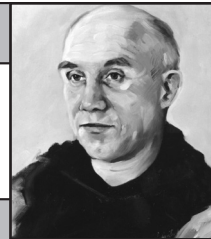


INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Seventeenth General Meeting a Virtual Success

“Thou Inward Stranger” was the theme of the Seventeenth General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society, originally scheduled for St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana but held virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic June 23-26, 2021. The conference included 339 participants from the United States and eight other countries.

General session addresses included: Marie Dennis: “Nonviolence: Essential to a *Laudato Si’* Future”; Andrew L. Prevot: “Contemplation in Times of Crisis”; Bonnie Thurston: “‘The Inward Stranger’: Challenge, Coordinates and Consequences”; and the Presidential Address by David Golemboski: “Absurdity and Imagination in a Time of Upheaval.” The conference opened with a welcome from Program Committee chair Mark Meade, followed by a Multi-faith Prayer Service coordinated by Sophronia Scott. The program included 43 presentations over the course of its four days: 33 concurrent session papers and ten workshops. A June 26 evening concert/reflection entitled “Encountering the Stranger: Finding the Hidden Wholeness in a Broken World” was a joint presentation of Carrie Newcomer and Parker Palmer and was followed by a closing prayer by incoming ITMS president Christopher Pramuk.

A selection of presentations from the conference is now available on YouTube. The full playlist of videos, which include the presidential address by David Golemboski, and the keynote presentations by Andrew Prevot and Bonnie Thurston, can be accessed on the Thomas Merton YouTube Channel at: https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCTeuUZQE_xJldy_yO5qXkg/videos.

The Program Committee was chaired by ITMS Past President Mark Meade and included ITMS

President David W. L. Golemboski, ITMS Secretary Cassidy Hall, Daniel P. Horan, OFM, Jonathan Montaldo, ITMS Treasurer David Orberon, ITMS Vice President Christopher Pramuk, Judith Valente and Julianne Wallace.

It was announced on the final day of the conference that the ITMS Eighteenth General Meeting is scheduled for June 22-25, 2023, once again for St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN. The program committee will be chaired by immediate past president David Golemboski with Daniel P. Horan, OFM as site coordinator, and includes Jessica Coblenz, Emma McDonald, Mark Meade, ITMS Treasurer David Orberon, ITMS President Christopher Pramuk, Kathleen Tarr, Judith Valente and Monica Weis, SSJ.

New Officers and Board

The Officers and Board of Directors of the International Thomas Merton Society for 2021-2023 were announced by outgoing president David Golemboski during the ITMS Seventeenth General Meeting on June 24, 2021. In accordance with the ITMS by-laws, the officers were chosen by the Board and members of the Board by the membership at large, from a slate prepared by the ITMS nominating committee, Christine Bochen, Deborah Kehoe, Emma McDonald, Paul Pynkoski and Judith Valente (chair). A total of 261 ITMS members, 24% of the membership, participated in the election, 240 through on-line voting and 21 by mail.

Officers are Christopher Pramuk, president; Judith Valente, vice president; Paul Pynkoski, secretary; and David Orberon, treasurer; David Golemboski will continue to serve on the board as past president. Newly elected members of the board are: Rose Marie Berger, Raymond Carr, Emma McDonald

and Kathleen Witkowska Tarr; Alan Kolp and Gray Matthews were re-elected to the board.

Christopher Pramuk is associate professor of theology and University Chair of Ignatian Thought and Imagination at Regis University, Denver, CO, and author of the award-winning *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton* (2009), *Hope Sings, So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line* (2013), *At Play in Creation: Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine* (2015) and, most recently, *The Artist Alive: Explorations in Music, Art, and Theology* (2019).

Judith Valente, a retired journalist and poet from New Jersey who currently lives in central Illinois, has served as a member of the ITMS Board. She is the author of the spiritual memoir *Atchison Blue* as well as two books of poetry; her most recent book is *How to Live: What the Rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us about Happiness, Meaning, and Community* (2018). *How to Be: A Monk and a Journalist Reflect on Living & Dying, Purpose & Prayer, Forgiveness & Friendship*, coauthored with Br. Paul Quenon, will be published later this year. She covered stories for *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, *The PBS News Hour* and the Chicago NPR affiliate; her work in print journalism includes reporting for *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *America Magazine*. She is married to retired Illinois Circuit Court Judge Charles Reynard.

Paul Pynkoski is an active member of the Church of the Redeemer, Toronto, ON, where he coordinates literature discussions at the Common Table, a drop-in for those who are vulnerable or homeless. He is a founding member of Voices for Peace, an ecumenical conference on peacemaking and has contributed to *The Merton Seasonal*, *The Merton Annual*, *Orthodoxy in Dialogue* and *The Anglican*.

David Orberon, current ITMS treasurer, received his Ph.D. from the University of Louisville and a Master of Theological Studies from the St. Meinrad School of Theology. He is author of *Thomas Merton – Evil and Why We Suffer: From Purified Soul Theodicy to Zen* (2018). He has been teaching theology part-time at Bellarmine University since 2007.

David Golemboski is Assistant Professor of Government and International Affairs at Augustana University, Sioux Falls, SD. He was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy at the University of Missouri after completing his Ph.D. in the Department of Government at Georgetown University. A former Daggy Scholar, he has previously served as ITMS secretary, vice president and president, and as co-chair of the Nominations Committee.

Rose Marie Berger is a poet and peace activist who is poetry editor and senior editor for *Sojourners* magazine, for which she writes a regular column. She presented the keynote address, “Direct Transmission of Faith,” at the ITMS Sixteenth General Meeting in 2019. She is co-editor of *Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and World* (2020) and author of the poetry collection *Bending the Arch* (2019).

Raymond Carr, formerly Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics at Pepperdine University, has also taught as visiting faculty in Germany, Switzerland and China. A member of the Merton Society since 2013, he has published and presented papers at ITMS conferences, and has taught Merton in his classes as well as in the ENGAGE program, a Lilly-funded initiative to interest high school students in religious topics.

Alan Kolp holds the University Chair in Faith & Life at Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, OH. A member of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and a Benedictine Oblate, he is co-author most recently of *Exception to the Rule* (2017), and has published articles on Merton in *The Merton Seasonal*, in *Merton and the Protestant Tradition* and elsewhere.

Gray Matthews teaches communications at the University of Memphis and has served as coordinator of the Memphis Chapter of the ITMS since 2001. He was site coordinator of the 2007 ITMS General Meeting in Memphis and has also served as co-editor of *The Merton Annual*. He has been a frequent presenter at ITMS conferences and has published numerous essays on Merton.

Emma McDonald is currently a Ph.D. student at Boston College, where she studies bioethics,

Catholic moral theology and women's health. She holds a Master of Arts in Religion degree from Yale Divinity School. A Daggy Scholar in 2017, she presented a paper at the 2019 ITMS General meeting on Merton, Robert Lax and Fanny Howe. While at Yale, she coordinated a monthly Thomas Merton Reading Group.

Kathleen Witkowska Tarr is the founder of the Alaska Chapter of the ITMS and author of *We Are All Poets Here: Thomas Merton's Journey to Alaska – A Shared Story about Spiritual Seeking* (2018). Her essays have appeared in *We Are Already One: Thomas Merton's Message of Hope* (2015) and *Merton & Indigenous Wisdom* (2019). She is a former Mullin Scholar at the University of Southern California Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies.

ITMS President Christopher Pramuk also announced that ITMS members from six countries will serve as International Advisors for 2021-2023. They are: Lars Adolffson (Strängnäs, Sweden), James G. R. Cronin (Cork, Ireland), Linda Espie (South Oakleigh, Australia), Liana Gehl (Bucharest, Romania), Dominiek Lootens (Frankfort, Germany) and Marcela Raggio (Mendoza, Argentina).

Paul Pearson will continue to serve as ITMS Resident Secretary and as ITMS Accounts Manager. Patrick F. O'Connell will continue as editor of *The Merton Seasonal* and David Golemboski will join Deborah Kehoe as co-editor of *The Merton Annual*. Michael Brennan will continue to serve as ITMS Chapters Coordinator.

Louies Awarded

The 2019 Thomas Merton Awards, informally known as "Louies," were presented by outgoing ITMS president David Golemboski on June 24, 2021 during the ITMS Seventeenth General Meeting. The award is a bronze bust of Thomas Merton created by sculptor David Kocka. The recipient of the "International" award, given to an individual who has made a significant contribution on an international level to the promotion of Merton's writings (in English or in translation) and to the presentation of his ideas, is Willy Eurlings. The recipient of the "Thomas Merton" award, given to an individual whose work has made a significant

contribution to Merton studies, is Sophronia Scott. The recipient of the "Society" award, given to a member of the ITMS whose distinguished service has contributed to the aims of the Society and the furthering of its goals, is Michael Brennan.

Willy Eurlings is chairperson of the Mertonvrienden, the Dutch-speaking Merton Society from Flanders and the Netherlands and regular contributor to and translator for the society journal, *Contactblad Mertonvrienden*. He is the compiler of the comprehensive finding aid of Books Cited by Merton by Title as found in the seven volumes of Merton's journals and five volumes of his correspondence, available on the Merton Center website at: www.merton.org/research/Quotations.

Sophronia Scott, novelist, essayist and leading contemplative thinker whose work has appeared in numerous publications, received the Louie for her latest book, *The Seeker and the Monk: Everyday Conversations with Thomas Merton*. Her other books include *Love's Long Line*, and *This Child of Faith: Raising a Spiritual Child in a Secular World*, co-written with her son Tain. She holds degrees from Harvard and Vermont College of Fine Arts. She lives in Sandy Hook, CT and is the founding director of Alma College's MFA in Creative Writing, a graduate program based in Alma, MI.

