



Pax, a Latin word meaning peace, is the motto of the Benedictine monks of New Norcia

The Chimes Newsletter



September 2020

Exciting developments in the Art Gallery and Museum

Over the last twelve months, the New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery has undergone some major renovations upstairs, including new cabinetry, lighting and freshly painted black ceilings and cream walls, all of which has made the gallery a much more dynamic, dramatic and exciting place to visit. We are also very excited to have two new exhibitions open for visitors and an update to an existing display.

Firstly, the Collections Committee is delighted to be able to display New Norcia's textile collection, which includes an 18th century Italian cope and chasuble, 19th century *pretiosa mitre* and a 1640 Dutch burse, among other precious textiles. The display, named the *Rinske Car Retrospective*, features delicate items which have been meticulously conserved by Rinske Car of the Denmark River Textile Conservation Studio. A large flat-screen TV adjacent to the exhibition also has a PowerPoint presentation on the restoration of the cope.

Rinske Car is Western Australia's most experienced and accomplished textile conservator, with more than fifty years' experience covering all types of historic and ancient textiles. Trained in the Netherlands, she interned in London and did extraordinary work on a range of modern and old textiles before emigrating to join the Western Australian Museum to conserve textiles from the Batavia (1629) shipwreck.

During her museum career as a part-time conservator she established her art practice and created large textile wall hangings for public buildings and private collections. Her next development phase was designing and supervising the making of traditional hand knotted carpets in Vietnam for eight years.

Since moving to Denmark, Rinske has spent almost a decade developing new methods for conserving and stabilising the remarkable collection of ecclesiastical textiles which are seen on display at New Norcia.

"The decisions on textile conservation of this extraordinary collection also take into account the ecclesiastical functions and spiritual dimensions of the objects. It recognises too the remarkable skill and dedication of those who



The renovated Art Gallery and Textile Collection, conserved by Rinske Car

made these beautiful objects and the desire to preserve their contribution to our shared heritage." Rinske Car, Conservator.

Downstairs, where the World War I exhibition was previously located, is now *Essence of Country* - an exhibition of



A painting on display by Albert Namatjira



Michael Jones

paintings by Albert Namatjira and members of his family, who were esteemed artists in their own right. The majority of the paintings were donated to New Norcia by the Michael Jones' estate in 2018, and they join New Norcia's own collection and one other kindly loaned to the Museum and Art Gallery by Jillian Passmore. Michael Jones was an old boy of St Ildephonsus' College who later went on to be a grazier in Kojonup and it is because of his very generous bequest to New Norcia that we are able to mount this significant exhibition of fifteen paintings. We are also indebted to Ruth Ellis for the significant contribution she made in providing background information on the Namatjira family.

Albert Namatjira, born Elea Namatjira, was a Western Arrernte-speaking Aboriginal artist from the MacDonnell Ranges in Central Australia. As a pioneer of contemporary Indigenous Australian art, he was the most famous Indigenous Australian of his generation.

Born and raised at the Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission outside of Alice Springs, Namatjira showed interest in art from an early age. In his boyhood, Albert sketched scenes and incidents around him - the cattle yard, the stockmen with their horses, and the hunters after game. He later made artefacts such as boomerangs and woomeras. Encouraged by the mission authorities, he began to produce mulga-wood plaques with poker-worked designs.

But it was not until 1934 (aged 32) that Namatjira began to paint seriously. In 1938 he held his first solo exhibition at the Fine Art Society Gallery, Melbourne. His richly detailed, Western art-influenced water colours of the outback departed significantly from the abstract designs and symbols of traditional Aboriginal art, and inspired the Hermannsburg School of painting.

He became a household name in Australia and reproductions of his works hang in many homes throughout the nation. In 1956 his portrait, by William Dargie, became the first Aboriginal person to win the Archibald Prize. Namatjira was also awarded the Queen's Coronation Medal in 1953, was elected an honorary member of the Royal Art Society of New

South Wales (1955), and was honoured with an Australian postage stamp in 1968.

