



NEW NORCIA

# Institute for Benedictine Studies

Study Weekends and Retreats

## PROGRAMME 2020



### A Message from the Director

The ministry of hospitality is one of the key elements of the Benedictine monastic charism. This hospitality assumes many and diverse forms; but one of the most significant and fruitful expressions of it in recent times is the offering of opportunities for spiritual development, for study and for prayerful reflection. The various retreats and study weekends offered by the New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies continue in this tradition. Participants in our weekends have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the tranquillity, peace and beauty of a traditional monastic environment, and to encounter God- and themselves- in a renewed way.

Our offerings for 2019 generated much enthusiastic appreciation, and attracted very strong attendances. We are confident that our programme for this year will build upon this, and continue to address the needs and interests of contemporary spiritual seekers in an engaging and reflective way.

We hope that you will find something of interest here, and look forward to your visit to New Norcia in 2020.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Robert Nixon, osb  
(Director)

*Pictured left: Virgin and Child, School of Murillo (17<sup>th</sup> century). Painting in Monastery Collection*

### February 28 - March 1

#### *Lenten Retreat*

Fr. David Barry osb

Lent is a time traditionally devoted to spiritual purification and refinement in preparation for the great celebration of Easter. During Lent, Christians are encouraged to adopt the practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. This retreat will help participants to embrace Lent prayerfully, with renewed energy, new insights and with an openness to the graces it offers.

### May 29 - 31

#### *The Sacrament of Silence- Meditation Retreat*

Dom Paul Forster, osb

Love of silence is a quality emphasised and affirmed in the Rule of St. Benedict and a traditional value of monastic life. Yet the cultivation of silence is something very difficult in our modern world, and often not understood or appreciated. Drawing from Thomas Keating's foundations for centring prayer and the Christian contemplative life, this weekend will consider dimensions and stages of contemplative prayer, steps in centring prayer, St. Anthony in the tombs, and cultivating a spirituality in everyday life. Time will also be allocated for meditation sessions.

### August 14 - 16

#### *'Letting Go'*

Sr. Lilian Bong, sjc

As we journey through life, we are in a continual process of 'letting go', in many different ways. This letting go can be the result of the loss of loved ones, of the process of aging, of relationship changes, and families growing up, etc. On the other hand, there can be things in our hearts- anger, regret, grief, attachment- which we would like to let go of, but find it difficult to do so. Yet, in learning to 'let go', we can embrace God's plan for us more deeply, and thus come more fully to life. This retreat will provide companionship and guidance in this process.



# Study Weekends

## March 27 - 29

*Cardinal Newman and the 19th Century Revival of English Catholicism*

Dr. Liam Lynch

In England in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there was a remarkable revival of interest in Catholicism. This manifested itself in the spiritual, liturgical and intellectual renewal expressed in the 'Oxford Movement', or Tractarianism. Among the many personalities involved in this, an outstanding figure was St. John Henry Newman- an Anglican minister, who converted to Catholicism, and eventually became a Cardinal. This weekend will explore the work of Cardinal Newman, and present an insight into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century emergence of Anglo-Catholicism.

## April 17 - 19

*Middle English Spiritual Writings: 'The Cloud of Unknowing', Julian of Norwich, Walter Hilton, Margery Kempe and others*

Fr. Robert Nixon, osb

During the later Middle Ages, there was in England a rich outflowing of spiritual writings in the vernacular tongue, or Middle English. These writings reveal a deep interest in mystical experiences amongst all classes of society, and testify to a profound and pervasive piety. This piety was rooted in orthodox ecclesial tradition, but deeply influenced by the popular culture and devotions of the time, and often very bold and imaginative. This weekend will examine this fascinating corpus of literature, delving into some of the key primary sources.

## July 10 - 12

*Female Benedictine Mystics of the Middle Ages: Sts. Hildegard of Bingen, Elizabeth of Schonae, Gertrude the Great and Mechtilde of Hackeborn*

Presented by various monks of the Monastery

While monasteries and convents of Benedictine nuns flourished throughout Europe during the entire Middle Ages, the amount of writings left to us, in comparison with male Benedictines of the same period, is relatively small. Yet among these writings are many treasures, expressing the life of mystical prayer, remarkable visions and revelations, and an ardent love for God. This weekend will examine the remarkable lives and writings of four mediaeval Benedictine mystics; Hildegard, Elizabeth of Schonae, Gertrude the Great, and Mechtilde of Hackeborn.

## September 25 - 27

*A Course in Reading Gregorian Notation for Musicians*

Fr. Robert Nixon, osb

The term 'Gregorian chant' is often used to generically refer to all the non-polyphonic repertoire of the Latin Church. This large and varied body of repertoire by no means represents a single or unified style, tradition or approach; and the performance and notational practices of Gregorian in current use emerged as a result of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century reform movement. This course will provide a theoretical background, and practical instruction in how to read Gregorian notation, for those who are already able to read standard musical notation.

## Benedictine Experience Weekends

These weekends in the monastery guesthouse provide the opportunity to enter fully into the monastic rhythm and balance of prayer, work, lectio divina, hospitality and community life. There will be opportunities to ponder the riches of the scriptures and monastic literature, both in group discussions and personal silence and solitude, bringing from the 'storeroom, things both new and old.' Participants are also invited to join the community for silent meals in the refectory, one of many invitations to listen with the 'ear of the heart.'

May 15 - 17 | June 19 - 21 | November 6 - 8

## ANNUAL INSTITUTE DAY

Saturday, 1 August 2020

Keynote Speakers:

Fr. Brendan Thomas, osb, Master of Novices, Belmont Abbey  
Fr. Joseph Chua, ocsso, Vocations Director, Tarrawarra Abbey

Musical performances will also be featured

Cost: \$75 Includes a fine lunch, morning and afternoon tea

## NEW NORCIA Institute for Benedictine Studies

The New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies seeks to broaden and deepen awareness of the monastic tradition within Christianity. It offers an environment conducive to prayer, study and reflection with excellence in teaching and research. It aims to encourage participants at all stages of life to reflect on their journey of faith with the pastoral support of rich traditions in prayer, discernment and discipleship, whether as lay people, professed religious, academics, or in ordained ministry.

### Course and Retreat Costs

Participants are asked to contribute \$250 which covers the course expenses and full board for two nights (Friday and Saturday) at the Monastery Guesthouse. It also includes entry into the Museum and Art Gallery.

Bookings are to be made via New Norcia's Webshop at: [www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au](http://www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au)

For all other queries please contact: Dom Robert Nixon, osb E: [institute@newnorcia.wa.edu.au](mailto:institute@newnorcia.wa.edu.au)

## CUSTOM RETREATS

We are delighted to be able to offer 'custom' retreats, for groups of participants. These retreats, presented by monks of the monastery, can be adapted to the particular needs and interests of the group and scheduled on any mutually convenient dates. Please contact Fr. Robert Nixon, osb, at [institute@newnorcia.wa.edu.au](mailto:institute@newnorcia.wa.edu.au) for more information



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