



Wycliffe College Summer 2018

Benedictine Spirituality and the Foundations of the New Monasticism

Course Code: WYP2210HF

Instructor: Constance Joanna Gefvert

June 25 - 29, 2018

St. Benedict's "Little Rule," written in the sixth century, is one of the primary sources of Anglican spirituality, liturgy and ecclesiology and has influenced many other denominations as well.

Since the mid-twentieth century it has had a profound influence on the "New Monasticism," Fresh Expressions, and the Emergence movement. The course will examine the historical roots of Benedictine spirituality in the desert tradition, the spread of the Benedictine tradition across Europe and the British Isles, the clash between the Roman Benedictine tradition and Celtic spirituality, the profound influence of Benedictine liturgy during the English Reformation especially in the shaping of the Book of Common Prayer, and the influence of Benedict's Rule on the development of Anglican and ecumenical religious communities. As we follow the tradition into the 20th and 21st centuries we will examine the increasing interest in Benedictine monastic spirituality among lay people and the evolution of monastic life into the "mixed economy" of traditional and emerging new monastic communities.



After a career as a university professor in the USA, Rev. Canon Sister Constance Joanna Gefvert (Connie) moved to Toronto to join the Anglican Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, a contemporary monastic community, where she is currently Vocations Coordinator and Coordinator of a program for millennials who are seeking a gap year "immersion" experience in Christian community.

She has been a member of the Wycliffe adjunct faculty for the past 14 years, teaching courses in monastic history and its influence on Anglican spirituality, the new monasticism, contemplative classics, and contemplative prayer.

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