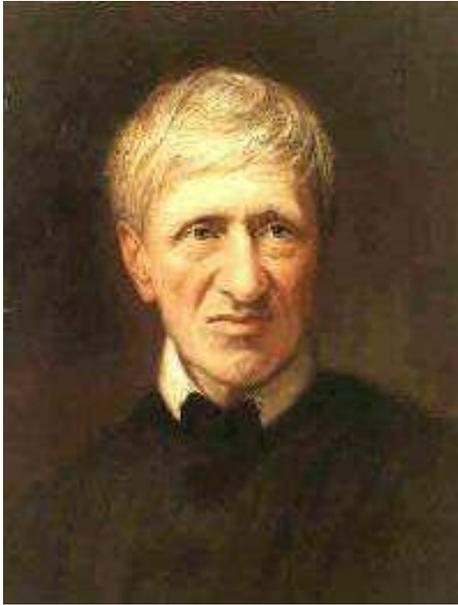


## ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, C.O.

1801-1890; CANONIZED IN 2019 BY POPE FRANCIS; FEAST DAY: OCTOBER 9



It would be difficult to overstate the influence of the life and work of St. John Henry Newman on the Oratory. His stature is such that he is considered a “second founder” after St. Philip, a major reason for the recent growth of the Oratory, especially in the English-speaking world. During his long life, Newman became known as a philosopher and theologian, a poet and novelist, a pastor and preacher, a convert, an Oratorian, and a Cardinal.

Newman’s intellectual work was wide-ranging and unsystematic, but he made significant contributions to our understanding of the development of Christian doctrine and the philosophy of faith. His influence has led to his being called a “hidden father of Vatican II.” He also made his mark as a poet (his *Dream of Gerontius* was set to music by Elgar) and novelist. He is considered one of the finest English prose writers of the Victorian era, and was a prolific letter writer.

Saint John Henry underwent three major conversions: first, as a teenager, to evangelicalism; then, while at Oxford, to a more traditional Anglicanism; finally, at the mid-point of his life, to the Roman Catholic Church. He was, and continues to be, highly influential among converts from Protestantism.

After his conversion to Catholicism, Newman sought a form of community life for himself and his fellow converts, finding in the Oratory an approach similar to his life at Oxford. He established the first English-speaking Oratories, at Birmingham and London, in the late 1840s.

During his time as both an Anglican and a Catholic priest, St. John Henry had a reputation as a kind and diligent pastor, always solicitous for the needs of his parishioners and the poor. His sermons, which brought him fame in his own time, run to many volumes and are still in print today.

As a convert, Newman’s theology - and even his sincerity - were viewed with suspicion by some in the Catholic hierarchy. Thus, it was a great act of vindication when, in 1879, Pope Leo XIII created him a Cardinal. Newman died in 1890 at the age of 89. Pope Benedict XVI, whose own work was influenced by Newman’s, beatified him in Birmingham on September 19, 2010. Pope Francis canonized him on October 13, 2019 in Rome.