Perhaps history’s most talkative Trappist, American monk Thomas Merton was nevertheless a modern spiritual master. The roots of all he wrote were sunk deep in the soil of contemplative prayer. After an introduction to Merton’s writing and thought, we will explore what he meant by “contemplation”. From a passage in a letter Merton wrote to a Pakistani Sufi we’ll isolate five principles of his prayer. Planned as a gentle day, there will be time and space for silent reflection as well as questions and discussion.

22nd September 2018

Bonnie Thurston resigned a Chair and Professorship in New Testament for quieter work in her home state of West Virginia, USA. She is author or editor of 21 theological books (3 on Merton) and 6 volumes of poetry. Her doctoral dissertation on Merton was one of the first. Subsequent work on Merton has been translated into Dutch, German, Italian, and Spanish. A founding member of the International Thomas Merton Society, she served it in several capacities. Her recent publications include All the Fullness of God: The Christ of Colossians (Wipf and Stock, 2017), Hidden in God: The Desert Spirituality of Charles de Foucauld (Ave Maria, 2016), Practicing Silence: New and Selected Verses (Paraclete Press, 2014), and From Darkness to Eastering (Wild Goose Press, 2017)