

St. John Henry Newman and the *Tria Munera* of Christ: Questions for Reflection

Munus docendi – **Prophet**

“Newman’s life teaches us that passion for the truth, intellectual honesty, and genuine conversion are costly.”

Does my preaching convey what Benedict XVI here says about the lessons of Newman’s life, that is, about the sovereign importance of truth and the cost of genuine discipleship?

Newman on the Bible: “It is the best book of meditations which can be, because it is divine. This is why we see such multitudes in France and Italy giving up religion altogether. They have not impressed upon their hearts the life of our Lord and Savior as given us in the Evangelists. They behave merely with the intellect, not with the heart. Argument may overset a mere assent of the reason, but not a faith founded in a personal love for the object of faith.”

Do I regularly commend the prayerful reading of the Gospels to those who are under my spiritual care?
Is there a concrete way that I could help them to have a daily habit of reading the Gospels?

Munus regendi – **King**

Benedict XVI, from the Mass for the Beatification of John Henry Newman: “I would like to pay particular tribute to his vision for education . . . [for schools in which] intellectual training, moral discipline, and religious commitment would come together.”

Does my commitment to the Christian education of the children entrusted to my care match Newman’s?

Newman’s personal crosses: “As a Protestant, I felt my religious dreary, but not my life – but, as a Catholic, my life dreary, not my religion.” “For years past, my only consolation personally has been in our Lord’s Presence in the Tabernacle.”

Giving oneself in service of others more often meets with obstacles and ingratitude than success and congratulation. Do I, like Newman, find the strength I need to persevere in good works in “my religion” and in our Lord’s Presence in the Tabernacle?

Munus sanctificandi – **Priest**

St. John Henry Newman’s motto or device as Cardinal: *Cor ad cor loquitur*; heart speaks to heart.

Do I sufficiently praise the sacrament of penance, encouraging those entrusted to my care to avail themselves of the grace and mercy of God offered through the sacrament and making the availability of reconciliation a priority in my schedule?

Newman, “The Mission of St. Philip Neri”: “We have determined, through God’s mercy, not to have the praise or the popularity that the world can give, but, according to our Father’s own precept, ‘to love to be unknown.’”

Am I content to be known by God while unknown by men?