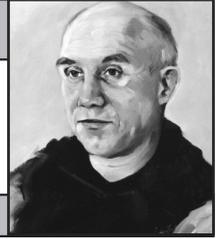


INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 29, No. 1

Spring, 2022



O'Callaghan Gallery Dedication

On November 13, 2021, a public ceremony took place marking the official dedication of the Tommie and Frank O'Callaghan Gallery of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY. The gallery, a semi-circular area adjacent to the Daggy reading room, includes display cases of various editions and translations of all Merton's books as well as volumes with marginalia in Merton's hand, along with articles of clothing and gifts sent by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI; the walls are hung with watercolors painted by Merton's father Owen and photographs of his parents, his brother and other family members. The gallery entrance is now marked by a plaque that reads: "Tommie (1931-2014) and Frank (1929-2011) O'Callaghan were close friends of Thomas Merton. In 1967 Tommie was one of the three founding members of the Thomas Merton Legacy Trust. She was devoted to the cause of the Merton Legacy and to helping establish the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University."

The event featured an introduction and welcome by Merton Center Director Dr. Paul M. Pearson and the unveiling of the plaque and brief commentary by Bellarmine President Dr. Susan M. Donovan, followed by a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing by Fr. Jack O'Callaghan, SJ, brother of Frank O'Callaghan, responses by the O'Callaghan children and a reception.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Pearson said: "As Director of the Thomas Merton Center here at Bellarmine University it is my great pleasure to welcome you all here this afternoon on behalf of President Donovan and the O'Callaghan family for the dedication of the Merton Center's gallery space in recognition of Tommie and Frank O'Callaghan. This weekend in November seemed most auspicious

for our gathering together as tomorrow, November 14, would mark both Tommie's ninetieth birthday as well as the signing of the Merton Legacy Trust document on November 14, 1967, which established the Merton Legacy Trust at Merton's behest with Tommie named by Merton as one of the original Trustees, in particular to be the local contact person for the Thomas Merton Center and the Abbey of Gethsemani."

He noted that a copy of the original Trust document was currently on exhibit, signed by the founding Trustees, Tommie O'Callaghan, Naomi Burton Stone and James Laughlin, as well as Thomas Merton, along with Frank O'Callaghan as one of the witnesses, and continued: "That Trust document would also name Bellarmine University as the official repository for Merton's literary estate. The Merton collection had already been started here at Bellarmine by Merton himself in 1963. A ceremony officially opening the collection was held in November that year. Thomas Merton wasn't allowed to be present but a statement he wrote for the occasion was read by Fr. Dan Walsh, by then a professor of philosophy here at Bellarmine but who had originally introduced Merton to the Abbey of Gethsemani and had also taught Tommie at Sacred Heart, Manhattanville."

Paying tribute to the commitment of Tommie O'Callaghan to this project, he continued: "After Merton's death Tommie would work tirelessly for the rest of her life in preserving and promoting Merton's legacy and in establishing and following through Merton's wishes for the Collection here at Bellarmine. . . . But led by her formidable spirit Tommie's work extended far beyond the physical collection in the archives to offering the gift of friendship and hospitality to an endless stream of researchers and friends of Merton who would be

visiting the Center or passing through Louisville *en route* to the Abbey.”

He then went on to pay tribute to the O’Callaghans’ particular care for the Center staff, past and present, and concluded his remarks by giving the final words to Merton himself, quoting two extracts from Merton’s November 1963 statement for the inauguration of the collection. “Naturally I feel that I have a very close bond with Bellarmine College,” the statement begins. “Archbishop Floersh, the founder of Bellarmine, ordained me to the Holy Priesthood just about the time when he founded the College. . . . Since then I have formed close friendships with many of the Bellarmine Faculty members (above all Monsignor Horrigan and Father John Loftus).” And it concludes: “I believe that a collection like this can have a meaning for us all. Whatever may be of interest to you in my work certainly belongs to you by right. I would not feel I were doing you justice by keeping it from you. If, on the other hand, there is much here that is trivial or useless, I trust your indulgence to overlook it and to pray for me. I will pray in a special way for all of you who are here today. May God bless us all, and give us all the grace to finish the work which he is asking of us.”

In her own remarks Dr. Donovan said: “I am thrilled to be here this afternoon to welcome you all to Bellarmine’s campus. I want to especially welcome Diane, Kathie, Nancy, Colleen, Kim, Sarah and John, the children of Tommie and Frank O’Callaghan, who are joining us today for this dedication. It is exceedingly rare to meet an individual who has met Thomas Merton – and today we are fortunate to be in a room with seven individuals who have not only met Thomas Merton, but knew him quite well – even affectionately referring to him as ‘Uncle Tom.’ . . . As I have learned more about Frank and Tommie O’Callaghan’s friendship with Thomas Merton, and especially Tommie’s commitment to the preservation of his legacy, the relationship between the O’Callaghan family and Bellarmine seems fitting. Hospitality in the inclusive spirit of Thomas Merton is a core value here at Bellarmine. That sense of hospitality has been exemplified by Tommie for years while hosting countless Merton

scholars in her home and will now live on through the dedication of the O’Callaghan Gallery as a space for scholars and friends to gather, learn more about Thomas Merton and share their personal reflections at Bellarmine. In 1965, Thomas Merton wrote to then president Fr. Alfred F. Horrigan, ‘This bond with Bellarmine College is to me a continued honor and joy.’ Still today, our relationship with Merton and the O’Callaghan family continues to be one of honor and joy.”

At the conclusion of the ceremony, after the blessing of the space by Fr. O’Callaghan and responses by the O’Callaghan children, each of the siblings was given a replica of the plaque, which also incorporated an etching of the Merton drawing used as the Merton Center’s logo.

James H. Forest (1941-2022)

Jim Forest, peace activist and prolific author, friend, correspondent and biographer of Thomas Merton and longtime member of the International Thomas Merton Society, died January 13, 2022 in Alkmaar, Holland, at the age of 80. Born in Salt Lake City, Utah on November 2, 1941, the son of committed communist parents, his early years were spent in Colorado. He moved to New Jersey at the age of five with his mother and younger brother when his parents divorced; as an adolescent he spent part of his time in Hollywood, California with his father. Dropping out of high school before graduation, he enlisted in the Navy and worked as a weather analyst in Washington, DC until he applied for and received an early discharge as a conscientious objector in 1961, after being received into the Catholic Church the previous year. He joined the staff of the Catholic Worker community in New York City and served for a time as managing editor of *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, and began his correspondence with Thomas Merton at that time, visiting him at the Abbey of Gethsemani in February 1962, later participating in the historic peacemakers retreat at the monastery in November 1964. Merton’s letters to Forest are included in *The Hidden Ground of Love*, the first volume of Merton’s collected correspondence, among them the famous letter of February 21, 1966, often known as “Letter to a Young Activist,” in which Merton

counsels him not to “depend on the hope of results” but to concentrate “on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself.” After working briefly for *Liberation* magazine, the Committee for Non-Violent Action and Catholic Relief Service, he was a founding staff person for the Catholic Peace Fellowship, an affiliate organization of the religious pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation, for which he worked in the late 1960s with responsibility as the group’s Vietnam programs coordinator, including accompanying Vietnamese Buddhist monk and peace advocate Thich Nhat Hanh on his speaking tours, beginning a life-long relationship. He was imprisoned for thirteen months in 1969-1970 after being convicted as a member of the Milwaukee Fourteen, which engaged in the second draft board raid, destroying more than 10,000 selective service records. In 1973 he became editor of *Fellowship*, the FOR magazine, and four years later moved to Holland to serve as General Secretary of the International FOR, a position he held for twelve years. In 1988, Jim and his wife Nancy joined the Orthodox Church after visiting Russia and being inspired by the faith evident there in the difficult circumstances of the final years of the Soviet Union and the following year he became International Secretary of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship and editor of its journal, *In Communion*.

