Bill speak, as our paths crossed several more times. Upon reflection, I realized that Bill was more at ease with himself than I was in that first moment; that perhaps, in Mertonian terms, he had tasted some inner freedom, was free in a certain sense from care – had become more himself and more open by being less concerned about himself. In Bill I met the scholar and spiritual man united.

Thomas Del Prete, chair of the Department of Education at Clark University, Worcester, MA, is the author of *Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person* and a former president of the ITMS.

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Uncle Bill

Jim Forest

One of the best things about having had a folder full of letters from Thomas Merton was that they brought Bill Shannon to our house, six times zones to the east of Rochester. At the time very few of Merton’s letters had been published. Bill was at work on the first volume, *The Hidden Ground*

of Love, as it was eventually named, and was not only searching far and wide for letters but for information that would put them in context and make obscure references comprehensible. He must have stayed with us for a week in our small house in the Dutch town of Alkmaar. We spent time each day of his visit reading the Merton letters and talking about the background of each. One consequence of his being with us was that I got to know Merton better. Just as important, we also got to know Bill as priest and pastor. Nancy and I had been married by a Jesuit friend but – due to our former marriages – in an irregular way, which pleased neither of us but we saw no alternative. Bill managed to get us talking about the subject and made it clear, once he knew the details, that we could and should apply for annulments. Without his advice and encouragement over a period of several years, we would never have taken the necessary steps or even known how to take them. It was a healing process in our lives, even though – ironically – by the time the annulments were received, we were well on our way to becoming members of the Orthodox Church, in which annulments are not required before remarriage in the church. Several Catholic priests we were close to were far from pleased about our becoming Orthodox, but here too Bill was able to stick with us. Perhaps his own love of icons was a factor – Bill’s heart and soul definitely had an eastern side. It was also Bill who moved us from the age of typewriters into the age of the home computer, and that has made a big difference in our lives and what we have been able to do in recent years, in my case as a writer and editor, in Nancy’s as writer, editor and translator. In 1988, a home computer was costly, well beyond my reach as a person doing peace work. Bill arranged with Nazareth College to take charge of our Merton letters, now part of the college library’s Merton Room. In exchange, the college bought us a PC, the software we needed and a printer. We nicknamed that first PC “Uncle Louie,” as Merton sometimes signed himself, but it would have been still more appropriate to call it “Uncle Bill.”

Jim Forest was a friend and correspondent of Thomas Merton and is the author of numerous books, including *Living with Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton*.

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A Memory of Kindness

Robert Grip

I was helping at the First General Meeting in Louisville and leaving one of the sessions when Bill Shannon, who had just gotten to know me, pulled me over and said, “I want to introduce you to someone.” That “someone” was Bob Giroux. I was so stunned to meet him; I don’t remember what was said. The lasting memory for me was the kindness Bill exhibited to a newcomer in the field of Merton studies.

Robert Grip is news anchor at WALA television in Mobile, AL and immediate past president of the ITMS.

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A Model of Discipleship

Patrick Hart, OCSO

Having just read Monsignor William Shannon’s recent memoirs, which arrived here in time for the announcement of his death, I was reminded of the day he surprised me with his first visit to Gethsemani. As he recalled the incident, he was accompanying a priest friend from Rochester who was scheduled to officiate at a wedding in Louisville, and rather than spend the time at the wedding, Bill decided to come down to Gethsemani, where we first met and spent an afternoon in Merton’s hermitage getting acquainted. That was just the beginning of a life-long friendship which resulted in

the establishment of the International Thomas Merton Society, and numerous publishing ventures. The one I remember most vividly is a meeting we had with the Merton Trustees at Robert Giroux's club, *The Players*, in Gramercy Park in New York City. After the meeting, we had an evening free,



Fr. William Shannon & Br. Patrick Hart

and Bill had tickets to the Metropolitan Opera, which was starring Jessye Norman in Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. (Robert Daggy, who was with us, declined the invitation and ended up at a Cole Porter Musical in a lighter vein.) Bill was one of the most generous men I have ever known, always wanting to share something of his latest discoveries, as his new memoirs reveal, first with his serious study of the Scriptures, contrasting the Gospel of Matthew with John. Then, through the encouragement of his students at Nazareth College, and no doubt the Sisters of Saint Joseph where he also served as chaplain for many years, he began teaching Thomas Merton's social justice message as well as his strong stand in opposition to nuclear war in particular, and also the use of violence in all its manifestations. His final "conversion" seems to have been at the time of Pope John XXIII's announcement of the Second Vatican Council and its call for *aggiornamento* in the Church, with its universal call to holiness for all baptized into Christ, whether men or women, clergy or laity. May he now enjoy the fullness of life in that great reality, and intercede for his numerous followers on the way who have profited by his charismatic example of discipleship.

Patrick Hart, OCSO, a monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani, served as Thomas Merton's secretary and was general editor of the Merton journals.

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A Moment of Thanks

Bill Shannon, priest, author, encourager, organizer, editor, friend, homilist, theologian (one who prays). We did a conference at Nazareth, and it was my first visit there. I spoke on *The Tower of Babel*. The meeting was a "Big Deal" and Bob Giroux was there. Fr. Shannon was cordial and low-key throughout. On Sunday, mid-day, when almost everybody had departed, we two had lunch. What always had impressed me was that Bill regularly focused on the present moment. When the lunch came, he made a special effort to express his appreciation. Bill didn't talk much about the conference. . . . But to the sister who brought the meal, several times he said: "Thank you . . . so much . . . thanks . . . this is my favorite meal. . . . Thank you for such a good Sunday dinner." Gracious, alert, joyful. That moment of thanks summed up something very good about Bill's manner. The meal was simple – meatloaf, carrots, salad.

Victor A. Kramer is a founding member of the International Thomas Merton Society, founding editor of *The Merton Annual*, and author of *Thomas Merton: Monk and Artist*.

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Holy Wisdom

One day after Bill Shannon, Christine Bochen and I had been working on *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* in Bill's office, we were putting away the various Merton volumes that had been pulled from Bill's well-stocked shelves, including a precious copy of Merton's prose poem *Hagia Sophia*,

Patrick F. O'Connell

hand-printed by Victor Hammer on his Stamperia del Santuccio press. I jokingly said as I handed it to Bill that it wasn't something to leave lying around, or "somebody" would be likely to slip it into his backpack (which just happened to be lying on a nearby chair). Bill immediately went to his bookshelf and pulled out a fancy folder and said, "Here – this is for you." Inside was an unbound copy of the very same *Hagia Sophia*! Of course I tried to turn it down, but Bill insisted that he wanted me to have it, since I'd written the article on *Hagia Sophia* for the *Encyclopedia*. This was only one instance of Bill's extraordinary generosity, which extended far beyond physical objects to ideas and encouragement and insights. It struck me later that the gift of *Hagia Sophia* was a perfect symbol of the "holy wisdom" that Bill Shannon had shared with me and with so many others, the sophianic guidance of a genuinely holy person who was a true sacrament, a sign and instrument, of the "hidden wholeness" of which the poem speaks – and which he now experiences in all its fullness and clarity.

Patrick F. O'Connell was the initial holder of the William H. Shannon Chair of Catholic Studies at Nazareth College.

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A Gift of Guidance

Peggy Rosenthal

Bill Shannon was my spiritual director from 1985 until his death. When I first began meeting with him monthly in 1985, we were both at the start of our studies of nonviolence. I had been moved to this study by the U.S. Bishops' 1983 Pastoral Letter, *The Challenge of Peace*, with its assertion that nonviolence "best reflects the call of Jesus both to love and to justice." Bill, for his part, had recently plunged into Merton's writings and was especially struck by Merton's re-interpretation of Gandhi for contemporary Christianity. So Merton, in a sense, became spiritual director for us both as we strove to understand and to begin to live the nonviolent spirit. I recall particularly one incident that Bill recounted to me. He used to be a heavy smoker, he told me. Then the U.S. government embarked on one of its acts of aggression (I'm afraid I don't remember which one). Bill said to me: "I was very distressed by this act of violence by my country, but I could do nothing about it; I had no control over it. So I decided to do something I did have control over: I could stop the violence I was doing to my body in smoking. I stopped smoking then and there – with no withdrawal effects. And I haven't smoked or desired to ever since." Merton guided my directee experience with Bill in other ways, too. As Bill absorbed Merton's distinction between the false self and the true self, he would draw on it to help me discover where I was letting the illusions of the false self seduce me. "The only reality," Bill would say, "is God's presence. Everything else is illusion and roles. So our task, our hope, is to be present to God's presence." One's so-called "spiritual life," Bill would often tell me, "is not *apart* from the rest of one's life, something that goes on in the prayer room alone. But it *is* our life: life *is* spiritual." The gift of having had Bill's guidance for all these years has been a blessing beyond measure.

Peggy Rosenthal is author of *The Poet's Jesus* and editor of *Divine Inspiration: The Life of Jesus in World Poetry*, and directs retreats on poetry as spiritual practice.

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Simple Charity and Warmth

Tony Russo

A number of years ago, Monsignor Shannon was travelling to Gethsemani via a stop in Cincinnati to do some book work at St. Anthony Press. A woman from there arranged for him to visit our Merton Group Meeting. However I, the coordinator, would miss the meeting since I was arriving

home too late to attend. Monsignor Shannon thoughtfully asked me if I wanted to have lunch with him the following day at his hotel in northern Kentucky. We had a very warm conversation and I deeply appreciated his thoughtfulness and deep interest in me and our group. Furthermore, I would from time to time e-mail him Merton-related questions which he responded to on a timely basis. The lunch was my only personal contact with him, but he certainly was not only a great scholar, but a man of simple charity and warmth.

Tony Russo is former ITMS Chapters Coordinator and director of annual retreats at the Abbey of Gethsemani.

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The Power of a Life Fully Lived

Bonnie Thurston

The problem one faces in writing remembrances is that they tend to be about the rememberer and not the one remembered! I could, for example, write about how I met Bill Shannon “by accident” (if you believe in that sort of thing) on an airplane in the 1970s. I could tell many stories about the founding of ITMS (and include Sr. Mary Luke Tobin and Bob Daggy in the bargain). I could even tell you why Bill Shannon never wore a Roman collar. These stories you will have to wait to hear in Connecticut in 2013 when we will, I hope, in some way remember together that without Bill Shannon there would be no ITMS, this community that gives us so much and can have such positive influence. Above all else, Bill Shannon gave us the gift of hope. As I sat in the chapel at Nazareth College on May 3 and 4 watching people come in to bid Bill farewell and to pray with him one last time, I was struck by the power and influence of one well and fully lived life. In a time when so many things seem broken, dark and disordered, Bill Shannon’s life is (for surely he still is) witness to how much good one person can do. Quietly, steadily, pointedly, Bill Shannon did good – not “well” as the spell-checker wanted to edit, but “good.” He was a great teacher and writer and editor and organizer. He was a generous friend to many people and many kinds of people. He was a good priest and many of us walked over the bridge to God that was his life and example. Merton began Chapter 12 of *Thoughts in Solitude*: “A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all.” Bill was “proof ocular” of that truth. Merton continued, “Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire.” And that, too, was true of Bill who now, we rejoice to know, sees the One he lived for and has the fullness of what he desired.

Bonnie Thurston is a founding member and former president of the ITMS and author of numerous books on scripture, spirituality and prayer, as well as three books of poetry, most recently *Belonging to Borders: A Sojourn in the Celtic Tradition*.

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We Remember His Kindness

Monica Weis, SSJ

For the last 20+ years I have enjoyed Sunday dinner, at least twice a month, with Bill Shannon. My duties as organist at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse offered a built-in opportunity for me to spent time with Bill. There were always interesting people at his table: Nazareth alums from years ago who happened to be in town and wanted to re-connect with their favorite teacher; dignitaries from various faith traditions who were also interested in Thomas Merton; regular visitors to Sunday Mass who became his loyal parishioners and friends; Sisters of St. Joseph who found an empty place at table and a hearty welcome from our brother “Bill.” The conversation was usually about Merton –

Bill's latest insights and writing project – but the conversation was also about the recent issue of the *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR) or breaking world news. Bill was “up” on everything and interested in exploring ideas with his table guests. My last conversation with Bill was on Holy Thursday, when between my college classes that ended at 4 p.m. and choir rehearsal for the Triduum service at 7, I invited myself for dinner at the SSJ Motherhouse. There was one place left at Bill's table, not where I usually sat, but at the far end. In the middle of the meal, Bill straightened himself up as much as he was able and in a very clear voice said: “Monica, do you miss me?” “Of course, I miss you, Bill,” I said, wondering where this dialogue was going. Did he mean his growing weakness and imminent death? Once again, he said in a deliberate and sonorous voice: “Monica, I'm asking you, do you miss me?” By this time I was replaying in my head Jesus' three-fold question to Peter – “Do you love me?” – but I knew what Bill was getting at. His greatest suffering, far more than the physical pain of his degenerating spine and acute stenosis, was his inability to preside at liturgy. And today was the great Feast of Love. In the last two months Bill had often mentioned how much he minded having to give up presiding at Mass. It was a most painful surrender of independence. Reluctantly he watched the Mass on closed circuit TV in the confines of his room and then, during the final hymn, propelled his electric chair to the narthex to greet the congregation, many of whom were using this time to thank Bill for all the ways he had inspired them, counseled them, and helped their families. Last August when I was leaving for my four-month Fulbright teaching assignment in Hungary, Bill was restive. He didn't want me to go. It was obvious that his strength was waning, but I adamantly told Bill I expected to see him when I returned in December. He nodded, but I knew our parting was difficult for him. Naturally he wanted to know how I was going to spread the word about Thomas Merton in Hungary, but knowing that he no longer read e-mail or was on Skype, I had to rely on friends to keep him abreast of my adventures. When Bill's birthday came around on the feast of St. Nicholas (Dec. 6), I was in a quandary about a present for the “man who has everything” and who was methodically divesting himself of most of his worldly goods. Voilà. When I went to Sunday Mass at Karoly Templum, a tiny church near the hospital in Veszprém, I saw on each pew a small woodblock print of Saint Nicholas with several lines of tribute in Hungarian. Aha! The perfect gift for Bill. And, indeed it was. He was delighted with my choice, found a frame for it, and showed it off to everyone who came to his office to visit. My painstaking translation of the Hungarian inscription reads: “Bishop Nicholas once upon a time long ago helped poor needy people. Beggars and orphans spoke highly of him. We remember his kindness.” We might not consider ourselves beggars and orphans, but, like Bishop Nicholas, Bill Shannon helped us; we all speak highly of him and remember his kindness.



Monica Weis, SSJ is director of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY, and author most recently of *The Environmental Vision of Thomas Merton*.