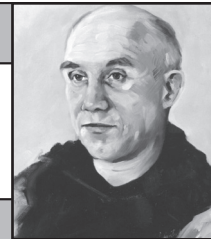


INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Daggy Scholars and the Centenary

At the ITMS Thirteenth General Meeting at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, Veronica Dagher, chair of the ITMS Advancement Committee, announced the initiation of the ITMS “One Hundred for the Hundredth” campaign, which seeks to encourage ITMS members to donate \$100 to the ITMS in preparation for the Centennial of Thomas Merton’s birth on January 31, 1915. Part of the campaign focuses on the William H. Shannon Memorial Fund, which will provide funds for Daggy Scholarships, with the hope of raising enough money to bring 100 young people to the ITMS Fourteenth General Meeting to be held at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY on June 4-7, 2015. In conjunction with the campaign, interviews with past Daggy Scholars are being conducted by Fr. Jeff Cooper, CSC to highlight the continuing impact on them of Merton and of the program. What follows is the second of these interviews, with 2013 Daggy Scholar Casey Holland, a student at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY. Comments by Daggy Scholars can also be found on You Tube: “What Thomas Merton Means to Me” at www.youtube.com/channel/UCTeuUZQE_x-Jldy_yO5qXkg. Further information on the campaign with a form for sending donations is available at <http://merton.org/ITMS/advancementflyer.pdf>.

If I said the name “Merton,” what is the first word or phrase that comes to mind?

The first word that comes to mind is “contemplation.” I am very new to Merton. I encountered him just last spring semester (2013) in a class with Christine Bochen (“Writer, Mystic, Prophet?”) at Nazareth College. We read a short thing entitled “Center” – it might have been material from Monsignor Shannon, but it was something that really hooked me right off. In it Merton asks the question: “What do we really want in life?” And the answer is freedom, but not freedom to do what we want but to be free from compulsions. That freedom is part of having a contemplative vision.

What first attracted you to Merton? How did you come into contact with him?

Christine Bochen’s class on Merton, at Nazareth in 2013. Then I was a Daggy Scholar this past year and attended the ITMS conference in Connecticut. I think I came across Merton really by accident – or an act of grace maybe is more like it. Merton just opens things up for me. I became a Religious Studies major because of this class and my experience with encountering Merton. I think my favorite Merton text would have to be *New Seeds*.

What surprised you about Merton (shocked, consoled, affirmed)?

In reading Merton, he is very present as I read him. Merton is accessible – very personal, intimate even, compared to other and “older” contemplative writers. His common humanity shows through his work and he has a phenomenal grasp on the English language. Merton appeals to diverse peoples with diverse faith backgrounds and I like that.

What holds your interest in Merton now?

I have been very interested in the medieval Christian spiritual tradition and kind of consider myself a “traditionalist.” Merton is rooted in the tradition and yet how he writes he makes that ancient tradition seem new, or fresh – accessible. I wonder if Pope Francis knows Merton – his style seems to reflect that.

Where do you see yourself in regards to Merton five years from now (scholarly interest – personal spirituality – connection with other Daggy Scholars – the ITMS community)?

Concerning academic work: I plan to keep going with Merton. I really want to present a paper at the Centenary meeting of ITMS in Louisville. For my final in Christine Bochen's class I wrote on Merton and Dante and explored the connections between the *Divine Comedy* and *The Seven Storey Mountain*, so maybe I could present something on that, or I am also interested in English literature and want to do graduate work in English Lit. So I would also be interested in doing something with Merton and the Arthurian Legend, like the Grail Quest. Merton speaks about this in one of his recorded talks. Concerning personal spirituality: I encounter Merton in everyday life. Someone once told me that Merton is my Virgil, someone I look to for guidance and inspiration. Due to that sense of intimacy I get in reading Merton he is just tied into my everyday existence. I also appreciate his connection to nature and how he used to go for walks. I like to walk too and be out in nature.

Merton Conference at St. Bonaventure

St. Bonaventure University in Olean, NY, where Thomas Merton taught in 1940-1941 immediately before entering the Abbey of Gethsemani, will sponsor a conference entitled "Coming Home and Going Forth: Merton as Mirror and Model," to take place June 19-22 to celebrate the relationship between Merton and SBU in anticipation of the centenary of Merton's birth on January 31, 1915.

Featured speakers include:

- John Eudes Bamberger, OCSO, student of Merton at Gethsemani and fourth abbot of the Abbey of the Genesee, Gethsemani's daughter house in Piffard, NY;
- Christine M. Bochen, holder of the William H. Shannon chair of Catholic Studies at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY, founding member and former president of the International Thomas Merton Society, and editor of numerous Merton works including *Learning to Love*, the sixth volume of Merton's complete journals and *The Courage for Truth*, the fourth volume of Merton's collected letters;
- Michael Higgins, vice president for mission and Catholic identity at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, author of *Heretic Blood: The Spiritual Geography of Thomas Merton* and the forthcoming *Thomas Merton: Faithful Visionary*, and current vice president of the ITMS;
- Daniel Horan, OFM, St. Bonaventure alumnus, doctoral student in systematic theology at Boston College, *America* magazine columnist, and author of numerous books, including the forthcoming *The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Inspiration of His Life, Thought, and Writing*.

The conference will also include tours of Merton sites on campus, worship experiences and other events that will highlight Merton's connections with the people and places of St. Bonaventure. Breakout session presenters include Brother Edward Coughlin, OFM, David Golemboski and Fr. Daniel Riley, OFM.

According to St. Bonaventure president Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF, the conference is designed to appeal both to those who have studied the life and perspectives of Merton and those on a spiritual journey of any kind: "Merton's time at Bonaventure can be both a mirror and a model for those of us who strive to find a spiritual home in our own lives."

For further information see the conference website at www.sbu.edu/about-sbu/news-events/events/thomas-merton-conference or follow conference preparations on Twitter using #MertonMirrorandModel.

Bellarmino Birthday Celebration

On February 9, 2014, the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY commemorated the ninety-ninth birthday of Thomas Merton with the screening of a preview of Morgan Atkinson's documentary on the final year of Merton's life, to be entitled *The Many Lives and Last Days of Thomas Merton*, a work-in-progress scheduled for release in 2015 to mark the hundredth anniversary of Merton's birth. The excerpts featured interviews with Merton's fellow monks Matthew Kelly, OCSO and John Eudes Bamberger, OCSO, his former student Dr. James Finley, author of the seminal book *Merton's Palace of Nowhere*, Suzanne Butorovich Demattei, Merton's teenage "pen pal" from California whose letters from Merton are included in *The Road to Joy: Letters to New and Old Friends*, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama,

speaking in-depth about his meetings with Merton in 1968 in an interview conducted by Merton Center Director Paul M. Pearson during the Dalai Lama's visit to Louisville in May, 2013. The celebration was co-sponsored by Interfaith Paths to Peace.

Call for Papers

To mark the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Thomas Merton, the Pennsylvania Communication Association is sponsoring a Pre-Conference at its annual meeting on "Thomas Merton & the Philosophy of Communication: A Centennial Celebration of His Work," to be held September 25-26, 2014 at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Patrick F. O'Connell, Professor of English and Theology at Gannon University, Erie, PA. The theme invites an exploration of the significant contributions that Merton's work has made over the last century. Scholars from related disciplines are invited to submit papers, extended abstracts or panel proposals for possible inclusion in the conference. Scholarly examination of Merton's philosophy of communication is encouraged through an exploration of his life and his philosophical, political, social and literary essays, poetry and other writings; proposals exploring the historical context of Merton's work in relation to the contemporary intellectual and cultural moment are likewise invited. The deadline for submissions is July 1, 2014. Interested scholars should consult the PCA website for more detailed submission guidelines, as well as registration and lodging information: www.pcasite.org; or may contact Dr. Pat Arneson, chair of the program committee: arneson@duq.edu.

Prades Pilgrimage

The Thomas Merton Society of Canada is sponsoring a "Thomas Merton in France" Pilgrimage June 11-21, 2014, including visits to sites in Prades, Merton's birthplace, and St. Antonin and Montauban, where he lived and went to school as a boy. The pilgrimage, led by Judith Hardcastle and Michael Higgins, will include lectures, discussions and ample free time to explore the surrounding Catalan countryside. The group will review Merton's life, with special attention to the ways in which he cherished and expressed his French origins, and will focus on central themes of his teaching: contemplation, non-violence and interfaith encounter. The program is intended both for

longtime lovers of Merton and his writings as well as new friends. Full details are available at: www.merton.ca/images/TMSC%20Pilgrimage%20to%20France%202014.pdf.

British Merton Conference

The Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland will hold its Tenth General Meeting & Conference, entitled "The Road to Joy," April 4-6, 2014 at Merton's Alma Mater, Oakham School, Rutland, UK. Plenary speakers include:

- Christine M. Bochen, founding member and former president of the International Thomas Merton Society, co-author of *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*, and editor of numerous Merton works, including *Learning to Love*, the sixth volume of Merton's complete journals, and *The Courage for Truth*, the fourth volume of Merton's collected letters.
- Gary Hall, former editor of *The Merton Journal* and theological educator in practical theology at the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham, UK, where he teaches a course on "Thomas Merton: Theology, Experience and Writing";
- Daniel Horan, OFM, columnist for *America* magazine, member of the Board of Directors of the International Thomas Merton Society, and author of numerous books, including the forthcoming *The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton* (Fall 2014).

Concurrent session speakers include:

- William Apel: "Hiroshima Notes: The Merton and Morishita Friendship";
- Nass Cannon: "Traveling the Road to Joy: Thomas Merton's Pursuit of the True Self";
- James Cronin: "An 'Apostolate of Friendship': Thomas Merton's Letters to Fellow Writers, 1958-61";
- Detlev Cuntz: "Merton and the Poetic Experience of the *Duino Elegies*";
- Stephen Dunhill: "Merton's Poetic Recovery of Paradise";
- Peter Ellis: "Like a Demented Woodpecker";
- Fiona Gardner: "'Both IT and NOT IT . . . This is the way I look at it . . .': Exploring Personal Experiences of God";
- Marianne Hieb: "Road Marks and Turning Points: Integrating Conference Themes with Visual and Verbal Journaling Prayer";

- Sonia Petisco Martinez: “Silence as the Path to Joy in the Poetry of Thomas Merton and T. S. Eliot”;
- Paul Pearson: “‘I love beer, and, by that very fact, the world’ – The Humour and Humanity of Thomas Merton”;
- Gosia Poks: “The One-Person Revolution as a Way to Joy: Thomas Merton, Ammon Hennacy and Christian Anarchism”;
- Anthony Purvis: “Giving an Account of Oneself: Music, Lyrics and Modes of Address in the Letters of Thomas Merton – *The Road to Joy*”;
- Maurizio Renzini & Mario Zaninelli: “Thomas Merton’s Influence on Young Italian Friends – Walking Their Road to Joy”;
- Jeanette Sears: “Brother Louis and C. S. Lewis Together on the Road to Joy.”

Conference artists-in-residence are Charles MacCarthy and Benet Haughton.

Full details of the conference and booking information is available on the TMS-GBI website at: www.thomasmertonsociety.org.uk.

Robert Nugent SDS (1937-2014)

Fr. Robert Nugent SDS, author of two books featuring the life and work of Thomas Merton, died January 1, 2014 at the age of 76 after a three-month battle with cancer. He was born in Norristown, PA on July 31, 1937, attended St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia and was ordained for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia; he later joined the Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians). He received master’s degrees in library science from Villanova University and in sacred theology from Yale Divinity School.

Fr. Nugent was best known as cofounder in 1977 with Sr. Jeannine Gramick of New Ways Ministry, a pastoral outreach to homosexuals, which for over two decades provided counsel to gay Catholics and their families, gave workshops for clergy and laity on same-sex relationships and advocated for sexual minorities in the Church. He served as a consultant for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on its 1997 pastoral document on homosexuality, “Always Our Children,” but his work drew increasing criticism from certain sectors of the Catholic community and in 1999 the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith forbade him to continue his ministry to gay

and lesbian Catholics. Nugent accepted the silencing and returned to pastoral duties in 2000, assisting periodically in parishes in the US and in London.

Fr. Nugent wrote numerous articles, booklets and books, including *Silence Speaks: Teilhard de Chardin, Yves Congar, John Courtney Murray, and Thomas Merton* (New York: Paulist Press, 2011), which describes the effects of disciplinary actions taken against the four Catholic authors by Church authorities, and *Thomas Merton and Thérèse Lentfoehr: The Story of a Friendship* (New York: St Pauls Editions, 2012), a detailed presentation of the important relationship between the Trappist monk and Salvatorian sister and fellow poet.

Merton at College English Association

The College English Association Forty-fifth Annual Conference, on the theme “Horizons,” to be held March 27-29 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Baltimore, MD, will include two sessions on the work of Thomas Merton, sponsored by the International Thomas Merton Society, a coordinate organization of the CEA.

On March 28 at 2:00 p.m. a session on “The Poetry of Thomas Merton,” moderated by Monica Weis SSJ, will include presentations by:

- John Collins: “Broadening the Horizons of Protest through the Poetry of Thomas Merton and Emily Dickinson”;
- Patrick O’Connell: “Crescent Moon on the Eastern Horizon: Thomas Merton’s Poems on Islamic Themes”;
- Alva V. Cellini: “Thomas Merton and Cesar Vallejo: Crossing Poetic Frontiers.”

A second session immediately following, moderated by John Collins, will include presentations by:

- Paul Pearson: “The Boundless Horizons of Lograire: Thomas Merton’s Final Prophetic Vision”;
- David Belcastro: “A Message from the Horizon from One Striving Towards Being”;
- Monica Weis SSJ: “Lure of the Visual: Thomas Merton’s New Horizon.”

Bethany Spring Reopens

Bethany Spring, the retreat house located in New Haven, Kentucky, one mile from the Abbey of Gethsemani, reopened March 1, 2014 after being temporarily closed in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Merton Institute for Contemplative Living

at the end of 2012. The focus will continue to be on serving as a contemplative retreat center, with daily meditation and the opportunity to participate in the liturgy of the hours at the abbey. Regularly scheduled retreats will be featured once again in the near future, but individuals are presently invited to make private retreats with room and meals provided. During Lent meditation and reflection time using the *Lenten Bridges to Contemplation* booklet will be provided. Arrangements have been made to celebrate the Triduum and Easter with the monks at Gethsemani. A labyrinth modeled on that found at Chartres Cathedral is being planned for the property. For further information, email: rick3649@gmail.com; website: www.bethanyspring.org.

ITMS Authors

The latest book by Daniel Horan, OFM is *The Last Words of Jesus: A Meditation on Love and Suffering* (Franciscan Media, 2013), which theologian Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ calls “Beautiful, fresh reflections on Jesus’ dying words in the spirit of Francis of Assisi” and James Martin, SJ describes as a “beautiful new book by one of my favorite young spiritual writers.”

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Bonnie Thurston’s new book is *O Taste and See: A Biblical Reflection on Experiencing God* (Paraclete Press, 2014), is an extended reflection on Psalm 34 and its famous verse, “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” The two-part work focuses first on “The Lord is” and “The Lord is good,” then on experiencing God as *seeing* and experiencing God as *tasting*.

Merton (and Lax) Happenings

Thomas Merton was quoted in episodes 12 and 13 of Season 8 of the television series *Criminal Minds* – “Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone. We find it with another.”

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On November 4, 2013, Celebrity Cipher, a nationally syndicated letter substitution cryptogram, featured a quotation from Thomas Merton: “Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time” (from *No Man Is an Island*).

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On November 6, Nick Redemacher, of the Cabrini College Theology Department, presented a “Break-

fast Talk” entitled “Connecting with God, Self and Community in a Hyper-Connected World: Reflections on Life in the Information Age from Thomas Merton’s Writings on Communication and Technology,” sponsored by the Spirituality Center at Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, PA.

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On November 13, Michael McGregor presented a talk entitled “Robert Lax: On the Road in Search of an Authentic Life” at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, NY; on the following day he spoke on “Robert Lax: Son of Olean and Israel” at the Olean Public Library. The talks were based on his recently completed biography of Lax.

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Natalie Terry and James Menkhaus gave a presentation entitled “Illuminating Education: The Visions of Arrupe & Merton” at the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice 2013, held November 16-18 in Arlington, VA. The Teach-In is an annual gathering of members of Jesuit institutions and others interested in the Ignatian tradition to come together in the context of social justice and solidarity to learn, reflect, pray, network and advocate together. The presentation focused on the witness of Pedro Arrupe, SJ and Thomas Merton to explore how the mission of Jesuit education, lived out in daily life, is to be a beacon of hope for individuals and communities.

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From January 7 through February 12, 2014, Alan Kolp presented a four-week adult education course for the Cleveland Ecumenical Institute entitled “The Spirit of Thomas Merton: From Seeker to Sanctity,” at the Lakewood Presbyterian Church, Lakewood, OH.

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On January 13, Michael Higgins gave a presentation entitled “Thomas Merton: A Monk for All Seasons,” at the Avila Carmelite Center in Dublin, Ireland, sponsored by *The Irish Catholic* Newspaper.

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On January 15, 2014, Michael Higgins gave a presentation entitled “The Making and Re-Making of Thomas Merton – The Twisted and Sapiential Journey after *The Seven Storey Mountain*” at the University of Chichester, UK.

On February 23, March 2 and March 9, Sr. Suzanne Zuercher, OSB and Mike Brennan gave a series of presentations entitled “Great Spiritual Thinkers: Thomas Merton” at the First United Methodist Church in Evanston, IL.

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On February 26, 2014, Dorothy Cotton presented the Eighth Annual Thomas Merton Black History Month Lecture, entitled “On the Journey Forward: Merton and King as Important Guides,” at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center. Dr. Cotton was a close associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and served as Education Director for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) from 1960 through 1968; she later served as Vice President for Field Operations for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, GA and as Southeastern Regional Director of ACTION, the Federal Government’s agency for volunteer programs during the Carter administration. She is the author of *If Your Back’s Not Bent: The Role of the Citizenship Education Program in the Civil Rights Movement*.

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On February 28-March 2, the Pax Christi Metro New York annual retreat was directed by Kathleen Deignan CND on the theme “Pax Christi/Pax Terra: Thomas Merton and Thomas Berry in Dialogue on Making Peace with Earth.”

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On March 16-21, the semi-annual Road Scholar Program “Week with Thomas Merton” was held at the Bellarmine University Thomas Merton Center. The Fall 2014 Merton Road Scholar (elderhostel) week will take place October 19-24. For further information contact Linda Bailey: 502-272-8161; e-mail: lbailey@bellarmine.edu.

Upcoming Events

On March 21, a study day entitled “With Its New Hat On: An Exploration of Thomas Merton’s Poetry,” led by Canon David Scott and Stephen Dunhill, will be held at the Monastery of Our Lady of Hynning Warton, Lancashire, UK.

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On March 21-23, 2014, Christopher Pramuk will lead a weekend retreat entitled “Merton and Sophia:

Wisdom in Our Life of Prayer” at Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT. For further information call 860-567-3163; email: programs@wisdomhouse.org.

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On March 28-30, Gordon Oyer will lead a weekend entitled “Reflecting on Spiritual Roots of Protest – 1964/2014” at Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center, Bangor, PA, based on his recently published book *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest: Merton, Berrigan, Yoder, and Muste at the Gethsemani Abbey Peacemaker Retreat*. The cost is \$325. For further information, call: 610-588-1793 or visit the center website: www.kirkridge.org.

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On May 3, 2014, a reflective study day entitled “Thomas Merton – Peacemakers and Peaceful Living” will be held at The Well at Willen, near Milton Keynes, UK. For further information, phone: 01908242190; email: bookings@thewellatwillen.org.uk; website: www.thewellatwillen.org.uk.

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At the College Theology Society Annual Meeting, to be held at Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, PA May 29-June 1, 2014, Patrick F. O’Connell will give a presentation entitled “Thomas Merton’s *Silence in Heaven* and *The Silent Life*: Negotiating Religious Life in Content and Process.”

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On June 25-29, 2014, Donald Grayston will present a class on Thomas Merton and Leonard Cohen at Hollyhock, a lifelong learning center on Canada’s Cortes Island, British Columbia. For further information, call 800-933-6339; email: registration@hollyhock.ca.

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On July 13-15, 2014, Mount Aloysius College, Cresson, PA, will be hosting a Thomas Merton Retreat, to be followed July 16-18 by a Thomas Merton Seminar entitled “Thomas Merton: Man of Letters,” both facilitated by Bonnie Thurston. For further information contact Sr. Helen Marie Burns: 814-886-6501; email: hburns@mtaloy.edu.

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On October 24-25, 2014, the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University will sponsor a weekend commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Gethsemani Peacemakers retreat entitled “The Spiritual

Roots of Protest.” Three of the original participants in the retreat, Tom Cornell, Robert Cunnane and Jim Forest, will speak at the event. Other speakers include Gordon Oyer, author of *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest: Merton, Berrigan, Yoder, and Muste at the Gethsemani Abbey Peacemaker Retreat*, Fr. John Dear, Joe Grant and Joe Tropea; the weekend will also feature the Louisville premiere of Tropea’s documentary film *Hit and Stay*, on the Catonsville draft board raid of the Vietnam era. For more information, see: merton.org/Events/#Roots.

The Thirteenth Annual Pilgrimage Retreat to the Abbey of Gethsemani, sponsored by the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society, will be held November 7-10, 2014 at the abbey, focused on Merton’s book *Contemplative Prayer* (also published as *The Climate of Monastic Prayer*). The retreat will be led by Tony Russo. For further information, contact him at 513-941-5219; email: trusso@fuse.net.

On November 14-16, Robert Kaizen Kaku Gunn will lead a weekend retreat entitled “In the Spirit of Merton, In the Spirit of Zen” at Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT. For further information call 860-567-3163; email: programs@wisdomhouse.org.

Chapter and Affiliate News

A new ITMS Chapter has formed at the Massachusetts Correctional Facility in Shirley, MA, coordinated by John P. Collins and prison chaplain Arthur Rogers. The group viewed Paul Wilkes’ documentary *Merton: A Film Biography* and read selections from *A Year with Thomas Merton*, edited by Jonathan Montaldo. Twenty-two inmates are currently reading and discussing Merton’s *New Seeds of Contemplation*. For further information contact John Collins at: jcollins1931@gmail.com.

The Chicago Chapter of the ITMS held a special Mass of commemoration for Thomas Merton on December 7, 2013 at St. Scholastica Monastery Chapel, celebrated by Fr. Michael Solazzo. On January 19, Jerry Hiller addressed the group on the topic “Navigating around the Rocks in the Middle of the Road”; on February 16, Greg Pierce gave a presentation entitled

“In the Beginning Was the Word: The Spectrum of Spirituality.” On March 16, Fr. Daniel Coughlin provided “Lenten Reflections with a Merton Perspective.” The chapter reading group has been focusing on Merton’s *Love and Living*. For further information contact Chapter Coordinator Mike Brennan: phone: 773-447-3989; email: cc.itms@gmail.com; website: www.merton.org/Chicago.

At its January 26, 2014 meeting, the Northern California Chapter of the ITMS finished its discussion of Merton’s *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. The group will next read and discuss *No Man Is an Island*. On March 16, the chapter held its meeting at the Trappist abbey at Vina, CA and participated in a dialogue with Fr. Paul Jerome, OCSO. For further information, contact John Berger: phone: 916-482-6976; email: bergerjh@rcip.clm.

The Wall, New Jersey Chapter discussed Thomas Merton’s *Opening the Bible* at its November 13 meeting. On December 18, the group discussed Merton’s *Spiritual Direction & Meditation*. On January 15 and February 12, the focus was on *Passion for Peace*, a collection of Merton’s essays on nonviolence, war and racial justice. The chapter will then read and discuss John Howard Griffin’s *The Hermitage Journals*, his journals during the period when he was working on his never completed biography of Merton and staying at Merton’s hermitage. For further information contact Greg Ryan: phone: 732-681-6238; email: gjryan@wccm.org.

On November 15, the founding meeting of the Thomas Merton Society Interfaith Chapter of Southern Delaware took place at the Epworth United Methodist Church in Rehoboth Beach. The group viewed *Soul Searching: The Journey of Thomas Merton*, a documentary film by Morgan Atkinson, and guest speaker David Golemboski gave a presentation entitled “Why Merton Is Relevant for Us Today.” The group is coordinated by Mary Helms and George Beckerman, in concert with the Steering Committee which includes Connie Benko, Reverend Dr. Patricia Loughlin and Joyce Lussier.

On February 18, 2014, the Cleveland ITMS Chapter heard Wayne Simsic discuss Merton's dialogue with death. The group also held its annual Merton birthday celebration, postponed because of weather from January. On March 18, students from Professor Alan Kolp's Merton class at Baldwin-Wallace University presented a panel discussion on "Merton's Spirituality: Walking Around Shining like the Sun," in which they discussed their encounter with Merton, their research topics and their visit to the Abbey of Gethsemani. For further information contact Sister Donna Kristoff, OSU: phone: 440-449-1200, ext. 314; email: dkristoff@ursulinesisters.org.

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On January 10, the Thomas Merton Society of Canada sponsored a talk by Ken Shigematsu entitled "Life-giving Rhythms – A Rule of Life," drawing on the Benedictine tradition. A day-long "Consonantia" retreat on January 11 included workshops by Devorah Peterson on "Carl Jung for the Urban Contemplative" and an Introduction to Mindfulness-Awareness Meditation with Jennifer Rodrigues. On February 7, ITMS Vice President Michael Higgins gave a presentation entitled "A Man Called John and a Man Called Louie: Pope John XXIII and Thomas Merton" at St. Andrew's United Church in North Vancouver. The "Consonantia" workshop day on February 8 featured Emily Cherneski on "Reiki as a Spiritual Practice" and Devorah Peterson on "Carl Jung for the Urban Contemplative." On February 26, ITMS President David Belcastro gave a presentation entitled "Merton of Times Square: Last of the Urban Hermits" at the Canadian Memorial Centre for Peace in Vancouver; on February 28, he spoke on "Trappist Trickster Remakes the World," and on the following day directed a retreat focused on "Thomas Merton: Monk on the Edge" (the title of the recent collection of articles by Canadian Merton scholars issued by the TMSC). For further information contact TMSC Community Relations Director Susan Cowan: phone: 604-988-8835; email: tmsc@telus.net.

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The Corpus Christi, New York City, ITMS Chapter sponsored a presentation on February 1, 2014 by Bishop Seraphim Sigrist on "Thomas Merton and the

Utility of Nothing," a continuation of the chapter's current focus on "Prayer of the Heart: Thomas Merton & the Orthodox Christian East." On May 3, Fr. John McGuckin will speak to the chapter on "Thomas Merton and the Prayer of the Heart: Forms of Prayer in the Desert Fathers and Their Influence on Thomas Merton." For further information see the website: www.corpus-christi-nyc.org or contact Chapter Director Brenda Fitch Fairaday: phone: 212-865-7261; email: mertonnyc@yahoo.com.

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On April 5, the Thomas Merton Society of Washington will host a presentation by Abbot James Wiseman, OSB, of St. Anselm's Abbey, speaking on "Thomas Merton and Buddhism" at 2:00 pm in Reid Auditorium of St. Anselm's Abbey School. The chapter discussion group is currently reading Merton's *Asian Journal*, and Abbot James will provide orientation to the various strands of Buddhism Merton encounters. For further information, contact: Maryle Ashley: tmsociety@fastmail.fm; Br Matthew Nylund, OSB: 202-269-2300; or Betsy O'Brien: tmcontemplation@gmail.com.

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The newly formed Johannesburg, South Africa Chapter of the ITMS, organized and moderated by Elmor van Staden, is an interfaith group which has spiritual growth, hospitality, fun and fellowship as hallmarks of its gatherings. Its first meeting is being planned for the second quarter of 2014. For further information, contact Elmor van Staden on 0832226115 or visit the chapter website: www.meetup.com/Johannesburg-Chapter-ITMS.

Send all Merton-related news to:

Pat O'Connell

Box 3219

Gannon University

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oonnell001@gannon.edu

The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS