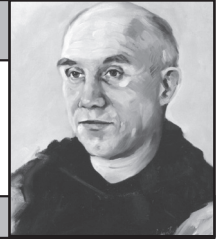


INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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2017 ITMS General Meeting Program Set

At its June 2016 meeting, the Board of Directors of the International Thomas Merton Society approved the program for the ITMS Fifteenth General Meeting, to be held June 15-18, 2017 at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, NY. The theme of the meeting is "Overshadowed by Mercy: Pilgrimage, Prayer, Prophecy." Plenary speakers include M. Shawn Copeland, Luke Timothy Johnson, Michael N. McGregor and Scott Russell Sanders. The program will also feature an address by ITMS President Michael W. Higgins, a "Robert Lax in His Own Words" session, an ITMS Thirtieth Anniversary Panel, fifteen concurrent sessions, fifteen workshops and guided prayer sessions, meditation sessions, liturgies, an interfaith vespers service and entertainment featuring James D'Angelo.

M. Shawn Copeland, professor of Systematic Theology at Boston College, served as the first African American president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and is former convener of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium. She is the author of *The Subversive Power of Love: The Vision of Henriette Delille* (2009) and of *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (2010), and is editor of *Uncommon Faithfulness: The Black Catholic Experience* (2009).

Luke Timothy Johnson is Robert W. Woodruff Professor at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. He is the author of 31 books, including the widely used text *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, now in its third edition, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels* (1996) and *The Revelatory Body: Theology as Inductive Act* (2015).

Michael N. McGregor, Professor of Creative Writing and English at Portland (OR) State University, is the author of *Pure Act: The Uncommon Life of Robert Lax* (Fordham University Press, 2015). His writings on Lax

and Merton have appeared in a variety of publications, including *Poetry, Poets & Writers Magazine*, *Notre Dame Magazine*, *The Merton Annual* and *The Merton Journal*.

Scott Russell Sanders, distinguished professor of English emeritus at Indiana University, is the author of twenty books of fiction and nonfiction, including *Hunting for Hope* and *A Conservationist Manifesto*. His most recent books are *Earth Works: Selected Essays* (2012) and *Divine Animal: A Novel* (2014). A collection of his eco-science fiction stories entitled *Dancing in Dreamtime* will be published this fall, and a new edition of his documentary narrative, *Stone Country*, co-authored with photographer Jeffrey Wolin, will appear in 2017.

Michael W. Higgins, Vice President for Mission and Catholic Identity at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, is a columnist, television commentator, radio documentary maker and author of numerous books, including *Heretic Blood: The Spiritual Geography of Thomas Merton*, *Power and Peril: The Catholic Church at the Crossroads*, *Stalking the Holy: In Pursuit of Saint-Making*, *Unquiet Monk: Thomas Merton's Questing Faith* and *Thomas Merton: Faithful Visionary*. He is the official biographer of Henri Nouwen.

Opening sessions on Thursday afternoon of the conference will include a First-Timers' Session with Robert Grip; Chapters Workshop with Donna Kristoff, OSU; a Merton Scholarship session with Deborah Kehoe, Patrick O'Connell, Paul M. Pearson and Joseph Raab; a "Merton at St. Bonaventure" slide show with Jan Sheridan; and an Emerging Scholars' Session with Phillip Antilla, Andrew Belfield, Christopher Fici, Anna Pfaff and Stephanie Redekop.

Concurrent sessions include:

- "Merton and Archaic Wisdom": Malgorzata Poks & Robert Toth;
- "Merton and Artistic Expressions": Jon Sweeney & Robert Whalen;

- “Merton and Contemplative Life”: Patrick F. O’Connell & Bonnie Thurston;
- “Merton and Foolish Mercy”: Nass Cannon & Michael Plekon;
- “Merton and Formation for Mercy”: Fiona Gardner & Jonathan Montaldo;
- “Merton and Inter-Religious Pilgrimage”: Leslie Aldritt & Edward Kaplan;
- “Merton and Literary Figures”: Peter Ellis & Tom Stewart;
- “Merton and Merciful Praxis”: Dominiek Lootens & Laura Geary Dunson;
- “Merton and the Carmelite Tradition”: Alan Kolp & Cristobal Serran-Pagan;
- “Merton at St. Bonaventure”: Christine M. Bochen & Mary Frances Coady;
- “Merton: Communication and Communion”: William Apel & Mario Zaninelli;
- “Merton, Mercy and Wisdom”: June-Ann Greeley & Jonathan Sozek;
- “Merton, Mysticism and Mercy”: Paul R. Dekar & Kathleen Deignan;
- “Merton: Revelation and Redemption”: Daniel Horan, OFM & Ryan Scruggs;
- “Prophetic Voices”: David Golemboski & Gordon Oyer. Workshops, Guided Prayer & Special Presentations include:
 - “Allowing Landscape to Nudge Us to Prayer: The Power of Place”: Monica Weis, SSJ;
 - “Application of Merton’s Writing to a Twenty-first-Century Contemplative Curriculum”: Bill Meyer;
 - “Conversion of Place: Geographic Change in Merton’s America”: Kathleen Baker;
 - “In Pursuit of Silence”: Cassidy Hall;
 - “Journey of the Heart: Traveling the Path of Love via the Prayer-Poems of Robert Lax”: S. T. Georgiou;
 - “Merton and the Merciful Gaze as a Creative Act”: Marianne Hieb;
 - “Merton at St. Bonaventure”: Paul Spaeth;
 - “Merton, the Catholic Peace Fellowship and Peacemaking as an Apostolic Work of Mercy”: Shawn Storer;
 - “Merton’s Death Seen from the Homegrounds”: Paul Quenon;
 - “Merton’s Love of the Natural World and His Sense of the Sacred: A Meditation”: Morgan Atkinson;
 - “A Muslim/Christian Peace Pilgrimage with Thomas Merton”: Sahar Alsahlani & Mark C. Meade;
- “Overshadowed by Mercy: Thomas Merton and Pope Francis on Experiencing and Sharing God’s Mercy”: Paul M. Pearson;
- “Spirituality of Thomas Merton and Robert Lax through Movement and Music”: Jacqueline Chew & Christine Bachich;
- “Saturated with the Dew of Mercy – Bernard to His Beloved Son Thomas”: Kevin Burns;
- “Sturgeon Bay Sunset: A Prayer Service of Silence, Music and Words Inspired by Christopher Pramuk and Thomas Merton”: Jeffrey Kiernan.

The program committee for the Fifteenth General Meeting was chaired by ITMS Past President David Belcastro, with ITMS Treasurer Paul M. Pearson as co-chair and Julianne E. Wallace as site coordinator; other members of the committee include Christine M. Bochen, Margaret Carney, OSF, ITMS President Michael W. Higgins, Joseph Q. Raab, Paul Spaeth and Monica Weis, SSJ.

Registration materials, with further information on the schedule, costs and accommodations for the conference are included in this issue of *The Merton Seasonal*. Information is also available at the Merton Center/ITMS web site: <http://merton.org/2017>.

Shannon Fellowships Awarded

At its June 2016 meeting, the ITMS Board of Directors awarded 2016-2017 Shannon Fellowships to William Meyer and Kathleen Witkowska Tarr. 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 Quinn Raab.

William Meyer, a high school teacher and a doctoral student at New York University’s Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, will pursue research on the topic: “The Enlightened Teacher: An Inquiry into a Contemplative Curriculum,” an exploration of how the ideas of Thomas Merton (especially the correspondence

with Thich Nhat Hanh) might be able to be used in the classroom both within the curriculum and in the context of providing a conceptual framework.

Kathleen Tarr, a writer and creative writing instructor in Alaska, where she has lived since 1978, and a founder of the ITMS Alaska Chapter, will focus on the topic: “Thomas Merton’s Alaska Journey, 1968” as part of a larger project of narrative non-fiction tentatively entitled *We Are All Poets Here*.

The deadline for applications for Shannon Fellowships for 2017-2018 is March 15, 2017. Awards must be used between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. 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, 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 af-

filiation, 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 2017 meeting of the ITMS Board of Directors, who will make the final decisions on awards, and results will be communicated to applicants shortly thereafter.

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. Scholarships cover all costs (except transportation) of attendance at the Fifteenth General Meeting of the ITMS, to be held at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, NY, June 15-18, 2017. The awards will also include one year’s free membership in the ITMS. Young people between the ages of fourteen 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 March 15, 2017, to the scholarship committee chair, Jamie Fazio, Nazareth College, 4245 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618-3790; e-mail: jfazio1@naz.edu. 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 2017 General Meeting should encourage him or her to apply for a scholarship.

Nominations Sought for ITMS Board

Members of the International Thomas Merton Society are invited to submit suggestions for qualified candidates to be nominated for election to the ITMS Board of Directors. The board consists of four ITMS officers and six directors. Proposed candidates must be ITMS members. Each submission should be accompanied by a brief description of not more than 100 words summarizing the suggested candidate's qualifications. ITMS members may also volunteer themselves as possible candidates for the Board. Proposals should be sent by November 1 to ITMS Nominations Committee Co-chair Gordon Oyer at gordonoyer@gmail.com, or 695 County Farm Road, Monticello, IL 61856.

Shannon Archives Available for Research

The papers of the late Monsignor William H. Shannon, founding president of the International Thomas Merton Society and leading authority on the life and work of Thomas Merton, are housed in the archives of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rochester, NY. Father Shannon, founding chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at Nazareth College of Rochester and longtime chaplain of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who founded the college, left his papers to the Rochester SSJ Archives at the time of his death in 2012. His files, which fill 39 archival cartons and measure 18 linear feet, represent a career that spans more than six decades and touch on many aspects of theology and religious studies including Scripture, Church history, the renewal of the Second Vatican Council, interreligious dialogue, contemplative prayer, and the writings of Merton. He wrote and lectured prolifically on these and other topics, becoming widely known and respected for his insight, his commitment to nonviolence, and his perspective on faith. Shannon, who often referred to himself as "a Sister of St. Joseph in spirit," lived at the SSJ Motherhouse for 65 years and chose to leave his scholarly papers in the care of the sisters' archives. The task of sorting through his files and collection of books fell to three of his close friends and colleagues: Barbara Staropoli, SSJ, Monica Weis, SSJ and Christine M. Bochen. Following his wishes, they sent many of the books and his

talks on Merton to the Thomas Merton Room in the library at Nazareth College, created with a generous endowment from Father Shannon in 1985. The remaining material came to the SSJ archives, where consulting archivist Diane Riley undertook the work of appraising the papers, arranging them according to archival standards, and organizing them into archival cartons. This process, which took several months, was supported by a grant from the SSJ Ministry Foundation. She has also prepared a finding aid which provides researchers with detailed information about the collection. It has been posted on the SSJ Rochester website at: <https://www.ssjirochester.org/filehandler.ashx?x=9075>; both the International Thomas Merton Society and the Catholic Theological Society of America have posted links to it on their websites. The collection includes Father Shannon's published articles, lectures and research files on an array of topics relating to Catholicism, spirituality, religious belief, moral issues and Biblical studies. As one of the world's foremost authorities on Thomas Merton, his Merton files, which fill nine cartons, are of special value. A meticulous scholar, Father Shannon carefully saved his correspondence with friends of Merton and Merton researchers living in many parts of the world, including North America, Europe, Russia and Asia. He also saved his homilies, given over the course of several decades on Sundays as well as on feast days, holy days and secular holidays such as Memorial Day and Thanksgiving. Father Charles Curran, a friend and fellow Rochester diocesan priest, has noted that William Shannon "made a monumental contribution to Catholic scholarship and life in his writing, especially about Thomas Merton." This contribution is now available to scholars and researchers in the Shannon collection.

Archbishop Chooses Merton Motto

Archbishop-designate Donald Bolen, whom Pope Francis recently appointed to lead the Canadian Archdiocese of Regina, Alberta, just north of the U.S. states of Montana and North Dakota, has chosen as his episcopal motto the phrase "Mercy within Mercy within Mercy," from Thomas Merton's journal *The Sign of Jonas*. "In some sense it's been for me the name of God, the name for who God is," said the archbishop about his motto. "God is the one who sees us as we are and loves us as we are; transforms us by that merciful love," he continued. "I understand mercy as . . . a transformative

love. It's the love that God has for those who are in need and in some sense broken, needing to be reached out to. And I think that's pretty much who the human race is, who we are." The phrase characterizes the Year of Mercy established by Pope Francis that will conclude with the beginning of Advent 2016. Bolen, who will be installed in his new position on October 14, has been bishop of the neighboring Diocese of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan since 2009, and previously worked at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome from 2001 through 2008.

Merton Vade Mecum

The fourth edition of *Merton Vade Mecum: A Quick-Reference Bibliographic Handbook*, compiled by Patricia A. Burton, is now available. It includes a Thomas Merton Timeline that incorporates a chronological listing of all Merton publications, including books, articles, poems, individual journal entries and published letters, along with significant biographical and historical events and visits of guests to the Abbey of Gethsemani; an alphabetical listing of all publications; detailed notes on various bibliographic complexities; and four appendices: an alphabetical list of Merton's correspondents, with a special listing for *The School of Charity* to locate the letters alphabetically by correspondent name; details of publication of Merton's works in several important periodicals: *Collectanea Cisterciensia*, *Cistercian Studies*, *The Merton Annual* and *The Merton Seasonal*; a list of topics included in the *Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*; and "Contexts," i.e. information about the provenance of the pieces in some of Merton's major essay collections. Newly added material in the fourth edition incorporates recently published double-sided sets of letters, including those of Merton and Camaldolese correspondents, Merton and Robert Giroux, Merton and Victor and Carolyn Hammer and Merton and Evelyn Waugh. The revised list in Appendix I now includes Merton's correspondents from all the volumes of the letters, thus combining the original *Merton Vade Mecum* with the *Index to Merton's Published Letters*. In the Contexts section, the contents of Merton's *Selected Essays* (2013) and *Early Essays 1947-1952* (2015) have been added. Numerous revisions and additions have been made throughout the volume. The volume can be accessed on the Thomas Merton Center website at: <http://merton.org/Research/bibre-sources.aspx>, and may be reproduced for personal use.

Mentorship Program Announced

The International Thomas Merton Society is planning to initiate a mentoring program to provide younger and/or newer members of the society with the opportunity to interact with and learn from a more seasoned Merton reader or scholar. For more information, to volunteer as a mentor, or to express interest in having a mentor, please contact Alan Kolp at akolp@bw.edu, or recent Daggy Scholars Cassidy Hall at hall.cass@gmail.com or Sarah Kothe at kothesm@gmail.com.

ITMS Authors

Kathy Cecala has written a novel, *The Novice Master* (CreateSpace, 260 pp. [\$14.98 paper]), in which college freshman and cancer survivor Evan finds himself yearning for a mentor or father-figure, turning to imperious history professor and former monk, Ellis Barlowe. The Midwest Book Review calls it "An impressively crafted novel from beginning to end [which] showcases Kathy Cecala's exceptional talents as an original and entertaining storyteller."

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Mary Frances Coady has recently published *Georges and Pauline Vanier: Mercy within Mercy* (Liturgical Press, 160 pp. [\$14.95 paper]), the lives of the parents of L'Arche founder Jean Vanier, a volume in the People of God series of short biographies of outstanding modern Catholics. She has also written a newly published novel, *Holy Rule* (Inanna, 250 pp. [\$22.95 paper]), a fictional look at events at St. Monica's Girls School during three momentous weeks in 1958.

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Paul R. Dekar has told the history of the first century of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in his new book, *Dangerous People: The Fellowship of Reconciliation Building a Nonviolent World of Freedom, Justice, and Peace* (Donning [\$30 cloth]).

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Hans Gustafson has recently published *Finding All Things in God: Pansacramentalism and Doing Theology Interreligiously* (Pickwick, 356 pp. [\$37.00]). Bruce Morrill, SJ writes that Gustafson "displays intellect, passion and reverence for traditions in this new comprehensive, interdisciplinary contribution."

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Michael W. Higgins has written *Jean Vanier: Logician of the Heart* (Liturgical Press, 136 pages [\$14.95

paper]), a volume on the founder of the L'Arche movement in the People of God series of brief biographies that also includes Higgins' *Thomas Merton: Faithful Visionary*. James Clarke calls the new book "an eloquent and moving meditation on what it means to be truly human in a 'throwaway' culture A book to be treasured and reread."

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Daniel Horan, OFM has recently published *God Is Not Fair, and Other Reasons for Gratitude* (Franciscan Media, 144 pp. [\$15.99 paper]), a collection of his columns and articles. Robert J. Wicks writes of the volume: "Reading Dan Horan's reflections was like reliving the encounters I have had with important spiritual mentors in my life: contemplatively based, realistic, marked by simplicity, and a call to good action. Just right."

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Michael Plekon has recently published *Uncommon Prayer: Prayer in Everyday Experience* (Notre Dame, 280 pp. [\$30 cloth]), which Alan G. Padgett calls, "an important book for scholars, students and thoughtful readers in the field of spirituality and spiritual theology."

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Jon Sweeney has recently published *The Enthusiast: How the Best Friend of Francis of Assisi Almost Destroyed What He Started* (Ave Maria Press, 320 pp. [\$18.95 paper]), the untold story of the friendship of St. Francis with Elias of Cortona, the man who helped him build the Franciscan movement. Richard Rohr, OFM calls the book "an immense and important contribution to our understanding of the great saint."

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Bonnie Thurston has recently published *Hidden in God: Discovering the Desert Vision of Charles de Foucauld* (Ave Maria, 160 pp. [\$14.95 paper]), in commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of the hermit, priest, spiritual writer and pioneer of Christian-Islamic dialogue. Lawrence Cunningham writes that "this lovely volume is not merely to be read, but to be made one's own. This is spiritual reading at its best."

Joseph J. McGowan (1944-2016)

Joseph J. (Jay) McGowan, third president of Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, died March 1, 2016 after a brief illness. He was born to Joseph and Joan

McGowan on Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, LA, but moved with his parents to Scranton, PA as a child. He received bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Notre Dame and a doctorate in higher education from Columbia University, and later graduated from Harvard University's Institute for Educational Management. He became president of Bellarmine in 1990 after serving for 21 years at Fordham University in New York City as vice president of student affairs and dean of students. He was a strong supporter of The Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine, the official repository of Merton's literary estate, with archives of more than 50,000 Merton-related materials, affirming that Merton's spirit "inspires the development of Bellarmine as the intellectual center of the region considering such issues as peace and justice, world religions and East-West and North-South dialogues." Through the influence of Dr. McGowan, Merton was incorporated into the mission statement of the university, described as "an Independent Catholic University in the spirit of Thomas Merton," a university "especially inspired by Thomas Merton, the late monk from the Abbey of Gethsemani who had a long, vital relationship with Bellarmine. His philosophy and writings on the search for truth, religious inquiry, the nature of humanity, the value of cross-cultural and inter-faith awareness and diversity, and his advocacy for peace, social justice and sustainability are at the core of our community values and our Catholic identity." Dr. McGowan's professional service included terms as chairman of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities and Kentuckiana Metroversity, along with service on the board of directors of the American Council on Education and the Council of Independent Colleges. He also served on numerous boards and executive committees, including Norton Healthcare, Greater Louisville Inc., The Frazier History Museum, Speed Art Museum, Greater Louisville Health Enterprises Network and the Metro United Way. "The world of higher education has lost a giant in Dr. McGowan," said Joseph M. McShane, SJ, president of Fordham University. "A man of great vision and integrity, his transformation of Bellarmine was nothing less than miraculous." Dr. McGowan is survived by his wife,

Maureen McRaith McGowan, and their twin sons, Joseph and Matthew, their daughters-in-law Emma and Heidi, five grandchildren, Alessia, Sofia, Neve, Fiona and Luke, his sister, Mary Hoban and her husband William, his brother, Timothy and his wife Theresa, and a large extended family. A Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated March 7, 2016 at St. Agnes Church in Louisville.

Francis Cusack, CP (1930-2016)

Father Francis Cusack, CP died June 1, 2016 at Nazareth Home in Louisville, KY where he was convalescing from kidney surgery. Born William J. Cusack on February 3, 1930 in Chicago, son of William J. and Helen Curtin Cusack, he entered the Passionist Preparatory Seminary in 1944, professed vows as a Passionist religious in 1951 and was ordained to the priesthood May 31, 1958. He was assigned to St. Agnes Parish in Louisville during three periods, 1961-68, 1987-91 and 2012-2016. Fr. Francis knew Thomas Merton and as a young priest stationed in Louisville, he brought pilgrim groups to Gethsemani, and celebrated Mass with Merton as well. He was a founding member of the Louisville Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society, and upon moving to Chicago during the years 2004-2011 founded the Northwest Chicago ITMS Chapter which subsequently became part of the already existing Chicago Chapter, leading a reading group for the chapter and hosting the chapter for regular presentations at the Passionist Immaculate Conception Parish. When he returned to Louisville after the Chicago monastery was closed, he donated many Merton books and other materials to the Chicago Chapter, including a signed copy of the original mimeographed "Peace in the Post Christian Era" given by Merton to Daniel Walsh, as well as a copy of the first issue of Merton's poetry magazine *Monks Pond*. Fr. Francis served as local superior in Louisville, 1987-91 and 1995-96 and Chicago, 2007-11 and was assistant local superior in Chicago, 2004-07 and in Louisville from 2015 until his death. His funeral Mass of the Resurrection was held on June 4, 2016 at St. Agnes Church, with former ITMS President Erlinda Paguio and former ITMS Vice President Monica Weis, SSJ representing the society.

Penny Jaworski (1943-2016)

Penelope V. "Penny" Jaworski, longtime member of the Chicago ITMS Chapter, died February 25, 2016 after an

extended illness, at the age of 72. The eldest child of Philip and Gertrude Zapf Jaworski, she grew up in the Old Irving Park neighborhood of Chicago, graduated from Roosevelt High School and attended classes at Loyola University. In the early 1970s the pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish hired her and for the next four decades she worked at the parish in many capacities, including secretary, youth minister, parish staff liaison to the parish's Pastoral Council and Commissions, chair of the Elizabeth Ministry and chair of the parish's annual picnic. She was a leader of the Teens Encounter Christ retreat movement, of OATS, a prayer group sponsored by the parish for high school seniors and college students, of the local Chicago Chapter of Contemplative Outreach's Centering Prayer and of the Living Flame spiritual lecture series; she was a member of the Community of Passionist Partners. She joined the Northwest Chicago ITMS Chapter begun by Fr. Francis Cusack shortly after his arrival in Chicago in 2004, which subsequently merged with the already existing Chicago ITMS chapter, and served as hospitality coordinator for the chapter's regular meetings; when Fr. Cusack returned to Louisville in 2011 she took over as facilitator for the chapter's reading group. Her funeral Mass was celebrated March 12, 2016 at Immaculate Conception Church.

Margaret R. Brennan, IHM (1924-2016)

Margaret R. Brennan, IHM, a correspondent of Thomas Merton and a key figure in the renewal of religious life in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, died April 28, 2016 at the motherhouse of her community in Monroe, MI at the age of 92. Born in Detroit on February 13, 1924, she entered the Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation in 1945, shortly after receiving her bachelor's degree from Marygrove College. She later earned a doctorate in religion from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN, in 1953, and a Master of Sacred Theology from Regis College, Toronto in 1976. She served as professor of theology at Marygrove from 1953 through 1962, and then as novice director of her congregation until her election as its president in 1966, a position she held for the next decade. She served as president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in 1972, and subsequently taught for 25 years as professor of pastoral theology at Regis College in Toronto – the first woman to hold that position. She received four honorary doctorates and the 2010 Distinguished Leadership Award from LCWR.

She was the author of numerous scholarly works, as well as of *What Was There for Me Once: A Memoir* (Novalis, 2009). Mother Benedicta, as she was known in the 1960s, consulted Thomas Merton in 1968 about the reform of women's religious congregations and the development of houses of prayer for religious women in active orders. This correspondence led to the conference on religious renewal Merton led at the Cistercian Monastery of the Redwoods shortly before his trip to Asia in 1968. Sr. Margaret was a featured participant in the "Women Who Knew Merton" discussion at Bellarmine University in 1998, available on video. Her funeral Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated May 2, 2016 at the IHM Motherhouse Chapel in Monroe, MI.

James C. Hennessy (1929-2016)

James Carlyle Hennessy, a longtime supporter of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, died May 21, 2016. The youngest of six children of Irene and John Michael Hennessy, he was born November 17, 1929. A graduate of St. Xavier High School in Louisville and the University of Notre Dame, where he was class president, he was a successful insurance company executive in Louisville for many decades. He became acquainted with Thomas Merton through their mutual friendship with Frank and Tommie O'Callaghan, though his name was first linked with Merton's when they appeared on the same page of the Abbey of Gethsemani visitors' book in December 1941, when the young Hennessy was making a retreat at the monastery and Merton was entering the community. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Barbara Minty Hennessy, former board member of the Merton Institute for Contemplative Living, his eight daughters, their spouses, and twenty grandchildren. His funeral liturgy was celebrated at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville on May 25.

Collins Receives Wright Award

ITMS member John Collins, recipient of the 2015 "Louie" award for service to the Society, received the John Cardinal Wright Award from Worcester, MA Bishop Robert McManus on April 21, 2016 at the diocesan chancery for his years of service bringing the message of Thomas Merton to the diocese and beyond, through his monthly columns in the Worcester *Catholic Free Press*, his leadership of the local ITMS chapter in Shrewsbury, MA, and particularly his founding of the ITMS chapter at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution in Shirley, MA, the only chapter

of the Society located in a prison. Members of the Shirley chapter had spearheaded the movement for the award and had enlisted the support of ITMS members throughout the country, who had written to the bishop in support of the nomination. In his informal talk at the celebration, Collins spoke of first reading Merton's *Sign of Jonas* while in the army during the Korean War, and the impact it had on him. Along with his more than 120 columns, he has written more than two dozen scholarly articles on various aspects of Merton's life and thought, most of them since his retirement from positions as Superintendent of Schools in Shrewsbury and Professor of Education at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester. The award is named after Cardinal Wright, who had been Bishop of Worcester and with whom Merton corresponded about issues of war and peace at the time of the Second Vatican Council. The award marked the culmination of Collins' long active service on behalf of the Merton community. Now 85 years old, he published his final article, on Merton and Flannery O'Connor, in the Spring 2016 issue of *The Merton Seasonal*.

CPA Awards

A number of Merton-related publications were honored with awards by the Catholic Press Association at the 2016 Catholic Media Conference in St. Louis, MO June 1-3. In the "Spirituality: Soft Cover" category, the second place award was given to *At Play in Creation: Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine* by Christopher Pramuk; in the "Biography" category, both *Pure Act: The Uncommon Life of Robert Lax* by Michael N. McGregor and *The Unquiet Monk: Thomas Merton's Questing Faith* by Michael W. Higgins received Honorable Mention; in the "Best Feature Article: Scholarly Magazine" category, the third place award went to *American Catholic Studies* for the piece entitled "Merton at One Hundred: Reflections on *The Seven Storey Mountain*" with contributions by Lawrence Cunningham, James Martin, SJ, Julie Leininger Pycior and Monica Weis, SSI; *The Catholic Sun*, Syracuse, NY, received a first place award for "Best Feature Writing: Weekly Diocesan Newspaper – Circulation 25,000 or Less" for the article "'Merton speaks to us today': The 'perennial wisdom' of Trappist monk and spiritual writer Thomas Merton" by Renée K. Gadoua, which featured interviews with Christine M. Bochen and Paul J. Spaeth.

Merton Prison Project

The Thomas Merton Prison Project donates interfaith reading materials to prison facilities in New York State

with the goal of eventually providing these materials to prisons throughout the US. The materials offered include the works of Thomas Merton, as well as the Dalai Lama, Muhammad Ali, Paramahansa Yogananda, Rodger Kamenetz, Andrew Harvey and other spiritual authors of various faiths and traditions. The project, sponsored by the Pure Vision Foundation, is named after Merton because of his position as a prophetic voice on issues of peace and nonviolence, race, poverty and the decline of moral and religious values, as well as his advocacy of interfaith understanding and his wide-ranging dialogue with prominent spiritual leaders of various religious traditions. The foundation's objective is to provide books that encourage spiritual growth, allowing inmates the opportunity to broaden their own perspectives and learn to resolve conflict in themselves and with others. The goal is to provide overall benefit within the correctional community and also to enable inmates to assimilate into a wider, more diverse world should they be returned to civilian life. The Woodbourne Correctional Facility in upstate New York has been the inspiration for The Thomas Merton Prison Project. While working in the prison for an electrical contractor, the foundation's founder, Lawrence Birney, who has been a student of Merton's writings for forty years, has had a first-hand view of prison life and the daily difficulties both inmates and correction officers face. He notes that the environment presents a challenging opportunity to explore Merton's works, as well as those of other spiritual authors, with the eventual aim of expanding the program to prison communities throughout New York and the United States. For information about donating to the project, see the Pure Vision Foundation website: http://www.purevisionfoundation.org/thomas_merton_prison_project.

John Wu Symposium

On April 22-23, 2016, Seton Hall University sponsored a symposium entitled "China Studies, Catholicism, and East-West Dialogue" in memory of former Seton Hall Professor John Ching-Hsiung Wu (1899-1986), correspondent and close friend and collaborator of Thomas Merton. The conference was organized and co-sponsored by the Department of Catholic Studies and the Asian Studies Program at the university, with assistance from the New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission, the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies and the Taipei Educational Council. Presentations

included: Keynote Speaker John Wu, Jr.: "A Lovely Day for a Friendship"; Edwin Pak-Wah Leung: "Professor John Ching-Hsiung Wu and Asian Studies: The Seton Hall Years, 1951-1968"; Dongdong Chen: "The Institute of Far Eastern Studies at Seton Hall University: Its Contributions to TCFL"; Zheng Wang: "China and International Law: The UNCLOS and South China Disputes"; Dermot Quinn: "Professor Wu and Seton Hall University"; Maja Basioli, "Finding John C. H. Wu"; Xue-Ming Bao: "Find Scholarly Works of John C. H. Wu through Library Databases: A Digital Humanity Approach"; Alan Delozier: "Researching Primary Archival Sources Related to John Wu and Asian Studies"; Robert Gimello: "John C. H. Wu as a Pioneering Exemplar for Comparative Theologians"; John Lindblom: "The Uniqueness of Wu Jingxiang's 1940s Chinese Translation of the Psalms and New Testament"; Anthony Clark: "Beyond the Dusty World: Daoism and the Epistolary Dialectics of Thomas Merton and John Wu." The conference also included a musical presentation by Ignatius Dino Wu entitled "Reflections and a Musical Tribute in Honor of My Grandfather" and a slide show presented by Gregory Wu, also a grandson of John C. H. Wu, as well as exhibits on the life and work of John Wu in the Walsh Library.

Merton at CEA

The International Thomas Merton Society will once again sponsor panels and presentations at the College English Association annual convention, to be held at the Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa in Hilton Head, SC on March 30-April 1, 2017. The conference is a gathering of 500-600 scholar-teachers committed to literature, writing, college teaching and related fields. This year's theme is "Islands," and one or more Merton panels are planned, along with possible individual presentations at other concurrent sessions. An allied organization of the CEA, the ITMS will provide limited financial support to defray expenses for presenters. Possible topics include: Merton & Cuba; Merton & Bermuda; Merton's *The Strange Islands*; Merton's *No Man Is an Island*; Merton and Melanesian Cargo Cults. Proposals of 200-250 words for a 6-8 page paper (15-minute presentation time) are due by November 1, 2016. Participants must be members of the CEA (\$50/year) by January 2017. Those interested in speaking at the convention are encouraged to contact Monica Weis, SSI, coordinator of the CEA Merton sessions, at mweis9@naz.

edu for further information on submitting a proposal and on CEA membership; additional information is available in the full Call for Papers at the CEA web site: <http://www/cea-web.org>.

Merton Happenings

On January 24, 2016, Cristobal Serran-Pagan gave a talk at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Valdosta, GA entitled “Thomas Merton: Cultivating Seeds of Contemplation in Everyday Life.”

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On March 15, Cristobal Serran-Pagan gave a presentation at Palacky University’s Sts. Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology in Olomouc, the Czech Republic entitled “The Paradigmatic Model of Mary and Martha: Contemplation and Action in the Spanish Carmelite Mystics and Thomas Merton.”

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On April 20, Paul M. Pearson gave the keynote presentation entitled: “Pope Francis and Thomas Merton: Apostles of Mercy” at the National Workshop on Christian Unity in Louisville, KY.

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On April 24, Cristobal Serran-Pagan gave a talk at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Valdosta, GA entitled “Building Bridges not Walls: The XIV Dalai Lama and Thomas Merton on Interfaith Dialogue.”

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On May 23-25, an international conference at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY on “Sacred Texts and Human Contexts: Nature and the Environment” featured a presentation by Monica Weis, SSJ based on Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’*, and the writings of Rachel Carson and Thomas Merton, entitled “Personal and Communal Conversion: Key to Environmental Integrity.”

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On June 26, Mario Zaninelli gave a presentation entitled “Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Merton: A Spiritual Confluence” during a conference at the Assumption Monastery, Genzano (Rome) on the theme “Evolutionary Ethics: From a Morality of Obedience and Perfection to the Ethics of the Responsible Commitment and Perfectibility,” sponsored by the Italian Teilhard de Chardin Association.

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On July 2, Paul M. Pearson gave a presentation entitled “Pope Francis and Thomas Merton: Apostles of Mercy” at the Monos Foundation’s Tenth Annual

Conference, exploring “God’s Mercy through Monasticism,” in Coalville, Leicestershire, UK.

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On July 7-9, Christine M. Bochen taught a course on “Thomas Merton and the Way of Mercy” at the Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, BC.

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On August 18, Morgan Atkinson gave a presentation entitled “Thomas Merton: A Kentuckian Claimed by the World,” including highlights from his two Merton documentary films, at the McCracken County Public Library, Paducah, KY as part of the Evenings Upstairs series, co-sponsored by the Kentucky Humanities Council.

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On September 8, Matthew Fox gave a presentation entitled “Thomas Merton: A Celtic Mystic, Warrior, Eco-prophet & Martyr for Our Times” at The Sanctuary, Augustine United Church, Edinburgh, Scotland.

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On September 15, Doris Donnelly gave a presentation entitled “Dorothy Day and the Men in Her Life” (including Thomas Merton), at John Carroll University, Cleveland, OH.

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On September 23-25, Richard Sisto directed a men’s retreat based on the core teachings of Thomas Merton and Buddhist practice at Bethany Spring Retreat Center in New Haven, KY, one mile from the Abbey of Gethsemani, that included a session at Merton’s hermitage with Br. Paul Quenon.

Upcoming Events

On four Monday evenings from September 19 through October 10, Alan Kolp is presenting a program entitled “The Pope’s American Models: Lincoln, King, Day and Merton” at the Jesuit Retreat House in Parma, OH.

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On Tuesdays between September 20 and October 11, Vanessa Hurst will present a continuing education course entitled “Thomas Merton and Buddhist Masters” at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY.

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On September 30-October 2, Christina St. Clair will lead a retreat entitled “Miracles of Healing” at Bethany Spring Retreat Center in New Haven, KY, one mile from the Abbey of Gethsemani. On October 7-9, Terry Taylor will lead a retreat entitled “Creativity as Solace: A

Spiritual Exploration.” On October 21-23, Sharon Grant will direct a women’s retreat entitled “Women: Living from Our Soul: Seven Steps of Women’s Spirituality.” On November 11-13, Sharon Grant will lead a retreat entitled: “Letting Go: Saying ‘Yes’ When Life Says ‘No.’” For further information on any of these programs see the Bethany Spring website: www.bethanyspring.org; or email: rick@bethanyspring.org; phone: 502-507-8576.

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On October 1, The Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland will hold a day of celebration and festivity to welcome the Thomas Merton Society library collection to St. Michael’s Priory, near Milton Keynes, Bucks. The day will include a keynote talk, readings from Merton’s works and a shared celebration of the Eucharist. For further information contact: bookings@stmichaelspriory.org.uk.

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On October 15, Stephen Dunhill will lead a study day on the theme “Thomas Merton: Contemplative Writer” at the Whirlow Spirituality Centre in Sheffield, UK. For further information see: <http://www.whirlowspiritualitycentre.org/whats-on/2016/10/15/thomas-merton-contemplative-writer-15-october>.

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The Fall 2016 Road Scholar “Week with Thomas Merton” Program will take place October 16-21 at the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. The Spring 2017 program is scheduled for March 5-10. For further details contact Linda Bailey at: lbailey@bellarmine.edu or 502-272-8161.

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On October 29, a conference entitled “Thomas Merton’s Engaged Spirituality” will be held at The Sanctuary, Augustine United Church, Edinburgh, Scotland, featuring presentations by Mario I. Aguilar, Ajahn Candasiri, James Crampsey, SJ, Stephen Dunhill, Jim Griffin, John McLuckie, Willy Slavin and Ann Tomlinson. For further details see <http://www.eicsp.org/events/event-details/378-day-conference-and-evening-cultural-celebration-thomas-merton-s-engaged-spirituality-29-october-2016>.

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On November 14, the Thomas Merton Center of Pittsburgh will present the 2016 Thomas Merton Award to Frida Berrigan, a columnist for Waging Nonviolence and author of *It Runs in the Family: On Being Raised*

by Radicals and Growing into Rebellious Motherhood. The daughter of Philip Berrigan and Elizabeth McAllister and niece of Daniel Berrigan, SJ, she lives in New London, CT with her husband Patrick and their three children. For further information, see: <https://2016mertonaward.eventbrite.com>.

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On December 3, the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain & Ireland will host “Come Lord Jesus: An Advent Retreat with Thomas Merton,” led by Paul M. Pearson, at United Church, Winchester, UK. For further information see: http://www.thomasmertonsociety.org.uk/files/public/2016_events/Winchester_2016_flyer.pdf.

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On December 4 Eric Anglada will give a presentation on “The Ecological Merton” at the Sinsinawa Mound Retreat Center in Sinsinawa WI; for further information see the center website at: www.sinsinawa.org/moundcenter.org, or call: 608-748-4411.

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On December 9, Bonnie Thurston will give a presentation entitled “The Sacrament of Advent: Thomas Merton’s Lessons and Carols” at Our Lady of the Woods Chapel on the campus of Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, beginning with evening prayer at 7 p.m. to mark the eve of the 75th anniversary of Thomas Merton’s arrival at the Abbey of Gethsemani on December 10th, 1941 and of the 48th anniversary of his death.

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On January 20-21, 2017, The Philosophy and Religion Workshop at Auburn University, Auburn, AL will sponsor a conference entitled “The Contemplative as Writer: Thomas Merton.” Featured speakers include Lawrence Cunningham, Kelly Dean Jolley, Patrick F. O’Connell, Christopher Pramuk and Bonnie Thurston. For further information contact Kelly Jolley at kellydeanjolley@gmail.com or Loxley Compton at comptja@auburn.edu.

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On February 20, Laurie Cassidy will give the Eleventh Annual Thomas Merton Black History Month Lecture at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY.

Chapter and Affiliate News

On April 17, the Chicago ITMS Chapter heard Sr. Mary Christine Athans, BVM speak about her new book *In Quest of the Jewish Mary: The Mother of Jesus in History, Theology, and Spirituality* at the Immacu-

late Conception Rectory Assembly. On September 18, Jim Kenney gave a presentation to the chapter entitled “Thomas Merton’s Buddhist Romance.” For further information contact Chapter Coordinator Mike Brennan at cc.itms@gmail.com or 773-447-3989.

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On July 7, the Thomas Merton Society of Canada held its Annual General Meeting at the Vancouver School of Theology’s H. R. MacMillan Theological Library, followed by a Wine & Cheese Reception and a Public Talk by Christine Bochen entitled “Thomas Merton’s Legacy and Challenge: Mercy, Always, in Everything, Mercy” at VST’s Epiphany Chapel. For further information contact Susan Cowan, Community Relations Director, at tmssc@telus.net or 604-988-8835.

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On April 19 the Cleveland ITMS Chapter heard a presentation by Rev. Donald Cozzens entitled “Merton & You: Why He Still Speaks to Your Soul.” On May 17, Patrick O’Connell spoke on: “Louie Learns Lectio: Thomas Merton’s Early Poetry on Scriptural Themes.” On September 20, Robert Toth gave a presentation entitled “Ishi: A Meditation – Merton on Indigenous Americans.” For further information contact Chapter Coordinator Donna Kristoff, OSU, at dkristoff@ursulinesisters.org or 440-449-1200, ext. 314.

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The Belmar, NJ ITMS Chapter discussed Merton’s *No Man Is an Island* at its April 13, and May 11 meetings at the St. Rose Parish Center. At its June 8 meeting the group viewed and discussed a DVD of panel discussions with monks, nuns and laypeople who knew Merton. On September 14, the group viewed the DVD *The Many Storeys and Last Days of Thomas Merton*. On October 12, discussion of Michael Mott’s “official” biography *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* will begin. For further information contact Greg Ryan at: GJRyan@wccm.org or 732-681-6238.

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The Northern California Chapter of the ITMS continued its discussion of Merton’s *The New Man* at its April 17, June 26 and August 28 meetings at the St. Francis Parish Center in Sacramento. The group visited the Cistercian monastery at Vina for its March 20 meeting, on Palm Sunday. For further information contact John Berger: 916-482-6976.

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On May 10, the Thomas Merton Interfaith Chapter of

Southern Delaware hosted a videoconference presentation by Mark C. Meade on Thomas Merton’s letters at the Lewes Public Library, in Lewes, DE. On Tuesdays between September 20 and November 8 Toni Worsham will facilitate a conversation series at the St. Edmond Paris Education Hall in Rehoboth Beach, DE, entitled “Dorothy and Thomas – Contemplative Activists,” focusing on Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton as models for Americans as highlighted by Pope Francis in his address to the U.S. Congress. On September 27, Liz Dolan will lead a conversation on “Thomas Merton the Poet” at St. Edmund’s. In March 2017 Christopher Pramuk will be the keynote speaker for the chapter’s 2017 program, speaking on the theme of his recent book *Hope Sings, So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line*. Rev. Keith Goheen continues to host the monthly First Sunday Contemplation & Conversation Gathering; the monthly Peace & Nonviolence prayer and discussion group is slated to resume in October. For further information contact George Beckerman at george.beckerman@gmail.com.

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On October 1, the New York City (Corpus Christi) ITMS Chapter will host a presentation by Christine M. Bochen entitled “Awakening the Heart, Mending the World: Merton’s Path to Mercy.” On November 12, Christopher Pramuk will lead a retreat day on the theme: “In Everything Mercy: Thomas Merton and Pope Francis on the Merciful Heart of God.” On January 28, Gordon Oyer and John Dear will speak on the life and witness of Daniel Berrigan, SJ and his relationship with Thomas Merton. For further information visit the chapter website at: <http://www.thomasmertonny.org>, or contact: info@thomasmertonny.org.

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On September 9-11, Walt Chura, OFS led the annual silent retreat sponsored by the ITMS Capital (NY) Chapter at the Pyramid Life Center in Paradox, NY.

Send all Merton-related news to:

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The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS