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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*“A deep sense of contentment and peace arises from these pages that can remind the monk in every one of us how we might choose to live.” —Pico Iyer*

In the spirit of his novice master Thomas Merton’s classic work *The Sign of Jonas* come these five decades of life and experience at the Abbey of Gethsemani by Brother Paul Quenon. ***A Matter of the Heart: A Monk’s Journal 1970-2022*** are Brother Paul’s collected reflections, meditations, and wanderings of experience in nature and monastic community.

There are sketches of fellow monks—saintly, comical, and strange. There are many poetic moments; Brother Paul is a fine poet. Remarks are made on world events as seen from a local and momentary perspective, such as the war in Iraq, or the end of the war in Vietnam. Private discoveries of animal behavior, and magical locations for prayer are experienced with wonder.

No daily chronology is followed, but entries are arranged from the 1970s to the 2020s according to the decade they occurred in, including the visit of H.H. the Dalai Lama and other occasions when this contemplative’s life has intersected with spiritual teachers outside the monastery. Overall, the “useless life” Brother Paul has lived appears to have been quite important.

***A Matter of the Heart: A Monk’s Journal 1970-2022*** (Paperback original; ISBN 978-1958972410; US \$23.99) publishes today.

“This is a text of its time, unmistakably: there are motorized wheelchairs in this world, trailer-hermitages, cannabis-confiscating helicopters, and COVID. But it’s also enlivened by a deep tradition of meditational practice. However easy it is to be distracted, Brother Paul Quenon suggests that there are a great many things that can just as easily bring us back into focus, if we only attend to them.” —**Jamie Kreiner**, professor, University of Georgia; author, *The Wandering Mind: What Medieval Monks Tell Us about Distraction*

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**Brother Paul Quenon**, OCSO entered the Abbey of Gethsemani at seventeen. Thomas Merton was his novice master. Remarkable teachers and mentors furthered his development, such as John Eudes Bamberger, Dan Walsh, Flavian Burns, Pico Iyer, and Beatrice Bruteau. He studied theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and taught and lived at a monastery in Nigeria. He has played an active role in the International Thomas Merton Society for a half-century. His memoir, *In Praise of the Useless Life*, received a Catholic Press Award, and he has published ten books of poetry. Now in his eighties, he continues his life of choir, prayer meditation, and cooking at the monastery.

A launch event for this book will take place at the Kentucky Book Festival in Lexington, Kentucky on November 2, 2024.