In 1980, he published his first book, *Thomas Merton: A Pictorial Biography*, which later appeared in two expanded editions as *Living with Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton* (1991; 2008). He subsequently wrote companion biographies of two other important friends and mentors: *All Is Grace: A Biography of Dorothy Day* (2011; a revised and expanded version of the 1986 volume *Love Is the Measure*) and *At Play in the Lions’ Den: A Biography and Memoir of Daniel Berrigan* (2017). His 2016 volume *The Root of War Is Fear: Thomas Merton’s Advice to Peacemakers* received the International Thomas Merton Society “Louie” award in 2017 for outstanding recent publication on Merton. His other books include: *Making Friends of Enemies* (1987); *Pilgrimage to the Russian Church* (1988); *Religion in the New Russia* (1990); *Praying with Icons* (1997); *The Ladder of the Beatitudes* (1999);

Confession: The Doorway to Forgiveness (2002); *The Wormwood File: E-Mail from Hell* (2004); *Road to Emmaus: Pilgrimage as a Way of Life* (2007); *Loving Our Enemies: Reflections on the Hardest Commandment* (2014), as well as the children’s books *Silent as a Stone: Mother Maria of Paris and the Trash Can Rescue* (2007); *Saint George and the Dragon* (2011) and *Saint Nicholas and the Nine Gold Coins* (2015). His final publications were his memoir, *Writing Straight with Crooked Lines* (2020) and *Eyes of Compassion: Learning from Thich Nhat Hanh* (2021). He is survived by Nancy Forest-Flier, his wife of forty years, his six children and his grandchildren.

Thich Nhat Hanh (1926-2022)

Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk and peace activist who became a “brother” to Thomas Merton, died January 22, 2022 at the Tir Hieu Pagoda in Hue, Vietnam, the monastic community he entered in 1942 at age 16, to which he returned in 2019 after more than five decades of exile in the West. Born October 11, 1926, as a young monk he was a leader in the effort to renew Vietnamese Buddhist life in what came to be called “Engaged Buddhism.” He studied at a secular university in Saigon, and in 1961 traveled to the U.S., where he studied comparative religions at Princeton University and was subsequently appointed lecturer in Buddhism at Columbia University. Upon his return to Vietnam two years later, he established the School of Youth for Social Service, which combined traditional Buddhist practices with direct service to the wider society, based on teachings of compassion, mindfulness and nonviolence. His opposition to the Vietnam War, which brought him back to America in the mid-1960s on a lecture tour sponsored by the religious pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation, forced him into exile, first under the U.S.-sponsored South Vietnamese regime and later under the Communist government. He established the Buddhist community of Plum Village in 1982 at Thénac, near Bordeaux in southern France, where he lived for almost four decades, while frequently travelling to lead mindfulness retreats. He wrote more than 100 books, among the most popular being *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, *Living Buddha*, *Living*

Christ, Being Peace and Peace Is Every Breath. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Rev. Martin Luther King, whom he met in Chicago during his 1966 US tour and encouraged to extend his nonviolent witness to include opposition to the Vietnam conflict, which King did in his historic speech at Riverside Church in April 1967. In his January 25, 1967 letter to the Nobel Committee, King wrote: “I do not know of anyone more worthy of the Nobel Prize than this gentle Buddhist monk from Vietnam. . . . [He] offers a way out of this nightmare, a solution acceptable to rational leaders. . . . His ideas for peace, if applied, would build a momentum to ecumenism, to world brotherhood, to humanity.”

On May 26, 1966, Nhat Hanh, accompanied by Fellowship of Reconciliation field secretary John Heidbrink, visited the Abbey of Gethsemani and met Thomas Merton there. Their conversation created a deep spiritual bond between the two monks, leading Merton to write his brief essay “Nhat Hanh Is My Brother” that very night, in which he said: “He is more my brother than many who are nearer to me by race and nationality, because he and I see things exactly the same way. . . . I have far more in common with Nhat Hanh than I have with many Americans, and I do not hesitate to say it. It is vitally important that such bonds be admitted. They are the bonds of a new solidarity . . . which is beginning to be evident on all five continents and which cuts across all political, religious and cultural lines to unite young men and women in every country in something that is more concrete than an ideal and more alive than a program.” He concluded with the plea: “This unity of the young is the only hope of the world. In its name I appeal for Nhat Hanh. Do what you can for him. If I mean something to you, then let me put it this way; do for Nhat Hanh whatever you would do for me if I were in his position. In many ways I wish I were.” Merton’s statement was first published in the August 1966 issue of *Jubilee* magazine, and was later included in his 1968 volume *Faith and Violence*. Merton also wrote the Foreword to Nhat Hanh’s *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire* (1967), which he calls “the first clear articulation of views and claims that

