

*Tokens of Holiness
in Blessed John Henry Newman*

Most Rev. Philip Boyce OCD
Bishop of Raphoe



Blessed John Henry Newman Statue at Littlemore/Oxford

There has been a continuous ebb and flow of interest in Newman down through the last hundred years. At times the Cause of his Beatification and Canonisation was not considered in any serious way by most people, while at other times it was to the forefront and was worked upon assiduously. Fr. Richard Henry Philip Lynch was born the year of Newman's death. He came to Birmingham Oratory as a young priest and was aggregated to the community in 1915. He testified during the collection of evidence in the Diocesan Process about the Cardinal's reputation for holiness among the Fathers at that time:

“When I first came to the community the idea was to defend Newman against the Modernists. After some years one heard foreigners (not English people) talking about the Cause being introduced. We did not take it seriously. We weren't very interested in beatifications in this country. We were interested in Newman's foundation here, not in his position in heaven - we were quite happy to leave that to the Almighty.” He

adds that it was not until an article by Mgr. Francis Davis appeared in *The Clergy Review*¹ in 1959 that he personally thought of beatification at all.

For decades at the beginning of the last century Newman was considered first and foremost as an academic, an intellectual genius, a brilliant writer and formidable controversialist. It was only gradually and that after the middle of the twentieth century that the focus was changed and more attention was paid to the holiness of his life.

The falling away of interest in Newman's personal sanctity seems strange after the outburst of praise and affirmation of his holy life that appeared in obituaries and published sermons following his death on 11th August 1890. There was scarcely a newspaper or magazine in Britain or Ireland that did not comment on the life and actions of a man whom most people had learned to respect, even though many would not have applauded all his decisions. The influence of his sermons was given particular praise, not simply on account of his exquisite English and 'chaste eloquence' but because the earnestness and depth of his words betrayed a holy and committed life. A journalist in the *Liverpool Post* wrote at that time: "Newman could not have written or spoken as he always wrote and spoke without being what he always was."²

In fact, it was not simply the intellectual genius of the man nor was it his fascinating use of words that gave him such influence. It was the moral qualities of the writer himself and the persuasive power of the truth he spoke that enlightened and encouraged countless people. To the undergraduates of Oxford University nearly fifty years prior to his death, Newman had dwelt on the importance of personal influence in propagating the truth. It is not the sound of words or 'virtue in a book' that sways

¹ H. Francis Davis, *English Spiritual Writers: Cardinal Newman: The Clergy Review* 44 (1959) 132-145. Reprinted in *English Spiritual Writers*. Edited by Charles Davis. London 1961, pp. 123-135.

² Many of these tributes were published in *The Press on Cardinal Newman, with a short Sketch of his Life*. Arranged by the Rev. Michael F. Glancey. Birmingham and Dublin. No date. They were also published more recently in *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*. Edited at the Birmingham Oratory with Notes and an Introduction by Francis J. McGrath, FSM. Oxford University Press, 2008. Volume XXXII, Supplement, Appendix 9, pp. 577-638.

the multitude, he said, ‘for 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...the attraction exerted by unconscious holiness, is of an urgent and irresistible nature’³ This inner life of Newman himself accounts in great measure for the secret force of his own preaching and writing. People felt that what he said and wrote came to them from the heart, with the force of the utter conviction with which it was delivered and that it led them to a deeper faith and a clearer conscience.

Indeed, at the time of his elevation to the Cardinalate in 1879, the English speakers of Rome in a congratulatory address claimed that all English-speaking Catholics had long looked up to him “as their spiritual father and their guide in the paths of holiness.”⁴



Painting of Cardinal Newman at the Newman-Centre, Rome

The same theme reappeared in the literature published just after his death. Many people bore witness to his influence on their spiritual lives. He was acclaimed as a man of God. Obituaries spoke of his saintly and unblemished life, his absolute sincerity, his humble piety and unworldly outlook. Even non-Catholic publications reported that he died in the odour of sanctity and spoke of peace for ‘a saint at rest.’ In many ways it was a spontaneous outburst of popular acclaim, an example of that elusive, yet in this case very palpable, *vox populi* so eagerly sought after by

³ *Fifteen Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*. London 1909, pp. 92, 95.

⁴ *Addresses to Cardinal Newman with his Replies. Etc. 1879-81*. London 1905, p.72. Pope Leo XIII showed his appreciation of Newman by having this meeting arranged in the English College and sending his Master of Ceremonies, Mgr. Cataldi, to accompany and assist the Cardinal. Newman was received at the College by the Rector, Dr. O’Callaghan, the Vice Rector, Dr. Giles, and Mgr. Stonor. Following the short but significant Address, the Cardinal gave a short reply, gracious and elegant as always, in which he acknowledged the strange favour of Divine Providence that enabled him to live beyond the age of most men in order to meet so many kind friends in Rome who claimed him as their spiritual benefactor. He promised to remember them in his daily Mass and asked for their prayers so that with the help of the Blessed Virgin and all Saints, he might “persevere in faith, hope, and charity, and in all that grace which is the life of the soul till the end comes” (*Ibid.*, p. 74).

Postulators of the Causes of Saints. The population of Birmingham expressed it visibly on the day of the funeral when for a few hours the city came to a halt as thousands lined the streets for the cortege that slowly passed from Edgbaston to Rednal for the burial service.



Rednal, Newman's tomb

In the sermon preached at the funeral Mass, Dr. William Clifford, Bishop of Clifton, paid an extensive tribute to a 'great and holy man,' a Catholic priest that a nation had come to admire and to love: "Cardinal Newman had from his childhood a great idea of the majesty and greatness of God. He was truly a man of God. He always felt himself to be in the presence of God; and the duty of serving God and doing His will was prominent to all other thoughts...His fervour and devotion when saying Mass was most edifying to those who assisted. He also had a tender devotion to the Mother of God, which shows itself in many of his writings; and he was specially fond of saying the Rosary...And now the end has come. A great and holy man has been taken from the midst of us, a faithful servant and mighty champion of God's Church has gone to his reward, one of the most prominent and most gentle characters of this age

and country has departed from our gaze...His memory will always remain in benediction in this land.”⁵

It is surprising then, that the idea of holiness in Newman’s life began to fade in public perception for over fifty years after his death. This was partly explained by some publications that propagated less than favourable interpretations of his character and his works. His brother Francis who had abandoned the Christian faith published a book about John Henry a year after his death. It was a reaction to the outburst of praise his deceased brother had received and it portrayed him in a very hostile manner, as being duped by organised religion and arrogant in his personal life.⁶ In the following year, 1892, another publication by Edwin Abbott, an Anglican, was also critical of Newman. He censured him for sacrificing his reason to the demands of an unfounded and irrational faith.⁷

Henri Bremond, the French philosopher, published in 1906 a study on Newman that gave rise to the widespread notion that he was a lonely and melancholy man, even a recluse. It was translated into English the following year.⁸ Bremond’s study influenced even the widely known and informative *Life* in two volumes by Wilfrid Ward.⁹ Here again, at least in certain chapters the idea of a sad, sensitive and solitary Newman is given to the reader.

Although there were others who questioned Newman’s sanctity on various points, things began to change in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s. This change of attitude was initiated to a large extent by two well-known and distinguished Newman scholars. One was Mgr. Francis Davis, the other Fr. Stephen Dessain. The writings in question appeared as two articles in *The Clergy Review* in a series of studies under the general title of “English Spiritual Writers.”

⁵ *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman, loc. cit.*, Appendix 10, pp. 644-645.

⁶ Cf. Francis W. Newman. *Contributions, chiefly to the early history of Cardinal Newman*. London 1891.

⁷ Edwin A. Abbott, *The Anglican Career of Cardinal Newman*. 2 Vols. London 1892.

⁸ Henri Bremond. *The Mystery of Newman*. Translated by H.C. Corrance. London 1907.

⁹ Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman based on his private Journals and Correspondence*. 2 Volumes. London 1912.

Mgr. Davis had acquired a comprehensive knowledge of Newman and of the spiritual influence he wielded over many people. He pointed to the importance of a vibrant and active faith in Christ that Newman always lived and taught: “his most characteristic message, in season and out of season, was an appeal to a deeper and sincere faith.”¹⁰ The importance of souls was deeply impressed in his mind from the beginning. None of his intellectual accomplishments ever took the place in his life of that important intuition of faith. The truths of divine revelation and of the unseen world guided him in his personal life and were the subjects of his preaching. Mgr. Davis defends Newman from the accusation of introspectiveness. What he saw when he looked inwards was the two objective and most important beings for each of us, namely, himself and his Creator. His spirituality was firmly directed to the unseen world of God’s revelation. This was what he constantly lived and taught.

A year later, in 1960, the Oratorian Father and renowned Newman scholar, Charles Stephen Dessain, published an article in the same series on *Newman’s Spirituality and its Value Today*.¹¹ He showed how his teaching was rooted in the New Testament, and how much of his Anglican Sermons were Catholic in spirit. Fr. Dessain also illustrated the importance of a living faith for Newman, his trust in a divine providence that cares for each individual, the combination of personal prayer and active good works in his life and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. His was a spirituality adapted to the laity. It did not enjoy the experiential awareness of God’s presence as perceived by the mystics, but a living faith in that prevailing reality of the divine within us.

In 1962, Meriol Trevor’s very readable two volumes entitled *Newman: The Pillar of the Cloud* and *Newman: Light in Winter* appeared. She was given access to all the unpublished correspondence and other documents in the Birmingham archives. She

¹⁰ *English Spiritual Writers, loc. cit.*, p. 124

¹¹ Cf. *The Clergy Review* 45 (1960) 257-282

does not give references to her sources. Newman, not Faber, is her hero. Nevertheless her portrait of Newman is on the whole objective. She presents Newman as a man who strove all his life for objective truth and holiness of life, and she does away with the notion of him being an isolated and hypersensitive character.

Over the last forty years there was an avalanche of publications both of Blessed John Henry's own works and of studies about him. The International Centre of Newman Friends was set up after the 1975 Symposium with its specialised library of Newmaniana on the Via Aurelia. In this Centre members of The Spiritual Family The Work provide an excellent service for students and scholars of Newman and have organised and given life to many Symposia, Congresses or Commemorative Lectures on the Cardinal. Pope Benedict XVI paid tribute in the Beatification homily to the hard work done over many years on Newman's Cause by the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory and the members of The Spiritual Family *Das Werk*. An important contribution was given by the Oratorians of Birmingham through the publication of Newman's works and the influence of the Centre of Newman Friends. Many other such Centres sprang up in various countries throughout the world.

The outstanding and comprehensive biography of Newman by Ian Ker appeared in 1988. This will always be a reference point for many years to come.

All recent Popes have had occasion to speak of Newman, and they praised his dedicated and exemplary life.

The Cause

In 1958, Archbishop Grimshaw of Birmingham had initiated the "Cause" or procedure that aimed at studying the life and writings of the renowned Oxford scholar and convert. It was the first official step on a long journey towards eventual Beatification and, we hope, Canonisation.

The difficulties were many, not least among them the amount of writings – approaching ninety volumes, - a fair number of which were at that time still unpublished, especially the important source of his letters and diaries. Moreover, there were no living witnesses to call upon who could give personal evidence of the Cardinal’s holiness as it appeared in daily life. Hence, it became a so-called “historical cause,” one which relied on testimonies available in written sources. Outstanding work was done by Fr Stephen Dessain of the Oratory and his assistants in publishing in scholarly fashion *The Letters and Diaries* which began to appear in 1961.

It was not until 1980 that more concrete steps were taken to promote the Cause itself. Archbishop Dwyer of Birmingham set up a commission of three competent historians who collected and filed a vast amount of material, and investigated Newman’s virtuous life and his reputation for holiness. In 1986 their findings were presented to a diocesan tribunal which had been appointed by the then Archbishop of Birmingham, Maurice Couve de Murville. That same year, Fr Vincent Blehl, S.J., was nominated Postulator of the Cause.

For three years, groups of theological censors assisted the Postulator in the examination of Newman’s writings. When all was completed, the material was reduced (!) to 19 volumes, amounting to almost 6,500 pages.

A two-volume synthesis, called the *Positio super virtutibus*, a detailed examination of the life and virtues of the Servant of God, was presented in December 1989 to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in Rome. It was subsequently examined and approved by various commissions of theologians and Cardinals.

Then on January 22, 1991, Pope John Paul II signed the Decree stating the heroic nature of Newman’s virtues. This marked the completion of the first and most

laborious stage of the entire process. As a result, Newman was entitled to be called “Venerable.”



Mass for the Beatification of John Henry Newman

A climax was reached at the Beatification in Birmingham on 19th September 2010 during the historic visit of Pope Benedict XVI to England. This does not yet present Newman as a model of holiness to the universal Church which comes only with canonisation, but it is a significant milestone.

These are some of the tokens of holiness in Newman’s life. There are many more worthy of note. We mention just a few.

The Pursuit of Holiness as Submission to God’s Will.

The idea of holiness of life as something that is an obligation for a Christian is a recurring theme in the writings of John Henry Newman. As an early teenager he toyed with the thought that ethical integrity rather than religious submission to God might suffice for Christian holiness.

The spiritual shock and awakening that resulted from his first conversion at the age of fifteen diverted him from the course of self-confident and intellectual independence. He emphasized the intellectual nature of this event of grace: “a great change of

thought.”¹² However, the effects were not simply of a purely intellectual order: they bore upon his spiritual life, changing his outlook in religious matters, intensifying his vision of faith, and creating a thirst for holiness and union with God that proved to be lasting.

From then onwards holiness was, in one form or another, a dominant theme, almost a leit-motif of his life and writings. Not that he was tormented with the specific urge to become a saint. As in the case of all who strive for a holy life, he learned that saintliness would be the outcome of self-emptying and devotedness to the cause of Christ. However, Newman did contemplate and was captured by the ideal and the challenge it offered. He strove for holiness in so far as it was submission to God’s will in faith, submission to the voice of conscience and truth no matter what the price he had to pay. He saw it as a Christian duty for every baptized person, as a flowering of baptismal justification and, in his own case, as a priestly obligation.

The Almighty who gave us the gift of free will is honoured most of all when we use this gift to obey and submit to him of our own accord. There is nothing a creature can give the creator that God does not have already. But in the exercise of free will there is mysteriously something that depends on us: if we are free, we can give it to Him or refuse to do so. Recall how St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus at the beginning of her *Autobiography*, a book that took the twentieth century by storm, was puzzled at how certain souls seemed to be caressed by the Lord from the cradle to the grave, while others appear to us to have had no chance at all. Holiness she concluded did not depend on being great or insignificant, famous or unknown, but on how a person submitted to God’s designs: “Perfection (she writes) consists in doing His will, in being what He wills us to be.”¹³

¹² *Apologia pro Vita sua*, London 1908, p. 4.

¹³ *The Story of a Soul*. A new Translation by John Clarke, OCD, Washington D.C. 1976, p. 14.

It may seem strange that a man of such intellectual talent as Newman should make so much of submission as a means of arriving at the purpose and goal of life. Great minds are not easily harnessed, genius normally needs a lot of free play. Yet we find this man of unique ability spending his life in the cause of an idea of holiness that he considered as the inescapable purpose of human life, especially of Christian life, an idea which had its precise demands of submission: submission to conscience, to revealed doctrine, to a Church, to an infallible authority, to the divine will, ultimately to Truth.

If we could have Newman in our midst for a moment and question him on this point, he might well answer in the words which he once delivered to Mixed Congregations:

“If there was one among the sons of men, who might allowably have taken His pleasure, and have done His will here below, surely it was He who came down on earth from the bosom of the Father, and who was so pure and spotless in that human nature which he put on Him, that He could have no human purpose or aim inconsistent with the will of His Father. Yet, He, the Son of God, the Eternal Word, came, not to do His own will, but His who sent Him, as you know very well is told us again and again in Scripture.”¹⁴

The example of submission given by the God-Man is unexceptionable. In this light, the fulfilment of God’s will appears as the accomplishment of the mission given to us by our Creator, the completion of the work we have to do on earth. Newman was a firm believer in a peculiar mission or work given to each individual: it was a point closely linked to the idea of Providence on which he insisted so much:

¹⁴ *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations*, London 1909, pp. 108-109.

