

**Demarius J. Walker**  
**VTS Capstone Project**  
**Submitted May 2021**

### **Listening for the Monastic Imagination.**

My project starts with Jesus' questions to his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" The question is as pertinent today as it was over 2000 years ago. The question invites us into the prophetic imagination. One way the Christian community has sought to live out this imagination is found in the intentional ways of life that arise cyclical in the church, broadly named monasticism. Over the course of 10 interviews I speak with scholars, traditional monastics, and individuals engaged with "the new monasticism" seeking to hear how their lives shed light on this question for the contemporary church. My goal in producing this project in the form of a podcast series is to make this wisdom more accessible to spiritual seekers who are not likely to read an academic paper or even attend a church service yet who are still compelled to listen for the voice of Jesus.

Interviews were conducted February- April 2021

Interviewees include:

- Rev. Dr. Greg Peters
- Rev. Dr. Luther Smith
- Rev. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove
- Br. Bede Mudge, OHC
- Br. John Forbis, OHC
- Br. Robert Leo Sevensky, OHC
- Katy Hirst
- Rev. Simon Lewis, COSA
- Sr. Marie Mondersert

All episodes are hosted by BlogTalkRadio and may be found at <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum>

**Episode 1:** <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep1-greg-peters>

Greg Peters is a native Virginian who loves to travel (especially in Europe) and read. When not reading for work, Greg reads for fun. He enjoys the fiction of Paul Auster, Bernard Malamud, Chinua Achebe and the nineteenth century Russian novelists. In addition, Greg loves the poetry of John Donne and George Herbert. When it comes to non-fiction, he enjoys reading anything that has to do with theology, monasticism or the history of the Christian church. When not working or reading Greg enjoys spending time with his wife Christina and two sons: Brendan and Nathanael. Greg is an ordained pastor in the Anglican tradition, serving regularly in his local parish.

**Episode 2:** <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep2-luther-smith>

The Rev. Dr. Luther E. Smith, Jr. is Professor Emeritus of Church and Community, Candler School of Theology of Emory University. Dr. Smith speaks and has written extensively on issues of church and society, congregational renewal, Christian spirituality, and the thoughts of Howard Thurman. He is a co-founder of the Interfaith Children's Movement that educates, mobilizes, and networks faith communities in being advocates for children in Georgia. Dr. Smith is the Coordinator of the "Pan-Methodist Campaign for Children in Poverty," and also serves on the board of "L'Arche USA" to assist its mission with persons with intellectual disabilities. He is an ordained minister of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

**Episode 3:** <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep-3-jonathan-wilson-hartgrove>

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is a celebrated spiritual writer and sought-after speaker. A native of North Carolina, he is a graduate of Eastern University and Duke Divinity School.

In 2003, Jonathan and his wife Leah founded the Rutba House, a house of hospitality where the formerly homeless share community with the formerly housed. Jonathan directs the School for Conversion, a popular education center that works to make "surprising friendships possible." He is also an Associate Minister at the historically black St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church.

Jonathan is a co-compiler of the celebrated Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals, and the author of several books on Christian spirituality, including Reconstructing the Gospel, Strangers at My Door, The Awakening of Hope, The Wisdom of Stability, and The New Monasticism. He is also co-author, with Reverend Dr. William Barber II, of The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement.

An evangelical Christian who connects with the broad spiritual tradition and its monastic witnesses, Jonathan is a leader in the Red Letter Christian movement and the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. He speaks often about emerging Christianity and faith in public life to churches and conferences across the denominational spectrum and has

given lectures at dozens of universities and seminaries, including Calvin College, MIT, Bethel, Duke, Yale, Princeton, Jewish Theological, Perkins, Wake Forrest, St. John's, DePaul, and Baylor.

**Episode 4:** <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep-4-br-bede-mudge>

Br. Bede is an Episcopal priest and member of the Order of the Holy Cross tells the story of his journey into and through the monastic imagination

**Episode 5:** Currently unavailable

Episode 6: <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep-6-robert-leo>

Assistant Superior, Sacristan, Archivist

Entered OHC: 1986

Life Professed: 1990

From: Scranton, PA

Interests: reading, especially monastic studies & memoirs; hiking.

**Episode 7:** <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep-7-katy-hirst>

Katy Hirst, a current seminarian at Ridely Hall Cambridge, reflects on her 2 years with the Community of St. Anselm.

**Episode 8:** <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep-8-simon-lewis>

Rev. Simon Lewis is a priest in the Church of England and Dean of the Community of St. Anselm. The Community of St Anselm is an Acknowledged Religious Community in the Church of England, founded by Archbishop Justin Welby in 2015 as part of his first priority: the renewal of prayer and Religious life. We draw together Christians aged 20-35 from all over the world, and any branch of the Christian family tree, for a year of living a shared life of prayer, theological study and service to the poor. There are three spaces of belonging for members: Immersive (Resident at Lambeth Palace), Integrated (Working and living outside) and Alumni (those who have completed the year and are dispersed across the world). All members shape their lives around the Community's Rule of Life and participate in Community meetings, retreats and other activities.

**Episode 9:** <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/thurmanforum/2021/04/06/monastic-imagination-ep-9-marie-mondesert>

Sr. Marie Mondesert is a consecrated member of the Chemin Neuf Community. The Chemin Neuf Community (French: Communauté du Chemin Neuf) is a Catholic community with an ecumenical vocation.[1] Formed from a charismatic prayer group in 1973, it has 2,000 permanent members[citation needed] in 30 countries, and 12,000 people serving[citation needed] in the community missions. Its main founder is the Jesuit father, Laurent Fabre [fr].[2]

The community takes its name from the first meeting place, based in Lyon, 49 Montée du Chemin-Neuf [fr]. A product of the Charismatic Renewal, the community claims to adhere to an Ignatian spirituality. It brings together priests, lay celibates (men and women) as well as non-celibates and couples with or without children.

The community directs its actions around the principle of unity: unity of Christians (ecumenism), unity of men (notably between different cultures and nations), unity of couples and of families.