

MEDIEVAL SPIRITUALITY

Course Description: Many Catholics do not understand the differences among the Catholic spiritual traditions, although they might know one tradition particularly well, especially if they went to a school run by a religious order. Catholicism is rich in its varied approaches to drawing closer to God, and, indeed, the Catechism devotes many paragraphs to religious orders (CCCC 914-945). Yet, one does not need to make a profession of religious vows in order to benefit from the various spiritual traditions embraced by these orders.

This course will focus on the major "schools" (or traditions) of spirituality within Catholicism: Benedictine & Cistercian; Carmelite; Franciscan; and Ignatian. We will examine the biblical roots of each tradition as well as a brief history of its institution. We will also explore the main contributions that the tradition has given to our Church, especially in the areas of prayer and service. Finally, we will also look at concrete ways that 21st century Catholics can adopt some of these prayers and practices into their own lives.

Course Objectives: Participants will learn

- biblical foundations for each aforementioned Catholic spiritual tradition
- the unique prayer and service practices that each tradition offers
- cognitive and emotional obstacles to practicing a particular tradition
- incorporating the prayers and practices of a single tradition into one's life
- Participants successfully completing this course will be able to understand the spiritual traditions highlighted in this course, especially in terms of comparing and contrasting them. They will also understand why these traditions are often counter-cultural; why individuals are often reluctant to embrace them; and how they can begin to incorporate a tradition's prayers and practices in their own personal and communal lives.