

Suggested Readings: *2 Timothy 4: 1 – 5; Psalm 96; John 15: 9 – 17.*

John Henry Newman was born in 1801 and brought up as a strict evangelical in the Church of England. He experienced a personal conversion when he was sixteen, which for the rest of his life he regarded as the saving of his soul: but he became increasingly aware of the role of the Church as the custodian of the revealed truth of the Christian faith.

Having obtained his degree at Oxford University, he became a fellow of Oriel College in 1823, and, in the customary way, was ordained the following year. He spent time in pastoral work and in academic study, and in 1828 was appointed vicar of the University Church of St Mary. He became increasingly distant from the evangelical party, and from 1833 (when John Keble preached the Assize Sermon on 'National Apostasy') he was committed to recovering the catholic nature of the Church of England. He started the *Tracts for the Times* (from which the movement gained the name 'Tractarian'), continued his studies and writings, and on Sunday afternoons preached sermons which had considerable influence, particularly over junior members of the University. From about 1839 he became less and less convinced of the Tractarian position. At the request of the Bishop of Oxford the publication of the *Tracts* ceased.

In 1842 Newman withdrew with a small group of friends to Littlemore, where earlier a chapel had been built, and the following year he resigned from St Mary's. On 9th October 1845 he was received into the Catholic Church, and in 1847 was ordained priest in Rome. He became a member of the Oratorian Order, founded by S. Philip Neri, and in 1849 founded the Birmingham Oratory, where he spent most of the rest of his life. His lectures and writings during this period included: - *The Development of Doctrine; The Idea of A University; Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (a response to Charles Kingsley's attack); *On Consulting the Laity in Matters of Doctrine*, and *The Dream of Gerontius*. From 1851 to 1858 he was Rector of the Catholic University in Dublin. He was created a Cardinal in 1879 – after which he published very little, continuing to live at the Birmingham Oratory. He died of pneumonia on 11th August 1890 and was buried in the Oratorian cemetery in Rednal. He was beatified by Pope Benedict in Birmingham in September 2010 and canonized by Pope Francis in October 2019.