Michael Brennan is the coordinator of the Chicago Chapter of the ITMS and longtime ITMS Chapters Coordinator. He served as site coordinator for the ITMS Twelfth General Meeting at Loyola University Chicago in 2011 and has served on the ITMS Board of Directors. He works for American Airlines and has been editor of the newsletter for Transport Workers Union Local 512 in Chicago. He is a member of the National Conference of Catholic Airport Chaplains.

Shannon Fellowships Awarded

At its June 2021 meeting, the ITMS Board of Directors awarded 2021-2022 Shannon Fellowships to: Alda Balthrop-Lewis, research fellow at Australian Catholic University, for a project entitled "Politics and Contemplation: Thomas Merton in Conversation with the 1960s"; Matt Dill, student in the master's program in creative writing at

Vermont College, for research on “Albert Camus’s Influence on Thomas Merton”; and Stephanie Redekop, doctoral student at the University of Toronto, for a project entitled: “Obligated to Speak: Thomas Merton’s Literary Essays and 1960s Crisis Discourse.”

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 Raab.

The deadline for applications for Shannon Fellowships for 2022-2023 is March 15, 2022. Awards must be used between July 1, 2022 and July 31, 2023. 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 (or \$40 to include *The Merton Annual*), 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 affiliation, 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 2022 meeting of the ITMS Board of Directors, who will make the final decisions on awards, and results will be communicated to applicants shortly thereafter.

Full details are available on the ITMS web site at: <http://merton.org/ITMS/fellows.aspx>.

Maurice Flood, OCSO (1935-2021)

On August 24, 2021, Fr. Maurice Flood, OCSO died after more than 64 years of Cistercian monastic life. Born Hugh Edgar Flood on October 25, 1935 in Lancaster, Ohio, the son of Ralph and Mary Lucille Flood, he originally joined the Order as a member of the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky in 1957 as a brother, making his solemn monastic profession on December 8, 1965. In the 1980s he transferred his stability to Holy Cross Abbey, Berryville, VA. After studies at the Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts, he was ordained a priest at Berryville on June 23, 1991. He served as retreat master at the monastery during the 1990s, and in 1999 became the chaplain to the Cistercian nuns at Our Lady of the Redwoods Abbey in Whitethorn, CA, where he served for fourteen years before returning to Berryville in December 2014 due to increasing age and declining health.

He provided various assistance to Thomas Merton after Merton’s permanent move to the hermitage in

August 1965, and regularly served Merton's mass during those years before a chapel was added to the hermitage. He was present at Merton's final mass in the hermitage on September 9, 1968, before Merton left on his final journey to the West Coast and the Far East the next day, and was left in charge of the hermitage during Merton's expected absence. He appears in the 1985 documentary *Merton: A Film Biography* directed by Paul Wilkes, and his interview with Wilkes is included in the volume *Merton By Those Who Knew Him Best* (1984).

He is survived by his sister, Sue Fox, and two nephews, as well as his monastic community. According to fellow monk Br. Efrain Sosa, "Of late he would talk a lot about death, of being freed. 'I'm not afraid of death. I never have been,' he said. 'I welcome her.' Like St. Francis of Assisi, he would call her Sister Death. He was a simple Trappist."

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the monastery on September 4, followed by burial in the abbey cemetery. In his funeral homily, Berryville Abbot Joseph Wittstock said of Fr. Maurice: "At our last community-sharing on *Experientia*, our dear Fr. Maurice spoke of what he termed the risk of pledging obedience to one's abbot, but then suggested that it was worth the risk for, as he said, *it all works out in the end*. I'm not sure whether at that time he was aware of just how close his own end was! However, as we know, in recent years he repeatedly expressed his readiness (and, indeed, his eagerness) to complete his earthly pilgrimage and make that final transition to his eternal home. This peaceful non-anxious approach to death suggests that the risk he took so many years ago, when he made that other transition from 'the world' into the enclosure of Gethsemani, was more than worth it and that, for him, it *did all work out in the end*. . . . And so Fr. Maurice's deep conviction that *it all works out in the end* was his way of affirming Saint Paul's insistence that *in all things God works for the good of those who love him*. As such his interesting life is a reminder that we need to trust God enough to surrender control over our life and relinquish those cherished expectations and desires that we might have had upon entering the monastery. His

life is a reminder that although a circuitous route home to our heavenly kingdom is often a result of our spiritual shortsightedness and lack of trust, God never gives up on us, but patiently accompanies us (as he did the People of Israel) and lovingly shepherds us through the wilderness of our sinful hearts in preparation for that moment when our end approaches and we stand on the banks of the Jordan and prepare to cross over into that kingdom prepared for us before the foundation of the world."

