

to appreciate that the “divine liturgy is at the heart of the Church and her mission to save mankind” in a culture when God has become eclipsed (153).

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Juan R. Vélez, editor, ed.

*A Guide to John Henry Newman: His Life and Thought*

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532 pages. Hardback. \$75.

The books on John Henry Newman keep on coming. It is an encouraging situation, for Newman’s story can scarcely be said to have ended with his canonization by Pope Francis in 2019. One can only wonder at how the latest English saint might have annotated the little biographical list he kept of his life—“and now a Cardinal, &c”—with the confirmation of his entry into the empyrean and his elevation to the altars of the Church.

Newman is not just a saint for England, of course. Let it be remembered that the miracles necessary for his canonization were found to have occurred in the United States, and so it seems fitting that the contributors to this doorstopper volume edited by Fr. Juan Vélez (author of *Passion for Truth: The Life of John Henry Newman*, 2011) write from all over the world, specifically from the Americas, Europe, Australia, and the Far East. The fragrance of the snapdragon on the wall has been wafted to the corners of the globe: “Their sound is gone out into all lands” (Rom 10:18).

Vélez is clear from the start that the aim of the volume is “to strike a balance, disagreeing at times with Newman, indicating omissions or completing ideas he put forth without diminishing his contributions or, worse, denigrating him” (xvi). This is to be welcomed, especially in the last instance; he identifies “a hermeneutic of suspicion” that has led some “to consider that Newman’s personal recollections are false until proven true” (xvii). He observes that in recent years certain scholars (he names one obvious candidate) have gone

out of their way to impute motives and impulses to Newman that amount to little more than speculation.

It was a tendency that the late Fr. Ian Ker particularly deplored, and so it is that chapters on Newman's engagement with his students and his relationships with his friends are to be particularly cherished. As Ker often asserted, the reason that so many modern commentators have been happy to attribute something "more" to Newman's interactions with Ambrose St John is because very few people today are able to understand the deep and intense nature of Victorian friendship. Fewer still seem to be fortunate enough to have experienced it for themselves.

Twenty-seven essays divided into two sections dealing with Newman's character and his doctrine respectively present a fresh approach to aspects of both. Barbara H. Wyman on Newman's women associates is an especially important inclusion, while Paul Shrimpton's evocative piece on Newman the educator reads like a eulogy for a form of pedagogy that has been lost. Focused on the pastoral care of the individual student and often developing into a lifelong mentorship, it turned out plenty of public figures who were considerably more rounded than many of our leaders of today.

That is not to say that all leaders of today are without their merits, of course. Anthony Fisher, O.P., the Archbishop of Sydney, reflects deeply on Newman and conscience; Stephen Morgan, Rector of the University of St. Joseph in Macao, writes of "the vivid power and synthetic originality" of Newman's approach to the exercise of the imagination (54); while Fr. Carter Griffin, Rector of St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, DC, engages with Newman's call to celibacy in the context of his immediate circle and through the lens of later papal teachings.

A narrative of conversion—and not only of life—also appears, for those with eyes to see. Tracey Rowland, who here considers development of doctrine, edited "The Anglican Patrimony in Catholic Communion: The Gift of the Ordinariates" (2021); Vélez emphasizes that many of the writers are "Christian Protestant converts to Roman Catholicism," (xvi) and himself contributes to a chapter (with Fr. Uwe Michael Lang, whose *The Roman Mass* appeared last year) which traces the intellectual journey of Newman's worship from the Book

of Common Prayer to the Mass and the Roman Breviary. Adjectives are helpful, of course—and one cannot reasonably engage with Newman without considering the theme of conversion in all its senses—but let it not be forgotten that many fine historians of the Catholic Church have declined to kiss the papal toe.

The kaleidoscopic material is engaging and illuminating, but not entirely incontestable. In places, terminology and concepts sometimes produce a muddle. “Anglo-Catholicism” is used of Tractarianism rather earlier than some experienced readers may find comfortable (e.g., 383). While it is true that Newman chose celibacy, to some extent it also chose him: he could not have been elected to the fellowship of Oriel (nor retained it) had he been married, and without such a significant appointment he might have struggled to exercise the kind of personal influence that he did over so many people. Other tweaks could easily be made for a future paperback edition. Newman’s senior sparring partner at Oriel was Edward Hawkins, not Hawking (81); Frederic Rogers was ennobled, not knighted, to his peerage (85); certainly John Keble “resigned all the privileges of an Oxford don . . . and instead ‘buried himself’ in rural parishes as a pastor of souls” (80), but he did also simultaneously manage to marry, enjoy the success of all 150-plus editions of *The Christian Year* and secure the Oxford Professorship of Poetry: he was the epitome of a learned Victorian gentleman-parson with considerable outside interests, and no Anglican Curé d’Ars.

These are niggling quibbles which in no way detract from the achievement of this important volume, which is as impressive for its size as for its quality. All the chapters bring new approaches to the table, but if we have learned anything from Newman studies over the last few decades, it is that not everyone will agree with its various conclusions. Nevertheless, the finished product stands as a fine tribute to an evidently Herculean effort for which its editor, contributors, and publishers deserve the academy’s congratulation and approbation.

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