

INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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2019 ITMS General Meeting Program Set

At its July 2018 meeting, the Board of Directors of the International Thomas Merton Society approved the program for the ITMS Sixteenth General Meeting, to be held June 27-30, 2019 at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA. The theme of the meeting is “O Peace, Bless This Mad Place,” taken from Merton’s poem “Love Winter When the Plant Says Nothing” (*Emblems of a Season of Fury*, 1963). Plenary speakers include Rose Marie Berger, Robert Ellsberg, Ron Hansen and Richard Rodriguez. The program will also feature an address by ITMS President Mark C. Meade, a Daniel Berrigan panel discussion featuring Frida Berrigan, Anna Brown, Karen Gargameli and Eric Martin, fifteen concurrent sessions, sixteen workshops and guided prayer sessions, meditation sessions led by John McHugh, a musical performance by Cyprian Consiglio, OSBCam and an art installation by Cassidy Hall entitled “Infinite Possibility: A Film Exploration of Thomas Merton’s Hermitage and the Interior Hermitage.”

Rose Marie Berger is a poet and social activist who serves as senior associate editor, poetry editor and regular columnist for *Sojourners* magazine, where she has been on staff for more than thirty years; she is author of *Who Killed Donte Manning? The Story of an American Neighborhood* (2009) and *Drawn by God: A History of the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries from 1967 to 1991* (with Janet Gottschalk, 2012). She was a participant in the April 2016 conference in Rome on “Nonviolence and Just Peace” sponsored by the Vatican’s Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace and her contribution is featured in the new book *Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence* (2018).

Robert Ellsberg has been editor-in-chief of Orbis Books since 1987; a former editor of *The Catholic*

Worker newspaper, he is the author of numerous books on saints, including *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* (1997), *The Saints’ Guide to Happiness: Practical Lessons in the Life of the Spirit* (2005), *Blessed among All Women: Reflections on Women Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* (2006), *Blessed among Us: Day by Day with Sainly Witnesses* (2016) and *The Franciscan Saints* (2017); he has also edited *By Little & By Little: Dorothy Day – Selected Writings* (1983; 2005), *The Duty Of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day* (2008) and *All the Way to Heaven: The Selected Letters of Dorothy Day* (2010).

Ron Hansen, Gerard Manley Hopkins professor of Arts and Humanities at Santa Clara University, is the author of numerous highly acclaimed novels, including *Desperadoes* (1979), *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (1983), *The Shadowmaker* (1987), *Mariette in Ecstasy* (1991), *Atticus* (1996), *Hitler’s Niece* (1999), *Isn’t It Romantic: An Entertainment* (2003), *Exiles* (2008), *A Wild Surge of Guilty Passion* (2011) and *The Kid* (2016). He is also the author of *A Stay against Confusion: Essays on Faith and Fiction* (2001) and is an ordained Catholic deacon.

Richard Rodriguez is an author of numerous critically celebrated non-fiction works, including *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982), *Mexico’s Children* (1990), *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (1992) (nominated for the Pulitzer Prize), *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* (2002) and *Darling: A Spiritual Autobiography* (2013). He has also been a frequent television commentator, especially on the *PBS News-hour*, for which he won an Emmy Award (1992) and a Peabody Award (1997). He has been called by *The Washington Post* “one of the most eloquent and probing public intellectuals in the country.”

Cyprian Consiglio, OSBCam is a member of the New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, CA, where he has served as prior (community superior) since 2013. He is a well-known composer and performer of liturgical music as well as music with a strong inter-religious dimension. He is also author of *Prayer in the Cave of the Heart: The Universal Call to Contemplation* (Liturgical Press, 2010) and *Spirit, Soul, Body: Toward an Integral Christian Spirituality* (Liturgical Press, 2015).

Opening sessions on Thursday afternoon of the conference will include a First-Timers' Session with Robert Grip; ITMS Chapters Workshop with Michael Brennan; a Merton Scholarship session with Deborah Kehoe, Patrick O'Connell and Paul Pearson; a "Merton and Journey" session with Joseph Raab and Kathleen Tarr; and a "Merton in Correspondence" session with William Apel and Gordon Oyer.

Concurrent Sessions include:

- "Merton and Ecology": Carol Lenox & Robert Whalen;
- "Merton and Formation": Tran Dung/Michael Carey & Thomas Malewitz;
- "Merton and (Non-)Religious Identity": David Orberson & David Rensberger;
- "Merton and Peace" 1: Bernadette McNary-Zak & Justin Klassen;
- "Merton and Peace" 2: Anthony Nuccio & Dominiek Lootens;
- "Merton and Peace" 3: Christopher Fici & James Robinson;
- "Merton and Poetry": Patrick O'Connell & Mary Frances Coady;
- "Merton and Racism" 1: Paul Dekar & Gray Matthews;
- "Merton and Racism" 2: Gregory Hillis & Marjorie Corbman;
- "Merton and the Off-side": Paul Pearson & Lynn Szabo;
- "Merton and the Ignatian Tradition": Daniel Horan, OFM & Cristóbal Serrán-Pagán;
- "Merton and Writing": Michael McGregor & Jamal Lyksett;
- "Merton, Daniel Berrigan and the Ignatian Tradition": Michael Plekon & David Goleboski;
- "Merton in the Classroom – Merton and Lax": Alan

Kolp & Emma McDonald;

- "Merton, the Celts and Wilderness": Monica Weis, SSJ & Deborah Kehoe.
- Workshops, Guided Prayer & Special Presentations include:
- "Encountering Glimpses of Merton's Journey: Selections of His Visual Art and Imagery": Marianne Hieb, RSM;
 - "It's a Beautiful Day in the . . . Monastery: Discovering Harmonies Shared by Thomas Merton, Fred Rogers and Ourselves": Jeff Kiernan;
 - "Meditation, Reflection and Renewal: Guided Meditations Inspired by the Words of Thomas Merton": Bill Meyer;
 - "Outdoor Walking Meditation": Jacqueline Chew, Jacqueline Corl-Seidel & Sue Yoes;
 - "Peace through Poetry: Thomas Merton and the Inner Silent Self as a Pathway to Peace via Poetry": Sarah Kothe & Cassidy Hall;
 - "Practicing Peace: The Promises of 'Merton's Beatitudes'": Kathleen Deignan, Ceire Kealty & Ashley Hubeka;
 - "Promoting Personal Maturity and World Peace: Does Your Left Brain Know What Your Right Brain Is Thinking?" and "Escaping the Clamor of Our Chaotic Lives": Larry Culliford & Christine Hearn;
 - "Prophecy, Poetry and Contemplative Action: Building on Merton's Legacy of Peacemaking" and "Let Peace Be Your Aim: Merton, Peacemaking and the Rule of St. Benedict": Paul Pynkoski & Judith Valente;
 - "Social Justice, Spontaneity and Sleeping under Those Magnificent Redwoods": Morgan Atkinson;
 - "Thomas Merton's Dance with the Feminine": Susan McCaslin & J. S. Porter;
 - "Transforming and Healing This Mad Place: James Baldwin and Thomas Merton on How and Why the USA Must Abandon the Tribe(s) of Whiteness": Malcolm Cash;
 - "Traveling Thomas Merton's 'Road to Joy'": Christine M. Bochen;
 - "'Us and Them': Merton on the Dark Side of the Moon": Christopher Pramuk;
 - "Who Is Thomas Merton? Constructing Personal and Social Narratives" and "Writing a Spiritual Autobiography": Randy Kroeker & Kaya Oakes;

- “The Yoga of Sacred Sound”: James D’Angelo.

The Program Committee for the Sixteenth General Meeting is chaired by ITMS Past President Michael W. Higgins, with Natalie Terry as site coordinator; other members of the committee include Christine M. Bochen, Kevin Burns, ITMS Secretary Cassidy Hall, ITMS President Mark C. Meade, ITMS Treasurer David Orberson and Joseph Q. Raab.

The registration brochure for the conference is included with this issue of *The Merton Seasonal*. Additional details can be found on the ITMS website at: <http://merton.org/2019> or can be obtained by contacting site coordinator Natalie Terry at: itmsmeeting@gmail.com.

Shannon Fellowships Awarded

The ITMS Board of Directors has approved awards of 2018-2019 Shannon Fellowships to Paul Dekar for a project of research on “Thomas Merton on Racial Justice,” and to Matthew Reid for research on “Adoption of Monastic Practices,” exploring how the framework of monasticism as found in the work of Thomas Merton can provide a guideline for a self-reflective lifestyle in the contemporary world.

The Shannon Fellowship program was established in 1997 in honor of the late Msgr. William H. Shannon, the founding president of the ITMS, to promote scholarship on Merton and his work. Up to five annual awards, of a maximum of \$750 each, are granted to scholars for research on primary-source Merton materials at the Merton Center at Bellarmine University or other archival collections. This year’s selection committee includes Paul M. Pearson (chair), Fiona Gardner and Joseph Raab.

The deadline for applications for Shannon Fellowships for 2019-20 is March 15, 2019. Awards must be used between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. Awards will be based on the quality of the proposal submitted and on the need for consulting archival materials at the site proposed. Applicants must be members of the ITMS; they may join the Society at the time of application by including a check for \$25, made out to “ITMS”, along with their proposals. Current officers and Board members of the ITMS, as well as grant committee members, are not eligible for fellowships during their term of office. Fellowships may be granted a maximum of two times to any applicant.

Application for Shannon Fellowships must include the following:

- a detailed proposal of 500-750 words explaining the subject and goals of the applicant’s research and the rationale for consulting primary sources at the Merton collection selected by the applicant; applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate in their application that they have consulted online finding aids for the Merton Center (<http://www.merton.org/Research>) or for other archival collections of Merton’s work (a list of subjects of previous awardees can be found under Previous Research Topics on the web site);
- a biographical profile of 100-150 words providing pertinent educational, scholarly and/or professional information about the applicant;
- a letter of recommendation from a scholar familiar with the applicant’s qualifications and research interests;
- a proposed expense budget: grants will cover costs of travel to and from collections; expenses for accommodations and food during time of research at archives; costs of photocopying;
- disclosure of any other sources of funding awarded or applied for, with amounts received or requested.

Applications are encouraged from established scholars, from researchers without academic affiliation, and from students and younger scholars, including those engaged in research for theses and dissertations.

Completed applications for fellowships should be sent to **Dr. Paul M. Pearson, Director, Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, 2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205; email: pmpearson@bellarmine.edu**. The committee’s recommendations will be presented at the June 2019 meeting of the ITMS Board of Directors, who will make the final decisions on awards, and results will be communicated to applicants shortly thereafter.

Daggy Scholarships Available

The International Thomas Merton Society will once again sponsor the Daggy Youth/Student Scholarship Program to make it possible for young people to participate in the ITMS General Meeting. The program is named in honor of the late Dr. Robert Daggy, founding member and second president of the

ITMS and longtime director of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. Up to fifteen scholarships will be awarded, covering all costs (except transportation) of attendance at the Sixteenth General Meeting of the ITMS, to be held June 27-30, 2019 at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA. The awards will also include one year's free membership in the ITMS. Young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-nine, and full-time undergraduate students up to the age of forty, are invited to apply. (Those under eighteen at the time of the conference must be accompanied by a parent or adult chaperone, whose registration will not be covered by the scholarship.)

