



“HEART SPEAKS TO HEART: THOMAS MERTON’S WITNESS TO FRIENDSHIP”

A FREE ONLINE RETREAT

**IN HONOR OF THE DAGGY & SHANNON FELLOWS OF THE ITMS & THOMAS MERTON’S
106TH BIRTHDAY**

With Douglas Hertler, Judith Valente & Brother Paul Quenon, OCSO

Jan. 31, 2021 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. EST

Sponsored by Mepkin Abbey

Part One: “Merton & Me Haunted By Intimacy: Friendship, Freedom, and the Fire of God’s Love” with Douglas Hertler

Intimacy. What associations arise in your mind when you say this word out loud, when you whisper it gently into the depths of your heart? How does it act on your being? *Does it* act on your being? Is intimacy simply sex? Is it love? What kind of love? Love of neighbor, love of enemies, love of self?

With Merton as our intimate friend and spiritual guide, Douglas Hertler will present a short reading from his play, *Merton and Me – A Living Trinity*, and invite us to reflect on our own degree of interior freedom. What are the shades and forms of intimacy to which God is calling each one of us today?

Part Two: “A Monk & A Journalist: How Merton Inspired A Contemporary Spiritual and Literary Friendship” with Brother Paul Quenon, OCSO and Judith Valente

Inspired by Merton’s own letter-writing, Brother Paul Quenon and Judith Valente share their journey in letters to one another over the years on such topics as knowing when to leave a job, struggles with prayer and meditation, coping with disappointment and the importance of play. Their letters are part of a forthcoming book, *How to Be: A Monk and a Journalist Reflect on Living & Dying, Purpose & Prayer, Forgiveness & Friendship*.

RETREAT IS FREE BUT REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. PLEASE CONTACT mepkinguestmaster@gmail.com (emailing is the fastest method of contact) OR CALL THE MEPKIN ABBEY ST. FRANCIS RETREAT CENTER AT 843 761–8509, OPTION 1. YOU MAY ALSO VISIT www.mepkinabbey.org.

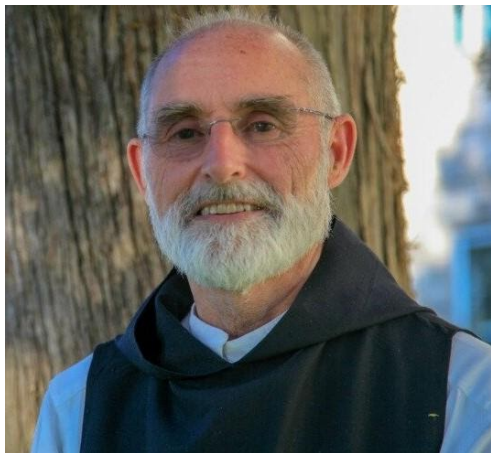
There is no cost for the retreat. If you wish to make a freewill donation, all proceeds will be used to support the Daggy and Shannon Fellows programs assisting a new generation of Merton scholars.



Douglas Hertler, aka Doug Lory, is a New York-based actor, tour guide, retreat leader, and creator of the popular one-man play, *Merton & Me - A Living Trinity*. He is a member of the New York chapter of the International Thomas Merton Society and was recently invited to serve on the board of the American Teilhard Association.



Judith Valente is a former religion reporter for PBS-TV and staff writer for *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. She is also a poet and author most recently of *How to Live: What The Rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us About Happiness, Meaning and Community* and a member of the ITMS board.



Paul Quenon was a novice under Thomas Merton and has been a monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani for more than 60 years. He is the author of nine books of poetry and “In Praise of the Useless Life: A Monk’s Memoir” and is co-author with Judith Valente of “The Art of Pausing: Meditations for the Overworked and Overwhelmed.”