

## INTERNATIONAL THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

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Art: Jim Cantrell

### Major Gift to Merton Center

Manuscripts and other papers by Thomas Merton appraised at a value of nearly one million dollars have recently been donated to the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY by Merton's longtime editor Robert Giroux. The gift is the largest single addition to the archives at the Center, the major repository for Merton's papers, since the core of the collection was received from Merton himself and from the Abbey of Gethsemani in the years leading up to and shortly after Merton's death in 1968. It follows a previous donation of materials by Mr. Giroux in 2001 valued at more than \$200,000, which at the time he believed included all the Merton-related documents in his possession.

The more than 3000 pages of newly discovered documents include drafts or proofs of five books: *The Waters of Siloe*, *The Sign of Jonas*, *Thoughts in Solitude*, *Disputed Questions*, and *The Ascent to Truth*, of which four heavily edited versions were found. Among the other materials are a draft of Merton's never-published book "Art and Worship," letters between Merton and Giroux, versions of numerous essays, and even a rejection slip from Harcourt, Brace, Giroux's original firm, dating from 1940, in which the publisher's reader said of one of Merton's early autobiographical novels, "I think Mr. Merton's got something, but not quite enough to do anything about."

The new materials will be made available for research along with the rest of the Center's collection of over 50,000 items. In an interview with *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, Center director Dr. Paul M. Pearson predicted that scholars "would have a field day" investigating the newly received documents.

### Spanish Merton Conference

The first international Thomas Merton conference to be held in Spain, entitled "Seeds of Hope: Thomas

Merton's Contemplative Message," will take place October 27-29, 2006 at the Auditorio Municipal de San Francisco in Avila. The conference is co-sponsored by the Centro Internacional de Estudios Místicos in Avila and the Thomas Merton Center of Bellarmine University.

Presenters will include: conference co-director Fernando Beltrán Llavador: "Thomas Merton and 'The Great Feast of Christian Hope'"; conference co-director Paul M. Pearson: "Emblems for a Season of Fury: The Art of Thomas Merton"; Fr. James Conner, OCSO: "Thomas Merton: Monk and Spiritual Master"; James Forest: "Thomas Merton as a Living Bridge Linking Christians East and West"; Erlinda G. Paguio: "Hope as an Unexpected, Incomprehensible and Total Gift: Reflections on Merton's Life and Writings"; Fr. Francisco Rafael de Pascual, OCSO: "The Secret Hope and the Hoped-for Secret: Keys for Life"; Sonia Petisco: "'O Sweet Escape! O Smiling Flight!': Recital and Commentaries to a Selection of Poems by Thomas Merton"; Cristóbal Serran-Pagan y Fuentes: "Seeds of Hope in Times of Crisis: Saint John of the Cross and Thomas Merton"; and Bonnie Thurston: "'A Realm of White Hot Faith': Thomas Merton on Islam in Spain."

The conference will be opened by Miguel Ángel García Nieto, the Mayor of Ávila and President of the Municipal Foundation of Mystical Studies. The program will also include liturgy of the hours with the Benedictine monks of Santo Domingo de Silos and Cistercian monks and nuns, times for prayer and contemplation, celebration of the Eucharist, cultural activities, and visits to the town, best known through its associations with the Spanish mystics St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

Registration fees for the conference are \$75 until August 31, 2006, and \$100 thereafter (until October 16). Checks, payable to "Merton Conference," may be sent to Dr. Paul M. Pearson, Merton Conference in Avila, Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, 2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205. Initial informa-

tion on accommodations can be found at <http://www.avilaturismo.com>; further information on the conference itself, including the schedule, can be found at <http://www.merton.org/> Spain or at [www.ciem.es](http://www.ciem.es).

### Merton Room Dedication Planned

On July 4, the official opening of the Thomas Merton Reading Room at the Vancouver School of Theology, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada will take place at 6.30 p.m. Speakers will include ITMS President Paul M Pearson, Thomas Merton Society of Canada President Ross Labrie, Abbot Damien Thompson, OCSO of the Abbey of Gethsemani, and Wendy Fletcher, Principal of the Vancouver School of Theology. At 7.30 p.m., Bernie Lucht of the Canadian Broadcasting Company, producer of "Heretic Blood," the CBC radio documentary on Merton, will give a public lecture entitled "Backstage Stories with Thomas Merton." On July 5 and 7 at 12:45 p.m., Paul Pearson will present gallery talks on Thomas Merton's photography in conjunction with the exhibition entitled "A Hidden Wholeness: The Zen Photography of Thomas Merton," which will run from July 3-28 in the Iona Building at VST.

### Two Members Added to Merton Annual Board

Two new members have recently been added to the Board of Editors of *The Merton Annual*, a refereed journal since its inception in 1986. Both have been active with the *Annual* through the past several issues. Professor David Belcastro of Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, wrote the Bibliographic Survey Essay for Volume 17 and coordinated Book Reviews for Volume 18 (2006). Professor Lynn Szabo of Trinity Western University, Vancouver, British Columbia, edited the sub-section in Volume 17 which derived from the papers of the 2003 General Meeting in Vancouver.

Other current members of the Board include: A. M. Allchin (University of Wales), Anne E. Carr (University of Chicago), Michael Casey, OCSO (Tarrawarra Abbey, Australia), David Cooper (Michigan State University), Lawrence Cunningham (University of Notre Dame), Robert Faricy, SJ (Gregorian University, Rome), Donald Grayston (Simon Fraser University), Patrick Hart, OCSO (Abbey of Gethsemani), Terrence Kardong, OSB (Assumption Abbey), Dewey Kramer (Georgia Perimeter College), Ross Labrie (University of British Columbia), Elena Malits, CSC (St. Mary's College), Patrick F. O'Connell (Gannon University), Bonnie

Bowman Thurston (Wheeling, WV), Rowan Williams (Canterbury, England).

### Merton Happenings

On December 11, the Thomas Merton Foundation sponsored a presentation commemorating the thirty-seventh anniversary of Thomas Merton's death entitled "Reflections on Thomas Merton: A Conversation with Fr. Matthew Kelly," moderated by Dr. William Paulsell, at the Clifton Center Theater in Louisville, Kentucky.

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On Jan. 22-27, George Kilcourse taught a class entitled "Thomas Merton: An Engaged and Inclusive Spirituality," in St. Petersburg, Florida, sponsored by Columbia Theological Seminary in cooperation with Eckerd College.

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On Jan. 30, Louisville's Cathedral Heritage Foundation and the Cathedral of the Assumption sponsored its twelfth annual Merton Birthday program with a presentation entitled "Merton's Humor: 'Snapping the Fingers at Life'" by George Kilcourse.

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On January 30-February 3, Esther de Waal led a Thomas Merton Study Seminar at the Cathedral College of Preachers in Washington, DC.

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On the four Saturdays in February, Brenda Fitch Fairaday led a discussion group on the book *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master* entitled "Life and Holiness: Reading Thomas Merton" at Blessed Sacrament Church in New York City.

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On February 23, Terry Taylor and Paul M Pearson led a discussion group on Thomas Merton's *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* at Carmichaels Bookstore in Louisville, KY.

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On March 15, Abbot John Eudes Bamberger spoke on "Thomas Merton: Monk and Spiritual Master" at the Cralle Theater, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, sponsored by the Bellarmine Thomas Merton Center.

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On March 19, Paul M. Pearson gave a presentation entitled "Thomas Merton: A Monk with the Vision of an Artist" to the Thomas Merton Society of Rochester at St. Joseph's Motherhouse, Pittsford, NY.

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On March 21 Malgorzata Poks gave an open lecture on "Merton as an Icon of the Twentieth Century" at

Teacher Training College, Sosnowiec, Poland.

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On April 1, Patrick O'Connell gave a presentation entitled "Mending Walls: Thomas Merton's Evolving Poetic Imagination" at the South Central meeting of the Conference on Christianity and Literature in New Orleans.

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On April 6, John Collins gave a presentation entitled, "Thomas Merton's Reflection on the Passion" at the Calvary Retreat Center in Shrewsbury, MA.

### Upcoming Events

On May 25, Sr. José Hobday, OSF will give a presentation entitled "Christianity - A Living and Perpetual Revolution: The Challenge of Thomas Merton" at the Cralle Theater, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, sponsored by the Bellarmine Thomas Merton Center. The presentation will begin at 7 p.m. and is open to the public.

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June 19-23, Vaughn Fayle will present a course entitled "Thomas Merton and the Theology of Art" at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. For further information contact Dr. Opal Easter: phone: 773-753-5337; email: [oeaster@ctu.edu](mailto:oeaster@ctu.edu); website: [www.ctu.edu](http://www.ctu.edu).

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June 25-30, Jonathan Montaldo will speak on "Thomas Merton: In Search of Peace" as part of a course entitled "Catholic in the USA" at La Salle University in Philadelphia. For further information contact Fr. Frank Berna, OFM: phone: 215-951-1346; email: [berna@lasalle.edu](mailto:berna@lasalle.edu).

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From June 25 through July 1, Anthony Padovano will present a course entitled "Thomas Merton and Contemporary Spirituality" as part of the Institute for Adult Spiritual Renewal at the Lakeshore Campus of Loyola University, Chicago. For further information phone 312-915-7970 or visit the website at [www.retreatsintl.org](http://www.retreatsintl.org).

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July 3-7, Dr. Monica Weis, SSJ will present a course entitled "Finding the Sky within You: Thomas Merton, Man of Prayer and Contemporary Issues" at the Vancouver School of Theology, Chalmers Institute, Vancouver, BC. For further information phone 604-822-9563 or email: [registrar@vst.edu](mailto:registrar@vst.edu), or visit the website at [www.vst.edu](http://www.vst.edu).

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July 3-16, Dr. Les McKeown will present a course entitled "Thomas Merton and Contemplation" at Newman Theological College, Edmonton, Alberta. For further information, phone: 780-447-2993 or 1-800-386-7231; email: [registrar@newman.edu](mailto:registrar@newman.edu).

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July 16-22, Fr. Patrick Collins will lead a Thomas Merton Retreat at St. Columban Center, Derby, NY. For further information, phone 716-947-4708.

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The next "Week with Thomas Merton" Elderhostel at Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, will be held from Sunday October 8 through Friday October 13; for further information contact Linda Bailey by phone at 502-452-8161 or by e-mail at [lbailey@bellarmine.edu](mailto:lbailey@bellarmine.edu).

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On October 11, Robert Ellsberg, editor-in-chief of Orbis Books, will give a presentation entitled "Saints for Now: Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and Henri Nouwen" at the Cralle Theater, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY, sponsored by the Bellarmine Thomas Merton Center. The presentation will begin at 7 p.m. and is open to the public.

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On four Tuesday evenings from October 17 through November 7, a program entitled "Merton's Spiritual Journey Is Our Own" will be held at the Spiritual Life Institute of Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center, Citrus Heights, CA. The series will be led by John Berger, director of the Northern California Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society, assisted on October 24 by Fr. Art Wehr, SJ, associate pastor of St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, Sacramento, CA. The topics include: "Who are we? What do we believe? Where exactly do we stand? Who was Thomas Merton" (October 17); "Our Spiritual Journeys; Merton's Spiritual Journey" and "Merton's Mode of Prayer" (October 24); "Why we must be ecumenical; why we need encounters" (October 31); "Peace and Justice: Merton's *Contemplation in a World of Action and Peace in a Post-Christian Era*" (November 7). For further information contact John Berger at: 916-482-6976 or by email at: [bergerjh@rcip.com](mailto:bergerjh@rcip.com).

### Chapter News

On January 15, the Northwest Chicago Chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society featured a talk by Sr. Suzanne Zuercher, OSB, entitled "Loving and Living: Merton's Last Task" at the Passionist Monastery, 5700 N. Harlem, Chicago. On January 30 and

March 27, Fr. Francis Cusack led roundtable discussions on *The Intimate Merton*. On February 26, Erlinda Paguio, immediate past president of the International Thomas Merton Society and chair of the program committee for the Tenth General Meeting (June 7-10, 2007) in Memphis, spoke on "Reflections on Merton and His Asian Friends" at the Passionist Monastery.

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On April 2, the Chicago Chapter of the ITMS viewed *Merton: A Film Biography* at the Concordia University Alumni Room in the Koehnke Community Center, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL 60305; on April 30, the chapter viewed *Remembering Thomas Merton*, a compilation of remembrances by people who knew Merton, produced by the Thomas Merton Foundation. For further information contact Mike Brennan: phone: 773-447-3989; email: cc.itms@gmail.com.

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The Cincinnati Chapter of The International Thomas Merton Society is sponsoring a "pilgrimage-retreat" entitled "Merton and Peace" at the Abbey of Gethsemani, November 3-5, 2006, led by Tony Russo, Chapter Coordinator. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of finding inner peace, of opening to the Peacemaker, God, as the foundation for working for peace in the world. For further information contact Tony Russo at 513-941-5219; email: trusso@fuse.net.

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In September, Roger Lipsey spoke to the Corpus Christi (New York City) Chapter on Merton's Drawing and Calligraphy. Gerard Straub led the Retreat Day on November 5, entitled "Poverty and Prayer: Walking with St. Francis and Thomas Merton." On March 4, Esther de Waal addressed the chapter on Merton and his photography. On May 20, Bonnie Thurston will speak to the members on "Merton and Islam." For further information see the chapter website: <http://www.corpus-christi-nyc.org/MertonSociety.htm>.

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The Mississippi Chapter of the ITMS is sponsoring "A Prayer Retreat with Thomas Merton" led by chapter coordinator Dr. John H. Staggs at the Abbey of Gethsemani June 19-23. For further information contact Dr. Staggs at 662-369-2519; email: merton@netdoor.com.

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The Northern California Chapter of the ITMS discussed *Raids on the Unspeakable* at its January and March meetings. A day of prayer at the Cistercian abbey in Vina took place on March 18. The May 21 meeting will focus on *No Man Is an Island*. For further information contact John Berger: 916-482-6976; email:

bergerjh@rcip.com.

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The new Oregon Chapter of the ITMS held its first meetings November 12 and February 11 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey, about 30 miles southwest of Portland. The group will meet quarterly at the abbey, from 10 a.m. to noon on the second Saturday of November, February, May and August; the meeting will be preceded by an optional contemplative session beginning at 9:30. In addition, a Merton book study group meets in Portland monthly, except during the summer months. For further information contact Br. Mark Filut, OCSO, Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey, 9200 NE Abbey Road, Lafayette, OR 97127.

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On March 15, Lynn Szabo spoke about "Thomas Merton's Poetics: A Revelation of Love" at the Vancouver Public Library, sponsored by the Thomas Merton Society of Canada. On April 4, Jeff Imbach gave a presentation entitled "Three Simple Steps to a Contemplative Lifestyle" at the library. On May 9, J. S. Porter will give a talk at the library entitled "Rhinos, Lizards and the Click of Being." On June 6, Doug Beardsley will speak on "Thomas Merton as Spiritual Mentor" at the library. For further information contact Judith Hardcastle at 604-669-2546; email: judithhardcastle@telus.net; website: [www.merton.ca](http://www.merton.ca).

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On December 11, 2005 the ITMS Italy chapter met for an evening of reflection at the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas, Rome. Father Joseph Chalmers, Prior General of the Carmelite Order and co-author of the book *A Deeper Love: An Introduction to Centering Prayer*, gave a presentation entitled "Il Suono del Silenzio" ("The Sound of Silence") and led a centering prayer meditation. The second annual convention of the ITMS Italy chapter will be held at the Monastery of Bose on May 6-7, 2006. The first ITMS International Pilgrimage to Italy is currently being organized. For further information on these events, see the ITMS Italy web site: <http://xoomer.virgilio.it/merton>.

Send all Merton-related news to:

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