



Embracing Solitude: Women and New Monasticism

Bernadette Flanagan, Beverly Lanzetta

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Embracing Solitude focuses on the interior turn of monasticism and scans the Christian tradition for women who have made this turn in various epochs and circumstances. New Monasticism is a movement assuming diverse forms in response to the turn to classical spiritual sources for guidance about living spiritual commitment with integrity and authenticity today. Genuine spiritual seeking requires the cultivation of an inner disposition to return to the room of the heart. The lessons explored in this book from women spiritual entrepreneurs across the centuries will benefit contemporary New Monastics--both women and men. The accounts will inspire, challenge, and guide those who follow in the footsteps of the renowned spiritual innovators profiled here. "In this inspiring new work, Bernadette Flanagan seeks not merely to uncover forgotten stories of women's spirituality and prophetic voices, but to probe the reasons for tradition's lack of attention to transformative solitude, intentionally chosen. From the desert of fourth-century Africa to the woods of contemporary America, women's choice of solitude offers new landscapes of the sacred--in ordinary life, in new forms of community, and in exploring mystical processes of inner transformation. A rich gift indeed for all who seek the divine." --Mary Grey, University of Winchester "This speaks to the deepest longings of spiritual seekers today. It answers many of their questions, places them in a historical context, and, most of all, encourages them on their pilgrimage into the heart of God through a mysticism embodied in a shared spiritual solitude, which can be maintained in the midst of the ordinary and the everyday. Just as Christian seekers moved from the city to the desert in the third century, now the move is back to finding contemplative solitude in the midst of the commerce of the city." --From the Foreword by June Boyce-Tillman, University of Winchester "Bernadette Flanagan opens up rich pathways of exploration and discovery into different practices of solitude, monasticism, and contemplation. Drawing on a wide range of examples, with a special emphasis on women's spirituality, this book is a wise and welcome guide for those seeking solitude within and beyond the clamor of modern life." --Tina Beattie, Digby Stuart College, University of Roehampton

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