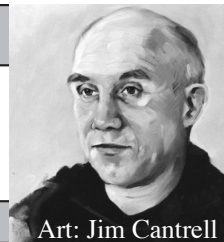


INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Art: Jim Cantrell

Changes at Merton Trust Announced

Thomasine (Tommie) O'Callaghan, the last of the original Trustees chosen by Thomas Merton to administer the Merton Legacy Trust, established on November 14, 1967 to oversee Merton's literary estate, has resigned her position. A personal friend of Thomas Merton, she played a significant role in the development of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, the principal repository of Merton's papers, and for the past four decades has, with her husband Frank, provided support, encouragement and hospitality for scores of Merton scholars and researchers. She will assume the role of Trustee Emerita.

The Abbey of Gethsemani and the Legacy Trust have announced that Mary R. Somerville of Louisville, KY has been appointed as the new Trustee, joining current Trustees Peggy Fox and Anne McCormick. Ms. Somerville was born and grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. She holds a B.A. in English with Honors in Writing from the University of North Carolina, where she was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate. She earned an M.A. in English at the University of Colorado and an M.L.S. at the University of Oklahoma. Ms. Somerville served as Library Director in the Miami-Dade Public Library in Florida, which has one of the nation's ten largest public library populations. She has served as President of the American Library Association, the world's oldest and largest library society; during her tenure as president she established an Emerging Leaders Institute, represented the association at an international library congress in China, and advocated for libraries and children's services on national media, including the *Today Show*. She was previously President of the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the ALA, traveling to the former

Soviet Union and participating in a Soviet-American symposium on public library services to children. Her leadership in the international arena has also included speaking and consulting with the U.S. Information Service and the State Department in South Africa and Brazil. She has been included in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in American Women*. A member of the International Thomas Merton Society, she has served as ITMS Treasurer and is the current coordinator of the Louisville ITMS Chapter, as well as chairing the ITMS Scholars Retreat scheduled for May 2010 at the Abbey of Gethsemani; she also chaired the Archival Committee for the Thomas Merton Foundation (now the Merton Institute for Contemplative Living).

Merton & Ecology Conference Scheduled

A conference on Thomas Merton and Ecology will be held at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY on Saturday, October 16, 2010. Speakers for the day-long event will include:

- Rabbi **Andrea Cohen-Kiener**, Director of the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network and spiritual leader of Congregation P'nai Or in West Hartford, CT;
- **Kathleen Deignan, CND**, Professor of Religious Studies at Iona College, New Rochelle, NY, and Founding Director of the Iona Spirituality Institute, and editor and compiler of two acclaimed books of Thomas Merton's writings: *When the Trees Say Nothing: Thomas Merton's Writings on Nature* (2003) and *Thomas Merton: A Book of Hours* (2007);
- **Dennis Patrick O'Hara**, Assistant Professor of Ethics and Director of the Elliott Allen Institute for Theology and Ecology at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, frequent lecturer

on ecotheology, health care ethics, and the spiritual dimension of human health, and author of a number of articles on Thomas Merton and the environment;

- **Monica Weis SSJ**, Professor of English at Nazareth College, Rochester NY, former Vice President and current Board member of the International Thomas Merton Society, and author of *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani: Landscapes of Paradise* (2005) as well as numerous articles on various aspects of Merton's work, with particular focus on his theology of the natural world.

For further information on the conference, contact the Thomas Merton Center: 502-452-8177; pmpearson@bellarmine.edu.

TMS Conference Scheduled

The Eighth Conference and General Meeting of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland will be held April 9-11, 2010 at Oakham School, Rutland, UK, Thomas Merton's alma mater. The theme for the conference is "The Night Spirit and the Dawn Air," taken from Merton's *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*.

Keynote presentations include:

- "Conjectures: Postscript from Gethsemani" with Paul Quenon, OCSO, a monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani and novice under Thomas Merton;
- "Earthing Our Spirituality: What Role for Contemplation Roots in an Age of Planetary Crisis?" with Mary Grey, ecofeminist liberation theologian and professional research fellow at St. Mary's University College, London; and
- "Through Darkness to Dawn: In Search of a Spirituality of Transition in Troubled Times" with Margaret Silf, regular columnist for *America* magazine and author of nine books on spirituality in an ecumenical age.

