

Teilhard and Newman

by **Nicole Timbal** on 25 August 2011

I am very moved and very happy to speak here of Newman and Teilhard, these two exceptional men, of the influence of the first on the French Jesuit, of their affinities, their similarities in their love for the Church, in the sharpness of their perceptions, in their suffering at being misunderstood, in their intellectual honesty, to speak about their differences as well, and their spirituality, which marked their centuries in a sustainable manner.

Newman's Influence on Teilhard's Thought: Their Affinities, Similarities and Differences

It was thanks to his Order's exile in 1901 that Teilhard discovered Newman and the Church Fathers, particularly the Fathers from Alexandria, Origen and Clement, and also the Greek Fathers such as Athanasius, often referred to by Newman.

Forced exiles sometimes have unexpected positive sides that make the victim all the richer. As you know it was in the same way in the fourth century that Saint Hilary of Poitiers, in exile in Phrygia, discovered the rich Greek theology that he was to introduce in the West, when he came back to Poitiers and wrote his treaty about the Trinity, along with many others.

Teilhard and the discovery of Newman

As early as the period when he was in Jersey, Teilhard had started reading Newman's letters. Then at Ore Place, Hastings, near the very place where we are today, he became acquainted with his Sermons, Tracts and all of his writings. Teilhard was quite at ease with English culture and he read Newman in the original English texts.

On 8 October 1911, from Oxford, he wrote to his parents that he was delighted at having been able to visit the place where Newman had lived so long.

The second *meeting* he had with the Cardinal, which impressed him more, took place in the trenches of the First World War.

In his war correspondence, he greatly praised Newman, particularly after reading *Apologia pro Vita Sua* where he was confronted again with the dilemma Catholic/atheist that had struck him when he was studying theology.

He also read the Cardinal's letters once again, so numerous and meaningful "to one's heart and one's intelligence" as Bishop de Beranger would say. It is through the letters that one gets a better knowledge of another's character. Lord Halifax said it and Newman himself wrote: "The publication of letters is the true method to make a biography interesting, and even more to penetrate the bottom of things".

Both their correspondences, just before undertaking a new work, show them anxious to explain their projects, their intentions, their desire to *pass* something on.

It reflects the spiritual battle that is theirs, in their reflections.

In his letters written during the First World War, Teilhard said how he felt "the

growing sympathy and communion of ideas that bind me to the memory of the great Cardinal”, “so bold, so full of faith, so full of life and of thoughts and, at the same time, so controversial” (July 1916).

In the magazine *Etudes*, he also read the articles that Father de Grandmaison had devoted to Newman “regarded by him as a master”. And the “Catholic Newman” by Thureau-Dangin allowed him to better explore the believer.

He observed “When approaching him, I could feel once again inside me the inspiration that calls for the great *work of conciliation* of the supreme and definitive Love of God and Love of Life embraced in its natural forms ...”

Another time, he said “Plenty of Newman’s ideas, so broad, so free, so realistic, have entered my mind as in a dwelling that had long been inhabited by them”.

In July 1916, he wrote: “The more I read Newman, the more I feel a kinship (very humble, of course!) between his mind and mine. And a consequence of this harmony is how excited I become, with his example, to perform *my work*”.

Speaking of *Apologia* that he was reading once more, he wrote that his thought “is excited by that reading and, between brackets, that it is this kind of book alone that should ever be written”.

True, Teilhard will be influenced, choosing “as Newman in this book, the autobiographical form”, thus becoming a witness for his time.

Similarly, Newman’s *Grammar of Assent*, the most elaborate work, the most complex and also the most difficult, but the richest one perhaps, is a distillation of his thought or spiritual testament. Newman acknowledged: this work, unlike the others, was born of an *inner calling*. That same calling will drive Teilhard to write *The Heart of Matter, How I believe, The Divine Milieu* and even more clearly, *Le Christique* that can be regarded as his spiritual testament.

But the first author tries, in his book, to “justify the act of faith of men without culture”; whereas Teilhard tells us that his personal faith is born of an inner need.

This literary form is not just related to a specific genre, but it is based on their profound spiritual experience. Each is bent upon *the need to be a witness*, to let others participate in that experience.

