

THE PROGRAM

Thomas Merton, born in France in 1915, the son of artists, is arguably, in terms of Christian spirituality, the most important writer of the second half of the 20th century.

Having lived in France and England, he studied at Columbia University in New York. There in New York he was baptized as a Roman Catholic, and later joined the austere Trappist order of monks at the Abbey of Gethsemani, in Kentucky. In his all too short life (he died in Thailand in 1968), he was many things: poet, social critic, ecumenist, calligrapher, Zen photographer, novice master, journalist, diarist and practitioner of inter-faith dialogue. However, it is as a contemplative, both as monk and writer, that Merton offers us his greatest gifts, in the frenetic and disconnected society in which we live today.

In 1940, aged 25, and wanting, after his baptism, to spend some time in a Catholic

country, Merton went to Cuba, where he visited Havana, Matanzas, Camagüey, Santiago de Cuba and the shrine at El Cobre.

At the time, Cuba was a dictatorship, a virtual fief of the United States, and a playground for the Mafia and their friends. Merton's visit, as recorded in his journal, is as notable for what he

didn't see — colonialism, political oppression, Santería — as for what he did. On this study tour, we will visit the places Merton visited, see something of what he saw, and attempt also to see some of what he didn't.

With the help of our interpreter, we will meet Cubans and explore religion and society in Cuba today. We also plan to relax at one of Cuba's most beautiful beachside cities, Trinidad.

So join us, *por favor*, for a fabulous winter holiday that will also introduce you to or acquaint you further with one of the great writers and thinkers of our time.

SONG FOR OUR LADY OF COBRE

*The white girls lift their heads like trees,
The black girls go
Reflected like flamingoes in the street.*

*The white girls sing as shrill as water,
The black girls talk as quiet as clay.*

*The white girls open their arms like clouds,
The black girls close their eyes like wings:
Angels bow down like bells,
Angels look up like toys,*

*Because the heavenly stars
Stand in a ring:
All the pieces of the mosaic, earth,
Get up and fly away like birds.*

ITINERARY

Jan. 7 Saturday

3:00 pm Depart Vancouver by Air Canada for Havana
Transfer to Ambos Mundos Hotel (where Ernest Hemingway stayed) in old Havana
Program orientation after dinner
Please note that our daily study sessions will be scheduled to suit our activities and travel itinerary.

Jan. 11 Wednesday

Havana to Matanzas by air-conditioned bus
Accommodation: Canimao Hotel

Jan. 12 Thursday

Matanzas to Camagüey
Accommodation: Gran Hotel

Jan. 14 Saturday

Camagüey to Santiago de Cuba
Accommodation: Hotel Libertad

Jan. 15 Sunday

Pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre

Jan. 16 Monday

Santiago de Cuba to Camagüey
Accommodation: Gran Hotel

Jan. 17 Tuesday

Camagüey to Trinidad
Accommodation: Iberostar Trinidad Boutique Hotel
Three days to relax at one of the loveliest beachside cities in Cuba!

Jan. 21 Saturday

Trinidad to Havana Airport for our flight to Toronto.

PILGRIMAGE FACULTY



ANNA BAIGNOCHE is a gifted and accomplished performer and world traveller. Combining her talents in singing, dancing and acting, she produced a very successful production called *The Havana Project*. Before settling into the performing arts scene in BC, she studied and performed extensively in a number of countries, including a year in Cuba, studying Cuban religion, literature, art, language, dance, music, and theatre at the University of Havana.



DONALD GRAYSTON, past president of the Thomas Merton Society of Canada, is now vice-president of the International Thomas Merton Society. He taught religious studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver for 15 years, for the last three of which he was director of the Institute for the Humanities. An Anglican priest, he is director of the Pacific Jubilee Program in Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Direction at Vancouver School of Theology. Currently he is preparing for a six-month pilgrimage/hike in the United Kingdom in 2006. He is also a lover of Shakespeare and the tango.



JUDITH HARDCASTLE is program director of the Thomas Merton Society of Canada. In her third year of M.Div. studies at Vancouver School of Theology, she is a candidate for ministry in The United Church of Canada. She is particularly interested in Merton as pilgrim of wisdom and peace. Judith has organized and led previous Merton pilgrimages with Donald Grayston to France, New York and Alaska.

REGISTRATION

As the tour is limited to 18 people, we advise early registration. Minimum age is 19 unless traveling with a parent or guardian.

COST

Land cost: \$1,995 (includes 14 nights accommodation, breakfast and dinner daily, ground transportation by air-conditioned coach, services of a Cuban guide, instructors and interpreter). Cost is based on double occupancy. Single occupancy, if desired and available, will be at an additional charge of \$350.00.

Airfare: \$619 (Toronto/Havana return) or \$929 (Vancouver/Toronto/Havana return), plus taxes. Our group booking is on Air Canada scheduled flights.

Cost does not include:

- Lunches
- Cuban departure tax of \$25 (pay locally in Cuban convertible pesos)
- Health and accident insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Excess baggage charges
- Individual accommodation surcharges, tips, or expenses arising from any causes beyond the reasonable control of the tour leader
- Taxes on airfare

DOCUMENTATION

A valid passport is required for travel to Cuba.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Before Nov. 4: Your deposit will be refunded less a \$75.00 processing fee.

Between Nov. 4 and Nov. 23: A full refund, less the processing fee, will be possible only if someone from the waitlist is available.

After Nov. 23: No refund will be possible. Original receipts issued by the TMSC must accompany any refund request. The Thomas Merton Society of Canada reserves the right to cancel the tour in the event of insufficient registration.

HOW TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE

Please complete and mail the registration form with your deposit in the amount of \$995 (cheque payable to the Thomas Merton Society of Canada or your credit card number and signature) to the Thomas Merton Society of Canada, 705 - 700 Chilco Street, Vancouver, BC V6G 2R1. The balance of \$1,000 is due Nov. 4, 2005.

A receipt from the Thomas Merton Society of Canada in response to your deposit will confirm your registration.

To arrange your air travel segment of the tour and optional travel insurance, please contact Gail Nygren at Personal Travel Management, 604-739-3622 or gail-ptm@shaw.ca. A deposit of \$125 in payment of your airfare is required by Nov. 4, 2005. Final payment is due by Dec. 5.

If you have any questions, contact Judith Hardcastle at 604-669-2546 or judithhardcastle@telus.net.

REGISTRATION FORM

Yes! Please register me for Thomas Merton in Cuba.

January 7 – 21, 2006 (one registration form per person please)

Full Name *(as it appears in your passport)*

Address

()

Day Telephone

()

Fax

()

Evening Telephone

E-mail

Dietary Restrictions: Vegetarian Other _____

Smoker: Yes No Age group: 19-30 31-45 46-60 60*

Accommodation: Single Share with _____

I heard about the tour from: _____

Deposit of \$995.00 CDN is made by:

Cheque *(payable to the Thomas Merton Society of Canada)*

VISA

Card Number

Expiry Date

Cardholder's Name *(if different from registrant above)*

Signature *(required for credit card payment)*

Balance of \$1000 CDN is due November 4, 2005.

I have carefully read and accept all the conditions stated in the brochure. I confirm that I am 19 years of age or older, that I will be responsible for any health or travel insurance which I will need on the study tour, and for any person(s) of minor age accompanying me; and that I hereby release and discharge the TMSC and its agents and employees from any and all claims, actions and demands that I or anyone in my charge may have for any injury, accident or loss arising from my participation in the program.

Signature of registrant

THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY OF CANADA



Thomas Merton in Cuba

January 7 – 21, 2006

A PILGRIMAGE PROGRAM TO CUBA



THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY OF CANADA

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