

John Henry Newman's Coat-of-Arms

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Cardinal Newman's Arms: what it is, how it was chosen, what it signifies

On 12 May 1879 in Rome, John Henry Newman was created Cardinal, and as a Cardinal he was required to have a Coat-of-Arms. At the right is a graphical representation of the Arms that he chose. It consists of three elements: a hat with tassels, a shield, and a motto on a banner below the shield.



[Source](#)

Newman's Arms varied somewhat when represented on different objects. For example, on the Cardinal's vestments and on the back of his chapel chair:



[Source](#)



[Source](#)

The basic elements, however, are the same. Now consider the significance of each element in turn, then the pairing of the shield with the motto.

The Hat and Tassels

A hat with tassels descending on both sides of the shield is a standard symbol for an office in the Catholic Church. The color and the number of tassels vary with the office: Bishops (6 green), Archbishops (10 green) and Cardinals (15 red, as for Cardinal Newman).

The Shield

Cardinal Newman took his shield from his father, John Newman, who had used it on his seals and bookplates. [1]

The Motto

"I took my arms from my father's seal and book-plate, and there was no motto there." [2] Newman had heard that few people in England had a right to a motto, but "They said at Rome I must have a motto, ... so, if others invented one for themselves, I thought I might." [3]

The motto he chose was the Latin, "Cor ad cor loquiter;" in English, "Heart speaks to heart." But he didn't invent it for himself.

This phrase Newman took from St Francis de Sales [4], whom he had quoted in his essay "University Preaching", first published in 1855 in the *Catholic University Gazette* [5], then republished in 1859 in *Idea of a University* [6]. Fr Newman wrote of a preacher: "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." [7]

It is this earnestness, in the supernatural order, which is the eloquence of saints; and not of saints only, but of all Christian preachers, according to the measure of their faith and love. As the case would be with one who has actually seen what he relates, the herald of tidings of the invisible world also will be, ... not because he has proposed to himself to be so, but because certain intellectual convictions involve certain external manifestations. St. Francis de Sales is full and clear upon this point ...

Then he quoted a Latin translation of what de Sales originally had written in a 1604 letter in French, "... *le coeur parle au coeur* ..." [8]

The Motto and Shield Together

Cardinal Newman took his Arms from his father, and we don't know what significance the Newman family attached to the three hearts. Nor do we have a record of how Cardinal Newman himself interpreted them. How may we interpret them? One interpretation is given [here](#).

Fr James Douglas Conley at his consecration as Bishop in 2008 chose for his episcopal motto "*Cor ad cor loquitur*." His devotion to Cardinal Newman began when as a sophomore in college he read excerpts from Newman's writings. Here is Bishop Conley's take on the motto [[9](#)]:

These words "heart speaks to heart" can first be understood as the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Heart of God, speaking to our heart, calling us to holiness, leading and guiding us to the Father.

But "heart speaks to heart" can also describe a type of pastoral charity where an individual leads another individual to God, through love and kindness. One heart at a time, person to person, heart to heart.

Considering John Henry Newman's life from the first perspective, we certainly may take one of the three hearts for Newman's own loving heart, and another for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for he had a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart.

1. Newman and the Sacred Heart

John Henry Newman was received into the Catholic Church on 9 October 1845. He and fellow converts were invited to move together to St Mary, Oscott, for an initial period of instruction and discernment. Newman wrote two letters from "Mary Vale," as he called it, in his first week there.

I write my first letter from my new home to you.

I am writing next room to the Chapel—It is such an incomprehensible blessing to have Christ in bodily presence in one's house, within one's walls, as swallows up all other privileges and destroys, or should destroy, every pain. To know that He is close by—to be able again and again through the day to go in to Him ... It is the place for intercession surely, where the Blessed Sacrament is. [[10](#)]

This was an unexpected blessing:

It has been sometimes objected that some of us have gone over for the privileges we hoped to gain in the Catholic Church. That has not been our case here. We went over not realizing those privileges which we have found by going. I never allowed my mind to dwell on what I might gain of blessedness—but certainly, if I had thought much upon it, I could not have fancied the extreme, ineffable comfort of being in the same house

with Him who cured the sick and taught His disciples, as we read of Him in the Gospels, in the days of His flesh. When I have been in Churches abroad, I have religiously abstained from acts of worship, though it was a most soothing comfort to go into them—nor did I know what was going on; I neither understood nor tried to understand the Mass service—and I did not know, or did not observe, the tabernacle Lamp ... [\[11\]](#)

The Maryvale residence had *two* chapels, the main chapel and another smaller one that was the first in England to be dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. [\[12\]](#) It must have been there at Maryvale that Newman's devotion to the Sacred Heart began, for he wrote in 1873, "ever since I have been a Catholic, I have had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart." [\[13\]](#)



Sacred Heart Chapel, Maryvale, dedicated 1814 [Source](#)

In 1861 Newman wrote to a friend who was a Visitation sister: "Your good sisters must love St Philip as much as we do St Francis and the devotion of the Sacred Heart. I have for this eight years determined to build two chapels under these two invocations, when money which I lent, came in." [\[14, 15\]](#) At last, as a Cardinal, he was able to create his own small private chapel in the Birmingham Oratory. He dedicated it to St Francis de Sales, placed a portrait of the Saint above the Altar, and on one wall placed sketches of scenes from the Saint's life. [\[16\]](#) Here is a photo of the Cardinal's chapel, and a closeup of its altar photos:



Cardinal Newman's chapel [Source](#)

Newman's meditation on the Sacred Heart includes these words:

O most Sacred, most loving Heart of Jesus, Thou art concealed in the Holy Eucharist, and Thou beatest for us still ... I worship Thee then with all my best love and awe, with my fervent affection, with my most subdued, most resolved will. O my God, when Thou dost condescend to suffer me to receive Thee, to eat and drink Thee, and Thou for a while takest up Thy abode within me, O make my heart beat with Thy Heart. [\[17\]](#)

2. Newman and the Third Heart

Following Bishop Conley's comment on the motto, we can take the third heart for that of an individual who "leads another individual to God, through love and kindness."

2.1 Saints who spoke to Newman's heart

Newman was "nothing short of enamoured" with Saints Augustine, Ambrose and others when at age 15 he read Milner's history of the early Church. [\[18\]](#) Over the next thirty years he undertook systematic studies of the lives and writings of the early Church Fathers, and, under the tutelage especially of the above-mentioned saints, and of Saints Athanasius and Leo the Great, he

recognized the Catholic Church as the "one true fold" and was received on 9 October 1845. "The Fathers made me a Catholic."

In 1859 Fr Newman began writing a series of articles on "The Ancient Saints" for [The Rambler](#). He confessed to "delight in reading the lives, and dwelling on the characters and actions, of the Saints of the first ages, such as I receive from none besides them; and for this reason, because we know so much more about them than about most of the Saints who come after them ... the Ancient Saints have left behind them just that kind of literature which more than any other represents the abundance of the heart, which more than any other approaches to conversation; I mean correspondence." [19]

Newman began the series with articles on St John Chrysostom (347-407). The following extended quote from his last Chrysostom article tells us not only why Newman had a devout affection for the Saint, but about Newman himself.

WHENCE is this devotion to St. John Chrysostom, which leads me to dwell upon the thought of him, and makes me kindle at his name, when so many other great Saints, as the year brings round their festivals, command indeed my veneration, but exert no personal claim upon my heart? Many holy men have died in exile, many holy men have been successful preachers; and what more can we write upon St. Chrysostom's monument than this, that he was eloquent and that he suffered persecution? ... He has not trampled upon heresy, nor smitten emperors, nor beautified the house or the service of God, nor knit together the portions of Christendom, nor founded a religious order, nor built up the framework of doctrine, nor expounded the science of the Saints; yet I love him, as I love David or St. Paul. How am I to account for it? ... It is not force of words, nor cogency of argument, nor harmony of composition, nor depth or richness of thought, which constitutes his power,—whence, then, has he this influence, so mysterious, yet so strong? I consider St. Chrysostom's charm to lie in his intimate sympathy and compassionateness for the whole world, not only in its strength, but in its weakness ...

I speak of the discriminating affectionateness with which he accepts every one for what is personal in him and unlike others. I speak of his versatile recognition of men, one by one, for the sake of that portion of good, be it

more or less, of a lower order or a higher, which has severally been lodged in them; his eager contemplation of the many things they do, effect, or produce ... Possessed though he be by the fire of divine charity, he has not lost one fibre, he does not miss one vibration, of the complicated whole of human sentiment and affection ...

He may indeed be said in some sense to have a devotion of his own for every one who comes across him,—for persons, ranks, classes, callings, societies, considered as divine works and the subjects of his good offices or good will, and therefore I have a devotion for him. [20]

Here we have, then, in the Communion of Saints, heart speaking to heart across the centuries.

2.2 Some Other hearts to whom Newman's spoke

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger said in 1990 of Cardinal Newman: "Newman belongs to the great teachers of the Church, because he both touches our hearts and enlightens our thinking." [21] Many have been touched and enlightened by Cardinal Newman. Take three examples: preaching (Shairp); holy friendship (Du Boulay); published works (Crosby).

John Campbell Shairp

When Oratorian Father William Neville wrote his "Note on Cardinal Newman's Preaching and Influence at Oxford," [22] he simply quoted writings from and about a single person: John Campbell Shairp (1819–1885), a Scottish Presbyterian, who had been an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford, 1840-1844. Shairp was deeply influenced by John Henry Newman during his time there, and wrote many years later of Newman's preaching:

As he spoke, how the old truth became new! how it came home with a meaning never felt before! He laid his finger—how gently, yet how powerfully!—on some inner place in the hearer's heart, and told him things about himself he had never known till then ... how gentle, yet how strong! ... how penetrating, yet how tender-hearted! [23]

Newman had

...that penetrating insight into human nature, which made him well understand his own age, and its tendencies. He was intimately acquainted with his own heart, and he so read the hearts of his fellow men, that he

seemed to know their inmost secrets. In his own words he could tell them what they knew about themselves, and what they did not know ... [24]

Shairp remained a Presbyterian after Oxford, but, in the words of the Balliol classmate and lasting friend who had first induced Shairp to hear Newman preach, "to the end of his days there was no one with whose writings he was more familiar ... His loyalty to Cardinal Newman ended only with his life." [25]

Mary Gabriel (Susan) Du Boulay

An early mention of Susan Du Boulay (1826-1906) occurs in a letter from Catherine Ward to Fr Newman, dated 23 July 1849, requesting that he join in a Novena for her young niece, Susan. [26] Ward mentioned that her niece's step-father "had the formation of her elegant character by first placing in her hands your sermons." Du Boulay was received into the Church by Newman in London on 15 April 1850. After spending a year travelling in Italy with a friend, they both entered Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan's convent at Clifton, and both were professed in the newly-opened Dominican convent at Stone on 8 December 1853. [27] Susan Du Boulay took the religious name Mary Gabriel.

Sister Mary Gabriel and Newman corresponded for the rest of his life.

By 1861 Newman had suffered several setbacks as a Catholic, the latest being conflicts with the Headmaster of the Oratory school that he had founded in 1859. His health was seriously affected, and he was obliged to take long periods of rest. [28] Sister Mary Gabriel wrote in August 1861 to encourage him:

We are so very sorry to hear of continued weakness and shaken health, and shall pray most earnestly that sufficient strength may be given you to work on, yet many years in the service of your Lord and Love.

... the greater the soul the more it must suffer ... The love and labour and the tender sympathy it pours out on every soul with which it comes in contact, must widen the circle of its suffering—and help to wear out the bodily frame. But each suffering brings forth its own child of benediction which will not die because it is not of nature but of grace. There are thousands of such springing up from you my very dear Father in hidden places, where you do not

suspect them:—hearts that love you as their guide into the Faith—
hearts that you have reconciled—that you have comforted, that you
have guided to the bridal chamber of their Spouse.—Those many
voices of childlike love and gratitude all blend in one persevering
prayer that you may be rewarded with Life, Eternal Life, ... for all
the good things that you have done to them. [[29](#)]

Fr Newman responded: "Your letter was a great consolation to me. I could
hardly get through it without tears." [[30](#)]

Sister Mary Gabriel wrote in March 1879, on behalf of her sister Dominicans
and herself, to congratulate Fr Newman on the cardinalate: "It makes indeed
very little difference in our hearts, for there you have been throned many a
long year too high for any external dignity to place you any higher—but it
has taken a whole strain of sadness out of my life, to feel you will be
understood and in your right place *now*—instead of having (as I once
thought) to wait till you had passed away from among us." [[31](#)]

Her letter to the Cardinal anticipating the Feast of St John in 1886 closed
with:

I often talk now about old age—and the unexpected sweetness it brings—
and certainly that one, of long friendship which has been all for you, and
which now (it is morally certain) will be faithful unto death, is one of its
precious privileges.

Ever your Eminence's most grateful and devoted child,
Sister Mary Gabriel [[32](#)]

John Francis Crosby

Cardinal Ratzinger noted that Newman "touches our hearts and enlightens
our thinking;" this occurred in reverse order in the life of the philosopher
John Crosby (1944-).

Crosby was baptized Catholic. At age 16, a time of questioning, he began to
read Newman:

When I first encountered Newman in my teens and early twenties, I was
drawn to him mainly by the radical Christianity that he preached in
Oxford during the years of the Oxford Movement. He challenged what he
called "the religion of the day," a Christianity that, having been long

established in England, was taken for granted by everyone but taken seriously by very few. [33]

Crosby continued reading Newman in the years immediately after the Second Vatican Council, years of religious turmoil, with many voices "calling for an accommodation with the world, for an adaptation to contemporary modes of thinking and living." [34]

"[The Religion of the Day](#)," read in the setting of the post-conciliar ferment, seemed to challenge the Christian world in much the same way as that sermon challenged the Christian world in England when first preached in 1832. [35]

Newman once wrote: "My desire hath been to have Truth for my chiefest friend, and no enemy but error." [36] Crosby appreciated Newman's passion for revealed Truth—for faithfully handing on the deposit of faith—and his resistance to relativism and theological liberalism. But he found that Newman was "not just an intellect who has it right." [37]

Crosby was a college senior studying philosophy when he met Dietrich von Hildebrand in 1966. He grew close to von Hildebrand, studied for a PhD under one of von Hildebrand's leading students at the University of Salzburg in Austria (1966-1970), started teaching at University of Dallas (1970), and married a daughter of one of von Hildebrand's Austrian friends (1977). But Crosby had not forgotten Cardinal Newman: John and Pia Crosby named their first child John Henry. [38]

Through his studies of the personalist philosophy of von Hildebrand, Karol Wojtyla and others, Crosby came to appreciate another side of Newman. He reported his mature appreciation of Newman in his 2014 book, [The Personalism of John Henry Newman](#).

I kept reading Newman, and I began to notice the personalist sides of his mind and personality. I began to absorb his profound thought on religious experience, on personal influence, on heart speaking to heart, on the imagination, on "the living intelligence" of each person. [39]

... what he knows and proclaims is somehow based on what he is. As a result he is personally present in his words in an extraordinary way. Newman is not just talking about Christian holiness, but bearing witness to it. [40]

Crosby summarizes his experience of Newman:

Some of the Oxford undergraduates who fell under Newman's influence scandalized people by saying, "Credo in Newmanum." This was not adolescent hype, ... this just expresses what all of us who are deeply indebted to Newman are willing to say. We have not only been convinced by Newman's teaching, but also convicted by his witness. He has appealed to our intellect, and he has appealed to our imagination. Mind has spoken to mind, and heart has spoken to heart. His influence on us has been intellectual, and it has been personal. [[41](#)]

Conclusion

Let us end with a heart-quote from Newman:



I say, then, that the happiness of the soul consists in the exercise of the affections; not in sensual pleasures, not in activity, not in excitement, not in self-esteem, not in the consciousness of power, not in knowledge ... This is our real and true bliss, ... to love, to hope, to joy, to admire, to revere, to adore. Our real and true bliss lies in the possession of those objects on which our hearts may rest and be satisfied ... yet the affections require a something more vast and more enduring than anything created ... He alone is sufficient for the heart who made it. [[42](#)]

References

1. [Letters and Diaries, Volume 29](#), p 108, note 1 *
2. [Ibid](#), p 214 *
3. [Ibid](#), p 209 *
4. [Ibid](#), p 108, note 2 *
5. [Catholic University Gazette](#), 1855, pp 394-400 (quote from p 396)
6. [Idea of a University](#), 1859, pp 405-427 (quote from p 410)
7. [Ibid](#), p 408
8. [Oeuvres de Saint Francois de Sales](#), Volume 12, p 321
9. "In the Rockies, Conley Friday Dawns Early," [Whispers in the Loggia](#), 29 May 2008
10. [Letters and Diaries, Volume 11](#), p 129 *
11. [Ibid](#), p 131 Whence this belief in the Real Presence? The grace of conversion: "I did not believe the doctrine till I was a Catholic. I had no

difficulty in believing it, as soon as I believed that the Catholic Roman Church was the oracle of God, and that she had declared this doctrine to be part of the original revelation."—[*Apologia*](#), p 239 *

12. <https://www.maryvale.ac.uk/history-and-heritage.html>
13. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 26*](#), p 352 *
14. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 19*](#), p 498 *
15. See Pope Francis' encyclical [*Dilexit Nos*](#) (On the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ), §114 ff, for a description of the connection between St Francis de Sales and the Sacred Heart devotion.
16. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 19*](#), note 5 *
17. [*Meditations and Devotions*](#), p 413
18. [*Apologia*](#), p 7
19. [*Historical Sketches, Volume 2*](#), pp 217-218, 221
20. [*Ibid*](#), pp 284-288
21. "[Presentation ... on the Occasion of the First Centenary of the Death of Cardinal John Henry Newman](#)," Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Rome, 28 April 1990 (last paragraph)
22. [*My Campaign in Ireland*](#), John Henry Newman, Edited by Rev. William P Neville, CO, A King & Co., 1896, note
23. [*Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*](#), John Campbell Shairp, Edmonston and Douglas, 1868, p 212
24. [*Aspects of Poetry; being lectures delivered as Professor of Poetry at Oxford*](#), John Campbell Shairp, Clarendon Press, 1881, p 451
25. [*Principal Shairp and His Friends*](#), William Angus Knight, J Murray, 1888, p 415
26. [Letter from Catherine Ward to Fr Newman](#), 23 July 1849
27. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 15*](#), p 558 *
28. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 27*](#), p xiii *
29. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 20*](#), pp 28-29 *
30. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 20*](#), p 29 *
31. [*Letters and Diaries, Volume 29*](#), p 63, note 3 *
32. [Letter from Sister Mary Gabriel to Cardinal Newman](#), 27 December 1886
33. [*The Personalism of John Henry Newman*](#), John F Crosby, Catholic University of America Press, 2014, p 32 *
34. [*Ibid*](#), p 31 *
35. [*Ibid*](#), p 32 *
36. [*Via Media, Volume 1*](#), pp xii-xiii

37. "[Dr. John F. Crosby: Life-long Catholic](#)," *The Journey Home*, EWTN, 23 July 1999 (at 50 minutes)
38. "[Growing Up with Dietrich: A Conversation with John Henry Crosby](#)," John Burger, *Crisis Magazine*, 11 March 2008
39. [The Personalism of John Henry Newman](#), John F Crosby, Catholic University of America Press, 2014, p 32 *
40. [Ibid](#), pp 76-77 *
41. [Personalist Papers](#), John F Crosby, 2004, p 231 *
42. [Parochial and Plain Sermons, Volume 5](#), pp 315-316

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