

**A THIRD SPRING:  
G.K. Chesterton  
and the Convert Cardinals**

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# INTRODUCTION

Karl Schmude

The Australian Chesterton Society was founded nearly 25 years ago, having been established in Western Australia by Tony Evans before becoming a national association in the year 2000.

The Society has held conferences over the years in various centres, but since 2007 at Campion College, where there is a *natural affinity* with Chesterton. He is, in so many ways, an exemplar of the liberal arts taught at the College – that is, a person of broad intellectual interests and learning, who has synthesised knowledge and understanding across many subjects, and pursues and promotes truth in the light of both reason and faith – human reason and divine faith. Chesterton was a model of the integrated man.

This conference of the Society focuses on three men – Chesterton, Manning and Newman: two ‘convert Cardinals’ and, we might say, a ‘convert layman’. At a surface level, they are a striking contrast – the genial (and generously proportioned) journalist Chesterton, the reserved scholar Newman, and the gaunt ascetic Manning.

The two Cardinals, Newman and Manning, made distinctive contributions to the treasury of Christian thought and witness in the 19th century – Newman in the **intellectual** sphere, revealing a great love of truth, and registering a deep and enduring impact educationally, especially in universities; and Manning in the **social** sphere, helping to shape and inspire the development of Catholic social thought at a critical moment in history, and witnessing in his own life to a great love of the poor.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chesterton, in many ways, brought these strands of thought and action together. He showed, as a practising journalist, an ardent love of truth and an intense love of the poor. He practised both these vocations – an intellectual one and a social one, whether it was defending Christian belief in books like *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*, or fighting for a more just social order in the pages of his journal, *G.K.’s Weekly*.

In a poetic tribute written on Chesterton’s death, Msgr Ronald Knox expressed these dimensions of Chesterton’s life and thought by invoking two great saints (St Thomas Aquinas and St Francis of Assisi) to ask God to accept him into Paradise:

**Take him, said Thomas, for he served the truth;**

**Take him, said Francis, for he loved the poor.**

At this conference, we will, in addition to exploring the distinctive contributions of these three figures (Chesterton, Newman and Manning), be seeking to link them – connecting the traditions they articulated and deepened and re-enlivened; the traditions of thought and testimony that have formed so much of the mind and heart of our culture. In this way, we may hope to recognize the sins of a ‘Third Spring’, building on the ‘Second Spring’ which Newman announced in a famous sermon in England more than a century and a half ago.

# G.K. CHESTERTON'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Paul Morrissey

## Introduction

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) was if nothing else a man of many talents. A prodigious writer, he covered every imaginable subject in a variety of genres. He described himself as primarily a journalist, but he was also a poet, philosopher, fiction writer, biographer, theologian, Christian apologist, literary critic and writer of detective stories. His writing was known for its wit, good humour and the use of paradox.

Throughout his life Chesterton took on many intellectual and social trends, including many literary heavyweights such as Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells. Most of Chesterton's writing had as its central aim a defence of the orthodox Christian worldview that he would eventually embrace. At his funeral Mass, Monsignor Knox said of Chesterton that 'he will almost certainly be remembered as a prophet in an age of false prophets.'<sup>1</sup>

This paper is really an exploration of Chesterton's philosophy of the human person. As he never wrote a specific study of the human person, it is no easy task to find anything remotely systematic regarding Chesterton's views on this subject. However, throughout his work lies a profound depth of thought and wonder at the nature of man.

It is hoped that this paper will present something coherent, for in many respects Chesterton was an anti-intellectual, preferring to shock the reader with strange analogies and paradoxes. He was more an entertainer and stylist than an intellectual. However, this paper hopes to demonstrate that it is possible to find scattered throughout Chesterton's writing a thorough and profound answer to the question of what is the human person.

## Chesterton's worldview

Although Chesterton did not enter the Roman Catholic Church until later in life, his worldview or basic philosophy was consistently Catholic. He held that the reality of God was the focal point of human existence and history and that the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is the revelation of this God who is personal, loving and triune.

As an orthodox Christian, Chesterton believed that man was created in God's image – his body, soul, reason, imagination and will are all gifts from God and each individual person is a unique reflection of the divine majesty. However, the goodness of the human person is not perfect and Chesterton was a fierce defender of the doctrine of original sin. It is through the lens of an orthodox Christian faith that Chesterton viewed the world and upheld the dignity of the human person. He was particularly interested in defending the

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Pearce, Joseph, *Wisdom and Innocence – A Life of G.K. Chesterton*, San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996, viii

'common man'<sup>2</sup> and his institutions: his Church, his home, his family and - very importantly! - even his pub.

In moving towards the Catholic faith Chesterton came to admire two of the Church's greatest saints, Francis and Thomas Aquinas. In Francis he saw a truly human reflection of God's love; a man who walked the world like the pardon of God showing that men could be reconciled to God, to nature and to themselves.<sup>3</sup> In St. Thomas, Chesterton found a thoroughly intellectual and plausible account of what he had always intuitively believed: that everything that exists matters; there is a wonder in all things.

As Ronald Knox noted:

'It was a favourite principle of Chesterton that it is possible to see a thing again and again until it has become utterly staled to you by familiarity, and then suddenly to see it for the first time...it was possible to have a vision of the truth in the same way – to see a thing as it really is for the first time, because all your nine hundred and ninety-nine previous glimpses of it has given you a merely conventional picture of it, and missed its essential truth.'<sup>4</sup>

For Chesterton it was important to have the innocence of a child to appreciate the wonder and truth of things. His worldview was in many ways that of a child. He states, 'What was wonderful about childhood is that anything in it was a wonder, it was not merely a world full of miracles; it was a miraculous world like a hundred windows opened on all sides of the head.'<sup>5</sup> Chesterton showed a great mistrust of anyone who tried to rationalize everything, leaving nothing to the imagination or the mystical. To be wise, according to Chesterton, one has to be innocent.<sup>6</sup>

## **Chesterton's philosophy of the human person**

Chesterton's approach to the human person was deeply affected by his natural affection and love for people. He once wrote whimsically that he would like to meet all people.

Mr Gilbert Chesterton  
Requests the pleasure  
Of Humanity's company  
To tea on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> 1896.  
Humanity esq., The Earth, Cosmos E.<sup>7</sup>

For Chesterton any real philosophy of the human person must begin with the uniqueness of the person; like all things there is a wonder to people. He wrote:

'The startling wetness of water excites and intoxicates me: the fieriness of fire, the steeliness of steel, the unutterable muddiness of mud. It is just the same with people... When we call a man 'manly' or a woman 'womanly' we touch the deepest

<sup>2</sup> 'Common Man' is the man of common sense and tradition. See Chesterton, G.K. *The Common Man*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1950.

<sup>3</sup> Chesterton, G.K., *St Francis of Assisi*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, 154

<sup>4</sup> Knox, Ronald, quoted in Pearce, *Wisdom and Innocence*, viii

<sup>5</sup> Chesterton quoted in Peters, Thomas C., *The Christian Imagination-G.K. Chesterton on the Arts*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000, 36.

<sup>6</sup> This is the central argument of Pearce's biography, *Wisdom and Innocence*.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Fagerberg, David W. 'The Essential Chesterton', *First Things*, 101, March 2000, 24.

philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

In his book *The Everlasting Man* Chesterton argues, contra the evolutionists and materialists, that the human person differs in kind and not in degree from animals. The evolutionists of Chesterton's time – and many to this day – saw the human person as an animal with some culture added on. He argued strongly against the idea that art, language, literature, family etc. were simply an evolutionary advance from primitive man who was evolved from the apes. When man sings praise to God he is not making an instinctive animal noise. Chesterton was not so much interested in evolution as science, rather he was perturbed when the philosopher or the psychologist takes the theory and concludes that the human person is ultimately no different from the ape from which he has evolved. For Chesterton, 'the more we really look at man as an animal, the less he will look like one.'<sup>9</sup>

In *The Everlasting Man* Chesterton takes particular issue with H.G. Wells and his *Outline of History*, which concludes that the cave man was the first of many evolutionary stages for the human person that will be ultimately realized with a type of utopian society when man has reached evolutionary perfection. Chesterton sets out to debunk the myth of the 'cave man.' Using the only evidence of primitive society known at the time – the simple drawings of animals found in caves – Chesterton demonstrates that primitive man was truly man; he was not half person, half ape. He writes: 'The most primitive man could draw a picture of a monkey, it would be a joke to think that the most intelligent monkey could draw a picture of a man.'<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, 'Monkeys did not begin pictures and men finish them...the horse was not an Impressionist and the race-horse a Post Impressionist.'<sup>11</sup> Indeed, for Chesterton, 'Art is the signature of man.'<sup>12</sup>

Unlike some contemporary philosophers, Chesterton would have no problem with being labeled a specieist: 'Man is at once the exception to everything and the mirror and the measure of all things.'<sup>13</sup> That is, the human person is different and superior to all other living things; he is, in fact, a stranger on earth.<sup>14</sup> He differs in kind to animals in a myriad ways: he clothes himself, he cannot trust his instincts, he is both a creator and a cripple, he has a mind that doubts, dreams and knows things and, importantly for Chesterton, 'Alone among the animals, he is shaken with the beautiful madness called laughter; as if he had caught sight of some secret in the shape of the universe hidden from the universe itself.'<sup>15</sup>

Chesterton's fierce upholding of the uniqueness of the human person extended to his defence of free will. Contra the determinists of his day, Chesterton saw free will as a given. In his *Autobiography*, Chesterton, with his characteristic wit, stated: 'I regret that I cannot do my duty as a true modern, by cursing everybody who made me whatever I am. I am not clear about what this is; but I am pretty sure that most of it is my own fault.'<sup>16</sup> For Chesterton, determinism, whether of the materialist or puritan variety, is dehumanizing. One of the human person's most noble characteristics is his ability to

<sup>8</sup> Letter of Chesterton to his wife Francis, quoted in Fagerberg, *Essential Chesterton*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Chesterton G.K. *The Everlasting Man*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993, 36.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* 34

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* 35

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* 36

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Chesterton, G.K. *Autobiography*, London: Hutchison, 1936, 3

choose between good and evil; to overcome adversity and conquer obstacles.

Chesterton saw the truth of free will as a matter of common sense; any notion of morality or ethics hinges on it. 'The one who represents all thought as an accident of environment is simply smashing and discrediting all his own thoughts – including that one.'<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, far from freeing the human person from religious dogmas, the determinists in destroying free will enslave man in the prison of his environment.

You may say, if you like, that the bold determinist speculator is free to disbelieve in the reality of the will. But it is a much more massive and important fact that he is not free to raise, to curse, to thank, to justify, to urge, to punish, to resist temptations, to incite mobs, to make New Year resolutions, to pardon sinners, to rebuke tyrants, or even to say 'thank you' for passing the mustard.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout his life Chesterton battled against the varied determinists of his time. He knew that any denial of free will would have dire consequences. When human actions are seen to be pre-determined, either by one's environment (the behaviourists) or by one's physical matter (scientific determinists) or by one's God (the pre-determinists), individual responsibility for my actions is absolved and the notion that I can change the world through my will is destroyed. The dignity of the human person is thus diminished.

Chesterton's philosophy of the human person is neatly summarized in his essay, 'Philosophy for the Schoolroom'. He argues that all arguments begin with an infallible dogma; something that must not be doubted before an argument is built. He saw the sceptics of his day as quite mad for they began any debate by saying what they did not believe. Chesterton held that all men believe firmly in four things which are 'unproved and unprovable.'

First, every sane man believes in the reality of the world; that his life is not a dream. Secondly, they believe that this world matters; that there is something intrinsically wrong when someone says: 'I did not ask for this farce and it bores me. I am aware that an old lady is being murdered downstairs, but I am going to sleep.' Thirdly, that there exists such a thing as self, an 'I' or an ego which is continuous. Finally, they believe, and in practice assume, that they can choose and are responsible for their actions.<sup>19</sup>

Chesterton believed that these four 'certainties' – quite apart from any religious belief or doctrine – are essential in upholding the inherent dignity of the human person. The human person exists objectively, he exists subjectively, he is a moral being able to choose good or evil and he is free. This for Chesterton is the common sense approach to any analysis of the human person.

## **The dilemma of the human person**

For Chesterton the metaphor that most aptly describes the human person's dilemma is that man is homesick while being at home; we know there is more, something greater, something beyond, and are therefore forever restless. He writes in *Orthodoxy*: 'The main

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<sup>17</sup> Chesterton, quoted in Marlin, George J. and Rabatin, Richard P. 'G.K. Chesterton Versus Behavioural Psychology', *The Chesterton Review*, Vol XIII, No. 3, August 1987, 346.

<sup>18</sup> Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 228

<sup>19</sup> Chesterton, G.K. 'Philosophy for the Schoolroom', *Daily News*, June 22, 1907, from [www.chesterton.org](http://www.chesterton.org)

problem for the philosopher is to be at the same time both amazed by the world and at home in it.<sup>20</sup>

Our separateness from 'home' is for Chesterton another way of talking about original sin. In answer to the question: what is the fall of man, Chesterton answers: 'That whatever I am, I am not myself.'<sup>21</sup> He calls this the prime paradox of Christianity, that 'something that we have never in any full sense known, is not only better than ourselves, but is even more natural to us than ourselves.'<sup>22</sup>

The problem then for man is that he strides two worlds, the spiritual and the material, he is soul and body; if the balance is not right between the two, catastrophe will follow.

'This is what I call being born upside down. The sceptic may truly said to be topsy-turvy, for his feet are dancing upwards in idle ecstasies, while his brain is in the abyss. To the modern man the heavens are actually below the earth. The explanation is simple: he is standing on his head.'<sup>23</sup>

One of the perils of the human condition is that the human intellect is free to destroy itself. When philosophers, scientists and psychologists proclaim that the mind does not exist – a current of thought that has become more and more prevalent since Chesterton – they, in fact, teach that there is no validity to human thought. Chesterton uses the analogy of the power of one generation being able to prevent the existence of the next generation by all entering a monastery or committing suicide; his generation was trying to stop the next from thinking. This, he writes, 'is the only thought that should be stopped.'<sup>24</sup>

Thus, another dilemma of the human person for Chesterton is the temptation to be trapped in our desire to think our way out of everything; to explain the world away. Thus, his famous statement: 'the madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason.'<sup>25</sup> This is indeed a trap, which will lead, as Chesterton was fond of putting it, to the padded cell or the asylum. We must be willing to straddle the material, scientific world as well as the mystical and imaginative world. A failure to do so will result in the prison of the materialists or the asylum of the gnostics.

### **Chesterton's answer to the dilemma of the human person**

Put simply, the answer that Chesterton gives to what he called the riddle of man was the God-Man. It is in the Incarnation where we find the two worlds, the divine and the human, perfectly united. The human person is lost and disorientated between these two worlds, it is Jesus Christ who bridges them. The central argument of *The Everlasting Man* is that the yearnings, the mythologies and the art of the 'cave man' are fulfilled in the God who humbled Himself to be born in a cave.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 212.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* 363.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* 365.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* 236.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Chesterton, *Everlasting Man*, Part II, Chapter I.



Thus when Chesterton describes the human condition as feeling homesick at home, he proposes that it is Jesus Christ who points us to our true home, which is in Him: As he writes: 'Jesus is more human than humanity.'<sup>27</sup>

In *Orthodoxy*, Chesterton describes his pre-Christian attitudes to the world and the human person, attitudes that reflect the Christian faith that he would later embrace. He saw these attitudes as an antidote to the problems of his contemporary world. First, the world does not explain itself – neither the magician nor the scientist can satisfactorily define everything about the world. Second, this world must have a meaning and a purpose for it is a work of art; this purpose is personal. Third, the world is beautiful, but not perfect. Yes, the world is good, but it is dangerous to deny its defects. Fourth, the fact that the world is good means we need to thank the God who made it that way. Finally, Chesterton's attitude was 'that in some way all good was a remnant to be stored and held sacred...Man had saved his good as Crusoe saved his goods: he had saved them from a wreck.'<sup>28</sup> Here, like Kant and Newman, Chesterton is saying that we can arrive at knowledge of God from an intuition, from our conscience. He believed in God because he thought there must be someone to whom he could give thanks.<sup>29</sup>

For Chesterton mysticism is important because it keeps men sane. The ordinary man is sane because he is a mystic with 'one foot in earth and the other in fairy land.'<sup>30</sup> He is free to doubt, but also free to believe; he can believe in fate as well as free will. The healthy person is the person who can balance contradictions.<sup>31</sup> One can therefore see why Chesterton would find the truth of all things in the Catholic religion – the religion of 'ands' rather than 'either/ors': faith and reason, nature and grace, scripture and tradition, human and divine, three and one; spirit and letter; body and soul.

In being a mystic the human person needs to transcend himself. Chesterton compares the difference of an over-emphasis on the immanence of God and a proper understanding of God's transcendence. The first he sees as characteristic of Buddhism, a spirituality of introspection and isolation. The latter he associates with Christendom, a spirituality of wonder, curiosity and moral and political adventure. He writes: 'Insisting that God is inside man, man is always inside himself. By insisting that God transcends man, man has transcended himself.'<sup>32</sup> This is essential for the true nature of the human person to be realized.

Chesterton also saw the virtue of hope as essential in a world characterized by the two extremes of optimism and pessimism. He wrote amusingly, 'that the optimist thought everything good except the pessimist, and the pessimist thought everything bad, except himself.'<sup>33</sup> He explains that both the optimist and the pessimist see the universe as though they were looking at purchasing a new home, whereas the more acceptable attitude is something akin to patriotism. 'The point is not that this world is too sad to love or too glad not to love; the point is that when you do love a thing, its gladness is a reason

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* 185

<sup>28</sup> Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 268.

<sup>29</sup> Hollis, Christopher, *The Mind of Chesterton*, London: Hollis and Carter, 1970, 71.

<sup>30</sup> *Orthodoxy*, 230.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* 337

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* 269

for loving it, and its sadness a reason for loving it more.<sup>34</sup> For Chesterton it is the Catholic understanding of a world created by God, a world that is good but far from perfect, that answers the problem posed by the optimist and the pessimist. We are called to be creatures of hope.

Above and beyond all this, Chesterton proclaimed the crucial need for joy. This joy is not just supernatural – although the source of all joy is God – but very human. It is expressed in laughter, song, play and nonsense. His critique was not just of a drab, pessimistic and overly intellectualized world, but also of an overly pious and serious religion. As he wrote: ‘I do not like seriousness. I think it is irreligious. The man who takes everything seriously is the man who makes an idol of everything.’<sup>35</sup> For Chesterton, the great secret of the Christian is joy; the joy that comes from God. In writing about Christ, Chesterton points out how His pathos was natural, that His tears flowed and His anger was open for the world to see and yet ‘there was one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth; and I sometimes fancied it was His mirth.’<sup>36</sup> The human person longs to be happy, and to be happy we need to be grateful. As David W. Fagerberg has commented,

Until we are grateful, we will not find the world miraculous; until we find the world miraculous, we will not find it important; until we find it important, we will not be happy here. The difference between ourselves and Chesterton is that we don’t think our world is important because it seems ordinary, while he thinks his world is important because he is ordinary. ‘I am ordinary in the correct sense of the term; which means the acceptance of an order; a Creator and the Creation, the common sense of gratitude for Creation, life and love.’<sup>37</sup>

## **An evaluation of Chesterton’s thought**

In evaluation Chesterton’s philosophy one must be mindful that Chesterton was not an intellectual in the narrow sense of this term. His non-fiction work is not scholarly: footnotes are rare, quotations are often mistaken and never cited, and he preferred a broad generalization to facts and statistics. For this he has been criticized. However, this is, one could argue, one of the great charms of Chesterton; his anti-intellectual approach endears him to the common man whom he had such affection for.

The danger of the modern world, as Christopher Hollis pointed out, is that we are so caught up in progress, in arguing about irrelevant or secondary points, that we can miss the great truths. This is the value of Chesterton’s work, where the great truth of the human person, his dignity and intrinsic value, illuminates nearly every page that he wrote.<sup>38</sup>

Chesterton’s view of the human person is the orthodox Catholic position: man is created in the image and likeness of God, he is subject to original sin and he has been redeemed by Christ. The lesson of Chesterton’s thought is that this truth about who we are is something that we must be grateful for and express with joy.

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* 270

<sup>35</sup> Chesterton quoted in Peters, *Christian Imagination*, 124

<sup>36</sup> *Orthodoxy*, 365, 366

<sup>37</sup> Fagerberg, ‘*Essential Chesterton*’, 26

<sup>38</sup> Hollis, *Mind of Chesterton*, 275

As previously noted, Chesterton saw seriousness, even religious seriousness, as akin to heresy. A religious person needs the imagination of the child if he is to appreciate the wonder of the Creator, of creation and, indeed, the wonder of himself. 'The child has no need of nonsense: to him the whole universe is nonsensical in the noblest sense of that noble world...(the child) has appreciated this world at a glance, and first glances are best.'<sup>39</sup>

If the Christian message is true, then surely it is something to be happy about. Theology and philosophy are sciences, but for Chesterton it is a danger to limit them to reason. A Christian needs an imagination, otherwise he will not see things as they really are. To truly reflect his Creator, he also needs a sense of humour. As Thomas C. Peters writes:

Chesterton's theology is an assertion that the Creator exists indeed; that this same Creator of the earth and the stars is the Creator of the bacon on the rafter and the wine in the wood; and the God that made good laughter has pronounced them good. We are created in the very image of the God who created laughter, joy, play, nonsense, and imagination.<sup>40</sup>

Christianity takes the human person seriously, but because it takes him seriously it acknowledges how wondrous he is. Perhaps that is Chesterton's most enduring message for us today. To a society that often stereotypes the Christian as taking himself too seriously, of being moralistic and a killjoy, the thought and life of Chesterton can act as a decisive rejoinder. The Creator wants us to enjoy, in moderation, His creation, to play in His fields and glory in the wonder of things.

For G.K. Chesterton it is only in Christian orthodoxy that a full account of the human person is found. It is the Christian faith that acknowledges the dignity of man as *imago Dei*, reflecting God's love, goodness, truth, beauty, playfulness and humour. This God has called us to a happiness and joy beyond all telling. To respond to this call we must follow the words of Jesus, words that Chesterton was fond of quoting,

'Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.' (Luke 18:17)

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<sup>39</sup> Chesterton quoted in Peters, *Imagination*, 41.

<sup>40</sup> Peters, *Imagination*, 127

# THE FORGING OF A SOCIAL TRADITION – MANNING AND CHESTERTON

**Garrick Small**

Gilbert Keith Chesterton and Henry Edward Manning are two figures that disappeared from view in the late twentieth century. They were both brilliant public figures who excelled in multiple areas of important human action. They were outspoken, irrefutable, world changing leaders, but today they are largely ignored. Their intellectual sources, their fortitude and their dynamism came from the one true source, which is Truth Himself, but this is also a reason they are ignored today.

Their lives could be described as devoted to knowing, loving and serving God in this life. They understood that there could only be one true God, that God could produce only one true Church and that her teaching alone could solve the many problems of fallen human society. They sought and found that one true Church under great difficulty and at no small personal cost. Their lives were devoted to explaining and realising Her vision for humanity. For Cardinal Manning that meant a public life of action; for Chesterton it was a life of vast and varied literary work. Manning's work earned him critics, even within the Church, despite the evidence of his alignment with the Gospel. Chesterton's literary gift was to be able to treat weighty topics with levity, making his own physical bulk look somehow elfin, and disarming his staunchest enemies with the joy of the truth and a way of presenting it that always showed respect and humility. An encounter with Chesterton always leaves you jollier at the end than at the start, even when he deals with the most sobering of topics.

The eclipse of Chesterton is perhaps more peculiar than that of Manning. It is easier for the young to overlook Disraeli or Bismark or Pope Pius IX than Santa Claus or Saint Francis or the Brothers Grimm. Yet Chesterton's detective fiction is more satisfying than Sherlock Holmes, his novels more engaging than Mary Shelley, his apologetics more insightful and prescient than almost anything in the last fifty years and his social thought more reasonable than Adam Smith or Karl Marx. Students do not read Chesterton's fiction, or his poetry, in literature, his defences of the Church and Her ways in apologetics or theology, or his social thought in economics. This is most telling in institutions that claim to be true to the Catholic intellectual tradition, even though much of his writing is much broader and more genuinely liberal than anything narrowly sectarian.

## **Intellectual integrity**

Perhaps Chesterton is a victim of his intellectual integrity in an age that no longer believes in intellectual integrity. More than that, he complained about the fading

interest in intellectual integrity half a century before relativism came to dominate the West, or the universal scepticism of post-modernity. In the social sphere he had outgrown socialism well before it manifested as the communist revolution in Russia. This does not mean he embraced capitalism, but rather recognised them both as the twin faces of the same root evil. In this comes another reason for his discrete elimination from the modern mind of our post-modern culture. In this he is joined by several other figures from the fifty years either side of the year 1900. One of the most impressive of those was the Catholic archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Manning.

Henry Edward Manning was born into an Anglican Tory family in 1808 (Kent, 1910)<sup>1</sup>. His father, William Manning was member of parliament and a governor of the Bank of England. By 1850 he had risen in the Church of England to the post of Archdeacon of [Chichester](#), with a reputation as a great preacher and one of the leaders of the high Anglicans. He took his faith seriously. As archdeacon he was active in personally visiting the parishes and there is evidence that this was both an expression and a stimulus of his care for the ordinary man.

As a high church Anglican his formal associations suggested an alignment with power and wealth, but his friends included Samuel Wilberforce, the son of William Wilberforce, the campaigner against slave trade and slavery. Manning was a man who lived by his beliefs and appears to have been one of those rare people who understand that the most authentic beliefs are those that are found, rather than those shaped by one's own needs.

### **The leader as Father**

As a young Anglican priest Manning committed himself to his people. Many were poor. He spent time with them and learned their poverty and their dignity. Unlike the general thrust of the English culture through the Anglican era, Manning maintained an almost medieval relationship between his people and their pastor. The Machiavellian revolution that reframed the prince as the self-interested tyrant had overturned the idea of the leader as father, or patriarch. The modern era, which has Machiavelli as its father, has made fathers into tyrants and reformed the Christian community into an association of self-interested individuals.

Christianity has always opposed this corruption of human social order by recognising that human social order is made in the image and likeness of the divine social order of the Most Holy Trinity. St. Bonaventure's understanding of the mechanics of the community of love that is the Trinity, extended to its image, imprinted on the human soul (Bonaventure, 1979). In that divine archetype the Father creator has all power and authority, but, in an infinite eternal act of love, devotes all His power and authority to the good of the Son. In so doing the Father is the eternal servant, who remains the eternal omnipotent God, to be feared by all creation, while still being called 'abba'. The Franciscan tradition takes this further to recognise that, by giving all, the Father holds nothing to Himself, and is thereby infinitely poor.

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical details of Cardinal Manning are taken predominantly from Kent (1922)

It is no surprise that Chesterton discovered that the key to understanding God was to embrace paradox. He was not the first. St. Bonaventure's theology ripples with paradox, but so too does the Gospel. Ewert Cousins (1978) captured this idea in the title of his work: "Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites". In the Franciscan tradition this infinite poverty of God the Father also becomes the archetype for the Seraphic Order. Joseph Ratzinger (1971) noted with approval the tradition that acknowledges that the Franciscan tradition will provide the spirituality of the true Church at the end of history. In this is acknowledged the fact alluded to in Revelations 19 that avarice will be the sin at the end of history.

Modernity prefers the thin rationality of elementary empiricism. Power may be observed, but love must be inferred. Love is an immaterial reality that cannot be directly observed despite being the mainspring behind all creation. The patriarch's exercise of power is evident as a fact. His love is not, and hence escapes the modern understanding.

### **Power and authority**

The Christian ordering of power, under love, in the service of God is the exercise of *authority*. While authority subjugates those under it, its exercise is for *their* good, it is an act of love and an imitation of God the Father. The Machiavellian emphasis on the appearance of good, despite the reality of vice in the service of self-interest recognises power, but is incapable of understanding authority. This leaves power as fundamentally problematic to the modern mind.

There are two solutions to the problem of power, once the obligations of authority, are stripped from it. One is to sanctify raw power as somehow the shadow of authority and argue for its raw exercise as somehow the will of God. The other is to oppose power in all the conventional places it is found by the revolutionary reformation of power in the hands of those under it. The first cuts power loose from its moral bonds by claiming it is its own moral end. The second seeks to neutralise power by preventing its concentration, and in so doing atomises society into factional conflicts. Both have anarchy as their end. The political Right and Left represent these twin expressions of Machiavellian social order.

Both of these solutions revolve about a preoccupation with man as an individual. Both are modern. Both ultimately believe man is driven by self-interest and both are poison for civilisation. In England power was cut from authority when Henry VIII cut from Rome. Henry's church was no more than Henry's church. It was not the Christian Church, despite retaining some of its accoutrements. Its distinctive features were those that marked it apart from the Church Christ founded. That is, Henry's church was Christian to the extent that it retained principles from the Church of Christ, but something other than Christian in all that made it the Church of England.

The English have never been totally comfortable being Anglicans. It has suited some, but not others, and most seem to have been disadvantaged by it, even if they have never been aware of what it has done to them. Cobbett, despite being Anglican, painted a graphic portrait of how it suited Cramner. The Anglican hierarchy seems to

have had its share of Cramner's, but it has also been blessed with its Fishers. The established church in England has long been a comfortable, commercial affair with benefices and the support of the state. Cobbett also pointed out how it impoverished too many Englishmen (Cobbett, 1830, 1988). Unlike the Church founded by Christ that relies on apostolic succession to maintain its authority, the Church of England relies on the monarch and the English Privy Council for direction in its faith and morals. On critical issues its faith and morals have more to do with the interests of the king and the members of the Privy Council than the will of God.

It was into this hierarchy that Henry Manning was born and within it he rose to prominence. His objective was primarily the service of God, which he was brought up to believe was the object of the Church of England. There are certain things that can be known about an authentic religion using no more than the light of reason. These include the necessary existence of a unique, omnipotent and personal God, the objective nature of truth, and the unchanging nature of the essential principles of faith and morals. From these, the authenticity of the Gospels may be deduced and from that the necessity for a single Christian Church as the vehicle of salvation for all people. Manning was content to accept that the Church of England was a branch of that single Christian Church and that its traditions and teachings contained the directions one must follow in order to achieve one's final end, the Beatific Vision.

These included the efficaciousness of the sacraments, beginning with baptism. This is one of the reasons that Anglican ministers retain the title priest, unlike the non-conformist Protestant religions that use an array of less specific terms to denote their religious leaders.

One Anglican priest who tested this distinction was George Cornelius Gorham whose views on baptism were in Manning's opinion, more like a non-conformist minister than the constant tradition of the Church. Manning was not alone, and the Anglican Bishop Henry Phillpotts was sufficiently concerned that he denied Gorham a post as Anglican vicar to a small village in Devon. Gorham contested the matter, first at an Anglican ecclesiastical court, and then on appeal to the Privy Council that eventually found in Gorham's favour in 1850.

Manning considered the matter of baptism fairly straightforward, but the fact that a civil court could rule on ecclesiastical matters caused him to doubt the legitimacy of the Anglican religion. To make his loyalty to his church more difficult, Manning was moving in circles touched by John Henry Newman's Oxford Movement and despite the latter's succession to Rome in 1845, Manning upheld its earlier aims of returning to the Anglican religion many of the traditions and practices that it had dropped through the sixteenth century. The Privy Council's apparent authority over the Church of England, especially when exercised to force it to embrace a highly problematic theological idea, proved too much for Manning, and he followed Newman's lead in 1851 to enter the Catholic Church. Like Newman, he was soon ordained a priest, and in 1865 raised to the position of Archbishop of Westminster. Ten years later he was created a cardinal.

## **Manning as Catholic leader**

His achievements in both churches were substantial, though it was as a Catholic leader that he exercised most influence. He had always had an interest in education and this was carried into the Church to greatly expand Catholic education in England. As archbishop of Westminster it fell to Manning to build the Catholic Westminster Cathedral, and as a public figure he was instrumental in settling the London dock Strike of 1889. The innocent and the weak were those Manning devoted the exercise of his power to as the most influential Catholic in England. His considerable personal capacities as a speaker and leader, and his background amongst the influential in England combined to augment that power considerably. His exercise of that power was as a servant, a true patriarch exercising his fatherhood in the image of God the Father and in the Franciscan sense of generative love.

His interest in industrial relations, however, found permanent expression in an area that does not bear his name, nor originate from his country. As a Catholic ecclesiastical leader Manning enjoyed good relations with Pope Pius IX, and later his social views were very influential in informing Pope Leo XIII in the writing of *Rerum Novarum* (1891) which was issued two years after the London Dock Strike. This encyclical was pivotal in many ways. It stands as the link between the long tradition of scholastic moral thought on economic issues and the practical needs of the industrial world. It also provides a pivot point between the twin modern economic errors of liberalism<sup>2</sup> and socialism. It connected theology to economics at a time when the world was chaffing to assert that economics was an independent positive science. It also reminded the world that it was the family and not the self-interested individual that was the centre of the economic process, from which economic production emanated, and to which it was aimed.

In all this it revealed its Godly origins in its ability to unite so much that appeared in opposition within the overarching framework of the Gospel. *Rerum Novarum* was a truly great encyclical and Henry Manning was one of its prominent intellectual architects. Manning was not alone, The German Bishop Wilhelm von Kettler of Mainz also contributed to it considerably, and in so doing added the German perspective to the English.

Germany had come late to industrialisation and the new economy that accompanied it. The story of Germany's economic achievements through the nineteenth century tend to be ignored these days, but it is almost impossible to understand twentieth century history without it.

## **English commerce and Christian social teaching**

It is well known that the English commercial empire grew from the Elizabethan piracy championed by Drake and his associates. Henry's break from Rome festered into the Anglo-Spanish tensions that gave some inexplicable moral justification to the English plundering of the Spanish gold-bearing ships that crossed the Atlantic from the New World. It has been estimated that the entire trajectory of the English

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<sup>2</sup> Liberalism refers to 'British liberalism' which is synonymous with capitalism.



commercial empire can be traced with reasonable precision against a modest rate of compound interest applied to the gold that England stole from Spain at that time.

English commerce did not only thrive on compound interest, even though Henry VIII was the first king in Christendom to permit a licit rate of interest on a money loan, and in so doing overturned the Christian recognition of the immorality of usury (Goyder, 1993). English commerce flourished by producing things in low wage colonies and selling them into high wage European markets. In so doing it grew rich by undercutting local wages in the destination countries and hence impoverishing most of their people. Nowhere was this more evident than in England itself.

Throwing off the yoke of Catholicism in the sixteenth century meant that England could also throw off the Christian moral burden of a living wage. Experiments in undercutting wages had been progressing from before the fifteenth century, especially, but not exclusively, in England. This proto-capitalism was also the corruption of the guilds and has resulted in rendering an understanding of the guilds almost impossible, especially in the English culture. True guild practice involved recognition that a craft association held considerable economic power. Power always involves moral obligation. The Christian guilds understood their moral obligation to avoid using their power for self-interest, and instead freely choose to use it to deliver the optimum economic result to the community (Kurth, 1987). It meant paying fair prices for resources, applying best practice to their craft, and charging just prices to their customers, all for the love of God, exercised as love of neighbour.

Today the idea of freely choosing not to exploit a business opportunity sounds ridiculous. Most people believe that humanity is not like that, is not capable of the self-restraint that is entailed. While it is true that people with their fallen human nature have a weakness when exposed to the occasions of sin, it is precisely the hope that, through grace and the embrace of morality, people can act in a civilised way.

The same mechanism applies to other areas of the moral order. To walk down a street at night in an uncivilised part of town, is to risk being victim to rape and pillage, but in a civilised part of town those about might have the same physical strength and animal inclination, but they distinguish themselves by being protectors rather than exploiters of the weak. That is, civilisation is marked by persons who use their power within the order of moral self-restraint and humanity is capable of civilisation. Christianity is the greatest civilising power, which is perhaps why its corrupted forms distinguish themselves with cultural expressions that corrupt civilisation. This is evident in our time with the corrupting effects of contraception. Chesterton recognised that the protestant religions were Christian heresies, making it no surprise that they would embrace contraception following the Anglican Lambeth conference of 1930.

## Christianity and Modernism

The protestant religions began coincident with the dawn of modernity and this coincidence is perhaps no coincidence at all. Modern thought flourishes within the protestant religions and the protestant religions flourish on the intellectual foundation of modern thought. While they need each other, modern thinking, when applied to Christianity, is known within the Catholic intellectual world as the heresy of modernism. Modernism was described by Pope Pius X as the culmination of all heresies, and so it is. It can be evident in many different forms and different degrees. Protestantism in its many forms is intelligible as a set of modernist expressions. Likewise, within the Church, many species of modernism have erupted from time to time. Some go back before the dawn of modernity, and can be seen as aberrations in Catholic culture that put the individual before the common good and the exercise of power for the good of the self at the expense of the community<sup>3</sup>.

Nowhere is this more evident than in commercial relations. If we can be civilised with respect to any aspect of the moral code, then we can be civilised with respect to all of it, including commercial relations. The corruptions of the guilds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which are now seen as proto-capitalism, or the avariciousness of the Spanish conquerors of South America that marred the transmission of Christianity to that continent, are all instances of modernist corruption of commercial morality, despite occurring within Catholic communities.

The ascendancy of Protestantism was fuelled at least in part by a liberation from the Christian moral order, which is really only licence. The German princes who followed Luther sought licence to rule without the moral oversight of Rome, the merchants wanted the licence to abandon just prices and just wages, and bankers wanted licence to practice usury<sup>4</sup>. Luther himself practiced his liberation from the confessional in carnal excesses under the slogan 'sin strong strongly, but have faith more strongly'.

Heresy can be viewed in many ways. It is usually based on taking a truth from the Catholic religion to some imbalanced excess. The truth of a heresy secures its general acceptance, the licence of a heresy provides its leaders with the licence to exercise their power as individuals and not as part of communities modelling on the Most Blessed Trinity.

Heresies usually include rejection of the pre-existing theological and moral thinking of balanced religion. In the case of modernity this meant rejection of the Scholastic doctors, especially St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure. To be effective, the heretic must either claim that he is perfecting the pre-existing thinking, or exposing and dealing with its hitherto hidden flaws. Modern philosophy asserts that it does both. Moderns pride themselves as 'standing on the shoulders of the giants', and in

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Hoffman (Hoffman, 2010) argued persuasively that the Church's tolerance of usury, which began in practice before the Protestant revolt, was evidence of modernism in action within the church.

<sup>4</sup> Odd Langholm (Langholm, 1984) noted that prohibitions against usury fell as the Reformation swept across Europe.

so doing supposedly appropriate title to their achievements and take them further. Curiously, they do this in practice by ignoring them, or misrepresenting them, or claiming to have discovered their true meaning, which just happens to make studying them unnecessary.

### **Newman, Chesterton and Manning**

Cardinal Newman came into the Church discovering that to be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant, and this was to be the path of Chesterton and Manning. In Chesterton this path back to the pure sources of Christianity took him back to when his church separated from the true Church and the integrity of the medieval doctors. His mastery of St. Thomas's thought is well known in the accolade paid him by the great Thomist Etienne Gilson who confessed that, despite his learning, the insightful common sense appropriation of the Angelic Doctor by Chesterton surpassed his own. Manning appears to have followed a similar trajectory, perhaps aided by the late nineteenth century Catholic respect for the Angelic Doctor that culminated with Pope Leo XIII's recognition that St. Thomas's thought was the measure against which any Christian intellectual innovation must be measured (Pope Leo XIII, 1879).

It is no surprise that the practical decline of the Catholic Church in recent decades has been accompanied by the practical elimination of St. Thomas from the syllabus of Catholic places of learning, either out of downright contempt, or the strange belief that the presentation of his thought needed fundamental correction that has resulted in its practical elimination<sup>5</sup>. These attitudes have a simple explanation, the heresy of modernism, though its mutating manifestations have proven hard to identify in the timely way demanded by these troubling times.

Pope Leo XIII did more than establish St. Thomas as the reference point for Catholic thought. He is better known for his great encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, that initiated what is known today as Catholic Social Thought. *Rerum Novarum* can be viewed as itself no more than a restatement of the economic thought of the medieval doctors adapted for the commercial situation of the time. In a sense, *Rerum Novarum* is a refutation of aspects of the de-civilising moral aberrations that had crept into the West on the back of the modernism that undergirded the Protestant religions, as well as infecting the commercial practices of some people within Catholic communities.

Manning had seen this first hand with his work amongst the poor of England, both as an Anglican and a Catholic. He recognised the necessity for a return to the moral directions that were available from the medieval doctors. That is, he recognised the need to reject a form of moral modernism that had unravelled Christian civilisation in the social arena. This unravelling should be evident in the history of our very own New South Wales, populated as it was from only a little before Manning's birth with the victims of the savage power unleashed by England's commercial moral modernism.

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<sup>5</sup> Attention to the modern thinkers behind this trend reveals that while they all flourished in the last half of the twentieth century, they straddle the progressive/conservative divide that is popular in the Church at present.

### **Moral logic of *Rerum Novarum***

The spectacle of the richest and most successful economic empire the world being unable to build sufficient prisons to house its own desperate poor, and starting a prison the size of a continent (Australia), should be sufficient evidence to suggest that something was badly wrong in 'Merry England'. Manning saw it initially as the failure of the Church of England to measure up as a Christian Church, and later as a course of action to correct it. His insights are acknowledged to have contributed in no small measure to the moral logic adopted by the pope and published as *Rerum Novarum*.

*Rerum Novarum*, therefore, can be viewed as partly an intellectual manifestation of Manning's practical work with the poor. It begins with a relatively short introductory survey of the problem, which can be summarised by Pope Leo's recognition of the 'rapacious usury' (n. 6) that was causing so much hardship for ordinary people, followed by a brief but potent rejection of socialism, a detailed denunciation of what is now called capitalism that the Pope identified as the massive problem, and an ultimate remedy that was simply evangelisation and a return to the true religion.

Within its substantial content it can be viewed as a restatement and development of questions 66, 77, 78, 117, 129 & 134 (property, price, usury, liberality, magnanimity & magnificence) of the second part of St. Thomas's *Summa Theologica*<sup>6</sup>. To this were added some references to medieval social organisation and the importance of evangelisation as the key to a civilised social order. The political Left and Right are intelligible within questions 66 and 77, on property and price.

In both cases Aristotle's dictum '*virtus stat in media*'<sup>7</sup> provides the key to the Christian order. In the case of property, *virtue sits in the middle* by requiring property to exhibit both private ownership with common use. With respect to price, it is the moral obligation on both parties not to exploit the other in transactions, despite having the power to do so. In both these cases it provides explicit, objective and knowable moral principles that may be used to design particular social systems. Being a set of fundamental moral principles and not turnkey economic system solutions has been a challenge for economists who tend to think in terms of systems, and especially the two systems that have dominated the attention of modernity, communism and capitalism.

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<sup>6</sup> Available for download from "New Advent" see:  
 Property: Q 66: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3066.htm>  
 Trade: Q 77: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3077.htm>  
 Usury: Q78: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3078.htm>  
 Liberality: Q117: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3117.htm>  
 Magnanimity: Q.129: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3129.htm>  
 Magnificence: Q.134: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3134.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Virtue stands in the middle

### **Chesterton Hudge and Gudge by government and big business**

The twin rejections of the economic prescriptions of what is now identified with the political Left and the political Right was not contentious for late nineteenth century educated Catholics. Chesterton wrote a considerable volume on these twin evils and personified them as Hudge and Gudge. These represented big government on the Left and big business on the Right both greedily seeking to exploit the ordinary person, Jones, who simply wanted to live by honest hard work, raise his family and serve God humbly in his state in life.

Cardinal Manning in his defence of the poor was not promoting socialism, but more social behaviour from those who held economic power. It could be described as a more self-restrained exercise of their economic power. This did not stop his detractors from tarring him with the socialist brush as though these were the only alternatives available. This is part of the modern condition and comes from the nature of modern thought. It has become even more common over the last century. To understand it, one must appreciate the connection between economics and the metaphysics of creation.

Modernity is based on the empiricist belief that the only things that can be known to exist are those things that are apparent to the senses, which makes the Big Bang the most likely source of existence and people are the result of the evolutionary chance collision of atoms. From this follows the anthropology and morality of self-interested individualism. Elizabeth Groz described the responses to this condition as either that of the slave or the tyrant. These alternatives produce the two modern political alternatives. The tyrant wants the freedom to exploit others and this has given rise to the British liberalism that was the dynamic for the British commercial empire. Its other name is capitalism. The slave, or victim, seeks to wrest power from the tyrant by vesting economic power in the state as communism.

Chesterton's Hudge and Gudge are both modern, and exhaust the political and economic possibilities for modern man (Chesterton, 1910). They are both inhuman, or perhaps sub-human. Their solutions to the economic problem both claim liberty, while relying on external forces to constrain people to moral action. The capitalist relies on the external forces of the market, while the communist insists on the external force of the state (Small, 2013).

Pope Pius XI (1931) described these twin modern aberrations as *twin rocks of shipwreck* in *Quadragesimo anno*<sup>8</sup>. More incisively, he had earlier identified them as representing variants of *moral, juridical, and social modernism* in his first encyclical, *Ubi Arcano* (1922)<sup>9</sup>. That is, the economic systems of the political Left and the political Right that Leo XIII denounced are not merely moral errors, but the fruit of that virulent heresy that was first evident in the nineteenth century and appears to have never been suppressed. Pope Pius X is remembered for his attempt to define and remove modernism from the Church, especially with his great encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907). However, a close reading of it reveals that his

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<sup>8</sup> See n.46

<sup>9</sup> See nn.60-61

target was modernism applied to theological matters such as the efficacy of the sacraments and reality of miracles.

Cardinal Manning was aware first hand of the moral modernism on the Right of Politics in the Anglican inclination towards the commercial success theology of British liberalism. In our time this is often labelled conservatism and it is evident in a lack of solidarity with the economically weak. Chesterton's Gudge is a Right wing moral, social and juridical modernist. It is a position that Max Weber associated with Protestantism (Weber, 1920 trans. 1930).

Chesterton's Hudge represents the big government of the socialism of the Political Left. It is no less a rock of shipwreck and a form of moral, juridical, and social modernism. In recent times it has been seen in liberation theology and its adherents within the Church are often labelled progressives. It was denounced no less vigorously by the early social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI, but it tends to live on.

### **Gift economy – vs – contract economy**

Cardinal Manning was content to militate for concessions for the working poor in England. That solution was not quite as elegant as inspiring those with economic power to exercise self-restraint for the love of God, but to the extent that he negotiated as a powerless religious leader, perhaps there was some element of that inspiration amongst the outcome. His approach was neither Left nor Right, but in solidarity with suffering humanity. It may have appeared as a compromise 'third way' between the poles of Left and Right, but it really conceived of human society in a totally different way. A century later, Pope Benedict XVI (2009). would recognise that economic justice was a gift that the strong give to the poor. In this light Christian economics can be viewed a gift economy between persons connected in Christ compared with the contract economy of the self-interested individuals of modernity<sup>10</sup>.

Chesterton used these same principles to conceive of a different solution. He recognised that widely distributed private property could achieve the same Christian outcomes for society. On the surface, this appears to slip into the error of utopianism as some sort of magic economic adjustment that would automatically solve the economic problem. It is not. Widely distributed private property requires self-restraint to achieve and maintain. To the extent that it requires self-restraint, it requires explicit moral action. It is a different, and perhaps more developed solution. It illustrates that more than one solution exists and could exist. The Christian feudal economy of the Middle Ages can be shown to be another.

It might be noted that both Chesterton and Manning were English and so were both immersed in English culture and perspective. Manning's father had been a senior part of the Bank of England, and both their educations would have included the English historical perspective. England had been using history for half a millennia by the time Chesterton and Manning were taught it. In Australia the Catholic bishops of

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<sup>10</sup> Lester K. Little (Little, 1978) outlined the way that the contract economy of the Christian middle ages gave way to the contract economy of modernity.

the late nineteenth century began the Catholic school system largely on the basis of what they perceived as the pernicious errors of English history. Henry VIII needed to rewrite the history of the monasteries in order to sack them in the sixteenth century and Elizabeth I had encouraged a formalisation of fictionalised history to support her reign. David Hume largely supported himself on the income he derived from “The History of England”, which he wrote in the mid eighteenth century that Thomas Jefferson described as “poison”. It nevertheless become the standard reference for English history from then on.

Both Chesterton’s and Manning’s interest in social issues was based on the English experience of capitalism. Their militancy was in part drawn from awareness of the historical defects in that system. This is especially evident in Chesterton, whose promotion of William Cobbett, as well as his own historical writings, reveal a connection to English history as truth in contrast to Hume’s history as ideological apologetics. Thorold Rogers (1884) traced English wage levels through the six centuries to the end of the nineteenth century to demonstrate the social failure of the English system of liberal capitalism. Although Rogers was rather anti-Catholic in his outlook, he was honest enough to recognise that the Reformation had been devastating for the English worker, whose condition deteriorated progressively until the desperation of the nineteenth century produced the political rebellion to it that eventually erupted into communism.

What is often ignored in the English world is that example of industrialisation which was not marred by British liberal capitalism and which developed on the continent through the nineteenth century. Germany was late to industrialise. It had been wracked by the protestant rebellion under Luther, but eventually returned to its Catholic character. It had been aware of the damage being done to its internal economy by cheap British imports which had the effect of driving down its wages and endangering its local productive capacity. Its response was to recognise the macroeconomic importance of the living wage and the necessity for protecting its domestic productive capacity. Bishop Wilhelm von Kettler was amongst those who contributed to German economic policy at that time. Pope Leo XIII also relied on von Kettler’s insights in framing *Rerum Novarum*.

### **German Catholic perspectives**

The German approach was relatively simple and can be reduced to perhaps three policies. First, apply self-restraint against the temptation to buy cheap goods produced by quasi-slave labour and domestic wages will not risk falling to quasi-slave wage levels. Second, ensure the majority of the population have good wages because these wages will be spent on domestic goods and strengthen domestic productive capacity and businesses. Third, encourage quality production as a service to the community which will improve overall utility, reduce waste, and maximise the overall objective of providing the material means for a good quality of life for the entire community. The German approach was essentially Catholic in its principles and outstandingly effective in its economic performance, even though it was operating well before *Rerum Novarum* was written (Jones, 2014).

It was also frustrating to the ambitions and requirements of the British commercial empire. British liberalism required ever expanding sources of cheap labour and ever expanding markets to dump their cheap products into at a profit. The Germans were blocking the second part of that equation, though the tensions that erupted as a result are beyond the scope of this paper<sup>11</sup>. Suffice to note that the German economic solution was yet another practical system built on the foundations of longstanding Catholic economic moral principles.

Overall, von Kettler demonstrates that Manning and Chesterton did not so much forge a Catholic social tradition as present it to the English audience. It was in England that mercantile capitalism found its most successful home, even though some Catholic countries also indulged in it. It was also in England that Karl Marx wrote *Das Kapital* since it was there that the evils of that system were most apparent, even if Russia was to go on to be its first practical political disciple. The connection between aberrant economic organisation and modernism deserves further attention. Pius XI's twin moral modernisms have been largely ignored but there is evidence to suggest that they provide a key to understanding much of the last half century of changes in the Catholic Church. While it has been demonstrated here that Chesterton's Hudge and Gudge represent the progressive and the conservative moral modernists in the economic realm, in the theological realm these terms can be shown to represent similar underlying elements. The progressives in the Church today promote immorality in family affairs which can be shown to rest on modernist foundations. The conservatives in the Church tend to be aligned with economic immorality which also rests on similarly modernist foundations. We tend to be immersed in the culture of modernism that makes it difficult to penetrate back to an authentic understanding of the truth that the Son of God promised to His Church.

An important hint lies in those who are remembered and those who are forgotten by the various parties. If Chesterton, St. Thomas and Cardinal Manning, perhaps along with a host of other Catholic intellectual leaders (such as Popes Pius IX, X, XI & XII, Christopher Dawson, Edward Cahill, Garrigou-Lagrange, Austin Woodbury, Amintore Fanani, Cardinal Ottaviani, etc), are being forgotten by a faction within the Church, then it is a sign that that faction is not aligned with their Church.

Chesterton and Manning were distinguished by their courageous determination to seek and live the truth despite their education, their culture and the religion of their birth. They were powerful forces for bringing Christ's Church back into the country of their birth and the culture it had spread globally. They lived and promoted the perennial social message of the Gospel within a modernist environment and succeeded in shining the light of truth.

Their message for our time should not be ignored, nor the parallels between their situation and ours.

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<sup>11</sup> See (Knuth, 1945), (Jones, 2014) and perhaps (Carroll, 1981) for connections between Germany's economic success, its relationship to international finance and World War I.



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# Newman and the Catholic University of Ireland

**Stephen McInerney**

“Controversies in education, as in anything else,” John Senior said, “are consequences of deeper divisions in philosophy and ultimately in religion”.<sup>1</sup> John Henry Newman’s *Idea of a University*, perhaps the most famous and influential defence of liberal education ever written, arose from such a controversy.

In 1845, the year Newman was received into the Catholic Church, The Queen’s Colleges Ireland Act was passed, to enable, as the subheading of the act states, “Her majesty to endow new colleges for the Advancement in Learning in Ireland.”<sup>2</sup> This led eventually, in 1850, to the establishment of the Queen’s University of Ireland. The move was promoted by Sir Robert Peel, the British conservative politician and twice Prime Minister, with the intention of opening up university education in Ireland to non-Anglicans, including Roman Catholics, who though able to matriculate were ineligible to take degrees from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland’s oldest and most prestigious university, because of the religious tests enforced there (tests which, like those of Oxford and Cambridge in England, required students to assent to the articles of Anglicanism).

Peel, who had been a foe of John Henry Newman’s during the latter’s Anglican years, was a generous man who promoted the kind of liberalism Newman detested. Peel’s address on the opening of the Tamworth Reading Room, in 1841, had elicited from the Anglican Newman a searing though anonymous letter to the *Times* in which he challenged Peel’s contention that the natural sciences and humane letters (in Newman’s summary), represent “a kind of neutral ground, on which men of every shade of politics and religion may meet together, disabuse each other of their prejudices, form intimacies, and secure cooperation.”<sup>3</sup> Works of “Controversial Divinity”, by contrast, were to be excluded from the Reading Room on the grounds they divided rather than united men of goodwill.<sup>4</sup> Newman of course would have none it; he deplored the idea that religious texts should be vigorously excluded while science and humane letters should be promoted in their stead as the source of moral

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<sup>1</sup> John Senior, “A Final Solution to Liberal Education”, *The Restoration of Christian Culture* (Norfolk, VA: HIS Press, 2008), p.107.

<sup>2</sup> *The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Her Majesty’s Printers, 1845), p. 509

<sup>3</sup> John Henry Newman, “The Tamworth Reading Room: Addressed to the Editor of the *Times*. By Catholicus”, *The Newman Reader*:

<http://www.newmanreader.org/works/arguments/tamworth/section1.html>

<sup>4</sup> Sir Robert Peel, “Inaugural Address on the Opening of the Tamworth Library and Reading Room 1841”, in *A Web of English History*, <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/education/tamread.htm>

good. Newman saw no essential conflict between religion and science, and as a great controversialist in religious matters he certainly saw the pursuit of truth as more important than a quiet peace based on ignoring the ‘elephant in the room’ – the differences between men on matters that touched on their eternal destinies. The liberalism that inspired Peel’s speech for the opening of the Reading Room also inspired his promotion of the Queen’s Colleges Ireland Act. The emergence of the Queen’s Colleges in turn elicited a similar reaction from the majority of the Catholic hierarchy as Peel’s earlier speech had drawn from the Anglican Newman years before.

On the face of it, one might imagine that a development like the Queen’s Colleges would be welcomed by the authorities of the Catholic Church – after all, here was an opportunity for Catholic men, hitherto deprived of the ordinary pathways of social advancement, to take their place among their non-Catholic peers at the forefront of Irish society, effecting the kind of social mobility that Catholics today, at least in the developed world, take for granted. Apart from a small minority of Irish bishops, however, the Church authorities were by and large unenthusiastic – fearful rather than excited by the prospect of their faithful getting embroiled in ‘mixed education’. The Irish hierarchy nevertheless recognized the need to respond to the challenges that the Queen’s Colleges were endeavoring to meet – and to the challenge posed to Catholic consciences by the emergence of the Queen’s Colleges themselves. Could Catholics attend? The hierarchy’s answer, following Rome’s lead, was no, although Archbishop Murray of Dublin had favored the idea.<sup>5</sup> It would be one thing, however, to forbid Catholics to take the opportunity to attend the Queen’s Colleges; it would be quite another thing not to provide them with a legitimate Catholic alternative. In 1850, the same year that the Queen’s University of Ireland opened its doors, therefore, the Catholic Church in Ireland with the endorsement of Pope Pius IX established the Catholic University Committee, under the leadership of Archbishop Paul Cullen of Armagh (a future Cardinal), with the aim of establishing a Catholic University in Ireland.

A year later, a letter from Cullen arrived on the desk of one Fr John Henry Newman, England’s most famous convert, at his Oratory in Birmingham. Cullen invited Newman to deliver some lectures in Dublin on education, in the coming year, and to advise him on staff appointments. By November 1851 Newman had been made Rector of the future Catholic University of Ireland, a position he would hold for seven turbulent years. He began to prepare his lectures, and *The Idea of a University* was born.

### **Theology as the integrating principle**

Once again, as he had done in his first battle with Peel, Newman would argue strongly against the idea of there being a strictly “neutral ground” in education. In the absence of theology (including “Controversial divinity”, as Peel described it), which Newman saw as the very epitome and integrating principle of education,

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<sup>5</sup> Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 377. For the dates and details surrounding Newman’s appointment, I am indebted throughout to Fr Ker’s definitive biography.

some other ideology would take its place. G.K. Chesterton put it best in *The Common Man*:

[E]very education teaches a philosophy; if not by dogma then by suggestion, by implication, by atmosphere. Every part of that education has a connection with every other part. If it does not all combine to convey some general view of life, it is not education at all.<sup>6</sup>

By the time Cullen's initial letter arrived for Newman in Birmingham in April 1851, its recipient had been a Catholic for just over five years, and a Catholic priest for even fewer. But Newman was still in some ways an obvious choice as the University's first Rector. Although he did not yet exert the influence over the British Catholic imagination that he would come to do after the publication of his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* in 1864, he was nonetheless easily the best-qualified English Catholic priest to run a University. Newman had been, as an Anglican, the most famous man at Oxford, from the time he first became a fellow at Oriel College, in 1822, until his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1845. He spearheaded the Oxford Movement, which transformed the Church of England and recalled it to its vocation – as Newman and other Tractarians understood it – as part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; not only the Church of England, but the Church in England: Catholic and reformed at once, a *Via Media* between the excesses of Roman Catholicism on the one hand and Evangelical Protestantism on the other. Through a series of Tracts, Newman, Edward Pusey, John Keble and others argued for the Apostolicity of the Church of England; they encouraged regular attendance at the service of Holy Communion, fostering in doing so a liturgical revival in Anglicanism, and saw themselves as continuing the ethos and ambience of the Church of the Fathers. By the mid 1830s, the Church of England was effectively divided three ways between the older High Churchmen, Evangelicals and this new breed of Anglo-Catholic who were at once more conservative than the older High Churchmen and more radical than the Evangelicals.

### **The Oxford Movement and Liberalism**

The Oxford Movement reacted against liberalizing laws that allowed Roman Catholics and Non-Conformists to assume positions of authority in the English parliament and therefore positions of influence over the Church of England.<sup>7</sup> And

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<sup>6</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *The Common Man* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1950), p. 167. I am indebted to Karl Schmude for this reference which I've taken from his paper, " 'Chesterton's Vision of Education': A Paper for the Seminar , 'Capturing the Imagination – G.K. Chesterton and Culture', Melbourne, Dec 2, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Newman's relationship with liberalism is full of ironies. As a Catholic, of course, he benefited from the growing freedoms accorded to Catholics in England which as an Anglican he'd opposed. It was Peel, who, as Frank Turner shows, having initially opposed Catholic emancipation, in 1829 "carried the measure through the house" which enabled Catholics to be seated in the Westminster Parliament. See Frank Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven: Yale, 2002), p. 16. Notwithstanding Turner's own prejudices, his revisionist account of Newman's relationship with liberalism is an important corrective to the temptation (one many Catholic scholars have succumbed to) to accept uncritically Newman's own assessment of his adult life as a battle against liberalism.

they argued against liberalizing tendencies in the University itself, not infrequently challenging the orthodoxy of their peers in Oxford, calling for books to be investigated for doctrinal rectitude, and insisting on the necessity of assent to the Articles of the Anglican Religion as a necessary prerequisite to matriculate to the University – yet also redefining, in time, what assent to those articles meant and, in turn, themselves becoming the subject of investigation and censure by the University authorities.<sup>8</sup> Newman came to argue, for example, in Tract 90, that one could interpret the Thirty-Nine Articles in a way that allowed one to accept many of the tenets of Roman Catholicism.

Through all this, the imaginations of the young in Oxford were stirred; hundreds flocked to hear Newman preach at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, where he was Vicar from 1828 to 1843. He exerted an incredible influence on young men, many of whom, becoming impatient with the Church of England's middle or muddled way, as they saw it, preceded Newman into the Catholic Church – exceeding him in impatience just as (in Newman's mind) they exceeded him in imprudence. By 1843, Newman and a group of these young men had retired to the parish church at Littlemore where together they lived a quasi-monastic life, celebrated the Eucharist daily (an unusual practice in Anglicanism at the time) and even recited the Roman Catholic breviary, with minor changes, rather than the established Book of Common Prayer.<sup>9</sup>

### **Role of the university tutor**

Yet none of this might have happened were it not for an earlier controversy Newman embroiled himself in some years before, at Oriel College – a controversy over education. Newman had noticed that many of Oriel College's students hired private tutors to prepare for their University exams. This seemed to him to point to deficiencies in the way the tutorial system was run at his College and indeed at the Oxford colleges more generally. Why, if the colleges were meeting the students' academic needs, would the students need to pay for additional private tuition? Newman believed that the tutor's role had been gradually whittled away over the course of centuries. The tutor ideally, for Newman, was supposed to be a guide in life, not only in studies; in morals and attitudes, not only in discipline. The tutor ought to model for his students the life of the Gentleman and, more than this, the life of the Christian Gentleman. His role ought to be pastoral, as well as academic. He should therefore have more involvement in his students' lives, advising them on their lecture programs and their subjects, and teaching them himself whenever possible. Instead of this ideal, the tutors had become by Newman's time mere disciplinarians at worst or distant dons at best, unconcerned with the inner lives of their students.

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<sup>8</sup> Renn Dickson Hampden, targeted by the Tractarians, was censured by the University in 1836. The tables were turned, however, when the Hebdomadal Board condemned Newman's Tract 90 in 1842. Pusey was suspended from preaching by the University authorities in 1843, becoming, in Turner's words, "the third major religious Oxford figure since 1836 to receive some form of university theological condemnation". See Turner, *John Henry Newman*, pp. 246, 455-459.

<sup>9</sup> For details of Newman's use of the Roman breviary while still an Anglican, see Donald Withey, *John Henry Newman: The Liturgy and the Breviary – Their Influence on his life as an Anglican*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1992.

Newman had some support for his suggested changes but not the support of the man who most mattered, the College's Provost, Edward Hawkins. Eventually, although Newman's experimental system was attempted, Hawkins insisted that if Newman did not return to the previous system he would simply not send him any more students, which is in fact what happened. Newman, whose reforms were inspired by his belief that tutors needed to be more engaged with their students, ended up having no formal teaching duties at all, although he retained all the other privileges of his fellowship: room, board and a good income. Newman thus had time on his hands, and he used it to throw himself into ever-greater controversies.<sup>10</sup>

The Oriel experiment teaches us two important lessons about Newman, which shed light on his future as President of the Catholic University of Ireland, and on his *Idea of the University*. The first is that Newman thought deeply about what education actually meant: he was not content simply to ride the wave of privilege at Oriel; he believed a tutor was in a real sense a cure of souls, serving his students in a manner consistent with his vocation as an Anglican priest, and he wanted to situate this role within the larger idea and purpose of a university. It was essentially a medieval view, one that reached back for its inspiration to the time of Oxford's foundation in the twelfth century.

### **Controversy as University Rector**

The second lesson from the Oriel episode – and one evident throughout Newman's subsequent time in the Oxford Movement – is that Newman was willing to engage in controversy, if not open conflict, in order to articulate, refine and defend his own ideas. Newman always demurred at the idea of himself as a theologian, preferring to style himself as a controversialist. And whether at Oriel, as an Anglican, or in Birmingham and Dublin as a Roman Catholic, controversy always seemed to find him, and Newman always seemed to discover his best and worst selves in times of controversy. His role as Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland would prove no different. He would have run-ins with Cullen, just as he had with Hawkins at Oriel – and he would need to understand and account for all the competing views in play about just what a university was for, and to do so in a relatively alien context: Catholic Ireland, as far from Oxford intellectually and socially as could be imagined. Newman even relished the idea that in spearheading a University in Ireland, “the battle there will be what it was in Oxford 20 years ago”.<sup>11</sup> But he did not perhaps anticipate that he would be embroiled in controversy with fellow Catholics.

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<sup>10</sup> The dispute with Hawkins is addressed in both major biographies, Ker's and Turner's, and most recently by Paul Shrimpton in his *The 'Making of Men': The Idea and Reality of Newman's University in Oxford and Dublin*. Leominster: Gracewing, 2014. Peter Nockles, in a review of Shrimpton's work, challenges the accuracy of his assessment of Hawkins' educational philosophy as “entirely impoverished” and argues that Newman “was as much to blame as was the provost for misunderstandings and conflicts between them”. See Peter Nockles' review in *British Catholic History* (Vol. 32, No. 4, October 2015): pp. 605-608.

<sup>11</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain et.al (Oxford, 1978-84), Vol. xiv., pp. 389-90, quoted in Ker, *Newman*, p. 377.

One such controversy arose over Newman's geographical distance from the University. Newman always insisted in his dealings with Cullen that in taking on the Rectorship of the new University he would still need to devote time and energy to his role as superior of the Birmingham Oratory. Cullen seemed to understand, at first, but he never quite got used to the idea of an absentee Rector, one who would (quite literally) sail in and out of Ireland a few times each year. Newman mused that perhaps, one day, he could establish an Oratory in Dublin itself, near the University, which could serve in effect as a chaplaincy to the University. This never eventuated.

### Limited understanding of Ireland

I have said that Newman was in many ways the best candidate as the University's founding Rector, but in some respects he was still not particularly well suited to the role. For one thing, and most obviously, he was an Englishman, with a limited interest in Irish affairs and even less understanding of them. Sara Castro-Klarén has noted just how narrow is *The Idea of a University's* conception of civilization (restricted, as it is, to Greco-Roman Christian civilization).<sup>12</sup> But Newman appears to us – unfairly no doubt – as a dinosaur in another respect. He was seriously lacking in the sensitivities to the Irish predicament that were needed to ensure the University would be more than simply a transplanted English University in Ireland. For a start, it never occurred to him that Irish culture was itself unique, with its own language, but then it hadn't seemed to occur to Irish churchmen either, who seem to have been characterized by that strange combination of slavishness to English ways and resentment of their cultural enslavement that is a sad part of the story of nineteenth-century Ireland.<sup>13</sup> (The Church had, after all, not covered itself in glory when it actively discouraged the speaking of Gaelic in the homes of its people). Newman did have the foresight, however, to insist that wherever possible Irish nationals should be appointed to key posts,<sup>14</sup> but again he seems not to have recognized the contradiction that these same Irishmen, especially those teaching history and literature, would be expected to be immersed not in distinctively Irish culture but in British and more specifically English culture. His view that the University would straightforwardly represent the importation of Oxford into Ireland is revealing. The Australian poet Les Murray writes that in post-World War II Australia "a major in English made one a minor Englishman",<sup>15</sup> and much the same was true of nineteenth-century Ireland.

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<sup>12</sup> For a critique of Newman's restricted view of civilization, see Sara Castro-Klarén, "The Paradox of Self in *The Idea of a University*", in John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Frank Turner (New Haven: Yale, 1996): pp. 318-338. Castro-Klarén notes that Newman "disparaged the ways non-European peoples have built complex and durable societies... For him only one civilization is worthy of the name, and that is European Christianity with its peerless intellectual accomplishments." (p. 325).

<sup>13</sup> In discussing Newman's English cultural imperialism, Castro-Klarén argues persuasively that for Newman: "The Irish Catholic, as a liberally educated person, must become the very model of an English gentleman. Newman cannot bring himself to imagine that there might be a distinctly Irish Catholic gentleman with his own religious and cultural characteristics." *Ibid.* p.329.

<sup>14</sup> Ker, *Newman*, p. 412.

<sup>15</sup> "Sidere mens Eadem Mutato", *Collected Poems: 1961-2002* (Potts Point: Duffy and Snellgrove, 2002), p. 109.



Newman was still relatively new as a Catholic, too, and had hardly come to terms with the full implications of the cultural and religious shift he had made, and what it meant for his life, by the time Cullen's letter arrived on his desk. One episode, recounted by Ian Ker in his biography of Newman, points symbolically to another problem Newman faced. Arriving in Dublin in February 1854, to start at last the Catholic University, Newman climbed into a cab at Kilkenny station and asked to be taken to the bishop's residence: the cabman promptly agreed, but instead of taking Newman to Cullen's address, he took him instead to the residence of the Church of Ireland bishop (the "protestant bishop", as Newman called him). The cabby, evidently, had mistaken Newman for an Anglican or Church of Ireland clergyman. Newman was by Catholic standards very new to the Church and he was apparently wearing the type of plaid shirt commonly seen on Anglican clergyman but not on Catholic priests.<sup>16</sup> If a typical Irish cabby mistook Newman for a 'protestant clergyman', what would others make of this strange creature from across the waters, who spoke with an upper-middle-class English accent, had attended Oxford, studied in Rome, and who, it seems likely, would never have visited Ireland were it not for Cullen's letter?

What then of the Catholic University of Ireland? Perhaps predictably, it failed. Newman left it in 1857. 20 years later it enrolled only three students. The Jesuits assumed control of it, under its new name, University College, Dublin, in 1883, and one of their most famous members, the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins – who had been received into the Church by Newman and was once employed by him at the Birmingham Oratory School – lived and taught Greek at the University for five years before his death. It was the unhappiest period of Hopkins' life, but we owe to it the so-called 'terrible' sonnets, which are among the great poems in the language. By 1909, the University was absorbed by the National University of Ireland. Cullen's dream had come to an end. Newman's thought lives on in *The Idea of a University*, which has, as Turner has argued, "exerted extraordinary influence over the discussion and conceptualization of higher education",<sup>17</sup> especially in the twentieth century.

### **Newman and Oxford**

Yet Newman still hoped to be involved in some way in Catholic higher education. As he searched his heart, he realized he still harboured a desire to return to the city of the dreaming spires where he had felt so at home for so many years prior to his conversion to the Catholic Church. Indeed, in 1860, only two years after resigning the rectorship of the Catholic University and only four years after it had opened its doors, Newman began to prepare for the possibility of Catholics being readmitted to Oxford. His opposition to "Mixed Education" was clearly not absolute. In 1864, he purchased land in Oxford with the aim of building a college and a church there,<sup>18</sup> hopeful that the Church would permit Catholic men to study with their Protestant

<sup>16</sup> Ker, *Newman*, p. 406.

<sup>17</sup> Frank Turner, "Editor's Preface", *The Idea of a University*, p. ix

<sup>18</sup> Eamon Duffy, "A Newman Chronology", notes for his "John Henry Newman: Life, Thought, Legacy", Paper C5 Theological and Religious Studies Tripos Part IIB, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, 2011-12.

peers.<sup>19</sup> Bishop Ullathorne wished to build a Catholic Church in Oxford, and from the outset wanted Newman involved in that project. Rome eventually gave support to the establishment of a Catholic mission in Oxford, but ordered Newman – who had started to raise funds for the project – to cease his involvement.<sup>20</sup> By this time he was out of favour in Rome; he was seen as an ally of liberal Catholics, including Dollinger and Acton, and his own writings and ideas (including *The Essay on Development*, *On Consulting the Faithful on Matters of Doctrine*, his criticism in the *Apologia* of an extreme “ultra party” in the Church, and his views on the Temporal powers of the Pope) were considered deeply suspect in some quarters.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, his fresh fame, in the wake of the *Apologia*, made him a particularly difficult customer for the Catholic authorities in Rome and England alike. His dreams of playing a key role in Catholic higher education were dashed, but their legacy lives on.

### Universal knowledge

About 12 months ago, as I drove home from Campion College (a venture inconceivable without the influence of Newman’s reflections in *The Idea of a University*) I listened as a university professor spoke on the radio about the need for students to encounter “big history” – a discipline, he argued, that helps students see the fundamental connectedness of things and to ask the big questions: what does it all mean? how does it all fit together? I thought to myself: this is pure Newman, who was asking and answering the same questions 150 years ago; who believed a university was precisely that place where students could pursue what he called “universal knowledge”, including theology, and where the disciplines could converse with one another, as those that undertook them sought to become gentlemen. And where, in a Catholic University, as Newman believed, those same gentlemen could advance also in their true vocation, to be saints.

But Newman’s *Idea* is far from being a pious or even strictly speaking a religious work (with the notable exception of his encomium of the papacy in the opening chapter). And a university is not, as Newman made clear, a seminary. Nor is it a place primarily designed to prepare people for the professions. It is ironic therefore, given that Newman is the most articulate advocate for the notion of the wonderful ‘uselessness’ of the liberal arts (precisely because they are studied for their own sake), that the most successful part of the Catholic University of Ireland was its medical school. Newman, though, was not opposed to practical subjects being studied at university, and he came to appreciate, notwithstanding his own ideals, that the university did need to prepare its largely middle-class students to enter professions. But this, for Newman, was always a secondary aim. The real purpose of a university is to create an environment where men:

<sup>19</sup> See Ker, Chapter 11: “Oratory and University”, *Newman*, pp. 417-462.

<sup>20</sup> See Ker, *Newman*, p. 597.

<sup>21</sup> Mgr. George Talbot and Archbishop Manning each played a key role in securing opposition to Newman’s involvement in the Oxford project. For a copy of Talbot’s letter to Manning urging him to take the fight to Newman, see Wilfred Ward, *The Life of John Henry Newman* (London: Longman, Green and Co, 1913), pp. 146-148. The role of these men, and William Ward, in undermining Newman at key points in his Catholic ecclesiastical career, deserves a study of its own. An ultra-traditionalist and jaundiced defense of the opposition to Newman – which contains the aforementioned letter – can be found at [http://www.traditioninaction.org/ProgressivistDoc/A\\_134\\_Nw-Dangerous.html](http://www.traditioninaction.org/ProgressivistDoc/A_134_Nw-Dangerous.html)

though they cannot pursue every subject which is open to them... will be the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle... [Where] an assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation.<sup>22</sup>

The “special fruit of the education furnished at a University”, according to Newman, is a certain “habit of mind...which lasts through life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or what... I have ventured to call a philosophical habit”.

As a nation, as we continue to debate the role of universities in a changing global context, in the world and in the Church, we could do worse than turn again to Newman as our guide. After all, the attributes of the philosophical habit he describes (freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom) are the very ones needed to ensure such a debate is fruitful.

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His scholarly monograph, *The Enclosure of an Open Mystery, a study of the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, David Jones and Les Murray* was published by Peter Lang in 2012. A published poet himself, his first book was recommended by Les Murray in *The Times Literary Supplement* ‘Books of the Year’, and a new volume, *The Wind Outside*, is due for publication in February 2016.

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<sup>22</sup> Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. 77.

# CAMPION AND NEWMAN: THE PETER AND PAUL OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Karl Schmude

Edmund Campion and John Henry Newman: both these men can stake a large claim to importance in the idea of a Catholic university. Newman very plainly and recognizably, as a result of his classic work, *The Idea of a University*; yet Campion as well, as the existence of Campion College, named in his honour, testifies, as Australia's first – and at this stage only – institution of higher education. Edmund Campion embodied a vital part of the Catholic educational tradition, even if his contribution is less amply documented and less widely known.

In this paper, I will be suggesting that Campion and Newman are foundational figures of Catholic higher education – comparable in the sphere of the university to the pivotal role played by Sts. Peter and Paul in the historical development of the Church.

Let me begin by sketching a picture of these two remarkable men – foundational figures of Catholic higher education: the 'twin towers', as it were, of the Catholic university.

They were born three centuries apart – Campion in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, amid the religious and political turmoil of the English Reformation, and Newman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period of great religious and intellectual controversy. I imagine each of them, characteristically, in a **cell**. Edmund Campion at first occupied the secret cell where he was found and captured, the special hiding place at that time in English Catholic houses used by Campion and other priests, during this period of persecution, in the event of a sudden raid by the authorities; and finally, the prison cell to which he was consigned in the Tower of London – a cell understatedly, more ironically, described as the 'Little Ease' because of its cramped shape that prevented its occupant from standing or lying comfortably. From these cells in Elizabethan England, Campion, still a relatively young man, radiated energy and inspiration – the energy of a scholar and lecturer, a man of learning, the inspiration of an apostle and martyr, a man of faith. I imagine him in his pain – not only physical pain, having been tortured on the rack and now facing the horror of being hanged, drawn and quartered, but also the mental and emotional anguish of a priest trying to shepherd his people in the midst of persecution.

John Henry Newman, too, I picture in a cell – in his case, a scholar's cell, composing tirelessly at his desk, producing so many memorable works. In these writings, especially his private letters and diaries, I sense his pain as well – the pain of

isolation, both religious and cultural, and of frustration of his talents, especially during the last half-century of his life as a Catholic. Newman lived to a formidable age – he was almost 90 when he died – by contrast with the relative youth of Campion at his martyrdom (he was only 41).

In each case, the cell they inhabited was a symbol of their religious fidelity. It was a consecrated place in which they lived out their vocation of witness to the truth. We can, perhaps, see it as, in Campion's case, a consecration of the martyr's heart, and in Newman's, a consecration of the teacher's mind.

In each case, I like to imagine them in their cells as they lived out their last days, and to wonder if they called to mind the mission they had carried out to exalt the truth in their time, and to build the 'idea' of a university for our time. Indeed, all time.

Thus I will be striving in this paper to do two things – first, to compare the contributions of Campion and Newman to an understanding of Catholic higher learning, both philosophically and institutionally; and secondly, to consider the ways in which Campion and Newman epitomized the Catholic intellectual vocation, and carried out in the university sphere the leadership exerted more broadly in the life of the Church by Peter and Paul.

## **Men of Oxford**

Campion and Newman were both born in London, but they were, I think, quintessentially men of Oxford. Each was the outstanding Oxford figure of his time. Campion was a person of precocious brilliance. Several years after he left Oxford, he was described by Lord Cecil, an architect of the English reformation (and close advisor to Queen Elizabeth), as 'one of the diamonds of England.'<sup>1</sup>

At Oxford, Campion was appointed a Fellow of St John's College at the age of 17. He attracted a personal following, and exercised an intellectual influence, that was not rivalled for another three centuries – until John Henry Newman did the same, attending Trinity College, Oxford, as an undergraduate and becoming a Fellow of Oriel College at the age of 21. Newman called Oxford 'the most religious university in the world'<sup>2</sup>, and the institution played a decisive part in forming the religious and intellectual sensibilities of Campion in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and of Newman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Speaking of the members of the Oxford Movement, Newman said that Catholics did not influence their conversion to Catholicism. 'Oxford,' he said, 'made us Catholics'<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Simpson, *Edmund Campion: a biography* (London: John Hodges, 1896), p.20.

<sup>2</sup> C.S. Dessain, *John Henry Newman* (London: Nelson, 1966), p.6. Cf. the comment of Christopher Dawson, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933), p.87: '[Newman] saw that the anti-modern character of Oxford, its unutilitarian beauty, fitted it to be the representative of religious ideals and spiritual values in an age of secularism and material progress.'

<sup>3</sup> Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: a biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.493.

Campion and Newman each delivered memorable sermons in the University Church of St Mary the Virgin in Oxford. Campion did so indirectly when his work of apologetics called *Ten Reasons* was secretly printed and left on the pews of the church, arousing the hostility of the authorities and causing a massive search for him – said to be the largest manhunt at that time in English history – which culminated in his capture and execution.

Newman also spoke at the University Church – only he did so in person, and frequently, when he served as Vicar (1828-1843) during his Anglican years.

Both Campion and Newman loved Oxford, and the Oxford experience shaped their philosophy of education and their devotion to the university as an institution.<sup>4</sup> Each tried to establish a Catholic university – and each was unsuccessful at the time. These efforts both took place in Ireland. Campion sought to revive a university that had lapsed, a papal foundation of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which was later to materialise as Trinity College, Dublin.

Newman was deeply engaged in the founding of the Catholic University of Ireland; and while it, too, did not really flourish in Newman's lifetime, it inspired the lectures which he delivered in Dublin and formed the foundation of his famous work, *The Idea of a University*.

### **Liberal arts and a liberal education**

What was Newman's 'idea' of a university? It was at once a positive concept shaped and sharpened by negative forces. The positive content was the study of various subjects or branches of knowledge – commonly called the 'liberal arts' – so as to enlarge and cultivate the mind and produce an integrated understanding of knowledge and truth. In this Newman stressed the compatibility – even more, the necessary **interdependence** – of religion and learning, of faith and reason, of revelation and the imagination, as forming the unity and universality of truth.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, Newman's account of a liberal education – the education that befits a free man, and particularly a free *lay* man, since Newman had a deep desire to foster an educated *laity*<sup>6</sup> – is heightened by the defects and distortions of higher education, which have remained to our own time, and indeed intensified; especially the utilitarian view which confuses education with vocational training, and the clerical attitude which mistakes a university for a seminary.<sup>7</sup>

Edmund Campion, too, had a deep sense of a liberal education, though, by comparison with Newman, only fragments survive to illustrate his outlook. After leaving Oxford, he spent some time in Ireland, and his writings of that period reflect

<sup>4</sup> Simpson, *Edmund Campion*, p.21, and *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain et al. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961-77), Vol.XXI, p.303.

<sup>5</sup> John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1900), Sermons X and XI, pp.176-221.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters and Diaries*, Vol.XXI, p.327, and John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. I.T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), p.392.

<sup>7</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, pp.382-3.

his rich understanding of university culture, combining habits of mind and demeanour that constitute the ideal student<sup>8</sup>. A discourse he wrote in Ireland entitled *The Academic Man*, was described by the English Jesuit, Fr. C.C. Martindale, as anticipating Newman's *Idea of a University*<sup>9</sup>. Campion stressed, for example, the blending of morals and manners with the cultivation of learning; the importance of piety and humility as well as healthy habits of study and recreation. In Ireland, he offered this advice to a student:

*. . . [B]ury yourself in your books, complete your course . . . keep your mind on the stretch . . . strive for the prizes which you deserve . . . Only persevere, do not degenerate from what you are, nor suffer the keen eye of your mind to grow dark and rusty.*<sup>10</sup>

In an oration he delivered in France – at the seminary of Douai – not long afterwards, he was even more explicit on what was required of a student. The ideal student must keep his mind subtle, his memory active, his voice resonant; he should cultivate his pronunciation; his recreations are to be painting, playing the lute and writing music; and he should be devoted to languages – Latin, Greek and his own tongue, in which he must compose verses and epigrams; by his 16<sup>th</sup> year, he must be able to produce Greek iambic verse.<sup>11</sup> (One wonders what the comparable demands on the contemporary student might be!)

### **Campion as educator**

When Campion later arrived in the city of Prague, after his ordination as a Jesuit and before his return to England and eventual martyrdom, he engaged largely in educational activities, teaching in the liberal arts – especially philosophy and rhetoric at a Jesuit school (in Prague) – as well as giving displays of oratory and writing and producing plays. To a decisive extent, Campion embodied the qualities that Newman would readily identify, three centuries later, with his 'idea of a university'. And they both embody, I believe, the Catholic intellectual vocation, consisting as it does of certain distinctive attributes – notably, a devotion to truth, the synthesis of faith and reason, an attitude of spiritual sacrifice and fidelity, a zeal for souls, and a certain daring in challenging the status quo.

These qualities have registered an impact on our religious and educational culture, not least in the names of Campion and Newman being invoked by various institutions (colleges, university clubs and residential halls, and secondary schools).

The spirit of a Catholic intellectual vocation is strikingly evident in both Campion and Newman. In his biography of Campion, Evelyn Waugh describes the process by which the Elizabethan scholar and saint came to realize what God was asking of him – in his fidelity to the truth, and to God:

<sup>8</sup> Simpson, *Edmund Campion*, p.34.

<sup>9</sup> C.C. Martindale SJ, *Blessed Edmund Campion* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1964), p.3.

<sup>10</sup> Simpson, *Edmund Campion*, p.33.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp.36-7.

*Only by slow stages was it revealed to Campion how complete was the sacrifice required of him. He had powerful friends and a brilliant reputation. Surely with these it must still be possible to make a career in the world, without doing violence to his religion? Surely it was not expected of him to give up all.*<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Newman, too, the process of realization was slow and yet remorseless. He was acutely conscious of the sacrifices, both personal and social, he made in becoming a Catholic, and he lamented the loss of old associations and the displacement of memories.<sup>13</sup>

His last sermon as an Anglican was called 'The Parting of Friends'.<sup>14</sup> He felt no personal consolations or rewards in the years following his conversion to Catholicism; having to endure, on the one hand, grievous misunderstanding, and on the other, repeated neglect of his talents and his potential value to the Church.<sup>15</sup> In this, no doubt, he suffered a continuing torment, somewhat similar to the one experienced in the following century (the 20<sup>th</sup>) by another priest-convert from Anglicanism, Ronald Knox, who, in the words of a recent reviewer, suffered 'a mild martyrdom'.<sup>16</sup> Even the pangs of intellectual confession were sharply felt by Newman: in writing the *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), he reported being 'constantly in tears, and constantly crying out with distress'.<sup>17</sup>

### **Catholic intellectual vocation**

Both Campion and Newman understood that the Catholic intellectual vocation involved suffering – suffering for the truth, and suffering for souls. One mark of this was the battle for truth – the various controversies in which Campion and Newman engaged. Campion showed his willingness and his skill in the work of apologetics he produced, *Ten Reasons*, and in his *Brag*, the short but crucial manifesto he wrote of his purpose in returning to England, as well as, following his capture, in the verbal defence he offered, during his trial, of the Catholic mission he and others undertook to England.

Newman, for his part, revealed at an early date his taste as well as his talent for controversy. Like Campion, he was greatly influenced as a controversialist by the example of Cicero. As his biographer Ian Ker has observed, Newman had a strongly logical mind and great powers of irony and sarcasm, which were especially effective in his satirical writings.<sup>18</sup> A major target of his satire, for example, was the religious and spiritual shallowness that he saw in middle class England during the Victorian era, and in this Newman bears ready comparison with Charles Dickens and Matthew Arnold for the effectiveness of his critical prose.

<sup>12</sup> Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1935), p.33.

<sup>13</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, p.293.

<sup>14</sup> John Henry Newman, *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day* (London: Rivington, 1844), pp.447-64.

<sup>15</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, pp.520, 561.

<sup>16</sup> Isabel Quigly, "Mild and Bitter," *Times Literary Supplement* (29 March 2002), p.36.

<sup>17</sup> *Letters and Diaries*, Vol.XXI, p.107.

<sup>18</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, pp.157, 168.



At the same time, Newman always appreciated some elements of the established English church, recognizing the signs of religious awakening during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not only in the Tractarians but in some of the Evangelicals, especially the social reformers such as the Clapham Sect (within which William Wilberforce figured importantly in the fight against slavery).

The involvement of Campion and Newman in controversy – in the great debates of their respective times – is of instructive interest in relation to their contrasting personalities. Campion was a strikingly attractive figure. At Oxford he gained a loyal following among students: they flocked to his lectures and even imitated his mannerisms and dress style. He was a man of gentle courtesy but not reserved, delighting in oratory and the theatre. His biographer Evelyn Waugh describes him as ‘magnetic and inspiring’.<sup>19</sup> Across the centuries, he comes to us, I think, as a man of unmistakable flair.

Newman appears as a different personality – reserved, even shy; lonely and highly sensitive, though also robust in the face of adversity; and, living as he did so much longer than Campion, much affected by the enfeeblement of age.

### **Suffering for the truth – suffering for souls**

I have emphasized, in exploring the witness that Campion and Newman gave to the Catholic intellectual vocation, their readiness to suffer for the truth. But a further dimension of their vocation was their willingness to suffer for souls. These are, indeed, organically linked, in imitation of Christ’s own statement, that ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’ (John 14:6); but they are also treated in his work, *The Idea of a University*, where Newman argues that, while the direct end of a university is knowledge, the indirect effects of a university are religious.<sup>20</sup>

In Campion’s case, there is his heroic virtue as a priest, at first during his six years at Prague, where he not only served an academic role but was also preacher and confessor and provider of succour to those in prison and in hospital; and then on his return to England where he faced the hazards of a hunted priest as he ministered to his persecuted flock.

One incident in particular, I think, epitomizes his pastoral ardour – and that is, his forgiveness of the man, George Eliot, who betrayed him to the authorities. (Shades here, perhaps, of St Pope John Paul II, forgiving the man who tried to assassinate him in 1981 – Mehmet Ali Agca - in his Rome jail cell. It’s been reported that Agca, now released from jail, recently visited the Vatican to lay flowers at the tomb of the Pope he tried to kill.)

George Eliot visited Campion in his prison cell and confessed that, after his Judas-like act, he feared for his life. Campion urged him to seek God’s mercy and do penance for the sake of his salvation. He then offered to provide for Eliot’s safety by

<sup>19</sup> Waugh, *Edmund Campion*, p.62.

<sup>20</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, p.381.

recommending him to a Catholic duke in Germany. This overture did not have the desired effect – Eliot returned to spying for the Protestant authorities – but it did produce another benefit. Campion’s gaoler was present at his meeting with Eliot and was so swayed by Campion’s greatness of heart that he became a Catholic.

Newman, too, exhibited a readiness to suffer for souls. His conversion to Catholicism did not loosen his bonds of sympathy with his Anglican friends. He recalled with feeling the long years where they worshipped side-by-side, but acknowledged that his very outspokenness was due to his conviction that ‘the Catholic Church is the one ark of salvation’<sup>21</sup>, and due also to the love that he harboured for their souls. As a priest, he had a deep pastoral sense, which his fame and his final elevation to Cardinal did not impair. Those whom God ‘singularly and specially loves, He pursued with His blows, sometimes on one and the same wound, till perhaps they are tempted to cry out for mercy’.<sup>22</sup> Newman, indeed, thought that the very act of belief was not only intellectual but also moral. It depends on ‘a right state of heart’ and ‘is perfected, not by intellectual cultivation, but by obedience’. In short, Newman said, ‘We *believe*, because we *love*’.<sup>23</sup>

### **Campion and Newman in Ireland**

An important factor in the zeal for souls exhibited by both Campion and Newman, I believe, was their exposure to popular Catholic culture and ordinary Catholic people. As Edmund Campion wrestled at Oxford with his mind and conscience over his religious allegiance, it proved significant that he moved to Ireland. There he lived in the family home of a friend, and, Evelyn Waugh records, ‘for the first and last time in his life, he tasted the happiness of a normal, cultured household’.<sup>24</sup> He experienced the tribal life of the Irish people, and the dependable routines and rhythms of a deeply Catholic culture.

Newman was also exposed to this Irish culture, during the seven years of his effort to establish the Catholic University in Dublin. He felt an enduring gratitude to the Irish people for the kindness they had shown him over the years – from his first visit in 1851. But at an earlier stage, both before and after his conversion, he had visited Italy and Sicily. He was profoundly impressed by the quality of popular faith – ‘*everywhere* a simple certainty in believing which to a Protestant or Anglican is quite astonishing’.<sup>25</sup> Newman also understood the nature of popular faith which, while it was often intermingled with pagan traditions and carried superstitions requiring purification, was nonetheless far preferable to scepticism. ‘[He] who believes a little, but encompasses that little with the inventions of men, is undeniably in a better condition than he who blots out from his mind both the human inventions, and that portion of truth which was concealed in them’.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> John Henry Newman, *Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1918), Vol.1, p.4.

<sup>22</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, pp.709-10.

<sup>23</sup> John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1900), pp.234,236,250.

<sup>24</sup> Waugh, *Edmund Campion*, p.34.

<sup>25</sup> *Letters and Diaries*, Vol.XII, p.24.

<sup>26</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1895), p.85

The culture of popular belief and practice is central to the contributions of Campion and Newman to the cause of Catholic higher education. Both were engaged in disputes that seemed ecclesiastical and political – appearing to be essentially a conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. They were, however, actually far more profound – involving conflicts that were spiritual, and even apocalyptic. For both men recognized that new forces were menacing the Christian faith and, by extension, its institutions such as the Catholic university. Like Thomas More before him, Campion saw, at least in a germinal form, the great threat posed by the power of the State, which would re-order the priorities of belief and commitment and jeopardize religious liberty and the rights of religious institutions.

### **The Infidelity of the Future**

Newman, on the other hand, was acutely alive to the looming danger of secularism – a threat to the fundamental viability of religious belief in Western society which was not only becoming irreligious but anti-Christian.

As Christopher Dawson pointed out, ‘Newman was the first Christian thinker in the English-speaking world who fully realised the nature of modern secularism and the enormous change which was already in the process of development, although a century had still to pass before it was to produce its full harvest of destruction’.<sup>27</sup>

In a remarkable sermon which Newman preached in 1873 entitled ‘The Infidelity of the Future’, he foresaw the magnitude of the threat posed by a militant secularism. ‘Christianity’, he said, ‘has never yet had experience of a world simply irreligious’, and ‘the trials which lie before us are such as would appal and make dizzy even such courageous hearts as St Athanasius, St Gregory I, or St Gregory VII. And they would confess that, dark as the prospect of their own day was to them severally, ours has a darkness different in kind from any that has been before it’.<sup>28</sup> It was no longer possible to depend on the orthodox faith of Protestants, while Catholics in England were likely to be seen as ‘the enemies’ of ‘civil liberty’ and ‘national progress’, and to face discrimination, particularly since they were too prominent to be ignored and yet too weak to defend themselves.<sup>29</sup>

Both Campion and Newman possessed a prophetic sense that remains sharply relevant to our own times – and to the future of a Catholic university in our society. Frank Sheed said that Campion was ‘the first modern man in English history . . . He was of 20<sup>th</sup> century cast’.<sup>30</sup> Campion was sensitive to the problem of the State in relation to the Church, especially when it came to the enforcement of false religion.

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<sup>27</sup> Christopher Dawson, “Newman and the Sword of the Spirit,” *The Sword of the Spirit* (August 1945), p.1.

<sup>28</sup> John Henry Newman, *Catholic Sermons of Cardinal Newman* (London: Burns & Oates, 1957), pp.121, 123.

<sup>29</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, p.676.

<sup>30</sup> F.J. Sheed, *Sidelights on the Catholic Revival* (London: Catholic Book Club, 1940), p.19.

No doubt the people of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were feeling their way on the precise relationship of religious and political institutions, especially when these institutions fell into conflict over the primacy of a citizen's loyalty. But it is perhaps arguable that Campion had an early intimation of the extent to which the State could subject the prerogatives of God to the power of Caesar, and lead to the twofold outcome of a **politicized Church** – and a **desacralized or secularized State** – with which we today are much more familiar.

A politicized Church brings the power of the State into the very bosom of the Church, so that the State determines, and dictates, religious faith, which leads to a fatal confusion of sacred and secular loyalties. There are abundant examples of this confusion in present-day Western society, particularly in the sphere of law, whether it is the legislature or the court; but perhaps the most striking instance of a politicized Church is present-day Islam, which compounds religion and politics in a social order consecrated by nationalism.

The lack of distinction in Islam between Church and State, between God and Caesar, is, of course, a direct and often violent confrontation to the complacent yet tenacious secularism of the contemporary West. I think the resurgence of Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has given new relevance, and new urgency, to the events and consequences of the 16<sup>th</sup> century English Reformation. Indeed, if Islam poses the great threat to Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as Communism did in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can appreciate even more sharply the combined importance for our time of the prophetic insight of Edmund Campion and John Henry Newman.

### **Campion as a precursor of Newman**

Campion may, perhaps be seen as a precursor of Newman, for, if the State can determine religion, it can also determine irreligion. It can impose apostasy. A politicized Church, in which the temporal displaces the transcendental, does in fact pave the way for a secularist culture, in which temporal loyalties are elevated to timeless, and totalitarian ideology becomes a substitute for transcendental faith.

These principles are of direct relevance to the university as an institution, and specifically the Catholic university; for the university cannot maintain its integrity, its essential mission, as an educational institution, if it is at first politicized and then secularized.

As Christopher Dawson noted, in his 1961 book, *The Crisis of Western Education*, Dawson noted – I think, with great prescience – that, in a secularist culture, the Catholic Church must not only deal with Catholic colleges and universities. It must attend to secular institutions of learning as well.<sup>31</sup> So, in exploring the idea of a *Catholic* university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must also address, I believe, the idea of a *university*.

### **Campion and Newman – Peter and Paul**

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<sup>31</sup> Christopher Dawson, *The Crisis of Western Education* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1961), p.112.

I have described Campion and Newman, in the sub-title of this paper, as the Peter and Paul of Catholic higher education. There is, indeed, a degree of dramatic licence in such a claim; but, in pondering the importance of Campion and Newman, both for their own time and for ours, I have been struck by certain parallels with the lives and contributions of St Peter and St Paul.

In their sense of *intellectual* vocation, Campion and Newman may be seen to resemble St Paul – their facility with ideas and with language, their deep convictions founded in faith as well as reason, and their devotion to learning.

Paul was a convert, as was Campion and Newman; and, just as Paul provided a theological foundation and an intellectual architecture for the Christian faith, so Campion and Newman supplied the intellectual underpinning for the Christian university.

In certain other ways, Campion and Newman resemble St Paul – in their preaching and power of oratory, and in their daring, a brave eagerness to take on the prevailing intellectual order and challenge it with the Truth of Christ. To this might be added Campion's personal prowess – a *physical* daring, an undeniable verve, manifested by St Paul in his perilous journeys, and by St Edmund Campion in his period of constantly evading the English authorities, until, like St Paul, he was captured and martyred.

Newman, too, displays Pauline qualities. For one thing, Newman and Paul were great letter writers. For another, they both sought to adapt the Church to new conditions – Newman's grasp of secularism helping to prepare the Church for a different culture, mirroring St Paul's role in developing the Church beyond its cradle in Judaism to meet the different circumstances of a Gentile world.

Newman had a special respect for St Paul because of his humanity – 'his intimate sympathy and compassionateness for the whole world, not only in its strength, but in its weakness; in the lively regard with which he views everything that comes before him, taken in the concrete'.<sup>32</sup>

Campion and Newman resemble St Peter in the unmistakable qualities of leadership which each displayed. They embodied and projected a vision of learning, of the intellectual apostolate, of the university, that bears respectful comparison with the broader leadership in the Church exercised by St Peter. They also showed a capacity for *organizational* development, one of the qualities of a leader, as revealed in their respective desire to found universities in Ireland, and in Newman's case, in his establishment of the Oratory in Birmingham as an institutional centre of Christian humanism.

An incidental link of St Edmund Campion with St Peter, which I find intriguing, is that the day on which Campion resigned from Oxford (in 1569) and embarked upon the path that finally led to his martyrdom was the feast of St Peter in Chains – a symbolic

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<sup>32</sup> Ker, *John Henry Newman*, p.484.

prefiguration, indeed, for Campion himself. And, after his return to England in 1580, Campion chose the feast day of St Peter and St Paul, June 29, to speak on the Papacy (under the title 'Tu es Petrus') before a large audience in London.

It would, I believe, be appropriate that, if John Henry Newman, now beatified, is fully raised to the altars of Catholic sainthood, he share the feast day of St Edmund Campion, December 1<sup>st</sup> – in a graceful echo of the combined feast day of St Peter and St Paul (on June 29).

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He served as University Librarian from 1984 to 2000 at the University of New England in Armidale NSW, and then became engaged in the development of Campion College as Australia's first Liberal Arts college.

# AUSTRALIAN CHESTERTON SOCIETY



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The Australian Chesterton Society is a national association devoted to fostering an appreciation of G.K. Chesterton's writings and the value of his thought in contemporary Australia.

The Australian Chesterton Society is part of an international Chesterton movement that seeks to promote the study and understanding of Chesterton's ideas and insights. Various members contribute regularly to *The Chesterton Review*, the quarterly journal of the G.K. Chesterton Institute for Faith & Culture located at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. Several members serve on the Editorial Board of *The Review*. In addition, the Australian agent for subscriptions to *The Chesterton Review* is Mrs Virginia Schmude of 177 Erskine Street, Armidale NSW 2350.

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The Society first functioned as a regional body, having been established in 1993 by Mr A.G. (Tony) Evans as the G.K. Chesterton Society of Western Australia. During that period, the Society launched, in association with the University of Notre Dame Australia, an annual series of Chesterton Memorial Lectures, delivered by such distinguished speakers as Rev Dr Paul Stenhouse MSC, Professor Pierre Ryckmans, Ian Wilson and Dr Race Matthews. It also held talks and debates as well as less formal meetings devoted to convivial conversation on Chesterton's works.

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