

 **Mindful Dialogue**



Network Symposium

Where Interfaith, Ecology, and Education meet in 2026

Join Scholars and Activists for a Sustainable Future

May 14-17, 2026

Sankt-Wenzeslaus-Stift Meeting Center

Markersdorf, Germany

and online

Mindful Dialogue - Network for Attention and Kin-Making

Registration, Information and Call for
Papers: www.mindful-dialogue.org

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

Friday, May 15, 2026: DAY 1

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

- 07:15 Breakfast at the conference venue
- 08:30 Meditation (Conference Room)
Wilfredo Benitez, Portugal (online)
- 09:00 Intercultural Forum (Conference Room)
Dominiek
- 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 (online)
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 (online)
Dominiek
Prof. Dr. Mohammad Hossein Shoaee Shahreza, Iran: The Sufi Heart as a Threshold of Encounter: Reimagining Interreligious Education through Tazkiyat al-Nafs and the Ethics of Spiritual Hospitality (online)
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: Inscapes, 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
- 09:00 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, Department 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 (online)

Plenary

12:30

Conclusion

Paul Pynkoski, Marcela, Cristobal, Dominiek

12:45

Lunch at the conference venue

WORKING METHODS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

The working methods of the symposium are based on the Network's self-perception as a place where intercultural and interreligious practice, education and academic research, and teaching are interactively linked and mutually enrich each other. Practitioners, artists, activists, trainers and teachers in academic fields are invited to exchange ideas regarding contextual and holistic approaches to people's well-being. Because the Network promotes interactive exchanges and learning, we seek to include as many opportunities for interaction as possible through break-out groups, reflection groups, paper presentations and workshops.

Lectures

The lectures will consider the topic of the day from a more academic or professional perspective in order to stimulate discussion. During the symposium, speakers will present their lectures as interactively as possible. The presentations will be interspersed with breakout sessions where we will reflect on the lectures in small groups.

Reflection Groups

Reflection groups are small groups where we have a chance to meet and share on a more personal level. The reflection groups open up spaces for sharing experiences, opinions and ideas in a narrative, biographical way. The focus of these groups is not the academic or professional but rather on expressing oneself and sharing feelings or emotions. Participants will be in the same group during the whole seminar so that the conversation can be deepened.

Workshops and Paper Presentations

Participants can choose from various workshops and paper presentations. These approach the theme of the symposium from a variety of perspectives with presenters from different countries, cultures and faith traditions. Workshops and paper presentations are designed to be hands-on and participatory with moderators accompanying the discussion.

Intercultural Forum

Participants from different faith backgrounds and countries will share their experiences to provide input and inspiration for further exchange.

Meditations

We start our days with a meditation or blessing, which are led by representatives of the various faiths and worldviews that make up our group.

Zoom-Link:



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Network for Attention and Kin-Making

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