Robert Bonazzi (1942-2020)

Robert Bonazzi, poet, publisher, essayist, biographer of John Howard Griffin and correspondent of Thomas Merton, died on October 15, 2020 in Round Rock, Texas after a lengthy illness. Born December 9, 1942 in Jamaica, New York, son of Lorenzo and Francesca (Nasso) Bonazzi, he moved to Texas with his family at the age of four. A 1966 graduate of the University of Houston, he was the founding editor that year of *Latitudes* magazine and publisher of Latitudes Press, also begun in 1966, which became the longest surviving independent literary press in the Southwest, called "One of the finest imprints in the country" by *Library Journal* in 1988, publishing 112 titles between 1966 and 2000 and receiving grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines, Translation Center of New York and the Texas Commission on the Arts. A member of the Authors Guild and the Texas Institute of Letters, he was author of numerous volumes of poetry and prose, including *Maestro of Solitude: Poems & Poetics* (a finalist for the Texas Institute of Letters Poetry Award), and *The Scribbling Cure: Poems & Prose Poems*. He taught literature at a number of universities and community colleges, including University of Houston, Texas Christian University and Tarrant Community College, as well as in public schools in New York and Texas.

In the 1960s he became a close friend of author and activist John Howard Griffin, and when Griffin died in 1980 was appointed literary executor of his estate. In 1983 he married Griffin's widow Elizabeth, who became his co-publisher at Latitudes Press until her death in 2000, after which the press ceased

publication. He edited and published numerous posthumous volumes of Griffin's work, including *Follow the Ecstasy: Thomas Merton, The Hermitage Years, 1965-1968* (Fort Worth, TX: Latitudes Press, 1983), the final section of Griffin's uncompleted biography of Thomas Merton, for which Bonazzi provided the Foreword. He wrote two biographical works on Griffin, *Man in the Mirror: John Howard Griffin and the Story of Black Like Me* (Orbis, 1997) and *Reluctant Activist – The Spiritual Life and Art of John Howard Griffin* (Texas Christian University Press, 2018), as well as Afterwords for the Penguin editions of Griffin's classic *Black Like Me* (1996, 2010). He was featured in Morgan Atkinson's 2010 film documentary on Griffin, *Uncommon Vision*.

It was through their mutual friendship with Griffin that Bonazzi and Thomas Merton became acquainted, exchanging nineteen letters (13 from Bonazzi, 6 from Merton), mainly concerned with *Latitudes* and Merton's literary magazine *Monks Pond*, between October 14, 1966 and February 29, 1968 (all unpublished, in the archives of the Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY). Merton's humorous poem "Western Fellow Students Salute with Calypso Anthems the Movie Career of Robert Lax" first appeared in the February 1967 issue of *Latitudes*, followed by excerpts from *Cables to the Ace* and the essay "The Monk Today" in April 1968. Bonazzi contributed three poems published in the fourth and last issue of *Monks Pond* (see *Monks Pond: Thomas Merton's Little Magazine*, with an Introduction by Robert E. Daggy and an Afterword by Patrick Hart, OCSO [Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1989] 229-30; three poems by Ron Seitz in the third, fall issue were erroneously attributed to Bonazzi – see 115). Along with Elizabeth Griffin-Bonazzi, Robert Bonazzi was a plenary speaker at the ITMS Fifth General Meeting at Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL in June 1997. His book *Outside the Margins: Literary Commentaries* (San Antonio: Wings Press, 2015) includes his essays "Parra-Phrasing: Nicanor Parra & Thomas Merton" and "The Call to Emptiness: Thomas Merton & John Howard Griffin."

He was preceded in death by his twin brother

Lawrence, who died in 2014, and is survived by a sister, Mary Frances Urie, along with her husband Paul Urie, a niece and three nephews. The literary archives of Robert Bonazzi and Latitudes Press are archived in The Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

O'Callaghan Gallery Dedication Scheduled

On November 13, the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY will hold an open house from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., which will feature a ceremony at 1 p.m. naming the exhibit area of the Center the "Tommie and Frank O'Callaghan Gallery." Originally scheduled for November 2020 but postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, the event marks the donation to the Center of the papers of Thomasine ("Tommie") O'Callaghan (1931-2014), who with her husband Frank (1929-2011) was a close friend of Thomas Merton, and one of the original members of the Thomas Merton Legacy Trust, on which she served from 1967 to 2009. The date coincides with the inauguration in 1963 of the Merton Collection at Bellarmine, which developed into the Merton Center, and also marks Tommie's ninetieth birthday. The following day is the fifty-fourth anniversary of the signing of the Merton Legacy Trust agreement in 1967.

Tuesdays with Merton Series

The Tuesdays with Merton webinar series, cosponsored by the International Thomas Merton Society and the Center for Spirituality at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN, takes place on the second Tuesday of each month. On September 14, Sophronia Scott gave a presentation entitled "The Radio of Nature: Merton's Tuning into God Outdoors." On October 12 at 8 p.m., the series will continue with "Prayer and Thomas Merton: A Conversation with James Martin, SJ." On November 9, the speaker will be Kathleen Tarr. For further information and to register for this program, see: <http://merton.org/ITMS/TWM/default.aspx#BNM>. To view past presentations in the series see: <http://merton.org/ITMS/TWM/TWM-Archive.aspx>.

