

**Mindful Dialogue – Network for Attention and Kin-Making  
Symposium, Sankt-Wenzeslaus-Stift, Germany & online: May 14-17, 2026  
Interfaith Dialogue, Ecology, and Education**

**Thursday, May 14, 2026: ARRIVAL and OPENING SESSION**

**Registration and opening of the Symposium (Central European Time)**

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| 15:00 | Check-in  |
| 17:00 | Symposium Team Briefing<br><b>Paul Pynkoski, Marcela, Cristobal, and Dominiek</b>   |
| 17:45 | Dinner at the conference venue  |
| 19:00 | Welcome and practical information<br><b>Dominiek</b>  |
| 19:15 | Opening session (Conference Room)<br><b>Cristobal</b><br><b>Dr. Emilio Ricardo Báez Rivera</b> , Puerto Rico: Οἰκολογία πνευματικός ('Ecología espiritual'): el ciclo del agua y las criaturas en el "Cántico espiritual", de san Juan de la Cruz<br><b>Dr. Antonio Ramos Diaz</b> , Puerto Rico: Persona, amor y trascendencia en Max Scheler: fundamentos para un diálogo interreligioso (online)<br><b>Dr. Luis O. Canting Placa</b> , Puerto Rico: Noosfera y Antropoceno: educar para el avance evolutivo de la "Super-Humanidad"<br>Plenary |
| 21:00 | Conversations and Connections   |

**Friday, May 15, 2026: DAY 1**

**Topic of the Day: Interfaith Dialogue and Education (Central European Time)**

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| 07:15 | Breakfast at the conference venue                                  |
| 08:30 | Meditation (Conference Room)<br><b>Wilfredo Benitez</b> , Portugal |
| 09:00 | Intercultural Forum (Conference Room)<br><b>Dominiek</b>           |
| 10:30 | Break  |

- 11:00 **Marcela**  
Keynote I: Prof. Dr. Meena Sharify-Funk, Canada: Gendering Sufism - Tradition and Transformation  
 Associate Professor of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada. She is author of *Contemporary Sufism: Piety, Politics, and Popular Culture* (Routledge, 2018).  
Keynote II: Prof. Dr. Luce Lopez-Baralt, Puerto Rico: Borges in Dialogue with Islamic Mysticism  
 Distinguished Professor (Insignis Professor) and Emeritus Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literatures at the University of Puerto Rico. She is author of 30 books on comparative Spanish and Arabic literatures and mysticism, *aljamiado-moorish* and Latin American literatures.  
Keynote III: Prof. Dr. Cristobal Serran-Pagan y Fuentes, Czech Republic: Thomas Merton's Engagement with Muslims: Insights for Dialogue with Muslims Today  
 Professor in the Department of Philosophy at University Palackeho in Olomouc, the Czech Republic. He is author of *Saint John of the Cross: his Prophetic Mysticism in the Historical Context of Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Washington DC: Pacem in Terris Press, 2018).  
 Plenary
- 12:30 Practical Information  
**Dominiek**
- 12:45 Lunch at the conference venue
- 15:00 Workshops and papers I  
**Cristobal**  
**Wilfredo Benitez**, Portugal: Photography as Contemplative Exploration  
**Dominiek**  
**Prof. Dr. Mohammad Hossein Shoae Shahreza**, Iran: The Sufi Heart as a Threshold of Encounter: Reimagining Interreligious Education through Tazkiyat al-Nafs and the Ethics of Spiritual Hospitality  
**Marcela**  
**Dr. Juan Carlos Ramos Hendez**, Colombia: Contemplative Power: Thomas Merton, poética-profética ante la persecución religiosa (online)  
**Dr. Luis H Pabón Batlle**, Puerto Rico: El Pitágoras que no conocemos (online)
- 16:30 Break
- 17:00 Reflexion groups I  
**Paul Pynkoski, Marcela, Cristobal, and Dominiek (online)**
- 18:45 Dinner at the conference venue
- 20:00 Conversations and Connections

## Saturday, May 16, 2026: DAY 2

### Topic of the Day: Ecology and Education (Central European Time)

- 07:15 Breakfast at the conference venue
- 08:30 Departure to local projects in Ostritz  
**Dominiek**
- 13:00 Lunch in Ostritz
- 15:00 Workshops and papers II  
**Cristobal**  
**Prof. Dr. Marcela Raggio**, Argentina: The Legacy of Thomas Merton and Pope Francis: Ecology and the Literary Education  
**Lilian Naserian Martine**, Kenia: Building a Sustainable Future  
**Dr. Jose Andujar**, USA: Albert Schweitzer's "Reverence": Honoring life in all forms in these convoluted times  
**Dominiek**  
**Dr. Pinghua Liu**, China: "Dao Follows Nature" and Zen's Hermitage in Mountains and Forests: A Dialogue on Ecological Wisdom between Laozi and Zen Buddhism (online)  
**Prof. Dr. John Gillespie**, USA: The Sacred Ecology of Vision: Inscap, Incarnation, and Nature in Thomas Merton and Gerard Manley Hopkins (online)  
**Dr. Aizaiah G. Yong**, USA: Trauma and Renewal: Emerging Contemplative Contributions to Interfaith Community Transformation (online)
- 16:30 Break
- 17:00 Reflexion Groups II  
**Paul Pynkoski, Marcela, Cristobal, and Dominiek (online)**
- 18:45 Festive dinner at the conference venue
- 20:30 **Paul Pynkoski**, USA: greetings from the ITMS  
**Latif Bolat**, Turkey: concert

## Sunday, May 17, 2026: DAY 3

### Topic of the Day: Ecology and Interfaith Dialogue (Central European Time)

- 07:15 Breakfast at the conference venue
- 9:00 Meditation (Conference Room)  
**Latif Bolat**, Turkey: Andalusia under the Islamic Rule: Tolerance and Dialog

- 09:30 Intercultural Forum (Conference Room)  
**Dominiek**
- 10:30 Break
- 11:00 **Cristobal**  
Keynote I: **Prof. Dr. Vasudha Narayanan**, USA: The Cosmos as the Body of God: Ecology, Interfaith Conversations, and Emergency Ethics  
Distinguished Professor, Departement of Religion, at the University of Florida. She is author or editor of nine books. She created the first Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra) with the University of Florida.  
Keynote II: **Prof. Dr. Jung Eun Sophia Park**, USA: Thomas Merton and Cross-Cultural Spiritual Direction: To Construct a Borderland  
Associate Professor of Emerita at Holy Names University and a Global Educator/Learner. She published *An Asian Woman's Religious Journey with Thomas Merton* (Palgrave, 2022).  
Keynote III: **Dr. Sanjana Das**, Singapore: "Wake Up and Dance": In Solidarity with the Struggles of Indigenous Women in the Global South affected by Ecocide  
Researcher, feminist theologian and development practitioner, from India. She has co-edited a book with Joerg Rieger, *Decolonizing Development and Religion: Theoretical Frameworks, Case Studies, and Theological Models*, SCM Press, 2025  
Plenary
- 12:30 Conclusion  
**Paul Pynkoski, Marcela, Cristobal, Dominiek**
- 12:45 Lunch at the conference venue