Back upstairs again, next to the *Rinske Car Retrospective*, the two-part Music at New Norcia display, featuring Fr Stephen Moreno and the monastic orchestra, has undergone some considerable re-arrangement and improvement with the help and advice of New Norcia's liturgist, Fr Robert Nixon. The revamping of this exhibition also led to the establishment of a smaller display about the Aboriginal Boys' Brass Band downstairs in the museum.

In early September, prominent West Australian businessman Kerry Stokes, paid a brief visit to New Norcia to see the new exhibitions and other significant historical artefacts. Mr. Stokes himself has an important collection and we look forward to working collaboratively in the future to bring these significant collections together and to be able to display them at the Museum and Art Gallery.

All this work of course has involved a large number of very enthusiastic, willing and dedicated personnel whose contributions are very much appreciated. Those contributors were the Collections Committee (Fr John, Carmel Murray, Ian MacLeod, Peter Hocking), Fr Robert Nixon, Buildings and Grounds (Ian Smith, Rob Green and Graeme Edwards), Rinske Car, Axiom (for the signage), Colour West Painting and Unios Lighting.

Peter Hocking

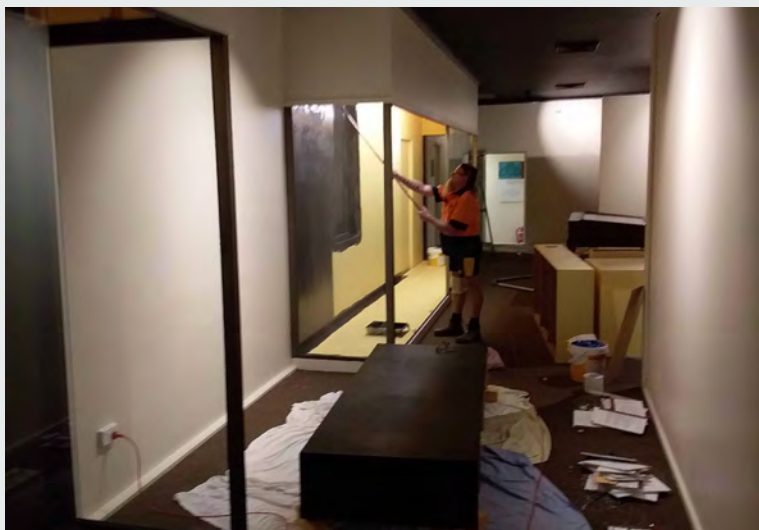


Albert Namatjira's postage stamp in 1968

Work around Town

As always, the Grounds Team has been busy with repairs and improvements around town. Work during the past few months has included:

- Painting inside Guesthouse ensuite rooms, exterior walls and timber work
- Installing bird netting at St Ildephonsus' College to discourage roosting
- Spreading lupins around the olive grove to increase nitrogen levels
- Replacing ceilings in St Ildephonsus' Cottage and painting it throughout
- Museum and Art Gallery upgrades, where the ceilings were painted black by Steve Mossman, Colour West; new LED museum grade lighting was installed in the European Gallery by electrician Mark Leuba from Bindoon; painting of the walls in the European gallery; and upgraded display cabinets for the textile, musical instrument and other displays.
- And other important works, with more information to be announced soon



Changes to Student Camps

Since our last college closed in 1991, we have for almost thirty years been pleased to welcome school groups for general camps, music camps and retreats, providing the unique experience of spending time in Australia's only monastic town and engaging with our Education Centre. The collaboration between your students and teachers and the monastic community and New Norcia staff has been a true source of joy for us. However, we wish to advise that we will cease offering residential school camps at New Norcia, effective at the end of 2020.

Although we regret having to make this decision, we are very pleased to be able to continue offering day visits for school groups. During the COVID-19 lockdown we were able to spend time developing interpretation material and activity packages relating to the various unique aspects and exhibitions throughout the site, some of which are pictured below. For more information regarding these packs and day visits for student groups, please contact our Group Booking Manager on 9654 8018 or groups@newnorcia.wa.edu.au.

St Mary's Art Panels

The River Walk

New Norcia Cemetery

The Prindiville Room



A Window Into New Norcia's History

The New Norcia River Walk takes you on a stroll into the past. It gives us a glimpse of aspects of the lives of Sabado and the monks during their early years in New Norcia along with some insight into the lives of people of this area during those early years of the mission.

