

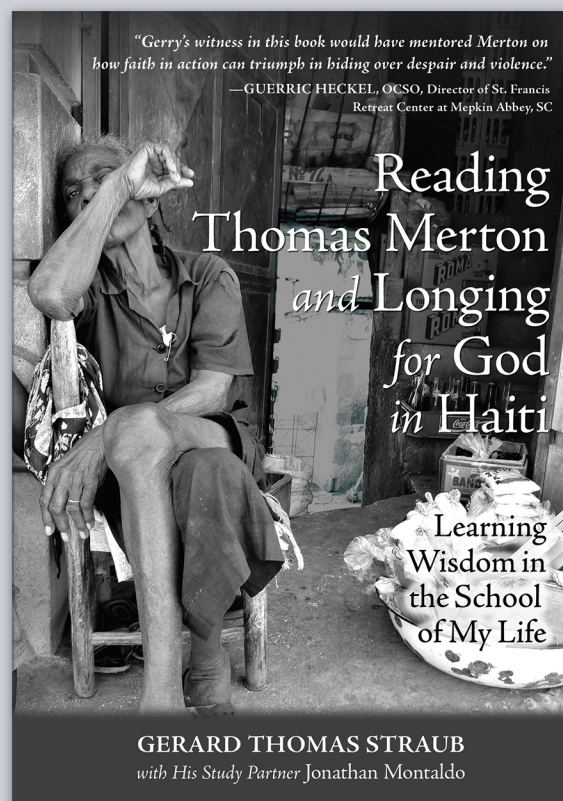
Reading Thomas Merton and Longing for God in Haiti

Learning Wisdom in the School of My Life

GERARD THOMAS STRAUB
with His Study Partner Jonathan Montaldo

"The power of contemplation and action to beacon hope for our world's dark journeys shines out in Gerry Straub's fascinating tale of his adventures in Haiti as the founder of the Santa Chiara Children's Center. Merton would have been avid to read the story of this married, secular Franciscan who gave up a New York media career to serve the poor. Gerry's witness in this book would have mentored Merton on how faith in action can triumph in hiding over despair and violence."

—GUERRIC HECKEL, OCSO, Director of St. Francis Retreat Center at Mepkin Abbey, South Carolina



Like Saint Francis of Assisi, although to a secondary extent, Merton has mentored Gerry Straub's spiritual exercises of remembering, of being awed by, and of obeying the commands of God's love, received throughout his community's days at the Santa Chiara Children's Center. His prose is undergirded with the poetry of his longing for God's presence in and for Haiti hour by hour. Gerry's prose and life resonate with Merton's texts. This book befriends Merton's own searching for God. Straub and Merton sing together, adding their voices to the chorus of God's beloved community in Haiti.

—From the Introduction by Jonathan Montaldo

Mr. Montaldo co-edited *The Intimate Merton: His Life from His Journals* with Brother Patrick Hart of Gethsemani Abbey. He edited the second volume of Merton's private journals, published in seven volumes, under the title *Entering the Silence* (1945–1959).

"Merton would be pleased and humbled to know he accompanied Gerry Straub into the most appalling circumstances of Haiti, and to afford motivation throughout such hopeless daily experiences encountered here with bald honesty and raw faith."

—BROTHER PAUL QUENON, OCSO, Abbey of Gethsemani, and Author of *In Praise of the Useless Life*



Gerard Thomas Straub had a long and distinguished career as a network television producer and executive in New York and Hollywood; he produced dramatic series that have aired on CBS, NBC, and ABC. He went on to write and direct over 20 documentary films focusing on the plight of the poor in such poverty-stricken nations as India, Kenya, Uganda, Jamaica, Haiti, Brazil, Peru, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, and The Philippines.

Mr. Straub is the author of nine books. *The Sun & Moon Over Assisi* was named "Best Spirituality Hardcover Book of the Year" in 2001 by the Catholic Press Association. *The Loneliness and Longing of Saint Francis* was a 2015 winner in the Spirituality category of the Association of Catholic Publishers' "Excellence in Publishing Awards."

Gerry also taught a course on television writing and directing at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. He has spoken at more than 240 Catholic churches, high schools, and universities across the U.S., and in Canada, France, Italy, and Hungary. He has been awarded three honorary doctorate degrees in recognition of his work on behalf of the poor.

Gerry lives primarily in Port-au-Prince, Haiti where he operates the Santa Chiara Children's Center, a home for forty-five abandoned and displaced kids. He has a small apartment in Ft. Pierce, Florida.

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