WHENEVER I THINK OF A MONK TODAY, I DON'T THINK OF A Catholic monk or a Christian monk or a Buddhist monk or a Zen monk, and I don't think of male or female monks. I imagine the monk as a spirit that engendered monasticism and moves a certain few individuals to live that spirit as a way of life. For me, the more interesting monk is a figure of the deep, creative imagination, who can inspire anyone toward an experience of virtues and styles epitomized by monks of all traditions.

Our task is to notice the monk when his spirit makes an appearance, and then find an individual way to embody it.