

MENDICANT

THREE PROGRAMS OF THE CAC: Publications, Daily Meditations, Podcasts

Times Like These

At CAC, our teachers and programs speak to times like these when it seems that things are falling apart—when old certitudes and ways of being stop making sense, and we are called to step into the graced experience of the new or unknown. These are the times when following the contemplative path becomes the most honest way forward.

To meet the need for contemplative wisdom and practices, we have expanded our teaching faculty and are inviting increasingly diverse collaborating partners to join our work. Our programs have evolved substantially and grown by leaps and bounds over the past few years. This issue of *the Mendicant* introduces some of the thinkers and leaders behind that growth and development, which is still underway. Under their leadership, we have branched into new media and sought to innovate old ones in significant ways.

The job of these leaders is to offer content and experiences that help you—the community we are privileged to serve—to encounter the Holy and be transformed in your inner and outer lives. As Fr. Richard shared in his reflections at the CONSPIRE 2021 virtual conference, the point of our work is never



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about CAC. However, as the Center's director, I get to see the servant's heart and creativity our team members bring to their work, and it gives me great joy to invite them to share their visions and experiences with you, too.

Finally, allow me to share the good news that our Development & Partnerships Director Ben Keesey—who normally pens the development update—and his partner Tiffany have become parents. Their baby boy Cassian was born on March 7. His name is inspired by the fourth-century monk John Cassian, who founded one of Europe's first Christian monasteries after living and studying with the early Desert Fathers and Mothers of Egypt. I hope you'll join me in welcoming Cassian to his human journey and offering up a prayer of blessing for Ben and Tiffany's growing family.

As always, we are deeply grateful for your ongoing support that makes the work of the CAC possible. We welcome your insights and feedback as partners in our mission.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Poffenberger".

Michael Poffenberger
Executive Director

A Brief History and a Future Glimpse of *Oneing*

VANESSA GUERIN

A key publication of CAC Publishing is *Oneing*—CAC's spiritual literary journal, which is read by CAC constituents in fifty-five countries. The journal includes numerous well-known authors and intentionally introduces new voices through its varied themes. While many contributors to the journal have historically been Fr. Richard's peers, it's exciting to publish the work of new generations of writers who have been inspired by and complement Fr. Richard's teachings.

Oneing evolved, together with *the Mendicant*, from *Radical Grace*, the newsletter Fr. Richard started in 1987, the year he founded the CAC. Beginning with *Oneing*'s inception in the spring of 2013, Fr. Richard has worked closely on thematic decision-making and contributor selection. Since the first issue of the journal was released, Fr. Richard has written the Introduction for each biannual issue, has recommended many of the stellar authors and poets who have graced the pages of the journal, and has contributed numerous articles himself. His wisdom and insights are woven throughout each issue of *Oneing*.

After several ideas for the journal's title were considered, the publication was named *Oneing* after an old English word used by Fr. Richard's beloved mystic Julian of Norwich (1342–1416), "to describe the encounter between God and the soul." In addition to these words, Fr. Richard wrote the following, which is imprinted on the copyright page of every issue of *Oneing*:



It is an honor to produce *Oneing* and the many other publications offered by CAC Publishing.

The Center for Action and Contemplation proudly borrows the word [oneing] to express the divine unity that stands behind all of the divisions, dichotomies, and dualisms in the world. We pray and publish with Jesus' words, "that all may be one" (John 17:21).

With these powerful words in mind, and as Fr. Richard transitions from his post as the central voice of the CAC and of *Oneing*, Fr. John Dear, a world-renowned peace and social justice activist and Fr. Richard's dear friend, was invited to be the first new voice to introduce an issue of *Oneing*. Fr. Richard is very pleased that Fr. John Dear will introduce the Fall 2022 issue of *Oneing* and he strongly supports the theme of "Nonviolence."

It will be a new experience to have someone other than Fr. Richard introduce each issue of *Oneing*. However, we will continue to include his voice by excerpting relevant selections from his numerous books and articles.

It is an honor to produce *Oneing* and the many other publications offered by CAC Publishing. I want to thank the *Oneing* advisory board and our readership for your ongoing support of this important component of CAC's programmatic offerings!

VANESSA GUERIN is Director of Publications for the Center for Action and Contemplation and has been editing and managing CAC publications since 2005. In addition to handling publications, she has organized volunteers, facilitated conferences, proofreads *Richard's Rohr's Daily Meditations*, and is updating several of Fr. Richard's books for Franciscan Media.

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Unveiling the Daily Meditations

MARK LONGHURST

In September 2021, we “pulled back the veil” to show readers that *Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations* (or “DMs,” as we call them) are a team effort. As always, Fr. Richard provides the inspiration—through his fifty-one years of teaching ministry and the countless books, CDs, and MP3s that are its astonishing fruits. Still today, he reviews and edits every single meditation. But there have always been faithful CAC staff and/or volunteers who collect and edit quotes, organize themes, place paragraphs and photos in email platforms, and ensure that the emails make it to our equally faithful audience each day at midnight Mountain Time. Even more, in addition to Fr. Richard, we now feature multiple CAC teachers: Barbara Holmes, James Finley, Brian McLaren, and Living School “emeritus teacher” Cynthia Bourgeault. The DM team regularly works with sources from these faculty and a plenitude of diverse authors to present each week of meditations.