we have hitherto completely ignored” concerning Western involvement in Indo-China and the current conflict there. On June 27, 1966 Merton also wrote his own letter to the Nobel Committee nominating Nhat Hanh for the Peace Prize. Nhat Hanh appears in the 1984 documentary *Merton: A Film Biography* and his interview for that production is included in Paul Wilkes’ *Merton: By Those Who Knew Him Best* (1984). An in-depth look at the two figures is provided by Robert H. King in *Thomas Merton and Thich Nhat Hanh: Engaged Spirituality in an Age of Globalization* (2001).

Through his writings, retreats and workshops, Nhat Hanh, along with the Dalai Lama, became one of the best known and most influential teachers of Buddhist spirituality and practice in the Western world. In 2005, Nhat Hanh finally gained permission from the Vietnamese communist government in Hanoi to return to his native land for a visit. He was allowed to teach there briefly as well as travel the country with monastic and lay members from his Hue community, followed by further visits in 2007 and 2008. In November 2014, shortly after his eighty-eighth birthday, Nhat Hanh experienced a severe stroke in a hospital in Bordeaux, France, becoming mostly paralyzed on the right side and losing his ability to speak. After treatment at the University of California, San Francisco Hospital he eventually returned to France. In November 2019, he left France and after stopping in Thailand returned home to his monastery in Hue where he remained until his death.

Ross Labrie (1936-2021)

Merton scholar Ross Labrie died November 16, 2021 in Kelowna, British Columbia. He was born on October 17, 1936 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, son of Ernest and Helen McCarthy Labrie. He received his bachelor’s degree from Loyola College in Montreal in 1957, followed by a master’s degree from McGill University in 1960 and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Toronto in 1966. He first taught at the University of Saskatchewan in 1962-63 as an instructor in English, moving to the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC in 1963 and remaining there until his retirement as professor of English in 2001. Following his

retirement, he joined the faculty of Arts One, an integrated, interdisciplinary program at UBC. In 1980-81, he was he held a fellowship in the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. In 1966 he married his wife Gisela, with whom he raised two sons, Mark and Steven. After living in North Vancouver for decades, he and Gisela moved recently to Kelowna to be near his son Steven and family. In 1979, he published *The Art of Thomas Merton*, which received an outstanding book citation from *Choice* magazine; his second book on Merton, *Thomas Merton and the Inclusive Imagination*, published in 1971, received the International Thomas Merton Society “Louie” award in 2003 for outstanding work on Merton published during the previous two years. He also was author of *The Catholic Imagination in American Literature*, (1997), a study of thirteen U.S. Catholic authors, including Merton, as well as *Howard Nemerov* (1980), *James Merrill* (1982) and *The Writings of Daniel Berrigan* (1989). He was active in leadership roles in the Thomas Merton Society of Canada, serving as its president in recent years, and co-editing and contributing to the volume *Thomas Merton: Monk on the Edge*, issued by the TMSC in 2012. He also served as an ITMS International Advisor and a longtime member of the Editorial Committee for *The Merton Annual*. He was a frequent contributor to ITMS publications, publishing ten articles and reviews in *The Merton Seasonal*, most recently “Art and Being in Thomas Merton” (Fall 2020), as well as seven pieces in *The Merton Annual*. His friend and fellow Canadian Merton scholar Michael W. Higgins praised him as “a respected English literature scholar with an estimable publication record, an admired, even loved, teacher and mentor for a platoon of students and colleagues, a devoted husband, father and grandfather . . . a collegial man, a community man, a man of faith and with integrity to burn . . . an appealing example of what we mean when we talk about the witness of a Catholic intellectual.” His funeral mass was celebrated November 22 at St. Charles Garnier Catholic church in Kelowna. He is survived by his wife and sons, his brother Warren and his grandchildren Kyla, Danika, Cohen, Josh

and Charlotte.

Raymond H. Bailey (1938-2021)

Raymond H. Bailey, Baptist minister, first director of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University and author of one of the earliest scholarly volumes on Merton’s life and work, died November 28, 2021. Born in Athens, Texas on January 31, 1938 (exactly 23 years after Thomas Merton) to R. G. and Ada Ann Bailey, he grew up in a poor family and held early jobs at Sears, as a radio announcer, an actor, a teacher and a child welfare worker. He attended Baylor University in Waco, Texas, receiving a bachelor’s degree in both religion and drama in 1959, followed by a master’s degree in speech from Texas Tech University in 1964, and a master’s of divinity and doctorate in history and philosophy from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville in 1970 and 1973, respectively, writing his doctoral dissertation on Thomas Merton under the direction of E. Glenn Hinson, subsequently published in 1975 as *Thomas Merton on Mysticism*. While serving as director of what was then called the Thomas Merton Studies Center, he also was associate professor of Theology and chair of the Communication Arts Department at Bellarmine. He later taught at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he was a Professor of Christian Preaching and founder of the National Center for Christian Preaching, for which he served as director for many years. His pastorates included Hebron Baptist Church, Madison IN; First Baptist Church, Newport, KY; First Baptist Church, Plantation, FL; Lyndon Baptist Church, Louisville KY; and Seventh and James Baptist Church, Waco, TX. In addition, he served as interim pastor for more than twenty churches including Highland Baptist Church and Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville and Pendleton Street Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. In addition to his Merton volume, he authored a number of other books, including *Jesus the Preacher*, *Paul the Preacher*, *Dramatic Monologues: Making the Bible Live*, *The Prayer Life of Jesus* and *Destiny and Disappointment*. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Patricia Bailey, his daughters Hollie Spade and Sarah Paris, and grandchildren, Bailey and Yulie Spade and Abbie

and Olivia Paris. Visitation and worship service were held December 3, 2021 at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville.

James M. Bannon (1946-2022)

Jim Bannon, longtime member of the Chicago Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society, died January 20, 2022 as a result of pancreatic cancer. Born in Chicago July 20, 1946, son of Hugh and Marie O'Connor Bannon, he attended St. Philomena Elementary School, DePaul Academy High School and the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he led a variety of student groups and was actively involved in campus publications. A long-time member of St. Philomena Parish, he was for many years owner and proprietor of Bannon Carpets, whose clients included the Chicago marathon. Jim was married to Linda (Balderrama) Bannon for over 50 years; he was the father of three children, Daniel, Elizabeth and Jessica, and grandfather of six: Colin, Jacob, Ryan, David, Molly and James. In the 1980s, Jim founded West Central Athletics, a sports league for Catholic schools in Chicago, and ran it for over thirty years, providing community engagement, fellowship and team-building opportunities to generations of children and families in the Hermosa neighborhood and beyond. He was very active in assisting with hospitality at Chicago ITMS chapter meetings and in taking photographs not only at local meetings but at ITMS general meetings at St. Bonaventure University (2017) and the University of Santa Clara (2019). His funeral was celebrated January 26 at St. Francis Borgia Church in Chicago. Mike Brennan, Chicago chapter coordinator, praised his commitment to the local Merton Society, saying: "Jim was a huge help to me for many years. I will miss him greatly."

ITMS Authors

Bonnie Thurston's most recent book is *Saint Mary of Egypt: A Modern Verse Life and Interpretation*, Foreword by Benedicta Ward, SLG (Liturgical Press, 2021) (136 pp. \$15.95). Lawrence Cunningham writes: "This volume provides us with a double pleasure. First, we have a sensitive version of the life done by Thurston. Second, we get a capacious study of how her life was received and expanded in the history of hagiography and spirituality. There is

much to savor and instruct in this book." Joyce E. Salisbury adds: "This study of Mary of Egypt is in two parts: a poetic life and a scholarly analysis. It is a perfect combination of art and science that offers the clearest and most compassionate study of the saint that I have read."

* * * * *

A new edition of Ron Dart's book *The Beatitudes: When Mountain Meets Valley* (originally published in 2005) has been issued by True North Publishing (105 pp. \$19.99 cloth), also available on Kindle and in audio. In his Foreword to the new edition, Bradley Jersak writes: "Has Christianity ever needed an upgrade in discernment so urgently as we do now? Those who install this time-tested forge in their hearts will soon appreciate what reliable protection it offers from the cacophony of deceiving voices, not least those lurking within. With that, I commend you to the attentive care of my mentor, friend, and Sherpa. Enjoy the hike, endure the furnace!"

* * * * *

Fiona Gardner has recently published *Taking Heart: Experiences of Spiritual Searching, Self-Acceptance and Journeying to the Heart of Faith*, with an Introduction by Jim Forest (Christian Alternative Books, 2021) (133 pp. \$14.95). John Moses writes: "It is our personal relationships that define our humanity and the things at which we stumble, the questions with which we grapple, provide the moments of encounter, of discovery. Fiona Gardner draws upon her insights as a theologian and a psychotherapist to point us towards the God who gives shape and meaning to our inner journey." Daniel P. Horan, OFM adds: "This book is more than an introduction to the spiritual life; it is a compass pointing the way for modern women and men searching for a profounder sense of spirituality and a deeper sense of self!"

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 December 14, 2021, Paul M. Pearson gave a presentation entitled "'I love beer, and, by that very fact, the world': The Humor

(and Humanity) of Thomas Merton”; on January 11, 2022, Douglas Hertler spoke on: “Merton, You, and Me: The Reality of Life in the Paschal Mystery”; on February 8, Steven P. Millies gave a presentation entitled “Our Crisis of Authority and Thomas Merton.” Upcoming presentations include Gregory K. Hillis, speaking on “What Does Thomas Merton Have to Tell Us about Catholic Identity” on March 8 at 8 PM (EST); Deborah Pope Kehoe: “Thomas Merton and Southern Writers” on April 12; Gordon Oyer: “Re-Visioning a Fragmented World: Learning from Merton’s Letters on Social Change” on May 10; Malgorzata Poks: “*The Geography of Lograire* as Thomas Merton’s Ultimate Autobiography” on June 14. 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>.

Shannon Homilies Available

The third collection of the homilies of Monsignor William H. Shannon, founding president of the International Thomas Merton Society and author of numerous volumes on Merton’s life and work, has now been published. *Faithful to the Word: The Sunday and Feast Day Homilies of William H. Shannon, Liturgical Cycle C*, is now available through the gift shop of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, NY. The collection of his homilies in this latest book relates to the Sunday readings according to the Gospel of Luke. Volume editor Barbara Staropoli, SSJ writes of this collection: “Using his gifts as a creative and poetic writer, Monsignor Shannon faithfully shared his reflections each week, helping his congregation find deeper life in God’s word, and encouraging us to go forward from the Eucharistic table strengthened to bring Christian love into the world through our eyes.” A copy of *Faithful to the Word* can be ordered by contacting Patricia Sullivan, SSJ at 585-641-8230; cost is \$15, plus \$10 shipping fee, if required. A limited number of copies of the homilies for Cycle B are also still available and can be ordered through the gift shop.

Fons Vitae Celebration

On November 18, Fons Vitae Publications celebrated the publication of *Thomas Merton &*

Hinduism: The Yoga of the Heart, the ninth and final volume of the Fons Vitae Thomas Merton Series of books on Merton’s interreligious dialogues with a program entitled “Swagatam – A Celebration of India: Faith, the Arts, and our Shared Universal Values” at the Speed Museum in Louisville, KY. Speakers included volume editor David Odoriso, translator Coleman Barks, whose volume *What Wants to Come Through Me Now, Rabindranath Tagore’s Gitanjali (Song Offerings)* was also highlighted at the event, Paul Quenon, OCSO, Robert Thurman, Francis X. Clooney, SJ, Pico Iyer, Paul Pearson and numerous other presenters, as well as performers of Indian music and dance. The event served as a prelude to the annual Louisville Festival of Faiths, which began on the evening of the same day. Information on viewing the entire program or individual presentations through YouTube can be accessed on the Fons Vitae website: fonsvitae.com/india-speed/.

Merton Happenings

On November 6, 2021, a conversation between author Sophronia Scott and Professor Alan Kolp entitled “Thomas Merton’s Key to Grace for an Impossible World” was presented via Zoom, hosted by Centering Space in Lakewood, Ohio.

On December 11, Jonathan Montaldo and Rev. Vincent Pizzuto presented a four-hour Zoom reflection entitled “Love Winter When the Plant Says Nothing: Praying When Our Hearts Are on Ice,” sponsored by St. Columba’s Contemplative Episcopal Church, Inverness, CA.

On January 10, 17, 24, 31, 2022, Alan Kolp presented a mini-course on “Thomas Merton and Ilia Delio with a Quaker Touch” for the Cleveland Ecumenical Institute for Religious Studies.

On January 17, Judith Valente gave a presentation entitled “Merton on Contemplation and Prayer” for the Thomas Merton Study Group at St. Mary Monastery, Rock Island, IL; on February 21, she made a follow-up presentation to the group entitled “Merton’s Contemplative Wisdom for Crisis Times.”

On February 22, Sophronia Scott presented the Sixteenth Annual Thomas Merton Black History Month Lecture, sponsored by the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, entitled “Uncovering a Hidden Wholeness: The Essence of Unity and Thomas Merton’s Hope for the Human Race.” An audio recording of the lecture is available at: <http://merton.org/Research/AV/TMBHM/Scott-2022.mp3>.

On March 1, Gregory Hillis gave an online presentation entitled “Man of Dialogue: Thomas Merton’s Catholic Vision,” sponsored by Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, drawing on his new book of the same title.

Upcoming Events

The Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain & Ireland is sponsoring a virtual Lenten series entitled “Thomas Merton, Pilgrimage of the Heart” with Rev. Máirt Hanley, consisting of a series of seven virtual stations or moments to pause as based on the seven canonical hours of the day extending across the seven weeks of the Lenten season (Wednesday, March 2 to Thursday, April 14, 2022). The virtual pause moments will be based on excerpts from Merton’s writings as chosen by James Cronin. Virtual pause moments, with guided reflections, will be posted at noon (Irish time) every Wednesday throughout Lent on [MáirtHanley@youtube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMáirtHanley).

On March 6 at 3 p.m. Douglas Hertler will give a performance of his one-person play *Merton and Me, A Living Trinity* at the Church of the Assumption in Emerson, NJ. Subsequent performances will take place March 18 at St. Joseph Church, Bound Brook, NJ; March 26 at St. Mark’s Church, Jackson Heights, NY; April 2 at the Church of Notre Dame, New York, NY.

On April 7, Gregory Hillis will present a lecture entitled “Pope Francis and Thomas Merton: The Need for Dialogue” at St. Barnabas Pimlico Church in London, sponsored by the Thomas Merton Society Great Britain and Ireland and the Society of St. Francis (Third Order).

On April 8-9, a symposium entitled “La Saviesa de les Tradicions Religioses: El Repte de la Transmissió” (“The Wisdom of Religious Traditions: The Challenge of Transmission”) will take place in Barcelona, Spain organized by the Religiosas Filipenses Misioneras de la Enseñanza. The introductory keynote address, entitled “Thomas Merton: The Abyss of Contemplation and the Source of Compassion,” will be given by Fernando Beltrán Llavador. For further information see: <https://casaespiritualitat.barcelona/properes-activitats>.

On June 12 Douglas Hertler and Brother Don Bisson, FMS will lead a one-day retreat entitled “Merton My Soul Friend,” which will also include the performance of Douglas Hertler’s one-person play *Merton and Me, A Living Trinity*, at The Center at Mariandale in Ossining, NY; for further information see: <https://centeratmariandale.secure.nonprofitsoapbox.com/upcoming-events?start=80>.

On July 17-22, Kathleen Dufy, SSJ will present a course entitled “Images of God in Teilhard and Merton” at the Maryknoll Mission Institute 2022. For further information see: <http://www.maryknollsisters.org/missioninstitute> or call 914-941-7575, ext. 5671; or email: missinst@mksisters.org.

Chapter and Affiliate News

During the pandemic, the local ITMS chapter in Belmar, NJ moved from in-person meetings to virtual meetings, which have included new members from other parts of New Jersey, one from Denver, CO and another from Ethiopia now living in Canada. Others are invited to join the group for book discussions and other events via Zoom on the first Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:00 p.m. For further details, contact chapter coordinator Gregory Ryan at GJRyan@WCCM.org.

Send all Merton-related news to:

Pat O’Connell

Box 3219

Gannon University

Erie, PA 16541

ocConnell001@gannon.edu

The ITMS Newsletter is also available online at:

www.merton.org/ITMS