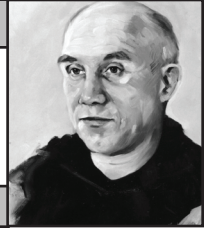


NEWSLETTER

Vol. 30, No. 1

Spring, 2023



Conference Plans Set

The program for the Eighteenth General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, with the theme “Sophia Comes Forth, Reaching,” to be held June 22-25, 2023 at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN, has now been completed. In addition to the four plenary speakers featured in the Fall 2022 issue of the *ITMS Newsletter*, Maria Clara Bingemer, Simone Campbell, SSS, Sophia Park, SNJM and Shannen Dee Williams, the conference will include: the presidential address by Christopher Pramuk; a panel entitled “Women Who Helped Us Know Merton”; four introductory sessions – a First-timers’ session, the ITMS Chapters Workshop, a Merton Scholarship session and an Emerging Scholars session with Laurin Ernst, Oliver Mesmer and Ethan Strouse; 27 concurrent session presentations; and 14 workshops, guided prayer and special presentations.

The panel, moderated by ITMS Board member Emma McDonald, will feature:

- **Christine M. Bochen**, professor emerita of religious studies at Nazareth College, Rochester, New York, a founding member and past president of the International Thomas Merton Society. She is co-author with William H. Shannon and Patrick F. O’Connell of the award-winning *Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*; editor of *The Courage for Truth*, the fourth volume of Merton’s collected letters, *Learning to Love*, the sixth volume of the complete Merton journals, and *Thomas Merton: Essential Writings*; and co-editor with William H. Shannon of Merton’s *Cold War Letters* and of *Thomas Merton: A Life in Letters*.
- **Kathleen Deignan, CND**, is founding director of the Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona College, New Rochelle, NY, where she was Professor of Religious Studies for 40 years while

guiding The Merton Contemplative Initiative and co-convening The Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue. Past President of the International Thomas Merton Society, she is a regular presenter at its meetings. Her book-length publications include *When the Trees Say Nothing: Thomas Merton’s Writings on Nature* and *Thomas Merton: A Book of Hours*, including an audio-book that features her sacred songs and psalmody. She recently co-edited *Teilhard de Chardin: A Book of Hours*.

- **Lynn R. Szabo**, Professor Emerita of English Literature at Trinity Western University in British Columbia, is a scholar of the poetry of Thomas Merton and editor of the first comprehensive selection of his entire poetic corpus, *In the Dark Before Dawn: New Selected Poems of Thomas Merton* (New Directions, 2005). In retirement, she serves as a spiritual director, a mentor to writers and young professors and a facilitator of study groups for the National Council of Jewish Women.
- **Bonnie Thurston**, founding member and third president of the International Thomas Merton Society, is a retired professor of scripture at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. She has written or edited twenty-four books on scripture, theology and spirituality as well as authoring six collections of poetry. She is editor of the Fons Vitae volume *Merton and Buddhism: Wisdom, Emptiness and Everyday Mind*, of *Hidden in the Same Mystery: Thomas Merton and Loretto* and of the anthology *Thomas Merton on Eastern Meditation*. Her book *Shaped by the End You Live For: Thomas Merton’s Monastic Spirituality* was published in 2020.
- **Monica Weis, SSJ**, Professor Emerita of English at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY,

is former vice president and board member of the International Thomas Merton Society and served as program chair for the ITMS Fourth General Meeting and as chair of numerous ITMS committees. She is the author of *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani: Landscapes of Paradise* (2005), *The Environmental Vision of Thomas Merton* (2011) and *Thomas Merton and the Celts: A New World Opening Up* (2016) as well as numerous articles and reviews on Merton.

Concurrent session presentations will include:

- Kevin Burke: The Beginning of Wisdom: Theological Assonance between Merton and Levertov;
 - Mary Frances Coady: "Waking from a Dream of Separateness": Thomas Merton and Caryll Houselander;
 - Ellyn Crutcher: Merton's 1968 Retreat at the Redwoods Lets "Some Fresh Air In";
 - Vaughn Fayle: Merton, Weil and Duncan: Sophia's Mystical Mutuality That Displaces Us;
 - Janie Harden Fritz: Flannery O'Connor and Thomas Merton: Dialogic Spirituality;
 - Phil Garrity: "The Tyranny of the Should": Examining Parallels between Thomas Merton's "True Self" and Karen Horney's "Real Self";
 - John Gillespie: A Hidden Wholeness: Merton, Rilke and the Reconceptualization of the Divine;
 - Aaron Godlaski: Neither This, Nor That: Merton's Non-Dual Communion with Nature;
 - Zachary Karanovich: Thomas Merton, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Misunderstanding Monasticism;
 - Alan Kolp: The Mertonian Influence on Ilia Delio: From Monk to a Dancing Star;
 - Dominiek Lootens: Gracie M. Jones, and Thomas Merton at the Redwoods: Spirituality and Ecowomanism;
 - Thomas Malewitz: *My Argument with the Gestapo*: Exploring Merton's Traumatic and Imaginative Narrative through the Lens of Magical Realism;
 - Susan Mancino & Natalia Tapsak: Dialogic Welcome in Communities of Difference: Lessons from Day and Merton;
 - Gray Matthews: Dialogue with Reality: Reimagining the Contemplative;
 - Mark C. Meade: An Unpublished Merton Poem on Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People" and Christian Existentialism in Her Fiction;
 - Viktor Niachayeu: Seeking Sophia: Thomas Merton and the Prayer of the Heart;
 - Patrick F. O'Connell: "A Character and Beauty of Its Own": Merton and the Wisdom of Chartres;
 - David Odorisio: "Not Drugs but Night": Thomas Merton on LSD and the Psychology of Religious Experience;
 - Anne R. Pearson: Solutions to Systemic Racism: Thomas Merton in Conversation with Women of Color;
 - Paul M. Pearson: From One Wise Master to Another: St. Benedict's Influence on Thomas Merton's Prophetic Spirituality;
 - Julia Prinz: Sophia Reaching: What Do You See?: A Study in the Photography of Thomas Merton;
 - Jim Robinson: Both "Hippie Monk" and Distanced Critic: Thomas Merton and the 1960s Counterculture;
 - Patti Sayre: Alone Together: The Solitary Ties that Bind Thomas Merton and Elena Malits;
 - Huili (Kathy) Stout: Merton's *Sophia* and the Chinese *Tao*: A Dance of Two Names;
 - Callie Tabor: "Fully Functioning" in Holiness: Women and Sainthood in Conversation with Thomas Merton and Sr. Thea Bowman;
 - Jason Taylor: Merton's Use of Arendt's *Human Condition* in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*;
 - Megan Way: Supply, Demand and the Sacred: Applying Thomas Merton's Wisdom to the Principle of Economics;
- Workshops, Guided Prayer and Special Presentation sessions will include:
- Paul Dekar: Praying in the Way of the Madonna House Apostolate;
 - Robert Ellsberg: "It's the Direction that Matters": How Sister Wendy Beckett Changed Her Mind about Merton;
 - Brian Harnetty: "Words and Silences: From the Thomas Merton Hermitage Tapes";
 - Doug Hertler: Merton and Me, A Living Trinity;

ITMS Board Elections

- Robert Hesse: Centering Prayer’s Healing Effects – Interfaith Prayer Practicum, Medical Research, and Resulting Ministries;
- Jeff Kiernan: A Mighty Hunger in My Soul: A Prayer Service of Silence, Music and Words Inspired by the Correspondence of Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton;
- Carol Lenox: Reflections on Rachel Carson’s Influence on Thomas Merton;
- Bernice Marie-Daly: She Who Is;
- William Hart McNichols, John Dadosky & Christopher Pramuk: Icons as Living Portals to the Divine Feminine;
- Zvony Nagy: A Book of Hours (Solo Piano Composition);
- Vincent Pizzuto: Wisdom’s Born in Secret: The Birth of the Divine Feminine in Everything;
- Paul Pynkoski: Merton and Levertov: Art, Poetry, and Contemplation;
- Paul Quenon & Judith Valente: “Like Hugging an Angel”: Merton, Emily Dickinson & Mary Oliver;
- Jennifer Trently: Creative Response to Merton’s *Hagia Sophia*.

The Registration fee, including conference registration and all meals, is \$265 for ITMS Members (\$315 after April 15) and \$315 for non-members (\$365 after April 15), with members’ fee available for those who join the ITMS at the time of registration; single-day registration fee is \$110. Housing accommodations are available in two campus residence halls as well as at two hotels located on the Saint Mary’s campus. Further information on housing is available on the Thomas Merton Center website at merton.org/2023, along with travel information and complete instructions for registration online or with a mail-in registration form.

The Program Committee for the ITMS Eighteenth General Meeting includes David Goleboski, chair, Daniel Horan, OFM, site coordinator, Jessica Coblentz, Emma McDonald, Mark Meade, David Orberon, Christopher Pramuk, Kathleen Tarr, Judith Valente and Monica Weis, SSJ.

As provided in the Bylaws of the International Thomas Merton Society, officers and directors of the society serve for two years. Terms run from General Meeting to General Meeting. Officers are elected by the Board of Directors, and board members by the membership at large. Elections for the Board of Directors will take place in the coming weeks by both online and paper voting. Members whose email addresses are on file will receive an invitation to vote electronically no later than April 1. Members with no available email address will be sent a paper ballot. Any ITMS members who would prefer to vote by mail may request a paper ballot by contacting the ITMS prior to April 22 at mmeade@bellarmine.edu or by calling 502-272-8099. Six directors are selected from a slate of thirteen candidates assembled by the Nominating Committee: Paul Pynkoski, chair; Christine M. Bochen; Deborah P. Kehoe; Emma McDonald.

The following are candidates for the Board:

Rose Marie Berger is a poet and peace activist who is poetry editor and senior editor for *Sojourners* magazine, for which she writes a regular column. She presented the keynote address, “Direct Transmission of Faith,” at the ITMS Sixteenth General Meeting in 2019. She is co-editor of *Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and World* (2020) and author of the poetry collection *Bending the Arch* (2019). She lives in Oak View, Calif. She is a current member of the ITMS Board.

Elizabeth Burkemper is a recent graduate of Yale Divinity School, where she received a Master of Arts in Religion and Ecology and where she now works with the Life Worth Living Program. She earned her undergraduate degree in Peace Studies and Sustainability at the George Washington University. A 2017 Daggy Scholar, she presented on “Countering ‘Strangeness’ in Late Capitalism” at the 2021 ITMS General Meeting. She is a member of the St. Louis Area Chapter of ITMS.

Roger Butts is a Unitarian Universalist minister who has served congregations in Iowa and Colorado and presently in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. His 2021 book, *Seeds of Devotion*, was dedicated to Thomas Merton. He has organized two centering

prayer groups, one focused on Merton's writings, and led the Colorado Springs chapter of ITMS for many years. His ministry involves bringing in authors and filmmakers grappling with faith and the common good. His second book, *Praying the Poets*, is forthcoming.

Raymond Carr is a visiting professor at Harvard Divinity School and a Research Associate at the Moses Mesoamerican Archive and Research Project at Harvard. He was Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics at Pepperdine University and has taught in Germany, Switzerland and China. A Merton Society member since 2013, he currently serves on the ITMS Board and has published and presented papers at ITMS conferences; he uses Merton in classes as well as in the ENGAGE program, an initiative to interest high school students in religious topics.

Aaron Kerr, former Philosophy Chair at Gannon University, is director of Groundwork Erie, a conservation organization focused on youth and green work-force development. He is author of *Encounters in Thought* (2019), in which Thomas Merton serves as an exemplar of openness in learning and life, and of *Mediations Between Nature and Culture* (2022), which promotes a global bio-ethic rooted in contemplative engagement. In summer 2022 he and his wife Gretchen made a pilgrimage to Gethsemani on the twelfth anniversary of their conversion to Catholicism.

Alan Kolp is Faculty in Residence at Baldwin Wallace University in Cleveland, where he is the former holder of the Chair in Faith & Life. He is a lifelong member of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and a Benedictine Oblate. He currently serves on the ITMS Board of Directors. He teaches, speaks and writes about Merton, publishing in *The Merton Seasonal*, and has an interest in the work of Ilia Delio. He is author of a new book, *Better Humans, Better Performance*, which uses the classical virtues to boost human performance.

Dominiek Lootens, an International Advisor to the ITMS, is author of *Open to the Full Dimension: Thomas Merton, Practical Theology, and Pastoral Practice* (2022). He is head of the Center for Dialogue at the Riedberg Campus in Frankfurt,

Germany. A member of the Merton Society since 2015, he has published and presented papers at ITMS conferences. He received his Ph.D. in Catholic theology from Vincent Pallotti University. He teaches Merton in courses for pastoral supervisors, hospital chaplains and theology students in Belgium and Germany.

Thomas Malewitz is Assistant Professor of Education and Director of the Ed.D. Leadership Program at Spalding University. He is a frequent presenter at ITMS conferences. His essays have appeared in *The Journal of Catholic Education* and *The Merton Annual*. He is the author of *Authenticity, Passion, and Advocacy: Approaching Adolescent Spirituality from the Life and Wisdom of Thomas Merton* (2020), which received a first place award in the "Pastoral Ministry – Youth and Young Adult" category from the Catholic Media Association in 2021.

Gray Matthews, Assistant Professor of Communications at the University of Memphis, is a current member of the ITMS Board of Directors. He has served as coordinator of the Memphis ITMS Chapter since 2001 and was site coordinator of the 2007 ITMS General Meeting in Memphis. He has also served as co-editor of *The Merton Annual*. He has been a frequent presenter at ITMS conferences and has published numerous essays on Merton in *The Merton Seasonal*, *The Merton Annual* and elsewhere.

Marcela Raggio lives in Mendoza in western Argentina and teaches American literature and specializes in translation studies at Cuyo National University (UNCuyo). In 2018, she organized the First Argentine Thomas Merton Conference at UNCuyo, and in 2021, the Second Argentine Merton Conference was held, with speakers from Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, the USA, the UK and Spain. She is editing a volume with the conference papers presented on the occasion. She currently serves as an International Advisor to the ITMS.

Sophronia Scott is a novelist, essayist and contemplative thinker whose book *The Seeker and the Monk: Everyday Conversations with Thomas Merton* received ITMS 2021 "Louie" Award. Her presentations on Merton include "Uncovering a Hidden Wholeness: The Essence of Unity & Merton's

Hope for the Human Race,” the 2022 Merton Black History Month Lecture at Bellarmine University. She holds a BA from Harvard and an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her latest book *Wild, Beautiful, and Free*, is a historical novel set during the Civil War.

Kathleen Witkowska Tarr is founder of the Alaska Chapter of the ITMS and author of *We Are All Poets Here: Thomas Merton’s Journey to Alaska*. Her essays have appeared in *We Are Already One: Thomas Merton’s Message of Hope* (2015) and *Merton & Indigenous Wisdom* (2019) and in *The Merton Seasonal*. She has presented at the Eighteenth General Meeting of the ITMS (2021) and on the Tuesdays with Merton podcast. She is former Mullin Scholar at USC’s Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies and is a current member of the ITMS Board. **Peter Vale** is a Boston-Florida hybrid who completed his undergraduate studies at Harvard University and subsequently earned B.Phil. and M.Div. degrees during the six years he spent in seminary formation. While priesthood is still on the table, Peter is currently in his third year of a doctoral program in biblical studies at Boston College. Thomas Merton has been a trusted spiritual companion of his for the past ten years. His review of Merton’s *Monastic Introduction to Sacred Scripture* appeared in the 2021 volume of *The Merton Annual*.

Mountain Anniversary Digital Exhibit

To mark the seventy-fifth anniversary year of the publication of Thomas Merton’s autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain* in October 1948, the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky has mounted a digital exhibit highlighting the Center’s collection of editions and translations of Merton’s most famous work. Created by Center Assistant Director Mark C. Meade and launched on January 31, Merton’s birthday, the exhibit includes scans of 99 distinct editions in twenty-two languages, arranged and photographed on an exhibit bookshelf at the Center, including French, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Romanian, Italian, Dutch, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Danish, Swedish, Czech, Polish, Croatian, Latvian, Lithuanian, German, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean and Chinese as well as English.

Viewers can choose sections to explore by language groups, as well as English editions grouped as early US hardcover, later US hardcover, US paperback and UK/Ireland editions. By clicking on the spines of individual books viewers have access to selected pages of that volume, as well as a summary item record. There is also a separate section containing the front covers of every volume. While the exhibit does not include every printing in the collection, it is representative of the diversity of holdings found at the Center, and the selections reflect the variety of cover art, bindings, translations and other unique features. The exhibit can be accessed by visiting the Merton Center website at www.merton.org and clicking on the exhibit logo in the “News & Events” column on the right side of the home page.

Donald G. (Christopher) Nugent (1930-2022)

Donald G. (Christopher) Nugent, 91, of Louisville, Kentucky, longtime member of the International Thomas Merton Society and frequent presenter at Merton conferences in the US and Great Britain, died on November 12, 2022 at the age of 91. Born December 3, 1930 to Clarence and Mabel McKinley Nugent in Louisville, he served in the United States Marine Corps from 1948 to 1949 after graduating from Saint Xavier High School. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree at Bellarmine College (1957), a Master of Arts at Creighton University (1959), a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Iowa (1965) and a Master of Arts at the University of San Francisco (1982). A history professor specializing in the Renaissance-Reformation Period, he taught at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada (1961-1962), at Nazareth College in Louisville (1962-1963), at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (1964-1966), and at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, (1966-1995). He was also a visiting instructor at University College Dublin (1972-1973) and an adjunct professor at Lexington Theological Seminary. He was the author of *Ecumenism in the Age of the Reformation* (1974), *Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History* (1989) and *Mysticism, Death and Dying* (1994). His funeral mass was celebrated at St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church in Louisville on November 17, 2022.

Thomas W. Sheridan (1943-2023)

Thomas William Sheridan, of Swisshelm Park, PA, longtime member of the International Thomas Merton Society and speaker at Merton conferences, died January 1, 2023 at the age of 80. He was born and raised in the Bronx, NY, the son of Thomas and Mary Sheridan, and earned his bachelor's degree at Manhattan College. He moved to Pittsburgh to attend Duquesne University, where he earned a master's and Ph.D. in clinical psychology. He was on staff at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh for 35 years, first serving as an administrator (1972-1977) and subsequently joining the hospital's Department of Psychiatry in 1979; he founded and served as the first chair of the hospital's Medical Ethics Committee, and was also a Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychology at the Drexel University School of Medicine, as well as counseling hundreds of patients in his private practice. He was a presenter at conferences both of the International Thomas Merton Society and of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Betty L. Sheridan, his children, Eric, Christianna, Matthew and Patrick E. Sheridan, and grandchildren, Sabine and Delaney Sheridan.

Barbara Hennessy (1933-2023)

Barbara Lee Minty Hennessy, a leader in the Thomas Merton community in Louisville, KY, died on February 20, 2023 at the age of 89. Born in Berkeley, California on May 8, 1933 to Robert and Elizabeth Minty, she attended the Westridge School in Los Angeles before moving to Kansas during World War II and from there to Louisville shortly thereafter. She graduated from Eastern High School in Middletown, Kentucky and attended the University of Kentucky. In June 1954 she wed James Hennessy, a Louisville insurance executive to whom she was married for 62 years until his death in 2016, and with whom she raised eight daughters. She was a longtime employee of *Louisville Today* magazine. A convert to Catholicism, she was active in numerous community service and cultural organizations, including the Louisville Festival of Faiths, the Afro-German Tea Room, a local homeless shelter and the Louisville

public television station. In the first decade of the new century she served as Board Chair of the Thomas Merton Foundation, which subsequently became the Merton Institute for Contemplative Living before ceasing operations in November 2012. She is survived by her eight children, twenty grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on February 25, 2023 at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville. Memorial gifts may be made in her honor to the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University.

ITMS Authors

Kathleen Deignan, CND is co-editor with Libby Osgood, CND of *Teilhard de Chardin: A Book of Hours* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2023) [\$25 cloth], a volume modeled on her earlier Merton *Book of Hours* (2007), with readings and reflections drawn from the entire range of the Jesuit theologian-paleontologist's writings, arranged according to evolutionary themes over the course of eight days, subdivided into Dawn, Day, Dusk and Dark. James Martin calls the book "Inspiring, challenging, provocative, comforting, and exalting daily meditations from one of the modern world's most visionary spiritual masters." Mary Evelyn Tucker of the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology adds, "A fresh appreciation for Teilhard's comprehensive spiritual vision that is so deeply needed in our time."

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Lucien Miller, scholar of Asian religions and Roman Catholic deacon, is the author of *Jesus in the Hands of Buddha: The Life and Legacy of Shigeto Vincent Oshida, OP* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2023) [\$24.95 paper / \$22.99 ebook], a memoir of Father Shigeto Oshida, Japanese Zen Buddhist master and Catholic Dominican priest, founder and director of the Takamori Hermitage in the Japanese Alps and pioneer in the encounter between Eastern and Western religions. Leo D. Lefebure of Georgetown University calls the book "a vivid and moving evocation of the late Japanese Dominican friar" who "offered an inspiring and prayerful witness of simplicity, poverty, solitude, and concern for a world of suffering. This moving and loving portrait is highly recommended for all spiritual seekers." Sr.

Meg Funk, OSB writes: “Oshida’s life and legacy is an experience of the spiritual senses knowing the mystical voice. Biblical in sources and Buddhist in form, reading this book took me as a reader to the great pause of silence.”

Karl Möller has recently published *Jonah’s Story, Our Challenge: Reading a Biblical Narrative in Today’s Church and World* (London: SCM Press, 2023) [£30], which considers the Book of Jonah from a range of angles, including historical, literary and psychological. John Barton of the University of Oxford calls the book “an extraordinarily wide-ranging study of many possible ways of reading the book of Jonah, based on close knowledge of all the major types of biblical interpretation in use today.” Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer of the Örebro, Sweden School of Theology writes that in this “thoughtful and far-reaching book” Möller “guides us towards a fuller appreciation of the multiple and often mutually contradictory interpretations of the book.

Thomas Malewitz has co-edited with Adam P. Zoeller *Hollywood or History?: An Inquiry-Based Strategy for Using Film to Teach World Religions* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2023) [\$52.99 paper / \$94.99 cloth], part of a series responding to the problems and potentials associated with teaching students, particularly in middle and secondary schools, through the medium of film. The volume provides material on the roots, rituals, symbols, beliefs and significant people and events for the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), Eastern religions and philosophies (Hinduism, Buddhism) and Indigenous religions/spirituality (Native American and traditional African religions).

Tuesdays with Merton Series

The Tuesdays with Merton webinar series, cosponsored by the International Thomas Merton Society and the Center for Spirituality at St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN, takes place on the second Tuesday of each month. On January 10, Emma McDonald gave a presentation entitled “Fully Human and Fully Real: Thomas Merton on Technology and

Embodiment.” On February 14, Bob Grip spoke on “Washington Watches the Monk II.” On March 14, Mary Frohlich, RSCJ discussed “Merton as Disciple and Re-interpreter of St. John of the Cross.” On April 11, Patrick O’Connell will give a presentation entitled “Beyond the Blurbs: Thomas Merton and St. Augustine.” For further information and to register for this program, see: <http://merton.org/ITMS/TWM/>. To view past presentations in the series see: <http://merton.org/ITMS/TWM/TWM-Archive.aspx>.