“every one who breathes, high and low, educated and ignorant, young and old, man and woman, has a mission, has a work. We are not sent into this world for nothing;



we are not born at random ... God sees every one of us; He creates every soul, he lodges it in the body, one by one, for a purpose... As Christ has His work, we too have ours.”¹⁵

Trinity College, Oxford

In this context we gain a valuable insight into Newman’s own journey to holiness of life, and we can grasp the biographical content of some of his preaching in which his own inner struggle is portrayed. Among his first sermons as a Catholic in England we have one dedicated to the theme: “God’s Will the End of Life”.¹⁶ It is in retrospect an explanation and justification of the step he had taken in the venture of his conversion to Roman Catholicism. At the outset of that enterprise, shortly after fateful words of St Augustine, “*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*”, had pulverized the theory of the *Via Media*, Newman had written another sermon that traced in advance the course he would follow. He had entitled it: “Divine Calls.” He preached to himself at that moment as much as to his hearers: “the one thing which lies before us is to please God. ... What gain is it to be applauded, admired, courted, followed, compared with this one aim, of not being disobedient to a heavenly vision?”¹⁷ Similarly, his last words as an Anglican preacher formulated the request to pray for him “that in all things he may know God’s will, and at all times he may be ready to fulfil it.”¹⁸

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104 -123.

¹⁷ *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Vol. VIII, p. 32. Cf. pp. 17-32.

¹⁸ *Sermons bearing on Subjects of the Day*, London 1909, p. 409.

Throughout his life he continued to pray for “a most absolute and simple submission to the will of Father and Son.”

Obedience to the Voice of Conscience

This submission to God’s will becomes equivalent to obedience to the voice of conscience. Whatever the situation of a given person may be, however removed from the light of revealed truth he may stand, he still “has within his breast a certain commanding dictate, not a mere sentiment, not a mere opinion, or impression, or view of things but a law, an authoritative voice, bidding him do certain things and avoid others.”¹⁹ This inner voice is not man’s own creation: it comes from Another, from a “Sovereign Lawgiver and Judge.” He may try to distort or silence it, he may disobey it, yet that voice remains.

Conscience however is not always crystal clear in its commands. It can be influenced by human reason or by the passions of pride and self-will. At times a person may not find it easy to determine what comes from the voice of conscience and what is insinuated by selfish desires and motives. In the development of conscience, it becomes clear that a subjective conscience has not undisputed control over a person’s conduct at all times. Until one has found an objective guide and an infallible authority, it is to be followed unequivocally. Thereafter, one must take into account this external authority. It is not a matter of substituting the voice of conscience at a given moment in spiritual growth for an external law, but rather allowing the inner light of conscience to be more surely guided by Truth itself, through the mediation of a divinely-willed and objective authority.

In the matter of conscience, Newman’s fidelity was put to the test pre-eminently in the interior struggle that preceded his reception into the Catholic Church. The Fathers of the Church had been his guide. He came to realise that “were St. Athanasius and

¹⁹ *Sermons preached on Various Occasions*, London 1908, p. 64.

St. Ambrose now to come Oxford, they would go to Mass in St. Clement's" (that is, the Roman Catholic Church).²⁰

The principles which Newman had followed in leading the Oxford Movement placed him before a stark choice. The whole affair became for him a question of conscience. In the early months of 1845, the call of duty and the light of conscience became dominant themes. If he did follow what conscience was dictating, he had so very much to lose. But then, if he refused, he must have known he had everything to lose.



Chapel at Littlemore/Oxford where Newman was received into the Catholic Church

For a while Newman kept asking himself if he was being driven by his reason or by his conscience: "I cannot make out, if I am impelled by what seems clear, or by a sense of duty." But soon the inner conviction prevailed that he was being called to join the Church of Rome, and that to resist would mean sinning against the light of his conscience. Those who really knew him understood his motives. Pusey, for example, in a letter to an unnamed friend, published on October 16 1845, writes: "he

²⁰ *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*. London 1961, Vol XI, p. 110.

has gone as a simple act of duty with no view to himself, placing himself entirely in God's hands. And such are they whom God employs.”²¹

No wonder then that Papal documents of the last century, when dealing with the theme of conscience, make frequent reference to the writings of John Henry Newman. Suffice to mention but one of them: In his Encyclical Letter, *Veritatis Splendor*, regarding certain fundamental questions of the Church's moral teaching, Pope John Paul II when explaining the relation between conscience, individual freedom and the duty to adhere to objective truth as soon as it is discovered, quotes Newman and calls him “an outstanding defender of the rights of conscience” (No. 34).

There are many more indications of holiness in the life and writings of Blessed John Henry Newman. One can think of adherence to Revealed Truth, his love and service of the Church, his awareness of an unseen world and a divine presence in which he lived, his trust in the designs of providence and the value he placed on the ordinary, on the simple routine of the daily round, his priestly ministry, his life of prayer, and so on.

The Beatification

This has all been given a seal of approval by the Church in his Beatification. The visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United Kingdom in September 2010 was truly extraordinary. Archbishop Vincent Nichols spoke of it as touching the hearts of millions in the order of grace. The climax was reached on Sunday 19th in Cofton Park, Birmingham, with the Beatification itself.

In his homily Pope Benedict placed Newman in a long line of English Saints and Scholars, such as Saint Bede, Saint Hilda, Saint Aelred and Blessed Duns Scotus. “In

²¹ H. P. Liddon. *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*. London 1893, p. 461.

Blessed John Henry, that tradition of gentle scholarship, deep human wisdom and profound love for the Lord has borne rich fruit, as a sign of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit deep within the heart of God’s people, bringing forth abundant fruits of holiness.”

The tokens of holiness in the life of the new Blessed, as mentioned by Pope Benedict, were his habit of prayer and of turning to God and the unseen world, his awareness of and commitment to his “definite service” or God-given mission in life, his vision of education that did so much for Catholic schools, his life as a priest and pastor of souls.



In other talks and sermons during and after his visit, Pope Benedict returned on several occasions to the lessons that come from Newman’s life, and the signs of holiness which they manifest. To members of the Roman Curia in his Christmas Address, he recalled Newman’s beatification and asked: “Why was he beatified?” In response he

chose to highlight the various conversions in Newman’s life and his teaching on an objectively-informed conscience to which Blessed John Henry, as we mentioned above, was always heroically faithful. His understanding of conscience, at times misinterpreted by public opinion, is diametrically opposed to what contemporary thought holds, where conscience is a purely subjective criterion for judging moral and religious questions. For Newman, however, “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. At the same time, conscience – man’s capacity to recognize truth – thereby imposes on him the obligation to set out along the path towards truth, to seek it and to submit to it wherever he finds it. Conscience is both capacity for truth and obedience to the truth which manifests itself to anyone

who seeks it with an open heart. The path of Newman's conversions is a path of conscience – not a path of self-asserting subjectivity but, on the contrary, a path of obedience to the truth that was gradually opening up to him.”²²

Conclusion

On account of the circumstances of his life – born into an Anglican milieu in family and society, endowed with exceptional intellectual and literary talents, rising to fame and acclaim in the religious establishment of his birth – it was not easy for Newman to fit into the categories of holiness in the culture and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet that is what he did, not only in the Church of his adoption but in the opinion of many in the society of his time.

Despite his greatness, he was universally considered as a person of notable self-effacement and withdrawal. The obvious sincerity of his motives made his humble ways so genuine. At the time of his death, *The Times* of London declared that Newman “may be said to have lived no other life than the religious life, the life in constant and conscious communication with the Unseen.” The *Spectator* elaborates, deeming that the secret of the spell he cast over the popular mind, and which was so intense at the time of his death, lay in his saintliness. In a remarkable statement it wrote: “It is as the saint, not as the profound scholar... that Newman has kept and will keep hold on our imaginations” and it goes on to describe with vivid language the effect of his life on the society of his day: “In this busy, material, striving and crying age, Newman revived in his beautiful personality and serenely-ordered life what seemed a dead and gone ideal... He laid a cool hand on the feverish pulses of our life, and we felt the touch. The simplicity of the man's life, the solemnity of his

²² Benedict XVI's Christmas greeting to the College of Cardinals, the Roman Curia and the "Governate": *L'Osservatore Romano*. Weekly Edition in English, 22-29 December 2010, p. 14.

tones, his marvellous spiritual history, his wondrous influence over his contemporaries of an earlier day, all helped to bring to life again the old notions of saintship.”

These affirmations of holiness were echoed in Cofton Park on 19th September 2010, this time by the highest Church authority. The cloud over his life was lifted again and this time was replaced with a halo.

Copyright © 2012 by Rev. Most Rev. Philip Boyce OCD
Bishop of Raphoe, Ireland