History of the roads in the area

- **Old Geraldton Road**
The road running directly from the bridge across the Moore River in front of the Monastery building and then up the hill to the old Court house was originally the main route from Perth to Geraldton. At the Southern end there was a three-span bridge across the Moore River which is now in ruins. As the traffic increased in the 1950's a new bridge was built and the highway was moved away from the Monastery. In 2016 to 2017, a bypass road was constructed taking the main stream traffic away from the centre of New Norcia and the precinct completely.
- **Old road to Wyseing Mission** (see below)

Wyseing Mission

The track from the Old Convent to the Moore River marks the commencement of the road from New Norcia to Wyseing Mission which was 40 kms to the east. Wyseing Mission was operated by the monks and Aboriginal workers as a pastoral station, poultry farm and winery for more than sixty years between the years 1878 - 1970.

• 1879-1981

A reliable fresh water supply was critical to the early settlement and survival of sheep and these stone lined wells were constructed during this period. This period saw a network of wells constructed in the area by the monks and today there are wells remaining at Wyseing Springs, the Mission House and seven smaller wells in the vicinity.

New Norcia's original cemetery

The original cemetery was behind the church but was moved to its current location when the church was enlarged during the mid 1890's. Like all monasteries, New Norcia has its own unique story to tell, in this case the history of a monastic town and of the people who lived here and continue to do so to this day. Just as with monastic life, there is order and thought in the arrangement of the graves: the graves of the abbots form the central backbone, with monks and others on either side of the abbots. Aboriginals' burial sites are at the foot of the cemetery near the entrance, while settlers and landowners are to their sides and behind. Notice that the monastic community is at the centre, just as it is in life.

The founder of New Norcia, Bishop Sabado (Abbot from 1847 to 1900), will not be found in the cemetery, instead he is in the marble apse to the left of the church. The first abbot therefore to be buried in the cemetery was Fulgentius Torres who was Sabado's successor from 1901 to 1914. His tomb is the largest one in the cemetery and this is probably a reflection of the sort of man he was. Abbot Torres was responsible for building the two large colleges on either side of the cemetery - St Gertrude's College for girls on the south, or to the left of the entrance, and St Ildephonsus' College for boys on the northern, or right side. It seems appropriate therefore that his grave is built in a grand manner. As mentioned above, the community was buried on either side; monks can be identified by the initials before their names (P, M, Don), while sisters had S or Soror before their names. The simple crosses and symbols on their graves reflect the simple life that the monks and sisters of New Norcia's Order of St Benedict (OSB) led.

The Beginnings of New Norcia Mission

Sabado and Serra were fellow monks at Compostela in Spain and later at Cava during which time they became good friends. Subsequently they both offered themselves for mission work and arrived in Fremantle on 7th January 1846.

The party left Perth on 14th February and, after resting at the Scully homestead for some days, they struggled on eventually reaching a spring called Badji Badji by the Aborigines. On arrival they found that unfortunately the spring had been reduced to a muddy quagmire. At sunrise, after making camp for the night, Sabado, Fontaine and one of Scully's men were guided by Aborigines to another place which was also dry. Fontaine and the other man refused to go on any further however Sabado followed the Aborigines to another spring where there was water. Sabado returned and led his men to this place. The following day Mass was celebrated prior to Scully's men leaving the party alone in the bush.

Aborigines watched them but the monks made no approach to them for a few days until March 2nd when they invited the Aborigines to eat and work with them.

It was later that the monks asked if they could join the Aborigines in their nomadic life and they also volunteered for some of the tasks the Aborigines found the most 'bathosomic' such as carrying the children on their shoulders. The monks also started to learn the Aboriginal language.

After a series of unpleasant events the decision was reached by the two remaining monks, Sabado and Serra were to select a new site where the land was more fertile. They packed their tattered clothes with kangaroo skins rejected by the Aborigines; tied kangaroo gut around their waists to keep them up and

New Book Available

Urban VIII and Alexander VII each occupied the papal throne during the 17th century, and were munificent and discriminating patrons of the arts, as well as men of conspicuous erudition and imagination. They were also sensitive, inspired, and highly accomplished poets. The cultural milieu from which they sprang was a halcyon era in which literature and the arts flourished with all the apollonian refulgence of a splendid, and sometimes extravagant, opulence. The present work of adaptation by New Norcia's Fr. Robert Nixon, employing strictly the medium of English heroic verse, comprises a choice cornucopia of the lyrical musings of these two baroque pontiffs.

Endorsements & Reviews

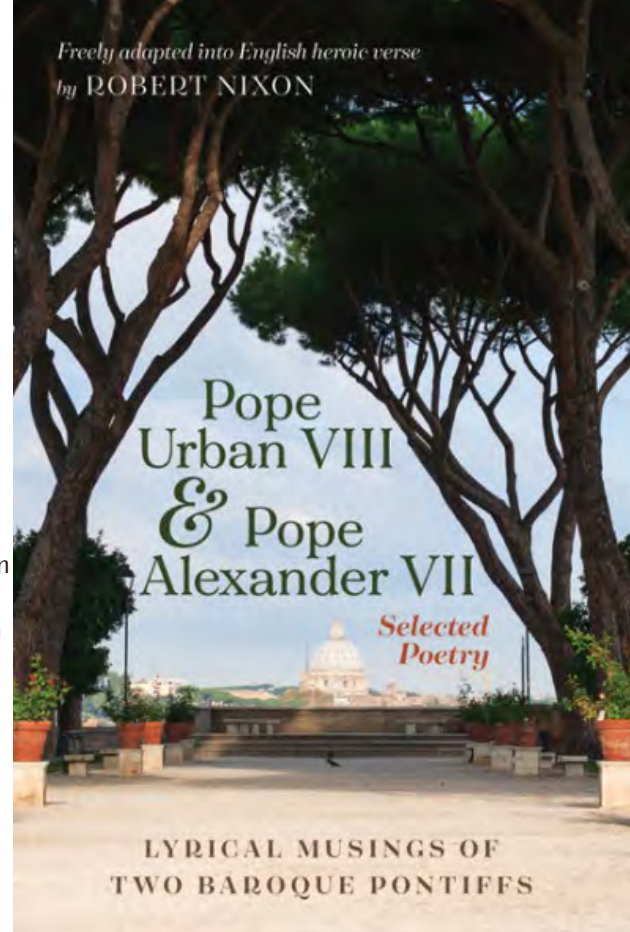
"A wonderful achievement. The Latin poetry of Baroque popes has never been so readable. Nixon's heroic couplets and lexical pyrotechnics bring this verse, on topics high and low, within easy reach. Here is translation as creation, at a high level, and what delights it offers."

—John J. Kinder, University of Western Australia

"Walking in the footsteps of his Benedictine forebears, Fr. Robert Nixon has rendered an immense service to classical education. These exceptional translations of two great popes both convey the meditative aura of the originals and incite to return to them. May they help rediscovery of Latin as part of a living tradition—vehicle of history, culture, and faith—especially through its use in the liturgy."

—Pius Mary Noonan, OSB, Notre Dame Priory, Tasmania

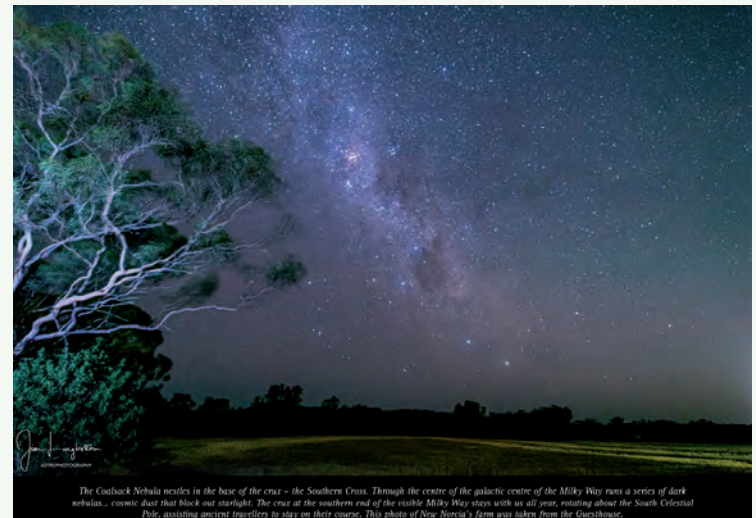
To purchase a copy, please visit our Museum & Art Gallery or visit our store at www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au.



