

Star: From Cradle Catholic to Cyborg Christian (Orbis, 2019).

**A LIVING GOSPEL:
Reading God's Story in Holy Lives
July 12-16, 2021**

In a number of award-winning books, Robert Ellsberg has reflected on the lives of saints, drawing particular attention to models of holiness that speak to the needs of our time. The message of such figures, he argues, is found not only in their writings but in the "text" they wrote with their own lives. Among the figures he examines are Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, and Flannery O'Connor. He reflects on the example of holy women who charted their own path and who exemplify a "holiness of the everyday." In learning how to read the "living gospel" in their stories, he shows how we may learn to read our own stories in the same light.

This session will draw in particular on Ellsberg's recent book, *"A Living Gospel: Reading God's Story in Holy Lives"* (Orbis, 2019) and primary sources from his edited work, *Modern Spiritual Masters: Writings on Contemplation and Compassion.*" (Orbis 2019).

Resource Person: Robert Ellsberg, MA, has a Master's Degree in Theology from Harvard Divinity School. He is Publisher and Editor in Chief of Orbis Books. He has written many books and received numerous awards. *Blessed Among Women* (Crossroads, 2007) and *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets and Witnesses for our Time* (Crossroads, 1997), are among his best sellers. Dorothy Day had a great influence on Robert's life. He worked as editor of the *Catholic Worker* and edited the published diaries and letters of Dorothy Day.

**FINDING A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS:
Drawing Courage through the Art of Film
July 19-23, 2021**

In his article "Desert Attentiveness, Desert Indifference: Countercultural Spirituality in the Desert Fathers and Mothers," Belden C. Lane



Sr Ilia Delio OSF enjoying a moment with Sr Helene O'Sullivan, MM Cambodia Mission

writes: "On the far side of emptiness, where brokenness and disorientation overtake us, where death awaits us, we learn to care – and not to care." Disruptions in our lives remind us we are not in control of what happens to us. With time and accommodation, we come to realize that our response to life's disruptions constitutes the fiber – the character and integrity - of our lives. Film artists remind us of these truths and invite us into the spiritual discipline of "wakefulness." Do we want to be awoken?

Resource Person: Rev. Larry Lewis, MM, PhD, ordained in 1975, served in the Hua Ming Counseling Center, Taipei, Taiwan; and 1988-1991, taught American literature, family psychology, writing and film at Wuhan University of Technology, Wuhan, China. He was Rector of Maryknoll seminarians for 6 years and for 20 years coordinated the China Educators & Formators Project. Since 2003, Larry has offered retreats and workshops throughout China. He served 4 years at the Cenacle Retreat Center, Ronkonkoma, NY, and now serves in the Maryknoll Office of Society Personnel. Larry holds a doctorate in spirituality from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA. He authored *The Misfit: Haunting the Human-Unveiling the Divine* (Orbis, 1997).

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**LEANING INTO THE GOSPEL:
Learning Love and Freedom
May 10-14, 2021**

The essential challenge of the Gospel of Jesus is to move from fear and violence to freedom and love. This is also the essence of nonviolence, the movement deeply needed in our world today. We are called by the times that we live in, and by Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, to stretch our beloved community beyond human circles, to include all beings and Earth itself. This program will explore how listening with the ear of the heart will guide us to respond with humility, courage and compassion toward ourselves, others, those who are suffering, as well as Earth, our common home.

Resource Person: Sr. Anne McCarthy, OSB, coordinates *Benedictines for Peace in Erie, PA*, and participates in the global Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. She holds a MA in Theology from St. John's University, Collegeville, MN in monastic studies and completed Shalem Institute's program, "Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups and Retreats." She is presently on the staff with *Benetvision* (www.joanchittister.org) and *Monasteries of the Heart* (www.monasteriesoftheheart.org). Anne served previously as National Coordinator of Pax Christi USA and on the board of the Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIM-MID). She gardens with children in inner-city Erie and co-leads *Listening Hearts*, a spirituality program for women in poverty.

**WHEN TEARS SING:
Lament as a Way Home to the Heart of God
May 17-21, 2021**

"The violets in the mountains have broken the rocks." Words of Tennessee Williams, on his tombstone, mirror a way home to the heart of God. When vulnerable and fragile persons find one another, when vulnerable and fragile communities come together, a spirit of hearty resilience and deep joy germinates verdant life between the fissures of a terrible broken world. The Christian tradition names this experience *koinonia*. During this program, participants will create *koinonia* by



Robert Ellsberg, Editor-in-chief Orbis Books with Sr Peg Donovan, Director Mission Institute

bringing their lived experiences into plenary and small group conversations. Particular "voices" will join the conversations and experiences: the Civil Rights Movement of the South; the Missing Generation—those who died from AIDS, between 1992 to 1993, lament psalms; as well as fiction, non-fiction and cinema. Participants will learn afresh that through relational practices and commitments, greater solidarity emerges, deeper joy is aroused and more fervent passion for justice is awakened.

Resource Person: Rev. William Blaine-Wallace, PhD, is a retired Episcopal priest. He has ministered in parishes, hospices and in mental health and educational settings. Presently Bill maintains a pastoral counseling and consultation practice and a spiritual direction ministry. He is the author of *Water in the Wastelands: The Sacrament of Shared Suffering* (Cowley Publications, 2003) and the newly released *When Tears Sing: The Art of Lament in Christian Community* (Orbis, 2020). He has contributed to books and journals in the fields of pastoral theology and spirituality. He and his spouse live on a farm in the foothills of western Maine.

**TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES:
Restorative Justice Practices
June 7-11, 2021**

The world today needs more than ever the ability to dialogue. We are surrounded by harsh rhetoric and divisive actions. Our anguish in the face of this polarization and the ensuing social problems and the destruction of the environment can paralyze us and sap our energy. This program will focus on the theme of *Restorative Justice*, which is a global movement that has expanded around the world bringing about positive changes in individuals and communities. In this evolutionary process, where relationships are strengthened, people are transformed and empowered to move toward the changes they seek in their lives and communities with a renewed spirit.

Resource Person: Joanne Blaney, MKLM, is a Maryknoll Lay Missioner, teacher and restorative justice trainer and facilitator. She has over 20 years of experience in working with conflict, violence, forgiveness and reconciliation. Presently Joanne's ministry as a Lay Missioner is in Brazil.

**DEEPENING ONE'S CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE:
Necessary for the Transformation of Our Time
June 14-18, 2021**

This time together is a combination of a retreat, a program and a process. The primary focus is to deepen one's experience of contemplation. Each day will include communal contemplative prayer and a focus on its various aspects. We will explore how the deepening of one's practice invites a shift in consciousness inviting us to imagine new ways of responding to the challenges of our time. Both beginners and practitioners of contemplative prayer are welcome.

Resource Person: Sr. Nancy Sylvester, IHM, MA, founded the *Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue* in 2002 in response to her experiences working for justice and right relationships in church and in society. She serves as President of

the Institute and as Executive Director of its major project. Nancy contributed to and is co-editor of the book, *Crucible for Change: Engaging Impasse Through Communal Contemplation and Dialogue* (Sor Juana Press, 2004). She is convinced that transformation of society and church requires a contemplative response.

**THEOGENESIS: Is God Becoming God?
June 24 & 25, 2021 (Two days only)**

This program will explore Teilhard de Chardin's notion of "theogenesis" or the rise of God in evolution. Teilhard thought that evolution requires a new understanding of God in a world where consciousness is increasing with complexity. We will look at the relationship between consciousness and matter and explore the emergence of God through writings of Teilhard de Chardin and Carl Jung, among others. We will also briefly explore the relationship between theogenesis and trinitization in view of human action and Jacob Boehme's idea of quaternization.

Resource Persons: Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, PhD, received her doctorate in Historical Theology from Fordham University. She holds the Endowed Chair in Theology in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University. A prolific author, her many articles and abstracts testify to her wide field of knowledge in the subjects of evolution, spirituality and the universe story. Dr. Delio's latest book is *Birth of a Dancing*



Larry Lewis MM, with participants attending his Mission Institute