

THE CULT OF THOMAS MERTON

by **Pauline Pearson**

During The Second General Meeting of *The International Thomas Merton Society* (1991)

I sit here and observe the friends
of Thomas Merton
Telling their stories of their experiences with
him.

I wonder if this is what the apostles did
as they sat around an evening fire
Remembering the moments and the friendship
with the Lord.

Perhaps the early gospel stories were told
in settings similar to this.
I see the anxious, happy faces of the
observers waiting for tidbits
about the master.

I see myself as one of them.

I've often thought, along with others, that
Merton might be appalled that
People would gather to "revere"
the memory of him.
That they might take him apart
in little pieces
and build some saintly idol.

Yet the laughter and the tears,
the prayerful gatherings are
Simply the signs of growth
perhaps produced from the
many seeds he planted.

He is no idol, but as Paul
encouraged each of us
He has become "Christ" for others.

His simple yearning was to be at one
with God.

His prayer for those who gather in this place
could only be the same.

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