



A PASTORAL LETTER

On Saint John Henry Newman, Doctor of the Church

To be read at all Masses on the Solemnity of All Saints

1st/2nd November 2025

My dear brothers and sisters,

The Solemnity of All Saints provides the ultimate perspective for our lives. This celebration urges us to strive to be with those whom the Gospel declares forever ‘blessed’, so we may at last *“rejoice and be glad”* that *“our reward is great in heaven”ⁱ*. This is our goal by God’s grace – *“his free and undeserved help”ⁱⁱ* – to finally be with those *“from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb”ⁱⁱⁱ*. A gathering anticipated in the celebration of every Mass, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, *“the Eucharist is the anticipation of the heavenly glory”^{iv}*. Tomorrow, we begin our November prayer for ‘All Souls,’ praying for those beyond death’s horizon, who long to be purified and brought to the perfection of love.

The saints who have attained this goal offer us their encouragement and the help of their prayers. Among them are those men and women who have been recognised through the centuries as “doctors”, that is “teachers,” who help us with the guidance of their writing and teaching along the path of our Christian lives. From such great bishops as Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine, to the 24-year-old Saint Therese of Lisieux declared a teacher of the whole Church by Pope Saint John Paul II. Today, Pope Leo has declared our own Saint John Henry Newman a Doctor of the Church.

John Henry Newman is no stranger to this Shrewsbury Diocese, spending most of his life in Birmingham and Oxford. In times when people often despair of finding objective truth, preferring to speak of “your truth” and “my truth” because they no longer believe truth can be found, Cardinal Newman has been raised up as a guide.

The journey he made into the full communion with the Catholic Church will be an encouragement for many making this same journey. Against the prejudices of his time, Newman came to recognise the Catholic Church as the Church which Christ founded, *“endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace”^v*. Saint Paul VI said of his journey, that *“guided solely by love of the truth and fidelity to Christ, (he) traced an itinerary, the most toilsome, the most conclusive, that human thought ever travelled during the last century, indeed one might say during the modern era, to arrive at the fulness of wisdom and peace”^{vi}*.

Today we pray Saint John Henry Newman’s fearless love of the truth, will help many besieged in a digital age by a cacophony of discordant voices, to arrive at this same wisdom and peace. At the heart of the Catholic Church, Newman found what he called *“a Treasure unutterable”*, the Mystery of the Eucharist containing the Church’s entire spiritual wealth: Christ Himself^{vii}. This led to an enduring sense of wonder that he had found in the Blessed Sacrament the Real Presence of Christ Himself. As Newman reflected, *“He is not past, He is present now. And though He is not seen, He is here”^{viii}*.

May we learn from Saint John Henry Newman to see our own lives in the light of the Eucharist. And let us pray that this newest Doctor of the Church will help many of our contemporaries on the same path to the truth, to the fulfilment of our vocation and to reach the goal of everlasting happiness with all the Saints.

United with you in this prayer,

+ *Mark*

Bishop of Shrewsbury

ⁱ Mt. 5: 12

ⁱⁱ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1996

ⁱⁱⁱ Rev. 7:9

^{iv} Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1402

^v Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council No 4

^{vi} Homily of Pope Paul VI at the Beatification of Blessed Dominic Barberi, 27th October 1963

^{vii} Cf. Letter to Mrs William Froude 16th June 1848 & Decree of the Second Vatican Council *Presbyterorum Ordinis* No. 5

^{viii} Sermon 25th May 1858 & Letter to Henry Wilberforce 24th September 1846