In his Journal, Teilhard noted and underlined numerous quotes by Newman. Particularly: “It is disheartening to live before one’s time and to be despised or stopped as soon as one starts acting ... the ones who want to help some truth overcome before the time is ripe may end up heretics”.

He was struck by this cry, which he will assume later on and he will be sufficiently clear-sighted to say: “I will never be understood until I am overtaken ...”

Two things attracted him to Newman. In fact, he insisted:

- on the fact that *he could get rid* “of very specific arguments in order to tackle the fundamental problems where the best interests of the Kingdom of God are engaged”,
- and, like him, he felt very deeply the difficulties of living his faith, without ever questioning it.

There is also in each of them an extraordinary capacity to be open to the beauty of things which they have succeeded in describing with a refined, elegant and poetic pen.

Although Newman, an excellent violinist, was more talented in the arts than Teilhard, he is close to our friend, in fact, by his writing: a flexible pen, even if it does not proceed in

the same vein. Teilhard's is natural, easy, born of a real talent, Newman's is more laborious, more worked; he keeps coming back to his writings, sometimes painfully, before taking them to perfection, but the result is stunning: clear, fine!

It is amusing to note in passing another similarity in the two men: a curiosity and a strong taste for geology that Newman studied at a time, travelling in the English countryside, looking for interesting sites too. One is an amateur, the other is a professional scientist ... yes, but that illustrates a *common interest in approaching things in their past and their future*,

Both men were equally gifted with empathy and they were able to make friends with a lot of people, while feeling very lonely at times, perhaps because of some misunderstanding by many, or some malevolence by a few. In particular Newman, by his conversion to Catholicism, caused a wave of hostility. One of his sisters will go so far as to write to him that she was ashamed of him, that he was a renegade.

Both had a broad intellectual training. They differed, however, in their experience of faith. Newman was a pastor above all, this was his function and his famous sermons are a reference. He also was a pastor through his temperament which turned him to the most humble, the poorest among his parishioners.

Teilhard, and he admitted it himself, found it very hard sometimes to love his neighbour, the poorest, the most primitive one. His charity had more to do with his adherence to God's love, that must be proved and which is the "lifeblood of our power of love" than with his temperament. But even so, his ministry has opened to many, new lines of research, questioning, and he also spiritually helped many friends. In China, during the war, he knew how to be, for many, a "smuggler of hope". "All that is very nice, a gentleman told me after a conference, but you did not say what Teilhard did as a missionary in China ..." For many, a priest, and a Jesuit even more so, must work to the evangelization of the masses.

Indeed, Teilhard was not a missionary in the usual sense, but did he not bring a lot more to the Church today through his work as a researcher and thinker? He fits completely in the Jesuit tradition of research and discovery ... he had the intuition of an unknown world and sought to broaden the scope ... he developed a "mystique of research", in all lucidity, yet wary, as well as Newman, of its excesses, which may become some kind of *idolatry*: that of *scientism*, which separates from and betrays Christian hope, instead of bringing fulfillment in Christ.

In fact, it "is more important to fight against deviations from fundamental thinking than to bring some conversions or be confined in sectarian strife" as Newman had recognized in his time. On the contrary, both believed that evil can be fought by the "purity that will save the world", purity and truth.

Curiously, in 1953, Teilhard wrote to Claude Cuenot he had read the *Grammar of Assent* with pleasure during the war, but he was not aware that this book had had an impact on him ... perhaps on the contrary it marked him so much that he was no longer aware ... this often happens ... Despite this, even if he seems to have forgotten it at the end of his life we can say that the thought of the Cardinal marked him deeply. Unquestionably, there is between them, a kindred soul, heart and approach to the divine, even if their way of approaching were not always the same. He was able to see him as someone who tried to reconcile God with the World, not with the world of philosophers and intellectuals, but with the real World.

Their intuition of Evolution

Both men were very cultivated and had a relentless curiosity, which led to some equilibrium, however dangerous at times, but a balance they were able to reach, between *faith and reason* for Newman, *faith and science* for Teilhard. Cardinal Jean Honoré in his book *The fight for truth, with Newman* recalls that it was he who “introduced reason in the act of faith”. A whole new concept, and which we cannot do without in the Church today. Teilhard has often said that not only faith and science are not opposed but they grow one by the other. Neither *reason* nor *science* can be evacuated from the approach of the Faith; there is no incompatibility as Benedict XVI stressed again recently. But for this truth to have come out, and it is no longer doubted by any Christian today, we must be grateful to men like Newman and Teilhard, who were pioneers and have dared to fight.

Newman was careful to note the divorce, in his days, between Faith and Science; he asked the question of their relationship and their implication, necessarily requiring a reinterpretation of the texts. He even regretted the paucity of scientific knowledge with the clerics of his time and emphatically required more rigorous training. He was not opposed, either, to the hypothesis of the evolution of species. Let us not forget that it was the century of Darwin!) He answered a friend who asked his opinion on the subject: “It does not seem that Creation is denied because the Creator, millions of years ago, gave laws to matter”!

And as Teilhard invited us so often, he also believed that Creation is not complete, that it requires our participation: “We do not deny, nor do we limit the Creator, because we hold that he has created the human mind able to act by itself, creativity is rather a gift ... Evolution may just suggest a broader idea of prescience”.

Therefore, he was no stranger to science even though he placed some limits; he denounced, in fact, the intellectual tyranny arising in some scientific mentality denying any truth beyond its control.

But beyond these intuitions there emerges their full membership in the Mystery of Christ that overwhelms both, as we shall see.

Their loyalty to the core of their faith

For one as for the other the Creed is, indeed, the true source of faith, born of Scripture.

“I am inclined to say that the Creed is the faith necessary to salvation and the communion of the Church, and I maintain that Scripture, in agreement with the Fathers, is the authentic source of faith”, Newman wrote to his friend Froude.

If Newman may prove more rooted in Scripture than Teilhard [he grew up as an Anglican in this culture of the Bible] and he will never stop drawing from it, Teilhard often refers to it as well.

And the loyalty to the Creed does mean for Teilhard that the Church is founded on Scripture, that its truth is based on *the dogmas and texts of the Council*; and, contrary to what some say, *he never considered another church.*

In the Creed we proclaim our Faith in Love, in the Spirit: things that do not pass ... that will always be.

But both were able to hold vast views and go beyond the narrow and simplistic formulations that the Tradition gave, to restore all its fullness and truth to the divine action that underlies it. Not to take words in their literal sense, but to let them light up one another ... We need words, but the Mystery is such that words are inadequate to say it.

For both of them, their strong belief, the one that really epitomizes their kinship, is that the dogma is the essential key to faith, that it is in the “service of our spiritual life and

underpins our prayer” but, as we shall see in the second part of this presentation, it is not immune to evolution.

Teilhard constantly repeated that “we cannot be a Christian believer if we do not adhere absolutely and finally to all dogmas. Any restriction on the extension or understanding causes everything to vanish”. And it is this discovery by Newman that Faith is based on *dogma* not just on the book, as he had believed in his youth, which led him to Catholicism.

For Newman, the evolution of dogma, and even more the evolution of Christianity, is “like a second and broader principle of any change in beliefs”. This even cheered him up when he realized that his conversion belonged to the same process of transformation.

But in fact this process is not far from Teilhard’s evolution.

In his *Essay on the development of Christian Doctrine* Newman went so far as to say that it is normal for the Church to know changes; in fact, the law of “the future” is universal. Newman also wrote in this text that without denying that *the Sacrifice of Christ is unique*, God comes to us with our assistance, that the Christian is the *architect of his own perfection and holiness*, and this is very similar to what Teilhard wrote in “The Faith that operates” or when he spoke of the “deification of activities” in *The Divine Milieu*.

Man must try and understand what the texts of Scripture want to express of what God wanted to tell us through literary genres, and not take them literally.

“The Constitution Dei Verbum, has accredited the thesis of Newman on the close synergy of God and Man in the mystery of inspiration”, wrote Cardinal Honoré.

But beyond these thoughts, these reservations, these considerations, the setbacks and contradictions suffered by both of them, their loyalty and attachment to the Church was equally unwavering. It brought them “the certainty of a Faith that leaves no room for doubt”. In the Magisterium Teilhard recognized, as he wrote in his diary, a necessary and essential role of restraint, “of eliminator, even regulator” Otherwise we could do all sorts of things, he said.

In Rome, he became aware of “the extraordinary spiritual influence of the place, the result of two thousand years of history”.

He knew that the future of tomorrow’s Christianity will have its source there and that the “axis of upward human evolution he dreams of will be there too”!

And Newman wrote: “Rome is the centre of unity ... the Church is the pillar and ground of truth”. He thought that “the Church of Rome is in all respects, a continuation of the ancient Church”, the only one that is Christ-centred.

Neither of them can imagine anything but seeing in Rome the “safety net of the Church”. “The defence of the moral law and conscience is the *raison d’être* of the Pope” said one and the other deemed “the dogmatic realism that Rome wishes and requests” necessary.

For all that, Newman does not always approve of what the Catholics are doing, nor does Teilhard, who sometimes dreams “of throwing a cat among the pigeons”!

Despite their loyalty, both of them experienced difficulties with the hierarchy and Rome: the one, after an essay in the journal “The Rambles”, his famous call for an “intelligent and well-formed laity”, for its role in the preservation and transmission of faith in the Church and the other, as we know, about the Original Sin.

Misunderstanding, betrayal, malice ... we find the same process that leads to distrust

They were victims, too, of underhanded, misleading actions from those who too often did so because they did not understand the thought of these precursors.

But despite this, they were aware that they had to serve their Church faithfully, by

taking the human and intellectual gifts given to them to their full completion.

On 16 May 1925 Teilhard wrote Father Valensin: “It is critical that I show by my example that if my ideas seem innovative, they make me as faithful as anybody can be to the attitude of yesterday”.

Their thoughts about the Church came from its source, set by Christ, and extended towards its *future*.

Their driving force was the same: *Faith in Jesus Christ*, that they shared with the same abandon. Both were passionate about God, amazed by God. The motto chosen by Newman when he was made a Cardinal is a telling point, “Heart to heart with Christ”. His “He and I” also tells it, this famous formula “by which he tries and expresses the intimate experience he made of knowing himself depending on an absolute and sovereign being”, as Cardinal Honoré explains. Teilhard took up the formula and made it wider. In his letter of 9 January 1917 to Marguerite, he explained that he didn’t understand Newman’s “I” as “an isolated entity, far from all connections”, but quite the contrary, in some way as the whole Universe centered on him, and he felt the same thing himself when he said “in this essential face to face with God, I feel all creatures behind me”.

Christology is the unwavering basis of their thoughts and of their acts ... They are not alone! Saint Augustine who said “Total Christ is the whole universe” is not far away from the “Ever greater Christ” of Teilhard!

Is not Teilhard’s prayer:

“O Lord, lock me in the deepest womb of your heart, and when you hold me there, burn me, set me on fire until the utmost destruction of myself” similar to Newman’s “You are the living flame burning with love for men. Get inside me so that I am like you. Set me on fire with Your fire”?

Both thought liturgy is most important, Newman in a Tract *The Visible Church* declared that the unity of the Church is made visible in liturgy, that it is not “an arbitrary arrangement”, but an expression of praise that has its source in the Eucharist and the other sacraments. As the *Caroline divines*, the theologians of three centuries ago, who influenced him a lot and have fought the denials of the Reformation, he *believed in Christ’s presence in the Eucharist*. Teilhard was very much attached to the Eucharist too. “Daily mass” was the advice he gave the people he helped spiritually. He had magnificent words to speak of “this burning fire, source of renewal and growth” and it was that thirst for the Eucharist that caused him to write the superb essay “The Mass on the World” which you all know.

We should note that such thirst for the Eucharist, in both of them, was not usual by the end of the nineteenth century, and Newman had to battle in order to force a weekly Eucharistic celebration at St Mary’s, as it was contrary to the habit of the time! He had understood that Revelation must not only be told, but be lived in Sacraments, as he had already surmised when he had created the Oxford Movement. The fellow of Oriel, as well as the brilliant Jesuit both gave in their works, their thoughts and their lives a full place to Christ, the Christ of Glory, the Christ that gives himself to us unremittingly in the Parted Bread.

All that gives Newman’s work its unity and its force comes from the Christology of the Fathers. Very soon, he has discovered their steadfastness when confronted to the heresies of the beginnings of the Church on the one hand, and on the other their communion of thought in spite of their cultural diversity. Cardinal Honoré will say that “he finds in them a

larger and deeper truth than the one carried by the Reformation and an excessive pietism more attentive to form than to meaning". The study of the Fathers gave him the guarantee and assurance he needed to plough his own way among doctrinal debates and to support what was getting clear in him, i.e. the real Church, the one nearest to the Primitive Church, was in Rome.

What Was Their Influence on Today's Church?

Contrary to what was taught in the nineteenth century, both reacted against the static faith that was offered in their time, the sort of faith that prompted one to say "Oh God, Oh God" and expected everything from God. They thought that faith, as well as their thought and spirituality must be active, dynamic, that it must lead us towards God, show us the way, allow us to be bold. It must invite us to "walk on water".

Newman and Teilhard are not prisoners of a closed system, fixed, giving one single narrow interpretation of the texts. Quite the reverse. And they fight the fixist theory that forbids the Church from growing in intelligence. Both were in motion: *development, or regeneration* with Newman, *evolution* with Teilhard...

As Teilhard, Newman loved nature – beautiful, great, mysterious nature – and he looks for God's image there. In a letter to Canon Walker, he wrote: "At first sight, I do not see that the accidental evolution of living creatures is opposed to God's purpose ... it may simply suggest a larger idea of God's foresight, of His power ..."

Creationists and others that still question Evolution nowadays could read anew the writings of the Blessed Cardinal!

In 1939, Teilhard himself wrote to Rhoda de Terra: "There is only one enemy I'd really like to fight, and I'd willingly give my life for that: *stillness!*" He does not try to anticipate the future, but he goes forward, with all his trust, aware of working for God and with God ... *Process of convergence in Christ, convergence of dogma, but also the human spirit.*

Indeed, they did not feel at home with the formal attitude still active in their days, which had prevented Christian thinking from moving for centuries, and even more so in France, marked by the rigors of Jansenism. They felt that the world of tomorrow will need something else and their minds trembled with that expectation. They had the feeling of being pioneers, each in his time. And it is this *pioneering* realism, in each case, that will go right against the rather fixed tradition of his time.

But they did not reject what is fundamental – the source of the Christian faith, the Creed.

Their positions were quite the reverse as we have seen, but they let their intuitions take shape.

Both of them, maybe Newman more than Teilhard, tried and awakened the consciences surrounding them, thus behaving "more as spiritual masters than thinkers".

Still, they did not act as theologians. Cardinal de Lubac will say that about Teilhard, and Newman defended himself modestly: "Theology is for well-read people, and it is a difficult science", he said with some humour, I think, and he added "that is why I shall not venture there. My approach will be much more modest, more spiritual and human".

He may not have been a theologian, but as Keith Beaumont writes in the preface of the short anthology he devoted to Cardinal Newman: "Theological thinking is, and only can

be, at the service of spiritual life” ... so it is hard to be one without being the other, even if one denies it!

They were not theologians, and still, it is a paradox, they have opened up new lines to theological thinking, they have dusted, enlivened, made it dynamic. Both underlined the richness of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, which was not usual in their days. For them, it is “a powerful channel for grace”.

And even if the way they looked at the meaning of suffering was very different, they both were far away from the penitential spirituality of their times, attached to the Cross. Newman saw in it, beyond the pious object “looked at from outside, arousing the emotion of the heart, the mystery of salvation it reveals in its link with Resurrection”, as Cardinal Honoré would say. Indeed, he is wary of emotions, feelings, experiments felt *inside* rather than the approach of The One that is *elsewhere*!

The Cross is also very much there in Teilhard’s work. On this subject, he has written beautiful pages to his sister Françoise, a missionary in China. For him also, the Cross escapes the dolorous piety that was prevalent in the nineteenth century. He wrote from New York in 1952 that he dreams “the Cross will stop being only a sign of expiation to be a sign of evolution too”. Like the Cardinal, he laments “that it is presented too often less as an awesome aim that we shall reach by surpassing ourselves, than as a symbol of sadness and repression ...”

Quite the contrary, it stands “forward on the way leading to the highest summits of creation ... as the Cross is a symbol for much more than the fault that is atoned for, it is a symbol for a blood that circulates and gives life much more than a spilt blood!” Bishop Duplex will say that for Teilhard, the Cross “has really been lived as an emerging threshold and a victory”.

Both have known painful bereavements: the death of Newman’s beloved sister, his favourite confident, and in the case of Teilhard the death of Black, with whom he had worked in China, the death of his nephew Olivier and many others in his family, of which he wrote that he lived them as the stations of the Cross.

Still, beyond the legitimate, understandable pain and emotion, they were oriented towards *the expectation of the blessed vision of The One whose immense and loved Presence has filled their lives*. This attitude may be rather new for the time as well, when *death* was too often felt as a punishment, in a way as the *salary* of the original sin, and not as, the end of a human being: Life, Death, resurrection, different faces of the same being “participated” in God ...

Both saw in the Cross, beyond The One that was crucified, the Resurrection moving, the Resurrected inviting us, Forward, to enter “the new life”. Thus, they placed themselves in the perspective of the theology of the Cross that most often was represented with *Christ in Glory*, a royal Christ, oriental or Byzantine, before the style of a suffering Christ on the Cross started spreading from Spain in the thirteenth century.

Newman said that confronted with death “it is the thought of God, His presence, His strength that make up and soothe all bereavements”. The day after his sister’s death, he wrote to his nephew: “How could eternity be good if God is not there”?

Teilhard interpreted Death as an act of dispossession, in order to receive God himself. He wrote in the Divine Milieu: “God must, in some way, in order to make His way into us finally, dig into us, hollow us out, make room for Himself... and the task of Death is to make, deep inside us, the opening that is desirable”. As Father Martelet told us in Assisi in September 2010 in a superb lecture, “the opening of the finite in order to receive the

infinite”. Many could think of it who, too often in our time, deny death and forget that it opens the doors of Life!

We can recall here what Cardinal Ratzinger said in a symposium about Newman in 1990: "I think that the way to recognize a great master in the Church is that he doesn't teach through his *We*, ideas and works but also through his life; for in him, thought and life are interpenetrated and they mutually determine each other. He touches our hearts and illuminates our intelligence”.

That is true regarding Newman, and it is fully so too regarding Teilhard, in whom we note a *perfect coherence* between the faithful and the scientific man, and who spent his whole life trying to make others able to see what he thought he had glimpsed formerly, by the light of the *reality* that was revealed to him, on the frontline.

“Become what you receive” is what our two thinkers underline... as Saint Irene had already said and as we sing at church. Indeed, they have the feeling that God is inside every one of us a hundred percent, but He requires our participation a hundred percent in order for us to become fully “sons of the Father”... and Faith alone can bring about such adequacy.

Newman used to say that it is not enough to accept Faith, “but it must be reasoned, developed, worked with our intelligence”. And Teilhard wished for a change in the mentality of the teaching of the Church that would enlarge the Primacy of Christ to the whole universe. He worked during his whole life to “clear this new face of the Divine”.

Such intuitions were not in the line of what the Church was teaching at the time, and we shall have to wait until the Second Council of the Vatican for them to appear! Indeed we can say that both of them were some sort of prophets, decidedly in advance of the latest Council... Newman's thought, whose roots go deep in the Church Fathers, has widely influenced the theologians that have prepared the Council: the texts about the role of the attendance, about the conscience, about Tradition and its adjustment to the reading of the biblical texts are parent to the Cardinal's intuitions.

Olivier de Béranger, just after the Cardinal was declared Blessed, wrote: “What Newman says of the ‘prophetic Charge of the Church’ and of the mystery of salvation through justification anticipates in a luminous way the Second Council of the Vatican and the further developments of the dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans”. And he goes on so: ‘The prophetic Charge of the Church is shown in history through the conjunction of two traditions: the bishops’ and the prophets’, one is expressed through the authorized interpretation of the Scriptures, the other one, more dispersed, is as *the Soul of the Church*, tenuous, intuitive but significant, and that Newman will call “the thought of the Holy Ghost”!

The spirituality of Newman as well as Teilhard's participate in these two traditions. And it may be what the Blessed John Henry expressed in his prayer, as he could not express otherwise: “Allow me to spread your perfume wherever I go, Fill my soul with your spirit and your life ... so that my life in the end is just the radiation of yours ...”

At the end of the Council, everybody admitted the influence of Newman. Jean Guilton even talked of him as “the invisible thinker of the Council” and many saw the mark of Teilhard as well. Think of Cardinal de Lubac and Cardinal Garrone, particularly, who, enthusiastic and thankful, will say: “The Church could not ignore the extraordinary effort of Teilhard de Chardin in order to bring together a really new view of the world and the eternal truths of Faith”. Bishop Lefebvre will go so far as to exclaim, exasperated: “Indeed, this Council is Teilhardian”!

Both have resisted any attempt to enclose them into a mould. It has been said of Newman that he has “given back to the Catholic faith an intellectual credibility”, and of

Teilhard that he has tried to reconcile faith and science. Even if their approaches were not received well in their times, they had the merit to begin the task of connecting tradition and change, and the Second Council of the Vatican has recognized and has carried out that task. It is amazing to think that Newman, a long time before the Council authorized the use of vernacular languages, had written "if we do not use everybody's language, I can't see how the Catholic crowd will receive catechism or even be instructed"! This had nothing to do with a revolution since he added: "while taking every care to keep the theological words that the Church admits as being part of dogmatic declarations with a religious sharpness".

Both helped the Church go forward. Their religious thinking cannot get old, because it *embraces truths* and meets experiences that indeed led that Church to the door of Modernity, have given it a future, thanks to their beliefs and their testimonies as much as thanks to their intuitions maybe, because they were conscious that the needs and expectations engendered by the extraordinary leap forward of cultures and sciences could not be ignored.

They have renewed the way a Christian looks at Man and Creation; they have opened up new lines and perspectives that have made today's Church richer while remaining deeply attached to the core of faith, able to preserve their roots in the ever-lasting Church at the same time. The Voice of Nature with the one (Providence and Conscience), the Voice of Science with the other, are Voices of the Church. They are witnesses and interpreters of the Mystery.

Faith is beyond words, but it needs words to be approached, determined, discussed. And Newman thinks that "God could not help putting into every man's heart the natural elements that favour his reception of the Gospel"!

They have felt like helping things move, but not no matter how. Newman said: "Some changes change the nature of things, and some help them get mature". Here we are confronted with the problem of *discriminating*, and I think it is more necessary than ever in the Church of today!

Beyond the variations of vocabulary or interpretation of which they had an intuition, both were fundamentally faithful to the dogmas of Incarnation and Redemption. Even though they may think and forecast that such faithfulness will someday happen through the participation of man, who will be called upon to protect and regulate them, in order to give them their full truthfulness.

At long last, Newman has been recognized in our times, as was shown by his recent beatification and for Teilhard the day will come when the Church will also say the "thank you" he deserves for having fulfilled well, and very well, in his way, the mission he had given himself, "for the Church and for Christ", as Father Martelet has written in "The ever-greater Christ".

As Benedict XVI reminded us at Hyde Park, during the ceremony of beatification of the Cardinal: "In times of crisis and upheaval, God has always given rise to great saints and prophets for the renewal of the Church and the Christian society." The Pope, who makes no secret of the fact that the thought of Newman has marked "his own thought", also said of

Teilhard, on another occasion that he was "a genius of a Jesuit", thus opening, maybe, new prospects. But one has to be very careful, when studying the thought of Teilhard, and beware not to distort it. Cardinal de Lubac said it: "one can only understand Teilhard thanks to the entire Teilhard" and with him look for Truth ... Anyway, we can say already with Bishop Patenotre that "confronted with the future that is being discovered, Teilhard de Chardin can help us see, believe, love, serve the unity of the World by focusing on the Mystery of Christ, in a new way".

As a conclusion, I will say that John Henry Newman as well as Teilhard de Chardin put their fingers on the “vital juncture” of human thought and that they have a message for all times. Both are at the heart of Modernity and were able to visit religious beliefs anew with their intelligence and their hearts. They were clear-headed, realistic and imaginative in their search for truth and in their living Faith.

Both broadcast the Light ...

I thank you for your attention ...