



THE Newman

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEWMAN ASSOCIATION

May 2022

Issue No. 114

£5.00

Mark Vernon
Dante, Myth and the Path to God

Fr Peter Conley
Newman's Pandemic Ministry

Harcourt Concannon
Notre Dame in Flames

Book Review
AGM details

Spirituality Page
The Tudor Queens: a poem

Contents

Comment	1
Dante, Myth, and the Path to God	2
Newman's Pandemic Ministry: A Balm for the Bereaved.....	7
The Tudor Queens	12
Eileen Cheverton 1921-2021	13
Book Review	16
Spirituality Page: Henry Vaughan.....	18
A Parisian railway worker watches Notre Dame burning on April 15th, 2019	20
Circle Programmes	25

Editorial Committee: Barry Riley (Editor) • Anne Duddington • John Duddington • Josephine Way • Dr. Marie Rose Low • Dr. Christopher Quirke

Printing: Silver Pines Services, Sevenoaks

Articles, comments, etc.: Should be sent to Barry Riley by email at editor@newman.org.uk – items should be sent in Word format as an attachment or as an embedded text within the email. Hard-copy items may be sent by post to 17 Mount Pleasant Road, London W5 1SG. Tel: 020 8998 5829. Articles should not normally exceed 3,000 words.

Copy Deadline: the date of the next issue has yet to be decided.

The Newman: is published by the Newman Association, Registered Office: c/o Swallow & Company, Commercial House, Bridge Road, Stokesley, North Yorkshire TS9 5AA.

Website: <http://www.newman.org.uk>. Unless the Editor is informed in advance that contributors wish to refuse permission for online use of their material, The Newman Association may use on its website any article or other material contributed to *The Newman*. Unless the article has been previously published elsewhere with copyright assigned, copyright will reside with the author, The Newman and the Newman Association. In this case an author may republish his or her material elsewhere with the permission of the Association and printed acknowledgement of its prior appearance in *The Newman*.

Email: info@newman.org.uk

British Library Reference Number: ISSN-0951-5399

Back numbers: copies of a number of previous issues of *The Newman* are available from the editor - see contact details above.

The Newman Association Charity No. 1006709

Acting President: Brian Hamill

Hon. Secretary: Sophie Rudge: 27 Dee Banks, Chester, CH3 5UU, Tel 01244 311375, to whom general enquiries should be addressed.



QR code

Contributions to *The Newman* express the views of their authors and not necessarily the views of the Newman Association

Cover picture: *Dante Alighieri*

Comment

Suddenly we are once again needing to find a way of dealing with the morality of war. Many studies have been made of the historical challenges posed to religion by warfare. In the First World War regimental chaplains used to bless British soldiers about to go and fight the Germans. Over on the other side of the front line German chaplains would do exactly the same. God was apparently blessing both sides. Then in the Second World War Pope Pius XII in Rome would face serious threats from the Mussolini regime and eventually from an effective Nazi German occupation. Was it right to compromise in order to ensure survival?

Theologians have long grappled with concepts of the 'just war' in order to make religion compatible with politics. St Thomas Aquinas outlined a theory in the 13th century under which wars could be fought 'in the pursuit of justice'. We have all hoped that these controversial ideological battles would no longer need to be debated. But now we have seen the eruption of a war between Russia and Ukraine.

For the Church of Rome there is no real debate here. Pope Francis has described the conflict as a 'cruel and senseless war'. But the Russian Orthodox Church is deeply embedded in the political debate. Almost wiped out during the Twentieth Century by the Soviet regime the Russian Church has fought its way back under the much more supportive Putin regime and, under the leadership of Patriarch Kirill since 2009, its loyalty to the Russian President now seems to be total.

There is a powerful national ideology at work here. The Russian Orthodox Church has been expanding at home by promoting its traditional beliefs based on a male priesthood and conservative religious values. This is contrasted with the shrinkage and weakness of Western Christianity at a time when there is a drift towards acceptance of sexual ambiguity and deviation. Although Roman Catholicism has been resistant so far, many Protestant sects have largely been taken over by female clergy. The Russians also comment darkly about the influence of homosexuals and other sexually unorthodox groups.

How, though, can this promotion of traditional religious values be reconciled with the brutal demolition of Ukraine? Many Russian Orthodox priests are said to be unhappy, and Kirill's stance has caused a major rift with the Greek Orthodox Church. But Russian nationalism is evidently the supreme factor for Patriarch Kirill.

The tension between global religions and local nationalism is a very old theme. It was why King Henry VIII set up the Church of England 500 years ago. The relevant issue at the particular time was Pope Clement VII's refusal to approve Henry's divorce from his Spanish wife Catherine of Aragon. But the close connections between Spain and Rome at the time were a powerful factor for Henry who decided to take advantage of the fragility of the Roman Church across much of Europe as Martin Luther and others launched the Reformation.

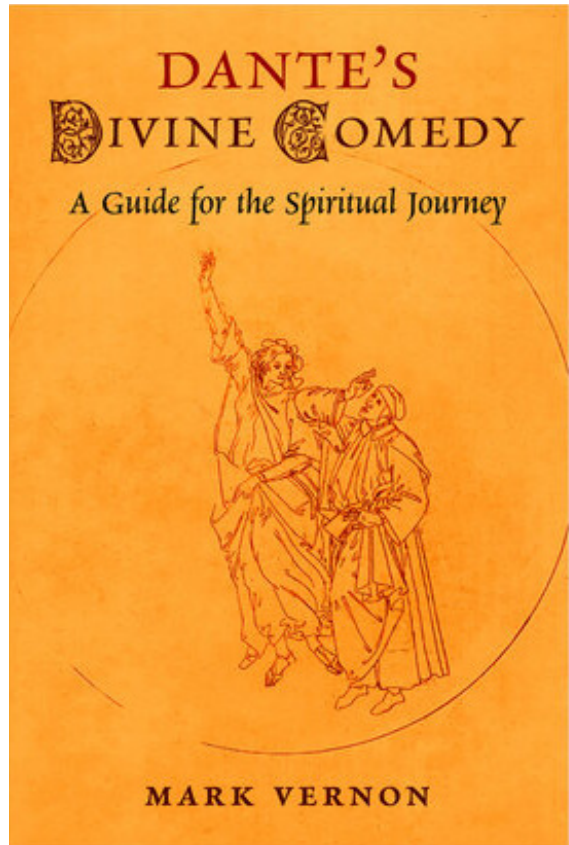
Today the nationalisation of part of the Catholic Church remains a pressing issue in China, where the Roman Church was replaced in the 1950s by the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. The Vatican signed a controversial deal with China in 2018 which promised to regularise the status of the Chinese hierarchy but Catholics in China continue to be trapped in a political tangle. We can expect more doctrinal contortions if China recreates the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the Far East by invading Taiwan.

Barry Riley

Dante, Myth, and the Path to God

by Mark Vernon

Dante's *Divine Comedy* can rightly be called a myth. That it is an account of a real experience I have no doubt. My best guess is that he had some kind of direct taste of the unity of all creation with its divine source and wellspring. But in order to convey the fullness of that experience, Dante had to deploy all of his poetic genius to understand, develop and convey its full resonance. Further, he is explicit in wanting his readers to enjoy the beatific vision by following him through hell, purgatory and paradise. This is what myths do: they are not literal reports, because the literalism would destroy the layers of meaning and fail to open up parallel perceptions in others. As Beatrice tells Dante: tell of all that you have seen – not like a journalist but like a prophet and poet who awakens in his readers a perceived consciousness of the light.



Like the best myths the poem is, therefore, many things: a diatribe against the Church of his day, a celebration of human qualities, a warning that this life matters, a path of awakening, an odyssey. But it was born of a crisis. Dante begins his journey by waking up in a dark wood. The air tastes bitter. He grows fearful. The way forward seems firmly blocked. He needs more than his current awareness of life can muster. He must undergo a transformation of perception. His brilliance as a writer is that he not only found that himself but offers it to us as well.

And his predicament resonates with where we find ourselves now, in the middle of various emergencies, a spiritual crisis underlying them all. Individually and collectively, we must see the world afresh and find ways to re-orientate ourselves. Alongside other divinely-inspired texts and great mythologies, I believe Dante can help us discover how. By way of example, consider one strand in the golden thread of Dante's vision: the role of erotic love. It's the type of love that tends to be viewed

warily in monotheistic religions, particularly in their institutional forms. They are more comfortable when love manifests in other guises, like agape or friendship. Christianity provides an obvious case in point.

Punitive attitudes towards eros set in from its earliest days, explains the historian of late antiquity, Kyle Harper, in his brilliant book *From Shame To Sin*. For example, Saint Paul felt that sex provided a test case for how the new freedom to be found in Christ differed from the old freedoms of Roman citizenship. For the Roman freeman, a key demonstration of liberty was doing what you willed sexually with your and other's bodies. But Paul preached a different liberty. It was not civic but spiritual, known through belonging to Christ. Sexual acts, of any sort, were therefore interpreted as an implicit rejection of divine grace.

"I wish that all of you were as I am," he writes to the Corinthians, which is to say, celibate. As Saint Augustine was later to teach, the one thing that erotic love reveals to us is that its surges of desire spring directly from humanity's rebellion against God. At best, it is what you might call a necessary evil.

Eros as daimon

What's striking is that these worries and prohibitions stand in marked contrast with the attitudes towards eros found in mystical and visionary traditions. They tend to take a very different view, in the West, reaching back to Plato. He taught that Eros is a go-between spirit or dynamic, entities known in the ancient world as daimons, whose embrace widens and deepens perception. In the *Symposium*, he tells of how the priestess and prophet Diotima taught Socrates that the "arts of love" can lead to the highest mysteries of sight, ultimately catching glimpses of what is good, beautiful and true.

To come back to Dante: he clearly felt a tension between the two attitudes towards eros in his life. His early poems describe the agony of controlling sexual impulses. His muse was, of course, the young lady, Beatrice. Her image utterly, almost ruthlessly, seized his imagination. He reached a pivotal moment in his spiritual and poetic struggle when he realised that exulting the beauty he saw in her could be an end in itself. He gradually found a way of harmonising the love she inspired in him with the ascent of the soul to the divine.

It required a combination of eros and logos, meaning the intelligence or insight that can discern the presence of God. This is because the divine image itself can be known as a combination of eros and logos. "Beatrice is Dante's pole star for finding his way through love's vicissitudes, in his search for what is constant and eternal in love and desire," writes Andrew Frisardi in his Temenos lectures, published as *The Young Dante And The One Love*. In short, the right use of eros is at the heart of his message and he presents a key moment of realisation during Canto 9 of *Purgatorio*. It is worth considering, not least as a case study in combining mortal experience, dreamed insights and ancient mythology.

Violent dreams

The moment comes after Dante and Virgil have emerged from the subterranean darkness of hell. The first part of the Comedy, *Inferno*, relates how their journey begins with a descent into it. They witness the numerous ways in which human beings can become trapped by their desires. It's a crucial part of the journey for Dante because,

when meeting these souls, Dante simultaneously encounters the darker parts of himself. Seeing the extent of these shadows is also to begin to open up to how they may be transformed.

This is what begins to happen on Mount Purgatory, in the second part of the *Divine Comedy*, with a pivotal moment coming in Canto 9. The setting is the end of the first day ascending the mountain. During the day Dante has been finding his bearings in the second domain of his pilgrimage. Exhausted, he now falls asleep and as he sleeps, he dreams. He dreams that he is snatched from the mountain by an eagle. It carries him into the high heavens, much as Jove was said to have abducted Ganymede, lifting him into a burning fire. In Mark Musa's translation, published by Penguin Classics:

*I saw him circle for a while,
then terrible as lightning, he struck down,
swooping me up, up to the sphere of fire.*

Then, Dante wakes with a jolt. He's dazed, "feeling the freezing grip of fright". It takes some comforting words from Virgil to calm him down, and what Virgil tells him is a revelation.

In fact, his guide explains, whilst he slept, a lady from heaven appeared. She is Lucia and, as the day's climb had been hard going for Dante, she had carried him a little further up the mountain. She told Virgil that she wanted to "speed him on his journey up".



A street sign in Ravenna, where Dante is buried

Possession and participation

Much ink has been spilled over the meaning of the dream and its links to the mythology, but it's pretty clear that the vision and what happened whilst he slept are in stark contrast. The dream was a nightmare of barely-disguised sexual violence, an insight that is underlined by several other mythological allusions to uncontained lust that Dante makes in other parts of Canto 9. The reality, whilst he slept, is of love coming to his aid.

Lucia is significant because she is one of three beautiful souls who keep a benign eye on Dante from the celestial heights. The other two are Beatrice and the Virgin Mary, and note: he has not one but three beautiful ladies loving him. It's one indicator

of how eros' passion is transformed. What might be judged almost as a kind of promiscuity becomes an excessive desire and power to help. As to the dream, I think what it implies is something like this: if, inwardly, Dante had experienced the outward actions of Lucia as a kidnap, almost a rape, as he awakens, he realises how profoundly mistaken he is. She was actually speeding him on his journey towards divine love.

The implication of the canto is that the transformation of eros, from its dark manifestations to its true character, requires him to work on his perceptions. He must hold in mind both images, one of violent and lustful snatching, the other of divine embrace and carriage. In so doing, the possessive character of eros that currently dominates his mind is revealed by the dream and its mythological contents. Then, that might give way to the dominate character of divine love, which is of dynamic participation. As it is summarised by the famous last line of *Paradiso*, this is "the love that moves the sun and other stars". The shift is key to Dante's transformational erotic spirituality, and it seems to be confirmed by what happens next in Canto 9.

It turns out that Lucia has carried Dante, with Virgil walking alongside, to a gateway. It marks the start of purgatory proper, which Dante is now ready to enter, having oriented himself and gained a first taste of the dramatic changes in him that the ascent will demand.

Using eros

Dante sees that the gateway can be entered by ascending three steps. The first looks like glass; the second like cracked pumice; the third like flaming blood spurting from a vein. The steps are usually interpreted allegorically by commentators, but I feel a more natural and penetrating way to explain them arises from the experience he has just had. He sees his image in the first step of glass, much as he has seen an aspect of himself in the dream. This is represented in the



Dante's tomb

second step, which he is now able to step on to because he can tolerate the cracked and troubling erotic impulses inside him.

And because that disturbance is born, a third step up becomes possible, when this flaming passion, now in the process of being changed, can bear him to a threshold.

You might say that the dream, the carriage and the gateway are an initiation. Dante still has a long way to go and his erotic desires will require further work. As he follows the path, he learns much more about how his ambivalence about eros has to do with human ignorance and youthful experience, as well as the painful struggle to align his desires, his perceptions, his knowledge and his will so that he can become capable of paradise.

But Canto 9 conveys a central element: that which seems monstrous, feels dark, frightening, possessive and wild – like an uncontrolled rape of life itself – is something remarkably different. If we can bear ourselves, and allow ourselves to be borne, then we will become able to enjoy a free, indulgent and delightful participation with what is beautiful, good and true. Myth plays a key part in this transformation; it can help hold us and interpret current perceptions, making way for more.

In particular, Eros can be transformed, not condemned. It is a love to befriend, not reject. It can energise our steps up Mount Purgatory and, then, flight into paradise. Dante said that he wrote for the benefit of a world which lives badly, not least in its poor use of the divine gift of erotic love. Contemplating each step of his journey might foster the transformation of our own mixed passions. It is a myth for our times as much as his, offering a pathway to liberty by fostering the highest mysteries of divine sight.

Mark Vernon's latest book is Dante's Divine Comedy: A Guide For The Spiritual Journey (Angelico Press), of which this article is an excerpt and adaptation. For more information see www.markvernon.com.

This article is based on a talk given to the Hertfordshire Circle.



Mark Vernon

Newman's Pandemic Ministry: A Balm for the Bereaved

The Covid pandemic should not distract us from the impact of other pandemics in the past. St John Henry Newman was greatly involved with the repeated outbreaks of cholera which struck Britain during the nineteenth century.

By Fr Peter Conley

John Henry Newman's condolence letters had a profound effect on the widow of Rev Walter Mayer. She describes how his words "poured balm into the wounded mind." As did his funeral homily. Upon re-reading it in the evening, she tells Newman: "I seemed to be raised far above things of time and sense. I forgot I was a mourner". (Letters and Diaries II:59; 64 fn1).



Fr Peter Conley

Froude's attention to a case of cholera which Rev Samuel Rickards has in his parish. (Letters and Diaries III:7). It was located near a port where a coal barge carrying infected sailors had docked, but not quarantined, as the Government ordered ships to do, in October 1831. Until the mid-1850s the disease itself was thought to be spread by bad smells or contagion rather than contaminated water supplies. In fact Newman had speculated that the reason Birmingham had fewer instances was because of the City's drainage system.

In his own pastoral setting of Littlemore, Newman wrote a specific *Cholera Memorandum* (revised in 1857 and 1874). This charted both its presence and Newman's absence, for reasons of work and recuperation. He notes that when he heard of a person with suspected (or actual) cholera, he "went at once to the house where the suspicion lay." He also records an instance where he was in two minds whether to return to his parish base as the disease was circulating outside the church

This article explores how Newman's correspondence and sermons can continue to bring consolation, in the circumstances of Covid-19, when viewed in light of his own pandemic ministry. Newman lived through four major cholera outbreaks, namely: 1831-2 where 21,800 people died; this figure was significantly increased in 1848-9 to 53,292; then the year 1853-4 saw the number of fatalities fall to 20,097; and in 1866 14,378 men, women and children lost their lives. (Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine Vol XLI (1947),169-70).

Newman draws Richard Hurrell

boundaries. This is because, as he explains to Henry Wilberforce: "It would grieve me much did a case occur when I was away." (Letters and Diaries III:75;68).

During the first pandemic his sister Jemima, anxious for his safety, recounts the rumour in Oxford that 13 out of 15 university servants (or Scouts) died as the result of contaminated soup, left all night, after the Magdalen College annual Gaudy celebration. A month after, Newman tells Samuel Wood that "the cholera has made a second or third start in Oxford." Several weeks later, in his diary, since the disease appears to have run its course, Newman notes that he is planning, with the Archdeacon, a thanksgiving service. (Letters and Diaries III:77;91;97).

As a Catholic priest he said 'anti-cholera' masses and led benedictions for its demise. Newman never forgot being part of the 13 parishes under the Oxford Board of Health which, in 1832, had 174 cases of cholera with 96 deaths – 25 of which were of children. The Archive refers to the sick as having been "attacked without distinction." (Memorials of the Malignant of Oxford (1835),13). This is a chilling reminder that some of the early narratives surrounding Covid-19, described it in terms of a 'war'.

Newman also drew military analogies when commenting about his own grief. In the midst of coping with the dual deaths of his community Doctor and the critical illness of a friend, he confides to Anne Mozley that it is like being "in a hail of bullets". And to James Hope-Scott he states: "The March of time is very solemn now – the year seems strewn with losses – and to hear from you is like hearing the voice of a friend on a field of battle". (Letters and Dairies XXVII:13; XIX:410). His words to Edward Badeley are particularly apposite, given the restrictions upon human intimacy that we have all experienced, when social distancing was advised in the midst of national lockdowns:



Anne Mozley

"There is something awful in the silent restless sweep of time – and, as years go on, and friends are taken away, one draws the thought of those who remain about one, as in cold weather one buttons up great coats and capes for protection." (Letters and Diaries XIX:277).

Given the background of cholera's impact across the country in 1832, Newman preaches his sombre-toned sermon *The Lapse of Time*. This emphasises the fragility of life and the certainty of death; the trauma of bereavement and the need for conversion, amidst the reality of God's merciful judgment. Caring for the poor, who were the ones most affected by cholera, became a major priority for Newman. He was conscious

of their spiritual, practical and social needs. He provided coal for heating, secured employment opportunities through his contacts and paid their bills despite being financially stretched himself.

He recognised their needs to relieve stress and robustly defended their dignity to Charles Golithly after it was undermined by The Temperance Society calling them “drunkards”. Newman reacted strongly against this crude characterisation by saying that “during the prevalence of the cholera (this) was very presumptuous and hard-hearted.” To cope himself, he mentions that, throughout September, he played the violin to relax. At the end of October 1832, his diary records that he “buried early porter of All Souls, suspected to have died of cholera.” (Letters and Diaries III:55;108). He also refers to another favourite hobby to his Aunt Elizabeth:

What a dream, to be sure, that coming of cholera is! How it threatened, and how it went away! The most mysterious circumstance is that it was not overcome. It was not that medical science met and foiled it: but after showing its invincible powers it retired in triumph, as mysteriously as it came...I am reading Lochart's Life of Scott for recreation. (Letters and Diaries IX:76)

Newman's understanding of how to strengthen people's faith, hope and love, in the face of epidemics, developed as well. A short time after remarking in 1832 to Hurrell Froude that, as well as the Asiatic strain, “there is much English cholera about” (Letters and Diaries III:7), Newman delivers a sermon entitled ‘*On justification by faith alone*’. A decade later, on the cusp of a fresh wave of infections, he enhances the conclusion of *The Lapse of Time*:

...it is not merely a state of grace in which Christ puts us, He puts grace into our hearts. He is not merely around us but in us... He enters into our hearts, our thoughts, our affections, our aims, our exertions. He enlarged our faith. He deepens our repentance, He inflames our love, He strengthens our obedience, He beautifies and perfects our holiness. (Blehl, JHN Sermons 1824-43, Vol II, 23:183).

The paschal mystery

Newman focuses upon the paschal mystery when comforting the bereaved. Writing to Mrs Froude over the death of her son Arthur, he observes: “This is a sorrowful Easter day for you – yet a joyful one too. Through the past week you have been like the Blessed Virgin under the cross.” (Letters and Diaries XXIV: 61). As well as being infused with the reality of risen life, Newman was mindful of the intense suffering grief brings. In his sermon *Affliction, a School of Comfort*, he crystallises his thought. By permitting the loss of a loved one

God brings those who grieve...into pain, that they may be like what Christ was, and may be led to think of Him, not themselves. He brings them into trouble, that they may be near Him. When they mourn, they are more intimately in His presence than they are at any other time. Bodily pain, anxiety, bereavement, distress, are to them His forerunners. It is a solemn thing, while it is a privilege, to look upon those whom He thus visits. (Parochial and Plain Sermons V:21).

Uniting himself with the sufferings of Christ, and inviting others to do the same, remained for Newman an on-going personal journey, especially in respect of his youngest sister Mary and his Oratorian confrère Ambrose St John. As Louis Bouyer in *Newman's Life and Spirituality* perceptively asks “if the wound remains open does it not

become the glorious stigmata on the body of the Risen Saviour?" (p.109).

Sorting through the personal possessions of family, friends or relatives is especially difficult. Newman empathises with Lord Kerr's task when he says it is "like a second death." He admits to Harriet that opening a box and seeing Mary's handwriting so "decomposed my head" that he immediately closed it and distracted his thoughts. He also remarks to Anne Mozley that there is nothing "so painful as dismantling a home". (Letters and Diaries XXVI:314; II:91; XXXIX:227). Such circumstances brought us added anxiety during Covid-19, especially when the guidance restricted households mixing freely to support each other.

Newman drew great strength from celebrating mass surrounded by the memorial cards adorning the wall of his private chapel. Supporting Mrs Maxwell-Scott, after the loss of her brother-in-law and uncle, he says:

You have indeed accumulated sorrows. One's consolation under such trials, which are our necessary lot here, is that we have additional friends in heaven to plead and interest themselves for us. This I am confident of – if it is not presumptuous to be confident – but I think, as life goes on, it will be brought home to you, as it has been to me, that there are those who are busied about us, and in various daily matters taking our part. (Letters and Diaries XXX:67).

Adapting insights from Joseph Butler's work on religious analogy, John Keble's poetic *Christian Year* and, in particular, the Alexandrian Fathers, Newman develops his sacramental principle – to explain how we can continue to be influenced by the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. In his *Autobiographical Writings* (p.213), Newman reveals that he continues to sense Mary still:

Here everything reminds me of her. She was with us at Oxford, and I took delight in showing her the place – and every building, every tree, seems to speak of her. I cannot realise that I will never see her again.

He expands upon this reality in his sermon *Gratitude in Christ*:

We naturally love places which remind us of friends; and sights and sounds and scents



change in our estimate of them by our associating them with those we love – thus pain loses its acuteness, and bereavement its heartache, and the worldly anxiety no longer dries up the spirit, when we by faith regard them as memorials for Him who once was a man of sorrows for us and acquainted with grief. (JHN Sermons 1824-1843, Vol II, n 23, 183)

The reassurance of Jesus's continual presence, in grief, is balm for the bereaved. Newman surely has his ministry during the cholera epidemic of 1832 in mind as he concludes, in 1835, in his sermon *Tears of Christ at the Grave of Lazarus*:

Let us take to ourselves these comfortable thoughts, both in the contemplation of our own death, or upon the death of friends. Where ever faith in Christ is, there is Christ Himself. He said to Martha, "Believest thou this?" Wherever there is a heart to answer, "Lord I believe," there is Christ present.

There our Lord vouchsafes to stand, though unseen – whether over the bed of death or over the grave; whether we ourselves are sinking or those who are dear to us. Blessed by His name! Nothing can rob us of this consolation: we will be certain, through His grace, that He is standing over us in love, as though we saw Him. We will not, after our experience of Lazarus's history, doubt an instant that He is thoughtful about us. (Parochial and Plain Sermons III, 10).

The second, deadlier, upsurge

Strengthened by the security of knowing that Jesus was with him in every setting, during the second, deadlier, national upsurge, Newman conducts the funeral of Edward Caswell's wife who, he informs Henry Wilberforce, "died by the most violent Cholera" within 14 hours. (Letters and Dairies XIII:260). At the same time, news of the Kent Oratory's care of the stricken hop-pickers filtered through. Once back in Birmingham, Newman, together with Ambrose and Br Aloysius, bravely respond to an emergency request to cover for a struggling priest. Bilston, nearby, was the centre of 3,568 cases in 1832, where 742 people died. When Newman and his colleagues gave their pastoral support in 1849, there had been, in a two-month period, 1,365 deaths in the area itself and in Wolverhampton, adjacent to it. (Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine Vol XLI (1947), 166-67). This prospect alarmed Newman's parishioners who, he relates to John Bowden, were crying as if he and his fellow Oratorians, "were going to be killed." (Letters and Diaries XIII:261).

Although the immediate crisis receded after a few days, and he safely returned, Newman was profoundly affected by what he had witnessed – as he relates to Jemima on 9 January, 1850:

I have seen very little of severe illness but certainly the cholera is very shocking to see. We went over for a time to Bilston where it raged so, that the priests were unequal to it. Multitudes crowded for reception into the church, and, also, could not be received for want of instructors and confessors. They did not send for us till one priest was ill abed, and by that time the disease was abating – but the sight of the sick in the hospital was terrible and brought before one most awful thought. The night calls, which were frequent, involving walks from nightfall to morning of four to (I think) seven miles were the most trying part of the toil, but I had none of that, though my dear companion had. Before we came, the priest had had in succession (the same priest) three or four journeys through the night – just getting into bed to be called out again. But I believe none died all

through the country; whereas the fever the year before carried off, I think, at least thirty. A new year has commenced, and a new half century – great events are before us, though we may not live to see them. (Letters and Diaries XIII: 377-78).

Newman's stark conclusion is very revealing. It indicates the real sense of trepidation people commonly went through in the illness's wake. Amidst the next national pandemic of 1854, he refers to the great work of the London-based Oratory who offered themselves to serve the diocese, and were "in the thick of Cholera". (Letters and Diaries XVI:248). Then, in 1857, at the University Church in Dublin, with doubtless knowledge about the Irish epidemics of the 1820s and 30s, and especially, 1848, in his mind, he reflects on the mission of St Paul.

Newman's own commentary could be surely said of him, in light of his pandemic ministry to the sick and dying and their families, relatives and friends, in Oxford, Birmingham, Bilston and beyond.

He loved his brethren, not only "for Jesus' sake", to use his expression, but for their own sake also. He lived in them; he felt with them and for them; he was anxious about them; he gave them help, and in turn he looked for comfort from them. His mind was like some instrument of music, harp or viol, the strings of which vibrate, though untouched, by notes which other instruments give forth, and he was ever, according to his own precept, "rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that wept"; and thus, he was the least magisterial of all teachers and the gentlest and most amicable of all rulers. (Sermons Preached on Various Occasions, Sermon 8:114)

*(Edited from the e-journal **The Newman Review** (May 2021) and used with the permission of the National Institute for Newman Studies, Pittsburgh)*

THE TUDOR QUEENS

Two cruel Queens and sisters who,
Infected by their tyrant father's blood,
Resolved to rule in his despotic ways
Hunting down those to face a gruesome death
Whose consciences rejected their Queen's Church.
Yet, since their reigns, one Queen's revered as 'Good'
And one reviled as 'Bloody', though
Both stand guilty of such monstrous acts.
Their joint legacy to the people was
An England deep divided and discordant
For three hundred years and more.
Ah Jesus, Prince of Peace!
What dreadful deeds were done
In Thy dear name.

Eileen Cheverton 1921-2021

Eileen Cheverton, a past President of the Newman Association, died just before last Christmas aged 100. As President in 1992 she wrote the foreword to *The Use of Gifts*, a publication which celebrated the Association's first fifty years. "The fortunes of the Newman have varied over 50 years", she wrote then. "Membership has ebbed and flowed. Circles have come and gone and been replaced. But the Newman is still part of the questioning Church, maintaining a contemporary relevance to the world". She concluded by saying that the attempt to bring theological understanding and insight to many more people was an answer to John Henry Newman's call for "an educated laity".

She was central to the restoration of the Association's journal *The Newman* in 1984, being one of a group of Newman members in the West Country who inspired the project. Robert Williams was the first editor but Eileen took over at various periods including during the years 2000-2008 when she was already into her 80s. Editorial meetings were held in her Cheltenham home over beer and sandwiches.

She was born in 1921 in London but spent much of her childhood on the Isle of Wight where her father's family had originated. Her parents set up a boarding house in Ventnor but the business failed during the Depression and the family moved to Bitterne near Southampton after Eileen won a scholarship to go to Itchen Grammar School. She went on to study English Language and Literature at what was then the Southampton branch of the University College of London.

On graduating in 1942 she was seconded to Bletchley Park, working in Hut Six which was at the centre of the mission to break the Germans' Enigma Code. Having signed the Official Secrets Act she was reluctant to talk about her work at Bletchley. After the war she moved to Cheltenham to continue her work at GCHQ, the intelligence-gathering unit.

When you thought of Eileen you always thought of her loyalty, her steadfastness and her quiet, unobtrusive acts of kindness. She cared for her mother for many years before she died and always had the habit of suddenly "being there" at a time when she was needed. This was accompanied by a matter-of-fact attitude to situations and she once memorably observed when a difficulty arose: "I've survived bombs". This was no idle boast as Southampton, where she was at university from 1939 to 1942, was one of the most heavily-bombed towns in the UK. Her matter-of-fact attitude was seen too





Hut Six

when, just before a meeting of the Editorial Committee of the Newman Journal at her house, all running water to houses in Cheltenham was cut off due to a flood. There was no question of cancelling or rearranging the meeting; instead, she got buckets and pails of water which were strategically placed around her house and the meeting proceeded as normal.

The Newman was a great part of Eileen's life and she was surely the quintessential Newman member. As a "Cradle Catholic" her fundamental loyalty to the Church was part of her life but it was not an unquestioning loyalty. She served as National President from 1991-1993 and when she died must surely have been the longest serving member of the Newman Association. She was, naturally, a stalwart member of her own local Circle, North Gloucestershire, for a great many years.

In 1984 what had been the Newman Newsletter was replaced by the *Newman Journal* and Eileen was one of the original Editorial Committee along with Robert Williams and others such as Philip Daniel. Eileen was Editor for many issues and meetings of the Editorial Committee at her home always followed the same pattern: sandwiches, then a discussion of what should and should not go in, punctuated by a vigorous debate on current topics in the Catholic Church followed by a glass of wine and good fellowship. She used to describe some articles as "timeless" and these went into a file to be used when other copy was short. The membership of the committee stayed the same for over twenty years which was a tribute to the enduring friendship which we enjoyed and Eileen's hospitality.

Then the journal had to be pasted up. No one dared to suggest the use of a computer! Instead, scissors, paste and a ruler did duty and $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches were carefully measured for the amount of text to be inserted. This may seem old-fashioned but the journal came out in this way, on time and full of excellent material, for nearly thirty years. She could, too, be quite disarmingly direct. On one occasion Eileen and one of us had laboured all afternoon on the "paste-up" of the journal, expecting to be joined by a third person. However, that assistant did not arrive until the very moment that the job was done. With a slight twinkle in her eye Eileen told the offender very firmly: "You are in disgrace!"

Eileen enjoyed travel and was fluent in many languages. This was reflected in her commitment to Pax Romana where she made many visits to meetings held in various parts of Europe and gave detailed accounts of these in the Newman Journal. She made many visits to Rome and when once asked if she had ever met the Pope calmly said; "Oh yes. Pope Pius XII". A friend that she was with had a cousin who was an Archbishop in the Vatican and through him the visit was arranged. Eileen explained that they just entered the Vatican and were escorted along some corridors and there

was the Pope to meet them. Just like that! There was no elaborate security in those days, she remarked, but the Pope apparently could not fathom what a “civil servant” was. Kevin Lambert remembers Eileen’s story about being in Assisi in 1997 for a Pax Romana meeting. She had gone for a walk in the surrounding countryside and while she was out, there was an earthquake. It was the earthquake which destroyed the beautiful frescoes in the basilica – and killed several people.

She only spoke of her work at Bletchley Park in later years as she, like many others of her generation, took the view that having taken the oath to observe the Official Secrets Act nothing should be said, even though the story of Bletchley Park became well known. When she did talk about her experiences she explained that she had not worked directly on codebreaking but was employed to listen to German radio transmissions, looking for unusual patterns of activity. She recalled that she worked shifts, was in Hut 6, and that the Saturday evening dances were lovely.

One tactic was to look for where in any message the encrypted version of the words “Heil Hitler” appeared as it was a requirement for the Germans to include this somewhere. Once identified this made codebreaking easier. Another tactic was to watch for where a lazy German had used the previous day’s code. After the War she worked in the Foreign Office in London before moving to Cheltenham to work at GCHQ.

Eileen’s editorship of *A Use of Gifts* was appropriate as Eileen herself had many gifts and used them wisely and generously. One now has the sense of a life richly and fully lived, sustained always by a quiet but steadfast Christian faith. One cannot forget her.

A last memory: the first time we met Eileen was at a Newman Conference at Spode House nearly forty years ago. The theme was “Unbelief” and she presented a paper on this topic from North Gloucestershire Circle. She began by saying: “It was my job to knock this into shape”. That was the typical Eileen; always getting on with things, sorting them out and indeed knocking them into shape. May she be doing the same in Heaven.

With thanks to Anne and John Duddington

From A Use of Gifts, 1992

The Newman Association sees its primary purpose to enable Catholics to use their minds and their talents for the extension of the Kingdom of God. In the early days the Association was closely linked with the universities. Members were almost exclusively graduates and there was considerable intellectual firepower which is perhaps not now so prominent. The wider membership today can be seen as a response to changing times and the broadening of educational possibilities.

In the Association members find the opportunity and the stimulus to keep in touch, however superficially, with developing thought in the Church on moral and theological issues. The local circles are all-important and through them The Newman, with its national and international, professional and academic links, can offer theological understanding and insight of a high standard to many people, some of whom have lost touch with any academic institution.

Eileen Cheverton

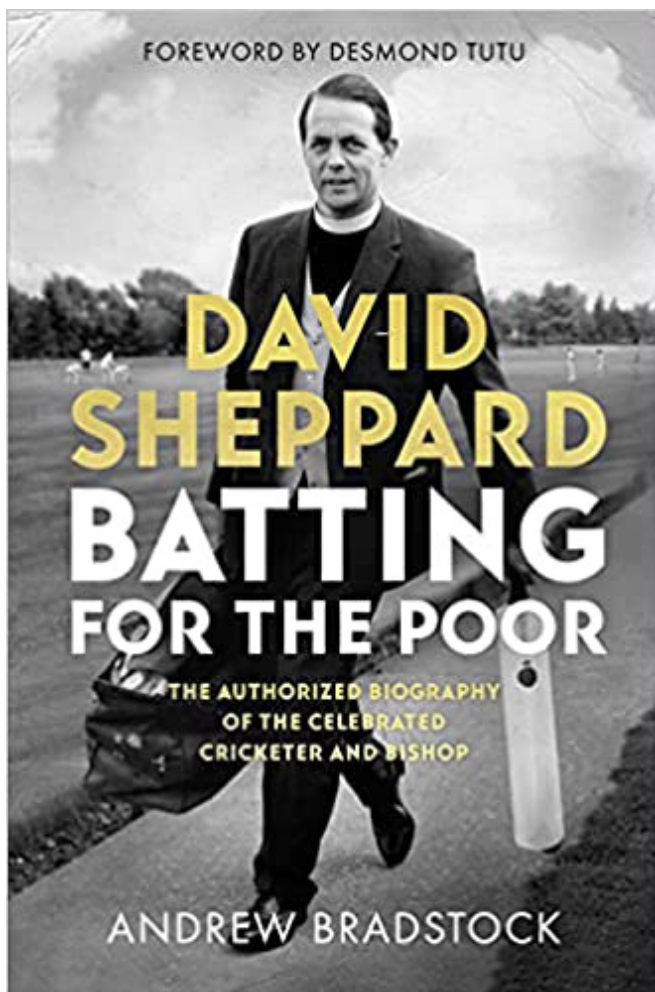
Book Review

***David Sheppard, Batting for the Poor*, by Andrew Bradstock (SPCK; London, 2019)
384 pp. ISBN 0281081034**

As with many boys of my age David Sheppard was a great hero, not of course as a Bishop but as a cricketer. I have vivid memories of travelling to the cricket at Hastings in the sidecar of my father's motor-cycle to see what was then the traditional match between Kent and Sussex. If memory serves me right Sheppard made a century and Sussex a large score which doubtless, as a Man of Kent, much disappointed me. Now the ground is occupied by a Tesco (!) and Sheppard, having gone on to be Bishop of Liverpool, is no longer with us. However, we do have this splendid biography by Andrew Bradstock, which has a foreword by Desmond Tutu and is authorised in that it draws on the subject's private papers. Incidentally the author notes that Sheppard was part of the last

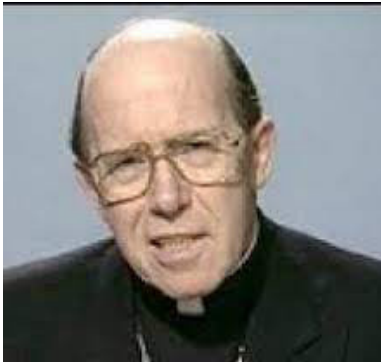
generation of public figures to operate almost entirely before electronic communications became commonplace. As a result he left over 60 box files of correspondence. One wonders how future biographers will manage.

As Bradstock says: "David Sheppard achieved the distinction of becoming a household name in two different spheres of life, cricket and the Church". This book weaves the two together noting the times when, as his cricket career progressed but at the same time he was either an ordinand or ordained, he was torn between the two. It is interesting to note the advice,



which Sheppard always treasured, given to him by Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher about whether he should accept the captaincy of a tour party to Australia. Fisher advised that he should interpret this “as a direct call”. Indeed Fisher felt that standards were slipping and that Sheppard could do something about this: “As I understand, there really is a crying need for someone to bring back into the higher ranks of English cricket a sort of moral decisiveness and discipline which has been slipping”. In the end Sheppard was not chosen anyway and indeed standards have slipped.

From ordination and a curacy in Islington, Sheppard became Warden of the Mayflower Centre in East London and here he started on what was his life’s work: mission to inner city areas. The book does not gloss over the difficulties faced by not only David but also Grace, to whom he was newly-married. As Grace remarked “she was a 22-year-old with limited experience of the world, taking up this new life among people whose ways were so different from all I’d ever known”. In fact some of the most moving parts of the book are about their marriage and Grace’s struggles with agoraphobia.



Archbishop Derek Worlock

For Catholic readers some of the most interesting passages in this book concern Sheppard’s partnership with Archbishop Derek Worlock when he became Bishop of Liverpool. As is well known, Worlock did not want to go to Liverpool, having hoped for Westminster, but on his first evening in the city, on a dark February night, Sheppard appeared with a bottle of wine and from then on a memorable ecumenical partnership developed, which became a triumvirate when John Newton became the Moderator of the Free Church Council for Liverpool.

The book recounts the tumultuous and tragic events in those years such as the Heysel football disaster in 1985 and then Hillsborough in 1989, together with the storms caused by the actions of Liverpool City Council under the leadership of Derek Hatton, then the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1982, when he went to both Cathedrals, and the reaction to the Church of England report, *Faith in the City*.

This last brought down upon him the ire of the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, which brings us to the question of whether she chose George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury in preference to David Sheppard. Andrew Bradstock has done some fascinating research here and, in the end, concludes that we cannot know but he does recount that the late Frank Field asked her in the late 1980’s if she would appoint him as Archbishop. “Yes of course. He always tells me to my face what he thinks and we have a good argument”. At all events Sheppard remained at Liverpool until he retired but after this was awarded a life peerage and was active in the House of Lords.

David Sheppard came from a conventional middle class churchgoing home but dated his conversion to an evangelical meeting in Cambridge in 1949. From that moment, he later wrote, Christianity had become “the central fact upon which my own life turned every day”. This splendid and moving book shows just how his conviction of this inspired him to a life of Christian service in so many different spheres.

John Duddington

Spirituality Page: Henry Vaughan

Henry Vaughan was a Seventeenth Century Welsh poet who also practised medicine. He is best known for his poem *Silex Scintillans* and his poetry has enjoyed something of a renaissance in more recent times.

Following study in Oxford and in London he returned to his native Breconshire, which was a source of inspiration for his writings, and he lived on the estate at Llanisantffread where he was born and which he inherited from his parents. He married twice and had four children, dying at the age of 74 in 1695. He had a strong attachment to the Established Church and his brother was ordained an Anglican priest, being deprived of his living during the Commonwealth.

The disruption of this period caused Vaughan much distress and a good deal of his poetry of that time is directed to showing his readers how to understand their membership of a church whose actual body in the form of regular worship is absent. This was in fact the period when he was most active as a poet and much of his work is directed to giving his readers a kind of standpoint from which to judge present travails such as in the words "foolish ranges" in the poem "Peace" below.

He was heavily influenced by the religious poet George Herbert, and it is his religious poetry that remains critically acclaimed. His poem "*They are all Gone into the World of Light*" concerns the mysteries of death and the speaker's desire to uncover more about those who have passed away. It ends with the lines:

*Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective as they pass
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
Where I shall need no glass.*

One of the loveliest of his poems is "Peace". Vaughan wrote this in 1650 as part of *Silex Scintillans* and it describes Heaven as a place without danger or sadness, filled only with the peace and happiness of God. There, we will find the angels and Christ "One born in a manger" who "commands the beauteous files". Hubert Parry included it in his *Songs of Farewell* composed in 1918, the year before he died, and the poem is of course especially relevant at this troubled time.

Peace

My Soul, there is a country
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skillful in the wars;

There, above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits, crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.

He is thy gracious friend
And (O my Soul awake!)
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.

Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

Anne and John Duddington



A Parisian railway worker watches Notre Dame burning on April 15th, 2019

As night falls we common citizens of Paris
pass the news from mouth to mouth,
and every media tells the same story.
A thousand cameras tell the bitter truth,
the flames devour your mighty structure.
Our Notre Dame,
once proud Queen of the Seine,
Is surely burning to the ground.

But how should I understand the loss?
Religion just passed me by,
I am but a humble railway worker.
And do many in the watching crowds,
See more than a shattering spectacle?
Great Notre Dame,
Are you indeed no more
than a broken pile of stones?

True, here and there, huddled together,
small groups kneel and pray the Rosary,
and some sing the Salve Regina:
Mother of mercy to thee do we cry!
For them, I suppose, you are indeed an inspiration.
But, Notre Dame,
My faith lies in the Party,
And you never did that for me.

Yet I know I will feel your loss acutely.
Some whisper that your burning is but a sign.
Sic transit gloria mundi they say,
thus will pass all worldly trappings.
Yes, but for me you are more than earthly glories,
dear silent Lady of stone;
I know only that
somehow you have touched my heart.

For a thousand years you stood,
soaring sign of our City's greatness,
pride of its people, whoever they were.
Revolutions and wars passed you by,
enemies camped their tents around you.
Our Lady of Paris,
proud Queen of the Seine,
you are our living history.

Countless Kings came to you for blessing,
Emperors were crowned within you,
Presidents were buried from you.
To the world you were our City,
a mighty symbol of state.
But Notre Dame, for us, the people,
just your presence was a comfort.
So, know we will not desert you now!

And that is why four hundred brave fire fighters,
risk death to battle the inferno within your walls,
defy the furnace for a whole day and night,
pump millions of litres from the river
to save you from the engulfing flames.

Dear Notre Dame,
maybe the Seine on which you stand,
will with their strength yet save you.

For all night long, as the fire raged on and on,
your fate lay in the balance.

Huge silent crowds lined the banks.
The world watched in horror,
citizen and stranger joined together.

A common cry was heard:

Notre Dame,
dear lovely Lady by the Seine,
you will not perish by the flame!

It will not be true that you are vanquished!

Consumed by vast flames perhaps,
your great spire tumbled to the earth,
your vaults and buttresses destroyed,
your magical stained glass no more.

But dear Notre Dame,
Guardian of our City's soul,
do not for a moment doubt
that France will raise you from the ashes!

Harcourt Concannon
November 2021



The Newman Association Council

There have been changes in some of the top positions in the Newman Association.

Winifred Flanagan, who became President in 2018, is seen here presiding at the Zoomed AGM held in January 2021. She was due to step down at the AGM scheduled for January this year but that meeting was postponed. She remained in office until the AGM could be rescheduled but in April she fell very ill with Covid and resigned. Winifred was briefly in hospital

but fortunately has recovered quickly. She will remain on Council as Past President. Brian Hamill, pictured below, who until two years ago was Hon. Secretary of the Association, was ready to succeed to the Presidency at the AGM now scheduled for June 25th. Voting papers are being posted to members with this issue of *The Newman*. In the circumstances, however, he was immediately installed as Acting President after Winifred's resignation.

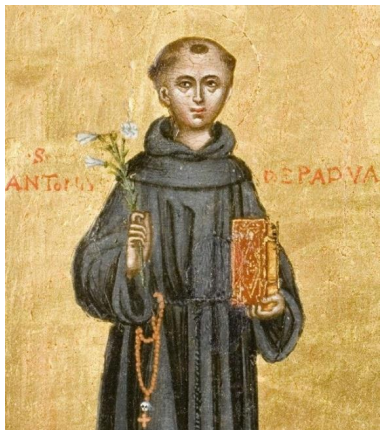


A member of the York Circle, Brian is a former monk and priest of Mount St Bernard Abbey and a retired Classics teacher. Resident in Wakefield he is active in local ecumenical groups.

In addition, some new candidates are standing for Council. Professor Terry Webster of the Tyneside Circle has been a Professor of English Literature at Newcastle University. He says he likes to write provocative letters to *The Tablet*.

John Duckett of the Coventry Circle was a career banker but he is now, he says, "retired and a busy culture vulture".

• Sadly, we have also seen the retirement of one of the Newman's most stalwart characters. Kevin Lambert organised the Newman Pilgrimages for many years and took on editorial responsibility for the *Newman Association News*, the newsletter that is emailed to Circle Secretaries, mainly with news of recent Council meetings. But he has been very ill and decided that the recent 99th issue of the newsletter was to be his last. He is due our enormous thanks.



St Anthony of Padua

Postponement of the 14th Newman Pilgrimage

The Pilgrimage to Padua in Italy which was scheduled for the 2nd to 9th October 2022 has been postponed.

It is hoped to arrange a similar journey in the earlier part of next year, probably in May. Padua, known as the City of St Anthony, is in the Veneto region.

Full details will be given in the next issue of *The Newman*.

Inquiries may be made to the organiser:
Anthony Coles, 18 Maresfield Gardens, London
NW3 5SX; Tel. 020 7431 3414; email address
arctc@btinternet.com



The Newman Association

Postponed Annual General Meeting for the year 2020-21

This AGM will now take place at 11.30 a.m. on Saturday, June 25th 2022, at the County Hotel, Neville Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 5DF.

The Day's Programme

11.30 AGM

1.00 Mass to mark the Newman Association's 80th anniversary

1.45 Lunch

3.00 A talk by Dr Greg Ryan: Synodality: Buzzword or Breakthrough?

The AGM will take place in the County Suite of the County Hotel, which is exactly opposite Newcastle Central railway station. Those coming by car should enter Newcastle via the A167 and take the first left after the Tyne Bridge if coming from the south, or the final turn off the roundabout before the Tyne Bridge if coming from the north. There is limited parking in the hotel itself, more in the railway station.