Merton at CEA

On March 30-April 1, 2023, the College English Association will hold its Annual Conference at the Sheraton Gunter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The conference theme is “Confluence.” A panel sponsored by the International Thomas Merton Society and moderated by Monica Weis, SSJ entitled “Always Seeing Anew: Thomas Merton’s Insights and Discoveries” will feature three presentations:

- Christine M. Bochen: “Called to Joy, Together: Merton’s Vocation and Ours”;
- Paul M. Pearson: “The Paradise Consciousness of Thomas Merton: Using His Camera to see with a Paradise Eye”;
- and Monica Weis, SSJ: “Discovering Celtic Spirituality: A Graced Moment of New Life.”

The ITMS, an affiliated society of the College English Association, is also sponsoring a coffee break during the course of the conference.

Merton Happenings

From August through December, photographs by Thomas Merton were included in an exhibition held at the Museum Stift Stams, the museum of a Cistercian monastery in the Austrian Tyrol, entitled “Take Care of Life, Wherever You Find It!” which brought together a variety of artists whose work aligned with Edith Stein’s motto used as the exhibit title. Forty-three of Merton’s photographs were included in the exhibit.

On September 30, Sophronia Scott led a study day entitled “Thomas Merton and the Transformative Power of Love” at the Meditatio Centre in London.

On January 18, 2023, Hugh Turley gave a presentation on the assassination of Thomas Merton at St. Anselm's Abbey School in Washington, DC.

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On January 28, Marek Czarniecki led a day-long retreat on the topic of "The Contemplative Spirituality of Icons and Iconography," drawing on the insights of Thomas Merton, at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford, Connecticut.

Upcoming Events

On March 18, Sophronia Scott will lead a day-long retreat on the topic "The Mystical Experience of Everyday Living," drawing on the work of Thomas Merton, at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford, Connecticut. For further information see: info@holyfamilyretreat.org.

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On March 18, Doug Hertler will give a performance of his one-man play, *Merton and Me, A Living Trinity* at St. Mary Grand Church in New York City; on March 25, he will perform the play at St. Paul's Church in Wickford, Rhode Island; on May 10, *Merton & Me* will be presented at Church of the Redeemer in Toronto; on May 25 at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN; on June 17 at Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center in Litchfield, Connecticut; on August 15 at Assumption Abbey, Richardton, North Dakota, and on September 17 it will be presented in Pittsburgh, PA. For further information on these events see www.mertonandme.com.

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On March 31, the Catholic Worker in Washington, DC will host a talk by Hugh Turley on his new book *Thomas Merton's Betrayers: The Case against Abbot James Fox and Author John Howard Griffin*.

Chapter and Affiliate News

On January 28, the Corpus Christi, New York City ITMS Chapter marked Thomas Merton's birthday by honoring three of Merton's friends who died this past year: Jim Forest, Thich Nhat Hanh and Tom Cornell. The featured speaker was Robert Ellsberg, publisher and editor-in-chief of Orbis Books, who knew each of these peacemakers well. For further

information visit the chapter website at: <http://www.thomasmertonnyc.org>, or contact: info@thomasmertonnyc.org.

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On January 18, 2023, the winter quarterly meeting of the North-Central Connecticut Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society Chapter (NCCTITMS) met remotely to discuss the topic of Contemplative Dialogue as a reflection and extension of Thomas Merton's contemplative engagement with the world. The presentation was led by chapter coordinator Mike Smoolca and Paul Uccello, both of whom have been trained in and have shared with others the approach of Contemplative Dialogue. On January 23, the first meeting of the contemplative book study group met to begin discussion of Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*. For further information contact chapter coordinator Mike Smoolca at: msmoolca@hotmail.com or see the NCCTITMS web site: <https://www.invalumen.org/northctitms.html>.

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On the first Saturday of each month, at 9.30 a.m. (Argentina time) the Argentine Westlands Merton Chapter meets virtually for 45 minutes to read and talk about texts by Thomas Merton. The link to join the meeting will be announced the day before in the chapter instagram account: [@argentinewestlands](https://www.instagram.com/argentinewestlands) and on its Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1163942074102>. The readings and the meeting are held in Spanish. People from any region are invited to attend. For further information contact chapter coordinator Marcela Raggio at: marcelaraggio@yahoo.com.ar.

Send all Merton-related news to:

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The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS