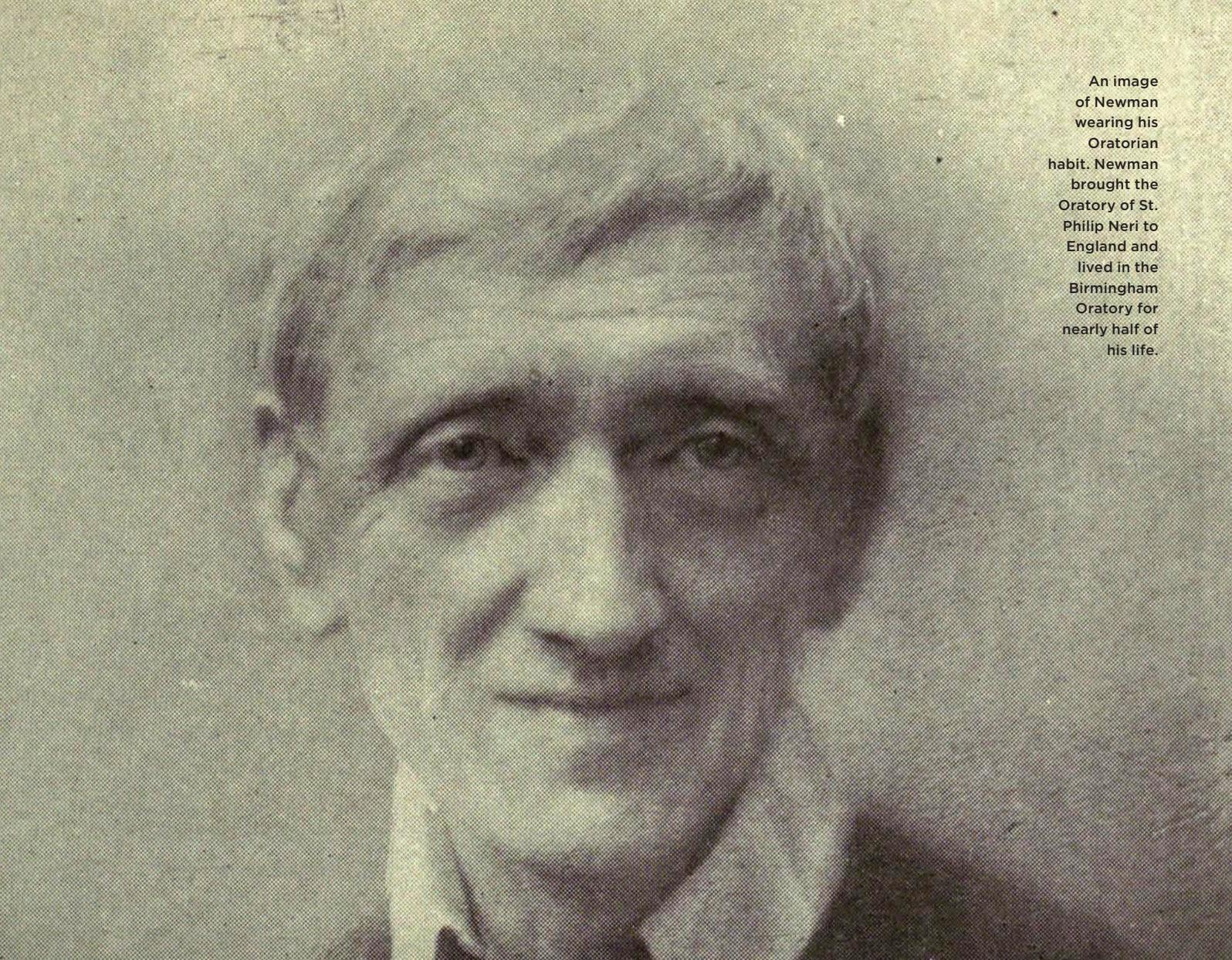




Sir John Millais painted this famous portrait of John Henry Newman in his cardinal's vesture in 1881, two years after Newman was named to the College of Cardinals by Pope Leo XIII.

# HEART SPEAKS TO HEART

A PASTORAL LETTER FROM BISHOP JOHN O. BARRES  
TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CANONIZATION OF  
SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN



An image of Newman wearing his Oratorian habit. Newman brought the Oratory of St. Philip Neri to England and lived in the Birmingham Oratory for nearly half of his life.

## DEAR FRIENDS:

**THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS RELATES A GLORIOUS AND CONSOLING FACT: "WE ARE SURROUNDED BY A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES" (12:1). IN OUR JOURNEY TO HEAVEN, GOD, THE GIVER OF EVERY GOOD GIFT, AFFORDS US COMMUNION WITH THE HOLY ONES WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US AND LIVE NOW WITH HIM FOREVER. HE OFFERS US FRIENDSHIP WITH THE SAINTS.**

Last year, around the time of his canonization, I wrote to you about Saint Oscar Arnulfo Romero, a new friend of God in heaven. Together, we beheld this saintly martyr-Archbishop of San Salvador who made the holy sacrifice of his life while celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I am grateful for the ways we have allowed his luminous life to encourage our daily participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

In these days, the universal Church is preparing for the canonization of another holy one of God, John Henry

Cardinal Newman. This nineteenth-century Englishman - a seeker of truth, Anglican clergyman, preacher at Oxford University, noted intellectual, gifted writer,

convert to Catholicism, Catholic priest, and Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church - will be raised to the altars on October 13, 2019, and declared a saint. Soon his holy life and heroic virtue will be held up by the Church, and another friend of God will be close to us.

As the occasion of his canonization draws near, I wish to highlight this modern saint and offer six lessons from his life. However, I would first like to remember the gift of the saints and ponder the holiness of that "great cloud of witnesses."

## I. THE GIFT OF THE SAINTS

As Catholics, we rejoice in the saints. They are our heroes. From the first followers of Christ to the holy sojourners of recent decades, from Saint Peter and Saint Mary Magdalene down the centuries to Saint Gianna Molla and Saint John Paul II, we celebrate what God has accomplished in his sons and daughters. We delight in their closeness because, as we say at Mass, “their great example lends us courage, their fervent prayers sustain us in all we do.”<sup>21</sup>

But who are the saints? The saints are ordinary men and women who lived differently. They lived the grace of their baptism to the full. Supported by the sacraments, guided by the Word of God, and strengthened in prayer, they responded fully to the upward call during their earthly pilgrimage (Phil. 3:14). In all circumstances, they learned to abide in deep intimacy with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and so throughout their lives, they were transformed. They became holy.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminds us, and this is crucial to remember, that holiness “does not consist in carrying out extraordinary enterprises but in being united with Christ, in living his mysteries, in making our own his example, his thoughts, his behavior.”<sup>22</sup> The holiness of the saints, therefore, lies first and foremost in their being and not in their doing. They may have accomplished great things, and many did, but their holiness derives from being docile to Christ and allowing him to live completely in them (cf. Gal. 2:20).

Some might think such a transformation robs a person’s freedom or stunts his or her joy. However, as Pope Francis points out and the witness of the saints shows, just the opposite occurs. Instead of diminishing life, holiness makes a person “more alive, more human.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, becoming more Christlike only deepens and expands a person’s energy, vitality, and joy, as he or she discovers, in the words of Saint John Paul II, “the greatness, dignity, and value that belong to his or her humanity.”<sup>24</sup>

Such growth in holiness certainly demands a personal relationship with the Lord, but it is no mere private experience. For the saint, there can be no “me and Jesus” moment indifferent to the wider community. On the contrary, friendship with Christ enlarges a saint’s relationship with his

or her brothers and sisters.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the saints, each in their own way, and each in their own time and place, became a transformative force for good in the world. They became prophetic heralds of Christ’s joy, mercy, and healing presence in their thoughts, words, and deeds. We need only consider the examples of our American saints to verify this statement. Think of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton’s work on behalf of education, Saint John Neumann’s love for the immigrant communities of Philadelphia, or Saint Marianne Cope’s work among the lepers of Hawaii. Radical intimacy with God did not remove them from the world. Rather, it fueled their charity and their Matthew-25-inspired life of self-giving.

We have the gift of the saints, and now we have the gift of a new saint, another friend of God, John Henry Newman, whose life can inspire and teach us today.

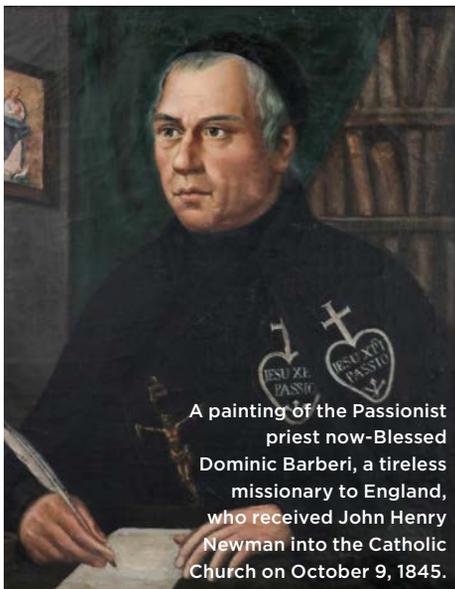
## II. THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

John Henry Newman’s life was as dramatic as the times in which he lived. Born in London on February 21, 1801, he lived during most of the nineteenth century, until his

death in Birmingham, England, on August 11, 1890. The span of his life incorporated a period of immense innovation and change for his English homeland. Think back to history class: Newman watched the unfolding of the Industrial Revolution and the societal shifts it generated. His almost ninety years of life witnessed scientific discoveries, technological advances, improvements in communication, and new forms of transportation. Moreover, he lived in the midst of new intellectual ideas. Newman saw the good these innovations rendered and faced the new problems they posed. All of this makes him, as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI noted, “above all a modern man, who lived the whole

problem of modernity.”<sup>26</sup>

His first years were lived in London, and there, in his family home, the beginnings of the Christian faith were given to him. Newman was baptized an Anglican on April 9, 1801. As he grew, he was taught the catechism of that Church and was read the Bible by his mother and grandmother. In time, he could read Scripture himself, something which gave him “great delight,” as he relates in his classic spiritual autobiography, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Though he knew the



A painting of the Passionist priest now-Blessed Dominic Barberi, a tireless missionary to England, who received John Henry Newman into the Catholic Church on October 9, 1845.

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Bible well and understood his catechism, Newman later maintained he had “no formed religious convictions” at this young age.<sup>7</sup>

He was highly intelligent and, around fourteen, after reading philosophers such as Voltaire and Hume, he questioned the faith. He was searching. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI relates, “in identifying with their objections to religion, [Newman] turned towards a kind of deism, in accordance with the humanist and liberal trends of that time.”<sup>8</sup> But this was soon to change. When he was fifteen, he experienced a powerful conversion. As Newman explained, “a great change of thought took place in me. I fell under the influences of a definite Creed, and received into my intellect impressions of dogma, which, through God’s mercy, have never been effaced or obscured.”<sup>9</sup> At that age, Newman came to know the truth of revealed religion. He believed firmly that God made himself known in Christ and his Church, and from that moment on, as he pursued the Lord, his life had “a new horizon and a decisive direction.”<sup>10</sup>

Soon after his conversion, he left London for Oxford. The town and university would be home for the next three decades of his life. There, Newman fully embraced the Anglican church of his baptism, and in time, discerned a call to ministry. Upon ordination at age twenty-four, he served the university community in various roles until his appointment as Vicar of the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin in 1828. In the pulpit of that church, at the heart of Oxford, Newman gained renown for his preaching. His erudition and faith were displayed in his sermons, which drew people from far and wide and are still read to this day.

Throughout these years at Oxford, his heart was still seeking truth, the truth that summoned him at fifteen. Newman engaged in the religious debates and conversations of the day, especially within Anglicanism. He was an influential member of the Oxford Movement, a group of Anglicans who were concerned about the influence of secular governance on their Church, interested in its apostolic origins, and open to imbuing their religion with older forms of worship. During this time, Newman became engrossed in the early years of Church history and began to read the Church Fathers. Soon he would be “deep in history”<sup>11</sup> and keen to explore the Catholic Church because the more he read of the ancient Church, the more he saw its continued presence abiding in the Church of Rome rather than in the Church of England. He loved the Anglican Church and the life that surrounded his association with it - his ministry, numerous friends, his beloved Oxford - but he felt called to investigate Catholicism more deeply.

As his inclination towards Catholicism intensified, he retired to Littlemore, a small village on the outskirts of



Newman's Shrine in the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the Birmingham Oratory in Birmingham, England.

Piposullivan (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Birmingham\_Oratory\_Newman\_shrine,\_Edgbaston.jpg), https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode

the university town. There, for five years, he lived a quasi-monastic life of prayer, study, and contemplation. This graced-time prepared him for the moment when, in the words of Saint John Paul II, “after long and meticulous historical researches and after interior suffering, he was obliged by the evidence of the proofs to embrace Catholicism and enter the Church of Rome.”<sup>12</sup> That day came on October 9, 1845, when Newman was received into the Catholic Church by now-Blessed Dominic Barberi, a Passionist priest and zealous missionary to England.

Shortly after his conversion, Newman was sent to Rome to prepare for the priesthood. Following his ordination as a Catholic priest on May 30, 1847, Father Newman returned to England, where he soon established an Oratory of Saint Philip Neri in the immigrant industrial city of Birmingham, far from London and Oxford. According to *The Times* of London, “There could not be a stronger test of sincerity, or a higher proof of devotion, than for a great theologian and scholar to resign Oxford and Littlemore, and bury himself in the throng, smoke, and din of a great manufacturing centre.”<sup>13</sup> But Newman did just that, and there he and his fellow Oratorians committed themselves to pastoral work in their parish church, Oratory school, and in ministries throughout the bustling city. In Birmingham, Newman was

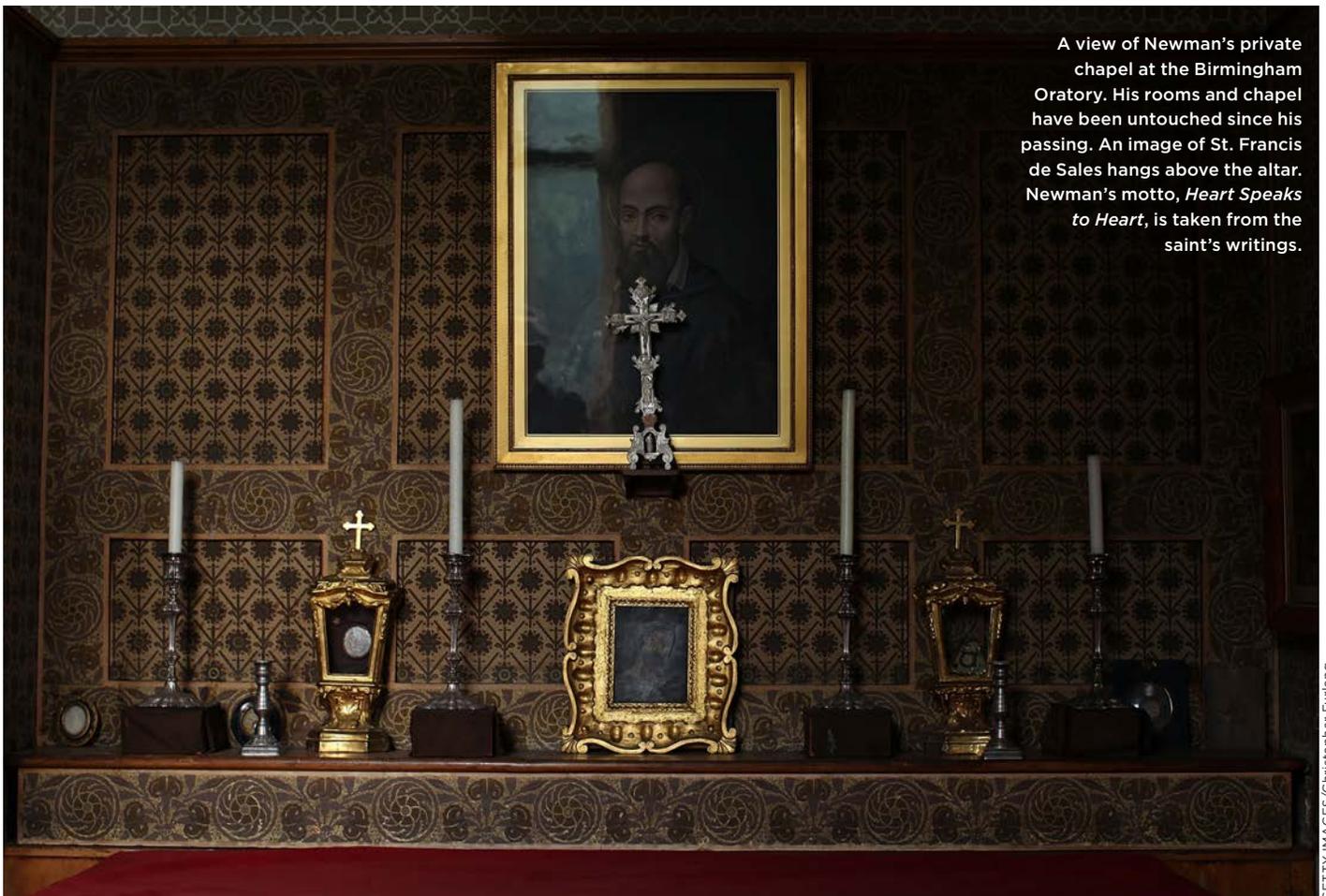
a priest. He celebrated the sacraments, preached the Word of God, served the poor, visited the sick, and cared for the imprisoned. Except for times of travel in subsequent years, especially when he was appointed as the first Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland in 1851, a challenging position he held for a few years, this stable community structure was home for the rest of his life. It provided Newman a place to grow in holiness and exercise his priestly ministry. Newman and the Oratory are inseparable. His private chapel and study at the Oratory, preserved to this day, indicate how he spent his decades in Birmingham, namely, in prayer and intellectual work. This was the “definite service” he offered to God.<sup>14</sup>

In 1879, Newman was named a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. The gesture acknowledged his contributions to theology and the life of the Church, and vindicated Newman, who had been misunderstood or vilified by many after his conversion.<sup>15</sup> As Newman himself said, the pope’s “act was a recognition of my zeal and good service for so many years in the Catholic cause.”<sup>16</sup> The last years of his life were spent in ill health, being cared for by his Oratorian brothers, until he was called home to God. Cardinal Newman’s funeral drew nearly 20,000 people, including many local, working-

class Catholics who appreciated his kindness and holy life. He was buried in the Oratory cemetery, where he rested until shortly before his beatification in 2010. Today, his shrine, quiet and dignified like Newman himself, stands in the Oratory Church of the Immaculate Conception in Birmingham.

### III. SIX LESSONS FROM THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Cardinal Newman is admired as a master of the English language. Anthologies of English literature often include excerpts of his most famous writings. He wrote exquisitely, and he wrote extensively. The collection of his correspondence alone spans thirty-one volumes. When we consider his sermons, essays, books, novels, devotional writings, hymns, and poems, the literary output is vast. He was prolific, and his life and writings have inspired much scholarship. Books on him abound. As Cardinal Avery Dulles wryly noted, “Many hundreds of volumes on Newman weigh down the shelves of our libraries, and the quantity increases year by year.”<sup>17</sup> My intention here is neither to summarize the soon-to-be-canonized Saint’s



A view of Newman's private chapel at the Birmingham Oratory. His rooms and chapel have been untouched since his passing. An image of St. Francis de Sales hangs above the altar. Newman's motto, *Heart Speaks to Heart*, is taken from the saint's writings.

GETTY IMAGES/Christopher Furlong

writings - an impossible task - nor to duplicate insights and contributions made in those many books. Rather, I wish to highlight six lessons from his life and thought worthy of our imitation and remembrance. Allow me to begin with three lessons from his spiritual life, where we can find in Newman one who sought truth, suffered for his faith, and shared Christ.

### ***Lesson One: Seek the Truth***

Cardinal Newman sought Truth - God - throughout his life. Recent popes highlighted this “seeking” dimension of Newman. Saint Paul VI spoke of Newman’s heart as being “devoted to the light of truth.”<sup>18</sup> Saint John Paul II called him a “pilgrim of truth.”<sup>19</sup> And Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who beatified the Cardinal, noted his “journey of

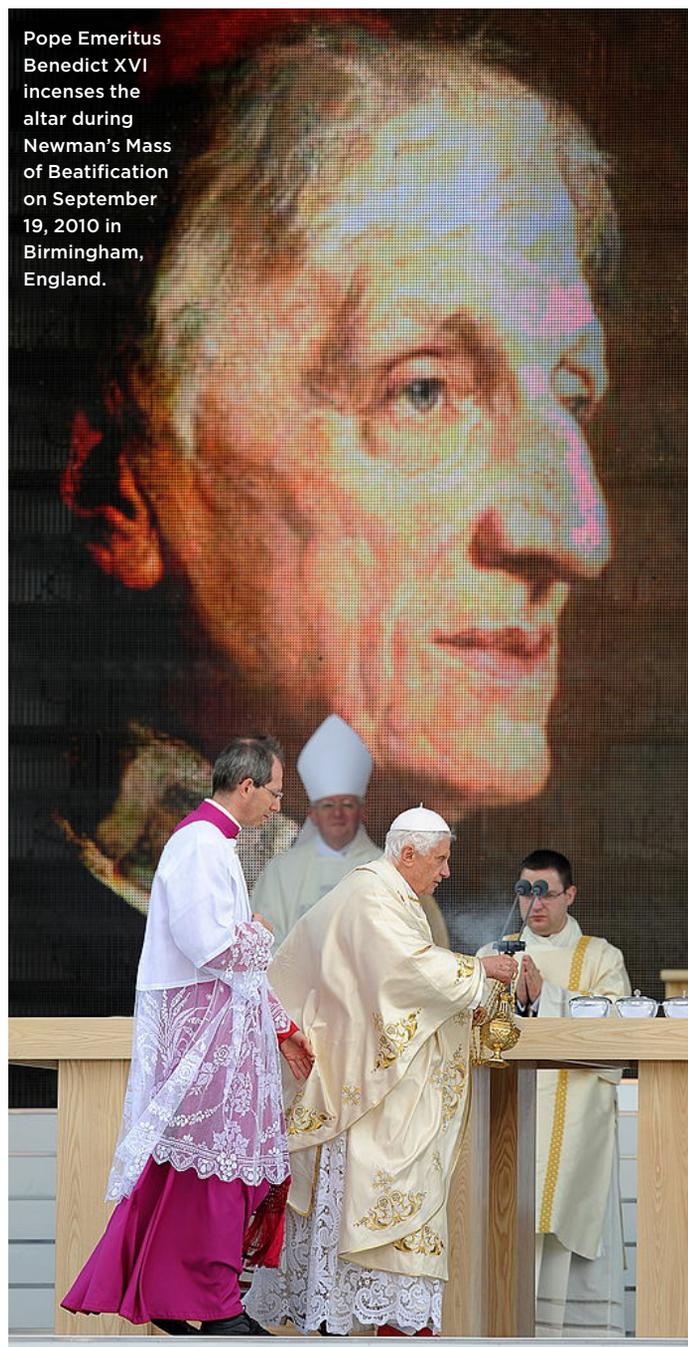
obedience to the truth, to God.”<sup>20</sup> These apt descriptions underscore Newman’s life as one movement towards the Almighty. From the time of his first conversion at fifteen, when he was overwhelmed by the existence of a living God, Newman pursued truth. It led him to embrace fully his Anglican faith and eventually to enter the Catholic Church. Every step of his life, momentous or small, shows Newman following truth as it prompted him.

Precisely by seeking and following Truth - God - rather than himself, Newman grew in holiness. According to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in Newman’s steadfast journey we find his “basic spiritual message, [which] testifies that the path to knowledge is not withdrawal into ‘self,’ but openness, conversion, and obedience to the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”<sup>21</sup> Through his example, we see our obligation to seek Truth in our lives. Especially “in our day, when an intellectual and moral relativism threatens to sap the very foundations of our society, Newman reminds us that, as men and women made in the image and likeness of God, we were created to know the truth, to find in that truth our ultimate freedom and the fulfilment of our deepest human aspirations.”<sup>22</sup>

### ***Lesson Two: Be Prepared to Suffer for the Truth***

John Henry Newman suffered for pursuing the truth. Though to the outsider his quiet life of study, prayer, and ministry might appear uneventful, Cardinal Newman carried the cross like all followers of the Lord (cf. Lk. 9:23). Indeed, as Saint John Paul II said, his “search was shot through with pain.”<sup>23</sup>

Newman’s conversion to Catholicism proved an especially challenging cross to bear because of the loss it entailed. The Catholic Church in England that he entered in 1845 was on the outskirts of Victorian society. Catholics were few and far between, even with Irish immigrants beginning to swell their numbers, and the Church was still finding its place in society three centuries after Henry VIII separated from Rome and established the Church of England. Parliament’s *Roman Catholic Relief Act* of 1791, followed by another act in 1829, began slowly to normalize life for Catholics, but things were still far from normal. Joining such a Church, considered socially strange, questionable in its loyalty, and held odd in its beliefs, Newman lost many friends, as well as his position at Oxford. This took a toll on him. In a novel published soon after his conversion, *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert*, a fictional tale, though hard not to view as autobiographical, Newman says of the main character, who has just seen again the spires of Oxford, “Whatever he was to gain by becoming a Catholic, this he had lost; whatever he was to gain higher and better,



Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI incenses the altar during Newman’s Mass of Beatification on September 19, 2010 in Birmingham, England.

GETTY IMAGES/BEN STANSALL

A statue of John Henry Newman outside of the London Oratory in London, England. Newman, dressed as a cardinal, holds a book, a sign of his learning, and looks to Rome.



GETTY IMAGES/AmandalLewis

at least this and such as this he never could have again. He could not have another Oxford, he could not have the friends of his boyhood and youth in the choice of his manhood.”<sup>24</sup> One feels the weight of Newman’s decision to convert in those words. Why would he endure such loss? The answer is simple. Truth had taken hold of him, and he was willing to sacrifice for it. Once aware of the veracity of the Catholic Church’s claims, nothing could prevent him from converting.

Sadly, in addition to losing much at the time of his conversion, Newman also faced misunderstandings and hardships among his newfound Catholic fold in the ensuing years. Certain members were envious of his gifts or wary of his theological ideas. His life was not easy. In 1863, he would write, “As a Protestant, I felt my religion dreary, but not my life - but, as a Catholic, my life dreary, not my religion.”<sup>25</sup> Yet, through all the difficulties of life, Newman persevered. He was resolute in adhering to the truth that beckoned him, and quietly, he carried his cross. We are called to seek the same truth, and Newman’s courageous example inspires us to do so no matter the cost.

### ***Lesson Three: Share the Truth***

Like all disciples, Newman was called to carry his cross, and like all disciples, he was called to share his faith (cf. Mt. 28:19). This Newman easily understood. He knew his abiding relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had to be given to others. The truth that captivated him had to be shared. Of course, Newman evangelized through his writings, which reached a great multitude, but his primary approach to sharing the Gospel centered on the individual. When named to the College of Cardinals, he chose a telling motto: *cor ad cor loquitur*, which translated means, “heart speaks to heart.” Perhaps this phrase, taken from the writings of Saint Francis de Sales, best summarizes his method of evangelizing. As Saint John Paul II, the great herald of the New Evangelization, said, “For Cardinal Newman it was *individual influence*, ‘heart speaking to heart’ that most effectively imparted the Gospel and that formed the whole person, heart and mind, and conscience.”<sup>26</sup>

Early in his life John Henry Newman recognized this power of personal influence. In a sermon preached in 1832, he noted that “men persuade themselves, with little difficulty, to scoff at principles, to ridicule books, to make sport of the names of good men; but they cannot bear their presence: it is holiness embodied in personal form, which they cannot steadily confront and bear down.”<sup>27</sup> Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI underlined Newman’s correlation of personal holiness and evangelization on the evening

A view of Oxford University, England in 1832, as it would have appeared in Newman's day. The spire of St. Mary the Virgin, the church where Newman gained renown for his preaching, is at the center of scene.



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before the Cardinal's beatification. The Pope Emeritus said: "[Newman] saw clearly that we do not so much accept the truth in a purely intellectual act as embrace it in a spiritual dynamic that penetrates to the core of our being. Truth is passed on not merely by formal teaching, important as that is, but also by the witness of lives lived in integrity, fidelity, and holiness."<sup>28</sup>

Cardinal Newman recognized the importance of personal influence, and he lived it. Newman took an interest in other people and willingly shared his life, his thought, and his faith. He opened his heart in friendship and bonds flourished. Friends visited him constantly throughout life, especially at the Oratory, and as his nearly twenty-thousand letters attest, he corresponded with "men and women of all religions and none, [who] turned to him for enlightenment and guidance." This work of correspondence, of personally investing himself in the lives of others, Newman held "as one of his most important pastoral labors."<sup>29</sup>

In our day, when transmitting the faith seems daunting, and programmatic approaches to evangelization appear alluring, Newman teaches us the simplicity and effectiveness of personal influence. He reminds us of our duty to bring the Gospel to others, as he did, by letting

our hearts, having been spoken to by God, speak to theirs.

Having explored these three spiritual qualities of seeking, suffering, and sharing, let me now turn to Newman's thought and present three additional lessons it offers, remembering the fundamental challenges Newman faced are not unlike those of our time.

#### ***Lesson Four: The Objective Truth of Religion***

Throughout his life, John Henry Newman insisted upon the objective truth of religion. In doing so, he taught and defended what the Church has always known and believed. In a speech given in 1879 in Rome upon being notified of his elevation to the Cardinalate, he expressed well the consequences of denying religion's objective truth. Newman spoke specifically against the influence of liberalism, that is, "the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another." (Today, we might speak of relativism.) Newman understood the gravity of such thinking. For him, it could lead one to say that, "revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; not an objective fact, not miraculous; and it is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy." Such thinking caters to subjectivism,

and following this line of thought, religion becomes “so personal a peculiarity and so private a possession” as to be irrelevant in personal interactions and of no bearing on society. Instead, it is relegated to being “a private luxury... which [a person] must not obtrude upon others.”<sup>30</sup>

Newman wrote these words one-hundred and forty years ago; he could have written them today. To counter this trend in his time, Newman asserted, in the words of Saint John Paul II, that revealed religion, “with its content of doctrine and morals, is the bearer of objective truths which can be known with certitude and assented to with joy and ease.”<sup>31</sup> This was superbly accomplished in his 1870 book, *A Grammar of Assent*, which presented the reasonableness of belief in religious truth. The great Newman scholar Father Charles Dessain relates the twofold object of that famous work, as Newman explained it to a fellow Oratorian: “In the first part [it] shows that you can believe what you cannot understand. In the second part that you can believe what you cannot absolutely prove.”<sup>32</sup>

Cardinal Newman’s clear articulation of the objective truth of religion is vital for us today, living in a society that continues “building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive.”<sup>33</sup> Without religious truth, society is rudderless. Newman knew this, and we should remember it.

### ***Lesson Five: The True Meaning of Conscience***

Cardinal Newman explained well our personal relationship with truth in his writings on conscience. For Newman, the gift of truth is not inaccessible. Neither is it magically discovered. Rather, truth manifests itself to a person in his or her conscience, that sacred place where God speaks. Conscience is “the echo of God’s voice within the heart of man, the pulse of the divine law beating within each person as a standard of right and wrong, with an unquestionable authority.” This “inner light of conscience puts a person in contact with the reality of a personal God.”<sup>34</sup> It “is the connecting principle between the creature and his Creator.”<sup>35</sup>

Today, the world understands conscience differently. Instead of being viewed as a place of encounter with truth, it is taken as the exclusive domain of the subject, as an inviolable locale where no outside influence can impinge upon the individual. With such an understanding, conscience, unhinged from the truth, can justify anything and lead a person astray.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminds us that “Newman’s understanding of conscience is diametrically opposed to this [view]. For him, conscience means man’s capacity for truth: the capacity to recognize precisely in the decision-

making areas of his life - religion and morals - a truth, *the* truth.” This ability to discern the truth also “imposes on [a person] the obligation to set out along the path towards truth, to seek it, and to submit to it wherever he finds it.” Therefore, “conscience is both capacity for truth and obedience to the truth which manifests itself to anyone who seeks it with an open heart.”<sup>36</sup>

We see this twofold dimension of conscience at play in Newman’s own journey. Conscience guided him to the truth and brought him to accept it: the truth of a living God, the truth of Catholicism. His witness and writings remind us of our obligation to form our consciences, engage the truth in that sacred place where God speaks to us, and follow our conscience no matter the cost.

### ***Lesson Six: The Role of Religion in Society***

Religious truth was held suspect in Newman’s day. It was dismissed because, as seen above, some perceived it as subjective. Viewed as mere opinion, it was relegated to the sidelines of society’s conversations. Newman, however, disagreed with such thinking. Knowing the objective nature of religious truth, he was adamant about its role in society and in education. Though not verifiable like those truths apprehended through scientific experimentation, Newman understood that religious truth still makes a vital contribution, principally by offering what science cannot. Religion provides a complete picture of the person - his or her origin and destiny. Precisely because it proposes such invaluable insights, Newman grasped that religious truth is forgotten only to society’s detriment.

In the Cardinal’s day, the inability to bring religious truth into societal conversations was exacerbated by an ongoing clash of two currents of thought, namely, rationalism and fideism. To explain them simply, rationalism trusted exclusively in the human capacity for reason. It would not entertain religious truth. Fideism, on the other hand, looked solely to faith. Wrongly, it was distrustful of our God-given ability to reason. Saint John Paul II explains the consequences of both lines of thought: “Rationalism brought with it a rejection of both authority and transcendence,” that is, it dismissed the belief that God or the Church could articulate truth, “while fideism turned...to a distorted dependence upon authority and the supernatural.”<sup>37</sup> In short, rationalism was too this-worldly in its outlook, while fideism was too other-worldly.

Newman advocated a middle ground. He promoted the Catholic position, namely, that a relationship exists between faith and reason. For him, faith and reason were, in the words of Saint John Paul II, “like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of the

truth.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, according to Newman, they must be taken together in order to assure that the fullness of truth comes to bear on society’s problems and challenges. Faith and reason together help society avoid any reductive or utilitarian solutions. Especially in the realm of education, Newman “sought to achieve an educational environment in which intellectual training, moral discipline and religious commitment would come together.”<sup>39</sup> He sought a place of learning where the truths of faith and reason both rightly held sway. In our day, we do well to remember Newman’s synthesis and express the religious truths we know in the important conversations that pertain to society and education.

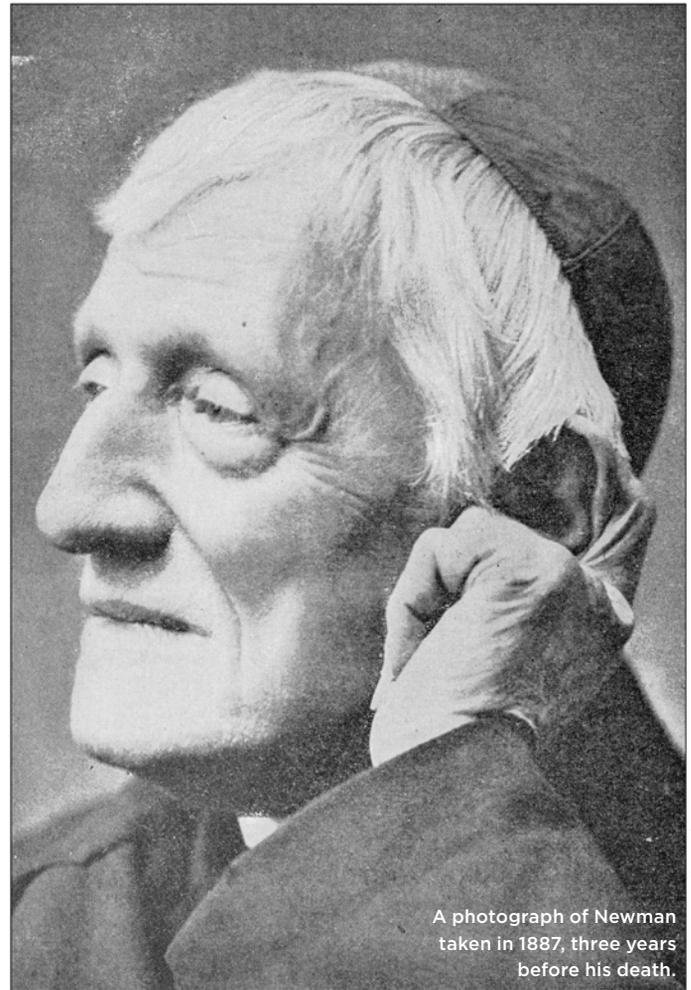
These three lessons from Newman’s thought, along with the three gleaned from his spiritual life, are illuminating for us who are called to follow the path of sanctity and imbue the world with the truth of God. Not only does Cardinal Newman remind us of the necessity of seeking truth, being prepared to suffer for it, and sharing it with others, he also shows us that what we believe is objectively true, accessible through a proper use of conscience, and imperative to share for society’s good.

#### IV. OUR CALL TO HOLINESS

The saints, like Saint John Henry Newman, inspire us. They intercede for us and remind us who we are called to be, namely, saints like them. Despite what we might think of our own prospects for holiness, especially when confronted with our weaknesses and limitations, the saints “tell us that it is possible...to take [the] road” of sanctity.<sup>40</sup> They spur us on. In their witness, they disclose marvelous news: The will of God is our holiness (cf. 1 Thes. 4:3).

When I was installed as Bishop of Rockville Centre on January 31, 2017, on the feast day of Saint John Bosco, I brought to the fore our common call to holiness. I say it again now: “You and I are called to be men and women of communion and mission. We are called to be saints.”<sup>41</sup> In the time since I proclaimed that good news, I have never tired of repeating it. From Malverne to Montauk, from Port Jefferson to Patchogue, in all my pastoral visits, it has been a joy to announce the goal of life - holiness.

Equally joyful has been witnessing the daily striving for holiness that occurs across Long Island, the holiness we observe in “our next-door neighbors, those who, living in our midst, reflect God’s presence.”<sup>42</sup> Praise God for the ways in which we in Nassau and Suffolk counties cooperate with his grace and win small victories in the pursuit of sanctity. Thank God for those moments when we reject sin, practice charity, embrace the mysterious power of the Cross, and



A photograph of Newman taken in 1887, three years before his death.

GETTY IMAGES/DEA /libusca

run the race of this life with our eyes fixed on the Face of Jesus. In such moments, we are growing close to God and transforming the world around us.

We do well to remember this truth: Holiness is not for a few. Its call is universal. It beckons you and me. God desires our friendship, and he offers every aid to cultivate it. Therefore, as we strive daily on our journey to be “saints among the saints in the halls of heaven,”<sup>43</sup> let us continue to partake of the sacraments, pray with the Word of God, practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, cultivate a devotional life, and stay close to the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints. As we push ahead on the path of sanctity, the emboldening words of Pope Francis must remain before us: “Do not be afraid of holiness.”<sup>44</sup> Its call is a gift, as it was for Saint John Henry Newman.

#### CONCLUSION

“The saints surprise us, they confound us because by their lives they urge us to abandon a dull and dreary mediocrity.”<sup>45</sup> These words of Pope Francis ring true of every saint, and they apply to Saint John Henry Newman. His dramatic life, full of twists and turns, yet constant in its pursuit of

truth, encourages us to pursue the holiness for which we are made. It stirs us from mediocrity.

Newman chose a Latin phrase for his epitaph: *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*. Translated, it means, “from shadows and images into the truth of things.” As we have seen, this phrase was lived by Newman throughout his life as he sought the Lord and boldly followed him when he called, moving all the while out of the shadows. Etched on his tombstone, it testifies to what Newman understood, namely, that knowing God fully would only happen in the life to come. This is the life he now lives, basking in the truth and enjoying forever the “kindly light” that led him throughout his earthly pilgrimage.<sup>46</sup>

May Saint John Henry Newman, now fixed among that “great cloud of witnesses” assist us. In a special way, may he help us in our spiritual lives to seek truth, accept sufferings, and share our faith from the heart. From his place giving “praise to the Holiest in the height,”<sup>47</sup> may he inspire us to acknowledge truth, orient our conscience towards it, and imbue the conversations of society with it. Finally, may Saint John Henry Newman teach us to pray these beautiful words which he wrote and himself prayed, so that we might grow in holiness and faithfully serve Christ’s call of dramatic missionary growth on Long Island and beyond:

*Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as Thou shinest: so to shine as to be a light to others. The light, O Jesus, will be all from Thee. None of it will be mine. No merit to me. It will be you who shinest through me upon others. O let me thus praise Thee, in the way which Thou dost love best, by shining on all those around me. Give light to them as well as to me; light them with me, through me. Teach me to show forth Thy praise, Thy truth, Thy will. Make me preach Thee without preaching - not by words, but by my example and by the catching force, the sympathetic influence, of what I do - by my visible resemblance to Thy saints, and the evident fulness of the love which my heart bears to Thee.*<sup>48</sup>

Saint John Henry Newman, pray for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John O. Barres  
Bishop of Rockville Centre

- 1-Roman Missal, *Preface II of the Saints*.
- 2-Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, April 13, 2011. [All papal quotes may be accessed online at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)]
- 3-See Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 32-34.
- 4-Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptor Hominis*, 10.
- 5-See Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 25-31.
- 6-Pope Benedict XVI, *Interview During the Flight to the United Kingdom*, September 16, 2010.
- 7-John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864; reprint, New York: Doubleday, 1989), 125.
- 8-Pope Benedict XVI, *Letter on the Occasion of the Symposium Organized by the International Center on Newman Friends*, November 18, 2010.
- 9-Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 127.
- 10-Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est*, 1.
- 11-John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 6th Edition (1878; reprint, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 8.
- 12-Pope John Paul II, *Homily at the Chiesa Nuova*, May 26, 1979.
- 13-*The Times of London*, “Death of Cardinal Newman,” August 12, 1890.
- 14-See John Henry Newman, “Meditations on Christian Doctrine: Hope in God - Creator,” *Prayers, Verses and Devotions* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 338.
- 15-See Pope John Paul II, *Letter on the Centenary of Newman’s Elevation to the Cardinalate*, April 7, 1979.
- 16-This quote is from Newman’s famous Biglietto Speech, which he delivered on May 12, 1879 when he was formally notified that he was to be made a Cardinal. The speech was republished in the Vatican’s newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, on April 14, 2010, where this quote may be found on page 9.
- 17-Avery Dulles, *John Henry Newman* (New York: Continuum, 2009), vii.
- 18-Pope Paul VI, *Address to the Participants in the Cardinal Newman Academic Symposium*, April 7, 1975.
- 19-Pope John Paul II, *Address to the Participants in the Academic Symposium Organized to Commemorate the Centenary of the Death of Cardinal John Henry Newman*, April 27, 1990.
- 20-Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily at Mass for the Episcopal Ordination of Five Archbishops*, February 5, 2011.
- 21-Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, September 22, 2010.
- 22-Pope Benedict XVI, *Address at the Prayer Vigil on the Eve of the Newman’s Beatification*, September 18, 2010.
- 23-Pope John Paul II, *Letter on the Second Centenary of the Birth of Cardinal Newman*, January 22, 2001.
- 24-John Henry Newman, *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert* (London: Longmans, 1906), 354.
- 25-As quoted by Pope Benedict XVI, *Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia*, December 20, 2010.
- 26-Pope John Paul II, *Homily at Mass for Priestly Ordinations in Dar-es-Salaam*, September 2, 1990.
- 27-See John Henry Newman, “Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating the Truth,” *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford* (London: Longmans, 1906), 92.
- 28-Pope Benedict XVI, *Address at the Prayer Vigil on the Eve of the Newman’s Beatification*, September 18, 2010.
- 29-Charles S. Dessain, *John Henry Newman*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 163-164.
- 30-John Henry Newman, *Biglietto Speech*. See above at note sixteen.
- 31-John Paul II, *Letter on the First Centenary of Newman’s Death*, June 18, 1990.
- 32-Dessain, *John Henry Newman*, 148.
- 33-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Homily at the Mass for the Election of the Roman Pontiff*, April 18, 2005.
- 34-John Paul II, *Letter on the First Centenary of Newman’s Death*, June 18, 1990.
- 35-Dessain, *John Henry Newman*, 149.
- 36-Pope Benedict XVI, *Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia*, December 20, 2010.
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- 38-Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*, Introduction.
- 39-Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily for the Beatification of John Henry Newman*, September 19, 2010.
- 40-Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, April 13, 2011.
- 41-Bishop John O. Barres, *Homily at the Mass of Installation as Bishop of Rockville Centre*, January 31, 2017.
- 42-Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 7.
- 43-Roman Missal, *Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I*.
- 44-Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 32.
- 45-Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 138.
- 46-John Henry Newman, “*The Pillar of the Cloud*,” *Prayers, Verses and Devotions*, 572.
- 47-John Henry Newman, “*The Dream of Gerontius*,” *Prayers, Verses and Devotions*, 712.
- 48-John Henry Newman, “*Meditations on Christian Doctrine: Jesus, Light of the Soul*,” *Prayers, Verses and Devotions*, 389-390.



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