



# Thomas Merton's Path to the Palace of Nowhere: The Essential Guide to the Contemplative Teachings of Thomas Merton

*Ph.D. James Finley*

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Thomas Merton -- Trappist monk, author, and student of Zen -- remains one of the most important and beloved figures in the modern Christian contemplative movement. His writings, which bridge Eastern and Western spiritual thought, continue to inspire us with their real possibilities for immediate and direct experience of the divine. Now James Finley, who for six years lived, prayed, and studied with "Brother Louis," as Merton was known at the Abbey of Gethsemani, shares with us the gifts passed on to him by this towering figure.

Discover the Contemplative Dimension of Daily Life We can choose to open ourselves to contemplative experience at any moment, Merton taught. Through spontaneous moments of awakening that happen continuously in daily life, we can take the first steps on this self-transforming path to union with the divine. Using the trustworthy spiritual landmarks described by Merton himself, Finley guides us beyond our preconceived ideas in order to discover the infinite love that life itself manifests. First presented at a series of popular retreats, this full six-cassette program takes a participatory approach to Merton's most useful teachings, helping us to discover our true self -- "... to disappear into God, to be submerged into his peace, to be lost in the secret of his face," as Merton said -- through daily practices including contemplation, prayer, and faith. In the end we find ourselves in what the Taoist sage Chaung Tzu called, "... the Palace of Nowhere, where all the many things are one."

There is an Eastern teaching called "transmission of mind," in which the enlightened mind embodied in the master is manifest in the student's awakening. It is in this spirit that James Finley invites us to follow THOMAS MERTON'S PATH TO THE PALACE OF NOWHERE.

### Program Highlights:

- Thomas Merton as our spiritual director
- Living the contemplative life today: how to begin
- The eight arenas of spontaneous awakening
- Revelatory experience and the present moment
- Contemplative prayer and how it cultivates faith
- "Pure Seeing": insights into Merton's approach to Zen Buddhism
- What does a faithful life look like?
- The "true self" and the purification of the ego
- Merton's "cosmic dance"

- The inevitability of death -- as well as life
- The "frontier of thought" and opening to divine wisdom
- Guidelines for meditation
- What "God falls in love with" inside each of us
- More than eight hours of participatory insights, inspiring stories, and step-by-step meditations



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