2021 New Norcia Calendar

The 2021 New Norcia calendar *Between Compline and Vigils - the monastic town after dark* includes stunning photography by Jim Longbottom Astrophotography. Jim has taken photos of the town and farm by night and the results are simply breathtaking.

The calendar includes liturgical dates, school term dates, public holidays and dates of importance, with plenty of space to add your own notes. It is available for \$12.00, with all proceeds helping to maintain, renovate and enhance the heritage of Australia's only monastic town.



New Norcia Hostel

The New Norcia Hostel (previously the Hotel) has been very busy these past few months. Group bookings have included the Porsche Car Club, a 50th birthday, an 80th and 90th birthday lunch, a family reunion, as well as bus tour groups for lunch.

The Hostel can be booked by previous arrangement for groups of 10 or more for lunch, dinner or an overnight stay. Please contact Joyce for overnight bookings on 9654 8018 or Carmel for day visits, including lunch, on 9654 8056.

Gather with family or friends for a HIGH TEA AT NEW NORCIA

Elegant and intimate tea rooms, a variety of delicate and indulgent foods, New Norcia Abbey Blanc de Blanc and a roaring wood fire await your group.

Treat yourself and create new memories, while soaking up the atmosphere of the historic New Norcia Hostel and Australia's only monastic town.

\$50/person | Monday - Thursday | groups of 6+



To book, please contact Carmel on (08) 9654 8056 or info@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

Banding Together for Telethon!

In August we welcomed the local Yerecoin Primary School to the steps of the New Norcia Abbey Church where they sang "Times Like These", for the Telethon Choir Project, filmed by Channel 7. We are looking forward to seeing their beaming faces and New Norcia during the Telethon Weekend later in the year.



BRIDGE INTO NEW NORCIA OPEN

In mid-July the bridge into the southern side of New Norcia re-opened following a complete overhaul. With the bypass, bridge and NorthLink now all complete, the journey to New Norcia from Perth has become quicker, easier and safer.

CAN YOU HELP?

The WA Electoral Commission is looking for people to help work on election day in New Norcia. If you are interested, please go to the Western Australian Electoral Commission website from December to register your interest.

COVID-19 SAFETY

We would advise visitors that New Norcia is COVID-19 compliant with safety and is following all the necessary safety measures; all staff have completed the AHA COVID-19 training and are following strict cleaning regimes.



NEW NORCIA

Institute for Benedictine Studies

Study Weekends and Retreats

PROGRAMME 2021



A Message from the Director

The year which has passed has been a unique and challenging one. The world faced the unprecedented crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, and all the loss, grief and anxiety emerging from the effects of the virus. Moreover, the measures implemented to help contain the threat placed severe restraints on a variety of freedoms which had previously been taken for granted. Yet Divine Providence is active in all things. As a result of the strange and difficult conditions, many people have experienced a new spiritual awakening, and an increased awareness of the necessity of faith in eternal realities amidst this world's vicissitudes. Despite a suspension of NNIBS retreats for some months, once the initial restrictions were relaxed an immediate surge in interest was at once apparent. In a certain sense, one might compare the conditions of 'lockdown' with the traditional monastic notation of enclosure. Even when confronted with restrictions in the external conditions of life, a rich inner freedom may be cultivated and enjoyed.

In 2021, we are delighted to offer a truly fascinating range of retreats and study weekends. As always, the Benedictine Community of New Norcia is very pleased to welcome participants from all backgrounds of life. Our wonderful environment and the quiet prayerfulness of the monastic routine form the perfect background for an encounter with the peace, tranquillity, rejuvenation and clarity which God alone can offer.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Robert Nixon, osb

(Director)

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.

March 5 – 7

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 in England there was 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

is often very bold and imaginative. This weekend will examine this fascinating corpus of literature, delving into some of the key primary sources.

March 19 – 21

BENEDICTINE EXPERIENCE WEEKEND (#1)

April 16 – 18

Thomas Merton as a Guide for our Inner Journey

Silvia Grevel

Thomas Merton was a 20th century Cistercian monk, whose writings inspired a world-wide renewal of interest in Christian, monastic spirituality and contemplative prayer. On this weekend the writings and spirit of Thomas Merton will be a guide to shine a light on the multiple rooms of our mind, heart and soul. The aim is to grow deeper into our personal spirituality, into deepened inner freedom. The weekend is suitable for everyone who has been put on a spiritual journey, and wants to further explore the dialogue between our inner and outer source. Following Merton's example, participants will practise self-reflection by ways of journal writing, photography and simple drawing exercises.

Please turn over

May 7 - 9

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.

June 11 - 13

The Imitation of Christ: A Spiritual Classic Revisited

Fr. Robert Nixon, osb

It is often said that, apart from the Bible, the most influential work of literature in Christian spirituality is *The Imitation of Christ*. This small book, written by Thomas à Kempis in the 15th century, has been a treasured source of inspiration and guidance for followers of Jesus for over 500 years, and continues to be relevant, encouraging and strengthening. This weekend will examine the text, its context and its principle spiritual lessons.

June 25 - 27

The Blessings of Life's Eventide: Growing Older with God

Various monks of New Norcia

Every stage of human life presents its unique blessings, challenges and opportunities for spiritual insights and deepening of one's relationship with God. This weekend will explore these in the particular context of the experience of ageing, which is often undervalued and under-appreciated in our mainstream culture. Drawing on a rich variety of wisdom traditions, it will be seen that this stage of life can be a unique opportunity for spiritual and personal rejuvenation, filled with unexpected joys, graces and illuminations.

July 16 - 18

BENEDICTINE EXPERIENCE WEEKEND (#2)

August 6 - 8

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: A Spiritual Luminary of the Monastic Tradition

Fr. Joseph Chua, ocsb

St. Bernard of Clairvaux was a 12th century monk, of foundational importance in the Cistercian Order, a reformed form of Benedictine monasticism. Not only was he a charismatic and effective abbot, but his writings reflect profound and beautiful insights into the mystery of God, Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin. Moreover, he shows acute and penetrating insights into the human heart and soul, and the struggles and blessings of its spiritual journey towards eternity. This weekend will explore the life, person and writings of this great saint.

September 17 - 19

'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 ageing, 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 to live more fully. This retreat will provide companionship and guidance in this process.

October 15 - 17

Spiritual Biography

Dr. James Cregan, University of Notre Dame

The power of another person's life story to provide not just a template for the conduct of one's own life, but also a mirror in which to examine one's personal circumstances, values and beliefs, has been a potent dimension of all religious experience. It is, for example, not just the account of the incarnation that moves individuals towards a new way of being, but also the myriad subsequent stories of individual responses to the Christ event. The huge variation in the way these stories have been expressed, received and circulated, given the complexity and subtlety of human experience, should come as no surprise. This workshop surveys a range of spiritual biographies, predominantly but not exclusively, from the Christian tradition, analysing and reflecting on their structure, special characteristics and emphases. In doing so the course lays the foundation for participants to ask the fundamental question of all stories, including their own: "Of which narrative are we a part?"

November 5 - 7

BENEDICTINE EXPERIENCE WEEKEND (#3)

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.

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

For all other queries please contact: Fr Robert Nixon, osb E: institute@newnorcia.wa.edu.au

CUSTOM & INDIVIDUAL RETREATS

We are delighted to be able to offer 'custom' retreats, for groups of participants. These retreats, can be adapted to the particular needs and interests of the group. Please contact Fr. Robert Nixon, osb, at institute@newnorcia.wa.edu.au. And you are welcome to stay in the monastery guesthouse for an individual retreat. This may be done without direction, simply allowing the experience of prayer, silence and solitude to enrich and renew one's spirit. Alternatively, it is possible to arrange for a monk qualified in spiritual direction to meet daily with retreatants. Enquiries may be directed to guesthouse@newnorcia.wa.edu.au.



New Norcia Institute for Benedictine Studies
Great Northern Highway, New Norcia WA 6509

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