



Text File

Introduced: 4/28/2015

Bill No: 2015-1578, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, Thomas Merton, born in 1915, was a seminal figure for promoting peace and interfaith understanding. A trappist monk, he was revered for his writing, poetry, social activism, and studies in comparative religion; and,

WHEREAS, Thomas Merton was born in the south of France, raised by grandparents in the United States, and later attended boarding schools in France and England. A worldly and socially exuberant young man, he undertook his studies of English at Cambridge and later Columbia University, where Merton first became involved with the pacifist movement.

WHEREAS, in 1941, Thomas Merton entered a Trappist monastery at the Abbey of Gethsemani. From this time onward, he wrote more than 60 books and numerous poems, essays, and other writings including his most famous work, "Seven Storey Mountain," in 1968.

WHEREAS, Thomas Merton worked tirelessly for social justice beginning during the Cold War and reflected in his "Cold War Letters," posthumously published in 2006. Merton was a strong supporter of nonviolent civil rights, viewing race and peace as the most urgent issues of "our" time. Merton planned a retreat for the Reverend Martin Luther King, prior to their deaths in 1968.

WHEREAS, Thomas Merton extended ties across religions, exploring eastern religions and opening an interfaith dialogue with prominent Asian spiritual figures, including Dalai Lama D.T. Suzuki and the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh. And where Merton died tragically near Bangkok, Thailand, in 1968 at the age of 53 during an international monastic conference.

WHEREAS, the Thomas Merton Center located in the Garfield neighborhood of Pittsburgh serves as Pittsburgh's peace and social justice center with the mission to build a consciousness of values and to raise the moral questions involved in the issues of war, poverty, racism, classism, economic justice, human rights, and environmental justice. Thomas Merton Center engages people of diverse philosophies and faiths who find common ground in the nonviolent struggle to bring about a more peaceful and just world.

WHEREAS, the Thomas Merton Center commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Merton through a Centennial Festival celebrating the life and contributions of Thomas Merton through a series of events held from April 16-26, 2015.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh honors and appreciates the life and work of Thomas Merton; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare April 28, 2015, to be

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Thomas Merton Centennial Day in the City of Pittsburgh.