

## **Presentation on Margery Kempe**

**By Celina Tillack**

I want to focus my presentation on what I wrote in a term paper titled **Bodily desire and sexual fantasies – constructing sexual and religious authority in *The Book of Margery Kempe***. Very broadly, I want to examine how Margery Kempe uses the language and imagery of explicit sexual desire for Christ in order to construct a sexual and religious authority for herself. For this, I will first look at how Margery Kempe characterises her relationship with Christ, particularly paying attention to the conflation of roles of lovers/husband and wife/mother and son. Then I will also examine the parallels we can see between Margery's sexual desire for Christ and her real, lived experiences as a sexually active wife and how those experiences help her build an especially intimate relationship with Christ, as well as help her take back some form of control over her own body and her sexuality. Lastly, I want to look at how Margery uses all of this (i.e. the intimate relationship she has with Christ) to construct religious authority for herself that she otherwise would not have as a wife and mother, as opposed to a virginal woman.