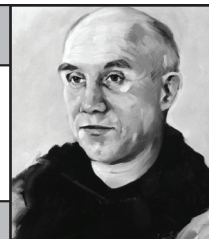


INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Conference Plenary Speakers Announced

Four plenary speakers for the Eighteenth General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, to be held June 22-25, 2023 at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN, have been announced by conference program chair David Golemboski. The conference theme is "Sophia Comes Forth, Reaching," emphasizing Merton's connection to divine wisdom and the divine feminine. The speakers are Maria Clara Bingemer, Simone Campbell, SSS, Sophia Park, SNJM and Shannen Dee Williams.

Maria Clara Bingemer is a noted Brazilian theologian who received her doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. Currently a full professor at the Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC), where she previously served as dean of the Center of Theology and Human Sciences, she focuses her research on systematic theology, on mysticism, and in particular on Latin American and liberation theology. Her works available in English include *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor*, with Ivone Gebara (Wipf and Stock, 2004), *A Face for God: Reflections on Trinitarian Theology for Our Times* (Convivium, 2014), *Witnessing: Prophecy, Politics and Wisdom*, co-edited with Peter Casarella (Orbis, 2014), *Simone Weil: Mystic of Passion and Compassion* (Wipf and Stock, 2015), *The Mystery and the World: Passion for God in Times of Unbelief* (Wipf and Stock, 2016) and *Latin American Theology: Roots and Branches* (Orbis, 2016). She serves on the editorial boards of many theological journals, including *Concilium*.

Sr. Simone Campbell is a member of the Sisters for Social Service and former executive director of

NETWORK, the Lobby for Catholic Social Justice. During that time she organized and participated in seven cross-country "Nuns on the Bus" tours to highlight themes of Catholic social teaching and to promote various initiatives, such as the call to vote, equitable tax policies, immigration reform, Medicaid expansion and economic justice. Born Mary Campbell in Santa Monica, CA, she attended Mount Saint Mary's College, graduating in 1969 with a degree in sociology, and entered the Sisters of Social Service, adopting the name Simone in 1973 when she took her final vows. In 1977, she received her law degree from the University of California, Davis, where she was the editor of its law review. In 1978, she co-founded the Community Law Center in Oakland, CA and spent the next eighteen years there practicing family law as its lead attorney. From 1995 to 2000, Campbell was the general director of her order, with oversight over its activities in the United States, Mexico, Taiwan and the Philippines. Along with the bus tours, a highlight of her time at NETWORK, which she led from 2004 to 2021, was her advocacy for health care for all Americans, often considered to have been a significant factor in the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010; she authored the "nuns' letter" in support of the bill, which was signed by sixty heads of religious orders and like-minded umbrella groups and then sent to members of Congress. She is the author of *A Nun on the Bus: How All of Us Can Create Hope, Change, and Community* (HarperCollins, 2014) and *Hunger for Hope* (Orbis, 2020). She has received Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award and the Defender of Democracy Award from the international Parliamentarians for Global Action. On July 7, 2022, President Joe Biden presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom along

with sixteen others who have “made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private endeavors.”

Sr. Sophia Park, SNJM is associate professor of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Holy Names University, Oakland, CA and author of *An Asian Woman's Religious Journey with Thomas Merton: A Journey to the East* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). Her teaching and research focus on medieval women's spirituality and movements, Biblical spirituality, postmodern hermeneutics with a focus on postcolonialism and discourse on spiritual direction. She received her doctorate in Christian Spirituality from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA in 2008. In 2013, she was appointed as the Irene Woodward Professor in Arts and Humanities, the first endowed position at Holy Names. In addition to her book on Merton, her writings include *A Hermeneutic on Dislocation as Experience: Creating a Hybrid Identity, Constructing a Borderland Community* (Peter Lang, 2011), *Border-Crossing Spirituality: Transformation in the Borderland* (Pickwick, 2016) and *Conversations at the Well: Emerging Religious Life in the Twenty-First Century Global World*, co-authored with Tere Maya (Wipf & Stock, 2019), as well as articles in *Presence, An International Journal of Spiritual Direction, Theology and Thought, Theological Studies* and in the volume *Jesus of Galilee: Contextual Christology*, edited by Bob Lassell-Klein (Orbis, 2011), as well as several books in Korean.

Shannen Dee Williams is Associate Professor of History at the University of Dayton. A historian of the African American experience with research and teaching specializations in women's, religious and Black freedom movement history, Williams is the author of *Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle* (Duke University Press, 2022). She received her doctorate in History from Rutgers University, as well as a master's degree in Afro-American Studies from the University of Wisconsin and a bachelor's degree from Agnes Scott College. Her research has been

supported by fellowships, grants and awards that include a Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City, a Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Fellowship in Religion and Ethics from the Woodrow Wilson National Foundation, an Albert J. Beveridge Grant from the American Historical Association and the John Tracy Ellis Dissertation Award from the American Catholic Historical Association. Her work has been published in the *Journal of African American History*, *American Catholic Studies*, the *Washington Post*, *America* and the *National Catholic Reporter*. A Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians, Dr. Williams also authors the award-winning column, “The Griot's Cross,” published by the *Catholic News Service*.

Updates on the general meeting schedule and other conference information will be posted on www.merton.org/2023. The conference registration form will be included in the Winter 2022 issue of *The Merton Seasonal*.

Shannon Fellowship Awarded

At its June 2022 meeting, the Board of Directors of the International Thomas Merton Society awarded a 2022-2023 Shannon Fellowship to Jessica Coblentz and Susan Mancino for a study entitled “Merton and Madeleva: A Correspondence on American Catholic Life.”

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 2023-2024 is March 15, 2023. Awards must be used between July 1, 2023 and July 31, 2024. 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 (or \$40 to include *The Merton Annual*), 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 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 2023 meeting of the ITMS Board of Directors, who will

make the final decisions on awards, and results will be communicated to applicants shortly thereafter.

Full details are available on the ITMS web site at: <http://merton.org/ITMS/fellows.aspx>.

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 Eighteenth General Meeting of the ITMS, to be held June 22-25, 2023 at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN. The awards will also include one year’s free membership in the ITMS. Young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine, and full-time undergraduate students up to the age of forty, 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, 2023, to the scholarship committee chair, Daggy. Scholarships@gmail.com. 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 2023 General Meeting should encourage him or

her to apply for a scholarship.

Rosemary Radford Ruether (1936-2022)

Rosemary Radford Ruether, prominent Catholic feminist theologian and correspondent of Thomas Merton, died May 21, 2022 in Pomona, CA at the age of 85. She is survived by her husband Herman, her children Mimi, Rebecca and David, and two grandchildren.

She was born on November 2, 1936, in St. Paul, MN to Robert Radford, a civil engineer, and Rebecca Cresap Ord Radford, a secretary. After the death of her father when she was 12 years old, she moved with her mother and two sisters to San Diego, CA, where she attended a high school run by an order of progressive nuns, followed by matriculation at Scripps College, Claremont, CA, where she majored in classics, graduating in 1958. A year earlier she had married Herman J. Ruether, a fellow student studying political science. She went on to earn a master's degree in classics and Roman history in 1960 from the Claremont Graduate School and a doctorate in classics and patristics from the Claremont School of Theology in 1965 with a dissertation, subsequently published, on St. Gregory Nazianzen. When her first teaching position, at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, was not renewed after she published an article in favor of birth control in *The Saturday Evening Post*, following a summer spent in Mississippi as a civil rights worker she accepted a position at Howard University in Washington, DC, a historically Black institution, where she became chair of the religion department, participating in civil rights and anti-war activism that included arrests for civil disobedience. After a visiting professorship at Harvard Divinity School in 1972, which did not lead to a permanent appointment due apparently to her controversial views, she accepted the Georgia Harkness Professorship of Applied Theology, an endowed chair at the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, located on the campus of Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, where she spent the next three decades, retiring in 2002. Here she wrote the majority of her most influential books, using her systematic and historical theological training to critique authoritarian, patriarchal, rigidly

dogmatic aspects of the Christian tradition in such works as *The Church against Itself* (1967), *The Radical Kingdom* (1970), *New Woman, New Earth* (1975), *Sexism and God Talk* (1983), *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (1998) and *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions* (2004), a total of nearly forty books written and edited, along with hundreds of articles for scholarly and popular publications, on a broad variety of topics that included racism, anti-Semitism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the climate crisis as well as the role of women in the church and in society. In 2013 she published a memoir, *My Quests for Hope and Meaning: An Autobiography*. Despite her criticism of abuses and perceived distortions of authentic teachings, she remained in the Catholic Church, saying in a 2010 interview: "My Catholicism is the progressive, feminist liberation theology wing of Catholicism. That is the Catholicism that I belong to, that I am connected to around the globe." After retiring from Garrett she and her husband moved back to California, where she taught classes at the University of California, Berkeley.

The correspondence between Ruether and Thomas Merton began in August 1966 when she offered to send him the manuscript of her first book, *The Church against Itself*, which incorporated an article on the "Death of God" theologian Gabriel Vahanian that Merton had praised in a letter to its editor. This led to an exchange that continued through February 1968, twenty letters from Ruether and nineteen from Merton, which examined in some depth the situation of church and society in the mid-1960s and their ramifications for the personal lives of a world-famous monk and a daring theologian just beginning her career. These letters are collected and published *in toto* in the volume *At Home in the World: The Letters of Thomas Merton & Rosemary Radford Ruether*, edited by Mary Tardiff (1995). It is noteworthy both for Ruether's radical challenge to Merton's monastic vocation and for Merton's willingness, in Ruether's own words, to respond to her "as an equal. . . . [N]ever did he take the paternalistic stance as the father addressing the child, which is more typical of the cleric, especially

in relation to women. Mostly, in these letters, we dialogue and even scrap with each other as intellectual siblings.” What Ruether was seeking, she says, “was a genuine Catholic intellectual peer, one who would treat me as a peer, and with whom I could be ruthlessly honest about my own questions of intellectual and existential integrity . . . whether it was, in fact, actually possible to be a Roman Catholic and to be a person of integrity. . . . Merton was my ‘test case’ for whether integrity was possible for Catholics” (xv-xvii). As for Merton, in the words of scholar Christine Bochen, “it is clear that at the time Merton corresponded with Ruether he found her an engaging, exacting, and sometimes unrelenting dialogue partner” (101), resulting in an “exchange that,” according to Msgr. William Shannon, “is as insightful as it is a delight to read.”

Miguel Grinberg (1937-2022)

Miguel Grinberg, Argentine poet, journalist and translator, friend and correspondent of Thomas Merton, died March 4, 2022 at the age of 84. Born in Buenos Aires on August 18, 1937, he studied at the University of Buenos Aires School of Medicine, turning to writing and publishing in the early 1960s, becoming an influential cultural critic and proponent of rock music, Beat poetry, research on alternative futures and eventually ecological activism, as founder of the Argentine National Network of Ecological Action and Eco-Social Pact. He received a doctorate in Educational Sciences from the Colegio Libre de Buenos Aires in 1971. He edited a number of significant literary journals, beginning with *Eco Contemporáneo* in 1961, and was author of many volumes both of verse and of prose, including *Memory of Parallel Rites* (2014), a diary account of his extended visit to the United States in 1964 and encounters with numerous important literary and politically active figures during the Vietnam era, and *Eighty Questions to Miguel Grinberg*, responses to a broad variety of issues published on the occasion of his eightieth birthday in 2017. In 2015 he was declared an Outstanding Personality of the Culture of the City of Buenos Aires.

Grinberg met Thomas Merton during his North American trip of 1964, provided with an introduction

by Merton’s Nicaraguan friend Ernesto Cardenal. Merton recounts the visit in his journal for March 10, 1964 (*Dancing in the Water of Life* 89-90). Merton’s correspondence with Grinberg between June 1963 and October 1966 is included in *The Courage for Truth* (195-204). Merton’s “Answers on Art and Freedom” (*Raids on the Unspeakable* 165-75) was written for Grinberg and first appeared in Spanish in *Eco Contemporáneo*. His “Message to Poets” (*Raids* 155-61) was composed for a meeting of poets in Mexico City in February 1964 for which Grinberg was a principal organizer.

In 1993, Grinberg edited and was a principal translator of *Thomas Merton Hermana America*, an anthology of Merton’s writings in Spanish translation; he also translated *The New Man* (1998), *A Vow of Conversation* (1998), *Thoughts in Solitude* (2000) and *Mystics and Zen Masters* (2001) into Spanish. His poem on Merton, “The Monk Whispers,” was included in the anthology *A Merton Concelebration* (1981). He was a plenary speaker at the Fourth General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, held at St. Bonaventure University in 1995, and received the ITMS “International” (“Louie”) Award for “significant contribution on an international level to the promotion of Merton’s ideas” at that conference. He also served as an ITMS International Advisor in the period 1997-1999 and was the longtime coordinator of the Buenos Aires Chapter of the ITMS.

Thomas C. Cornell (1934-2022)

Thomas C. Cornell, lifelong peace activist, Roman Catholic deacon and correspondent of Thomas Merton, died on August 1, 2022 at the age of 88 at Vassar Hospital in Poughkeepsie, NY. Born in Bridgeport, CT on April 11, 1934 to Thomas and Ann Caruso Cornell, he attended Fairfield Preparatory School and Fairfield University, which would later grant him an honorary doctorate, and earned a master’s degree in education at the University of Bridgeport. While in college, he read *The Long Loneliness*, the autobiography of Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, and in 1953, at the age of nineteen, began to visit CW houses of hospitality, meeting Dorothy Day,

who became a primary formative influence on his future life, and later serving as managing editor of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper during the period 1962-1964. He met his future wife, Monica Ribar, at the New York Catholic Worker; they married in 1964 and later moved with their young children to Newburgh, NY. An activist in both the civil rights and the peace movement, he participated in antinuclear protests organized by the Committee for Non-Violent Action at the Groton, CT submarine base in the early 1960s while teaching nearby, was a leader in early protests against the war in Vietnam and in November 1965 was one of the first public draft-card burners, subsequently serving a five-month sentence after being convicted for his action. In March 1965, he served as one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s marshals on the March from Selma to Montgomery. He was a co-founder and co-chair of the Catholic Peace Fellowship and a liaison at the United Nations for its parent organization, the interfaith pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation, continuing to work for these organizations until 1979. He was also a co-founder of Pax Christi USA, which named him an ambassador of peace in 2019 "for his contributions made in preaching and practicing gospel nonviolence, peacemaking, reconciliation and justice." He was co-editor with Jim Forest of *A Penny a Copy: Readings from the Catholic Worker* (Macmillan, 1968) and of its second edition, coedited with Forest and Robert Ellsberg (Orbis, 1995). After teaching for a couple of years he moved to Waterbury, CT in 1981, where he and his wife ran a soup kitchen and house of hospitality; for over eleven years he served as director of soup kitchens for the local council of churches. During this period he served as a consultant for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1983 pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace*. In 1988 he was ordained a deacon in the Archdiocese of Hartford. In 1967, the U.S. Catholic bishops appointed Cornell, along with Dorothy Day, to attend the Third World Congress of the Laity in Rome. In 2000, at the Fourth World Congress, Cornell served as Pope John Paul II's deacon at the Mass of Christ the King in St. Peter's Square. In 1993 he

and his family moved to the Peter Maurin Catholic Worker Farm near Marlboro, NY, affiliated with the New York Catholic Worker community, where he lived and worked until his death. During this time he once again became active with *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, as a member of its editorial board. He served as deacon at St. Mary's Church in Marlboro and also taught in the archdiocesan diaconate formation program. He was a member of the Advisory Board of the Dorothy Day Guild of the Archdiocese of New York, which advocates for the canonization of the Catholic Worker founder. At the ITMS Twelfth General Meeting in 2011 he was a participant in the Dorothy Day Roundtable.

Tom Cornell was one of the fourteen participants in the December 1964 Peacemakers Retreat, organized by Thomas Merton and held at the Abbey of Gethsemani. Thirteen letters from Cornell to Merton and nine from Merton to Cornell, exchanged between November 1962 and December 1967, are extant in the archives of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University; though none of them has been published (except one by Merton addressed jointly to Forest and Cornell: see *Hidden Ground of Love* 298), all of Cornell's and four of Merton's are available online at: <http://merton.org/Research/Correspondence/yl.aspx?id=399>.

His death was the result of an aneurism suffered after a short illness. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his children, Thomas, who operates the Catholic Worker Farm in Marlboro, and Deirdre, a writer and activist on issues of immigration and homelessness, his grandchildren Rachel, Thomas, Seamus, Rebecca and Rosa, and his sister, Ann Marie Tomasiello. A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated August 10, 2022 at St. Mary's Church in Marlboro.

Robert Cunnane (1932-2020)

Robert F. Cunnane, civil rights and peace activist and one of the fourteen participants in the historic December 1964 Peacemakers Retreat organized by Thomas Merton and held at the Abbey of Gethsemani, died on December 4, 2020 due to complications from COVID-19. Born July 12, 1932 in Arlington, MA, after attending a local parochial

grade school and public high school he entered the seminary of the Stigmatine Order in Waltham, MA, where he spent two years, followed by a year at the order's novitiate in Springfield, MA. He then studied theology and philosophy for six years at the Dominican University in Rome, where he met and befriended several Thai students, relationships that predisposed him to early opposition to US military involvement in Vietnam. After ordination in 1960 he served for two years in a parish in Milford, MA, before becoming director of the order's Espousal Retreat House in Waltham. His active support of H. Stuart Hughes' peace candidacy for the US Senate in 1962, including gathering signatures of 300 Boston Archdiocesan priests and nuns for a letter (sponsored by the anti-nuclear war organization SANE) critiquing the House Un-American Activities Committee, led to a six-month reassignment to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Upon his return to the Boston area in 1963 he became an administrator at the Stigmatine seminary in Wellesley, MA for a year and resumed his role at the Espousal Retreat House. In that year he also became involved with ministry at Packard Manse, an ecumenical center in Stoughton, MA, and was subsequently invited to become its co-director, while continuing with his Espousal retreat responsibilities. His growing friendship with Philip Berrigan, a Holy Cross classmate of his older brother, led to contacts with Daniel Berrigan and with the New York Catholic Worker community, and then to his participation in the Gethsemani retreat, an important influence on his subsequent anti-war activism. Along with Dr. Benjamin Spock, Rev. William Sloan Coffin and two others, he collected draft cards at a major demonstration held on October 16, 1967 at Arlington Street Episcopal Church in Boston, where several draft card holders also spontaneously burned their cards. Some participants, including Dr. Spock, were convicted of conspiracy charges related to the card burning, and at Spock's appeal trial, Cunnane's testimony proved crucial in overturning Spock's conviction. In 1968, he participated in discussions leading to the Catonsville Nine draft board raid, finally deciding not to take part in that action, but did join the

Milwaukee Fourteen raid on September 24, 1968, four months after Catonsville, and after a trial and conviction served a prison term of about a year in 1969-70. In 1972, he resigned from the priesthood, and the following year married Anne Walsh, a former Sister of St. Joseph who was also deeply involved in antiwar activity. After their marriage they continued work at Packard Manse along with their antiwar advocacy, challenging the role of Boston-area Honeywell Corporation in producing anti-personnel bombs. To supplement their limited income from Packard Manse, Cunnane taught religion for twenty years at Boston's all-Black Cathedral High School. After his retirement from Packard Manse in 1998, he and Anne moved to Cape Cod into a house built by Anne's father, where they lived until his death. He is survived by his wife, their children Kate and Tran, and three grandchildren. Gordon Oyer, who met and interviewed him during the course of research for his ground-breaking study on the 1964 Gethsemani Retreat, *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest*, writes of Bob Cunnane, "He is remembered with great fondness for his warm, engaging, humble demeanor as he encountered others throughout his life of service and social engagement."

Elena Malits, CSC (1934-2022)

Elena Malits, CSC, pioneering Merton scholar and professor of theology at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN, died March 10, 2022, in the Ernestine M. Raclin Hospice House in Mishawaka, IN. Born July 3, 1934 in Pittsburgh, PA and christened Helen Joan, she was the elder of the two daughters of Frank Malits, an immigrant from Austria, and Amelia Kobca Malits, a Pittsburgh native, who together ran a bakery business. After attending St. George's Grammar School and St. Francis Academy, from which she graduated in 1952, she went to St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, a highly respected women's college sponsored by sisters of the Congregation of Holy Cross. In addition to her intense intellectual curiosity and outstanding academic performance, her college years were marked by involvement with significant lay movements including Young Christian Students, Young Christian Workers and the Christian Family Movement, as well as participation

in college musicals and dance performances, which led during her junior year to a semester abroad in Vienna, Austria with a group of dance students from different colleges. At the time of her graduation in 1956 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy, she had decided that she had a vocation to religious life, which she considered "a matter of conviction, not attraction," based on God's initiative. Her religious interests had been stimulated by an early reading of Thomas Merton's autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in August 1956 and received the name Sister M. Elena (a variant of her baptismal name) at reception of the religious habit on February 2, 1957. While completing her religious formation, she also earned her a masters degree from Saint Mary's School of Sacred Theology, Notre Dame, in 1959. Later that year she began her teaching ministry as a theologian at Cardinal Cushing College in Brookline, MA, where she taught for eight years (1959-67), serving as chair of the Theology Department during the last two of these years. She then began graduate work at Fordham University, where she earned her doctorate in 1973 with a dissertation on Thomas Merton. A revised version of this material was published in 1980 by Harper & Row as *The Solitary Explorer: Thomas Merton's Transforming Journey*, a highly acclaimed early study of Merton as writer, monk, social critic, person of prayer and spiritual guide that is still frequently cited and studied. At the time of its publication, it was praised by Br. Patrick Hart as "A sensitive and intelligent interpretation of Thomas Merton's ongoing conversion experience," and by Professor Lawrence Cunningham as "a critical work in the best sense of the word" and "as good a balanced judgment of Merton as I have seen." Her Merton-related essays and reviews were published in *Cistercian Studies*, *The Critic*, *Furrow*, *Horizons*, *Journal of Religion*, *The Merton Annual*, *The Merton Seasonal*, *New Catholic World*, *Notre Dame English Journal*, *Our Sunday Visitor*, *Praying*, *Religion and Literature*, *Sisters Today*, *Spiritual Life*, *Theology Today*, and the volumes *The Legacy of Thomas Merton*, *The Message of Thomas Merton*

and *Thomas Merton: Prophet in the Belly of a Paradox*. She served as a member of the first Board of Directors of the International Thomas Merton Society in 1989-1991, as its second vice-president in 1991-93, and on the Board again in 1995-97. She was a presenter at ITMS Second General Meeting in 1991, a presider at the Third General Meeting (1993) and a panelist in the "Teaching Merton" roundtable at the Fourth General Meeting (1995). After her return to St. Mary's to teach in 1970, she served as chair of the Religious Studies Department for a number of years. Due to ongoing health issues, she retired from full-time teaching in 2000, though continued to be involved with the college as professor emerita, initiating a course on Religion and Film that proved to be particularly popular with students. Given her chronic health problems and the ongoing pandemic, Sr. Elena decided after a brief hospital stay to move from St. Mary's Convent on campus into hospice care, where she spent her final days. Her funeral was celebrated on March 15 at the Church of Our Lady of Loretto on the St. Mary's campus. She is survived by her sister Grace Webb of Seattle.

Albert J. Raboteau (1943-2021)

Albert J. Raboteau, acclaimed scholar and author on African-American religious traditions and appreciative and insightful commentator on the life and work of Thomas Merton, died at the age of 78 on September 18, 2021 at his home in Princeton, NJ from the effects of Lewy body dementia. He was born into an African-American Roman Catholic family on September 4, 1943, in the gulf coast city of Bay St. Louis, MS, three months after his father had been fatally shot in a racially motivated incident by a white man who claimed self-defense and was never prosecuted. While still an infant, he moved with his mother, Mabel Ishem Raboteau, a teacher and domestic worker, and his two sisters to Ann Arbor, MI, and then in 1958 to Pasadena, CA, after his mother had married Royal L. Woods, a resigned priest from Mississippi, who became an important influence on his own life and vocation. He attended parochial schools and had an early interest in monastic life, influenced by his reading of Thomas Merton.

He attended Loyola University in Los Angeles, graduating in 1964, and subsequently earned a master's degree in literature from the University of California at Berkeley in 1966, and then a second master's in theology at Marquette University in Milwaukee. After beginning his academic career teaching theology at the historically black Xavier University in New Orleans, in 1970 he enrolled in the History Department at Yale University, studying American religious history under Sydney Ahlstrom, with particular attention to examining early African American religious beliefs and practices from the perspective of enslaved and newly liberated Black people themselves. Using little recognized or understood sources, he wrote an innovative 1974 doctoral dissertation that was later revised as his first book, the influential *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (1978). After teaching stints at Yale and Berkeley, he moved to Princeton University in 1982, serving as chair of the religion department from 1987 to 1992 and as dean of the graduate school in 1992-1993, and remaining there until his retirement in 2013. Subsequent books include *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History* (1995), *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (1999), his memoir *A Sorrowful Joy: A Spiritual Journey of an African-American Man in Late Twentieth-Century America* (2002) and *American Prophets: Seven Religious Radicals and Their Struggle for Social and Political Justice* (2016). In the 1990s, he turned to Orthodox Christianity as an expression of a similar spirituality of "sorrowful joy" that he had discovered in African-American religious experience, serving as lay coordinator of the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Orthodox Mission in Rocky Hill, NJ. His continued interest in the spiritual and social vision of Thomas Merton is evident in the substantial discussions of his work in both *A Fire in the Bones* (a section originally published as "A Hidden Wholeness: Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King Jr." in *Spirituality Today* [1988]) and in the chapter "Thomas Merton: Contemplation in a World of Action" in *American Prophets*. At the Tenth General Meeting of the International Thomas

Merton Society, held at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, TN in June 2007, Dr. Raboteau delivered a plenary address, subsequently published as "Thomas Merton and Racial Reconciliation" in *The Merton Annual* 21 (2008) 13-24. His funeral was held at Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Church, followed by burial at Highland Cemetery, Hopewell, NJ. He is survived by his wife Joanne Shima Raboteau and his children Albert, Charles, Martin and Emily Raboteau.

Anthony Russo (1941-2022)

Anthony (Tony) Russo of Cleves, OH, retreat leader and longtime coordinator of the local chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society, died June 17, 2022 at the age of 80. Born September 26, 1941 in Cincinnati, OH and educated in local schools, he joined the Society of Jesus in 1959 after graduating from high school, and while in the seminary earned two degrees from Loyola University, Chicago. After leaving the Jesuits and returning to Cincinnati in 1968, he earned a second master's degree from Xavier University, then worked as a teacher for many years and subsequently as an alcohol and drug treatment counselor and director of counseling at an inpatient chemical dependency unit. He was married for over fifty-two years to Josie Thacker Russo. His passion for the works of Thomas Merton, which began with his reading of Michael Mott's biography in 1987, led him to join the ITMS in 1998 and in that year to found and lead the very active Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky ITMS chapter. Beginning in 2003, he conducted more than a dozen annual retreats open to all interested at Merton's Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky.. He served the society both as Chair of the Membership Committee for several years and as Chapters Coordinator, and frequently conducted the Chapters Workshop at ITMS General Meetings, providing helpful advice for both new and veteran chapter leaders. His reflective essay, "Messenger of Hope," appeared in the volume *We Are Already One: Thomas Merton's Message of Hope – Reflections in Honor of His Centenary (1915-1968)*. His funeral Mass was celebrated June 24, 2022 at Our Lady of Visitation Church in Mack, OH. Donations in Tony's

memory may be directed to The Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, 2001 Newburg Rd. Louisville, Ky 40205 or online at Merton.org/give.

David Scott (1947-2022)

Canon David Scott, Anglican priest, acclaimed poet and a founder of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, died just before dawn on October 21, 2022 at the Gilling Reane Care Home, Kendal, Cumbria, UK, where he had been living since 2019 after falling ill with Alzheimer's disease.

Born in Cambridge on January 13, 1947, he was educated at Solihull School, and studied theology at the University of Durham and at Cuddesdon College, Oxford. After ordination, he spent two years as a curate in Harlow, then became chaplain and religious education teacher at Haberdashers' Aske's School, Elstree. For eleven years he served as vicar of Torpenhow and Allhallows in Cumbria, and from 1991 until his retirement in 2010 he was Rector of St. Lawrence with St. Swithun Church in Winchester, warden of the Diocesan School of Spirituality, an honorary canon of Winchester Cathedral and honorary fellow of the University of Winchester. In 2008 Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams conferred a Lambeth Degree Doctorate of Letters (D.Litt.) on Canon Scott in recognition of his contribution to deepening the spiritual life of the Church through his work as a poet and his teaching ministry, particularly on the work of Thomas Merton. Upon retirement he moved with his wife Miggy back to Cumbria, where he spent the rest of his life.

In 1978 Scott won the *Sunday Times*/BBC national poetry competition with his poem "Kirkwall Auction Mart." His first volume of verse, *A Quiet Gathering* (1984), was awarded the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize in 1986. It was followed by *Playing for England* (1989), a Poetry Book Society recommendation, *Selected Poems* (1998), *Piecing Together* (2005) and *Beyond the Drift: New & Selected Poems* (2014). He was also the author of a collection of poems for children, *How Does It Feel?* (1989), as well as four plays for young people, staged between 1981 and 1988. His prose writings on religious themes

include six books, *Moments of Prayer* (1997), *Building Common Faith* (1997), *An Anglo-Saxon Passion* (1999), *Sacred Tongues* (2001), *The Private Prayers of Lancelot Andrewes* (2002) and *The Mind of Christ* (2007).

David Scott first encountered the work of Thomas Merton as a teenager in boarding school, when he borrowed *The Sign of Jonas* from the local library. His parents' gift of Merton's *Selected Poems* followed soon afterward. With the encouragement of his mentor and friend Donald Allchin, he was principal organizer of a conference commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Merton's death in December 1993, held at his parish in Winchester, during which the establishment of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland was proposed and approved by the participants. An interim committee was created to develop the proposal, with Canon Scott as its chair. He subsequently served as the first chair of the committee of the society and as poetry editor of *The Merton Journal*, its semi-annual publication, and finally as society patron. He was also an international advisor of the International Thomas Merton Society during the period 2005-2007, and in 2009 received the ITMS "International" ("Louie") Award for "significant contribution on an international level to the promotion of Merton's ideas."

He is survived by his wife Miggy and children Adam and Lucy. Burial is at St. Mark's Church, Natland, Cumbria, UK.

Merton Sightings and Soundings

Thomas Merton continues to make appearances as a significant cultural figure in various contexts. On *Spellbound*, her twenty-ninth album and the first for which she composed all the material, legendary folksinger Judy Collins includes a song entitled "Thomas Merton." With its chorus, "He dreamed of being an eagle / With wings he would fly / From the west and the north and the east / Thru rain and sleet, thru wind and snow / He'd find his way to bring us peace," the song pays tribute to Merton as "searcher and believer" and imagines a meeting "on the mountain" in which speaker and monk walk "seven times" together. The song follows the

hypothesis that Merton was assassinated, likening him to John Kennedy and Martin Luther King as one who worked and prayed for peace – even to the extent of imagining Merton had likewise been shot. (Its reference to “The Dalai Lama Welcome[ing] him / To Thailand” is likewise inaccurate.) The lyrics of the four-minute, forty-seven-second song can be found at <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/judycollins/thomasmerton.html>. The album itself was released on February 25, 2022.

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In Pulitzer-Prize-winning author Richard Russo’s latest novel, *Chances Are . . .* (2019), three friends return to Martha’s Vineyard in 2015, the site where the young woman whom they all loved had disappeared on a previous visit there in 1971, the year of their (and the author’s) college graduation. Teddy, one of the three, had written his college entrance essay on Thomas Merton and later became a publisher at a small religious-oriented press he called Seven Storey Books. But he subsequently becomes disillusioned with, even bitter toward Merton, seeing his withdrawal from the world as simply one more form of self-centeredness. Given that much of the early drama of the book centers on the Vietnam War and the dilemma of the draft, which in fact leads one of the other characters to go into exile in Canada, it is surprising that Teddy seems completely unacquainted with Merton’s turn toward the world in the last decade of his life, his role as social critic of war and racism – in fact unacquainted with anything beyond Merton’s autobiography. It is not clear whether this is to be interpreted as evidence of the limitations of Teddy’s spiritual quest, or if it perhaps reflects onetime altar boy Russo’s own unawareness of the full scope of Merton’s mature thought and writing.

* * * * *

The seven-part HBO mystery series *Mare of Easttown*, written by Brad Ingelsby, initially released in April 2021, is now available on DVD and through Amazon Prime Video. It stars Kate Winslet as detective Mare Sheehan, who investigates the murder of a teenage mother in a small town in eastern Pennsylvania while dealing with her own multiple

domestic difficulties. In his review of the series in *The Tablet* in June 2021, Mark Lawson claimed that it was “a masterpiece of Catholic writing in the tradition of Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh,” with Mare as a “standout heroine.” In the opening episode, Mare’s cousin, Fr. Dan Hastings, is visiting Mare and her mother in Mare’s kitchen when the following dialogue ensues:

Mare: Are you here to guilt me into returning to the church again, Danny?

Dan: No, no, no. I gave up on that a while ago.

Mare: Freddie broke into Bethy’s again. Did he come by the shelter this afternoon?

Dan: Deacon Mark made sure he had a bed for the weekend.

Helen: Poor Bethy. I don’t know how she handles it.

Dan: How’s she holding up?

Mare: Well, her mom’s got Parkinson’s, and her brother’s smashing her kids’ piggy banks to buy Dilaudid. I think she’s wondering where the hell God is in her life.

Dan: Depends on what her view of God is. Merton says that our idea of God tells us more about ourselves than about Him.

Mare: When you’re up at the altar preaching to the congregation, you ever get the feeling no one’s listening?

Dan: Every single day.

The Merton quotation is taken from chapter 3 of *New Seeds of Contemplation* (p. 15).

* * * * *

In a *New York Times* interview with actor Matthew McConaughey about his new memoir *Greenlights*, the interviewer compared this best-selling book to Thomas Merton’s *The Seven Storey Mountain*. In the November 29, 2021 piece in the *Times* magazine entitled “Matthew McConaughey Is Not Afraid to Go Down the Rabbit Hole,” interviewer David Marchese commented on the surprising staying power of the book, saying: “It didn’t make sense to me that a celebrity memoir was selling so well for so long. Then after I finally read ‘Greenlights’ I realized that you’d written something – in your own weird way – that was much more in the lineage

of books like Thomas Merton's 'The Seven Storey Mountain' than of memoirs by famous people, which is to say that your book is really a fable aimed at teaching men – and I suspect they're your primary readership – about how they might live." In response McConaughy said: "Am I dipping into the spiritual realm and the infinite game of life? Damn right I am." The complete interview is available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/29/magazine/matthew-mcconaughey-interview.html>.

* * * * *

In an April 4, 2022 *New York Times* interview with Pulitzer-Prize winner Ocean Vuong, the Vietnamese-American poet repeatedly cites the influence of Thomas Merton. In response to a question of what books were on his night stand, along with volumes by Ernest J. Gaines, John O'Donohue, James Agee, Frank B. Wilderson, J. R. Ackerley, Charlotte Brontë, Deborah Levy and Édouard Glissant, Vuong mentions Merton's *The Sign of Jonas*. When asked what books he returns to again and again, he cites only Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*, adding, "Other than that, I don't really reread books, even ones I deeply admire. I'm such a slow reader that it's more efficient for me to go to newer ones." Finally, when asked what three writers he would invite to a literary dinner party, Vuong lists Merton along with French poet Arthur Rimbaud and Japanese fiction writer Murasaki Shikibu, commenting, "Wouldn't that be amazing? A young trailblazer of modernism, a Trappist monk who challenged ideas of orthodoxy in order to privilege a wider curiosity of inter-philosophies, the first person – a woman, it so happens – to write and realize the novel, over half a millennium before *Don Quixote*." The complete interview is available at:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/15/books/review/ocean-vuong-reading-list-by-the-book.html>?

ITMS All Souls Remembrance

On Saturday, November 5, members of the International Thomas Merton Society gathered virtually to remember ITMS friends and colleagues who have died in recent memory. The simple

program format included a prayerful litany of names with photographs (where available), followed by brief remembrances from those in attendance. It is hoped that this inaugural "All Souls" event will become an annual tradition for the Merton Society during the month of November.

ITMS Authors

David Golemboski has written *Religious Pluralism and Political Stability: Obligations in Agreement*, a volume in the Routledge Innovations in Political Theory series (Routledge, \$123), taking the position that only the principles and institutions of liberalism balance commitments to stability and pluralism and can bring citizens' moral, religious and political loyalties into agreement. Paul Weithman of the University of Notre Dame writes of this work: "in both its theoretical and more applied chapters, this is a thoughtful and richly argued book of quite refreshing originality."

* * * * *

Aaron K. Kerr has recently published *Mediations between Nature and Culture* (Lexington Books, \$45.00), reflections and explorations of the reality that human communication is the mediation between one's intellectual, moral and political experience and an examination of the obscurities caused by technology and economic dogmatism. Patricia Arneson of Duquesne University writes: "This thought-provoking work offers an accessible investigation of communication as a philosophical activity – one that constructs human culture in conjunction with the natural environment."

* * * * *

Jon M. Sweeney has written *Teresa of Calcutta: Dark Night, Active Love* (Liturgical Press, \$19.95), his latest biography in the People of God series. James Martin, SJ call this "A superb, brief introduction to the most important saint of our time."

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Bonnie Thurston has recently published two volumes of verse, both with the Welsh publisher Cinnamon Press and available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble: *Forgotten Futures: A Memoir* (\$8.00), reflections on the past focused on the sacredness of small things and the transforming

power of memory, and *Not Sonnets: Observations from an Ordinary Life* (\$14.00), a sequence of 14-line poems tracing daily experiences through the seasons.

Awards for ITMS Authors

At the annual Catholic Media Association Conference, held July 4-7, 2022 in Portland, OR, three of the authors receiving book awards were members of the International Thomas Merton Society. Two of the books so honored were on Merton himself. First place in the Biography category was awarded to *Man of Dialogue: Thomas Merton's Catholic Vision* by Gregory K. Hillis (Liturgical Press), which was called "an inspiring read that brings a person into the mind of Thomas Merton and challenges the reader to pursue the spiritual life in earnest." Second place in the same category was given to *Signs of Hope: Thomas Merton's Letters on Peace, Race, and Ecology* by Gordon Oyer (Orbis), of which the judges wrote, "Thomas Merton is truly a man for all ages and this collection of his letters is a valuable and timely resource." Second place in the Mysticism category went to *Saint Mary of Egypt: A Modern Verse Life and Interpretation* by Bonnie B. Thurston (Liturgical Press), described as a "Fascinating book undertaking the topic of Mary of Egypt, venerated in Orthodox Church as 'the model of repentance.' The author tells a history in both academic study and modern verse."

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 May 10, Gordon Oyer gave a presentation entitled "Re-Visioning a Fragmented World: Learning through Merton's Letters on Social Change"; on June 14, Malgorzata Poks spoke on "*The Geography of Lograire* as Thomas Merton's Ultimate Autobiography"; on September 13, Daniel P. Horan, OFM spoke on "True and False Love: Thomas Merton's Spirituality of the Restless"; Julianne E. Wallace spoke on "Of Messengers of Peace: A Liturgy for Our World in the Voices of Merton and Francis" on October 11

and Alan Kolp on "Partners in the General Dance of the Spirit: Thomas Merton and Ilia Delio Evolving into the Grandeur of God" on November 8. David Golemboski will speak on "People That God Has Brought Together: Thomas Merton on the Hope of Political Community beyond Nationalism" on December 13. For further information and to register for this program, see: <http://merton.org/ITMS/TWM/default.aspx#AK>. To view past presentations in the series see: <http://merton.org/ITMS/TWM/TWM-Archive.aspx>.

Merton on Thursday Series

As the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland was unable to hold its residential conference for 2022, a series of Zoom meetings with some of the scheduled participants was arranged. On May 5, Paul Pynkoski spoke on "Discerning Christ among Us: Proximity as Spiritual Praxis" and William Horan on "Thomas Merton and Non-Violence." On July 7, the speakers were James Cronin and Bernadette McNary-Zak. On August 4, Gordon Oyer and Peter Ellis gave a joint presentation entitled "Finding Hope in the 'Sacramental' Economies of Thomas Merton and Walter Weisskopf." Christopher Pramuk and Sophronia Scott were the featured speakers on September 1, and Gary Hall and Fiona Gardner on October 6.

Posthumous Peace Prize

Thomas Merton was awarded the 2022 Gautama Peace Prize, created by the Indian Buddhist Federation in 2013 to recognize spiritual leaders in the quest of world peace. Merton was honored as "the spiritual conscience of the peace movement of the 1960s" in the US, for his support of "the nonviolent civil rights movement" and for promoting interreligious dialogue, particularly that of Zen and Taoism with Christianity. This *in memoriam* award, announced in September by H. E. Master Maitreya Samyaksambuddha of the Maitriyana Buddhist Community, was accepted on Merton's behalf by Dr. Paul M. Pearson, director of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. Previous recipients of the award include Master Maitreya in 2013, Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 2017, and Mahatma Gandhi, *in memoriam*, in 2018.

New Julian Blog Begun

Rev. Dan Collier, an Episcopal priest from Natick, MA, has initiated a blog called “Julian of Norwich and Other Tibetan Lamas,” intended as a weekly serial commentary on the fourteenth-century anchorite and mystic’s *Revelations of Divine Love* in conversation with the work of Thomas Merton and Tibetan Buddhist teachers. It can be accessed at <http://julianofnorwichandothertibetanlamas.com>.

Merton Happenings

On February 23-25, 2022, Willy Eurlings led a weekend retreat on the work of Thomas Merton at the Dominican convent in Huissen, the Netherlands.

The International Thomas Merton Society sponsored two panels and an additional presentation at the College English Association annual convention, held March 31-April 2, 2022 at the Birmingham Sheraton Hotel, Birmingham, AL, the location originally chosen for the 2021 meeting, postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. The theme, likewise carried over from 2021, was “Justice.” Presentations included: Thomas Malewitz: “A Nonviolent Response to Tragedy: Learning from the Sixteenth Street Bombing through the Lens of King and Merton”; Bernadette McNary-Zak and Swasti Bhattacharyya: “Merton and Vinoba: Action and Non-Attachment”; Anne Pearson: “Reading Thomas Merton’s Writings on Racism in the Age of Social Media and the Black Lives Matter Movement”; Paul Pearson: “‘A Kind of White James Baldwin’: Thomas Merton and James Baldwin”; Christian Smith: “Thomas Merton and the Economics of Attention”; and Monica Weis: SSJ: “The ‘Weapon’ of Creative Non-violence.”

On April 1-3, Silvia Grevel led a Guesthouse Retreat entitled “Writing Your Spiritual Autobiography,” drawing on the writings of Thomas Merton and Etty Hillesum at the Benedictine Institute, New Norcia, Australia.

Beginning April 26, Rabbi Or Rose gave a six-session weekly course entitled “A Dialogue of Devotion: Thomas Merton and Zalman Schachter-

Shalomi” at Temple Beth Zion, Brookline, MA, as part of the Hebrew College Adult Learning Program.

On May 13, in the session “Cistercians and the Early Monastic Traditions” at the Cistercian & Monastic Studies Conference held virtually in connection with the 57th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Michael Plekon spoke on “Merton’s Monastic Renewal and the Desert Mothers and Fathers” and Patrick O’Connell gave a presentation entitled “Across the Invisible Frontier: Thomas Merton’s ‘Two Desert Fathers.’”

On May 24, the Voices for Peace online conference “Blessed Are the Peacemakers,” featuring keynote speaker Robert Ellsberg, was cosponsored by the International Thomas Merton Society.

On June 4, Christine Hearn led a one-day program entitled “Thomas Merton & Eco-Spirituality” at the Cranaleith Spirituality Center in northeast Philadelphia, PA.

On June 12, Doug Hertler performed his play *Merton and Me, A Living Trinity* at the Center at Mariandale, Ossining, NY, as part of a weekend retreat on the Roots of Racism led by Br. Don Bisson and Boreta Singleton.

On July 7, Gary Hall presented a lecture entitled “Tensions, Disruptions and Incompleteness: Thomas Merton on Sustaining Hope in the Face of Social Crisis” at the Vancouver School of Theology Epiphany Chapel, Vancouver, BC, Canada, cosponsored by the Thomas Merton Society of Canada and the Center for Christian Engagement of St. Mark’s College, available on YouTube. He also taught a course at VST July 7-9 entitled “Communicating Communion: Thomas Merton and Christian Imagination in the Face of Social Crisis.”

On July 16, Maggie Winfrey facilitated a contemplative panel on Zoom entitled “With Merton & Keating’s Roadmap, Where Do We Go from Here?” with Ed Bacon, Vernon Dixon,

Victor Kramer and David Rensberger, hosted by Contemplative Outreach Atlanta.

On August 4-8, Bonnie Thurston directed the annual retreat of the Society of the Sacred Cross (Anglican women monastics) at Tymawr, Wales on the theme “The Christian Center of Thomas Merton’s Thought.”

On August 6, Leslye Colvin gave a presentation entitled “Thomas Merton: A Model of Unbinding” at the Pax Christi Fiftieth Anniversary National Conference in Washington, DC.

On August 17, Steven A. Denny led a free online session entitled “The Merton Prayer: An Exercise in Authenticity,” based on his book of the same title.

On September 10, Doug Hertler gave a performance of his one-man play, *Merton and Me, A Living Trinity* for the Leadership Team of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps of Milwaukee.

On September 16-18, a retreat at Mepkin Abbey in South Carolina was led by Paul Pearson and Doug Hertler, who performed his play *Merton and Me, A Living Trinity* as part of the program. The retreat coincided with the opening of the exhibit “A Hidden Wholeness: The Zen Photography of Thomas Merton” at the abbey’s Clare Boothe Library, which ran through November 1.

On September 17, Kathleen Deignan gave a presentation entitled “Thomas Merton’s Way of Living in Unity with Earth: Integral Ecology and Ecological Holiness” at The Well, La Grange Park, IL, which was also streamed virtually.

On October 27, Carol Becker, Dean of the Columbia University School of the Arts, gave a virtual presentation entitled “Ernesto Cardenal and Thomas Merton: Poets, Priests, Mystics, Revolutionaries,” sponsored by the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

On October 29, Carl McColman led a Zoom workshop sponsored by Contemplative Outreach Chicago entitled “Centering Prayer and the Mystical Imagination,” based on the teaching of Julian of Norwich, Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas Keating and Thomas Merton.

On November 1, Paul Pearson gave two presentations, “Thomas Merton on Listening and Seeing with the Heart” and “Merton’s Zen Photography and Zen Seeing.” the 2022 Fitzgerald Lectures on Spirituality and Medicine, sponsored by Roper St. Francis Healthcare of Charleston, SC, at Mepkin Abbey, Moncks Corner, SC.

On November 12, Jonathan Montaldo directed an afternoon retreat entitled “The Rapture of Being Alive: Thomas Merton & Mary Oliver on Gratitude for Life’s Hidden Holiness” at Corpus Christi Church in Manhattan, sponsored by the New York City Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society.

Upcoming Event

On February 21, 2023, the Seventeenth Annual Thomas Merton Black History Month Lecture will be given at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY by Dr. Craig A. Ford Jr. of St. Norbert College; for further information see www.merton.org/Events/#CF.

Chapter and Affiliate News

On September 15, the ITMS Chicago Chapter cosponsored a presentation by chapter member Judith Valente and her husband Charles Renard entitled “What the World Needs Now is Poetry” at Dominican University’s Martin Recital Hall in River Forest, IL. The chapter is currently in search of a new gathering place for its regular monthly meetings. For further information contact chapter coordinator Mike Brennan at cc.itms@gmail.com or 773-447-3989.

The new Indianapolis Chapter of the ITMS, named the Fr. Boniface Hardin Chapter after a leader of the civil rights movement in Indianapolis, held its

inaugural meeting in April. At the group's October meeting, the speaker was Nancy Chism, discussing her book *Pickin' Cotton on the Way to Church: The Life and Work of Father Boniface Hardin, OSB*. For further information contact chapter coordinator Mark Hudson at markchudson@gmail.com.

On March 18, the North-Central Connecticut ITMS Chapter, meeting at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, West Hartford, CT, participated in an online conversation on Merton's letter-writing with Br. Paul Quenon, OCSO and ITMS Vice President Judith Valente, coauthors of the new book *How to Be*, a collection of their own exchange of letters over the years. On July 13, Mike Smoolca and Paul Uccello led a discussion on the topic of "Visual Arts and Creativity – Influences on Thomas Merton's Spiritual Journey" at the monastery, with Zoom option available. The November 19 meeting will be a day-long public event at the monastery in cooperation with the Christian Contemplative Experience entitled "Heart Speaks to Heart: Correspondence as Spiritual Practice" with Br. Paul Quenon and Judith Valente. For further information contact chapter coordinator Mike Smoolca at: msmoolca@hotmail.com; or visit the chapter homepage at: www.invialumen.org/northctitms.html.

The Birmingham, AL Chapter of the ITMS conducted an intensive study of Christopher Pramuk's *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton* at its monthly meetings this past year. For further information contact chapter coordinator Mary Somerville at: newvista@bellsouth.net.

The Encino, CA ITMS Chapter meets on the third Sunday of each month for prayer, study and discussion at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for November 20, December 18 and January 15. For further information contact Center Director and Chapter Coordinator Sr. Chris Machado at 818-285-3354 or see the center website: www.hscenter.com/Event/events?parameter=1.

The Lakewood, CO ITMS Chapter has been discussing Gordon Oyer's new book *Signs of Hope: Thomas Merton's Letters on Peace, Race, and Ecology* at its recent meetings. For further information contact chapter coordinator Gerry Prus at prusgt@juno.com.

The new Rock Island, IL Merton Discussion Group of the Benet House Retreat Center meets virtually on the third Monday of each month: books being discussed this year are *Bread in the Wilderness*, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* and *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*. For further information contact group coordinator Sr. Bobbi Bussan, OSB at rbussan@smmsisters.org or 309-912-2218.

The Atlanta Merton Study group meets on the fourth Saturday of each month, currently on Zoom. The group has been discussing Merton's *Thoughts in Solitude* at recent meetings. For further information contact chapter coordinator Maggie Winfrey at Maggie.winfrey@gmail.com.

At its October 12 meeting at the Orchard View Church of God, the Grand Rapids, MI chapter of the ITMS continued its discussion of Merton's *The Waters of Siloe*. For further information contact chapter coordinator Bill Murphy at: bill@thomasmertonsociety-grandrapids.org or see the chapter website: www.thomasmertonsociety-grandrapids.org.

Send all Merton-related news to:

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The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS