

Study Guide for *Holiness in a Secular Age, the Witness of Cardinal Newman*

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Dedication

This short study guide is dedicated to my friends Bruce C. and Barbara H. Wyman, who for many years have generously given themselves to the intellectual, human and spiritual formation of their students at McNeese State University.

Introduction

Welcome to this study discussion guide on a book about the great English writer and Christian teacher, John Henry Newman.

Holiness in a Secular Age, the Witness of Cardinal Newman, a short 206-page book addresses topics which will help you to be a better Christian and to make a difference as a Christian at your university and in society. We live in a secular age which means that God is removed from public life, the university, and work, and is replaced by man-made gods.

Many of you go to state universities and colleges that have a Newman Center, yet you have only heard the name of Cardinal Newman without knowing about his life and teaching. Or, you may be at such a school with a Catholic chaplaincy under the patronage of another saint. This may be your case, yet you will benefit greatly from knowing about Cardinal Newman as well.

This book is meant to help you to understand better the Faith in Christ and his Church through the teaching of Newman who was once a college professor and, later, founder of a university and a school for boys. It is a help to take your faith seriously and live it with joy and confidence. In other words, the goal of this study guide is to take the teachings of Newman and apply them to yourself.

Start a Newman study group to discuss this book and your Christian life. And after you finish discussing the book, continue meeting once month to discuss your faith, studies and relationships.

How to Use this Book

This is a short study guide to facilitate a seminar-style discussion reading of this book. You may choose some chapters to read and discuss as a group. It is fine to skip chapters. It is advisable, however, to first read the Introduction and Biographical Sketch.

Holiness in a Secular Age, the Witness of Cardinal Newman

Choose a coordinator or moderator for your study group, and a day and time to meet. You may wish to meet after an activity at the Newman Center or after Mass. Once you choose which chapters to read, it may help you to read the few lines here below related to the chapter you plan to read . The lines are not a summary of the chapter but highlight some of the points made. Going over the questions first prepares you for your reading the chapter.

I welcome your questions and any suggestions you feel would improve this preliminary guide for you.

Holiness in a Secular Age, the Witness of Cardinal Newman is available through Scepter Publishers in both [paperback](#) and [e-book](#) format.

You can also find reflections on Cardinal Newman's sermons, essays and poems at www.cardinaljohnhenrynewman.com

Chapter One: Biographical Sketch

John Henry Newman was born on February 21, 1801, in the city of London and died on August 11, 1890, in Birmingham. He thus lived in a century marked by significant scientific, technological, economic and literary achievements in England. It was also a period of growing materialism, agnosticism and even atheism, with parallels to the world today.

He studied and later taught at Oriel College of Oxford University. In 1833, after traveling with friends in southern Europe, he returned to England and founded the Oxford Movement which sought to renew the spiritual and liturgical life of the Anglican Church.

On October 9, 1845, after years of prayer and study, he became a Roman Catholic. Shortly thereafter he studied at the College of Propaganda Fidei in Rome. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1847, and returned to England where he founded the English Oratory of St. Philip Neri. For a few years the Oratory ran a parish for Irish immigrants in Birmingham, and later a school for boys.

Newman wrote on many subjects of the faith such as the act of faith itself, the development of doctrine and the nature and scope of university education. He published many books and articles, and carried out an extensive correspondence with people. In 1879, towards the end of his life, Pope Leo XIII created him a cardinal.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we study the lives of saints and blessed who lived before our time?
2. Newman lived in the 19th Century which is much closer to today than many other saints; can this help us to relate to him more easily? What other saints have lived closer to our time?
3. Newman lived in a time of industrialization and materialism; what are parallel situations today?
4. Are there some problems and issues which are common to all times? What would one example be?

Newman's Character in Action

Newman was a normal real life human being with feeling and worries, desires and ambitions. When he arrived to Oxford University he was only sixteen, and he did not fit in with many of the students and disapproved of those who drank a lot and received Holy Communion after nights of revelry. The very first day at Trinity College, however, he met and became friends with John William Bowden, who was one year older and shared the same birthday: February 21st. John Bowden was an intelligent young man with a very good character. They developed a wonderful friendship that later included Bowden's wife and children.

Another snapshot of his life at Oxford was his election as tutor (a college instructor) at Oriel College. One day he was in his room practicing a musical instrument when he found out he'd been chosen for a position that he had tirelessly pursued for a long time; at that news he immediately tossed down the instrument and ran to receive the results. The story illustrates his determination in his pursuits and youthful reaction to the news of winning an important contest.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

"Thomas came and touched Thy sacred wounds. O will the day ever come when I shall be allowed actually and visibly to kiss them? What a day will that be when I am thoroughly cleansed from all impurity and sin, and am fit to draw near to my Incarnate God in His palace of light above! what a morning, when having done with all penal suffering, I see Thee for the first time with these very eyes of mine, I see Thy countenance, gaze upon Thy eyes and gracious lips without quailing, and then kneel down with joy to kiss Thy feet, and am welcomed into Thy arms. O my only true Lover, the only Lover of my soul, Thee will I love now, that I may love Thee then." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Two: Friendship

“What is a friend?” and “How do you tell a true friend?” These are important questions for all of us. Reading about John Henry Newman and his friendships can help us to think about this, but each person must make sound decisions and choose the right friends. The next step is growing in our friendships. This is much more than ‘hanging out’ with others or going to parties.

Cicero described friendship as “nothing else than accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection, and I am inclined to think that, with the exception of wisdom, not better thing has been given to man by the immortal gods.” (Laelius de Amicitia – On Friendship, 6)

One of Newman’s earliest friends was Richard Hurrell Froude, also a tutor at Oriel College. Froude taught Newman many things; he challenged him and corrected him at times.

Together with Froude, John Keble and a few others, Newman began the Oxford Movement in 1833. Soon afterwards Edward Bouverie Pusey joined the movement. Years later when Newman became Roman Catholic their friendship suffered. But since they were true friends they were reconciled years later and rekindled their friendship. This reconciliation was brought about by Frederic Rogers, another Anglican friend.

His circle of friends naturally included women, beginning with his mother and sisters with whom he enjoyed a close relationship. He became friends with different women such as Maria Giberne, a family friend; Elizabeth Bowden, the wife of a close friend; Emily Bowles, the sister of another close friend; and Julia Holmes, a governess who sought his advice.

John St. Ambrose was a convert like Newman, and he helped Newman begin the Oratory in Birmingham and later the Oratory School. He was very loyal to Newman.

Newman also had a number of friends who were distinguished lawyers and writers. Among these were James Scott-Hope, Edward Bellasis and William Henry Wilberforce.

One of the ways that Newman kept up his friendships was through letter writing. He lived in an age before instant communication. But he also visited his friends, and went on walk or horseback rides with them.

Discussion Questions:

1. What sort of friends did Newman have? What can be learned from Newman's friendships that might apply to a student today?
2. Does social media help to keep in contact with friends? Is it sufficient? What are its drawbacks?
3. Is it important to spend time in order to have conversations with substance?
4. Is speaking about God, and perhaps even the meaning of life something that should be part of conversation with friends?

Newman's Friendship in Action

In 1864 Newman wrote *Apologia pro vita sua*, a spiritual autobiography explaining the development of his religious ideas and the reason for his conversion to Roman Catholicism. He speaks throughout of his Anglican and Catholic friends, and he closes acknowledging the friendship of those with whom he lived by offering the work to them. Among these was his closest friend and collaborator at the time to whom he wrote: "And to you, especially, dear Ambrose St. John: whom God gave me when he took everyone else away: who are my link between my old life and my new; who have now for twenty-one years been so devoted to me, so patient, so zealous, so tender; who have let me lean so hard upon you; who have watched me so narrowly; who have never thought of yourself, if I was in question." Ambrose had converted with Newman at Oxford and they had both been ordained Catholic priests together in Rome.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

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

Chapter Three: Holiness and Christian Life

“What is holiness?” The word “holiness” seems like an old fashioned term with little meaning for us today. But, in fact holiness is friendship with God; holiness is about charity which is the love that God pours into our hearts through his Holy Spirit so that we can love him in return.

At an early age, while in grade school, Newman read the works of Thomas Scott, an evangelical writer who impressed on him the need for holiness in life. Later on, the work of Anglican writer, William Law, and Newman’s reading of the Scriptures, deepened in him the conviction of the need for holiness of life.

For him, holiness consists in the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul which grows through prayer, meditation of the Scriptures, and the sacraments.

In the many sermons that he preached at the University Church in Oxford he highlighted the vision a Christian should have in terms of holiness.

Like earlier saints such as St. Philip Neri and St. Francis de Sales, and later ones such as St. Josemaria Escrivá and St. John Paul II, he taught that holiness is for men and women in all walks of life; that it is lived out in one’s daily encounter and work with others; and that all are called to holiness, not just special privileged persons.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is holiness? Is it something we do? Is it possible in our world?
2. Can a person strive to be a saint or does that only happen after one is dead?
3. How can we apply one of Newman’s ideas in the sermon “Holiness Necessary for Future Blessedness” to life on campus today?
4. What is pride? How can we apply what Newman say about fighting pride in his sermons?
5. What does he say to university students about holiness?
6. Do we appreciate the value of Confession as Newman did in his time?
7. Does striving for holiness in college mean you can’t have fun? Is it a goal that can be attained even while living in student residence, or participating in sorority or fraternity?

Newman's Holiness in Action

One day, as a young Anglican clergyman, Newman visited a parishioner who was ill. Such was Newman's way of acting and prayer that the woman thought it was Jesus who had come to visit her. Whether Christ actually appeared to her or whether she was seeing Christ in Newman, we don't know, but by means of striving to grow in friendship with God, Newman reflected God's love in an extraordinary way. It was manifest in his love to others. Newman continued to visit parishioners and friends who were ill and to pray for them. They found comfort and spiritual strength from him in those memorable visits.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

"O my dear Lord, since I perceive Thee to be so beautiful, I love Thee, and desire to love Thee more and more. Since Thou art the One Goodness, Beautifulness, Gloriousness, in the whole world of being, and there is nothing like Thee, but Thou art infinitely more glorious and good than even the most beautiful of creatures, therefore I love Thee with a singular love, a one, only, sovereign love. Everything, O my Lord, shall be dull and dim to me, after looking at Thee. There is nothing on earth, not even what is most naturally dear to me, that I can love in comparison of Thee. And I would lose everything whatever rather than lose Thee. For Thou, O my Lord, art my supreme and only Lord and love." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Four: Meditation and Study of the Scriptures

“Do Catholics need to study the Scriptures?” St. Jerome, who in the fourth century made the translation into Latin of the Bible called the Vulgate, said that “ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ.” Before the Bible was readily available, people would have to find someone to read it to them; after written copies became more widely available, those who knew how to read began to have more opportunity to read and study Scripture on their own.

From an early age John Henry learned from his grandmother to read the Scriptures. In college he read the Bible daily and meditated upon it. Later his preaching was completely inspired by biblical teaching and full of quotes from the Bible.

Like the Church Fathers from whom he learned a great deal, he gave importance to both the literal and figurative reading of the Scriptures grounded in the tradition of the Church: that whereas the former is important and the starting point, it leads the way to the spiritual reading of the Bible. Thus Newman warned against the then growing historical-critical reading of the Bible.

Writing in the third quarter of the 19th century, Newman wrote some pages on biblical inspiration and on the relationship between the Bible and Tradition that later inspired some of the teachings of Vatican II on Revelation and the Bible.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is historical literary criticism as Newman described it? Does historical literary criticism appear in today’s classrooms?
2. How does Catholic and Protestant understanding of the Bible differ?
3. In what matters is the Bible infallible according to Newman and the Church?
4. What does Vatican II (in the constitution *Dei Verbum*) say about the relationship between Sacred Tradition and the Bible?
5. Are Catholics encouraged to read the Bible? Even without reading, is a Catholic exposed to the Bible in other ways? What advice could Newman give students today regarding reading the Bible?

Newman's Study of the Bible in Action

When Newman was a child his grandmother on his father's side read to him the Bible. Later at the age of 15, following a short period of doubts of faith, he began to take seriously his belief in God. He began to read regularly the Scriptures. When he became an Anglican clergyman and afterwards as a Catholic priest he memorized long passages from the Bible and quoted it often in his sermons. In the early 1850's he was asked by the Bishops to prepare a new English translation of the Bible. He started work on this but, unfortunately, put it aside when he learned that a bishop in the United States was close to completing a new translation.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

"And, for that end, give me, O my Lord, that purity of conscience which alone can receive, which alone can improve Thy inspirations. My ears are dull, so that I cannot hear Thy voice. My eyes are dim, so that I cannot see Thy tokens. Thou alone canst quicken my hearing, and purge my sight, and cleanse and renew my heart. Teach me, like Mary, to sit at Thy feet, and to hear Thy word. Give me that true wisdom, which seeks Thy will by prayer and meditation, by direct intercourse with Thee, more than by reading and reasoning. Give me the discernment to know Thy voice from the voice of strangers, and to rest upon it and to seek it in the first place, as something external to myself; and answer me through my own mind, if I worship and rely on Thee as above and beyond it." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Five: The Moral Life in the Kingdom of God

“Is the moral life possible in today’s university environment? If everyone is doing it, does this make it right?”

Newman reminds us that God is our Creator and that we are his children. He reminds us in his sermons of many Bible passages which ask us to obey our Maker who wishes our happiness. Christians need to keep in mind that our Maker is also our Judge, an infinitely good and just Judge. Our life on earth will be rewarded or punished after death.

For the Christian to live a moral life he has to have a certain detachment from the world. We must not see the world as an end but as means to everlasting happiness. The Christian must take his life seriously and seek to please God above all things and to find his lasting happiness in him.

But the moral life is not about obeying laws, a morality of fulfilling the minimum; it is a morality of holiness. God who is a loving Father, and his Son Jesus who is Goodness and Beauty, draw us into their divine life through prayer and the sacraments.

In order to help us make the right moral choices God speaks to our minds through the voice of conscience. Newman explains that our conscience is sovereign, that is, it must be obeyed, but the conscience must be instructed in God’s laws and truth. Its judgments cannot contradict the Church’s teaching. By conscience God provides us with a practical judgement about what to do in one situation or another.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the moral life important and how do the sacraments help the Christian to live the moral life?
2. What is the end or goal of the moral life? How would Newman explain it?
3. How does conscience help us to act? Why can’t one rely only on feeling to discern if something is morally right or wrong?
4. How should a student respond to someone who tells me “my conscience is as good as yours,”

5. Is the moral life possible in college? Is it possible to get ahead in one's studies, win in sports, and have fun while living a moral life?

Newman's Moral Teaching in Action

As an Anglican clergyman, a woman in his parish wished Newman to officiate her wedding in the parish church. The woman's family had refused to have her baptized some years before. Newman explained that she could not receive the sacrament of marriage without the sacrament of baptism. The woman refused the sacrament of baptism and had a wedding officiated by another pastor. Newman acted according to his conscience formed in the Church's teaching. By obeying his conscience in keeping with the Church's teaching he suffered the abuse of others, including that of his own bishop. But in acting thus, Newman knew he was doing right and had inner peace. Furthermore by means of his actions he was able to teach others that baptism and marriage are not man-made institutions; they follow higher laws.

Prayer by Cardinal Newman

"THOU, O Lord, after living a whole eternity in ineffable bliss, because Thou art the one and sole Perfection, at length didst begin to create spirits to be with Thee and to share Thy blessedness according to their degree; and the return they made Thee was at once to rebel against Thee. First a great part of the Angels, then mankind, have risen up against Thee, and served others, not Thee. Why didst Thou create us, but to make us happy? Couldst Thou be made more happy by creating us? and how could we be happy but in obeying Thee? Yet we determined not to be happy as Thou wouldst have us happy, but to find out a happiness of our own; and so we left Thee. O my God, what a return is it that we—that I—make Thee when we sin! what dreadful unthankfulness is it! and what will be my punishment for refusing to be happy, and for preferring hell to heaven! I know what the punishment will be; Thou wilt say, "Let him have it all his own way. He wishes to perish; let him perish. He despises the graces I give him; they shall turn to a curse." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Six: A Christian Vision of Pursuits in the World

“Is the goal of life to make a lot of money in order to live a comfortable life?” This is often the view of the world. Things and people, and even nature compete for our attention. Newman teaches us to give each of these their right place in our minds and hearts. He cautions us to fight avarice and envy. But more than warn Christians about the seduction of the world, Newman urges Christians to give praise to God through our pursuits.

Whereas persons who have a conversion often seek to separate themselves from worldly occupations, he invites them to see these as the means for giving glory to God. Also when we experience suffering in our work we should unite ourselves to the Cross of Christ. Our attitude towards work should be a diligent and cheerful carrying out of the work entrusted to us.

We are called to take an active role in the world through our professional work and occupations, including that of the homemaker and mother. In so doing, we not only give glory to God, we draw others closer to Him. Work thus is not something gloomy and burdensome, it should be a path of love and holiness.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the work of a student? And how can a student give glory to God through his studies?
2. What is the attitude a Christian should have concerning daily work?
3. What did Cardinal Newman call the “religion of the world”?
4. What does he say about the work of Jesus and Joseph, his father?
5. What did St. Josemaria Escriva teach about sanctification of work?

Newman’s Appreciation of Christian Pursuits in Action

Blessed Newman encouraged lay leaders in professional positions, especially lawyers, professors, elected officials and civil servants, to take an active part in shaping the world and to give Christian witness by means of their example. One of his close friends, James Hope-Scott, did precisely this as a distinguished lawyer; and all the while, his intentions to serve and love

God made him seem disinterested in the honors and high esteem of the world. At Hope's funeral Newman said:

“Such apathy, so to call it, might be, though not an Epicurean selfishness, still a natural temper, the temper of a magnanimous mind, such as might be found in ancient Greece or Rome, as well as in modern times. But in truth in him it was much more than a gift of nature; it was a fruit and token of that religious sensitiveness which had been bestowed on him from above. If it was really the fact, that his mind and heart were fixed upon divine objects, this at once accounts for what was so strange, so paradoxical in him in the world's judgment, his distaste for the honours and the pageants of earth; and fixed, assuredly they were, upon the invisible and eternal. It was a lesson to all who witnessed it, in contrast with the appearance of the outward man, so keen and self-possessed amid the heat and dust of the world, to see his real inner secret self from time to time gleam forth from beneath the working-day dress in which his secular occupations enveloped him.”

Prayer by Blessed Newman

“Everything short of Thee, O Lord, is changeable, but Thou endurest. Thou art ever one and the same. Ever the true God of man, and unchangeably so. Thou art the rarest, most precious, the sole good; and withal Thou art the most lasting. The creature changes, the Creator never. Then only the creature stops changing, when it rests on Thee. On Thee the Angels look and are at peace; that is why they have perfect bliss. They never can lose their blessedness, for they never can lose Thee. They have no anxiety, no misgivings—because they love the Creator; not any being of time and sense, but "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today, who is also for ever.

My Lord, my Only God, "Deus meus et omnia," let me never go after vanities. "Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas." All is vanity and shadow here below. Let me not give my heart to anything here. Let nothing allure me from Thee; O keep me wholly and entirely. Keep thou this most frail heart and this most weak head in Thy Divine keeping." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Seven: Development of Doctrine on Religious Truths

“Will the Church’s teaching on such topics as contraception ever change?” Things and people change; ideas and technology develop. It would seem that religious doctrines change too. Newman wrote that “to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.” A look at the history of Christianity indicates change and growth in its doctrines. Newman called this “development in doctrine.” Studying Church history, Newman developed some criteria to examine whether a religious belief or practice is a good development. This can be helpful to us today when we often hear the claim that a given teaching is a development in doctrine.

The main criteria presented by Newman is that for a doctrinal change or development to be authentic it has to be in continuity with previous Church teaching. It cannot be a contradiction to earlier teaching; instead it must be a growth or development anticipated by the earlier teaching.

In his time Newman argued against the notion that there are no set doctrines or beliefs in religion. He called this “liberalism in religion.” Religion is based on set truths or doctrines revealed by God.

In his time, as well as today, Protestants often claim that the Catholic Church changes and adds to Christ’s teaching transmitted to us through the Evangelists and Apostles. This leads some to criticize the Catholic Church and undermine some of Church’s teaching as wrongful additions to Christ’s teaching. But study of this development led Newman instead to conclude that the Catholic Church is the Church founded by Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is meant by authentic or true development in Christian doctrine?
2. Does development in doctrine contradict the belief that there are certain definitive religious doctrines?
3. Why can’t the Church change core teachings such as the meaning of marriage between a man and a woman, or the evil of abortion?
4. What is a 20th century example of development in doctrine confirmed by the Church?
5. Who decides what is authentic development in religious doctrine in the Church, and why?

Newman's Explanation of Doctrinal Development in Action

Shortly before converting to the Roman Catholic Church, he finished writing the book which gathers his conclusions on the subject of doctrinal change: *Development in Christian Doctrine*. In this ground breaking book Newman described doctrinal development with an analogy of the difference between a stream and a river:

“It is indeed sometimes said that the stream is clearest near the spring. Whatever use may fairly be made of this image, it does not apply to the history of a philosophy or belief, which on the contrary is more equable, and purer, and stronger, when its bed has become deep, and broad, and full. It necessarily rises out of an existing state of things, and for a time savours of the soil. Its vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary, and is employed in efforts after freedom which become more vigorous and hopeful as its years increase. Its beginnings are no measure of its capabilities, nor of its scope. At first no one knows what it is, or what it is worth. It remains perhaps for a time quiescent; it tries, as it were, its limbs, and proves the ground under it, and feels its way. From time to time it makes essays which fail, and are in consequence abandoned. It seems in suspense which way to go; it wavers, and at length strikes out in one definite direction. In time it enters upon strange territory; points of controversy alter their bearing; parties rise and around it; dangers and hopes appear in new relations; and old principles reappear under new forms. It changes with them in order to remain the same. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often”.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

“Come, O my dear Lord, and teach me in like manner. I need it not, and do not ask it, as far as this, that the word of truth which in the beginning was given to the Apostles by Thee, has been handed down from age to age, and has already been taught to me, and Thy Infallible Church is the warrant of it. But I need Thee to teach me day by day, according to each day's opportunities and needs. I need Thee to give me that true Divine instinct about revealed matters that, knowing one part, I may be able to anticipate or to approve of others. I need that understanding of the truths about Thyself which may prepare me for all Thy other truths—or at least may save me from conjecturing wrongly about them or commenting falsely upon them. I need the mind of the Spirit, which is the mind of the holy Fathers, and of the Church by which I may not only say what they say on definite points, but think what they think; in all I need to be saved from an originality of thought, which is not true if it leads away from Thee. Give me the gift of discriminating between true and false in all discourse of mind.” *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Eight: Bishops and Popes: Authority in the Church

“Peter was the first pope; was he perfect?” Although we know that he was not perfect, we believe he was chosen by Christ to be his vicar or representative, and as such promised the grace to fulfill his office.

The Church is the community of the baptized who form the body of Christ in the world. Bishops and Popes are chosen from among the faithful to be shepherds of Christ’s fold. These men can and do err except under limited circumstances explained below. Newman, thus, embraced a maxim of the third century bishop and martyr St. Cyprian: *nihil sine episcopo* (nothing without the bishop). In practice this means obedience, affection, and prayer for the local bishop, something which Newman practiced as an Anglican and later as a Roman Catholic.

Christ established the Bishop of Rome who should be the sign and source of unity for the Church. As the Church expanded throughout the world, this role became more important and developed. Due, however, to human failings and sins, the office of the Pope was at times disgraced in history and with the Protestant Reformation the Church of Rome came to be considered the Anti-Christ in some circles; and hence, the Pope’s spiritual authority was dismissed.

The study of heresies (doctrinal errors) throughout Church history led Newman to realize that the Successor of Peter maintained in history the integrity of doctrine, and thus he overcame his own prejudice against the authority of the Pope. Within the limits of faith and morals, the Pope enjoys the assistance of the Holy Spirit to act infallibly. He does so when, in keeping with established Church tradition and the overall agreement of all the bishops, he pronounces a teaching to be definitive.

Newman thought that the timing of the declaration of the dogma of papal infallibility was not good because it would fuel the suspicion and misunderstanding against Catholics in England in the 1870’s, but he explained and defended its teaching.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is papal infallibility? And what are some misconceptions about papal infallibility that are met in talking to non-Catholics?
2. Can a pope make mistakes when talking about subjects such as politics and economics? Does a Catholic have to agree with everything that a pope says?
3. Why is the teaching of papal infallibility something important still today?
4. Can someone be both a good Catholic and a loyal citizen of a country? William Gladstone, Prime Minister of England, in Newman's time thought it was impossible to be both a good citizen and a good Catholic.

Newman's Christian Humility in Action

When Newman was rector of the Catholic University of Ireland, his eminent appointment as bishop was blocked in Rome by some who felt threatened by his having episcopal authority. He accepted the humiliation in a Christian manner. Years later he hesitated accepting the invitation by Pope Leo XIII to become a cardinal because he feared having to move to Rome, also out of humility. After accepting, he offered the following explanation to an Anglican friend: "A good Providence gave me an opportunity of clearing myself of former calumnies in my Apologia - and I dared not refuse it - And now He gave me the means (...) to set myself right as regards other calumnies that were directed against me - how could I neglect so great a loving kindness?"

Prayer by Blessed Newman

"Come, O my dear Lord, and teach me in like manner. I need it not, and do not ask it, as far as this, that the word of truth which in the beginning was given to the Apostles by Thee, has been handed down from age to age, and has already been taught to me, and Thy Infallible Church is the warrant of it. But I need Thee to teach me day by day, according to each day's opportunities and needs. I need Thee to give me that true Divine instinct about revealed matters that, knowing one part, I may be able to anticipate or to approve of others. I need that understanding of the truths about Thyself which may prepare me for all Thy other truths—or at least may save me from conjecturing wrongly about them or commenting falsely upon them. I need the mind of the Spirit, which is the mind of the holy Fathers, and of the Church by which I may not only say what they say on definite points, but think what they think; in all I need to be saved from an originality of thought, which is not true if it leads away from Thee. Give me the gift of discriminating between true and false in all discourse of mind." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Nine: Celibacy and Marriage

Every person is loved by God, and is made to know Him, love Him, and for the love of Him to love others. This vocation to love is lived out in two ways or states of life: celibacy and marriage. (A celibate person is the one who chooses not to marry in order to give him or herself to the service of God with greater freedom). And each person needs to discern God's calling.

From an early age John Henry Newman felt the desire to serve God in a celibate manner. He expressed his desire to serve God as a celibate missionary or as a clergyman. At this time Anglican clergymen often married. Newman learned of the Roman Catholic tradition of celibacy from a college friend, and years later as a Roman Catholic was ordained a priest in Rome (1847).

As a child his experience of family life and of the marriage of his parents was a good one. Then as a young adult he witnessed the Christian example of married life among a number of friends. Together with the Church's teaching on the goodness and holiness of marriage, this example, moved him to help others to live the married vocation well.

Celibacy in Christian life is also practiced by men and women who form part of religious communities which often have specific missions. Newman knew about the lives of various saints who embraced his calling, and he wrote an essay on St. Anthony Abbot. He admired the work done by monks and cloistered nuns. Through their work of prayer and penance for the world, they were the set of persons, who according to Newman, were closest to Christian perfection. For this reason Newman wished to revive the tradition of celibate women living in communities, and he himself lived in a community with celibate men.

As a priest Newman encouraged his married friends in their own vocation, and he taught them to grow in greater love for God. As we will see in later chapters, he also assisted them with the education of their children, and in the various difficulties they faced in life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is celibacy? And when did the practice of celibacy begin in Christianity?
2. Is the practice of celibacy something still possible and desired in today's world?
3. Newman considered the lives of various saints and communities to decide in which type of community he would live his celibate vocation. How does someone today find advice to respond to a vocation to celibate love?

4. How do married persons love God in their vocation?
5. Is it possible for a person to live a celibate life even after losing virginity, serving God in some way outside marriage?

Newman's Presentation of Vocation in Action

As an Anglican clergyman Newman saw many of his peers married. He told a friend that he felt the natural charm of women and considered the many benefits of a wife's company and care of the home. He knew that together with children all of this was a blessing, but he felt that God asked him to give that up for the sake of a higher calling. In fact, there was a family friend whom he liked and who could have been his wife, but he chose to remain single to serve God in another way. At the same time he helped his sisters to meet their future spouses, and was a good friend to his married friends and their spouses.

Prayer Reflection

"God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission—I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow I am necessary for His purposes, as necessary in my place as an Archangel in his—if, indeed, I fail, He can raise another, as He could make the stones children of Abraham. Yet I have a part in this great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connexion between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do His work; I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Ten: The Christian Gentleman

Everyone wishes to be liked. Everyone wishes to be accepted and even popular. In other words, we wish to fit in. Newman wrote about the Christian Gentleman. However, the word “gentleman” today can be applied to both young men and women. It is a term not used much today, but it simply means someone that is pleasant and kind to others, someone who knows how to listen to others and speak to them; someone who has talents and displays them with ease, and someone who does not upset anyone with his words or actions. This can be applied both to men and women.

In a brilliant and often quoted passage Newman gives the definition of a “gentleman” according to society at large. The definition describes the qualities and skills a person can reach by purely human effort. In Newman’s time those who subscribed to this definition thought, just as many do today, that man can be content without religion. They focus purely on the external behaviour without regards to moral life which takes account of the interior of a person, his desires and intentions. They substitute the moral conscience for good taste or a vague moral sense. And they ignore the supernatural dimension of human beings and their need for redemption. The definition also puts tolerance over other obligations of truth and justice.

Newman is quick to point out that as human beings we need to recognize our weaknesses and sins, and to ask God for His grace. Without this we settle for natural human virtues. The Christian gentleman or woman, instead, seeks God’s grace to heal the wounds of original sin, and grows in the supernatural virtues, especially charity.

The secular definition of a gentleman is someone who is perhaps smooth and refined, with nice manners, and an ease of surface conversation. A Christian, practices tolerance and respect for all, and at the same time speaks the truth and corrects those who make mistakes. He strives to love others with a supernatural love called charity.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do most of us seek approval? If so, do we look for approval from others at any cost?
2. What is tolerance? And is tolerance today true respect for others or is it often a way of silencing those who hold views which are not politically correct?
3. Where can a young person today find examples of people of character who can be admired?
4. Why are the “natural qualities” (as Newman noted) insufficient for a Christian?

Newman's Christian Gentleman in Action

In 1864, an author wrote a stinging falsehood about Catholic priests in an English publication. His claim was that everyone knew “as Newman” had said that Catholic priests are known for their deceitfulness. Newman who was the perfect English gentleman took up his pen and asked the writer for a private apology. The writer instead insisted on his point. In consequence Newman wrote within the span of a few weeks one of the most famous autobiographies called *Apologia pro vita sua*. In this work Newman explained the reason for his becoming Roman Catholic and why the Catholic Church teaches what she does. In doing so Newman displayed what a real gentleman is: someone who speaks the truth with charity and firmness. Tolerance does not exclude justice and courage.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

“O my dear Saviour, would that I had any right to ask to be allowed to make reparation to Thee for all the unbelief of the world, and all the insults offered to Thy Name, Thy Word, Thy Church, and the Sacrament of Thy Love! But, alas, I have a long score of unbelief and ingratitude of my own to atone for. Thou art in the Sacrifice of the Mass, Thou art in the Tabernacle, verily and indeed, in flesh and blood; and the world not only disbelieves, but mocks at this gracious truth. Thou didst warn us long ago by Thyself and by Thy Apostles that Thou wouldst hide Thyself from the world. The prophecy is fulfilled more than ever now; but I know what the world knows not. O accept my homage, my praise, my adoration!—let me at least not be found wanting. I cannot help the sins of others—but one at least of those whom Thou hast redeemed shall turn round and with a loud voice glorify God. The more men scoff, the more will I believe in Thee, the good God, the good Jesus, the hidden Lord of life, who hast done me nothing else but good from the very first moment that I began to live.” *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Eleven: The Educated Layman and University Education

“What is a university and what is the origin of the university?” Universities are a creation of ancient Greece, but the modern university as we know it is the result of the Christian Middle Ages. Newman wrote that a university is a place where students develop a “philosophical habit of mind” which is to say a mature way of thinking. This includes the analysis, comparison, judgment, synthesis and articulation of ideas. It means to know the whole of things and how the parts relate to the whole.

Newman thought that to accomplish this a person needs to read literature, history and philosophy; what the Middle Age universities called the “liberal arts.” These studies are called “liberal” because they free people from manual work and allow them to develop other areas of study and work. In most modern day universities the liberal arts are given little importance, and engineering, business and biology are given preference.

There are various problems with the rejection of the liberal arts or their fragmentation, as in separate Women’s Studies, Latin Studies, African American studies, etc. This fragmentation of the study of liberal arts makes it seem that nothing is related nor part of a coherent whole. Even more grave is that the study of God and the meaning of the human person are discarded, or at best seen from a historical or biological perspective. Another problem is that the subjects and programs that give practical benefits in the form of a lucrative career are considered good, and the others are considered as “fluff” and unnecessary. The result is that so many students leave the university without addressing very important questions about the meaning of life, God, truth, love and friendship, goodness and evil, personhood and society.

Newman, who taught at Oxford University and later founded the Catholic University of Ireland (1854) has a lot to teach us about the purpose and goals of a university education. Many of his teachings on this subject are contained in one of his most well-known works *Idea of A University*.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the word “university” mean? What does the word “humanities” mean?
2. What is the purpose of a university education? Is it primarily to procure a good job after graduation? (a means to an end)

3. What is true academic freedom? And are students and faculty allowed to think and voice their ideas and opinions? Or has fear of offending others become something that silences students today?
4. What place should the study of God, the person and society occupy in university studies? Is this possible at a public university?
5. Is it possible to think about the big questions and obtain a good university education while at the same time making friends and enjoying college years?

Newman's Theory of True Education in Action

When Newman began to teach at Oriel College at Oxford University he and two other colleagues were concerned about the spiritual and moral life of their students. They considered that a tutor should be concerned for this aspect of student's lives, not only academics. Along with his two friends he tried to introduce some changes to make this attention to the whole person possible, but the head of the college resisted. This was a very important point about the education of students for which Newman was willing to risk losing his job. In fact this is what happened: the head of the college did not assign him more students, causing him to resign his position at Oriel. As we will see in the next chapter, when he started the Catholic University of Ireland he was able to incorporate some of his ideas about the formation of students.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

"My God, I adore Thee, O Eternal Paraclete, the light and the life of my soul. Thou mightest have been content with merely giving me good suggestions, inspiring grace and helping from without. Thou mightest thus have led me on, cleansing me with Thy inward virtue, when I changed my state from this world to the next. But in Thine infinite compassion Thou hast from the first entered into my soul, and taken possession of it. Thou hast made it Thy Temple. Thou dwellest in me by Thy grace in an ineffable way, uniting me to Thyself and the whole company of angels and saints." *Meditations and Devotions*

Chapter Twelve: The Making of Men and the Reality of a University Education

“Do modern university studies provide a complete education or are they simply for professional training?” Newman holds that a university education is about the formation of the mind and the character of students. Many educators and readers admire John Henry Newman’s *Idea of a University* but they usually think that is an ideal more than something that can be realized.

It is not uncommon today for young people to view going to a university or college as a way of escaping parental control, a time of having fun and of doing whatever they wish, a prolonging of youth instead of a preparation for adulthood. Newman argued that the purpose of a university was to “make men.” (we can take this today more comprehensively as to “make an adult.”) When he founded the Catholic University of Ireland in 1854, he established collegial houses to provide a good formation to the students.

These small residences within the university made it be easier for students to develop their capacity to think for themselves and to exercise character. Each of these had a director, a chaplain, a tutor and senior students who guided the formation of the students in a personal way. Newman believed that the students learned as much from each other as they did from teachers through their conversations and time spent with one another.

In addition, Newman gave importance to a debating society, a school newspaper, and collegial sports (intramurals) which provided other ways of learning and healthy entertainment. He designed and built a university church where he and others offered the sacrifice of the Mass and preached to the students. Furthermore, he fostered attention to the spiritual life of the student through the chaplains and spiritual practices offered at the collegial houses.

Through the classes, extracurricular activities and personal attention of the students the university sought the integral human and spiritual formation of its students. As Newman explained there were other institutions specifically oriented for the training of doctors, engineers, soldiers, etc.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do modern universities foster personal intellectual and moral formation?
2. Can public universities foster such formation and in what way?

3. Are college dorms, sororities and fraternities places that encourage the human and spiritual growth of students?
4. How does the Newman Center or Catholic Chaplaincy help a student to grow in the knowledge and practice of the Faith?
5. Are there other campus organizations that help a student grow in moral formation?
6. Can students be members of secular campus organizations without compromising moral values?

Newman's Understanding of the Whole Person in Action

In 1855, Newman had some stables at the back of one of the college houses of the university in Dublin converted into a billiard room. Students had been going to play billiards at a decent establishment off campus. He did not wish the students, however, to form any undesirable acquaintances and get involved in betting. However, rather than issuing a ban on playing billiards, he found the solution mentioned above. For him, in addition to religious practices, meals, sports, recreation and student organizations were all an important part of university life, necessary for the personal growth of students.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

“My God, how far am I from acting according to what I know so well! I confess it, my heart goes after shadows. I love anything better than communion with Thee. I am ever eager to get away from Thee. Often I find it difficult even to say my prayers. There is hardly any amusement I would not rather take up than set myself to think of Thee. Give me grace, O my Father, to be utterly ashamed of my own reluctance! Rouse me from sloth and coldness, and make me desire Thee with my whole heart. Teach me to love meditation, sacred reading, and prayer. Teach me to love that which must engage my mind for all eternity.” *Meditations and Devotions*

Ch. Thirteen: Educating Boys (young students) and the Oratory School

‘What does lower school education have to do with college? Why are so many kids failing in school?’ In Western countries, there are so many school choices and resources, which include libraries and sports facilities, but children are not learning how to read and write well, nor to think and to speak properly, nor do they acquire the virtues needed to excel as young adults to later become mature adults.

Newman, an educator at heart, founded a grammar boarding school for boys in Birmingham. There, he and the teachers formed the minds and the hearts of the boys. In addition to a demanding plan of studies, the boys learned religion and how to pray.

He recognized the need for women (called dames) to care for the physical and emotional needs of the younger children and identified an excellent widowed woman to be in charge of the other dames. He also realized that parents were the first to be responsible for the education of their children, so he involved them closely in decisions about their children’s studies, health and spending, as well as future study and career plans.

Newman stirred the children’s imaginations by having them act parts of classic Greek and Roman plays, adapted to remove immoral scenes. And their study was encouraged by contests and prizes. He was remembered by former students as a wise and warm grandfather figure who left a mark on their souls and character.

Discussion Questions:

1. What can be learned from current lower school education, lessons which are useful in later life? Does this also pertain to homeschooling? What type of education (if marriage and children is the vocation) would you wish to provide your own children?
2. Is the formation in religion and piety at an early age still as important as it was for Newman?
3. What role do fathers and grandfathers play in their lives of boys, and vice-versa, mothers and grandmothers on that of their daughters?

4. What can be learned from current lower school education, lessons which are useful in later life? Does this also pertain to homeschooling? What type of education (if marriage and children is the vocation) would you wish to provide your own children?
5. Is the formation in religion and piety at an early age still as important as it was for Newman?
6. What role do fathers and grandfathers play in their lives of boys? And vice-versa, mothers and grandmothers on that of their daughters?

Newman's Respect for Young Minds in Action

Once a friend of Newman with two sons at the Oratory School in Birmingham consulted Newman about the youngest son whom he thought had a vocation to the priesthood. The father thought of taking his son out of the school and sending him to a minor seminary. Newman advised him to allow the boy to grow up first and explained that if the child had a vocation it would not go away. Newman's wise advice was proved correct when years later the child, now an adult, followed the vocation of marriage, while the oldest brother joined the seminary and was ordained a priest.

Prayer by Blessed Newman

"I adore Thee, O Almighty Lord, the Paraclete, because Thou in Thy infinite compassion hast brought me into this Church, the work of Thy supernatural power. I had no claim on Thee for so wonderful a favour over anyone else in the whole world. There were many men far better than I by nature, gifted with more pleasing natural gifts, and less stained with sin. Yet Thou, in Thy inscrutable love for me, hast chosen me and brought me into Thy fold. Thou hast a reason for everything Thou dost. I know there must have been an all-wise reason, as we speak in human language, for Thy choosing me and not another—but I know that that reason was something external to myself. I did nothing towards it—I did everything against it. I did everything to thwart Thy purpose. And thus I owe all to Thy grace. I should have lived and died in darkness and sin; I should have become worse and worse the longer I lived; I should have got more to hate and abjure Thee, O Source of my bliss; I should have got yearly more fit for hell, and at length I should have gone there, but for Thy incomprehensible love to me. O my God, that overpowering love took me captive. Was any boyhood so impious as some years of mine! Did I not in fact dare Thee to do Thy worst? Ah, how I struggled to get free from Thee; but Thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed. I have not a word to say, but to bow down in awe before the depths of Thy love." *Meditations and Devotions*

Ch. Fourteen: Faith, Reason and Science

“Hasn’t science contradicted many things earlier taught by religion? And isn’t science the measure of truth?” The answer to both questions is “no” and will always be “no.” Science only has answers for some questions about material reality, and not all, such as why things exist. In its right place science offers knowledge about “how” things are and how to improve technology to meet the needs of men.

Faith and Reason are two paths to knowledge, one is supernatural (above the purely human capacity) and the other natural. Through faith we know what God reveals of Himself and of the created world. Through reason we can gain knowledge of what we perceive through our senses. Newman argued that the university should include universal knowledge (the study of all the sciences, not just the physical sciences like biology, chemistry, physics, etc.) He explained that when one science such as theology (the science of God) is excluded from a university other sciences try to take its place; since this is not possible, this omission creates a distortion or false knowledge. The same would happen if history replaced economics, or literature replaced astronomy.

Newman compared a university to an empire with many lands, and called it an “imperial intellect” where the professors and their subjects are the ministers and the university assigns to each its place and importance. They should each respect each other without encroaching on the others. He defended the importance of theology as the highest science because it is the study of God, and told students not to allow findings of astronomy, geology or other sciences to make them doubt their faith. Those things that seem to be proven will turn out not to be proven or not contradictory to the Faith.

He urged students not to be afraid of good science because a Catholic is not afraid of the truth, and the truth does not go against God’s revelation. They must study and work with patience and respect for all sciences. He also explained that the progress of science requires free discussion as long as researchers respect moral principles and the truths of faith.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are the so-called “hard sciences” considered the voice (oracles) of truth?
2. Why doesn’t science have the last say about God, the world or man?

3. What was Galileo's mistake according to Newman? And what can we learn about the limits of each field of knowledge?
4. Why is it possible for a Christian to hold a theory of evolution? And when is a theory of evolution mistaken?

Newman's Integration of Faith and Science in Action

After the publication of Darwin's book *The Origin of Species* (1859) someone sent Newman a book criticizing Darwin's theory and asking for Newman's opinion. The latter replied that if God wished to create the world over a very long period of time through numberless changes, this fact would not contradict the belief in God as Creator of the world and of the human soul. He wrote: "It does not seem to me to follow that creation is denied because the Creator, millions of years ago, gave laws to matter. He first created matter and then he created laws for it - laws which should *construct* it into its present wonderful beauty, and accurate adjustment and harmony of parts *gradually*. We do not deny or circumscribe the Creator, because we hold He has created the self acting originating human mind, which has almost a creative gift; much less do we deny or circumscribe His power, if we hold that He gave matter such laws as by their blind instrumentality moulded and constructed through innumerable ages the world as we see it."

Prayer by Blessed Newman

"God was all-complete, all-blessed in Himself; but it was His will to create a world for His glory. He is Almighty, and might have done all things Himself, but it has been His will to bring about His purposes by the beings He has created. We are all created to His glory—we are created to do His will. I am created to do something or to be something for which no one else is created; I have a place in God's counsels, in God's world, which no one else has; whether I be rich or poor, despised or esteemed by man, God knows me and calls me by my name." *Meditations and Devotions*.

Ch. Fifteen: Ecclesiology and Converts

Why are Christians divided, and why does God want their unity?

At the Last Supper Jesus prayed to the Father for the unity of Christians. Sadly, from early on, Christians have separated from the body of believers established by the Lord. The story of these divisions is a long and complicated one. The most significant divisions occurred in the 13th century with the Orthodox Christians, and beginning in the 16th century with Protestant Christians. Many of the divisions were over doctrinal beliefs, but they were fueled and consummated by the human failings and abuses of Christian leaders.

When the Church of England separated from the Catholic Church it was further divided into parties. Newman grew up as a Low Church Anglican and went through a period of Evangelical Christianity and to the practice of High Church Anglicans similar in many ways to Roman Catholics. His conversion to Catholicism was a process of many years of prayer and study of Church history and doctrine. This led him to conclude that the changes in doctrine and religious practices of Roman Catholicism were a good and sound development of the truths taught by Jesus Christ and transmitted to the faithful by his Apostles.

Once he was Roman Catholic he tried to help his friends to take the step he considered natural from the Anglican communion to the Catholic Church. Newman tried to convince his Anglican friends in a series of lectures later titled *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*. He acted with respect and patience towards friends, praying for them and answering their doubts. As a result many friends and readers of his writings became Catholic, and to this day many readers of Newman continue to do so.

Although Newman thought that a reunion or unity of different Christian religious bodies was not possible in his time, he did join the effort of Fr. George Spencer to promote regular prayer for Christian unity. Since Newman, the Popes and many theologians have worked to advance this unity of the Catholic Church. It is a unity that should be based on truth and charity. The unity of Christians leads to the growth of the Church which is God's family, and increases the love among the members of his Church. Even more fundamentally, the Church should be one because God is three Divine persons in one, and his Church should mirror this unity.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is the Catholic Church more than one among many Christian denominations? And why?
2. How can you explain the doctrinal and spiritual authority and service of the Pope to non-Catholic Christians? How did Newman explain this?
3. Why do divisions in Christianity lead to religious relativism and indifference?
4. Why are doctrinal truths important in ecumenical dialogue? And what did Newman think about this?
5. What can you do to promote Christian unity in your university and city?

Newman's Ecumenism in Action

As a young Anglican clergyman Newman misunderstood Catholics, in particular, Irish Catholics for political reasons. With time he overcame his prejudices, and began to admire the holiness of many saints and ordinary Catholics. Later, once a Catholic, he faced the same bigotry on the part of some Anglicans. He was convinced that truth and charity would prevail over prejudice and false opinions, and that personal contact would do more than arguments to overcome prejudice. Writing to members of his community in Birmingham who suffered misunderstanding from English Protestants he wrote:

“You see, then, Brothers of the Oratory, where your success lies, and how you are to secure it. Never mind the London press; never mind Exeter Hall; never mind perambulating orators or solemn meetings: let them alone, they do not affect local opinion. They are a blaze amid the stubble; they glare, and they expire. Do not dream of converting the public opinion of London; you cannot, and you need not. Look at home, there lies your work; what you have to do, and what you can do, are one and the same. Prove to the people of Birmingham, as you can prove to them, that your priests and yourselves are not without conscience, or honour, or morality; prove it to them, and it matters not though every man, woman, and child, within the London bills of mortality were of a different opinion. That metropolitan opinion would in that case be powerless, when it attempted to bear upon Birmingham; it would not work; there would be a hitch and a block; you would be a match where you were seen, for a whole world where you were not seen. I do not undervalue the influence of London; many things its press can do; some things it cannot do; it is imprudent when it impinges on facts. If, then, a battle is coming on, stand on your own ground, not on that of others; take care of yourselves; be found where you are known; make yourselves and your religion known more and more, for in that knowledge is your victory. Truth will out; truth is mighty and will prevail.” *Present Position of Catholics in England*

Prayer by Blessed Newman

“I ADORE Thee, my Lord and God, the Eternal Paraclete, co-equal with the Father and the Son. I adore Thee as the Life of all that live. Through Thee the whole material Universe hangs together and consists, remains in its place, and moves internally in the order and reciprocity of its several parts. Through Thee the earth was brought into its present state, and was matured through its six days to be a habitation for man. Through Thee, all trees, herbs, fruits, thrive and are perfected. Through Thee, spring comes after winter and renews all things. That wonderful and beautiful, that irresistible burst into life again, in spite of all obstacles, that awful triumph of nature, is but Thy glorious Presence. Through Thee the many tribes of brute animals live day by day, drawing in their breath from Thee. Thou art the life of the whole creation, O Eternal Paraclete—and if of this animal and material framework, how much more of the world of spirits! Through Thee, Almighty Lord, the angels and saints sing Thee praises in heaven. Through Thee our own dead souls are quickened to serve Thee. From Thee is every good thought and desire, every good purpose, every good effort, every good success. It is by Thee that sinners are turned into saints. It is by Thee the Church is refreshed and strengthened, and champions start forth, and martyrs are carried on to their crown. Through Thee new religious orders, new devotions in the Church come into being; new countries are added to the faith, new manifestations and illustrations are given to the ancient Apostolic creed. I praise and adore Thee, my Sovereign Lord God, the Holy Ghost.” *Meditations and Devotions*

Ch. Sixteen: Newman's Devotion to the Mother of God

Why do some Christians misunderstand devotion to Mary?

Many Christians think that devotion to Mary is the same as worship given to God, and that devotion to her contradicts Jesus' mediation with God the Father. Newman grew up, as many Protestants, with such misunderstandings about Mary, the Mother of God.

When he was in college, however, he began to see Mary's role as the new Eve of which St. Irenaeus wrote in the second century. Mary is the new Eve that unties the knot made by the first Eve. His knowledge of the Virgin Mary grew as his understanding of the Bible deepened.

As an Anglican clergyman he used Anglican prayers that referred to the assistance of Mary and the saints but did not directly invoke her or the saints. He gradually changed this practice and when he became Roman Catholic his devotion to Mary grew while always remaining biblical.

He also wrote many short beautiful reflections on titles given to the Mother of God in the so-called litany of Loretto. He learned to pray to Mary with the ancient prayer of the holy rosary and developed a child-like love for the Mother of God. Later, as an older priest, he would teach the boys at the Oratory School to pray the holy rosary and encourage them to have love for Holy Mary, St. Joseph and other saints.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between worship of God and devotion to the saints?
2. What is the basis for Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary?
3. How can you help Protestant friends understand Mary's role in Christian life?
4. What experience do you have of the prayer of the rosary and how can you improve in this tried and true practice?

Newman's Devotion to Mary in Action

By mid-1845, Newman no longer had any intellectual doubts about Roman Catholic doctrine. While he labored over the *Essay on Christian Development*, however, his family and friends

continued to give him unsolicited suggestions and advice against his intended step to embrace Catholicism. On August 22, 1845, Newman entered the word “medal” in his diary: it marked the day that he began to wear around his neck the Miraculous Medal, a gift from a recent convert to Catholicism. Newman understood that wearing a medal, praying the rosary or honoring a painting of the Virgin Mary were all ways that the visible things lead us to communion with the invisible. The world is sacramental (material realities reveal invisible realities), and the material things which speak to us of God also lead us to Him.

Reflection by Blessed Newman

“But Mary never was in this state [of original sin]; she was by the eternal decree of God exempted from it. From eternity, God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, decreed to create the race of man, and, foreseeing the fall of Adam, decreed to redeem the whole race by the Son’s taking flesh and suffering on the Cross. In that same incomprehensible, eternal instant, in which the Son of God was born of the Father, was also the decree passed of man’s redemption through Him. He who was born from Eternity was born by an eternal decree to save us in Time, and to redeem the whole race; and Mary’s redemption was determined in that special manner which we call the Immaculate Conception. It was decreed, not that she should be cleansed from sin, but that she should, from the first moment of her being, be preserved from sin; so that the Evil One never had any part in her. Therefore she was a child of Adam and Eve as if they had never fallen; she did not share with them their sin; she inherited the gifts and graces (and more than those) which Adam and Eve possessed in Paradise. This is her prerogative, and the foundation of all those salutary truths which are revealed to us concerning her. Let us say then with all holy souls, Virgin most pure, conceived without original sin, Mary, pray for us.”

Concluding Chapter: Holiness in a Secular Age, the Witness of Cardinal Newman

We live in a secular age, an age in which many try to replace God with money, success or pleasure. Common values at school and work, models of relationships and widespread entertainment pressure us to accept this secular mentality. In the midst of this worldly influence Jesus calls us to live holy lives. Cardinal Newman, living as he did in similar age, stands out as a witness of holiness for our age.

He spent his life teaching and writing about the truths which can be known through reason and by faith, insisting on what he called the doctrinal principle of religion. We don't make up truth or choose and pick what to believe. Instead, we follow the truth, not opinions.

As an educator and founder of a university he convincingly argues that the purpose of a university education is to develop a philosophical habit of mind and a mature character. He challenges us to rediscover the liberal arts and to take seriously the study of the big questions: God, the world and man. At the same time, he helps us to see the harmony between faith and reason, religion and science: two ways of knowledge that are not in opposition.

Like other saints, Newman teaches us to aspire to holiness in everyday life by means of prayer, knowledge of the Bible and the practice of the virtues. He gives us a rich example of this and of having many friendships through which we experience God's love and serve others. He also encourages each one of us to discover and live the vocation that God has for us.

Lastly his love for Mary the Mother of God inspires in us a deeper biblical and child-like devotion to her, and through her increases our desire to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbor out of love for God.

Discussion Questions for the book as a whole.

1. What is a witness in the context of Christianity? And why do we need witnesses?
2. Through the reading of this book, what aspect of Newman's life struck you the most?
3. Are the questions Newman had about the Catholic Church and the answers to these questions which eventually led him to become a Roman Catholic still questions that people ask today?

4. Which of Newman's major works mentioned in this book have interested you the most? Why?
5. What has inspired you about John Henry Newman? And do you now consider him a witness of Christ in our secular age?

Newman's Notion of Sanctity in Action

Louis Bouyer closes his excellent biography of Newman with a story of the visit Jemima, Newman's sister, paid to her brother at Edgbaston. She brought with her a little grandson, and the boy, encouraged by the aged Cardinal Newman, asked what he had on his mind: "Which is greater, a Cardinal or a Saint?" The reply was, "Cardinals belong to this world, and Saints to heaven." He did not think himself a saint. In fact, saints think of themselves as ordinary men and sinners. Because they see themselves in God's radiant light, they are humble and allow the radiance of God to shine through them to others. God calls each one of us to become his children through baptism, and strive to live to the fullness of Christian life.

Prayer for Cardinal Newman's Canonization

God our Father, you granted to your servant Blessed John Henry Newman wonderful gifts of nature and of grace, that he should be a spiritual light in the darkness of this world, an eloquent herald of the Gospel, and a devoted servant of the one Church of Christ.

With confidence in his heavenly intercession, we make the following petition: [here make your petition]

For his insight into the mysteries of the kingdom, his zealous defense of the teachings of the Church, and his priestly love for each of your children, we pray that he may soon be numbered among the Saints.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.