

CHAPTER SIX

NEWMAN'S VIEW OF THE CHURCH AS A HOME – ECCLESIOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN A PASTORAL CONTEXT

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Introduction

Baptism solemnized in the Parish of <i>Saint Benedict commonly called Saint Benet Friar</i> in the Year 1801					
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents' Names.		Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.		
1801 April 9 th No.	<i>John Henry son of</i>	<i>John and Jemima</i>	<i>Newman</i>	<i>born February 21, 1801.</i>	<i>Robert Walter Curate.</i>

The above is a true Copy of the Baptismal Register of the Parish aforesaid, extracted this *Eight* Day of *March*
in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy *four*
By me, *J.W. Shepard M.A. Curate.*

Image courtesy of Mary Jo Dorsey
Copy of Newman's baptismal certificate
Please see the colour centerfold.

Biographers tend to graph aspects of Newman's ecclesiology along the axis of his personal pilgrimage. Accordingly, they plot his progress from his formative years in a bible-reading Anglican home to his youthful Evangelical conversion; from his belief in a spiritualized Church, to his acceptance of a Church with visible dimensions, to his discovery of the sacramental Church of the Fathers; from his advocacy of the *Via Media* to his identification of the apostolic church of Christ with the Catholic Church; and from his embrace of Catholicism to his life within this communion as priest and pastor, as founder and father of the English

Oratory, as educationalist and historian, as theologian and writer. In this process, Newman's distinctive voice on matters such as the *sensus fidelium*, the reconcilability of Catholicism and citizenship, and the nature of the Church conformed to the three offices of Christ commands our attention in works like *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* and *Preface to the Third Edition of the Via Media*. But there are other less explored ecclesiological pathways in his writings along which one might wander.

Though the original source escapes me, I once read that all stories, including the stories of our lives, are variations upon a few archetypal themes such as quest, trial, sacrifice, death, eternity, and home.¹ In my years as a systematic theologian and Newman scholar, I have encountered a growing literature on his thought concerning many aspects of the Church but never, in my recollection, a monograph or article specifically on his theology of home or the Church as home.² Now Newman's ecclesiological insights lay strewn across his oeuvre. Many of his sermons on the Church arouse the reader precisely because they embody those qualities which he had identified in *The Idea of a University* as hallmarks of effective preaching: "Talent, logic, learning, words, manner, voice, action, all are required for the perfection of a preacher; but 'one thing is necessary', – an intense perception and appreciation of the end for which he preaches, and that is, to be the minister of some definite spiritual good to those who hear him".³

My aim, then, is to help us enter into Newman's "intense perception and appreciation" of the Church as a home, particularly a home for the lonely and, in the process, permit him to provide "some definite spiritual good to those [of us] who hear him."

¹ On the capacity of storytelling to address such themes, see John S. Dunne, *Time and Myth. A Meditation on Storytelling as an Exploration of Life and Death* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975) and J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," *Tree and Leaf* (London: HarperCollins, 2001), 1-82.

² James Tolhurst approaches this theme in *The Church. . . . a Communion – in the preaching and thought of John Henry Newman* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Fowler Wright, 1988).

³ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, edited with introduction and notes by I.T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 330; cf. "Introduction," *Sermon Notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878*, edited by Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory (New York: Longmans, Green, 1913), v-xiii, esp., vii-xiii.

1837 Sermon Context

Like every writer, Newman quarried his own life to source his literary imagination. So, it is natural to ask if the sermon under scrutiny, “The Church a Home for the Lonely,”⁴ bears a semi-autobiographical imprint. Is it demonstrably impressed with Newman’s own struggles, trials and tribulations? This would not be unusual. For example, the memorable scene in his novel, *Loss and Gain* (1849), in which Charles Reding learns of his father’s bereavement, is most probably informed by Newman’s imaginative appropriation of the same experience.

When Charles got to his room he saw a letter from home lying on his table; and, to his alarm, it had a deep black edge. He tore it open. Alas, it announced the sudden death of his dear father! . . . Oh, my poor dear Charles, I sympathise with you keenly all that long night, and in that indescribable waking in the morning . . . That he is absent now is but a token and a memorial to their minds that he will be absent always . . . And when at the meal of the day Charles looked up, he had to encounter the troubled look of one, who, from her place at table, had before her eyes a still more vivid memento of their common loss . . .⁵

My examination of Newman’s letters and diary entries in the sermon year of 1837, however, suggests that the loneliness of which he speaks in this sermon is not ostensibly traceable to a specific series of events.⁶ The sermon was preached on 22 October, at St. Mary the Virgin in Oxford, after Newman had spent a serene afternoon of reading, in anticipation of a convivial dinner with friends in the Oriel Common Room.⁷ This late October moment was a sunny time during Newman’s participation in the

⁴ 22 Oct. 1837, “The Church a Home for the Lonely,” *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (London: Longmans, Green, 1900; new impression, Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1967), 4:185–199. Hereafter cited as *PS* 4.

⁵ *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert*, edited with an introduction by Alan G. Hill (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 110; 111. His father, John Newman, died 29 Sept 1824 at age 59; and, his sister, Mary, died 5 Jan 1828 at age 19. For the profound effect of their deaths upon his person, see Edward Short, *Newman and His Family* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 85–88 and 209–31.

⁶ See John Henry Newman, *The Via Media and Froude’s Remains January 1837 to December 1838*, vol. 6, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, edited at the Birmingham Oratory with Notes and an Introduction by Gerard Tracey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984). Hereafter cited as *LD* 6.

⁷ See Newman’s diary entry, 22 Oct. 1837, *LD* 6, 154.

Oxford Movement (1833-45).⁸ His jarring encounter with St. Augustine's dictum, "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*" (1839),⁹ the decisive episcopal condemnation of *Tract 90* (1841), the establishment of the Jerusalem Bishopric (1841), his retreat to interim theories in support of Anglicanism (1841-44), and his final steps towards Rome (1843-45) all lay in the future.

The onset of 1837 found Newman calm and confident. In the New Year, he published his generally well-received *Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church*. This *Via Media* advanced his Anglo-Catholic view, critiqued Reform and Low Church positions and shielded him from charges of Romanism. In April and May, he delivered one of his finest theological efforts, his *Lectures on Justification*, in the Adam de Brome Chapel of St. Mary the Virgin Church.¹⁰ October found him consulting with John Keble to ready extracts from Hurrell Froude's private journal and letters, for its early 1838 publication. One might surmise that Newman would be apprehensive of the spotlight to be shone upon *Remains*, a polemical work which exalted medieval Christianity,

⁸ "In the spring of 1839 my position in the Anglican Church was at its height. I had supreme confidence in my controversial *status*, and I had a great and still growing success, in recommending it to others." John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua. Being A History of His Religious Opinions*, edited and introduced with notes by Martin J. Svaglic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 91. Hereafter cited as *Apo*.

⁹ Newman appeals to St. Augustine's dictum – "Wherefore, the entire world judges with security, that they are not good, who separate themselves from the entire world, in whatever part of the entire world" (*Against the Letter of Parmenianus* III.iv.24) – in *Apo*, 110.

¹⁰ On 5 November 1857, some twenty years after publication, German historian and fellow Catholic, Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger, wrote to Newman:

Your work on Justification, which I have read twice, is in my estimation one of the best theological books published in this century . . . and your work on the Arians will be read and studied in future generations as a model of its kind. Pardon me, when I say, that since you have become a member and an ornament of the true church, you have not yet given to us a work of equal *theological* interest and importance. But I trust you will do so in time.

Newman mentions Döllinger's correspondence in his 25 Nov. 1857 letter to Sir John Acton, historian and close friend of the German scholar. See *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 18, edited at the Birmingham Oratory with notes and an introduction by Charles Stephen Dessain (London: Nelson, 1968), 184-85; citation of Döllinger at 185n1.

condemned Reform Christianity, and revealed his friend's severe asceticism – a mixture primed to make John Bull explode. Instead, one finds Newman writing to his sister Jemima, “Rivington on seeing the first sheet increased the impression from 750 to 1000 copies, which is a good sign. I am very sanguine of the effect of them.”¹¹

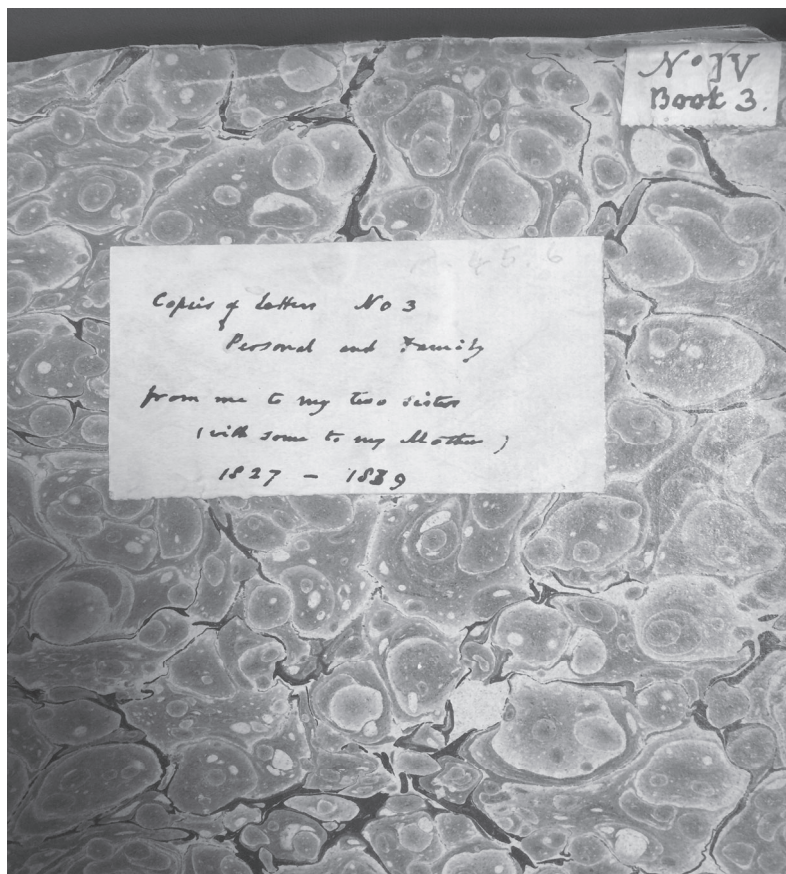


Image courtesy of Mary Jo Dorsey

Newman's Book No. 3

“Copies of Letters Personal and Family from me to my two sisters and some to my mother 1827 – 1839”

Please see the colour centerfold.

¹¹ 6 Oct. 1837, John Henry Newman to Mrs. John Mozley, LD 6, 148.

Restlessness in a Capricious World

Granting the commonplace that authors draw from their lives, and absent evidence that an identifiable chain of external events shape this sermon, it is best to interpret Newman's sermon insights on the Church and human loneliness in terms of his explicit theological anthropology. In "The Church, a Home for the Lonely," Newman's preaching of the Gospel is informed by an Augustinian assessment of fallen, restless pilgrims in search, sometimes knowingly, sometimes confusedly, of their lasting heavenly home.¹² With psychological perceptiveness, he describes how the "outward world is at first sight most attractive and exciting to the generality of men". For a time, the human sojourner is satisfied by the adventure of youth, the elixir of liberty, the novelty of amusement, the glory of victory, the pride of success and the contentment which derives from making a contribution to human flourishing.¹³ In time, however, the bloom fades. Eventually familiarity, loss, failure, harshness of circumstance, betrayal, violence, ennui, sickness, aging, unkindness, and trials reveal the world's capriciousness.

In the course of this sketch of human existence, Newman specifies the prime object that all should pursue, classifies those who do or do not pursue that object, identifies their shared need and, at length, articulates the gracious supply of the fulfillment of this need. To this end, he speaks forcefully of heaven as that "object claiming our highest love and most persevering exertions", and over and against this "object", he classifies three types of people.

First, there are those – symbolized by Samuel and John the Baptist – who have nearly always understood and pursued heaven as their prime object because they have kept the divine light alive.

¹² As one commentator notes:

[Newman] . . . approaches St. Augustine in his recognition of the subtle self-deceptions and treacheries of the human heart, as well as of the opposition human nature instinctively puts up to the requirements of humility, self-sacrifice, and all the 'hard things' that Christian perfection demands. Like Augustine he too saw that true perfection reaches into the subconscious and requires not only grace but a lifetime vigilance, control of emotions, appetites and instincts, as well as a continual self-examination of one's actions and motives.

Vincent Ferrer Blehl, S.J., *The White Stone. The Spiritual Theology of John Henry Newman* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1993), 58-59n1.

¹³ *PS* 4, 187-88.

All these, whether they have followed Him, have never been wedded to this world; they have never given their hearts to it, or vowed obedience or done folly in things of time and sense. And therefore they are able, from the very power of God's grace, as conveyed to them through the ordinances of the Gospel, to understand that the promise of heaven is the greatest, most blessed promise which could be given.¹⁴

Second, there are some who "lose the divine light originally implanted" but, eventually, a sort of purgatorial discontent pushes them back into the arms of God.

They are recovered by finding disappointment and suffering from that which they had hoped would bring them good; they learn to love God and prize heaven, not by baptismal grace, but by trial of the world; they seek the world, and they are driven by the world back to God . . . for they have tried the world, and it fails them; they have trusted it, and it deceives them; they have leant upon it, and it pierces them through; they have sought it for indulgence, and it has scourged them for their penance.¹⁵

Third, there are the disenchanted who remain uneasily in the world's embrace – a faithless mistress whom Newman describes "as waste as the wilderness, as restless and turbulent as the ocean, as inconstant as the wind and weather".¹⁶

Desire For Home and Happiness

While he classified and distinguished human beings in this way, Newman notes a unifying thread which runs through most human journeys, a thread upon which he tugs by reference to the manner in which the *Psalms* juxtapose the brevity and struggle of life with their longing for, and celebration of, the house of God.¹⁷ This unifying thread, in Newman's

¹⁴ *PS* 4, 185. Newman is fond of noting the relationship between the eternal life implanted in the baptized here and the blessedness of the heavenly life hereafter. E.g., see 6 August 1826, "Holiness Necessary for Future Blessedness," *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (London: Longmans, Green, 1900; new impression, Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1966), 1:1-14.

¹⁵ *PS* 4, 186-87.

¹⁶ *PS* 4, 190.

¹⁷ There are 18 scripture references including the sermon text, *Eph* 2:6 (*PS* 4, 185); 10 are to *Psalms* which is 56% of the total: i.e., *Ps* 84, 72, 43, 134 (*PS* 4, 191n1) and *Ps* 64, 17, 75, 27, 32, 31 (195n4). Other references are to *Lk* 15: 20, 21, *Jn* 4: 21-24 (*PS* 4, 192n2), *Is* 2:2, *Gn* 27:12, 2 *Kgs* 19:10 (*PS* 4, 196n5) and *Wis* 3:14 (198n6).

words, is that “almost all men, whether they are thereby moved to return to God or not, will on experience feel, and confess, and that in no long time, that the world is not enough for their happiness; and they accordingly seek means to supply their need”.¹⁸ According to Newman, the human being wants a home, he wants a centre on which to place his thoughts and affections, a secret dwelling-place which may soothe him after the troubles of the world, and which may be his hidden stay and support wherever he goes, and dwell in his heart . . . [A]ll men, without taking religion into account, seek to make themselves a home, as the only need of their nature, or are unhappy if they be without one.¹⁹

Home as Healing

An early expression of Newman's penetrating sense of the Church of Rome as a healing home for the injured wanderer is found in his poem, “The Good Samaritan,” which was written toward the end of his 1833 excursion to the Mediterranean. I am unsure if he was aware at this time, or at any time, of St. Augustine's figurative exegesis of the same parable in which the great African father compares the Church to the inn of refuge at which the wounded man is healed by the sacramental balms of Mother Church.²⁰ Notwithstanding his criticism of Roman ‘defects of doctrine,’ the similarity is striking, given that Newman penned his poem 15 years prior to becoming a Catholic.

Oh that thy creed were sound!
For thou dost soothe the heart, thou Church of Rome,
By thy unwearied watch and varied round,
Of service in thy Saviour's holy home.
I cannot walk the city's sultry streets,
But the wide porch invites to still retreats,
Where passion's thirst is calm'd, and cares unthankful gloom.

¹⁸ *PS* 4, 187.

¹⁹ *PS* 4, 188; 189.

²⁰ The Parable of the Good Samaritan (*Lk* 10: 25-37) is allegorically exegeted by St. Augustine in *Quaestiones Evangeliorum ex Matthaeo et Luca*, II.19. On the early Church practice of applying Jesus' parables to contemporary situations, often via allegorical interpretation, and for a historical-critical analysis of this parable, see Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1963), 42-89 and 202-205, respectively. On Augustine's interpretation of this parable, see C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: Scribners, 1961), 1-2 and Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching*, rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 46.

There, on a foreign shore,
 The home-sick solitary finds a friend:
 Thoughts, prison'd long for lack of speech, outpour
 Their tears; and doubts in resignation end.
 I almost fainted from the long delay
 That tangles me within this languid bay,
 When comes a foe, my wounds with oil and wine to tend.²¹

Home as Maternal Instruction

Newman's understanding of the Church as a home for restive pilgrims *in media res* is complemented elsewhere by his view of the ecclesial home as a place of maternal instruction and human formation. Importantly, Newman perceives the domestic church as established by the sacrament of Matrimony, and religious life, especially his Oratorian life, as coventantal contexts in which the reality of the Church as home is graciously experienced.

In his sermon, "The Mind of Little Children," Newman presents the Church, according to the well-known patristic model,²² as the Mother who instructs her child in the virtues of innocence, docility, guilelessness and connatural adherence to truth.²³ In her maternal care, a spiritual childhood is practised and promoted such that the little one becomes "a pledge of

²¹ 13 June 1833, Palermo, "88. The Good Samaritan," *Verses on Various Occasions*, accessed 20 July 2016, <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/verses/verse88.html>.

²² E.g., Newman cites St. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 AD), "'Where is the Catholic Church?' for such is the peculiar name of this the holy Mother of us all, who is the spouse of the Only-Begotten Son" (*Hieros. Catech.* xviii.12); and he states, "Viewed as one, the Church is still His image as at the first, pure and spotless, His spouse all-glorious within, the Mother of Saints." See John Henry Newman, "How to accomplish it," *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects*, new edition (London: Longmans, Green, 1891), 8 and "The Glory of the Christian Church," *PS* 2, 91.

²³ On the patristic emphasis upon the educative dimension of the sacramental motherhood of the Church, see Christopher O'Donnell, O.Carm., "Church as Mother," *Ecclesia. A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 312-13; Henri de Lubac, "Childbirth and Education," *The Motherhood of the Church*, translated by Sr. Sergia Englund, O.C.D. (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1982), 59-74; and Petroc Willey "The Pedagogue and Teacher," *The Pedagogy of God. Its Centrality in Catechesis and Catechist Formation*, edited by Caroline Farey, Waltraud Linning and Sr. M. Johannah Paruch FSGM (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2011), 29-50, esp. 36n24 and 44-46.

immortality; for he bears upon him in figure those high and eternal excellences in which the joy of heaven consists, and which would not be thus shadowed forth by the All-gracious Creator, were they not one day to be realized.”²⁴ So Newman situates the acquisition of virtue, human maturation, and their relationship to future eschatological glory within the context of home, and the Church as mother.

Home as Domestic Church

This point is uniquely underscored in another *Parochial and Plain* sermon, “Love of Relations and Friends”. Here Newman interprets the dominical injunction to become as little children as a command to “become in His Church, as men, what we were once in the small circle of our youthful homes”.²⁵ From this angle, the Church proper is considered as an outgrowth, consolidation, and gracious surpassing of the domestic church as the primordial place of human formation: the home of spiritual growth, personal affection, correction, forgiveness, mercy, celebration and mourning. In Newman’s judgment, Christian maturation is best achieved in a covenantal context in which sacrificial love is inbuilt into the daily round, especially in the domestic church arising out of the sacrament of Matrimony.

I have hitherto considered the cultivation of domestic affections as the *source* of more extended Christian love . . . Nothing is more likely to engender selfish habits . . . than *independence* in our worldly circumstances. Men who have no tie on them, who have no calls on their daily sympathy and tenderness, who have no one’s comfort to consult, who can move about as they please, and indulge the love of variety and the restless humours which are so congenial to the minds of most men, are very unfavourably situated for obtaining that heavenly gift . . . “the very bond of peace and of all virtues.” On the other hand, I cannot fancy any state of life more favourable for the exercise of high Christian principle, and the matured and refined Christian spirit . . . than that of persons who differ in tastes and general character, being obliged by circumstances to live together, and mutually to accommodate to each other their respective wishes and pursuits.—And this is one among the many providential benefits . . . arising out of the Holy Estate of Matrimony; which not only calls out the tenderest and gentlest feelings of our nature, but, where

²⁴ “The Mind of Little Children,” *PS* 2, 61-68.

²⁵ “Love of Relations and Friends,” *PS* 2, 51-60; at 53.

persons do their duty, must be in various ways more or less a state of self-denial.²⁶

Home as *Nido*

Similar to Newman's understanding of the Church as a home, which is instantiated in the life of the family grounded in the Holy Estate of Matrimony, is his appreciation of the Oratory as a home, which is instantiated in the "daily intercourse" of household members bonded by their vowed life.²⁷ As an elderly man, Newman had hesitated to receive the red hat for fear of having to reside, as was customary, in Rome. Yet, his hesitancy was not reducible to an Englishman's reluctance to relinquish his home and the consolation which domesticity afforded him. Rather, these potent feelings co-mingled with what he had always interpreted as a distinctively Oratorian view of home. As Wilfrid Meynell writes,

Back to Birmingham he came, after weariness in Rome, in July, 1879. "To come home again!" he said to the flock who gathered to meet him. "In that word 'home' how much is included! I know well that there is a more heroic life than a home-life. We know St. Paul's touching words in which he says he is an outcast. We know, too, that our Blessed LORD had not where to lay His head. But the idea of home is consecrated to us by St. Philip, who made it the very essence of his religious institute. Therefore I do indeed feel pleasure in coming home again."²⁸

Clearly, Meynell does not intend simply to recall the sentimentality of an old man who pines for his abode. Rather, he accents Newman's association of the religious life, as a son of St. Philip Neri, with his theological understanding of home. This is a longstanding practice. Within a few weeks after his 1848 return to England, some three decades earlier, Newman wrote about the intertwinement of religious life and the reality of home.

²⁶ PS 2, 57-58; italicized words are part of the original.

²⁷ Placid Murray, O.S.B., *Newman The Oratorian: His unpublished Oratory Papers*, edited with an Introductory Study on the Continuity between his Anglican and Catholic Ministry (Leominster, Herefordshire, England: Fowler Wright, 1980), 192. Hereafter cited as *OrP*.

²⁸ Wilfrid Meynell, "Chapter 6. The Cardinalate, Rome, Home, & the Last Resting-place," Cardinal Newman, with Portraits and Other Illustrations, 6th ed. rev. (London: Burns and Oates, 1907), 118-27; citation at 120. Accessed 27 June 2016 at <http://www.newmanreader.org/biography/meynell/chapter6.html>.

The Congregation is to be the home of the Oratorians. The Italians, I believe, have no word for home – nor is it an idea which readily enters into the mind of a foreigner, at least not so readily as into the mind of an Englishman. It is remarkable then that the Oratorian Fathers should have gone out of their way to express the idea by the metaphorical word *nido* or nest, which is used by them almost technically. The sanction for this idea is contained in the Rule, in one of the Decrees, which is one of the two which are said to be unchangeable. The Congregation, according to St Philip's institution, is never so large that the members do not know each other. They are to be "bound by that bond of love, which daily intercourse creates, and thereby all are to know the ways of each, and feel a reverence for 'countenances of familiar friends.'"²⁹ Familiar faces, exciting reverence, daily intercourse, knowledge of each other's ways, mutual love, what is this but a description of home?³⁰

Attributes of Home

In "The Church a Home for the Lonely," Newman preaches that the spiritual quest for home is anticipated and partially fulfilled, in the Old Covenant's narrative of nations streaming to the House of the Lord on the highest peak and in the dream of angels traversing Jacob's ladder.³¹ While marshalling a catena of Psalm verses to shower praise upon the Jewish Temple for its light, truth, shelter, beauty, stateliness and glory, he nevertheless contends that the Christian Church possesses a unique excellence, which is partially manifested in its universal accessibility across time and space, as "a home for the whole world, nay not for one nation".³² Reflection upon his sermon text, *Ephesians* 2:6 – "[God] hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" – establishes the fuller substance of this excellence.³³ I believe that the following passage, which forms a critical piece of that sustained reflection, is important for understanding Newman's theology of the Church as home.

²⁹ This citation is from John Keble's last verse for "The First Sunday of Lent," in *The Christian Year*; see *OrP* No.5, 192n2.

³⁰ *OrP* No.5, esp. 192-96; citation at 192. Cf: "Let it be our aim then, my Fathers and Brothers, that every fresh month, that every chapter, as it comes, may find us more and more in our place, more and more at home, more and more in possession of our true relation to things about us, and a good understanding of our duties." "Chapter Address: The House, Feb. 1854," *OrP* No. 21: 286-87.

³¹ *Is* 2:2; *Gn* 28: 12; 2 *Kings* 6:17 cited at *PS* 4, 193.

³² *PS* 4, 192-93.

³³ *PS* 4, 185.

I say, that our Lord Jesus Christ, after dying for our sins on the Cross, and ascending on high, left not the world as He found it, but left a blessing behind Him. He left in the world what before was not in it,—a secret home, for faith and love to enjoy, wherever found, in spite of the world around us. Do you ask what it is? the chapter from which the text is taken describes it. It speaks of "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone;" of "the Building fitly framed" and "growing unto an Holy Temple in the Lord;" of "a Habitation of God through the Spirit." This is the Church of God, which is our true home of God's providing, His own heavenly court, where He dwells with Saints and Angels, into which He introduces us by a new birth, and in which we forget the outward world and its many troubles.³⁴

In his explication of this sermon text, Newman speaks of the "secret home" of the Church, of which Christ is the "cornerstone", in a fourfold manner: first, as a "blessing" which extends and applies the redemptive mission of the God-man in history; second, as founded upon the prophetic dimension of the OT and the apostolic dimension of the NT; third, as entered into by the sacramental rebirth of baptism; fourth, as spanning temporal and celestial realms. Newman's comprehension of the Church as a "sanctuary from the outward world . . . which God has provided for [human sojourners]"³⁵ is typified, then, by its Christocentric, redemptive, historical, sacramental and eschatological character.³⁶ In the sermon, Newman focusses upon the presence of the invisible Church to the Church visible, of the accompanying and provisioning presence of Christ and his heavenly company to pilgrims in their progress. In his judgment, this precious celestial accompaniment supplies what the world cannot offer and fittingly is described in marital language. In fact, Newman speaks of the bridal relationship between Christ and his Church as a home in which sojourners find solace in the society of the angels and saints.

³⁴ *PS* 4, 190.

³⁵ In the same passage, he describes "home" as a "shelter", "refuge", "rest" and "secret place".

³⁶ *PS* 4, 187. Cf. "To carry out the will of the Father Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us his mystery; by his obedience he brought about our redemption. The Church – that is, the kingdom of Christ already present in mystery— grows visibly through the power of God in the world." *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, General Editor, Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, NY: Costello, 1987), 350-451; citation at 351. Hereafter, references are to *LG*. *CfLG* 5, 353.

The world is no helpmeet³⁷ for man, and a helpmeet he needs. No one, man nor woman, can stand alone; we are so constituted by nature; and the world, instead of helping us, is an open adversary. It but increases our solitariness . . . What is our resource? It is not in arm of man, in flesh and blood, in voice of friend, or in pleasant countenance; it is that holy home which God has given us in His Church; it is that everlasting City in which He has fixed His abode. It is that Mount invisible where Angels are looking at us with their piercing eyes, and the voices of the dead call us.³⁸

Conclusion

In the shadow of the Year of Mercy and Christ's call to follow him,³⁹ I want to make a few observations concerning homelessness, the New Evangelization, Vatican II, and the summons to create covenantal nidos, which devolve from Newman's view of the Church as home, whose obviousness diminishes neither their potency nor timeliness.⁴⁰

³⁷ St. John Chrysostom explains how the bridal Church attained a 'helpmeet':

Since the symbols of baptism and the eucharist flowed from his side, it was from his side that Christ fashioned the Church, as he had fashioned Eve from the side of Adam. Moses gives a hint of this when he tells the story of the first man and makes him exclaim: Bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh! As God then took a rib from Adam's side to fashion a woman, so Christ has given us blood and water from his side to fashion the Church. God took the rib when Adam was in a deep sleep, and in the same way Christ gave us the blood and water after his own death . . . Do you understand, then, how Christ has united his bride to himself and what food he gives us all to eat? By one and the same food we are both brought into being and nourished. As a woman nourishes her child with her own blood and milk, so does Christ unceasingly nourish with his own blood those to whom he himself has given life.

From "Homily for Good Friday" in *Office of Readings for Good Friday* forming part of *The Liturgy of the Hours*, accessed 7 Oct. 2016 at <http://www.liturgies.net/Liturgies/Catholic/loh/lent/goodfridayor.htm>.

³⁸ PS 4, 195-96.

³⁹ See Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (11 April 2015), accessed 8 Oct. 2016 at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/papafrancesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html.

⁴⁰ For a profound philosophical meditation on home which coheres with Newman's vision, see Dietrich von Hildebrand, "The Different Kinds of 'Mine,'" *The Nature of Love* translated by John F. Crosby with John Henry (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's, 2009), 180-99; esp., the subsection, "the primordial experience of 'being at home,' and 'the mine' that is rooted in it" at 185-92. I am grateful to Professor John F. Crosby of Franciscan University of Steubenville for directing my attention to this passage.

First, we live in a world in which many people lack roots, feel lost and are often materially and/or existentially homeless. Globalization homogenizes cultures, diminishes traditions and injects insecurity into communities.⁴¹ Violence and poverty contribute to massive movements of people. Educational systems substitute managerial and technological training for integral human formation. Politics fuel partisanship rather than serving the common good. The statistical normalcy of fornication, cohabitation, divorce, and broken families displaces the Judeo-Christian ethos of relationship. In the name of freedom, a neo-Gnosticism treats the body as incidental alienating many from their own spirit-embodied humanness.⁴² Obviously, the list is not comprehensive. From the perspective of the New Evangelization, Newman's theology of the Church as a home for the lonely challenges us to consider contemporary experiences of existential homelessness over and against deep-seated longings for an eternal home to ask: how can the Body of Christ recalibrate her resources in order to spend more upon her maternal mission of healing, formation in the virtues and instruction for flourishing here and in the hereafter?⁴³ According to Newman, we must assiduously attend to both aspects. For though the restless pilgrim will never be fully satisfied with intramundane answers, he will not learn how to live into eternity unless invited into a place of domesticity and accompaniment.

Second, Newman's theology of the Church as home resonates with Vatican II's recovery of an ecclesiology of the church as pilgrim.⁴⁴ While the status of the pilgrim is transitional, the Christian wayfarer, by

⁴¹ See David L. Schindler, "'Homelessness' and Market Liberalism: Toward an Economic Culture of Gift and Gratitude," *Wealth, Poverty, and Human Destiny*, edited by Doug Bandow and David L. Schindler (Wilmington, DE: ISI, 2003), 347-413. For a critical account of the contribution of religions in this context, see Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing. Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁴² See R.R. Reno, "Homeless," *First Things* (June/July 2016): 3-7.

⁴³ See Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Evangelization in the Modern World (1975), accessed 8 Oct. 2016 at http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html; Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, At the Beginning of the Third Millennium (2000) accessed 30 July 2013 at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp2mil3.htm>. Amongst the growing literature on the New Evangelization, one may profitably consult, Avery Dulles, SJ, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2009) and George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism. Deep Reform in the 21st Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

⁴⁴ LG 48-51.

following in the footsteps of her Master – who had no place to put his head (Lk 9:58) – paradoxically finds the permanency of home. Let us recall that part of *Ephesians* upon which Newman's sermon drew so heavily.

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph 2:19-22).

The College at Littlemore, Newman's onetime home (1842-1846), has since 1987 been entrusted by the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory to the care of The Spiritual Family, The Work. Founded by the Belgian, Mother Julia Verhaeghe (1910-1997), this community of priests, consecrated women, and associated members received papal approval in 2001 as a Family of Consecrated Life – a distinctly post-Vatican II juridical designation. The College, which was Newman's home during a period of intense discernment, has become a longtime place of personal pilgrimage for those inspired by his life and work. During the Year of Mercy it was formally designated as a site of pilgrimage and people who pause at this waystation are welcomed by those whose charism is to live as a spiritual family.⁴⁵ In a way, Newman's home in Littlemore has come to symbolize

⁴⁵ The charism of those who live in Newman's 'home' is typified by these words of Mother Julia:

The Work is a Family of God, willed by God, in which the members united in one body and held together by a hierarchical and clear order, seek to deepen and develop graces of baptism and confirmation, and the other sacraments. By their complementarity, love and respect, they bear witness to the supernatural splendor of the Mystical Body of Christ, as a community of adoration and service in the world, without being of the world (cf *Jn* 17:16-19). On the way of sincere conversion, which is lived out in the concrete things of the everyday life, they are willing to let themselves be purified, healed and sanctified in God's eternal truth. In this mutual, supernatural, and glorious unity and readiness for sacrifice, and with trust in God's plans, which are merciful and just love, they should be prepared to heal the wounds which have afflicted many of the People of God either consciously or unconsciously through the weakening and loss of faith. In this way they shall be spiritual fathers and mothers.

Cited in Mother Julia Verhaeghe, *The Mystery of the Church* (Bregenz-Rome: The Spiritual Family, The Work, 2011), 48. I am grateful to Mary-Birgit Dechant, FSO for suggesting and sourcing this reference. On Mother Julia, see *She Loved the Church. Mother Julia Verhaeghe and the Beginnings of The Spiritual Family of the*

the nature of the Christian life as pilgrimage, the need of a spiritual family to accompany sojourners on their way and of heaven as the ultimate goal of this journey.

Third, in the face of existential homelessness, I think that Newman's theology of the Church as home issues a summons which also is heard in Alasdair McIntyre's celebrated close of *After Virtue*.

What matters at this stage [today] is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us. This time however the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time. And it is our lack of consciousness of this that constitutes part of our predicament. We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict.⁴⁶

Newman stresses docility to the Church's maternal tutelage in the gracious way of virtue. And he exhorts us to invest in a covenantal understanding of the Church as a holy home and be sustained by the practice of sacrificial love that is inbuilt into the daily round of intimate human relations, especially those instantiated in the life of the family grounded in the Holy Estate of Matrimony and in the "daily intercourse" of religious communities grounded in fidelity to the vowed life and to one another. This approach resonates with McIntyre's call to construct "local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages". In the past 50 years, the emergence of many ecclesial communities and movements has provided yet another way of experiencing the contemporary Church as home.⁴⁷

Work, edited by Mother Katharina Stolz, FSO and Fr Peter Willi, FSO and translated by Ian Logan (Oxford: Family Publications, 2009).

⁴⁶ Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 263.

⁴⁷ See Brendan Leahy, *The Ecclesial Movements and Communities: Origins, Significance and Issues* (New York, NY: New York City Press, 2011) and Fr. Ian Ker, *The New Movements. A Theological Introduction* (London: The Catholic Truth Society, 2001). My suggestion, vis-à-vis this meditation upon Newman's spiritual theology of home, is that a recovery and reinvestment in all forms of covenantal homes is vital for the health of the Church and society. For two views of Christian community building see James O'Halloran SDB, *Living Cells. Developing Small Christian Community*, new rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984) and Jean Vanier, *Community & Growth. Our Pilgrimage Together* (Toronto, ON: Griffin House, 1979).

In an analogous way, Newman also invested his educational efforts as a tutor at Oriel College Oxford, and as founding rector of Catholic University Dublin, with such covenantal understandings in the pastoral office of tutoring students and his emphasis upon household and collegiate life.⁴⁸ In the United States, we might similarly think of the manner in which, over the past four decades, Christian discipleship has flourished in household communities at Franciscan University.⁴⁹ Finally, I would argue that in the USA and Canada the same covenantal understandings energize several like-minded movements to renew the relational dimensions of authentic parish life. These covenantal understandings are suggested in bestselling titles like *Rebuilt: awakening the faithful, reaching the lost, and making church matter* and *Divine Renovation. Bringing your parish from maintenance to mission*.⁵⁰

To end, I wish the reader to ponder Newman's view of the Church as home in light of G.K. Chesterton's "The Christmas Poem" which artfully illumines many aspects of Newman's theme.⁵¹

There fared a mother driven forth
Out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless
All men are at home.
The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.

⁴⁸ For an exhaustive scrutiny of this aspect of Newman's educational efforts, see Paul Shrimpton, *The 'Making of Men'. The Idea and reality of Newman's university in Oxford and Dublin* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2014).

⁴⁹ See Fr. Gregory Plow, TOR and Regina Doman, *No Longer Strangers* (Steubenville, OH: Franciscan University Student Life, 2016).

⁵⁰ Michael White and Tom Corcoran, *Rebuilt: awakening the faithful, reaching the lost, and making church matter* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2013); and Fr. James Mallon, *Divine Renovation. Bringing your parish from maintenance to mission* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third, 2014).

⁵¹ Gilbert Keith Chesterton, "Christmas Poem," accessed 24 July 2016 at <http://www.gkc.org.uk/gkc/books/christmas-poem.html>. While I am not suggesting a direct debt, my association of Newman and Chesterton is not haphazard. Joseph Pearce contends that the Catholic literary revival in England, in which Chesterton was a major player, was "instigated by John Henry Newman . . . coincided with his reception into the Church in 1845" and harmonized with his "insights" ("Tolkien and the Catholic Literary Revival," in *Tolkien: A Celebration. Collected Writings on a Literary Legacy* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001], 102-123; citation at 105).

For men are homesick in their homes,
And strangers under the sun,
And they lay their heads in a foreign land
Whenever the day is done.

Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honour and high surprise,
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the yule tale was begun.

A child in a foul stable,
Where the beasts feed and foam;
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home;
We have hands that fashion and heads that know,
But our hearts we lost---how long ago!
In a place no chart nor ship can show
Under the sky's dome.

This world is wild as an old wife's tale,
And strange the plain things are,
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings
And our peace is put in impossible things
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening
Home shall all men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.