

# THOMAS MERTON & SUFISM

A lecture by GRAY HENRY

**Monday 17 July 2017** at 7.30pm

The Essex Unitarian Church

112 Palace Gardens Terrace

London W8 4RT

*In the chair* Emma Clark

Thomas Merton was a 20<sup>th</sup> century spiritual seeker, a monk who became known throughout the world for his spiritual writings. At one point in his life he was graced with an epiphany. The term he used to describe an aspect of this experience was 'le point vierge' (literally 'the virgin point') which he took from Louis Massignon, the Catholic scholar of Islam, with whom he corresponded. Merton defined 'le point vierge' as 'the point at which I can meet God in a real and experimental contact'. Merton had been very drawn to Martin Lings' book on Shaykh Ahmad al Alawi, *A Muslim Saint of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* and invited a Shaykh from the Mostaganam Zawiyya to visit his own monastery in Trappist, Kentucky. During the two years before his death in 1968, Merton's weekly lectures to the monastery novices were focused on Sufism. This lecture will explore the influence of Sufism on Merton's thought.

VIRGINIA GRAY HENRY is Director of the Kentucky-based publisher Fons Vitae and Co-Director of the Ghazali Children's Project, a world-wide educational initiative inspired by the work of Thomas Merton and his interest in Sufism and the inner-life.



## **Admission**

£8 or £5 concessions

Full-time students with student ID card FREE

## **Reservations**

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