

## STUDY PACKET 2022-23

We hope this year's study will inspire us to promote a common vision of our individual efforts in social justice! Study Committee—Rachel Sena, Jeanne Moore, Barbara Lang and Pat Connick

### **Our Opening Statement**

We believe God's own Spirit of Love impels us along the Way of Peace.

In our Direction Statements at Chapter this spring, we reached consensus about a diversity of ways to “walk this talk” during the next six years.

It is clear that no one person can do everything, yet that each is an important part of the whole.

How do we find a common language then to unite our study?

A couple of summers ago, Sr. Addie Walker reminded us of the foundational nature of “right relationship” to all social justice issues. We would like to suggest this idea of “right relationship” as a preliminary common language for our study. Let us be in communion as Dominican Associates and Sisters while we build peace through “right relationship.” This ever-deeper grounding in contemplative living will sustain our prophetic engagement where impasse is inevitable.

At the start, a short bibliography of books, videos, and websites will be available along with a detailed outline. In late November or early December everyone will watch individually and then discuss in small groups (in-person or virtually) the first of the FitzGerald and Copeland videos from LCWR's 2022 Assembly. Each Sister and Associate will next personally discern the particular topic of study to which she/he feels called. A short survey will gather information from Associates and Sisters about which existing groups are open to new members and which members are interested in forming new groups or joining existing groups. This will help people of similar interest to “find” one another based on location, and/or available times. Sometime in January, after watching the second video of Fitzgerald and Copeland individually, groups will have a discussion on their timeline. After this, groups will begin study of their chosen topic.

This fruitful collaboration of prayerful study leading toward concrete action will model for the world what becomes possible when an “I” becomes a “we”, when we move from being individual Dominican Sisters and Associates to The Holy Preaching. Our attitude of openness and community building within the microcosm that is the Dominican Sisters and Associates of Peace will itself give hope for the transformation of the world in this, our wounded 21<sup>st</sup>-century.

**Our Common Beginning—The Constance FitzGerald, OCD, and Shawn Copeland Videos from the LCWR Assembly 2022: “Mystical Wisdom: Following Spirit’s Beckoning”**

**Dominican Sisters and Associates of Peace  
“thinking theologically together” about  
Constance FitzGerald and Shawn Copeland’s Dialogue**

Talk Part 1. 47 minutes [2022 - Mystical Wisdom - Constance FitzGerald, OCD & M. Shawn Copeland \(1\) on Vimeo](#)

Talk Part 2, 65 minutes [LCWR Assembly 2022: Mystical Wisdom: Following Spirit's Beckoning | LCWR](#) This video will be watched for the January meeting. An outline is forthcoming.

1. What did you know about Constance FitzGerald, OCD, and Shawn Copeland, before watching the video?
2. They situate religious congregations today within five major contemporary experiences: The failure of globalization... The COVID pandemic ... Mass migrations and loss of home... Racial violence ... Cosmic magnitude revealed by the Webb telescope While these five are familiar to us, did they offer you any fresh insights?
3. Whether you are a vowed or associate member, how do you experience concretely the vulnerability of religious life?
4. They spoke about “mystical wisdom, loving knowledge, and the Dark Night” as identical. What is your understanding of the Dark Night, especially as understood within the Carmelite tradition?
5. What do you foresee regarding what we Dominicans of Peace, personally and communally, are being called to surrender now or soon?
6. John of the Cross’s poem about the Dark Night is available below. Do FitzGerald’s and Copeland’s situating our current reality within his framework speak to you in any way?
7. We are celebrating 200 years of Dominican Sisterhood in the United States of America.
  - ❖ What will you/we have energy for ten years from now in 2032?
  - ❖ What is Love/Desire impelling you/us to do to be true to our Dominican mission within this season of Darkness?
  - ❖ What topic and structure for study would best sustain your hope as you encounter impasse within our church and world?

## The Dark Night of the Soul

1. One dark night,  
fired with love's urgent longings  
— ah, the sheer grace! —  
I went out unseen,  
my house being now all stilled.
2. In darkness, and secure,  
by the secret ladder, disguised,  
— ah, the sheer grace! —  
in darkness and concealment,  
my house being now all stilled.
3. On that glad night,  
in secret, for no one saw me,  
nor did I look at anything,  
with no other light or guide  
than the one that burned in my heart.
4. This guided me  
more surely than the light of noon  
to where he was awaiting me  
— him I knew so well —  
there in a place where no one appeared.
5. O guiding night!  
O night more lovely than the dawn!  
O night that has united  
the Lover with his beloved,  
transforming the beloved in her Lover.
6. Upon my flowering breast  
which I kept wholly for him alone,  
there he lay sleeping,  
and I caressing him  
there in a breeze from the fanning cedars.
7. When the breeze blew from the turret,  
as I parted his hair,  
it wounded my neck  
with its gentle hand,  
suspending all my senses.
8. I abandoned and forgot myself,  
laying my face on my Beloved;  
all things ceased; I went out from myself,  
leaving my cares  
forgotten among the lilies.

~ St. John of the Cross

**VIDEO PART ONE:****Outline.** (47 minutes)

The Study Committee offers our synopsis of a conversational mode of engagement, a “thinking theologically together,” of two wisdom-women-theologians who have been dialoguing for twenty years. Five contemporary experiences provide a context for understanding the vulnerability of religious congregations today:

1. **Failure of Globalization:** Democracy is vulnerable in the U.S. and elsewhere. The enslaved were never equal to white men. The U.S. swallowed part of Mexico. Displacement of the indigenous. Exclusion of Asian-Americans. We’ve never had a democracy. The world is diverging. White nationalism. Authoritarianism prevails → no democracy.
2. **Mass Migrations:** Loss of place and security. Ukraine. US borders closed to refugees from Central America. Fires and floods → displacement. Calvary was assigned to the enslaved and the indigenous.
3. **Racial Violence:** Quest for justice → search for God. Barbara Holmes, in *Joy Unspeakable*, declared, “The world is the cloister of the contemplative.” God is found in the world. She warned of busy-ness, “a deadly magic.”
4. **Pandemic:** Vulnerability. Polarization. Culture of lies. Loss & separation. Yet also a time of Self-transcendence and Self-sacrifice. Presence. Zoom.
5. **Cosmic Magnitude:** The James Webb Space Telescope revealed the fragility of our Earth-home and issued a call to communion, displacing our individualism.

**Religious Congregations:** View the loss of place, the vulnerability of religious congregations, within the above five experiences. Our loss relates to Mystical Wisdom & Theology, the Dark Night, Transformation, “Spirit Beckoning,” and Theological Hope. Somehow, the loss of place being experienced by religious is related to humanity’s loss and brokenness, and the transformation of human consciousness.

**Dark Night:** Early US Puritanism, in its fear, associated darkness with evil. The Bible and Tradition valued darkness and mysterious opaqueness. African Americans survived and experienced liberation. They found a way to connect with a deeper interiority, with God. They found a place, the Rock that is God, who became their Home.

**Vulnerability of Religious Life.** Fewer numbers. Aging. Few new members. Selling of motherhouses, hospitals, colleges, retreat centers = displacement from iconic places. Mergers. Elder years spent in unexpected places. Dying away from home. Our loss of place mirrors the migrations and displacements of our world. Millions are homeless. African Americans seek a home that they have owned. Indigenous seek the homelands taken from them. Does religious life have a future? What is the place of religious life? "The end is where we start." T. S. Eliot "Little Gidding." This is not a time to give up. Howard Thurman "lived in relative completion." Expect the unexpected. Do our best. Religious need to live ready to move on. LCWR has been fostering contemplative dialogues.

**Mystical Tradition.** Mystical Wisdom, Loving Knowledge, Mystical Theology, and the Dark Night are identical. Deep inflow of God into the soul. The Dark Night is both purification/refinement and union/communion. The transition may be brief or long. The Dark Night leads to deeper loving knowledge and relationship with Christ. Leave behind what no longer serves to enter a new stage of consciousness. Relinquishment.

Desire for Mystical Wisdom → transformation of communal consciousness → new form of religious life, identified with the poor & dispossessed, with Christ crucified.

We know this yet struggle to articulate the mystery.

**Dark Night.** Identify with Christ.

John of the Cross:

"One dark night..."

"I went out unseen." (Displaced.)

"to where he waited." (New Place.)

Home represents security. It forms us and we, it.

**Motherhouses.** Holders of memories. Permanent. Home base. Stability. Support for ministries. Center of unity. Security. Painful to sell. Aging members displaced from motherhouses and scattered to new places. Feels death-dealing. Uprooting should lead to a new place.

This video will be discussed at our second meeting, in January:

Talk Part 2, 65 minutes [LCWR Assembly 2022: Mystical Wisdom: Following Spirit's Beckoning | LCWR](#). An outline is forthcoming.

Groups will begin study of their chosen topic in subsequent meetings on a monthly basis.

**A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR STUDY TOPICS** A resource person is someone available to suggest resources to local groups or to move beyond an impasse. Possible topics are **highlighted**.

### **COSMOLOGY:**

**Resource Person:** Helen Cahill ([helen.cahill@oppeace.org](mailto:helen.cahill@oppeace.org))

#### **Books—Amazon information**

- Judy Cannato: [Radical Amazement](#)
- Sr. Laurie Brink, OP: [The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God: An Emerging Chapter for Religious Life: Science, Theology, and Mission](#) (newly released, February 2022)
- Sr. Catherine Vincie, RSHM: [Worship and the New Cosmology: Liturgical and Theological Challenges](#)

#### **YouTube/Internet Videos – links**

- Fr. Richard Rohr: [The Cosmic Christ](#)
- Fr. Richard Rohr: [The Role of the Universal Christ](#)
- Sr. Catherine Vincie, RSHM: [“Shooting for the Stars: Worship and the New Cosmology”](#)

### **ENVIRONMENT connected to COSMOLOGY**

**Resource Person:** Pat Connick ([pat.connick@oppeace.org](mailto:pat.connick@oppeace.org) )

#### **Books--**

- [Thomas Berry: Selected Writings on the Earth Community](#) by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim and Understanding cosmology is related to Environmental Studies, Climate Change, etc.
- Brian Swimme, Mary Evelyn Tucker: [Journey of the Universe](#) Goes with the video below.

#### **Internet Video--**

- Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Brian Swimme: [Journey of the Universe](#)

#### **Online Course (with free Coursera sign-in)**

- [Journey of the Universe: The Unfolding of Life](#) (contains both video and book in parts (6 sections))

**Document—**Pope Francis, [Laudato Si](#) (2015)

### **EUCCHARIST—**

#### **Encyclicals/Documents of the Church**

- Pope Francis Apostolic Letter: [DESIDERIO DESIDERAVI](#)
- St. John Paul II Apostolic Letter: [ECCLESIA DE EUCHARISTIA](#)
- St. John Paul II Apostolic Letter: [MANE NOBISCUM DOMINE](#)

<https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/> has resources from the USCCB! Check out the LEARN tab.

## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

**Resource Person—Francine Schwarzenberger** ([francine.schwarzenberger@oppeace.org](mailto:francine.schwarzenberger@oppeace.org))

Spirit Alive Series, Brentwood SSJ's: The Roots & Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)  
(7 Parts—videos are approximately 1 ½ hours each)

1. Synopsis of the Christian Moral Life and the Historical Roots of CST
2. Human Rights and Dignity
3. Family, Community, and Participation
4. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
5. Preferential Option for the Poor
6. Subsidiarity and the Common Good
7. Solidarity and Care for Creation

## DESIRE, DARKNESS and HOPE: THEOLOGY IN A TIME OF IMPASSE... (BOOK)

Engaging the Thought of Constance FitzGerald, O.C.D. Published by Liturgical Press, Academic.  
2021

**Resource Person—Jeanne Moore** ([jeanne.moore@oppeace.org](mailto:jeanne.moore@oppeace.org))

### Topics—

There are seven pivotal essays by FitzGerald on Teresa of Avila & John of the Cross; impasse & the dark night; the transformative power of contemplation; the subversive character and educative power of Sophia; Edith Stein and the passion; prophetic hope.

Twelve essays expanding her scholarship were written by Cathy Hilbert, OP; Bryan N. Massingale; Roberto Goizueta; Brian McDermott, SJ; M. Shawn Copeland; and other scholars in the fields of theology, antiracist social ethics, and ecological ethics.

## RACISM—

### Resource Persons—

Rachel Sena ([rachel.sena@oppeace.org](mailto:rachel.sena@oppeace.org)) & Judy Morris ([judy.morris@oppeace.org](mailto:judy.morris@oppeace.org))

Link to Materials from Previous Years: <https://37371.thankyou4caring.org/file/Racism-Encountering-the-Other-Study-Guide.pdf>

**BOOK: Critical Race Theory:** Jason Reynolds and Ibram X Kendi-k, STAMPED, Racism and Antiracism and You.

**ARTICLE: Environmental Racism:** [I know firsthand the deadly effects of environmental racism.](#)

"I charge the city of Phoenix with negligent homicide for willfully ignoring the impact of environmental racism on Black and ... Rashaad Thomas February 23, 2021, 10:29 am Public domain photo

### VIDEOS

Fr. Bryan Massingale: [Racism and the Catholic Church One Year After George Floyd's Murder](#)

Fr. Bryan Massingale: [How the church can combat racism and white privilege](#)

Fr. Bryan Massingale: [The Magis and Justice](#)

## **PROCESS FOR THE YEAR IN DETAIL**

Thank you for your patience. We are ready to start rolling out our Study for this year as discussed in the November webcast.

1. **Getting started:**
  - a. Individuals are encouraged **to watch** the first of two FitzGerald/Copeland videos from the LCWR meeting in advance of the first study group.
    - i. Links to each video are found on page 2 of this document.
    - ii. Questions for the first video are found on page 2.
    - iii. The outline for the first video is found on pages 4 and 5.
    - iv. At your first meeting, discuss the video and decide on a study topic for your group OR a short list of the topics you could study this year.
  - b. An initial resource document is provided here on pages 6 and 7. Throughout the year, the study packet will be updated in the Private Pages as more material becomes available.
  
2. In our first meeting we begin with a short study of “right relationships.” There are two possibilities:
  - a. Existing groups of Sisters and Associates (whether in-person or Zoom) meet for the first time in either late November or early December on a date of your choice **to discuss** the first video of FitzGerald and Copeland. Next, decide on a study topic.  
OR
  - b. Sisters and Associates who wish to join a group for the first time, or people who wish to switch groups, all meet *on Zoom (see info below)* **to discuss** the first video of FitzGerald and Copeland in one of two virtual meetings:
    - i. Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. ET or
    - ii. Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. ET

No need to sign up. Plan to attend virtually **one** of these two sessions. After attending the first session, there will be an opportunity to choose an in-person or virtual group for future meetings based on the survey in step 3. (See below)

More details will follow on OPPeace.org for these next steps:

3. A short survey will follow in early December to gather information on existing groups seeking members and the needs of people searching for new groups (in-person or on Zoom). Results from the survey will be used to find groups or to find members.
4. All groups will meet sometime in January to discuss the second video from FitzGerald & Copeland and to organize your group. An outline will be available before then.
5. After this introduction to “right relationship,” groups discuss their chosen topics monthly.