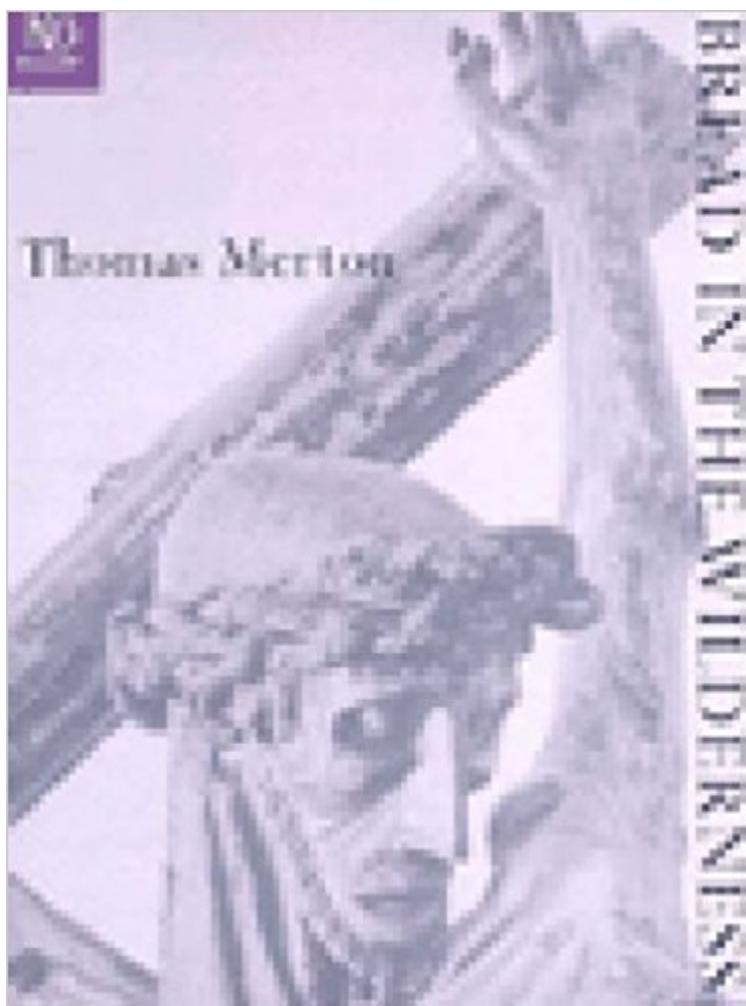


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# Bread In The Wilderness (New Directions Classic)



## Synopsis

The Psalms, which Thomas Merton called "one of the most valid forms of prayer for men of all time," are the most significant and influential collection of religious poems ever written, summing up the theology of the Old Testament and serving as daily nourishment for the devout. *Bread in the Wilderness* sets forth Merton's belief that "the Psalms acquire, for those who know how to enter into them, a surprising depth, a marvelous and inexhaustible actuality. They are bread, miraculously provided by Christ, to feed those who have followed Him into the wilderness." Merton's goal in this moving book is to help the reader enter into the Psalms: "The secret is placed in the hands of each Christian. It only needs to be discovered and fulfilled in our own lives." The new ND Classic edition of *Bread in the Wilderness* faithfully reproduces the beautiful, large-format original 1953 New Directions books, created by the celebrated designer Alvin Lustig and lavishly illustrated throughout with photographs of a remarkable medieval crucifix at Perpignan, France.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Thomas Merton (1915-1968) entered the Cistercian Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, following his conversion to Catholicism and was ordained Father M. Louis in 1949. During the 1960s, he was increasingly drawn into a dialogue between Eastern and Western religions and domestic issues of war and racism. In 1968, the Dalai Lama praised Merton for having a more profound knowledge of Buddhism than any other Christian he had known. Thomas Merton is the author of the beloved

classic The Seven Storey Mountain.

Valuable resource for spiritual growth and inspiring reading

Merton's beautiful words.

Pristine copy! Fabulous!

As always, Thomas merton is amazing. This book was in great condition. Thanks!

I commend New Directions for issuing a facsimile reprint of the original of this valuable book. Who would not say that here is a publishing company of enduring and impeccable taste? I have a copy of the original cloth bound book- it is beautiful, and easily one of my top twenty favorite books. I believe this is the book that comes most surely from Merton the poet. His consideration of the Psalms is inspired; the language in this book is as severe and ecstatic as are the Psalms themselves, and his insight into their relevance is without peer. The brevity of Merton's exposition is part of its potency. Nothing is wasted. Like the Psalms themselves, the veins of this book run deep in kingly rivers, announcing the heart of God like a morning song. Merton's interior acquisition of that song is of epic intensity, yet simple as clean water. I believe "Bread in the Wilderness" surpasses even "Seeds of Contemplation" in directness, common heart, and indeed artistic beauty. It's an indescribably beautiful book that moves, aches and rocks, and leads one, ultimately, to the inmost core of revelation, which is, after all, believability. Merton's references to the Psalms can be traced like a monk's thread throughout all of his writing, from the earliest books up through the posthumously published Journals. This book gives us a clear understanding of how constantly faithful Thomas Merton remained not only to the brilliant song of the Psalms themselves, but to the music of his own exceeding heart. And the woodcut Christ on the cover is so unfailingly Cistercian! This is a book that will live forever.

Bread in the Wilderness, a classic by Thomas Merton so well known for bringing an enthusiasm for things of God to the Twentieth and Twenty-first century, was first published in 1953. It has been reissued by New Directions Publishing in the original large format text design with the original illustrations of a medieval crucifix at Perpignan, France. The photographs of this crucifix, taken by J. Comet, are presented in varied detail and perspective throughout the book in such a way as to

complement the text. The text design, itself, is by Alvin Lustig as in the original, and presents the dropped or hanging running page information suggesting a crucifix and subtly informing the entire meaning of the book. For anyone interested in book design this volume is a valuable resource. Those who see a shocking modernity in medieval artwork and the depiction of faces high up in church and cathedral detailing will be interested as well. As for the writing itself and its importance, it is enough to say that the first chapter, based on the psalms, lays claim to its lastingness when Merton himself says, "the Psalms are one of the most valid forms of prayer ... of all time."

When Thomas Merton, a Trappist Monk, wrote BREAD IN THE WILDERNESS, he had fallen in love with the Psalms of the Old Testament. As a monk, he had chanted the Psalms every day of the week. The monks still do this today. This book is certainly about the Psalms as it relates to people seeking to understand God and Christ. In only the way Thomas Merton can write, one will discover many practical truths about the Psalms. As Merton writes, "The Psalms are theology. That means that they place us in direct contact with God, through the assent of faith in His revelation." Even though this is a brief book, it contains large amount of material for thought and study. There are five divisions in the book, and each division highlights how God speaks through the Psalms. To the poet, there are many Psalms of importance. As Merton writes, "The Psalms are poems, and poems have a meaning, although the poet has no obligation to make his meaning immediately clear to anyone who does not want to make an effort to discover it." One of the most interesting things about the book is how Merton sees Jesus Christ throughout the Psalms. Maybe Merton says it best when he writes, "The Psalms are more than language. They contain within themselves the silence of high mountains and the silence of heaven. It is only when we stand at the bottom of the mountain that it is hard for us to distinguish the language of the Psalter from the tongues of the earth..." In this book, Merton makes the Psalms come alive. This is a book worth reading.

Who better than Thomas Merton, a poet and a monk, to share his feelings on the most significant and influential collection of religious poems ever written? In this book Merton teaches us that the Psalms not only sum up the teachings of the Old Testament, but they can serve as actual nourishment for those whose vocation is the life of prayer. This book offers inspiration on the Psalms and shows us how they can lead us become closer to God. I highly recommend this book to all. And especially to those who seek to come closer to God daily in their contemplative life. Thomas Merton was Father Louis of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance and lived daily with the Psalms.

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