Scholarship applicants should submit a statement explaining why they are interested in learning more about Thomas Merton and how they think they would benefit from attending the ITMS General Meeting. They should also obtain a recommendation from a youth minister, campus minister, pastor, teacher, or other qualified adult explaining in what capacity he/she knows the applicant and why the applicant should be considered as a qualified candidate for an ITMS scholarship.

Completed applications, including the recommendation, must be submitted by March 15, 2019, to the scholarship committee chair, Jamie Fazio, Nazareth College, 4245 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618-3790; e-mail: jfazio1@naz.edu. Applications should include the age of the applicant, proof of educational status (if applicable), telephone number and email address (if available) as well as a return address. An application form and further information can be found at: <http://www.merton.org/ITMS/scholarships.aspx>.

Any ITMS member who knows an eligible young person/student that would benefit from attending the 2019 General Meeting in Santa Clara should encourage him or her to apply for a scholarship.

Merton Cited in New Film

The critically acclaimed new film *First Reformed*, written and directed by Paul Schrader and starring Ethan Hawke, features Thomas Merton as a significant influence on the main character, conflicted Presbyterian minister Ernst Toller, who is undergoing a severe crisis of faith as his historic church in upstate New York seems to be drifting toward complete irrelevance and he comes to question the meaning of his vocation. In

the movie, the minister is asked by a young parishioner to provide spiritual counseling to her husband, a radical environmentalist so wracked with despair over the state of the planet that he is driven toward suicide. Writing in his journal later that day, the minister cites a passage from Thomas Merton: "Despair is a development of pride so great that it chooses someone's certitude rather than admit that God is more creative than we are." According to Thomas Merton Center Assistant Director Mark C. Meade, this is a paraphrase of a sentence from the chapter entitled "Humility against Despair" in *New Seeds of Contemplation*: "Despair is the ultimate development of a pride so great and so stiff-necked that it selects the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves" (180). (Meade also notes that coincidentally the church building used in the film is in fact Zion Episcopal Church in Douglaston, Queens, NY, mentioned a number of times in Merton's autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*, where Merton's father Owen was the organist during his son's childhood.) Merton is later disparaged by the media-savvy pastor of the megachurch that owns the property on which Rev. Toller's church stands; he tells his colleague, whom he accuses of being too idealistic, that the "guy you're always reading . . . didn't live in the real world either."

In a June 12 interview with Schrader and Hawke on the NPR program *Fresh Air*, host Terry Gross asks Hawke, who was raised Episcopalian and has been drawn toward Buddhist practice: "Did you read Thomas Merton, who your character reads?" He responds: "Well, one of the things I loved about the script immediately . . . it described the books on Reverend Toller's desk, and a handful of them were all books my mother had given me. Thomas Merton . . . was a real hero to my mother, and she gave me all his books at different points in my life. And I've been to the Abbey of Gethsemani. I've done three different retreats there over my life. The monks there are very beautiful men, and I like the way they think and talk and speak. . . . And I found the writing of Thomas Merton extremely helpful. And, you know, obviously through his love of Christ, everything was rooted. But he was not – he didn't see that as a door that closed him off from other

people.” (Merton Center Director Paul Pearson notes that one of the books on Toller’s desk is Merton’s *A Life in Letters*, also found in the film’s credits, and that Hawke visited the Merton Center in 2002 at the time of one of his Gethsemani retreats.) (The transcript of the complete interview can be found at: <http://www.wamc.org/post/paul-schrader-and-ethan-hawke-test-their-faith-first-reformed>.)

In a subsequent interview with Jake Kring-Schreifels, entitled “Ethan Hawke Channels Thomas Merton in *First Reformed*,” Hawke, a respected writer as well as actor, again mentions the strong influence of Merton on his own life: “He really wrestled with his desire to be a writer and his desire to be a monk, and it took him a long time [to realize] that he didn’t have to choose and that he could integrate them both. I think it’s why his journals have such a powerful effect on me. I kept thinking that I needed to decide if I wanted to be a writer or an actor. And somehow, reading these journals gave me permission to say I’m going to be an actor that writes . . . that [I] don’t have to be one or the other.” (For the full interview see: https://www.americamagazine.org/arts-culture/2018/07/05/interview-ethan-hawke-channels-thomas-merton-first-reformed?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletters&utm_content=3+-+Read+the+full+story&utm_campaign=Newsletter&source=Newsletter.)

The film’s theatrical release was in May and it is now available on DVD.

Pope Blesses Merton Conference

On June 4, 2018, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, wrote the following message on behalf of Pope Francis to the conveners of the conference on Thomas Merton being held in Rome the following week: “His Holiness Pope Francis sends greetings and prayerful good wishes to all assembled for the International Symposium ‘Thomas Merton: Prophecy and Renewal’ to be held at the Pontifical Atheneum Sant’Anselmo from 12-15 June 2018. His Holiness trusts that these days of study and reflection will lead to a deeper appreciation of Merton’s role as a master of prayer whose writings continue to ‘open new horizons for souls and for the Church’ (cf. Address to the United States Congress, Washington, 24 September, 2015) and help shed the light of Christ on

the pressing spiritual and cultural challenges of our time. To all present the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of wisdom, joy and peace in the Lord.”

Robert Hale, OSBCam (1937-2018)

Robert Hale, OSBCam, monk of the New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, California and former board member of the International Thomas Merton Society, died August 30, 2018 of complications from a severe fall suffered two months earlier. He was born in Denver, CO in 1937, and was a 1959 graduate of Pomona College, Claremont, CA, after which he entered the Camaldolese Benedictine Order. He received an STB degree from the Collegio Sant’Anselmo in Rome in 1964, and was ordained at Camaldoli in 1966. He received an MA from St. John’s University, Colledgeville, MN in 1968, and a doctorate in theology from Fordham University in New York City in 1972. After teaching in Italy for six years, he returned to the US to found Incarnation Monastery in Berkeley, CA, a dual monastic experience with the Episcopalian Order of the Holy Cross. He served as prior (superior) of his Camaldolese Benedictine community at Big Sur from 1988 to 1999 and again in 2012-2013. He founded the oblate program for New Camaldoli and served as its oblate chaplain until his death.

Fr. Hale was a plenary speaker at the first ITMS General Meeting held at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY in 1989, on “The Contemplative Source of Peacemaking in Thomas Merton.” He was also a presenter at the 1991 Second General Meeting at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY, on the topic “Merton, Christian Solitude and Contemplative Prayer.” He served two terms as a member of the ITMS Board of Directors: 1991-1993 and 1993-1995.

He was the author of numerous articles and three books: *Christ and the Universe: Teilhard de Chardin and the Cosmos* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1973) (a revision of his doctoral dissertation: “The Cosmic Body of Christ: Teilhard and the Christic Nature of the Universe”); *Canterbury and Rome, Sister Churches: A Roman Catholic Monk Reflects upon Reunion in Diversity* (Paulist Press, 1982) and *Love on the Mountain: The Chronicle Journal of a Camaldolese Monk* (Source Books, 1999).

A Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated at the

New Camaldoli Hermitage on September 8, 2018.

Merton Anniversary Website

In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton on December 10, 1968, the Thomas Merton Center of Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY has set up a website that includes numerous documents related to the occasion, including obituaries published in numerous newspapers; telegrams and correspondence related to Merton's death; transcripts of the homily by Abbot Flavian Burns for Merton's requiem Mass celebrated on December 11, 1968, along with the office of prayer for Merton on that day; transcripts of the Order of Service for the Reception of the Body of a Departed Brother and for the Vespers, Funeral Mass and Burial Service of December 17, 1968; audio of both the sung and spoken texts of the funeral liturgy; and both a recording and a transcript of the homily preached by Fr. Daniel C. Walsh at the funeral. The website can be accessed at: <http://www.merton.org/50th>.

New Resource Available

A searchable database including information on all the books read by Thomas Merton that are cited in his seven volumes of personal journals, with pertinent extracts, is now available on the Merton Center website at: <http://www.merton.org/Research/Quotations/default.aspx>. Compiled by Willy Eurlings, chairman of the Mertonvrienden, the Dutch-speaking Merton Society from Flanders and the Netherlands, with technical assistance by Fieke Julius, the listings can be accessed according to author, book title, date, journal volume and page number, general category and quotation excerpts.

Subscription Program for Merton Talks

Now You Know Media has established a new online subscription program for Thomas Merton conferences. For \$7 per month, a new Merton oral recording will be delivered each week to the subscriber's inbox. The first, trial presentation is free, and the service can be cancelled at any time. Early recordings in the program include: "Irish Monks and Mysticism"; "Thomas Merton Sings Gregorian Chants"; "Spiritual Remarks after the Death of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."; "Day of Recollection: A Retreat with Thomas Merton"; "Eastern Gurus: Holiness, Discipleship, and the Mystical Heart." For further information or to become

a subscriber, see: <http://mertontalks.com>.

Chicago Merton Anniversary Conference

A conference entitled "Disappear from View? Thomas Merton Fifty Years Later and Beyond" will take place December 7-8 at the Bernardin Center of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, IL, cosponsored by the Center, the Joan & Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage of Loyola University, Chicago and the Chicago Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society. The conference will open on Friday evening with a keynote address by Richard Rohr, OFM, preceded by evening prayer and followed by a reception. The Saturday morning schedule will begin with breakfast followed by a plenary address by C. Vanessa White and an interview by Judith Valente of poet, memoirist and photographer Paul Quenon, OCSO, former novice under Thomas Merton. After lunch, concurrent sessions will feature speakers Robert Ellsberg, Mary Frohlich, RSCJ, David Golemboski, Michael Murphy, Gordon Oyer, Paul Pearson and Christopher Pramuk, who will explore various dimensions of Merton's life and writing. Each session will then be repeated, followed by a panel discussion with Cassidy Hall, Gregory Hillis and Mark Meade, moderated by Jon Sweeney. The day will conclude with a Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. There is an admission charge of \$10 to attend the Friday night presentation only, and \$50 to attend both days. Registration is required, with a deadline of November 30. Further information and a registration form can be found at <https://ctu.edu/event/merton2018>.

Call for Papers for CEA

The International Thomas Merton Society will once again sponsor panels and presentations at the College English Association annual convention, to be held in New Orleans, LA, March 28-30, 2019. The conference is a gathering of 500-600 scholar-teachers committed to literature, writing, college teaching and related fields. This year's theme is "Vision/Revision," and one or more Merton panels are planned, along with possible individual presentations at other concurrent sessions. An allied organization of the CEA, the ITMS will provide limited financial support to defray expenses for presenters. Possible topics include: revising texts (e.g. *New Seeds of Contemplation*, *Day of a Stranger*, etc.); envisioning one's place in the world;

envisioning a world of peace and/or justice; envisioning contemplation in a world of action; envisioning global harmony (East/West, North/South).

Proposals of 200-500 words for a 6-8 page paper (15-minute presentation time) are due by November 1, 2018. Participants must be members of the CEA (\$50/year) by January 2019. Those interested in speaking at the convention are encouraged to contact Monica Weis, SSJ, coordinator of the CEA Merton sessions, at mweis9@naz.edu for further information on submitting a proposal and on CEA membership; additional information is available in the full Call for Papers at the CEA web site: <http://cea-web.org>.

Major Gift for Columbia Merton Series

On May 24, 2018, the Columbia University Catholic Ministry announced that a record donation of \$100,000 has been made for its annual Thomas Merton Lecture series, as a memorial to the late Edmund J. Kelly. It is the largest gift the series has received since its founding in 1978 and will ensure for decades to come that Columbia students, faculty and alumni have an annual opportunity to engage in the life and lessons of the celebrated monk and Columbia alumnus.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Kelly family and their continued support of this signature event at Columbia University,” said Rev. Daniel O’Reilly, director of Columbia Catholic Ministry. “Even fifty years after his death, Merton’s intellectual curiosity and spiritual longing inspire students of all faiths on campus.” Columbia Catholic Ministry had received several previous gifts from the Kelly family, including \$50,000 in 1997 to establish the Hugh J. and Catherine R. Kelly Endowment for the Merton Lecture, which still supports the series today.

The Merton Lecture was established in 1978 when Columbia Catholic Ministry decided to sponsor an annual presentation honoring an individual prominent in religious life whose message resonated with undergraduates, selecting Merton as an appropriate figure due to his significant contributions to spiritual life and his strong ties to the university and nearby Corpus Christi Church, where he was baptized in 1938 while a Columbia graduate student. Speakers chosen for the series are not required to have ties to Merton, but preference is given to individuals with standing in the American Catholic community who are engaged

in a mission relevant to Merton’s philosophy. “It probably remains the one clear public lecture on campus that is identified with the Catholic community and with the religious community,” according to Msgr. J. Christopher Maloney, director of CCM from 1988 to 2003, whose immediate predecessor, Paul Dinter, established the series. “At Columbia there aren’t too many examples of that.” “The lecturers and themes over the years have reflected the many sides of Merton’s writings and interests, from prayer and contemplation to social justice and interfaith dialogue,” said Fr. O’Reilly. “This gift will enable our ministry to touch the hearts and minds of future generations of students and guide them on their life-long journeys of faith.”

The Merton Lecture has brought to campus cardinals, writers, business executives and more, discussing such varied topics as Merton and Asian wisdom (David Steindl-Rast in the inaugural lecture of 1978), the works of Flannery O’Connor (Sally Fitzgerald in 1981), the conversion experience of a political prisoner in Iran (Kian Tajbakhsh in 2016), Merton and Confucianism (Wm. Theodore de Bary in 2010), anti-death-penalty activism (Helen Prejean, CSJ in 1997) and Merton and the Metaphysics of Peace (Bishop Robert Barron in 2015).

Edmund J. Kelly, the son of Hugh J. and Catherine R. Kelly, received a law degree in 1962 from Columbia University and was an editor of the *Columbia Law Review*. He worked as an attorney and investment banker. The late Hugh J. Kelly, a 1926 graduate of Columbia College and editor of *The Spectator*, was a vice president at McGraw-Hill. Additional Columbia graduates in the Kelly family include Hugh J. Kelly, Jr., and Daniel Kelly, brothers of Edmund and graduates of the business school, as well as Tom Kelly, son of Edmund and a graduate of Teacher’s College, and Sr. Agnes Kelly, OSU, a sister of Edmund and graduate of Columbia’s School of Social Work and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. “The entire Kelly family is grateful to Ed and his beloved wife Joan for their continued regard for Columbia and the Merton Lecture Series,” said Sr. Agnes. “Growing up, we all knew how loyal Pop was to his alma mater as well as the importance he placed on faith, appreciation and respect. Merton’s dream – of a world where people could come together to solve problems and grow – will be advanced by the continuation of

Columbia's Merton Lecture," she added.

The 2018 lecture will be held this fall in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of Thomas Merton's death.

New Book by ITMS Author

Cristóbal Serrán-Pagán has recently published *Saint John of the Cross: His Prophetic Mysticism in the Historical Context of Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Pacem in Terris Press, 2018 [\$20 paper]), offering a holistic approach to John's life and writings, using Raimon Panikkar's tripartite model of the spiritual paths of action, wisdom and devotion, and presenting Thomas Merton as a major commentator on the life events and teachings of St. John of the Cross. In his preface, Joe Holland writes that "Saint John of the Cross has seldom been so profoundly presented" as in this "rich study which unveils the underlying unity of mysticism and prophecy in this great Spanish saint."

Assisi Pilgrimage Retreat

The Ninth Annual Pilgrimage Retreat to Assisi, Italy, sponsored by the Lourdes Wellness Center, will take place November 30 through December 6, 2018. The theme this year is "Advent Wisdom Journeying: Exploring Creative Symbols and Cycles of the Season." Retreat leaders are Marianne Hieb, RSM, Helen Owens, OSF, Jonathan Montaldo and Maria and Renee Pinardo. The pilgrimage schedule will include personal quiet, a generous buffet breakfast, morning prayer and a communal gathering with themed presentations; the afternoons provide open time with opportunities and meditative time for contemplative gazing, visiting sacred sites, wandering and exploring. Personal journaling and meditative art journaling with art materials and/or photography will be encouraged. The group gathers for a late afternoon sharing of graces and silence, followed by a traditional Umbrian dinner, concluding with optional night prayer. Lodging is at the Hotel Giotto, Via Fontebella, Assisi, located near the Basilica of San Francesco, which provides a dedicated room for retreat gatherings, all breakfasts, most dinners, and stunning views of the Umbrian valley. For further information, see the Lourdes Wellness Center website: www.lourdesnet.org/wellness; or contact Celeste Miller at millerce@lourdesnet.org; phone: 856-869-8190.

Scholars Retreat at Gethsemani

On May 25-28, the biennial ITMS Presenters and Daggy Scholars Retreat was held at the Abbey of

Gethsemani. The retreat coordinators were Julianne Wallace & ITMS President Mark C. Meade. A total of 28 participants took part, including seven Daggy Scholars and three other young people. The schedule included a visit to Merton's hermitage with Br. Paul Quenon, a monks' panel, a Friday night Shabbat service and participation in the regular monastic liturgy of the hours, a concluding prayer service led by Jackie Chew, and an ITMS brainstorming session.

Awards for ITMS Authors

At the Catholic Press Association 2018 Catholic Media Conference, held June 12-15 in Green Bay, WI, the second place award for biography was given to *At Play in the Lions' Den: A Biography and Memoir of Daniel Berrigan* by Jim Forest (Orbis Books), which also won a third place award for design and production. *The World as Sacrament* by Michael P. Plekon (Liturgical Press) received an honorable mention award for spirituality (soft cover).

Merton Happenings

On May 10, Monica Weis, SSJ led an evening of reflection at the Syracuse Spiritual Center, with presentations on "Finding the Sky within You" – a powerpoint session on the power of place and landscape in Thomas Merton's life – and on the importance of solitude for Merton and the early Celts.

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On June 9, Monica Weis, SSJ presented a two-part talk at Christ the King Retreat House, Syracuse NY entitled: "Seeing the World with Rinsed Eyes: Early Celtic Spirituality and Thomas Merton."

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On June 12, Monica Weis, SSJ led a retreat day at Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua, NY, focused on "Early Celtic Spirituality and Irish Hermit Poetry" and "Praying with Poetry."

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On July 4-6, Christopher Pramuk gave three presentations on Thomas Merton in Melbourne, Australia; on July 4 he led a reflection day on the theme "God Accompanies Persons: Thomas Merton, Pope Francis and Helping People to Become More Fully Human and Alive in Their Faith Journey"; on the following day, he delivered the Helder Camara Lecture entitled: "Wisdom-Sophia in the Life and Prayer of Thomas Merton"; on July 6, he led a reflection day on the

theme “In Everything, Mercy: Thomas Merton and Pope Francis on the Merciful Heart of God.”

On July 8, Christopher Pramuk gave a presentation entitled “In Everything, Mercy: Thomas Merton and Pope Francis on the Merciful Heart of God” in Adelaide, Australia.

On July 10, Christopher Pramuk led a Marist Ministries Formation Day on the theme: “Thomas Merton and the Future of Faith: Merton Dares to Imagine What Is Possible for God and for Human Beings” in Sydney, Australia.

On July 11-13, Christopher Pramuk led a retreat entitled “Thomas Merton: The Scriptures and Contemplation” at the Mittagong Marist Retreat Centre in Sydney, Australia.

On July 14, Alan Kolp led a study day entitled “Merton’s Spirituality: Treasure for Contemplative Living” at the Centering Space in Lakewood, OH.

On three Saturdays in August, Michael Casey, OCSO presented lectures exploring the legacy of Thomas Merton at Tarrawarra Abbey, Australia. On August 4, the topic was “The Journey to Abstraction”; on August 11, it was “Uncovering the Deep Self”; on August 18, the final presentation was “Inner Experience and the Sense of Dread.” Following the talks the audience was invited to participate in the office of vespers at the abbey.

During the fall semester, the Harvard Institute of Learning in Retirement in Cambridge, MA has been running a course entitled “The Life and Work of Thomas Merton,” taught by Charles Swearingen.

On September 7-8, Michael W. Higgins led a retreat entitled “Thomas Merton and the Spiritual Imagination” at Wisdom House in Litchfield, CT.

On September 8, a lecture by Paul M. Pearson entitled “A Hidden Wholeness: The Zen Photography of Thomas Merton,” marked the opening of an exhibit of Thomas Merton’s photographs that will run through November 10 at the Marie Louise Trichet

Gallery at Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT. For further information, see: http://www.wisdomhouse.org/gallery_upcoming.php.

Upcoming Events

On September 22, Bonnie Thurston will lead “A Quiet Day on Thomas Merton” at St. Katharine’s House, London. For further information, see: http://merton.org/50th/Thurston_Quiet_Day.pdf or <https://events.rfsk.org/events/thomas-merton-quiet-day-bonnie-thurston>; or call: 0300-111-1147.

On October 2, 9, 16 and 23, Vanessa Hurst will conduct a four-week adult education course entitled “Thomas Merton: Being a Contemplative in a World of Action” at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. For further information, see: www.merton.org/Events.

From October 5 through January 18, 2019, the 849 Gallery, at 849 South Third Street, Louisville, KY will host an exhibit entitled “Merton among Us,” featuring interpretations of Merton by seven visual artists and seven guest writers from the local community.

On October 13-14, Libby Falk Jones will direct a retreat entitled “Contemplative Writing: The Art of Noticing Deeply” at Bethany Spring Retreat Center in New Haven, KY, one mile from the Abbey of Gethsemani. For further information, see the Bethany Spring website: www.bethanyspring.org; or email: rick3649@gmail.com; or call: 502-507-8576.

On October 16, the Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations at Merrimack College, North Andover, MA will present a conference entitled “Thomas Merton and the Religions” commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Merton’s death. Speakers include Edward Kaplan on Judaism, with a response by Emma O’Donnell Polyakov; Patrick O’Connell on Islam, with a response by Mary Minifie; and Pdraic O’Hare on Christianity, with a response by Rev. Martha Hubbard; each presentation and response will be followed by open discussion. The day will also include the screening of the Morgan Atkinson film *The Many Storeys & Last Days of Thomas Merton*.

On October 19, the University of Memphis will host a

day-long conference entitled: “Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Conversation Deferred.” Panelists include Peter Gathje, Deborah Kehoe, Gray Matthews and Bernadette McNary-Zak. For further information contact Gray Matthews at matthews@memphis.edu.

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The Fall 2018 Road Scholar “Week with Thomas Merton” Program will take place October 21-26 at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. The Spring 2019 program is scheduled for March 31-April 5. For further details contact Linda Bailey at lbailey@bellarmine.edu or 502-272-8161.

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On October 23, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ will deliver the 2018 Vernon Robertson Lecture entitled “Our Common Home: Merton and Pope Francis on the Natural World” at Frazier Hall on the campus of Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. For further information, see: www.merton.org/Events.

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On October 26-28, the Merton Society of the Low Countries (Mertonvrienden) will host its annual reflection weekend in Westmalle, Belgium; the theme will be “Thomas Merton: Monk, Trappist, Peace Activist, Proponent of Interreligious Dialogue.”

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On November 2-15, an exhibition of twenty abstract paintings by Robert Wright entitled “Some Reflections in Abstract Art on Themes Arising from Thomas Merton’s Call to Transform Our Hearts and Lives” will be shown in the chapel of the Holy Spirit at Whirlow Spirituality Centre, Sheffield, UK; an opening reception will be held on November 2, with workshops scheduled on November 2 and November 5. For further information, see: <https://www.whirlowspiritualitycentre.org/whats-on/2018/11/2/an-exhibition-of-paintings-by-robert-wright-nov-2-to-15>.

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On November 8, a program entitled “Spiritual Catalyst for Compassion: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Auspicious Meetings of Thomas Merton and His Holiness the Dalai Lama” will be held in Frazier Hall of Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, beginning at 7 p.m. For further information, see: www.merton.org/Events.

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On November 24, Gary Hall and Ashley Cocksworth

will lead a study day entitled “Merton and Barth – A Shared Legacy” at St. Michael’s Priory, Milton Keynes, UK. For further information, email: bookings@stmiichaelspriory.org.uk; or call: 01908 242190.

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From November 30 through January 12, 2019, an exhibit entitled “Searching for Thomas Merton: An Artistic Tribute 1968-2018” featuring the work of Joe McGee and Penny Sisto, will be shown in the McGrath Art Gallery on the campus of Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. For further information, see: www.merton.org/Events.

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On December 1, a day of commemoration to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton, entitled “Thomas Merton Memorial: A Promise of Love,” will be held at Our Lady of the Lake Church in Seattle, WA, cosponsored by the Seattle Chapter of the ITMS and Contemplative Outreach Northwest. The day will include presentations by William Apel and Mike Seely, a memorial Mass concelebrated by Fr. Tim Clark, pastor of the parish, and a Cistercian monk from Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey in Carlton, OR, as well as recordings of Merton himself and of his funeral liturgy, along with time for personal reflection and prayer; for further information, contact Michael Lunde at: mlunde64@gmail.com or Michele Jankanish at: mbj@comcast.net.

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On December 7-8, a conference entitled “En Vivant avec Sagesse”: Commémoration Montréal Thomas Merton” (“Living with Wisdom”: Montreal Thomas Merton Commemoration”) will take place at the Institut de Pastorale des Dominicains, 2715 Chemin de la Côte Sainte-Catherine, Montréal, Qué, Canada, H3T 1B6. The program will include a tribute to the Maison Benoît Labre, founded by Tony Walsh, and a panel discussion of Merton’s friendship with Walsh and Daniel Berrigan, moderated by Brian McDonough, director of the Office de Pastorale Sociale of the Diocese of Montreal; a meditation session with friends of Thich Nhat Hanh; a Merton in dialogue panel with young scholars, including Ryan Scruggs and Martin Bellerose; a plenary address by Kathleen Deignan, CND; a meditation and resistance session focused on Merton’s essay “Rain and the Rhinoceros” with Richard Renshaw, CSC;

a plenary session on “Thomas Merton and Leonard Cohen, Soul-brothers and Spiritual Guides”; closing Eucharist with the Saint-Albert-le-Grand community. For further information, contact François Godbout at: godfranc@hotmail.com.

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On December 8, a Merton symposium entitled “Thomas Merton: Living with Wisdom” will be held at Górki Wielkie, Poland. Speakers include: Marek Bernacki, Michal Kopczyk, Stanislaw Obirek and Malgorzata Poks. Along with lectures and panel discussions, the program will include a jazz concert, a documentary about Merton (with Polish subtitles), spiritual exercises in the form of meditation, and a guided tour of the Kossak Manor in Górki Wielkie, in which famous Polish writer Zofia Kossak spent most of her life. For further information, see: <http://dworkossakow.pl>.

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On December 8, a study day entitled “The Spiritual Roots of Protest and Merton’s Enduring Legacy” will be held at the Episcopal Cathedral in Edinburgh, Scotland, led by Jim Forest, with James Cronin, Hugh Foy, Leah Robinson and Jeffrey Smith.

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On December 8, “A Day with Thomas Merton on the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Death” will be held at the Lion Ballroom, Leominster, Herefordshire, UK, featuring author Fiona Gardner, musician James D’Angelo, and artist Charles MacCarthy, as well as a recording of one of Merton’s novitiate conferences. For further information, email: bookings@thomas-mertonsociety.org.uk.

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On December 10, Saint James Episcopal Church, Lancaster, PA will host a “Quiet Day of Remembrance” commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton, led by Kimberlee Peifer, Director for Contemplative Prayer and Practices at Saint James, and Glenn Mitchell, Director of Oasis Ministries, Camp Hill, PA. For further information, see: <https://www.saintjameslancaster.org/spiritual-growth/retreats-pilgrimages/thomas-merton-day>.

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On December 10, 2018 at 7 p.m., a Mass to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton will be held at the Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville,

KY; the main celebrant will be Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, with Abbot Elias Dietz, OCSO of the Abbey of Gethsemani as concelebrant and homilist.

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On December 13, “An Evening with Jim Forest,” who will reflect on Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and Daniel Berrigan, will take place at the St. Pancras Church Parish Hall in London, hosted by Pax Christi and cosponsored by the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Faith and Resistance Network and the London Catholic Worker; for further information, see: www.paxchristi.org.uk; or call: 0208 203 488 4.

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On January 11-13, 2019, a program entitled “‘To Be Human in This Most Inhuman of Ages’: A European Symposium to Mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Death of Thomas Merton” will be held at Muensterschwarzach Abbey, Germany. Speakers include: Otto Betler, OSB, Ashley Cocksworth, Detlev Cuntz, Andreas Ebert, Anselm Grün, OSB, Gary Hall, Wunibald Müller, Malgorzata Poks, Abbot Michael Reepen, OSB, Kosmas Thielmann, OCist and Bonnie Thurston. For further details, see: <https://www.abtei-muensterschwarzach.de>.

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From January 24 through March 8, the Merton photographic exhibit “A Hidden Wholeness” will be shown in the Saint Vincent Gallery at Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, PA.

Chapter and Affiliate News

On November 3, the New York City ITMS Chapter will host a Day of Reflection at Corpus Christi Church entitled “Journey to the True Self,” led by Br. Don Bisson; the day will also include a Jazz Liturgy at noon featuring keyboardist and chapter member Deanna Witkowski and her jazz trio. On December 10, the fiftieth anniversary of Merton’s death will be commemorated with a memorial Mass celebrated by Rev. Daniel P. Horan, OFM and Fr. Raymond M. Rafferty that will draw on the music from Merton’s 1968 funeral Mass, including traditional Cistercian chant and music composed by Gethsemani choirmaster Fr. Chrysogonus Waddell. The chapter’s Merton Reading Group, led by Bryon Gordon, continues its monthly meetings in the Corpus Christi sacristy; the

fall meetings, on September 26, October 17 and November 14, are focused on Merton's *The Inner Experience*; *Disputed Questions* will be the topic for the winter sessions, January 16, February 13 and March 13; the spring meetings will discuss *Ishi Means Man*. For further information, visit the chapter website at: <http://www.thomasmertonnyc.org>, or contact: info@thomasmertonnyc.org.

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On September 2, the Chicago ITMS Chapter heard Vaughn Fayle, OFM speak on "Thomas Merton and the Language of Music" in the Rectory Assembly of Immaculate Conception Parish. On September 16, Pauline Viviano spoke to the chapter on the topic "An Unexamined Life Is Not Worth Living" (Socrates): Contemplative Living à la Merton"; on October 21, Gregory Pierce will lead an interactive discussion entitled "What Brian Doyle Knew: The Spirituality of Reading and Writing in the Age of Cable TV, YouTube and Instagram"; and on November 18, Patrick O'Connell will give a presentation entitled: "A Canterbury Tale: Thomas Merton and St. Anselm." For further information, contact Chapter Coordinator Mike Brennan at cc.itms@gmail.com or 773-447-3989.

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On September 16-22, the Thomas Merton Society of Canada is sponsoring a "Thomas Merton in Rome" pilgrimage, led by Judith Hardcastle and Christine M. Bochen, visiting the places in and around Rome which Merton visited, reading his accounts of those visits, discussing the later parts of his life to which they point and considering the essential elements of his continuing legacy as it pertains to our own time, viewing it both from a North American and European perspective. For further information on TMSC activities, see the society web site: www.merton.ca, or contact Susan Cowan, Community Relations Director, at tmssc@telus.net or 604-988-8835.

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On September 12, the Belmar, NJ Chapter of the ITMS viewed a DVD interview with Abbot John Eudes Bamberger about his friend and fellow-monk Thomas Merton; at its October meeting the group will discuss Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*; *Mystics and Zen Masters* by will be the topic of

discussion at the November and December meetings, to be followed by discussion of Merton's journal *Dancing in the Water of Life* beginning in January and continuing through the spring. For further information, contact Greg Ryan at: GJRyan@wccm.org or 732-681-6238.

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On May 15, Rev. Thomas Snyder gave a presentation to the Cleveland ITMS Chapter on Thomas Merton's early book *The Spirit of Simplicity*, recently republished. On September 18, the chapter viewed a video of a 2016 talk by L'Arche founder Jean Vanier and discussed Vanier and Thomas Merton, including Vanier's 1950 reading of Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* and its influence of Vanier's spiritual journey. For further information, contact Chapter Coordinator Donna Kristoff, OSU, at: dkristoff@ursulinesisters.org or 440-449-1200, ext. 314.

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On July 29, the Northern California ITMS Chapter concluded its discussion of Thomas Merton's *The Inner Experience*. Upcoming fall meetings are scheduled for September 30 and November 25. For further information, contact John Berger: 916-482-6976.

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The Thomas Merton Contemplative Initiative at Iona College, New Rochelle, NY is sponsoring a weekly hour of contemplative silence and meditation practice each Thursday from 5:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. throughout the fall semester. The unstructured, silent sessions are open to all members of the Iona community and to meditators from all spiritual traditions or seekers of no tradition. The sessions will take place in the Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice Chapel on the Iona campus. For further information, contact Sr. Kathleen Deignan at: kdeignan@iona.edu.

Send all Merton-related news to:

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The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS