

Newman and the Roman College: A Formative Exchange

JOSEPH CAROLA, S.J.
Pontifical Gregorian University
Rome, Italy

Introduction

The Pontifical Gregorian University's archives contain an autograph letter from Saint John Henry Newman of the Birmingham Oratory to Jesuit Father Giovanni Perrone, Prefect of Studies at the Roman College and Consultor for Propaganda Fide. Newman wrote to Perrone on May 5, 1867, in response to the Jesuit's letter of April 27 of that same year. Perrone had written to Newman in order to assure him of his affection, support, and defense. "You cannot believe how much I have always loved and esteemed Your Reverence," Perrone writes in Italian, "I know that Your Reverence has lately had some bitter disappointments, and I have felt them as if they were mine." "In certain circumstances," Perrone continues, "I have taken up your defense, and I have been successful. I cannot tell you anything more, given the nature of the affair. If another occasion should present itself to me, you may be sure that you will always have in me one who will defend your cause."¹ The immediate case, to which Perrone refers, may well have

¹ Archivio Storico della Pontificia Università Gregoriana [APUG], 105.II.299–300 (1954): "Non può credere quanto io abbia mai sempre amata e stimata V. R. . . . So che V. R. in questi ultimi tempi ebbe alcuni acerbi dispiaceri, e li sentii come fossero stati miei. . . . In alcune circostanze io ho prese le sue difese, e sono riuscite a buon termine. Non posso dirle altro, così esigendolo la natura della cosa. Se mi si presenterà un'altra occasione, ella può esser sicura, che avrà sempre in me chi

been the question of mixed education, that is, the question of Catholics studying at Protestant educational institutions, namely, Oxford University. Officials at Propaganda Fide, the Cardinal Prefect Alessandro Barnabò, and Pope Pius IX himself opposed such education. They were, moreover, under the false impression that Newman not only tolerated it in isolated cases, but indeed encouraged it in general.

When Newman responded to Perrone's letter, his fellow Birmingham Oratorian and dear friend Ambrose St. John was at that very moment in Rome attempting to clarify the matter of mixed education and to reassure all concerned of Newman's obedience. But St. John also sought to resolve another matter. Newman's 1859 *Rambler* article, "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine," had been delated to Propaganda Fide on the grounds that it contained material heresy—the neuralgic point being that for the sixty years after the Council of Nicaea the *Ecclesia docens* had been silent before the continual onslaught of Arianism.² Already, in 1860, at Newman's request, Propaganda Fide had composed a letter containing problematic passages from the article in order for Newman to clarify them. The Congregation had entrusted that letter to Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, who was then in Rome. But Wiseman, busy with other matters, failed to deliver that letter to Newman. Consequently, Newman simply thought that the Congregation had dropped the matter when, in fact, it had not. Receiving no response from Newman, the Congregation concluded that the English Oratorian remained obstinately disobedient. Unfortunately, they themselves made no further inquiries.³ As a result, a cloud hung over Newman in Rome for years until Ambrose St. John traveled to the Eternal City in May of 1867 with the dual mission of both resolving the misunderstanding concerning mixed education and investigating the lingering problems arising from the *Rambler* article.

Writing in Latin to Perrone that same month, Newman expressed his joy and gratitude for Perrone's letter. "For who am I," Newman humbly remarks, "that after so many years I am still in your memory and heart? And by what means have I deserved to be vindicated and defended so

difenderà la sua causa." See also John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* [LD], vol. 23, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain and Thomas Gornall, S.J. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 204–5. For the English translation, see Carleton P. Jones, O.P., *Three Latin Papers of John Henry Newman: A Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas S. Thomae in Urbe, 1995), 104.

² See LD, 23:219.

³ See Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 488–89.

charitably by you?" Perrone's defense immensely consoled him. Indeed, it meant a great deal to Newman to have the support of "a man distinguished and subtly versed in the schools of theologians." For Newman always protested that he himself was not a theologian, but rather one who tried his best to treat theological matters "in a zealous, accurate and cautious way." "I rejoice greatly now," he concludes, "to be thought of as having written on these matters so as to seem to have pleased, not myself alone, but also you."⁴ This heart-warming, epistolary exchange between the greatest English Catholic of the nineteenth century and the same century's most venerable theologian at the Roman College was rooted in a friendship that had begun some twenty years before.

Rome 1846–1847

On October 9, 1845, at Littlemore near Oxford, Passionist Father Domenico Barberi received John Henry Newman into full communion with the Catholic Church. One year later the then Bishop Nicholas Wiseman sent Newman and his companion Ambrose St. John, also a recent Catholic convert, to the College of Propaganda Fide in Rome in order to prepare for ordination to the Catholic priesthood. Newman and St. John arrived in the Eternal City at 10:00 p.m. on October 28, 1846—a very rainy day, Newman reports.⁵ They found temporary lodgings at the Casa Bouisse on the Piazza d'Ara Coeli, where they remained for almost two weeks while the Jesuits, who administered the College at Propaganda near the Spanish Steps, completely renovated their distinguished guests' rooms. The morning after they had arrived in Rome, Newman and St. John made their way directly to the Vatican basilica in order to recite the Apostles' Creed at St. Peter's tomb. To their surprise, Pope Pius IX was celebrating Mass there nearby them. It was their first Mass in the city. The Pope, moreover, was providentially the first person whom they saw in Rome.⁶

By mid-November Newman and St. John had moved into their rooms at Propaganda. Among the approximately 150 students in college, they were the only Englishmen. Their college-mates, who were notably younger than Newman and his companion, spoke thirty-two different languages. Approximately thirty students spoke English. As a young man touring the Mediterranean in 1833, Newman had studied conversational Italian. With

⁴ APUG, 105.II.299–300; *LD*, 23:204–5; for the English translation, cf. Jones, *Three Latin Papers*, 105.

⁵ See John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 11, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), 266.

⁶ See *LD*, 11:282.

his previous knowledge of Italian grammar, he had found it to be an easy language, and he had thought that, given sufficient immersion, he could have mastered it.⁷ But in 1846, he confesses: "Speaking languages is not my gift."⁸ At the "dopo pranzo recreation" with the Italian Jesuit fathers, he simply remained silent as he had once done when a shy undergraduate in the Oriel College common room. Nonetheless, Newman did manage to strike up friendships in college "with various clever youths from the United States who," Newman predicts, "will be important persons there hereafter, if they live."⁹ For, sadly, the Roman climate, which Newman himself continually lamented, undermined their health. The American students were often in the infirmary, and a good number of them died in Rome before ever returning to the United States.

As for the Jesuits, Newman could not have spoken more highly of them. "Nothing can exceed the kindness of the people with whom I am," he writes.¹⁰ The Jesuit rector at Propaganda Fide, Father Antonio Bresciani, sympathized deeply with his English guests. He anticipated all their needs, even providing for their afternoon tea. He was, according to Newman, "a man of real delicacy as well as kindness."¹¹ But Newman reserves his highest praise for the college's Jesuit confessor, Father Giuseppe Repetti, whom he described nineteen years later as "one of the holiest, most prudent men I ever knew."¹² Newman did indeed come to know the Roman Jesuits well during his thirteen-month sojourn in the Eternal City. They "were the real men in Rome," he observes, "i.e. we fall in with none others. I don't mean to say how great they are, but only they are the prominent men."¹³ Admittedly, he found them to be generally "cut and dried."¹⁴ But nonetheless, they did edify him. They were in his estimation "a really hardworking, selfsacrificing [*sic*] body of men . . . like first class men at Oxford."¹⁵ Newman was particularly struck by their

⁷ See John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 3, ed. Ian Ker and Thomas Gornall, SJ (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 243.

⁸ *LD*, 11:284.

⁹ John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 12, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), 74.

¹⁰ *LD*, 11:294.

¹¹ *LD*, 11:294.

¹² John Henry Newman, "Letter to Pusey 1865," in *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching Considered*, vol. 2 (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1969), 21.

¹³ *LD*, 11:268.

¹⁴ *LD*, 11:295.

¹⁵ *LD*, 12:103.

asceticism. "What a self denying life theirs is, as regards their enjoyment of this world!" he remarks:

They have no enjoyment of life. I go up in a cold evening to Padre Repetti, one of the Confessors, to keep myself awake, or rather from being torpid. I find him in a cheerless room, door and window not shutting close—no fire of course—a miserable bed—a few poor pictures on the walls—a few books on a shelf—the room, however, perfectly clean, and he reading. What has he to look forward to in life? Nothing; nothing is there to support him but the thought of the next world.¹⁶

Newman had initially considered entering the Society of Jesus. But the Jesuits' asceticism frankly dissuaded him. He felt that he was simply too old to give up property and to change his habits.¹⁷ Consequently, the Jesuit vocation was not to be his own.¹⁸ Nonetheless, Newman never ceased to hold the Jesuits in the highest regard.¹⁹ It was, moreover, with the Jesuits that Newman made his ordination retreat in April of 1847 at Sant' Eusebio amid the fields not far from the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. As a sign of his gratitude for the hospitality received at Propaganda Fide, Newman gave to Father Bresciani a portrait of Saint Ignatius Loyola that he commissioned his English friend, recent Catholic convert resident in Rome, and artist Maria Giberne to paint.²⁰

On Wednesday November 11, 1846, Newman and St. John began attending lectures in college. They had two hours of dogmatic theology and one hour of moral theology. "We are in daily lectures (!) with the boys," Newman reports.²¹ He and his companion must have resembled Ignatius of Loyola seated among ten-year-olds learning Latin! In the lecture hall, the professor of dogmatic theology followed Giovanni Perrone's *Praelectiones theologicae*—a nine-volume course in dogmatic theology designed for four years of study. Unfortunately, when Newman asked for clarifications, the Jesuit professor failed to provide satisfactory answers. Newman

¹⁶ *LD*, 12:26.

¹⁷ *LD*, 11:306.

¹⁸ *LD*, 12:25.

¹⁹ John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 29, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain and Thomas Gornall, S.J. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 128.

²⁰ The painting hangs presently in the office of the Jesuit Rector of the Collegio Bellarmino in Rome.

²¹ *LD*, 11:276.

grew frustrated. "Lecture after lecture," he complains, "to draw through a few tedious pages—All this is quite necessary for boys, not for grown men."²² Educated at Oxford, Newman preferred to read and to exercise his intellect in a more fitting manner.²³ During those boring lectures, he would simply nod off to sleep.²⁴ Eventually, he and St. John began skipping class, especially on Saturdays.²⁵ After Christmas, they stopped attending lectures altogether. For, as far as Newman was concerned, they were a waste of time.²⁶

Before arriving in Rome, Newman had heard that he would find little theology there. After his arrival, a Jesuit at Propaganda told him that he would also find little philosophy. Newman had inquired if the students studied Aristotle. The Jesuit retorted that neither Aristotle nor even Thomas Aquinas were in favor in Rome. Newman's interlocutor himself had read and benefitted from both. He clearly belonged to that group of nascent neo-Scholastics among the Roman Jesuits. But during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, positive theology held sway. While not disdaining the proper use of dialectics in theological discourse, Rome's positive theologians—primarily Giovanni Perrone and Carlo Passaglia—gave greater weight to the study of Scripture and the ancient sources. "*Facts* are the great things," the Jesuit at Propaganda told Newman, "and nothing else. Exegesis, but not doctrine."²⁷ Newman thought the situation unfortunate and considered the Pope duty-bound to maintain the study of Aristotle and Thomas in the Church. In 1879, Pope Leo XIII—the Pope who would make Newman a cardinal that very same year—would do just that. In the meantime, Newman's academic experience at the College of Propaganda Fide notably dissatisfied him. He consequently turned his gaze elsewhere and looked to the Jesuits' flagship institution in the papal capital, the Roman College founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1551.

Newman first visited the Roman College on November 6, 1846—a little over a week after his arrival in Rome. Canon Law Professor Father Giacomo Mazio, just one year Newman's elder, received him. For, among the Roman College Jesuits, it was Father Mazio who spoke English. To Newman's delight, they discussed his *Essay on Development*. Newman's

²² *LD*, 12:48.

²³ See *LD*, 12:97.

²⁴ See *LD*, 11:298.

²⁵ See *LD*, 12:97.

²⁶ See *LD*, 12:15.

²⁷ *LD*, 11:279.

diary for the next twelve months attests that he visited the Roman College on eleven occasions. But his letters indicate that he must have made other visits there as well. In late autumn, he made the acquaintance of Father Carlo Passaglia, eleven years Newman's junior—"the only prominent theological professor" in Rome, according to Newman.²⁸ Passaglia invited Newman to attend lectures at the college—most likely in the form of monthly disputations. Newman began attending those disputations in January of 1847 after he had stopped attending lectures at Propaganda. But as we shall see, Passaglia would prove to be a closed door for Newman. In November or early December of 1846, the Englishman also met Father Giovanni Perrone, seven years Newman's elder, inquiring with him about the possibility of an unconscious certainty in matters of faith.²⁹ But only on February 26, 1847, did Newman have an opportunity to engage Perrone privately in serious conversation.³⁰ For, as Newman lamented: "Everyone is so busy here, that it is very difficult to see much of those who might give an opinion, or rather enter into discussion, on the subject of many points of theology on which I am much interested."³¹ Yet, years later, at the beginning of that 1859 problematic *Rambler* article, Newman expressed his gratitude to Perrone, "a venerable man, who never grudged me his valuable time."³² At their February meeting, Newman had hoped "to scrape acquaintance with Perrone,"³³ not knowing if anything would come of it. But, as it turned out, that February meeting marked the beginning of an enduring and mutually beneficial friendship.

When they met, Newman already esteemed Perrone's work on faith and reason—a theme whose inclusion in the classical theological syllabus Church historian Roger Aubert attributes to Perrone.³⁴ "I have been much pleased with Perrone's treatise on the subject," notes Newman.³⁵ But while Newman respected Perrone as a dogmatic theologian, he thought "him

²⁸ *LD*, 12:42.

²⁹ See *LD*, 11:290.

³⁰ See *LD*, 12:55.

³¹ *LD*, 12:59.

³² John Henry Newman, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, ed. John Coulson (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1961), 65. This volume contains both the original 1859 *Rambler* version of the article of the same name and the 1871 amended version.

³³ *LD*, 12:55.

³⁴ See Roger Aubert, "The Continuation of Catholic Renewal in Europe," in *The Church in the Age of Liberalism*, trans. Peter Becker, ed. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 46–47.

³⁵ *LD*, 11:293.

often most absurd in polemics.”³⁶ According to Newman, Perrone did not understand the arguments that he treated in his polemics against the Church of England. “It was rash to undertake England,” Newman remarks, “knowing neither English language nor English character.”³⁷ Perrone, for example, had taken all too literally Anglican Newman’s comparison of the Church of Rome to a demoniac governed by an evil spirit—an image that young Newman, touring the Mediterranean in 1833, had previously employed in his epistolary descriptions of Pagan Rome’s *genius loci*.³⁸ It led the Italian Jesuit to conclude: “Newman Romanum Pontificem vocat diabolum [Newman calls the Roman Pontiff the devil)].”³⁹ Nonetheless, Perrone may not have been completely off the mark. For Newman himself confesses that it took him many years to overcome his childhood conviction “that the Pope was the Antichrist predicted by Daniel, St. Paul, and St. John.”⁴⁰ Perrone and Newman’s friendship providentially served to introduce the Jesuit to the English character. One year later, Newman would also help to introduce Perrone to Oxford University itself.⁴¹ For, as revolutions erupted across Europe, the Roman College Jesuits fled Rome in exile to England. Perrone would remain there for almost two years. While in England, Father Perrone also borrowed Father Mazio’s English grammar and began to study his host country’s language.⁴²

Doctrinal Development

The summer before Newman arrived in Rome, the American Catholic journalist Orestes Brownson, who had himself converted to Catholicism from Unitarianism only the year before Newman’s conversion, launched a full scale-attack against Newman’s *Essay on Development* in his quarterly review. The Boston coadjutor, Bishop John Fitzpatrick, encouraged Brownson’s fierce critique. For the *Essay* had apparently confirmed Boston’s Unitarians in their rejection of Trinitarian doctrine. Among the early Christians, faith in a triune God, Newman’s *Essay* seemed to suggest, was only a later development. Of course, Newman did not deny the primitive Church’s Trinitarian faith. He simply noted that its doctrinal articulation took centuries to develop. Brownson’s vehement opposition

³⁶ *LD*, 11:293.

³⁷ *LD*, 12:21.

³⁸ See *LD*, 3:288.

³⁹ *LD*, 11:275.

⁴⁰ John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 129.

⁴¹ Perrone accompanied his fellow Jesuit exile, Carlo Passaglia, on a visit to Oxford University that Newman had helped to arrange; see *LD*, 12:258–59.

⁴² See APUG, 105.III.a.66.

to Newman was well-known in Rome, and it prejudiced Roman authorities and academics against him even before he had arrived in the city. To make matters worse, no adequate Romance-language translation—more precisely, no correct French translation—of the *Essay* existed. Such a translation became a top priority for Newman. But, of course, it took time. Consequently, few who were not native English speakers had direct access to Newman's work. Even after a year in Rome, Newman still laments: "My book itself is not known here—hardly any one reading English."⁴³ Father Giacomo Mazio, however, did read English, and he had indeed read Newman's works, such as *The Church of the Fathers* (1840) and *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845). Moreover, during the summer and autumn of 1847, he published a series of two articles on the Anglican liturgy in which he favorably cites Newman's *Essay on Development*.⁴⁴

Newman knew that the Jesuits admitted the principle of development even though, from what two unnamed Jesuit professors at the Roman College had told him, they thought that he had taken it too far.⁴⁵ One of these Jesuits was most likely Mazio himself, with whom Newman regularly spoke. Newman identifies the other simply as a professor of dogmatic theology. In 1846, Father Giovanni Perrone and Father Carlo Passaglia held the two chairs in dogmatic theology at the Roman College. It seems quite likely that the dogmatician with whom Newman spoke was Passaglia. For, as Newman explains to his surprise and obvious displeasure, his interlocutors "took *the part of* [the early eighteenth-century Anglican Bishop George] *Bull against* [the seventeenth-century Jesuit Patrologist Dionysius] *Petavius*."⁴⁶ Bull held that the Trinitarian doctrine, among other doctrines, was clearly stated in the pre-Nicene Church, whereas Petavius admitted doctrinal development. According to Newman, the two Jesuits maintained that Petavius eventually retracted. Newman also attests later that Passaglia highly appreciated Bull's work.⁴⁷ Newman heard, moreover, that, without having read his entire book, theologians at the Roman College were introducing bits of his *Essay* into their lectures in order to dissent from it. He denounced the absurdity of their methodology.⁴⁸ When he complained to Mazio about this situation, Mazio assured him

⁴³ *LD*, 12:128.

⁴⁴ See Giacomo Mazio, "Liturgia Anglicana," *Annali delle Scienze Religiose*, 2nd series 5, no. 13 (July–August 1847): 50–160; 2nd series 5, no. 14 (September–October 1847): 181–292.

⁴⁵ *LD*, 11:274.

⁴⁶ *LD*, 11:274.

⁴⁷ See *LD*, 12:358: "F Passaglia at Rome spoke extremely highly of Bull's work."

⁴⁸ *LD*, 11:281.

that no one had been speaking against it. "Yet there must have been some foundation for the report," Newman insisted, attempting to frighten kind Father Mazio with the threat of harm to the Church's cause in England if word of their opposition ever got out!⁴⁹ Two months later, however, Newman learned that Passaglia had indeed lectured against his *Essay*. For, when asked after class, Passaglia had openly acknowledged that he was speaking against Newman.⁵⁰ "There is no disguising the fact," Newman writes to Bishop Wiseman on February 14, 1847, "that the only prominent theological professor here (Passaglia of the Col. Rom.) is opposed to my book on Development."⁵¹ Newman realized that he would get nowhere with Passaglia. This lack of Roman support, coupled with opposition from both Brownson in North America and Dr. Alexander Grant, Rector of the Scots College in Rome, did not bode well for Newman's future as a Catholic theologian.⁵² Newman was frankly disillusioned, but he did not despair. For, already in mid-November of 1846, he had had an inkling that Perrone would prove to be more favorable to him.

"By the bye," Newman writes that autumn to a colleague in England, "it is an encouraging fact, connected with the theory of development, that the said Perrone is writing a book to show that the immaculate conception may be made an article of faith."⁵³ That book, no doubt, was what had initially impeded Perrone from finding sufficient time to visit with Newman. Indeed, their February meeting took place only after Perrone had consigned the manuscript to the publishing house.⁵⁴ Newman knew that his *Essay on Development* presented the chief theological obstacle that he had to overcome in Rome. Even though he should never relinquish the

⁴⁹ *LD*, 11:281.

⁵⁰ *LD*, 12:36.

⁵¹ *LD*, 12:42.

⁵² See *LD*, 12:42.

⁵³ *LD*, 11:275.

⁵⁴ See Newman, *On Consulting*, 64–65: "I should have been led to fancy, perhaps, that he was shaping his remarks in the direction which he considered he might be especially serviceable to myself, who had been accustomed to account for the (supposed) phenomena [the earlier absence of well-elaborated dogmatic formulas] in another way, had it not been for his work on the Immaculate Conception, which I read the next year with great interest, and *which was passing through the press when I saw him*" (italics added). This observation challenges C. Michael Shea's conjecture that, in light of his exchanges with Newman, Perrone modified his text during the spring and summer of 1847 in order to include the notion of doctrinal development (*Newman's Early Roman Catholic Legacy 1845–1854* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017]).

theory privately, he did not intend to cling to it tenaciously in public.⁵⁵ He admitted to Wiseman that he would gladly submit to Rome's decision regarding the matter. But Rome moved slowly. So, Newman turned to Perrone, already in 1847 a venerable Roman authority, in order to find a more immediate answer. Perrone received Newman in late February. It was Newman's intention to begin their discussions with the question of faith and reason—a safe theological topic, as it were, for Newman knew already that he and Perrone basically agreed. Hardly more than one week later, Newman lamented that the lack of a translation rendered his *Essay on Development* unknown to those with whom he wished to discuss it.⁵⁶ Perrone would have been chief among them. To remedy the situation, Newman prepared for Perrone a short Latin treatise entitled *De catholici dogmatis evolutione* that summarized his theory of doctrinal development. He left ample space in the margins for Perrone to comment. Newman consigned that treatise to him sometime in the Spring. Simultaneously, Newman also published in Latin some dissertations taken from his translation of Athanasius in order to demonstrate that his work on development was grounded in a thorough knowledge of the Church Fathers.⁵⁷ By early April, St. John wrote to a mutual friend in England that “N. [Newman] has struck up quite a close friendship with F. [Father] Perrone: they embrace each other.”⁵⁸

Ever since its 1935 publication in the *Gregorianum*, that Latin summary of Newman's theory of doctrinal development has been commonly known at the *Newman-Perrone Paper*.⁵⁹ In his 1995 doctrinal dissertation on both that treatise and two other Latin treatises by Newman, Dominican Father Carleton Jones astutely observes that “Newman was able to find in Perrone both sufficient confirmation, and some needed correction, for his own original ideas.”⁶⁰ Contrary to Owen Chadwick's mistaken notion published originally in 1957 that Perrone and Newman opposed one another on the question of doctrinal development⁶¹—a notion that Walter Kasper carried forward in his 1962 dissertation on the Roman School⁶²—Jones has master-

⁵⁵ See *LD*, 11:274.

⁵⁶ *LD*, 12:60.

⁵⁷ *LD*, 12:60.

⁵⁸ *LD*, 12:40.

⁵⁹ T. Lynch, “The Newman-Perrone Paper on Development,” *Gregorianum* 16 (1935): 402–47.

⁶⁰ Jones, *Three Latin Papers*, 8.

⁶¹ See Owen Chadwick, *From Bossuet to Newman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 181–84.

⁶² See Walter Kasper, *Die Lehre von der Tradition in der Römischen Schule* (Freiburg:

fully demonstrated that Newman and Perrone fundamentally agree. In his recent monograph, *Newman's Early Roman Catholic Legacy 1845–1854*, C. Michael Shea rightly argues that Chadwick's narrative and its further elaboration by others cannot be maintained.⁶³ As Jones notes, the differences that do exist between Newman and Perrone are primarily a matter of emphasis rooted in Newman's particular interest in human consciousness. Whereas Newman emphasizes the *process* of development—a process that involves a movement from a foundational awareness or unreflective knowledge to a complex or reflective consciousness—Perrone emphasizes the Church's *immutable* faith whether implicitly held or explicitly professed. It is most important to keep this difference of emphasis in mind when one reads Newman's reference to “new dogmas.” Contrary to Chadwick, Newman does not intend by “new dogmas” additions made to the deposit of faith.⁶⁴ He is referring rather to new dogmatic formulations of truths previously held in an implicit manner. Three years later, in order to clarify his argument, Newman employed Perrone's terminology and rephrased his theory, emphasizing that the novelty of development pertains to definitions, not dogmas *per se*.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, Chadwick's misunderstanding of Newman and Perrone's exchange continues to influence adversely our own present understanding of Newman's theory of doctrinal development.

Beginning in February of 1847, then, Newman found in Perrone a constructive partner in dialogue. When he read Perrone's treatise on the Immaculate Conception the following year, he found further confirmation for his insights into doctrinal development. That same year Perrone favorably quoted Newman's *Essay* at length in an article for the *Annali delle Scienze Religiose*, Rome's premier theological journal.⁶⁶ In 1849 Newman enthusiastically received Pope Pius IX's Encyclical Letter *Ubi Primum* that called on the world's bishops to inquire among the Catholic faithful about their devotion to the Immaculate Conception. Newman recognized that the Pontiff's request touched on “the doctrine of development.”⁶⁷ For the encyclical made no mention of antiquity *per se*, but rather sought

Herder, 2011), 217–32.

⁶³ See Shea, *Newman's Early Roman Catholic Legacy*, 189.

⁶⁴ See Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1912), 184–87.

⁶⁵ See Newman, *Certain Difficulties*, 1:394–95.

⁶⁶ See Giovanni Perrone, “Della denominazione che la Chiesa Cattolica dà alle comunioni da lei divise di eretiche e di scismatiche,” *Annali delle Scienze Religiose*, 2nd series 6, no. 17 (March–April 1848): 215–21.

⁶⁷ John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 13, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), 81.

to probe the “everflowing, precise, living tradition.”⁶⁸ In *Ubi Primum* Newman found that Rome had indeed begun to decide on the question of development, albeit indirectly, and its decision effectively vindicated Newman against the anti-developmentalists. The English Oratorian maliciously hoped that “Old Brownson” had publicly committed himself to opposing the doctrine’s definability, as had Ignaz von Döllinger, and that he would henceforth be obliged to retract.⁶⁹

On Consulting the Faithful

In nineteenth-century Catholicism, Perrone commanded great respect. He corresponded with saints, cardinals, bishops, theologians, and missionaries across the world. In October of 1847, while Newman was still in Rome, Frédéric Ozanam, the founder of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, wrote to Perrone, declaring him to be “the greatest contemporary theologian.”⁷⁰ As a new Catholic convert, Newman knew the importance of obtaining Giovanni Perrone’s seal of approval. Indeed, the Englishman hesitated to take a possibly controversial step without Perrone’s support.⁷¹ After the promulgation of *Ubi Primum*, Newman recognized that, concerning the question of development, Pope Pius IX had embraced Perrone’s vision.⁷² Even fourteen years after his conversion, Newman continued to appeal to Perrone.

In 1859, Newman published in *The Rambler* what was perhaps his most controversial article. The article, “On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine,” considers the role of the *consensus fidelium* in theological discourse. It employs the specific example of the laity’s fidelity during the fourth-century Arian crisis when many bishops, whether consciously or not, effectively espoused Arianism. Newman had already touched on this historical theme in his 1833 monograph on Arianism. In the *Rambler* article, Newman recalls his 1846–1847 Roman sojourn. He refers to his conversations with Passaglia and Perrone “in such interviews as they were kind enough to give [him].”⁷³ With them he addressed the often scant evidence in ecclesiastical writings for defined Church doctrine prior to the doctrine’s definition. More specifically, Newman was concerned about the early Church Fathers’ silence that

⁶⁸ *LD*, 13:82.

⁶⁹ *LD*, 13:82.

⁷⁰ APUG, 105.IV.387.

⁷¹ See *LD*, 12:55; *LD*, 13:82.

⁷² See *LD*, 13:82.

⁷³ Newman, *On Consulting*, 205.

apparently witnessed against the antiquity of a particular doctrine. The question perplexed Newman, and he was eager to discuss it with the Roman College's two dogmatic theologians. We have already seen how Passaglia's and Perrone's respective engagements with Newman notably differed. Concerning their conversations, Newman reports that:

While Father Passaglia seemed to maintain that the Ante-Nicene writers were clear in their testimonies in behalf (*e.g.*) of the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and Justification, expressly praising and making much of the Anglican Bishop Bull; rather Perrone, on the other hand, not speaking, indeed, directly upon those particular doctrines, but rather on such as I will presently introduce in his own words, seemed to me to say "transeat" to the alleged fact which constituted the difficulty, and to lay great stress on what he considered to be the *sensus* and *consensus fidelium*, as a compensation for whatever deficiency there might be of patristical testimony on behalf of various points of the Catholic dogma.⁷⁴

In other words, the *consensus fidelium*, especially when the Church Fathers are silent, is an authentic witness to the apostolic faith. This notion played a crucial and indeed indispensable role in Perrone's work on the definability of the Immaculate Conception. According to Newman, then, when the *Ecclesia docens* fell silent for some six decades during the Arian crisis, the laity's belief in Christ's divinity assured the Christian community's continuous profession of the apostolic faith. Despite Newman's irreproachable appeal to Perrone and the recently defined Marian dogma, the *Rambler* article provoked great controversy.

At the Roman College, Johann Baptist Franzelin, Perrone's former student and his successor in one of the two chairs of dogmatic theology, denounced Newman in the classroom. He rejected the article's implication that the Church's entire magisterium did not always remain the divinely assisted instrument of the tradition's preservation. Franzelin insisted that there could never be a time when the *Ecclesia docens* was not an active instrument of the Church's infallibility.⁷⁵ In addition to Franzelin's denunciation, others delated Newman to Propaganda Fide for material heresy. As we have already noted, this cloud hung over Newman for eight years. In 1867, it was Perrone who yet once again offered John Henry

⁷⁴ Newman, *On Consulting*, 205–6.

⁷⁵ See Johann Baptist Franzelin, "Thesis XII: The Consensus of the Faithful," in *On Divine Tradition*, trans. Ryan Grant (n.p.: Sensus Traditionis, 2016), 160–61.

Newman a helping hand.

On mission in Rome in May of 1867, Ambrose St. John called on Perrone. He found him at his usual place in the Roman College library. After lecturing St. John about the evils of mixed education, Perrone told the Oratorian that he knew the controversial passages in Newman's *Rambler* article. He assured St. John that he would help him to identify them. Perrone, then, requested that Newman send him his clarifications so that Perrone could attest to his orthodoxy. St. John, in turn, made a request of Perrone: could he not plead Newman's case at Propaganda Fide? Perrone responded jesuitically. "Then he looked cunning," St. John relates to Newman by letter that same day,

and said that was not the way to do things there. They would say "you have been put up to this and come as a petitioner for your friend," and would look with suspicion on what he said. Let me have something to say and let them come to me, then I shall have so much more weight as being consulted than as a petitioner.⁷⁶

In sum, Perrone definitely wanted to help Newman, but he also wanted his assistance to be kept quiet.

From the library Perrone led St. John to Father Valeriano Cardella, who had been a Jesuit scholastic during the Roman College Jesuits' British exile. In 1867 Cardella held the other chair in dogmatic theology alongside Franzelin. He himself was even more sympathetic to Newman's cause than Perrone. Cardella gave St. John a copy of Franzelin's lecture notes. But he, too, did not want his cooperation in this matter to become public knowledge—"for he said we must keep peace with our own people, though I wish to serve Fr. N. [Newman] in any way in my power."⁷⁷ In the end, Perrone suggested that Newman publish his clarifications in a new appendix to the next edition of his monograph *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. Four years later, in 1871, the book's third edition did indeed include a new appendix. Newman unabashedly declares: "Fr. Perrone agrees with me."⁷⁸ Attributing all to Perrone, Newman states that the *consensus fidelium* is an instrument of the tradition and that it supplements other instruments in their absence—the Church's magisterium, as exercised at Nicaea, always understood to be operative.

⁷⁶ *LD*, 23:222.

⁷⁷ *LD*, 23:225.

⁷⁸ John Henry Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 2001), 467.

Conclusion

On August 5, 1847, Father Perrone, along with Father Mazio, paid Newman and his fellow Oratorian novices a visit at the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. Perrone later remarked how the English novices “edified Rome with their exemplary lives and their eminent piety.”⁷⁹ After returning to Rome from exile in England, Perrone continued to extol Newman. He named him the “chief ornament and champion of the Catholic Church in England.”⁸⁰ “His beautiful pious soul,” Perrone exclaims, “made for the truth, thirsting for the truth—his logical mind, consequently, poured abundantly into the Church’s antiquity and history, aided by the lights and impulses of grace—ardently embraced in the end Catholic truth which alone could satisfy it.”⁸¹ For the Pontifical Gregorian University in the twenty-first century, Saint John Henry Newman’s friendship with the Roman College Jesuits—most especially with Giovanni Perrone—remains not a dead letter conserved in the university’s archives. It forms rather a precious part of the university’s living heritage. N.V.

⁷⁹ Giovanni Perrone, *Il Protestantismo e la Regola di Fede* (Turin: Marietti, 1854), 496: “. . . edificarono Roma colla esemplarità di lor vita e colla loro eminente pietà” (translations from this work are my own).

⁸⁰ Perrone, *Il Protestantismo*, 26: “. . . quel precipuo ornamento e campione della chiesa cattolica in Inghilterra.”

⁸¹ Perrone, *Il Protestantismo*, 191–92: “La sua bell’anima pia, fatta pel vero, anelante al vero, la sua mente logica, conseguente, versata a dovizia nell’antichità e storia della chiesa, aiutata da’ lumi e impulsi della grazie, abbracciò infine con ardore la cattolica verità, che sola potea soddisfarla.”