Msgr. James B. Anderson, *Theology as Tempered by Mercy: Reflections of John Henry Newman in the Preface to The Via Media of the Anglican Church*

Given Pope Francis’s emphasis on understanding the relationship between truth and mercy in pastoral matters, I will investigate Newman’s observation in the *Via Media’s* 1877 preface, “that theology cannot always have its own way; it is too hard, too intellectual, too exact to be always equitable or to be always compassionate.” Newman understands truth and mercy’s relationship in terms of doctrinal development as a complex reality involving the threefold office of the hierarchy, the theologians and the laity. His message is a sober warning that identifying truth and mercy requires more discernment and prudence than almost any other action in the Church. Newman possessed a subtle, complex appreciation for the dialectical and spiral-like movement, tempered by mercy, of the Church’s journey toward truth.

**Rosario Athié, *Faith (as Real Assent) and Mercy***

Newman explains that true faith is an assent to religious truth that, in addition, comprises one's life, one's own existence. Recently, Pope Francis recalled that faith cannot do without the works that correspond to it and, specifically, the works of mercy. Understanding the truth about God and man and truly living in the presence of God implies a consistent life of doing the works that most make us participate in the work of, and truly resemble, the merciful God.

**Thomas Berenato, *Finding Forgiveness in Newman’s Prose***

A convenient formula for the operation of mercy in Newman's work is the phrase with which he is so fond of starting his sentences: "And yet…" These two words give the form, in abstract, that the idea of forgiveness takes in Newman's prose. Forgiveness, what Newman might have called—but specifically refrains from designating as—the 'leading idea' of Christianity, nowhere appears as a main head of discussion in the vast tissue of his thought. But it weaves its way through the texture of his sentences, audible, to those with ears to hear it, in their rhythmic profile.

**Christopher Cimorelli, *Newman and the Economy of Salvation: Truth, Mercy, and Ecclesiology***

Newman’s theology of God’s “economy of salvation” indicates a clear intersection between truth and mercy and promotes a robust conception of theology. In part one, I will outline Newman’s theology (and theory) of God’s economy of salvation and indicate the connections between his search for truth and consequent discovery and realization of God’s mercy. In part two, I will argue that, while open to the possibility of the scattering of truth around the world, Newman’s theory can be shown to call for a robust understanding of faith (the *fides quae* and *fides qua*) in
fulfilling the task of theology as *fides quaerens intellectum*. In part three I will connect this element of Newman’s thought with more recent themes in Catholic thought, particularly under Pope Francis.

**Author Meets Critics: David Delio’s “An Aristocracy of Exalted Spirits”: The Idea of the Church in Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room**

David Delio’s recent book provides not only a rich history of the origins, writing and reception of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room articles, but also makes a strong argument that it is the idea of the Church Catholic which is the central theme of these articles. Several scholars will give praise and criticism in a discussion of Delio’s treatment of these too-often-overlooked texts.

**Fr. Ed Enright, OSA, A Perfect Standard of the Christian Life: Augustine and Newman on the Sermon on the Mount.**

In that Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount can be viewed as the "perfect standard of the Christian life," the paper will focus on how Augustine and Newman would interpret the Sermon in their pastoral literature. Augustine wrote two books on the Sermon on the Mount, the first with twenty-three chapters, and the second with twenty-five chapters. Newman used passages from the Sermon in forty-six of the Parochial and Plain Sermons. Therefore, the paper will limit itself to what each of these two thinkers had to say on Chapter 5 of the Sermon on the Mount.

**Elizabeth Farnsworth, Wilfrid Ward’s Conception of Newman as “Witness” and “Preserver of Truth”**

Wilfrid Philip Ward (1856–1916) associates Newman with the theological categories of “martyr” and “witness” because Newman sought the “preservation of religious truth.” This presentation explores Ward’s notion of “witness” and “truth” as they relate to his biographical sketch of Newman found in his collection, *Witnesses to the Unseen and Other Essays*. Also investigated is the correlation of “love,” which is related to the concept of mercy, with “truth” and “certainty.” Pertinent to this presentation is the question of how love and truth are intrinsically related in Ward’s depiction of Newman’s theology and faith.

**Fr. John Ford, CSC, Personal Preference and Scientific Method: Two Essentials in John Henry Newman’s Dialogue with Scientists**

In his *Grammar of Assent* (1870), Newman described two types of inference: formal (logical) and informal (real). The ideal form of formal inference is mathematics; however, most of life—including many areas of scientific investigation—cannot be reduced to mathematical types of thinking. In other words, although some scientists may claim that their investigations and conclusions are rigorously logical, inevitably personal preferences intrude. This paper uses Newman’s description of inference in attempting to highlight the crucial junctures in scientific investigation where personal selectivity is operative: (1) the formulation of questions; (2) the examination of available data; and (3) scientific conclusions. Hopefully, such an analysis will help foster productive dialogue between science and religion.
Oswaldo Gallo-Serratos, *Heart spoke to Heart: John Henry Newman in the Conversion of Oscar Wilde*

One of the least known details of Oscar Wilde’s personal and literary history is his deep admiration for the work, the personality and even the aesthetic views of Cardinal Newman. This paper, by analyzing Wilde’s works and letters in which he specifically refers to Newman, will shed light on the very critical period in which Oscar Wilde considered conversion to Roman Catholicism and the place of Newman’s influence in those deliberations, which resulted in his conversion a week before dying.

Benjamin Heidegerken, *God feels no mercy: Aquinas and Newman on the analogy of divine Misericordia*

Thomas Aquinas argues that while God can be properly described as merciful in the sense of demonstrating the effects of mercy, God does not experience the passion of misericordia—God does not feel mercy. This paper will consider Newman’s relationship to and appropriation of Thomistic reflection on the analogous nature of divine mercy as well as related Christological aspects of the matter. Does Christ’s mercy have any causal effect on the merciful effects demonstrated by God? Does Christ’s experience of the affective response of misericordia increase or change the merciful effects God provides to the world and to humankind?


The talk, as the title indicates, engages on the relevance of the life of John Henry Newman to modern man in relation to new and global challenges. The context is the pontificate of Pope Francis. The talk provides a perspective of seeing Newman and Pope Francis in the same light when it comes to the significance of truth and mercy in Christian life. Finally, the paper shows us how Newman is a blessing to the Church of today in his dedication to truth and his submission to the power of God’s mercy in conversion.


In the July, 1859, number of *The Rambler*, John Henry Newman insisted on a consultation of the laity -- even in matters of doctrine. One of his arguments was the innate "instinct" (*phronema*) afforded the laity by virtue of their Baptism. Newman offered five characteristics of the *Sensus Fidelium* (a testimony of the apostolical dogma; a *phronema* in the bosom of the Body of Christ; a direction of the Holy ghost; an answer to prayer; and an abhorrence of error). This paper will focus on the theological significance, and consequences for the church today, on the second of these five characteristics.

Ryan “Bud” Marr, *“The Value of One Single Soul”: Newman on the Gravity of Sin*

When discussing the topic of conscience, John Henry Newman warned of a counterfeit understanding of conscience, which he described as the right of self-will. Today, we hear much talk of mercy. Yet, in this area as well, there is the risk of adopting a false understanding of
mercy—one divorced from an honest perception of sin and blind to the urgency of sanctification. My paper looks at how Newman’s writings can serve as a safeguard against inadequate conceptions of mercy. It concludes by applying his theology to contemporary debates around whether Catholics who are civilly remarried should receive holy communion.

Mark McInroy, Before Deification Became Eastern: Newman’s Ecumenical Retrieval

In his Lectures on Justification (1838), John Henry Newman spearheaded the first modern retrieval of the Christian doctrine of deification (or theosis). This paper argues that, precisely because of the early date at which Newman performs his rehabilitation, his treatment is not colored by the theosis-centered polemics between Eastern and Western Christianity that begin in the late-nineteenth century. In contrast to German historians of dogma in the nineteenth century and Russian émigré theologians in the twentieth, Newman does not characterize deification as an Eastern doctrine. Instead, he deploys deification as an ecumenical teaching that stands to unify the church.

Matthew Muller, Simplicity and Depth: Newman’s Tractarian Poetics and the Inspired Bible

This paper will analyze the poetic theories of Oxford Movement figures John Keble and John Henry Newman in order to give an account of Newman’s understanding of Scripture as essentially poetic. The Tractarians broadly expanded the categories of “poetry” and “poetic” to encompass a multitude of forms of expression. I argue that Newman conceived of the Bible within these categories, which shaped his understanding of inspiration and interpretation. The Bible was written by human authors who, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit, were divinely inspired to write in a poetic fashion.


“Misprison” is a technical term of Harold Bloom Meaning the offering of readings that are apparently forceful, highly interested, and apparently definitive. But, even if forceful are the readings definitive? A faulty reading puts Newman’s epistemology at risk. I will address three questions. 1. Do some constructions of modern philosophy hamper Newman’s thought from being taken seriously? 2In Newman’s paideia model, why is contemplation so important? 3. Why is assent for Newman simple and not a complex act? That means, in the quest for knowledge, Newman concerned himself about thinking, contemplation, and what happens in simple assent.

Michael J. G. Pahls, Faithful the Wounds of a Friend: The Severe Mercies of Richard Hurrell Froude and Benjamin Harrison in Newman’s Turn to the Development of Christian Doctrine

The crucial importance of Newman’s 1834 correspondence with Abbé Jean-Nicholas Jager for Newman’s ecclesiology—particularly his distinction between the “Prophetical Office” of
theologians and the “Apostolical Office” of bishops—is little regarded in studies of Newman’s
doctrinal development and conversion. Still less regarded is the critical role of Anglican-
Tractarian friends—Richard Hurrell Froude and Benjamin Harrison—pressing Newman to
follow through on the implications of his distinction. This paper argues that where Newman’s
debate with Jager initiated Newman’s progress toward the development of doctrine and where
Wiseman’s 1839 review of the Tracts for the Times marked his point of no return, the “severe
mercies” meted out by Froude and Harrison were painful, indispensable way points marking his
progress toward the truth.

Kenneth L. Parker, John Henry Newman’s Use of the Oriel College Senior Library, 1824-
1843: A Chronological Bibliographical Resource for Newman Scholars

In a forthcoming four-part series of articles for the Newman Studies Journal, I will provide a
chronological bibliography, with introductions and annotations of Newman’s use of the Oriel
College Senior Library, which have been gleaned from a library register that Newman used to
record the books he withdrew, used, and returned from 1824 to 1843. This paper, with an
accompanying power point presentation, will trace out the origins of this project, and the method
for reconstructing Newman’s used of that library. It will also recount examples of how this
project has already altered some aspects of the historiography of Newman’s life.

James Pribek, SJ, Three Literary Pilgrims: Newman, Hardy, and Sexton

Our conference theme—the search for truth and discovery of mercy—will first be illustrated
through the life and work of poet and would-be convert to Catholicism, Anne Sexton (1828-
1974). Though connections between Sexton and Newman are only indirect, her poetry offers a
paradigm for the 20th-century search for God through truth and mercy in those very terms. We
will then look at Newman’s influence on Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), who studied and admired
the cardinal’s work, alluding to it in two of his best-known novels. Newman might also have
inspired a youthful affiliation with Catholicism on Hardy’s part.

Msgr. Jeffrey Steenson, Newman as Prophet and Patron of the Ordinariate

The beatification of blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman on September 19, 2010, occurred in
the context of Pope Benedict XVI’s apostolic constitution Anglicanorum coetibus, which
provided for the reception of groups of Anglicans entering into full communion with the Roman
Catholic Church. A few months later, the Pope established the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady
of Walsingham for England and Wales under Newman’s patronage. To what extent did
Newman anticipate the Ordinariates? How should we evaluate the impact of his witness and
writings on this initiative?

Bernadette Waterman Ward, John Henry Newman and "The Progress of the Intellect"

In 1855, George Eliot reviewed The Progress of the Intellect, a now-forgotten book. The
language of A Grammar of Assent reflects Eliot's. Evidently, he was responding to the ideas of
Eliot's milieu, including post-Christian definitions of "faith," "credence," "calculation of
probabilities," and "inference." "Faith," especially, she calls inference from knowledge of
"invariable laws." Newman distinguishes confidence in inferred repetition of natural events from
faith in a person. God's mercy is not mere dependability—our faith prizes His desire for our welfare. Faith involves sympathetic imagination unifying us with our God as a person who is rational and therefore loving.