



Benedictine Men and Women of Courage: Roots and History

Ann E. Kessler

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Acclaimed as a significant treasury of uniquely inclusive monastic history, this fast-paced book surveys a vast landscape of men and women saints, scholars, mystics, and reformers whose impact continues to shape worldwide Christianity and monastic life. Completely updated and revised, this new edition engages readers with a comprehensive description of the history of Benedictine monasticism from its earliest beginnings to challenges facing the present day.

The story unfolds as a sweeping panorama of intrigue, controversy, and commitment across the fifteen-century development of both men's and women's communities. The chronicle's broad lens provides an inspiring vision of endurance as monks and nuns established their lasting, global presence through fifteen centuries of growth and adaptation. Often beset by overwhelming challenges from both within and outside its walls, Benedictine monasticism has shone with human magnificence at times but has been dimmed by the follies of human frailty at others.

Reform movements, congregations, and spiritualities have often reshaped Benedictine life, countering seasons of pervasive decline through centuries of political instability, wars, religious censure, suppression, dissolution and societal turmoil. Filled with sometimes surprising turns of events, fifteen centuries of change, adaptation, decline, restoration, and renewal continue to disclose the extraordinary resilience of the simple but life-encompassing Rule of Benedict that unites people across the globe. This book tells the fascinating and often surprising-story of both the noteworthy and notorious men, women, and movements that have impacted Benedictine monasticism from its origin to the 21st century.

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