

Brother Paul Bernard Williams died on February 25, 2001, after a brief bout with pancreatic cancer. He was seventy years old.

All monks feel the hand of God on them in special ways, but Brother Paul Bernard's was marked in a very special way. Born into a Protestant family in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1930, who nevertheless named him Bernard, he found himself walking in the steps of Thomas Merton. Like Merton he went to Columbia University, where he happened to find a copy of Thomas Merton's autobiography, *THE SEVEN STORY MOUNTAIN*, which led to his conversion to Catholicism. Like Merton he was early attracted to Cistercian life, but, figuring the life would be too hard for him, he joined the Carmelites. But his love for Cistercians continued to percolate, and by a series of coincidences, including a personal letter of invitation from Thomas Merton, he entered the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1955, where Thomas Merton was his novice director. Then in 1957 he came to the Abbey of New Clairvaux.

For Brother Paul Bernard life with the Trappists was a forty-six year love story, and his joy was infectious. He served the monastery as an organist, cantor, composer, business manager (cellarer), and in many other capacities through his long service. In the 1960's he wrote our English liturgy, both the music and Opus Dei texts.

A portrait of him is recorded in David Perata's *THE ORCHARDS OF PERSISTENCE*, including a picture of him on his bicycle, which captures his joyous free spirit.

At his funeral Mass a large number of people attended; the church was filled to near capacity, a tribute to the honor and love we all had for him.

Die Vigesima quinta mensis Februarii 2001

Obiit in nostro monasterio Beatae Mariae
de Nova Clara Valle in diocesi Sacramentensis, USA,

PAULUS BERNARDUS WILLIAMS,

monachus

anno aetatis suae 70; professionis vero 42.

