

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Christian Contemplative Experience at Holy Family Retreat Center for making today's performance possible.

Eva Ivanov, for generously sharing her time and directing talents to help launch and encourage this creative process.

Adam Shonkwiler, whose soulful vision gave brilliant artistic life to the Living Trinity that had previously only existed in my heart and mind.

Benjamin Scheuer, for offering his humanity to me and thousands of others through his powerful one-man show, *The Lion*.

Paul Pearson and the International Thomas Merton Society (ITMS), for preserving and sharing the breadth & depth of Thomas Merton's legacy.

Anne McCormick, Bill Derby, Carol Joyce, Bryon Gordon, Teresa Scott, Alice Finley, & John DelVecchio, whose time, attention, and feedback contributed greatly to the development of this story, and my confidence in sharing it.

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Alex Casten-Hertler, my beautiful wife whose unconditional love, encouragement, patience, & understanding are manna from heaven.

Thomas Sharkey, my stepson, whose very presence inspires me to embrace the daily struggle of striving to be a better person.

Theresa, Gene Sr. and Jr., & Steve Hertler, my family, and all of my friends and extended family - your love is forever a blessing in my life.

The one Lord above (and within), whose mysterious and ineffable presence has guided me through thick and thin, and ever reminded me of the profound value that each one of our lives holds.

Holy Family Retreat Center Welcomes



MERTON AND **ME**
A LIVING TRINITY

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY DOUGLAS HERTLER AKA DOUG LORY

A One-Man Play

on

February 24, 2024

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE:

The following words, from Thomas Merton's posthumous work, *The Inner Experience, Notes on Contemplation*, entered my consciousness in the Spring of 2005:

"The contemplative and spiritual self, the dormant, mysterious, and hidden self that is always effaced by the activity of our exterior self does not seek fulfillment. It is content to be and, in its being it is fulfilled, because its being is rooted in God."

These words, or seeds of contemplation, may seem to fit quite naturally into the evolving narrative of my life as today's story comes to a close. I must say, however, that at the time I experienced them, they all seemed rather unsettling and supernatural...

"If then, you are intent on "becoming a contemplative" you will probably waste your time and do yourself considerable harm by reading this book. But if in some sense you are already a contemplative (whether you know it or not makes little difference), you will perhaps not only read this book with a kind of obscure awareness that it is meant for you, but you may even find yourself having to read the thing whether it fits in with your plans or not. In that event, just read it. Do not watch for the results, for they will already have been produced long before you will be capable of seeing them. And pray for me, because from now on we are, in some strange way, good friends."

I pray that by the end of this performance, we too, may be in some strange way, good friends.

Wishing you faith, hope, and love on your journey.

Today's Performance is dedicated to:

Joe Morcone, a Connecticut native and good friend whose humility and hope in the face of suffering demonstrate the extraordinary grace of a steadfast faith.

Merton & Me - A Living Trinity,

is a one-man show which explores the struggles of youth, the complexities of faith, and the universal search for meaning in an increasingly chaotic and divided world, all the while guided by the words of Thomas Merton. Such ideas of prayer, vocation, and the ancient spiritual tradition of Contemplation are also incorporated into this journey...

What is Contemplation? Here is but one definition: It is an immediate and in some sense passive intuition of the inmost reality, of our spiritual self and of God present within us.

The Running Time of this show is 85 minutes with no intermission.

Excerpts from Thomas Merton's works include:
No Man Is an Island, The Seven Story Mountain, The Inner Experience, New Seeds of Contemplation

Lyrics & music by the following:
Rush - Closer to the Heart, Metallica - Sad But True
Coltrane - Alabama & A Love Supreme



Doug is a professional actor, retreat leader, NYC tour guide, and an actor/educator at Fordham University School of Law. He is a member of the International Thomas Merton Society and the American Teilhard Association. He holds a BA in Speech/Communication/Theater from Monmouth University.

MERTONANDME.COM

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