

Rome, June 2014



Dear Newman Friends,

As did his predecessors in the See of Peter, Pope Francis is showing his esteem for the works of Bl. John Henry Newman. In the first year of his pontificate, he specifically named and quoted the well-known English theologian on various occasions.

In his first Encyclical, *Lumen fidei* (29 June 2013), Pope Francis stressed that « the unity of faith, then, is the unity of a living body; this was clearly brought out by Blessed John Henry Newman when he listed among the characteristic notes for distinguishing the continuity of doctrine over time its power to assimilate everything that it meets in the various settings in which it becomes present and in the diverse cultures which it encounters, (cf., *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, London, 1878, 185-189) purifying all things and bringing them to their finest expression. Faith is thus shown to be universal, catholic, because its light expands in order to illumine the entire cosmos and all of history » (Nr. 48). Here the Holy Father refers to one of the seven criteria, which, according to Newman, characterize the true development of doctrine.

In the programmatic Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium* (24 November 2013), in the section about the temptations of those in pastoral work, Pope Francis quotes from a letter written in Newman's Anglican years: « In some places a spiritual "desertification" has evidently come about, as the result of attempts by some societies to build without God or to eliminate their Christian roots. In those places "the Christian world is becoming sterile, and it is depleting itself like an overexploited ground, which transforms into a desert" (*Letter of 26th January 1833, The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. III, Oxford 1979, 204) » (Nr. 86). In this paragraph, the Pope speaks with words of Newman about the sterility of life and work without God – something which sadly sometimes is also found within the Church.

On the 5th Sunday of Lent 2014, the Holy Father had a booklet containing of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles distributed to the crowd of pilgrims on St. Peter's Square. On the back of this publication is a prayer of Newman, which the Missionaries of Charity, faithful to the wish of Bl. Mother Theresa, pray every day and which ends thus

„Stay with me,
and then I shall begin to shine as you shine:
so to shine as to be a light to others.
The light, O Jesus, will be all from you.
None of it will be mine. No merit to me.
It will be you who shine through me upon others.
Oh, let me thus praise you, in the way you 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 your praise, your truth, your will.
Make me preach you 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 your saints,
and the evident fullness of the love which my heart bears to you.”

John Henry Newman, “Jesus, the Light of the Soul”, *Meditations and Devotions*.
In: *Everyday Meditations*, Sophia Institute Press, 2013

It is the great desire of Pope Francis that the whole Church and all the followers of the Risen Lord have an ever greater missionary spirit. Newman is a great example for us in this regard. Therefore, we wish to give you the text of a talk, [St Paul's Apostolic Zeal according to Blessed John Henry Newman](#), which was given at a Day of Recollection put on by our Newman Centre in Rome. From four of Newman's sermons about St. Paul, the author has brought together some fundamental attitudes of the Apostle, which are also valid for us.

Let us trust in the intercession of Bl. John Henry Newman, also in the great matter of the handing on of the faith to the next generation, and let us continue to pray for the necessary miracle for his canonization. The prayer-card with the prayer for his canonisation may be obtained in one of our Newman-Centres or you will find it on our web site.

[Prayer for Canonisation](#)

With our best regards, we remain

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Hermann Geissler FSO

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