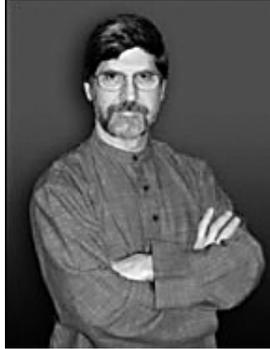


IN MEMORIAM  
JAMES S. CUTSINGER  
(May 4, 1953 – February 19, 2020)



**‘A Serious Seeker and Socratic Teacher’**

A gifted and compassionate teacher of the perennial wisdom, Professor Cutsinger possessed a penetrating insight that he brought to bear on issues of faith and modernity, challenging false assumptions prevalent within academia about the nature of man and the limits of knowledge.

He was the author of *The Form of Transformed Vision: Coleridge and the Knowledge of God* (1986) (Owen Barfield, who wrote the book’s foreword, praised Cutsinger’s ‘meticulous, unhurried, superabundantly documented exegesis of what Coleridge thought’); *Advice to the Serious Seeker: Meditations on the Teaching of Frithjof Schuon* (1997) (the book, which has influenced many a ‘serious seeker,’ explored the ideas of Frithjof Schuon and the perennialists); and three anthologies of Schuon’s writings: *The Fullness of God: Frithjof Schuon on Christianity* (2004), *Prayer Fashions Man: Frithjof Schuon on the Spiritual Life* (2005), and *Splendor of the True: A Frithjof Schuon Reader* (2013). Besides editing several of Schuon’s books and letters, he has also edited and produced several anthologies, notably the proceedings of two conferences that he organized [*Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialogue* (1997) and *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East* (2002)] as well as *Not of This World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism* (2003).

# 'The Best and Wisest of my Teachers'

*By Richard McCombs*

**J**ames Cutsinger was the best and wisest of my teachers. I have often tried to understand his pedagogical excellence, mainly so that I could imitate it. There were many reasons for his greatness: intelligence, inef-fable artfulness, dedication and hard work, a good voice, and more. In this tribute I will focus on just a few of his many virtues.

Dr. Cutsinger taught his students about the highest things, an infinite good, both transcendent and immanent, how to live in relation to this good, and how to unite with it. This teaching was nourishment for students dying of hunger in the famine of modernity.

He gave hope to students that they could know God for themselves and not just accept divine doctrine on authority. He did this partly through cogent arguments against standard attempts to limit human knowledge. He argued that in order to exclude the possibility of knowing God or the nature of reality, one would need to know the nature of knowledge, the essence of the human mind, and the nature of God. If one does not know the mind perfectly, then one cannot rule out that it has hidden intellectual capacities. If one does not know the essence of reality, one cannot know that it is humanly unknowable. If one does not know God, one cannot rule out that God can know himself in and through the human mind. Such arguments, powerful as they are, are not, however, enough. Students persuaded by them may nonetheless become discouraged and demoralized by their apparent lack of progress in knowing the highest things. Therefore Dr. Cutsinger also gave examples of saints who were credible owing to their sublime virtue and who claimed to know God; and, of course Dr. Cutsinger was himself a credible claimant to such knowledge.

Dr. Cutsinger was generous and humble. He wrote thousands and thousands of letters and emails to serious seekers. In my own case, over

To read the balance of this article, please subscribe to this volume.



# SACRED WEB

A JOURNAL OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY

[www.sacredweb.com](http://www.sacredweb.com)