ITMS Authors

Alda Balthrop-Lewis is the author of *Thoreau's Religion: Walden Woods, Social Justice, and the*

Politics of Asceticism (Cambridge University Press, 2021), in which she offers the first sustained reading of Thoreau's religiously motivated politics and demonstrates that Henry David Thoreau's ascetic life was a form of religious practice dedicated to cultivating a just, multispecies community. Philosopher Cornel West writes: "This book is undoubtedly the best treatment of Thoreau in this generation. Alda Balthrop-Lewis is a profound philosopher-poet who captures the subtle and sublime genius of the great philosopher-poet like no other. And in these bleak times of ecological catastrophe we need them both!" Environmental activist Bill McKibben adds: "This beautifully written volume offers a wonderful depiction of Thoreau as a person and a thinker for this time and place; really, everyone who's interested in his story, and in the American story, should read it and reflect on it."

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Nina Butorac has recently published *The World Transparent: A Catechesis at the Movies* (Wipf & Stock, 2021), in which she uses forty highly regarded films to examine key spiritual themes of Western Christian tradition from a sacramental standpoint, with particular focus on the theological virtues, conscience and the working of grace. Lawrence Carmignani of the University of Washington writes: "Nina Butorac selects themes from the works of profound Christian thinkers, from St. Paul to St. Augustine to Thomas Merton, and illuminates these themes by way of classic and top-drawer movies. . . . What emerges for the reader is an understanding of the powerful relevance of Christian thought to the universal plight of humanity. For the restless heart, the essential message of hope through Christ's two great commandments, love of God and love of neighbor, resonates on every page of this beautifully crafted work." Daniel Syverstad, OP calls the book "A well-written work that utilizes the movies as modern-day parables to illustrate the many principal themes in our Christian faith."

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Roger Butts has written *Seeds of Devotion: Weekly Contemplations on Faith* (GraceLight Press,

2021), featuring voices from the Bible and Sufi poets, from civil rights leaders and contemplatives, from Toni Morrison to Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen as well as lesser known figures. Rev. Benjamin Broadbent writes: "Roger is there as a capable facilitator of the encounters that ensue, but it is never about him. It is about the joy of discovery, of friendship, of beauty, and about waking up, once again, to the astounding realization that the One in whom we live and move and have our being is much larger than previously imagined." Professor Phyllis Culham adds: "This volume re-imagines the genre of the devotional for Franklin's 'citizen of the world.' It does focus on the three Abrahamic religions, yet inspirations from others, e.g., Buddhism, are included. . . . The book is a call from awareness to awareness."

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Geoff Colvin is the recent author of *Contemplative Prayer at Work in Our Lives: Resting in God's Presence and Action* (Resource Publications, 2021), in which he draws on his own experiences, studies of spiritual literature and participation in retreats and meditation groups to unravel the challenging practice of contemplative prayer, a unique form of meditation involving very few words in silence and stillness. Author Tom Stella writes: "Geoff Colvin is a spiritual cartographer. Drawing on his own experience and longings, Geoff maps the way to our soul; it is not a way that is divorced from our work and relationships, but one that is intertwined with ordinary life. This book is an important resource for anyone seeking a deeper connection with God." Spiritual director Dorothy Jean Beyer, OSB calls the volume "a treasure of a book on contemplative prayer. . . . very readable, engaging, practical, and down to earth for guiding Christians to practice contemplative prayer. This is a great resource for personal application and action. It will be helpful to beginners as well as to those very familiar with contemplative prayer."

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Jim Forest has written *Eyes of Compassion: Living with Thich Nhat Hanh* (Orbis, 2021), drawing on his decades of friendship with the Vietnamese

Zen master, peacemaker and spiritual guide to provide an intimate portrait, including photos and other illustrations, that communicate Nhat Hanh's spiritual teachings on mindfulness and the inner peace that is necessary for promoting world peace. Rev. John Dear writes: "A beautiful door into the life and vision of Thich Nhat Hanh, one of the greatest peacemakers and spiritual teachers in history. This intimate look into his early life inspires us to deepen in mindfulness and nonviolence, see through the eyes of compassion and live, like Thay, in the present moment of peace." Roshi Joan Halifax calls the volume an "exquisite book" that "brings us directly into the remarkable life of the great Vietnamese teacher Thich Nhat Hanh. I read it with deep joy, as Forest's words made me feel as though I had walked alongside Thay since his early years. It is full of dharma, tenderness, intimacy, and wisdom."

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Daniel P. Horan, OFM is the author of *A White Catholic's Guide to Racism and Privilege* (Ave Maria, 2021), in which he shares what he has learned about uncovering and combatting racial inequity in nation and Church, providing a prophetic response to the protests and racial tensions of recent American history as a doorway to awakening and spiritual conversion, rooted in the hope and surety of the Gospel and the wisdom of Catholic tradition, and focused on practical ways to educate ourselves and advocate for justice. Rev. James Martin, SJ calls the book "Important, urgent, and necessary" and media host Gloria Purvis writes: "This book may be an uncomfortable read, as it will prick consciences and perhaps even anger some, but you should read it with an open mind and heart anyway."

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Michael Plekon's most recent book is *Community as Church, Church as Community* (Cascade Books, 2021), in which he examines the causes of decline in participation in organized religion, but goes on to examine parishes from all over the country and from various church bodies that are resurrecting by reinventing their ministries, repurposing their buildings to better serve their neighborhoods, thus replanting and reconnecting with them. Former

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams writes: "While church institutions often seem consumed with anxiety about their future, many local congregations quietly and imaginatively find ways forward that work where they are. Michael Plekon's book reflects that grassroots critical confidence which grows out of the contexts where lives and communities are actually being changed by God in Christ. Honest and theologically acute, this book should help nurture such critical confidence more broadly." Daniel P. Horan, OFM adds: "In an age of institutional skepticism, social and ecclesial polarization, and religious disaffiliation, we need a renewed ecclesiology that responds to the 'signs of our times.' *Community as Church* provides us with exactly this kind of theological resource. Plekon's depth of knowledge and facility with key Christian sources brings a robust academic grounding to a timely pastoral challenge. This is a book that should be read by scholars and pastors alike."

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Jon Sweeney has recently written *Feed the Wolf: Befriending Our Fears in the Way of Saint Francis* (Broadleaf Books, 2021), which explores fifteen spiritual practices from the essential wisdom of Saint Francis to ease fear and uncertainty in twenty-first-century lives, each of which begins with an invitation to embrace the wolf – to consider another viewpoint, to befriend one's fears, and to discover something new along the path Saint Francis followed: the way of faith made tangible, always a way of peace. Author and activist Adam Bucko writes: "This book is not just something you read; it is something you put into practice. And when we apply the wisdom of Saint Francis, it has the power not only to heal us but, through us, to heal a hurting world." Poet and essayist Thomas Lynch adds: "The mysteries of faith and creation undergird Jon Sweeney's scholarship and erudition. His fascination with the saint of Assisi provides a reliable guide for redemptive living."

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Judith Valente and Paul Quenon, OCSO have co-authored *How to Be: A Monk and a Journalist Reflect on Living & Dying, Purpose & Prayer, Forgiveness & Friendship* (Hampton Roads Publishing, 2021),

a dialogue between two spiritual seekers, one a Trappist monk and the other a married professional woman, a mutually enriching friendship nourished through the correspondence collected in this volume, offering a window into two people struggling to come to terms with the big issues everyone faces: faith, mortality, mystery, prayer, work. Author Fenton Johnson writes: “This small book brought me joy and solace at a difficult time – what more may I say? Such a pleasure to read the correspondence of two thoughtful, perceptive people about what really matters. This small book demonstrates again that letters are among our most important literary forms.” Jon Sweeney adds: “These letters remind us that the monastic life is a gift to the world. The prayers and teachings of monks and nuns are here to help make contemplatives of all of us, regardless of where we live.”

Awards for ITMS Authors

Among the 2021 Catholic Media Association Book Award winners were three books focused on Thomas Merton: *Authenticity, Passion, and Advocacy: Approaching Adolescent Spirituality from the Life and Wisdom of Thomas Merton* (Wipf & Stock, 2020) by Thomas Malewitz won a first place award in the “Pastoral Ministry – Youth and Young Adult” category; Paul Pearson’s *Beholding Paradise: The Photographs of Thomas Merton* (Paulist, 2020) received first place in the “Religious Art” category; and Julie Leininger Pycior’s *Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and the Greatest Commandment: Radical Love in Times of Crisis* (Paulist, 2020) was awarded first place in the “History” category. In addition, ITMS member Jim Forest was given first place in the “Memoir” category for his *Writing Straight with Crooked Lines: A Memoir* (Orbis, 2020) and ITMS member Jon Sweeney received a first place in the “Best New Religious Books Series” category for his book *James Martin, SJ: In the Company of Jesus* (Liturgical Press, 2020), which was also awarded third place in the “Biography” category.

ITMS Publications for Sale

Copies of past issues of *The Merton Seasonal* and *The Merton Annual* listed below are available for purchase from the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University. Prices for the *Seasonal*

are \$5 per issue, 3 issues for \$12, 5 issues for \$18 (postage costs included) to U.S. addresses. Prices for the *Annual* (postage costs likewise included) are listed with each volume. Tables of Contents for each issue of both publications can be found on the Merton Society website at: <http://merton.org/ITMS/publications.aspx>. Checks made payable to “ITMS” should be sent to: Dr. Paul M. Pearson, Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, 2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205.

Seasonal issues available include:

- 46 (2021) 1, 2
- 45 (2020) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 44 (2019) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 43 (2018) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 42 (2017) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 41 (2016) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 40 (2015) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 39 (2014) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 38 (2013) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 37 (2012) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 36 (2011) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 35 (2010) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 34 (2009) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 33 (2008) 1, 2, 3
- 32 (2007) 1
- 31 (2006) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 30 (2005) 2, 3, 4
- 29 (2004) 1, 2, 4
- 28 (2003) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 27 (2002) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 26 (2001) 4
- 25 (2000) 2, 3
- 24 (1999) 4
- 23 (1998) 2, 4
- 22 (1997) 4
- 21 (1996) 2, 4
- 20 (1995) 3
- 19 (1994) 1, 2, 3, 4
- 17 (1992) 4
- 16 (1991) 1, 2

Annual volumes available include:

- 33 (2020) \$20
- 32 (2019) \$20
- 31 (2018) \$15
- 30 (2017) \$15

- 29 (2016) \$15
- 28 (2015) \$12
- 27 (2014) \$12
- 25 (2012) \$12
- 24 (2011) \$12
- 23 (2010) \$12
- 21 (2008) \$12
- 20 (2007) \$8
- 19 (2006) \$8
- 18 (2005) \$8
- 17 (2004) \$8

Call for Papers for CEA

The International Thomas Merton Society will once again sponsor panels and presentations at the College English Association annual convention, to be held March 31-April 2, 2022 at the Birmingham Sheraton Hotel, Birmingham, AL, the location originally chosen for the 2021 meeting, postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. The conference is a gathering of 500-600 scholar-teachers committed to literature, writing, college teaching and related fields. The theme, likewise carried over from 2021, is “Justice,” 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’s resistance to all forms of injustice (racism, individualism, violence, nationalism, white supremacy etc.); Merton and: Gandhi; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Malcolm X; John Howard Griffin etc.; spiritual roots of protest and the way of nonviolence; resurgence of interest in Merton’s writings on justice (*Seeds of Destruction*; *Faith and Violence*; *Emblems of a Season of Fury* etc.); key essays on racial justice (“Letters to a White Liberal”; “Religion and Race in the United States”; “The Hot Summer of Sixty-Seven” etc.); key poems on racial justice (“And the Children of Birmingham”; “Picture of a Black Child with a White Doll”; “May 4, 1968” etc.).

Abstracts of 200-500 words for a 6-8 page paper (15-minute presentation time) are due by November 1, 2021, submitted to www.cea-web.org. Proposals

submitted for the postponed 2021 conference will automatically remain in consideration for the 2022 convention; to withdraw a proposal, a notice to that effect should be emailed to: cea.english@gmail.com with “Abstract Withdrawal” in the subject line.

Participants must be members of the CEA (\$50/year) by January 2022. Those interested in speaking at the convention are encouraged to contact Monica Weis, SSJ, 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://cea-web.org>.

Oakham Conference

The Thirteenth General Meeting and Conference of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland is scheduled to be held April 6-8, 2022 at Oakham School, Rutland, England, the alma mater of Thomas Merton. The theme of the conference is “Where Is Our Hope?” Keynote speakers are Christopher Pramuk, current president of the International Thomas Merton Society, and Teresa Forcades, OSB, Catalan physician and social activist.

Presentations will be given by:

- Swasti Bhattacharya & Bernadette McNary-Zak on Merton and Vinoba Bhave;
 - Malcolm Cash on an African-American encounter with Merton;
 - James Cronin on Merton’s silencing;
 - Peter Ellis on Merton and the divine presence;
 - Fiona Gardner on returning “home” with Merton;
 - Gary Hall & Farai Mapamula on Merton and hope;
 - Gregory Hillis on finding God in the Other;
 - Daniel Horan, OFM on Merton’s prophetic message of hope;
 - Sam McNally-Cross on Merton and the Eucharist;
 - Gordon Oyer on Merton and Walter Weisskopf;
 - Paul Pearson on Merton and divine mercy;
 - Paul Pynkoski on Merton and the hope of proximity;
 - Angela Sheard on reading Merton as a companion.
- Workshops will be presented by:
- Martha Bailey, with a short play entitled “Sailing

to the Moon” followed by discussion;

- Larry Culliford on Merton’s advice from Alaska;
- William Horan on Merton and the Eucharist;
- Sophronia Scott on Merton’s reach for simplicity.

Conference fees are £240 for Merton Society members (£260 for non-members) when booked before January 2, 2022; £250 for members (£260 for non-members) after that date. For further details and the registration form, see the TMCGBI website: www.thomas-mertonsociety.org.uk.

Merton Happenings

On March 29, 2021, a 40-minute play of an imaginary encounter between Thomas Merton and Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet entitled *Un Pas de Deux, Un Pas de Dieu* by Christine Jensen Hogan was performed on Zoom by Michael Woodward and Katie Georgiou, sponsored by the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

On April 16-18, Sylvia Grevel led a retreat entitled “Thomas Merton as a Guide for Our Inner Journey” at the Monastery of New Norcia in West Australia.

On May 8, Bonnie Thurston gave an online presentation entitled “Merton and Women” sponsored by the Cullman, Alabama Benedictine Sisters Retreat Center.

On May 15, Contemplative Outreach Atlanta sponsored a Zoom conference by Maggie Winfrey entitled “Two Thomases: Merton and Keating Leading Us to Transformation.”

On May 15, a webinar with James Cronin and Jim Forest entitled “Where We Actually Are Is Where We Belong: Thomas Merton on the Ethos of Stability,” hosted by Anthony Purvis, was sponsored by the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

On July 6-9, Christine Bochen taught a Zoom course entitled “Created for Joy: Thomas Merton’s Spirituality of Awareness and Witness” for the Vancouver School of Theology; on July 8 she presented a public lecture entitled “Come Dance in

the Water of Life,” co-sponsored by VTS and the Thomas Merton Society of Canada.

On July 25, the Dick Sisto Trio gave a performance entitled “Raids on the Unspeakable: Jazz Musings and Memories of a Friendship with Thomas Merton,” consisting of original music composed for the Morgan Atkinson PBS documentary *Soul Searching: The Spiritual Journey of Thomas Merton*, at the Chapel of St. Philip Neri in Louisville, KY.

On August 5, Thomas Malewitz led a workshop entitled “Dignity and Grace: Thomas Merton on Race” for the Archdiocese of Louisville Summer Institute.

Upcoming Events

On September 26, 2021, Daniel P. Horan, OFM will present the 2021 Marianist Lecture entitled: “A Spirituality of Justice: Racism and Climate Change – A Catholic Response”; for further information see: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/marianist-lecture-a-spirituality-of-justice-racism-and-climate-change-tickets-169179290813?aff=erellivmlt&keep_tld=1; the presentation will be available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO5dRBFd2XU>.

On October 1, at 7 p.m. UK time, Paul Pearson and Fernando Beltrán Llavador will present a Zoom webinar entitled “Beholding Paradise: The Contemplative Lens of Monk-Photographer Thomas Merton”; for further information or to register, email: webinar@thomasmertonsociety.org.uk.

On October 1, the Centre for Christian Engagement at St. Mark’s College, University of British Columbia will host a lecture by Michael Higgins entitled “After Kamloops, the Flood,” in which he will draw on the wisdom of Thomas Merton in confronting the crisis of the recent revelations of abuses of indigenous children at Canada’s residential schools. To register, see: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/after-kamloops-the-flood-michael-w-higgins-tickets-170349435748>.

On October 23, the Beatitudes Center for the Nonviolent Jesus will host a Zoom session with Jim Forest on Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, hosted by John Dear. For further information see: www.beatitudescenter.org.

On October 28, Paul M. Pearson will present a gallery talk, followed by a reception, at the Chapman Gallery, Iona College, New Rochelle, NY in conjunction with “The Zen Photography of Thomas Merton” exhibition running at the gallery from October 25 through December 5.

On November 7, at 8 p.m. UK time, the St. Martin-in-the-Fields and Heartedge Reading Group will discuss Thomas Merton’s *The Seven Storey Mountain* with Dr. Sam Wells. For further information see: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/theology-reading-group-tickets-167228640365?aff=estw&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-source=tw&utm-term=listing>.

On February 22, 2022, Sophronia Scott will deliver the Sixteenth Annual Thomas Merton Black History Month Lecture sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY; for further information see: <http://www.merton.org/Events/#SScott>.

Chapter and Affiliate News

On October 23, the fall 2021 quarterly meeting of the North-Central Connecticut ITMS Chapter will sponsor a day-long Christian Contemplative Experience event featuring Sophronia Scott speaking on “The Humanity of Thomas Merton” at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, West Hartford, CT, also available remotely via Zoom. On July 21, the group met at the retreat center to view and discuss the film *Day of a Stranger* along with the Merton essay on which it was based. For further information contact chapter coordinator Mike Smoolca at msmoolca@hotmail.com or visit the chapter website at: <https://www.invalumen.org/northctitms.html>.

The newly formed Rock Island, IL Merton study group is planning to meet monthly on the third Monday of each month (except December) from September 20 through June 20, 2022 at the Benet House Retreat Center, led by Sister Bobbi Bussan, OSB. For further information or to register, contact Sister Jackie Walsh, OSB, at 309-283-2108 or by email at: retreats@smmsisters.org.

On May 8 the Thomas Merton Society of Canada hosted a Zoom symposium entitled “Thomas Merton and Contemplation” with speakers Monica Weis SSJ, Michael Higgins and Ajit Pyati. For further information, phone 604-988-8835 or email: tmssc@telus.net.

The Second Argentine Thomas Merton Virtual Conference will be held in September 2021 in Mendoza, Argentina, cosponsored by a number of groups including the Argentine Westlands Merton Chapter led by Marcela Raggio. Scheduled speakers include Fernando Beltrán Llavador, Cristóbal Serrán Pagan, Paul Pearson and Mark Meade. For further information contact: marcelaraggio@yahoo.com.ar.

The Brazilian Associação Thomas Merton do Brasil has organized eleven Merton reading groups meeting every other week to discuss works by Merton and their impact on their own lives and spiritual growth. For further information contact association coordinator Cristóvão de Sousa Meneses Júnior: merton.br@gmail.com; or see the group’s website: www.merton.org.br.

Send all Merton-related news to:

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The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS