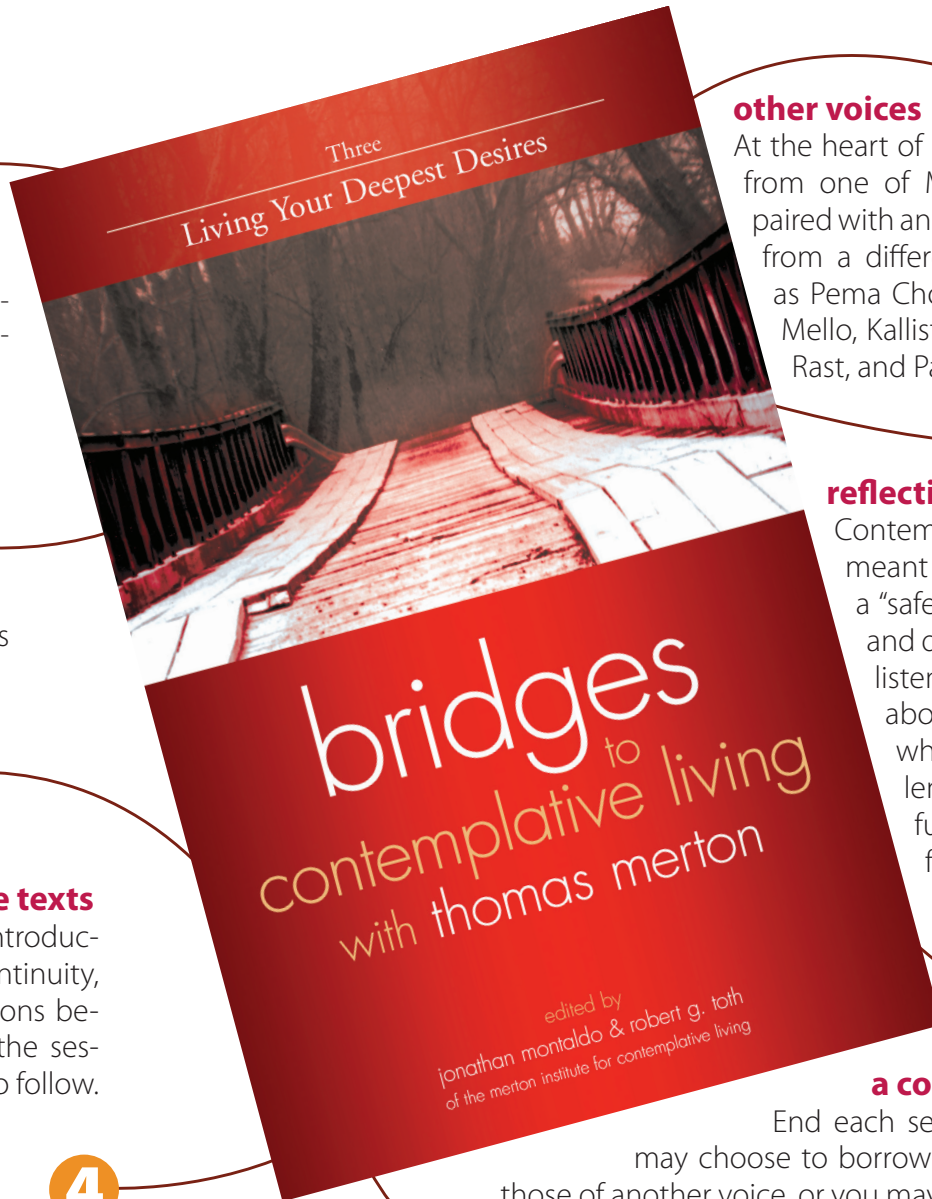


Inside Bridges

Each booklet offers eight weekly sessions. Each session includes an opening Psalm reading, an introduction to the session theme, readings from Merton and one other spiritual writer, and questions for contemplative dialogue.



1

the theme

Each session is developed around a key principle of Merton's thought.

2

opening reflection

Each session begins with a Psalm passage.

3

introduction to the texts

Each session has an introduction that provides continuity, context, and connections between the theme of the session and the reading to follow.

4

merton's voice

Each session includes a carefully selected passage drawn from the rich abundance of Merton's writing. For some, the chosen passage will initiate a spiritual journey, for others it will lead to re-examination or recovery from a neglected spiritual life.

5

other voices

At the heart of each session is a reading from one of Merton's works uniquely paired with another on the same theme from a different spiritual writer such as Pema Chodron, Rilke, Anthony de Mello, Kallistos Ware, Davide Steindl-Rast, and Paul Evdokimov.

6

reflection and dialogue

Contemplative dialogue is meant to be non-threatening, a "safe place" for open sharing and discussion. The focus is on listening rather than thinking about how to respond to what we hear. We are challenged to listen more carefully and approach different points of view by looking at their deepest values.

7

a concluding prayer

End each session with a prayer. You may choose to borrow the words of Merton or those of another voice, or you may choose to remain silent. "We who are in God find ourselves united in Him, with all that springs from Him. This is prayer, and this is glory!"

8

solitude and silence

Whether a Bridges group meets once a week or once a month, the time between sessions is very important. This is when the content from the readings and dialogue becomes part of everyday living. Taking time to reflect, finding places in our daily routines for silence and solitude, seeing the significance and appreciating the beauty of ordinary experiences brings it all together.