One thing we talk about at the CAC is making the transition from being an organization about Fr. Richard to being an organization about the things that Fr. Richard is about. After all, Fr. Richard himself is not about Fr. Richard—he’s about the gospel and transformation!

To wax theological for a moment, it brings to mind another Richard, the twelfth-century mystic and prior of the famous Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris. That Richard, known as Richard of St. Victor (who died in 1173), used the concept of the Trinity to teach that God’s loving delight is most vibrant when it is *shared and other-directed*. That’s a lofty way of saying that the Daily Meditations are not ultimately about Richard Rohr, but about sharing with the world the love of God as



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In September, we also launched a subtle shift in the DMs: a new editorial voice. On one hand, the change was small—the treasured content of Fr. Richard’s teaching, alongside the rotation of other voices, remained the same. On the other hand, the change contained an important nuance of presentation: Fr. Richard himself is no longer the introductory “voice” of the DMs. That function now is in the hands of the team—which includes Fr. Richard, along with those of us who help create the DMs. The DM editorial team has always been there in the background. We simply took the “unveiling” step of letting you see our work in action.

We plan to continue nourishing a global spiritual community through this digital DM space for many years to come, with and beyond Fr. Richard. We want the Daily Meditations to be about what Fr. Richard is about—and for each of us to encounter the loving Divine Presence at the heart of Reality. In this way, the remarkable impact that Fr. Richard has had on so many of us also becomes the story of God’s unfolding grace in our lives—and it doesn’t stop there. The quest of transformation is always about what we will do with the Holy Gift that we have

found within, and how we will pass it on.

MARK LONGHURST is the CAC’s Managing Editor of Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations and a graduate of the inaugural 2015 Living School cohort. Prior to joining the CAC, Mark worked at social justice nonprofits in Boston and served United Church of Christ churches. His great joy is to help recover the transformative power of the Christian mystical tradition for today.

the Mendicant

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Using Podcasts to Apply Mystical Traditions to the Modern Condition

PAUL SWANSON and COREY WAYNE

How do you explain the Christ to a child?" This was the very first question we asked Richard Rohr on the first season of our flagship podcast, *Another Name for Every Thing*. Packed into that question were hours of reading, pondering, and Paul playing with his kids. This personally intense question was asked in such a sparse way because Fr. Richard knows Paul and is the type of spiritual teacher who needs but a whiff of a question to follow its tracks. Fr. Richard has this unique ability to synthesize the complexities of the Christian tradition as he understands it and put it into a language that lights the wick of the heart and warms the mind. He's been teaching with this illuminating effect since his first cassette tapes were published when he was a fresh-faced Franciscan in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Prior to *Another Name for Every Thing*, podcasts at the CAC existed only intermittently via *Homilies*, which were recorded as Fr. Richard gave them at Holy Family Catholic Church in Albuquerque. Before Corey's arrival at CAC, Fr. Richard recorded these himself with a hand-held recorder that rested on the podium while he preached. By the end of 2018, these *Homilies* only had 280,000 downloads. When we set out to create *Another Name for Every Thing* in 2019, the idea was to help unpack the themes of *The Universal Christ*. However, during the production of that show, we had the idea of creating *Turning to the*



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Mystics with James Finley, and quickly began developing plans to form an entire podcast network comprised of the wisdom of our faculty and extended community.

The CAC podcast network was intentionally designed to serve multiple purposes. Given the advantages of podcasting, we wanted to use it as a tool to expand CAC's teachings on the Christian contemplative traditions. Later, it would also become a tool to showcase and connect listeners to other programs by the CAC. Lastly, our hope with the podcast network was to build a broader circle of teachers and practitioners who exemplify the multiple expressions of contemplation. Our podcast network is currently living into its purpose as we offer teachings on exploring the Christian contemplative traditions, learning new ways of seeing beyond ourselves, and exploring our shared cosmic belonging. In this way, the podcast network reflects the growing edges of each of the CAC's faculty and extended community of teachers.

Each podcast in our network walks into the world on the sturdy legs of a pedagogy that honors wisdom through teaching, practice, and relationship. This is true in the input as well as in the output. Corey, the mastermind of the network, has let Paul tag along in the cocre-

ation of the CAC network that leads with the strengths of the animating charisma of each teacher's podcast. With the pedagogy in mind, we collaborate with the teachers on a format, structure, and themes that will support their unique calling in service to the world.

As we look to an eventual future without Richard Rohr, this program has shown that



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One Love Unfolding

An Excerpt from the CAC Podcast *Learning How to See* with Brian McLaren

Thomas Merton once said, “In the spiritual order, to understand is to know that you are infinitely understood.” And he once said about the monks in the monastery, “There isn’t a single monk in this monastery who knows why he is here. If he thinks he knows why he’s here, he doesn’t know why he’s here, because we’re here because God loves us.” And so, there are moments when we’re touched by this in our heart; there are moments of communion. And so, it just isn’t that the answers fall away, but, in a certain sense, the question falls away.

There’s a certain moment where it’s infinite love, in all directions, unexplainably, through and through and through. The issue is that we live in a traumatized capacity to abide in that. That love alone pervades all things, endlessly, in all directions. And—in our hearts we know it’s true—there’s this moment where we’ve tasted it, but we’re impaired. We desire: “How do I abide in that?” So, being transformed in it, I might habitually see it everywhere. That’s our task, I

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think, because when we are traumatized, we’re upset. The density and intensity of the trauma and the cruelty closes off access to this love alone that is ultimately real.

I’m always trying to sink the taproot of my heart into this one love unfolding itself everywhere, which transcends the darkness of this world—not to be carried off, away from the world, but to radicalize my presence in it. That’s how Jesus lived. Jesus walked this earth: “If you have eyes to see, and you don’t see,” you don’t see the infinite love of God shining out, in standing up and sitting down, in your brother or your sister. So, I see it that way: to abide in it in a way that radicalizes my oneness with the holiness of everybody and everything. We’re all trying to find our way here, and how can I be true to my path so that others may find it somewhat easier to see in their own life?

—Jim Finley

To listen to the complete *Learning How to See* podcast, please visit <https://cac.org/podcast/learning-how-to-see/>

Using Podcasts to Apply Mystical Traditions to the Modern Condition

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it is possible for a movement to sustain itself by relocating Fr. Richard from the center to joining the circle of a broader community. As *Another Name for Every Thing* came to an end in 2021, the network’s offerings expanded to contain our entire lineup of faculty members and began including partnerships with our extended community.

Currently, all of CAC’s active offerings are presented by our other faculty members—Dr. James Finley (*Turning to the Mystics*), Dr. Barbara Holmes (*The Cosmic We*), and Brian McLaren (*Learning How to See*)—and extended community members such as the Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis (*Love. Period.*). Keep an ear out for Fr. Richard to reenter the podcast network later this year as we explore the archives of his teachings. 2021 concluded with over 3.5 million downloads across 202 countries and territories around the globe. We have

enjoyed watching our new shows grow and carry the network and the CAC into its future.

PAUL SWANSON is a Senior Program Designer at the CAC, where he supports the creation and curation of podcasts, online courses, and the Living School. He is a jackleg Mennonite and member of Our Lady of the Tall Trees. Paul lives in New Mexico with his wife Laura and their two feral children.

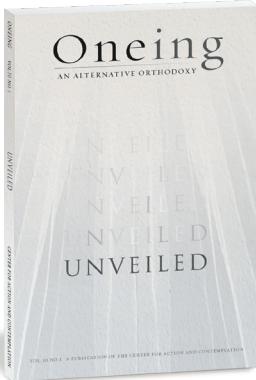
COREY WAYNE produces the podcasts for the CAC’s podcast network. Prior to his time at the CAC, he produced several chart-topping shows in the arenas of religion and spirituality and society and culture. When he’s not at work, he’s either out hiking or working to finish his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology. Although he calls Nashville his home, he currently lives in New Mexico.



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"Unveiling is a gift
for those who are ready
to see more fully."

—Richard Rohr

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Saint John of the Cross
Luminous Darkness



Mirabai Starr

Even though this holy night darkens the spirit, it does so only to light up everything.
—St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*

In this compendium of translations and commentary on the writings of St. John of the Cross (1542–1591), interspiritual teacher, author, and translator Mirabai Starr invites readers to experience his “quintessential guidance for navigating the journey to union with Love Itself” that first drew her to the sublime poetry of this Spanish mystic. This revised and updated edition includes a new foreword by James Finley, who notes “how skillfully Mirabai has woven the poems together with tracings of valuable information and insights to help us understand how his poems, his life, and our lives are so mysteriously interconnected and sustained in God’s love.” Now available at store.cac.org

***Saint John of the Cross: Luminous Darkness* by Mirabai Starr**

LEARNING
HOW
TO
SEE
with
Brian
McLaren

Seeing Christianity in a new way

Learning How to See is back for a third season, hosted by CAC faculty member Brian McLaren. In this season, we are pivoting from learning how to see beyond our biases to looking at new ways of seeing Christianity. This season, and the forthcoming season, were inspired by Brian's new book *Do I Stay Christian?* Listen in as Brian and guests such as Diana Butler Bass, Lisa Sharon Harper, Richard Rohr, and others help us to see Christianity in a new way.

Visit <https://cac.org/podcast/learning-how-to-see/>.

***Learning How to See* with Brian McLaren**

a podcast by the CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION