

Practical mysticism denotes the idea of living out the experience of union with God in a practical and applied manner. It is a mystical knowing, including an intense knowing of self and God, that implies and impels action, practical action for good.

In Bonhoeffer terms, private mysticism might be associated with 'cheap grace' (using religion as a shield from responsibility) while practical mysticism would connote 'costly grace', a profound commitment to the world and its issues. While Bonhoeffer became a living representation of all about which he spoke in costly grace, so too other notable Christians have followed this same pathway, one that seems to accord most closely with that of Christ himself.

Among these is Australia's first saint, Mary MacKillop – St Mary of the Cross – canonised within the last year. St Mary of the Cross (below), like Bonhoeffer, was driven by union with God to



contest the moral fortitude of her own church, was punished for her actions and eventually reconciled by becoming a legendary and inspirational figure in that same church. In both cases, the very church that had impelled rejection came to endorse their actions through sainthood or its equivalent.

We will explore the idea of practical mysticism as an authentic Christian pathway, explore the ramifications for insight into the nature of saintliness in Bonhoeffer and St Mary of the Cross, and finally bring these two heroes of the church into conversation with each other.



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<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/events.html>

See also:

http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_6/lovat.htm

A ministry of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle



The 7th Australian Annual
Bonhoeffer Conference

PRACTICAL MYSTICISM

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

in conversation with

Mary MacKillop



St Joseph's Spirituality & Education
Centre
Kincumber, NSW

17-18 November 2011

OUR SPEAKERS

Prof Terry Lovat lectures in theology at the University of Newcastle. His theological dissertation was on the non-religious interpretation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and he has also written and lectured widely on the impact of St Mary of the Cross and practical mysticism.

Dr Kathleen McPhillips, who also lectures at UoN, has co-edited 'Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment', and has written extensively on contemporary spiritual and religious expression.

Capt Lawrence Caelli, a part-time chaplain at the Army's School of Infantry, Singleton, is also an industrial chaplain at OneSteel and a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Sr Catherine Thom is a Sister of St Joseph who has researched extensively on St Mary of the Cross, especially her loyalty to the Church after her excommunication.

Sr Pauline Wicks, SSJ, who has written and spoken extensively on the spirituality of St Mary of the Cross, leads the after-dinner conversation.

Sr Merylin Browne, SSJ, a liturgist and formerly a secondary school teacher, pastoral associate and congregational leader, guides the prayers and reflections.

THE PROGRAM

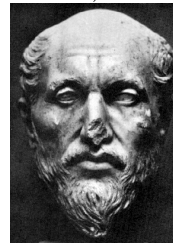
Thursday, 17 November

- 2pm Welcome and Introductions
Prayers and Reflection
- 2.15pm *Practical Mysticism as Authentic Spirituality*
- 3pm Afternoon Tea
- 3.30pm *Hearing the Voice of the Other: Sainthood as Hospitality and Radical Generosity*
- 4.15pm *Bonhoeffer's Spiritual Journey*
- 5.30pm Holy Eucharist, St Joseph's Chapel
Celebrant: the Rt Rev'd Dr Brian Farran,
Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle
- 6.30pm Dinner
- ~8pm After-dinner Conversation
- ~9.30pm Compline

Friday, 18 November

- 7am Prayers and Reflection
- 7.30am Breakfast
- 8.30am Flechtheim Scholar – Ashley Moyse
- 9.30am *Loyalty under Arms*
- 10.30am Morning Tea
- 11am *Loyalty to the Church*
- 11.30am *Loyalty under Pressure*
- 12pm Closing Discussion
- 12.30pm Prayers and Reflection
- 12.45pm Lunch

Mysticism is about faith and about knowing. Practical mysticism is about these conjoined in doing. Plotinus, the third century Egyptian philosopher (right), contrasted it with 'private mysticism', an ascetical brand of holiness with which he took some dispute.



It lies at the heart of the mysticism testified to in the sacred stories of history's most prominent religious figures, including those of Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, and so should be seen as the most authentic of those mysticisms judged to be genuinely religious in the Semitic traditions.

At the same time as some have their faith called into question by the institutions that go by their founders' names, invariably others who seem more cast in the mould of their founder's own persecutors are hailed quickly as true believers and even saints.

The instances of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, World War II martyr and unofficial saint, and St Mary of the Cross are cases in point. – *Terry Lovat*.

REGISTRATION FORM

The University of Newcastle (ABN 15736 576 735)
Account 10.21250-4411
GST Code C

Please return this form by fax/mail/email

REGISTRATIONS CLOSE 10 NOVEMBER 2011

Name:

Postal address:

Phone number:

Email address:

The GST-inclusive registration fee of **\$185** comprises conference attendance, overnight accommodation, and all meals. Payment is required with your registration. All payments will be refunded in full if you cancel *before 3 November 2011*. No refunds after this date.

Credit card payment (tick your preference):

Mastercard Visa

Card expiry date:/.....

Card number:

Cardholder's name:

Cardholder's signature:

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Mark your cheque in favour of 'The University of Newcastle'. Address details overleaf.