

Brother Patrick came into my life when I was seeking to publish my first book on Robert Lax, *The Way of the Dreamcatcher*. At first, there was little interest, but through friends the manuscript reached Brother Patrick, who had met Lax on Patmos in 1992 and had corresponded with him. He contacted me by phone soon after receiving *Dreamcatcher* – the first of many conversations (and brief letters) through the years. His thoughtful, precise voice was centered, uplifting, patient, most kind – and filled with enthusiasm. He wrote a wonderful foreword to the book which led to its publication by Novalis. Months later, when I met him at the 2001 ITMS conference at Bellarmine University, he exuded a contemplative joy that especially focused on Lax and Merton. He exclaimed how Bob was “the real deal,” a poet who had a deep connection to love divine, a natural-born solitary, a man of peace and inner radiance. Like Lax, Brother Patrick had the gift of knowing when to gently pause in conversation, that is, to *draw back*, inviting me to go forward and complete the shared thought. In this manner of “conversational co-creation” he prayed himself into brief yet meaningful responses, a trait reminiscent of Lax, a spiritual minimalist who understood how “less is more.” In the summer of 2005, Br. Patrick attended the Fiftieth Jubilee Celebration of the Abbey of New Clairvaux in Vina, CA. When we met there I saw that he had grown a full white beard; he jested that he was getting ready for Mt. Athos (or wanted to look a little like Lax!). I recall how he and I (and my mother and sister, invited by Brother Patrick) happily strolled through the fields together. Every so often we paused to let the words and light sink in, then continued down the vineyard lanes. I met with Brother Patrick a final time during the Merton Society conference at Bellarmine in 2015, the centenary year for both Merton and Lax. With mutual friends I attended Sunday Mass at Gethsemani. As the brothers processed into view, I saw Brother Patrick – despite his now frail health – among them. For a moment, everything seemed timeless, mysteriously suspended, caught up in a kind of transcendent glory, an ecstasy of Spirit. I thought of our lengthy friendship, our discussions on life, faith and art, our inspirational Laxian memories that we had shared in stellar (and challenging) times. After Mass we met with him and like a devoted grandfather he spoke patiently and lovingly with us. It was something of a full-circle reunion in Christ, a *synaxis*, honoring one who knew (and had worked with) both Merton and Lax and inspired us to keep studying

their writings. His voice was noticeably weaker, as was his ailing body, but his clear eyes radiated the liberating and all-welcoming radiance of love. His last words to me that afternoon summed up the salvific duty of our brief life in this world: “Shalom, dear friend; let’s keep praying for each other.”

---

**S. T. Georgiou** is the author of a spiritual trilogy inspired by Robert Lax: *The Way of the Dreamcatcher*, *Mystic Street* and *The Isle of Monte Cristo* and editor of *In the Beginning Was Love: Contemplative Words of Robert Lax*.

\* \* \* \* \*



**S. T. Georgiou**