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Orinda Community Church to Host World Renowned Theologian and Author

By Laurie Snyder

"Has there ever been a time in human history or the history of the planet when illumination, light, and wisdom, were needed more than now? Can anyone be better equipped to lead us than the neglected one, St. Hildegard, who in fact defines the ultimate act of illumination as compassion?" asks Matthew Fox in his book, "Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen."

A beloved theologian and internationally recognized expert on Christian mysticism, Fox will bring his acclaimed abilities to illumine and inspire to Lamorinda when he teaches at the Orinda Community Church Sunday, Feb. 10 in events that are sure to attract participants from across the Bay Area.

Fox is revered by many for igniting the embers that sparked their spiritual journeys through writings such as "One River, Many Wells: Wisdom Springing from Global Faiths," "Meditations with Meister Eckhart," and "Hildegard of Bingen's Book of Divine Works with Letters and Songs."

His most recent book, "Hildegard of Bingen, A Saint for Our Times: Unleashing Her Power in the 21st Century," has been released to mark the canonization of this Benedictine abbess. During her lifetime (1098-1179), Hildegard rose above the patriarchal culture to become a healer, scientist and composer, as well as a much sought after counselor by the highest ranking of male church leaders. She likened herself to the David who brought down Goliath.

Fox is a modern day version of David himself. A former Dominican priest and summa cum laude graduate of the Institut Catholique de Paris with a doctorate in the History and Theology of Spirituality, he once took on Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) in an attempt to stop the dissolution of the Creation Spirituality Institute at Oakland's Holy Names College. He continues to spar with the current pope and other spiritual leaders across the globe, challenging them with his thinking, activism, and writing. Books such as his "Christian Mystics: 365 Readings and Meditations" have become popular with many of diverse faiths who engage in meditation and other forms of contemplative practice.

OCC event attendees will reflect on the theme, "In what language will our children and grandchildren pray?" Fox will lead the liturgical service and dance, which will begin at 10 a.m. in the main sanctuary. Lunch will then be served in OCC's Fellowship Hall prior to the workshop with Fox from noon to 2 p.m. Church leaders are asking each workshop participant for a \$20 donation (\$30 for families or \$5 for students) to help defray expenses; however, no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

It is anticipated that seating will fill up quickly. To reserve your space, call (925) 254-4906. For more information about Matthew Fox, visit his web site: www.matthewfox.org.

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