

International Thomas Merton Society

NEWSLETTER

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Art: Jlm Cantrell

Shannon Fellowships

At the International Thomas Merton Society Board of Directors meeting in Louisville, KY on June 8, 1996, the Board approved a proposal to establish an annual fund for research grants. The grants will be called Shannon Fellowships in honor of Msgr. William H. Shannon, the founding president of the ITMS.

The ITMS will annually grant up to five awards, of a maximum of \$750, to qualified researchers for work at the Merton Center archives at Bellarmine College in Louisville, or at another major repository of Merton materials, such as the Lentfoehr Collection at Columbia University or the St. Bonaventure University archives in Olean, New York.

Determination of awardees will be made by a committee of three persons appointed by the ITMS president; the committee for the 1997 awards is chaired by Dr. Monica Weis, SSJ, ITMS Vice President, and also includes Dr. Ross Labrie and Dr. Bonnie Thurston. Awards will be based on the quality of the proposal submitted and on the need for consulting archival materials at the site proposed.

The number of grants made per year, up to a maximum of five, will depend on the merits of the individual proposals (i.e., the committee will be under no obligation to fund a set number of grants in any given year). In the event of a funding shortfall (as determined by the ITMS treasurer, in consultation with the president), the number of grants awarded may be reduced or

awards may be omitted in a given year.

Applicants must be members of the International Thomas Merton Society; they may join the Society at the time of application by including a check for \$20, made out to "ITMS", along with their proposals. Current officers and Board members of the ITMS, as well as grant committee members, will not be eligible for fellowships during their term of office.

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;
- 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.

Completed applications for fellowships must be postmarked by March 15, 1997, and sent to Dr. Monica Weis, SSJ, Department of English, Nazareth College, 4245 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618-3790. The committee's decisions will be made by June 1, 1997, communicated to the ITMS Board of Directors at its annual meeting, and announced at the Town Meeting during the ITMS Fifth General Meeting at Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL.

Individual grant recipients will also be notified by letter of their awards.

Awards must be used between July 1, 1997 and June 30, 1998; extensions of the grant period must be requested in writing from the committee chair before May 15, 1998, and will be permitted only in cases of legitimate need and only with written permission of the committee chair.

Awardees will receive grant funds awarded from the ITMS Treasurer, and must submit an accurate expense report with appropriate receipts to the Treasurer within six weeks of completing the visit to the Merton collection, or by July 31, 1998, whichever comes first; any unused portion of the grant must be returned to the ITMS. A written report summarizing the results of the awardee's research must be sent to the committee chair at the same time.

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.

Youth Scholarships

At the June, 1996 ITMS Board of Directors meeting, the Board unanimously agreed to continue the Youth/Student Scholarship program begun with the ITMS Fourth General Meeting at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, NY, attended by eight scholarship winners.

Therefore, the ITMS will underwrite ten full scholarships, covering all costs (except transportation) of attendance at the Fifth General Meeting of the ITMS, to be held at Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL, June 12-15, 1997. The awards will also include one year's free membership in the ITMS. **Young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-nine are invited to apply.**

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 **April 1, 1997** to the scholarship committee chair, Dr. Thomas Del Prete, Department of Education, Clark University, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610-

1477. Successful applicants will be notified by May 1, 1997.

The first group of scholarship winners included: Nadine D. Girard, a student at Clarkson University, Potsdam, NY; Eleanor Hogan, a student at the University of Notre Dame; Linell Roccaforte, a recent graduate of the University of New Mexico Master's Program; Michael Ruk, a student at Allegheny College, Meadville, PA; Jon Winsor, a student at the University of New Hampshire Graduate School; and Raissa Wu, a recent graduate of the College of Mount St. Vincent, Riverdale, NY. In addition, conference staff members David O'Connell, a student at Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA, and Jon Schickler, a recent graduate of Gannon University, Erie, PA, were given partial scholarships to defray board costs at the conference. (Other students awarded scholarships were unable to attend the meeting.)

Responses from the scholarship winners to the meeting at St. Bonaventure were uniformly enthusiastic. One wrote, "It was even better than I thought it would be. It was great meeting other people with Merton interests." Another commented, "I was highly impressed by the wide breadth of people interested in Merton, from the professionals to the everyday persons on their own spiritual journeys." A third wrote, "I really enjoyed the meeting! I wish that I had read

more of Merton's works, but even though I felt at a loss from time to time - I have been inspired to learn more, and read more." The opportunities to "visit places associated with Merton at St. Bonaventure," to hear "speakers that knew Merton from a personal standpoint such as Patrick Hart and Miguel Grinberg" and "to meet so many exceptional souls" were particularly noted in the award winners' comments.

Any ITMS member who knows a young person (14-29) that would benefit from attending the 1997 General Meeting in Mobile should encourage him or her to apply for a scholarship.

ITMS Retreats

More than 175 people participated in retreats sponsored by the International Thomas Merton Society at six sites during the summer and early fall of 1996. The program, authorized by the ITMS Board at its 1994 meeting, was coordinated by Rev. Robert Hale, OSB Cam., former member of the ITMS Board, and ITMS Treasurer Harriet Hope. The intent was to provide opportunities for spiritual reflection and growth based on Merton's life and teaching during alternate years when ITMS General Meetings are not held. The retreats were led by different directors but shared the common theme, "Summoned to Explore the Heart," borrowed from the ITMS 1995 General Meeting. All the retreats were filled to capacity and were enthusiastically received by those attending.

Three of the retreats took place on the weekend of June 28-30, 1996. The retreat at the New Camaldoli Hermitage, Big Sur, California was led by Fr. Robert Hale, whose presentations moved from "Merton on the Center" and "Merton on the Human Heart" to "Outpourings from the Center" such as peacemaking and interreligious dialogue. Strong emphasis was placed on prayerful and reflective response to the challenge of

Merton's life and teaching.

The retreat at Santa Sabina Center, San Rafael, CA was led by Mary Luke Tobin, SSL and Jane Marie Richardson, SSL, who reflected on their own friendship with Merton and on the complementarity of contemplation and social commitment. Poems, songs and celebration of Eucharist in the spirit of Merton, inclusive and aware of the wisdom of the East, took place in an atmosphere of monastic silence and sharing.

ITMS Resident Secretary Dr. Robert Daggy led the retreat at the Kordes Enrichment Center, Ferdinand, IN, and focused on the "Prophetic Challenge" of Merton's work. Comments from participants stressed appreciation of Dr. Daggy's integration of biographical, literary, theological and spiritual dimensions, his ability to appeal to a wide range of listeners, and his "delightful sense of humor," as well as the balance between lecture and reflection in the schedule.

On July 12-14, Fr. Hale directed a retreat at Epiphany Monastery, New Boston, NH. The program was basically the same as that given at New Camaldoli, and included sung morning and evening prayer, daily Eucharist, and family-style meals prepared by the monks.

Michael Higgins was the director of the retreat at Mount Carmel Retreat House, Niagara Falls, Ont., July 28-30. He focused on "five voices" of Merton: the Biography, the Pilgrim, the Humanist, the Diarist, and the Mystic. Responses stressed Dr. Higgins' "knowledgeable," "informative," "interesting" "uplifting" presentations.

The final ITMS retreat took place October 7-11 at the Abbey of Gethsemani, Trappist KY, and was led by Fr. Matthew Kely, OCSO and Br. Paul Quenon, OCSO. Fr. Matthew's morning presentations discussed Merton from a personal point of view, while Br. Paul explored how Merton's prophetic challenge flows from the exploration of the heart, with illustrations from scripture and the monastic tradition. The retreat also featured informal sessions

for sharing, a hike, and participation in the monastic liturgy.

At its meeting during the June, 1997 General Meeting, the ITMS Board of Directors will evaluate the responses to this first group of retreats and decide whether to make the "off-year" retreat program an ongoing part of the activities sponsored by the ITMS.

Kansas Conference

The Fourth Kansas Merton Conference was held November 8-10, 1996, at the Mount Community Center, Atchison, KS. This year's theme was "Finding the Depths of the Spiritual in Daily Activities: Thomas Merton, Guide to an Awareness and Celebration of the Fullness of Each Moment." The program included the following presentations:

- Jim Hartz: *From Seeing an Absolute Object to Absolute Seeing: Merton, Dzogchen and Nowness*;
- Harriet Hope: *Day with a Stranger*;
- John King: *Entering the Silence: Merton Leads Us to New Silences during Retreats*;
- William Koch: *Kathleen Norris' Dakota: Living the Legacy of Merton's Silence*;
- Jonathan Montaldo: *The World in His Bloodstream - An Open Forum on the Project to Publish Merton's Journals*;
- Elizabeth Noble: *William Blake and Merton*;
- Patrick O'Connell: *Monasticism as Lay Spirituality in the Thought of Thomas Merton*;
- Erlinda Paguio: *Thomas Merton and the Psalms*;
- Johan Seynnaeve: *Merton, Moore and the Carthusian Temptation*;
- Gary Young, CR: *Merton's Window and the Principle of Par Pro Toto*.

To receive information on tapes of these presentations as well as those of the three previous Kansas Merton Conferences, or to

be included on the mailing list for future conferences, contact conference organizer **Sr. Noreen Hurter, OSB**, The Mount Community Center, 751 South 8th Street, Atchison, KS 66002.

Merton Center Foundation

At the ITMS Board of Directors meeting in June, ITMS Treasurer Erlinda Paguio was named to serve on the Board of Directors of the recently formed Thomas Merton Center Foundation. The Foundation is an independent, nonprofit corporation established through the joint efforts of the Abbey of Gethsemani, the Merton Legacy Trust, Bellarmine College, and individuals interested in Merton's thought, to provide financial and other forms of support to the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine College and to other programs dedicated to promoting the life and work of Thomas Merton.

At the meeting, the Foundation's chairperson, retired Louisville businessman and ITMS member Douglas D. Stegner, addressed the Board and explained the purposes of the Foundation, which was incorporated in September, 1995. They include:

- assisting the continued growth and development of the Merton Collection at the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine College;
- developing a local, national and international interest in the Thomas Merton Center;
- promoting interest in Merton's literary and artistic works and fostering dialogue among scholars, students and the general public on the spiritual and humanistic, social and contemplative values central to Merton's life and work;
- promoting cultural enrichment programs that recognize the power of Merton's works to nourish the spirit, and providing a wide variety of cultural experiences for persons who visit the Thomas

Merton Center;

- assisting Bellarmine College to provide human and financial resources for programs designed to foster Merton's ideals;
- providing leadership in the development of the facilities of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine College, and assisting Bellarmine College in generating funds for the Center's continuous operation.

The Foundation's Articles of Incorporation permit the president of the ITMS to name a representative of the Merton Society to the Foundation's Board of Directors. The Board also includes representatives of the Abbey of Gethsemani, the Merton Trust, and Bellarmine College, as well as business and cultural leaders from the Louisville area. Erlinda Paguio will serve as the ITMS representative on the Foundation Board through June of 1997.

The Foundation's goal to establish an endowment that would fund operations and programs of the Merton Center has been supported by a substantial initial grant from the Abbey of Gethsemani. The Foundation has sponsored a Merton Scholars' Retreat in February, 1996 for fifteen Merton researchers (see accompanying story), as well as Louisville presentations on July 21, 1996 by Buddhist scholar Robert Thurman of Columbia University and on October 21, 1996 by Huston Smith, famed authority on world religions. Upcoming events include celebration of monastic vespers and a panel discussion by monks from the Abbey of Gethsemani, to be held at Bellarmine College in Louisville on December 10, 1996 to commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton.

Contributions to the Foundation are welcome, and may be sent to the Thomas Merton Center Foundation, Bellarmine College, 2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205-0671.

Scholars Retreat

In late February, the newly formed Thomas Merton Center Foundation (see accompanying story) sponsored a gathering of fifteen Merton scholars at Bellarmine College, Louisville, KY, and the Abbey of Gethsemani. The purpose of the retreat, organized by Thomas Merton Center Director Dr. Robert E. Daggy and Rev. George Kilcourse of the Bellarmine College Theology Department, was to provide the scholars, all of whom had done research at the Merton Center in the recent past, an opportunity to get to know one another and to share the results of their work. The Merton Center Foundation provided funds for the scholars' travel to and time in Kentucky.

The retreat began on Wednesday, February 21, 1996, and concluded on Sunday, February 25. It was preceded by a public lecture by one of the scholars, Dr. Fernando Beltrán Llavador of the University of Salamanca, Spain, on Tuesday evening at Bellarmine. His presentation, "Faith-filled Eyes in the Night: A Network of Saints for our Time," discussed Merton, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila.

The retreat itself began with a Wednesday luncheon for the scholars in the President's Dining Room at Bellarmine, followed by a trip to the Abbey of Gethsemani, where the scholars attended vespers and met for supper and an orientation session, followed by compline.

Thursday featured a visit to Merton's hermitage and three sessions at which the scholars discussed their research. On Friday, the scholars returned to Louisville and attended the Twentieth Century Literature Conference at the University of Louisville, which included a session on Merton at which three of the scholars presented papers, as well as the conference banquet at the historic Brown Hotel. Saturday included another scholars' session and time for informal discussion, and featured the presentation of *Pas de Deux, Pas de Dieu*, a two-person

drama on Merton and Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet, written by one of the participants, Christine Jensen Hogan from the University of Notre Dame, and acted by two students from Bellarmine. On Saturday evening, the scholars were hosted for dinner and a reception at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank O'Callahan, Merton's close friends; Mrs. Tommie O'Callahan is one of the three trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust and a member of the Merton Center Foundation Board. The retreat concluded with lunch on Sunday, after liturgy and a final session.

Attending the retreat were Claire M. Badarocco from Marquette University, Milwaukee; Fernando Beltrán Llavorador; Margaret B. Betz from Ohio State University; Douglas Burton-Christie from Loyola-Marymount College, Los Angeles; Fr. Michael Callaghan, CM from St. John's University, New York; Joan Combs from Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida; Fr. Enda Cunningham of Dublin, Ireland; Christine Jensen Hogan; Dorothy LeBeau, from St. Louis University; Jeannette Markgraf of Philadelphia; Mary Murray from the University of Pennsylvania at Bradford; Fr. Mark O'Keefe, OSB from the St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana; Jeff Roberts of Pointe Claire, Quebec; Johan Seynnaeve from West Virginia University; and Bradford Stull from Indiana University.

Merton Note Cards

A wide variety of note cards, bookmarks and prints suitable for framing, all featuring quotations from Thomas Merton and graphic designs by Lloyd Kleine Harvey, are now available. For further information, Mr. Harvey can be contacted at 5370 Pershing Ave. #205, St. Louis, MO 63112, or by phone at 314-361-6352.

Chapter News

On October 15, the Cleveland Chapter of

the ITMS sponsored a presentation on Merton as sage and prophet by ITMS President Pat O'Connell. For information on the group, contact **Sr. Donna Kristoff, OSU**, 2600 Lander Road, Pepper Pike, OH 44124.

The first meeting of the newly established Louisville Chapter of the ITMS took place on September 19, 1996 at the St. James Parish Rectory, convened by Erlinda Paguio and Sr. Jane Marie Richardson, SL. For information on the group, contact **Erlinda Paguio**, 7317 Honiasant Road, Louisville, KY 40214.

The September 15 meeting of the Massachusetts Chapter of the ITMS featured a report on the First General Meeting of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland by Rich Fournier, presenter at the May 17-19 conference; chapter member Bob Waldron's article, "A Terrible Beauty," on the group's May meeting with Fr. Basil Pennington at St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, MA, was a special feature in the June 14, 1996 issue of *The Pilot*, the newspaper of the Boston Archdiocese. For information on the group, contact **Ed Farley**, 262 Wentworth Ave., Lowell, MA 01852.

On October 27, the New Mexico Thomas Merton Society sponsored a presentation by Richard Croghan on "Contemplative Prayer and Merton's Poetry." Sr. Rose Annette Liddell, SL, ITMS Board Member also recently addressed the chapter. For information on the group, contact **Peggy Jones**, 825 East Zia Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

The Thomas Merton Center of Pittsburgh sponsored an evening of reflection on Merton May 22, 1996 at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, led by former ITMS president Bonnie Thurston and Peter Kountz, author of a book on Merton. The center's annual retreat, on November 8-9, was led by Marie Dennis, Associate for Latin America for the

Maryknoll Justice and Peace Office, at the Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, Whitehall, PA. At its annual dinner on November 21, the Center presented its 1996 Thomas Merton Award to Winona LaDuke, indigenous people's, women's and environmental activist. For information on the group, or to subscribe to the Center's paper *The New People*, contact **Molly Rush**, Thomas Merton Center, 5125 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

Merton Meetings in Britain

The Second General Meeting of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, an affiliated society of the ITMS, is scheduled for **March 27-29, 1998**, at **Oakham School**, Rutland, England, where Merton received his secondary education. The conference theme will be "Thomas Merton: Poet, Monk, Prophet." Major speakers will include Rev. Basil Pennington, OCSO, Dr. Esther de Waal, and Right Reverend Rowan Williams, Anglican Bishop of Monmouth. **Proposals are invited** for workshops exploring specific dimensions of Merton's life and work, sessions on teaching and giving retreats with Merton, dramatic, poetic, or musical interpretations of Merton, as well as scholarly papers, designed for presentation in thirty minutes (10-12 double-spaced pages maximum) on topics such as (but not limited to) Merton's understanding of monasticism, poetry and prophecy, his English experience, multicultural values and social concerns. Proposals, including an **abstract of no more than 250 words**, should be sent by **July 15, 1997** to the conference organizer, Paul Pearson, The Thomas Merton Society, 18 Colby Road, Upper Norwood, London SE 19 - 1HA, UK, or by E-mail: p.pearson@ucl.ac.uk.

The British/Irish Merton Society held its First General Meeting at La Sainte Union College, Southampton, May 17-19, 1996,

attended by 140 participants from at least eight countries. The conference theme was "Your Heart Is My Hermitage: Thomas Merton's Vision of Solitude and Community." The conference was organized by ITMS International Advisor Paul Pearson and hosted by La Sainte Union Theology Department member Sonia Kendall.



Canon A.M. Allchin, President, TMS GB/I (Photo: Don Sheehan)

Major addresses were given by Canon A. M. Allchin, president of the group, Rev. Melvyn Matthews, Professor Mary Grey, Jim Forest, and Dr. Robert Daggy (read in his absence by Rev. George Kilcourse). The conference also featured a panel of Merton friends, including Canon Allchin, Forest, Mrs. Tommie O'Callaghan and Ron Seitz; a poetry reading with Pdraig Daly, Selima Hill, Caroline McCausland and Seitz; meditation sessions in Sufi and Christian traditions; and concurrent sessions on: Merton and Other Traditions; Merton - The Early Years; Merton on Solitude and Community; Merton and the Human Community, as well as workshops on Merton and Art and Merton and Christodrama. A collection of paintings by Merton's father Owen was also on display.

A collection of papers from the conference is scheduled to be published in November;

for information on this volume, or the society's twice-yearly publication, *The Merton Journal*, contact Paul Pearson, 18 Colby Road, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 - 1HA, or by E-mail: p.pearson@ucl.ac.uk.

Credit in Mobile

Spring Hill College is offering participants at the ITMS Fifth General Meeting, to be held on that campus June 12-15, 1996, the opportunity to earn one graduate credit or one CEU (continuing education unit). Either option requires fulfilling certain assignments/requirements as well as paying a fee (\$75 for the credit; \$35 for the CEU). Further information can be obtained by contacting the site coordinator, Rev. Christopher Viscardi, SJ, Spring Hill College, 4000 Dauphin Street, Mobile, AL 36608-1791.

ITMS General Meeting participants are also invited to participate in the Spring Hill Summer Institute of Christian Spirituality, to be held immediately preceding the conference. The institute offers a series of 1-credit (or audit) courses, in two sessions, June 2-6 and June 8-12. Both sessions include courses of particular interest to ITMS members and friends. First session courses include: "The Desert Fathers"; "Christian Zen"; "Teresa of Avila"; "From Abraham to Rachel"; "Liberation Spirituality"; and "The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises." Second session courses include "Centering Prayer" (to be taught by Rev. Basil Pennington, OCSO); "Eco-Spirituality"; "Walker Percy: A Visionary Quest" (Percy, the eminent Southern Catholic novelist, was a friend and correspondent of Merton; the course is to be taught by Patrick Samway, SJ, literary editor of *America* and Percy editor and biographer); "Meister Eckhart"; "John of the Cross" (taught by General Meeting Site Coordinator Rev. Christopher Viscardi, SJ); and "Paul, Herald of the Gospel." For more information, contact the Office of Graduate Studies, Spring Hill

College, 4000 Dauphin Street, Mobile, AL 36608-1791 [e-mail: grad@shc.edu].

Merton Room at Nazareth

The new Thomas Merton Room at Nazareth College, Rochester, New York, was opened Friday October 25 with an address by Lawrence S. Cunningham, Chair of the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame and editor of *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master* and of *A Search for Solitude*, the third volume of the Merton Journals. His talk was entitled: "The Voice of a New World: Thomas Merton and American Culture." The talk was followed by a reception and tour of the new Merton Room, which houses all of Merton's works and a number of Merton memorabilia. The Merton Room, an enlarged version of an earlier collection established in 1985, was made possible by the gift of Msgr. William H. Shannon, emeritus professor at Nazareth and Founding President of the International Thomas Merton Society.

On the following day, October 26, a Merton Study Day was held at Nazareth, featuring a talk by Professor Cunningham: "Reflections on *A Search for Solitude: The Journals of Thomas Merton, Volume Three (1952-1960)*," a group reflection on *A Search for Solitude* facilitated by Msgr. Shannon and ITMS Board Member Christine M. Bochen, editor of the sixth volume of the Merton journals; and a talk by Msgr. Shannon: "Can a Technological Society be Contemplative." The day concluded with a prayer service.

Send ITMS Newsletter contributions to:

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