

PRESS RELEASE

Thomas Merton Centenary

1915-2015

The year 2015 marks the one hundredth anniversary of Thomas Merton's birth. His life and writings are not merely historically important, but offer a prophetic witness to a vision that points a way into the future. Merton continues to be widely read and for good reasons. His writings on contemplation and prayer, on social issues such as violence, war and racism, and on the necessity for inter-religious dialogue and understanding continue to resonate with readers in the 21st century.

The centenary offers an opportunity to consider how we too might set aside easy answers and wrestle with the urgent questions of our day. The Fourteenth General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, to be held at Bellarmine University in Louisville, KY, June 4-7, 2015, will focus on ways in which Merton's life and writings challenge us to continue his legacy through ever-deepening contemplation, compassion, and unity-- a legacy in which deep prayer informs action, action on behalf of justice, and the embrace of the whole world.

The theme of the meeting is "Merton 100: Living the Legacy." Plenary speakers include Christine M. Bochen, James Finley, Rev. Bryan N. Massingale and Archbishop Rowan Williams. The program will also feature an address by ITMS President David Belcastro; a panel on interfaith dialogue with Sidney Griffith, Edward Kaplan and Bonnie Thurston, an art exhibit entitled "Heaven in Ordinary: Painting Merton's Photographs" by Charles MacCarthy; twenty-one concurrent sessions; nineteen workshops and guided prayer sessions; meditation sessions with Richard Sisto, Gerard Koehn and Mark Filut, OCSO; liturgy, including a closing Mass celebrated by the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville; and entertainment.

Events celebrating the Merton centenary will be taking place around the world throughout 2015. A sampling of notable festivities in the United States includes events to be held at Bellarmine University, Columbia University, Pittsburgh Thomas Merton Center, and Burchfield Penney Art Center in Buffalo, NY, and Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. Celebrations and conferences are being planned in Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Germany, and Ireland.

For details on these events, an ongoing update of other Merton centenary celebrations, and a listing of new books being published to coincide with the centenary, please visit the Thomas Merton Center website at www.merton.org.