Concurrent session presentations include:

- William Apel: "Engaged Spirituality: Merton's 'Contemplative Life' and Bonhoeffer's 'Life Together'";
- Nass Cannon: "Attending to the Presence of God: Thomas Merton & 'Le Point Vierge'";
- Fiona Gardner: "Being in the Dark: Explorations in Purification and Renewal";

- Gary Hall: "Another Kind of Trifling: Merton and the Destructive Hyperactivity of Consumer Culture";
- Daniel P. Horan, OFM: "Sparks of Haecceitas: A Scotist Reading of Thomas Merton";
- Roger Lipsey: "'Let Us Walk Along Here, Says My Shadow': Thomas Merton, Doubter";
- Paul M. Pearson: "'Let Mercy Fall Like Rain': Thomas Merton and the Ox Mountain Parable";
- Gosia Poks: "Absence of Remembrance in the Ruins of Representation: Thomas Merton's Relevance for the Post-nuclear Age";
- Jonathan Sozek: "Merton in Conversation with Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*";
- Patrick Woodhouse: "Thomas Merton and Etty Hillesum: Twin Guides in a Post-modern Age." Workshops include:
- Hebe Wellbourn and Sarah Bird: "Thomas Merton and the 'Point Vierge'";
- Tony Bannon: "Merton: Technology and Change." The program will also include:
- an address from TMS President, Canon A. M. Allchin;
- a screening of Morgan Atkinson's filmed interview with Fr. John Eudes Bamberger, OCSO;
- a poetry evening led by Br. Paul Quenon;
- an exhibition of artwork, the forty-painting series "Not Silenced by the Darkness," drawing on the Hebrew poetry of the Old Testament, by Christian artist Hilary Hope Guise, who will be present to introduce her work;
- and a program of worship and meditation culminating in a celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday.

Costs, including registration, room and board, are £205 for TMS or ITMS members, £ 220 for non-members. For further information see the TMS website: www.thomasmertonsociety.org/2010.htm.

Merton Syllabi Sought

The ITMS has established a website to make available teaching materials on Thomas Merton and his work. Teachers at all levels, discussion group leaders, and others with pertinent material are requested and encouraged to send syllabi, reading guides and other course materials on Merton, as well

as questions and requests for further information, to: merton.syllabus@gmail.com. The collection can be accessed at: <http://merton.org/Research/syllabi.htm>.

Merton in Alaska Pilgrimage Planned

A "Thomas Merton in Alaska" Pilgrimage is being planned for June 25-July 4, 2010, sponsored by the Thomas Merton Society of Canada. Pilgrimage leaders will be Angus Stewart and Ron Dart. The program will be based at St. Herman's Theological Seminary in Kodiak, with trips to Spruce Island, Eagle River and Juneau. The pilgrimage will focus on Merton's experiences in Alaska in the weeks preceding his final trip to Asia in 1968, as recorded in the journals, letters and talks collected in *Thomas Merton in Alaska*, and will also feature dialogue with the Alaskan Orthodox community. Background information can be found in the article "In the Footsteps of Thomas Merton: Alaska" by Ron Dart in the Winter 2008 issue of *The Merton Seasonal*. For further information, email: tmsc@telus.net.

Merton Correspondent Honored

Continental Airlines recently named one of their planes after the late Marlon Green, the first African-American pilot of a commercial airline in this country, who had to take his case to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1963 in order to be hired. During the process, Green corresponded with Thomas Merton, beginning in August 1961; in their exchange of letters, Merton expresses his strong support of civil rights and of Green's battle to overcome discriminatory hiring practices in order to become a commercial pilot. Green had sought Merton's spiritual advice after reading his "Letter to an Innocent Bystander." Green sent Merton correspondence and articles related to his case, and in return Merton sent Green some of his own articles. Green travelled to the Abbey of Gethsemani and met with Merton in 1961, an event recorded in Merton's journal *Turning Toward the World* for September 9, 1961. Flint Whitlock's book about Green and his struggle, entitled *Turbulence before Takeoff*, includes discussion of Green's relationship with Merton (pages 213-18, 254-55). The ceremony commemorating Green can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XIcBIYdYjo>.

Harold Thibodeau, OCSO (1936-2010)

Br. Harold Thibodeau, OCSO, a novice under Thomas Merton who carried on his mentor's interest in dialogue with Eastern religions, died peacefully on January 9, 2010, from the effects of Alzheimer's disease. He was born in Royal Oak, Michigan, on July 5, 1936, and attended Michigan State University. He entered the Abbey of Gethsemani on October 1, 1960 and joined the novitiate on November 13 of that year; he began his temporary profession on November 15, 1962 and took his solemn vows on June 9, 1968. He worked at many jobs during his nearly half century in the monastery, including in the kitchen and the infirmary. Trained as a horticulturalist, he is perhaps best remembered for his contributions to the landscape of Gethsemani, having planted and cared for many of the gardens which fill the abbey grounds. His interest in Eastern thought led to a pilgrimage to Asia in 1992, where he visited Tibetan Buddhist communities in India as part of a hospitality exchange sponsored by Monastic Interreligious Dialogue. During his time in India he also met with Fr. Francis Acharya (Mahieu) at Kurisumala Ashram, the experimental monastic community now incorporated into the Cistercian Order. He also served on the MID Board, and participated in the historic July 1996 "Gethsemani Encounter" between Christian and Buddhist monks at which the Dalai Lama was present.

Thomas King, SJ (1929-2009)

Thomas M. King, SJ, a Jesuit priest and Georgetown University theology professor whose many books included a study of Thomas Merton, died June 23, 2009 at his home in Washington, DC of an apparent heart attack. Born in Pittsburgh on May 9, 1929, he graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1951 with a degree in economics and speech. After entering the Society of Jesus, he received a licentiate in sacred theology in 1965 from Woodstock College and a doctorate in religious sciences from the University of Strasbourg, France in 1968. He was ordained in 1964 and joined the faculty of Georgetown after finishing his doctoral studies, remaining on the faculty until his retirement. His book *Merton: Mystic at the Center of America* was published in 1992 as part of the Way

of the Christian Mystics series from Liturgical Press. He was also the author of a number of books on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, as well as works on Jung and Sartre, and the 1989 volume *Enchantments: Religion and the Power of the Word*. Fr. King also came to popular attention when he was asked to bless the crew and set of the movie *The Exorcist* before filming began in 1972, after various incidents of bad luck had taken place. At Georgetown, he was the founder and long-time president of University Faculty for Life, an anti-abortion group, as well as the founder of a campus science and religion group called Cosmos and Creation. He is survived by his brother, Fr. William King of Washington, DC, and two sisters, Martha Cox of Pittsburgh and Catherine Marie Tovey of Portland, OR.

MJ, CSQ Back Issues Sought

Back issues of two journals are being sought for the reference library at the editorial office of *The Merton Seasonal*. The issues include volumes 1 through 5 (1994-1998) of *The Merton Journal*, the semi-annual publication of The Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as the volume *Your Heart Is My Hermitage*, the proceedings of the First Conference and General Meeting of the TMSGBI; also the following issues of *Cistercian Studies/Cistercian Studies Quarterly*: vols. 1-9 (1966-1974); 10.1,2 (1975); 11.1,2,4 (1976); 12.1,2,4 (1977); 13.2,3 (1978); 14.1 (1979); 17.4 (1982); 21.1,3 (1986); 22.1 (1987); 23.1 (1998); 24.1,4 (1989); 25.3 (1990); 33.1,3,4 (1998). Anyone who might have any of these issues available for donation or purchase is requested to contact *Seasonal* editor Patrick O’Connell at oconnell001@gannon.edu.

Merton Happenings

On September 28, Paul M. Pearson gave a presentation entitled “A Hidden Wholeness: The Zen Photography of Thomas Merton” at the Otto Shults Community Center, Nazareth College, Rochester, NY, to mark the closing of the Merton photo exhibition that had opened during the ITMS Eleventh General Meeting at Nazareth in June.

On October 25, Cristobal Serrán-Pagán gave

a presentation entitled “The Mystical-Prophetic Witness of Thomas Merton: Contemplative Ruminations on the Mary-Martha Story” at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, Valdosta, GA.

On October 26, Bonnie Thurston gave a presentation entitled “‘I Spoke Most of Prayer’: Thomas Merton, September 11-October 15,1968” at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center.

On November 7, J. Patrick Mahon gave a presentation entitled “The Non-Violence of Thomas Merton” at the Call to Action Conference in Milwaukee, WI.

On November, 24, Monica Weis, SSJ presented “Advent Awakenings: A Reflective Morning with Thomas Merton” at St. Timothy Church, Lady Lake, FL.

The featured quotation for the December 3, 2009 Celebrity Cipher, a nationally syndicated letter substitution puzzle, was by Thomas Merton. The sentence, taken from *No Man Is an Island*, was: “Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.”

On January 10-15, Bonnie Thurston led a program entitled “The Life and Thought of Thomas Merton” at the Kearns Spirituality Center of La Roche College, Allison Park, PA.

On January 28, the Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville, KY hosted its sixteenth annual celebration commemorating the birthday of Thomas Merton in the Cathedral Undercroft. This year’s event, entitled “Merton Reviews Merton: Confessions of a Mature Monk,” featured several performers reading original Merton material compiled by Rev. George Kilcourse.

On January 28, James Finley spoke on Thomas Merton’s path to spiritual awakening as part of the Florida Atlantic University “Peaceful Mind, Peaceful

World” Series on the Boca Raton campus of FAU.

On January 31, actor and playwright James Nagle presented his one-man, one-act play *Fourth and Walnut*, an interpretation of the spiritual journey of Thomas Merton, at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC.

On February 19-21, John King led a directed retreat entitled “Merton on Prayer: A Lenten Experience” at St. Scholastica Monastery, Fort Smith, AR.

On February 22, Rev. Bryan N. Massingale, S.T.D. spoke on “Engaging Racism – Thomas Merton, the Church and Racial Justice,” the Fourth Annual Thomas Merton Black History Month Lecture sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY.

On February 27, Paul Pearson gave a presentation entitled “A Hidden Wholeness: The Zen Photography of Thomas Merton” at the Wasmer Gallery, Ursuline College, 2550 Lander Rd., Pepper Pike, OH, to mark the opening of an exhibit of Merton photographs that will run at the gallery through April 11.

From March 2 through April 6, Merton Center Director Paul M. Pearson is teaching a course entitled “Thomas Merton: Monk and Artist” for the Veritas Society of Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY.

On March 5-6, Kathleen Deignan, CND led a program entitled “Thomas Merton: Recovering The Paradise Mind” at the Inisfada Retreat Center, Manhasset, NY.

On March 12, Patrick O’Connell gave a presentation entitled “From Nowhere to Everywhere: The Spiritual Itinerary of Thomas Merton’s Final Poems” at the Mideast Regional Meeting of the Conference on Christianity and Literature at Grove City College, Grove City, PA.

On March 9, 16 and 23, Donald Grayston presented a three-session “Introduction to Thomas

Merton” at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, BC, Canada, co-sponsored by the cathedral and the Thomas Merton Society of Canada.

The Exploritas (formerly Elderhostel) “Week with Thomas Merton” was held March 14-19 at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. For information on the next Exploritas Merton Week, scheduled for October 10-15, contact Linda Bailey at 502-452-8161; e-mail: lbailey@bellarmine.edu.

On March 16, 23, and 30, Frederick Smock presented an adult education course on “The Poetry of Thomas Merton” at the Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY.

On March 23, Paul M. Pearson gave a presentation entitled “Thomas Merton: Poet, Monk, Prophet” at the Nelson County Public Library in Bardstown, KY.

On March 25, at the annual meeting of the College English Association in San Antonio, TX, Monica Weis, SSJ chaired a panel on Thomas Merton that included the following presentations: David Belcastro: “Thomas Merton: Monk, Trickster, Poet”; Deborah Kehoe: “Thomas Merton’s Language of Peace”; Paul M. Pearson: “Poetry of the Sneeze: Thomas Merton and Nicanor Parra.”

Upcoming Events

The ongoing “A Year with Thomas Merton” series of presentations at St. Monica-St. George Newman Center in Cincinnati will include the Earth Day presentation by Kathleen Deignan, CND on April 22, entitled: “Meeting Merton Again for the First Time: Contemplative Ecologist, Ecological Prophet”; Christine M. Bochen on April 25, speaking on “Thomas Merton: Sowing the Seeds of Justice and Compassion”; Bonnie Thurston on May 6, speaking on “Silence and Being: Thomas Merton’s Interest in Buddhism,” and Sidney Griffith on May 7, with a presentation on “There is No God But God: Thomas Merton’s Interest in Islam”; the series will conclude with a presentation by Paul

M. Pearson on May 25 entitled “Redeeming the Rhinoceros: Thomas Merton – Guilty Bystander in the Twenty-first Century.” Earlier presentations in the series included screening of *Merton: A Film Biography* after all masses on October 10 and 11, 2009; Christopher Pramuk: “Thomas Merton: Poet and Prophet for a New Century” on October 27; the dramatic presentation *Hermit in New York* by the Stillpoint Theatre Collective on November 6; on January 24, 25 and 26, Lawrence Cunningham gave presentations entitled “Thomas Merton as an Autobiographical Theologian,” “Why Thomas Merton Is a Spiritual Master for Our Time,” and “Contemplation in a World of Action according to Merton”; on February 26-27, Jonathan Montaldo led a Lenten retreat entitled “Becoming Communities of Forgiveness: Thomas Merton’s Teaching on Living in Contemplative Relationships.” For further information, contact the center at 513-381-6400; email: st.monica-st.george@fuse.net.

Bridges to Contemplative Living retreats will be held at Bethany Spring, the retreat center of The Merton Institute for Contemplative Living in New Haven, KY, on April 19-21, April 30-May 2, May 10-12, June 4-6, July 12-14, and July 23-25; cost is \$235. A Holy Week non-directed retreat will take place March 31-April 4; cost is \$320. On April 9-11 and June 18-20, retreats on “Thomas Merton & Mary Oliver: Poets of the Sacred” will be held; cost is \$285. On May 21-23, a “Contemplative Living: Mysticism and Nonviolence” retreat will take place; cost is \$285. On June 21-25, a directed retreat will be given; cost is \$320. On July 15-17, a retreat entitled “The Contemplative Caregiver” is scheduled; cost is \$235. For further information see the Bethany Spring website: <http://www.bethanyspring.org/index.htm>.

On June 6-8, 2010, a conference on “Thomas Merton and Interreligious Friendship” will be held at Spring Hill College, Mobile AL. Presentations will be held on three successive evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. On June 6, ITMS President Robert Grip will give an introductory presentation and welcome, and Victor A. Kramer will speak on “Thomas Merton’s ‘Hidden’

Agenda in Interfaith Dialogue”; on June 7, David King will present “Thomas Merton and Ecumenism”; on June 8, Sidney Griffith will speak on “Thomas Merton: Pioneer in Interreligious Dialogue.” Each evening will feature the main presentation, responses by the two other speakers, and a question-and-answer period with the audience.

On August 4, 11, 18 & 25, a “Bridges to Contemplative Living: Adjusting Your Life Vision” program will be held at The Benedict Inn, Beech Grove, IN; for further information, contact: benedictinn@benedictinn.org; phone: 317-788-7581.

On August 16-19 Fr. James Behrens, OCSO and J. Patrick Mahon will offer a retreat entitled “Contemplative Living and Non-Violence: The Spirituality of Thomas Merton” at the Abbey of the Holy Spirit, Conyers, GA. The five sessions of this retreat will explore the spirituality and the non-violence approach of Thomas Merton. The purpose of the exploration will be to enable participants to discover how they can live contemplatively in an upside down world. For further information see: http://www.trappist.net/retreat/schedule_2010.htm#Aug.

On September 8, 15, 22 & 29, a “Bridges to Contemplative Living: Seeing that Paradise Begins Now” program will be held at The Benedict Inn, Beech Grove, IN; for further information, contact: benedictinn@benedictinn.org; phone: 317-788-7581.

Chapter & Affiliate News

The inaugural meeting of the Arizona Chapter of the ITMS is scheduled for June 12, 2010 at 10 a.m. at St. Theresa Parish, 5045 E. Thomas Rd, Phoenix, AZ; for further information, contact Duncan Macaulay: duncanofthedesert@gmail.com; phone: 602-826-1982.

The Northwest Arkansas Chapter meets each Monday at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Fayetteville,

AR; the current book for reflection is *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. For further information contact John King: POOCH21@msn.com.

The Northern California Chapter continued its discussion of Merton’s *The Inner Experience* at its September 27, November 22 and January 31 meetings. Future meetings are scheduled for March 28 and May 23 at the St. Francis Parish Center in Sacramento. A day of prayer for the group is scheduled for March 20 at the Trappist Abbey at Vina, CA. For further information, contact John Berger: bergerjh@rcip.com; phone: 916-482-6976.

The San Diego Chapter will host its annual retreat, held this year at the Benedictine Prince of Peace Abbey, Oceanside, CA, April 16-18. For further information contact Walt Tice: 858-483-3343; email: waltmillietice@sbcglobsal.net.

The Thomas Merton Society of Washington’s spring lecture will take place on Saturday, April 10, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in St Anselm’s Abbey School auditorium; Donald Grayston will give a presentation entitled “Merton as Pilgrim in Cuba and Asia.” At its fall lecture on November 14, Daniel Horan, OFM spoke on “Freedom That Embraces Everything: The Influence of Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Tradition on Thomas Merton.” For further information contact Maryle Ashley: tmsociety@fastmail.fm.

On September 20, Tony Sorgi led the Chicago Chapter in a Guided Prayer experience entitled “Awakening Sacred Heart: An Experimental Method in Christian-Buddhist Contemplation.” On October 18, Tommie O’Callaghan, recently retired Trustee of the Merton Legacy Trust, was the guest speaker, in conversation with Rev. Marilyn Hendricks. On November 15, Jungian analyst John Giannini gave a presentation entitled “Love Is Power: From Peaceful Non-Violence to Intimacy.” On December 10, the annual Chapter Mass commemorating Merton’s death was concelebrated in the chapel of the Passionist Monastery by Fr. Francis Cusack, CP, and Fr. Vaughn Fayle, OFM. The chapter was among the sponsors of a

performance on December 20 of the play *The Hermit in New York*, written by Teresa Weed and produced by the Still Point Theatre Collective, featuring Beau O’Reilly as Thomas Merton, at the School of the Art Institute Ballroom, in Chicago. On January 17 Sr. Suzanne Zuercher spoke on “Loving and Living: Merton’s Last Task – Revisited.” On February 21, Fr. Vaughn Fayle, OFM discussed Christopher Pramuk’s new book, *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton*. On March 21, Dr. Pauline Viviano spoke on “Can the Warrior God of the Old Testament Be a God of Peace?” On April 18, Mark Boswell, a Ph.D. candidate at Garrett Theological Seminary, will address the group. Meetings are held in the Rectory Assembly of Immaculate Conception Parish, 7211 W. Talcott, Chicago. The Merton Reading Group led by Fr. Francis Cusack, which meets the last Monday of each month, continued its discussion of *The Seven Storey Mountain* in the library of the Passionist Monastery, 5700 N. Harlem, Chicago. For further information contact Mike Brennan at 773-447-3989 or visit the chapter website at <http://chicagomerton.org>.

The Thomas Merton Group at St. Mary’s Parish, Shrewsbury, MA is discussing *Mystics and Zen Masters* during its monthly meetings this year. The group, now in its eighth year, was a highlighted part of the Parish Ministry Fair, and was featured with an article and photo in the St. Mary’s Parish Newsletter. For further information, contact John Collins: jpcoll@aol.com.

The Wall, NJ Chapter is continuing its discussion of *The Intimate Merton: His Life from His Journals* on March 24 and April 14, having completed its discussion of Merton’s *Faith and Violence* at its January meeting. For further information contact Greg Ryan at gjryan@optonlin.net; phone: 732-681-6238.

On September 26 the Corpus Christi (NYC) Chapter sponsored a presentation on Merton and Robert Lax by Anthony Bannon entitled “The Circus of the Sun – Light and Shadow” that considered Lax’s work as an artist, including poems and photographs.

On November 7, Fr. James Conner, OCSO led the annual Merton retreat for the chapter. On January 30, Arthur Biddle continued the Merton-Lax focus with his presentation, "The Monk & The Dreamcatcher – A Friendship of the Spirit," which included tapes of conversations with Robert Lax on the island of Patmos. On April 24, the theme of the meeting will again be "The Circus of the Sun – Merton and His Friends." For further information see the chapter website: <http://www.corpus-christi-nyc.org/MertonSociety.htm>.

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The Lafayette, OR Chapter met November 14 at the Trappist Abbey to discuss "Merton's Journals as Inspiration"; William Apel then gave a presentation entitled: "A Tale of Two Monks: Thomas Merton and Thich Nhat Hanh." At the February 13 meeting, Mary Sommerset gave a presentation on "Merton and Gerard Manley Hopkins," and Tom Kinzie led a discussion on "Merton, Contemplation and Prayer – Some Conversation Starters." For further information, contact Doug Speers: dougspeers38@gmail.com; phone: 503-246-0722.

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On Saturday, March 20, the Thomas Merton Society of Canada sponsored a one-day conference entitled "Fulfillment through Interfaith Engagement" at the University of Victoria, British Columbia. The keynote speaker was Edward K. Kaplan. Other presenters included Barry Cooke: "Complementary Opposites: Thomas Merton's Holistic Style as a Foundation for His Expanding Religious Perspective"; Susan McCaslin: "Merton as Mystic"; Ray McGinnis: "Writing as Spiritual Practice: Toward an Interfaith Engagement"; and Aminch Pryor: "Sufi Teachings and Practices: Silence, Solitude, and the Divine." On March 10, Angus Stuart gave a presentation entitled "Visions on the Road: A Personal Odyssey with Jack Kerouac, Thomas Merton and Henry Miller" at the Vancouver Public Library. On May 6, Ron Dart will give a presentation on Merton at the Marywood Retreat Centre, Cranbrook, BC, sponsored by the TMSC, and on the following day Judith Hardcastle will lead a retreat at the Centre. On May 29 the Society will sponsor its annual auction to benefit the Thomas

Merton Reading Room at the Vancouver School of Theology. On July 8, Ross Labrie will present a lecture entitled "Thomas Merton on Marx and Marxism" at the Epiphany Chapel of the Vancouver School of Theology, preceded by the annual wine and cheese reception in the Thomas Merton Reading Room at the VST Library. On July 9-11, the TMSC and the VST will cosponsor a retreat by James Finley entitled "Following the Mystics through the Narrow Gate"; cost is \$200; for further information contact Katie Snikvalds: 604-822-9815. On October 1-2, the TMSC will sponsor a conference entitled "Fulfillment through Interfaith Engagement" with keynote speaker Bonnie Thurston at the Canadian Memorial Church & Centre for Peace, Vancouver, BC. Other scheduled presenters include: Barry Cooke, William Apel & Andrew Webber, Ray McGinnis, Jerene Broadway, Susan McCaslin, Don Grayston and Ron Dart. The cost is \$50 for TMSC members for the full day, or \$30 for a half-day; \$55 (non-members) for the full day or \$30 for a half-day; cost includes refreshments and lunch. For further information, see the Society web site: www.merton.ca; email: tmisc@telus.net; phone: 604-669-2546.

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The Thomas Merton Reading Group in Victoria, BC, meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Cadboro Bay United Church, 2625 Arbutus Road from 1:00–2:30 p.m. for informal discussion of a particular book by or about Thomas Merton. The group is open to new and long-time Merton enthusiasts. For more information, contact Basil Shammass: srb4747@telus.net.

Send all Merton-related news to:

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Gannon University

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The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS