

The Fullness of God: Catholics and Religious Exclusiveness

James J. Buckley

One hundred and fifty years ago this Spring, John Henry Newman gave a series of lectures that eventually became the collection of those lectures and other occasional essays we know as *The Idea of a University*.¹ Newman was a nineteenth century English thinker who became modernity's most famous Catholic convert. He was born at the beginning of the century (1801), died at the end (1890), and converted from the Church of England at mid-century (1845), just seven years before he gave the lectures that concern us. He gave the lectures that formed the basis of his book because an Irish bishop asked him to, as part of an effort to establish a new Catholic University of Ireland. Newman gave the talks, re-wrote them, combined them with other essays he wrote during the 1850s and published them as *The Idea of a University* in 1873. The university no longer exists. His book does exist, but (as the essays that accompany the abridged 1996 Yale edition suggest), there is little agreement about whether it points us backward or forward—where “us” includes students and faculty but also university administrators and university labourers and even donors.

One of the curious features of this classic work on Catholic education is that Newman makes little explicit reference to the religious orders who were the founders of most Catholic colleges and universities—Benedictine or Augustinian, Dominican or Franciscan, Notre Dame or Jesuit. Yet, as I hope to show, these orders were clearly in the back of Newman's mind in ways that shed light on the argument of *The Idea* as well as on our own circumstances. Newman seems to think that the question of how Catholic colleges and universities appropriate or re-appropriate the traditions of these religious orders turns out to be significantly more important than other important questions—such as how many Catholics a Catholic university needs on its Board of Trustees or faculty or student body, or how theologians and bishops, canonically, relate to each other.

But I shall not be interested in Newman in himself as an historian might be, or immediately useful questions about the university. I am interested in the more theological question of how Newman and we form “a whole”, a tradition on which we might draw for the future, given our differences and

even mutual exclusions. My argument will proceed in three steps. First, I will describe what I take to be the key theological dilemma with which Newman is struggling in *The Idea of a University*—the problem of “wholeness”, “integrity”, and “religious exclusiveness”. Second, I will suggest that to understand Newman’s solution to this problem requires understanding his theology of Benedictines, Dominicans, and Jesuits—and this will require turning to some essays he wrote at the same time as he wrote the essays in *The Idea of a University*. Third, equipped with Newman’s understanding of these religious orders, we can understand how Newman’s Catholics deal with the problem of “religious exclusiveness”—paradoxically, by including what I will call “the fullness of God.”

Wholeness and Exclusiveness:

God and the Religion of the Liberally Educated Person

“The idea” of Newman’s *The Idea of a University* is easy to state. First, Newman argues that there is an “essence” to the university—it is “a place of *teaching universal knowledge*” (I, preface [3]), over against those who charge such knowledge-its-own-end with “remoteness from the occupations and duties of life” or inutility (I, 1, i [15]. Newman’s italics). Second, Newman’s book is not primarily about “the university” but “a university,” specifically a Catholic university. Indeed, central to “the idea” of a university is that (as Newman put it) “the Church [by which he means Catholics of all sorts, clergy and religious and lay] is necessary for its [a university’s] integrity” (I, preface [4]), over against those who charge a Catholic university with religious exclusiveness (I, 1, i [15]).

Thus, the central idea of Newman’s book—the *idea* of the book—is that the Church is “practically speaking” necessary for the “integrity” of a university whose “essence” is the teaching of universal knowledge. The key concept that we need to understand Newman’s theological struggle in this book is, thus, “integrity”. Newman uses this word (I shall show) in what will seem to most of us an odd sense relative to our use; I think we will need to say what Newman says otherwise than he says it in order to say what he says, today.² But, for a start, let’s say that what Newman and we mean by “integrity” has something to do with “wholeness”—so that when we say, for example, that an educational institution cares for the “whole” person, or that we need to be persons of “integrity” or “wholeness” we are saying something very similar. Newman seems to presume that, if we understand Catholics and religious exclusiveness in the light of “integrity”, we will understand them differently than if we do the reverse. How so? Let me take you into the thicket of Newman’s dilemma.

What is the “knowledge-its-own-end” that Newman thinks is the essence of the university? Knowledge-it-own-end is comprehensive,

limited, ever enlarging. That is, knowledge is, Newman insists in various ways, “the knowledge not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations” (I, 6, v [98]), “the power of viewing many things at once as one whole” (I, 6, 6 [99])—the ability to discern “the end in every beginning, the origin in every end” (I, 6, 6 [100]). Newman also notes that “the human mind cannot take in this whole vast fact at a single glance”; “the sciences” (by which he means knowledges acquired through physics or literature or philosophy) are “various partial views or abstractions” (I, 3, 33 [42]). Knowledge-it-own-end is thus also *limited, finite*. We move back and forth between (finite) part and (comprehensive) whole as we aim at what Newman calls “enlargement of mind” (I, 6, i [92] & ii [93])—an *enlargement* defined, to return to the beginning, as viewing many things at once as one whole (I, 6, 6 [99]). In sum, knowledge-it-own-end is comprehensive, limited, ever enlarging.

To have this sort of knowledge of some thing or someone is to have “the idea” of them --and this is why Newman needs not only “ideas” of the university (or anything else) but “the idea” of it (or them). “The idea” of something is the knowledge we have of it “as a whole”. Now, if something is whole, universal, it is also catholic (with a small “c”) in one sense of that word. And so we might say that the aim of Newman’s liberal education is catholicity, in one of its senses, with a small “c”—“wholeness”. Each of Newman’s liberally educated people is catholic, in this sense—able to see and hear and touch many things “as a whole”.

What does such wholeness have to do with the Church? God is, Newman argues, “a comprehensive truth”, a world (I, 2, iii [29])—indeed, as Newman puts it, “a sort of world of worlds in Himself” (II, 8, iii [222]). This is a God who is other than the world, “infinitely different” from it (I, 2, vii [37]) yet who has “implicated Himself with it, and taken it into His very bosom, by his presence in it” (I, 2, iv [45]). Newman argues that knowledge of God enables us to be inclusive of all truths, and that it is therefore those who exclude theological knowledge (knowledge of God, whether by theologians or anyone) who are exclusivists rather than those who include it (I, 4, xiv [75]). When Newman says that the Church is necessary for the university’s “integrity”, he is claiming that knowledge of God is necessary for the “wholeness” (integrity) of the knowledge to which the university aspires.

I want to emphasize how religiously *inclusive* Newman is at this point. He thought that Christians (Protestant, Orthodox or Catholic), Jews, Muslims, and those he called “Theists” could agree on what they meant by this God (I, 2, vii [361]).³ A university that does not admit this knowledge of God (Newman argues) is practising religious exclusiveness.

Where then is the dilemma? At the same time that Newman insists on

including knowledge of God in the circle of sciences, he is sceptical that we all mean the same thing by the idea or word "God". "Let me not be thought offensive," he says, "if I question, whether it [the word 'God'] means the same thing on the two sides of the controversy." (I, 2, vii [36]). And no wonder: Newman's God is the triune God of Jesus Christ (Father, Son, and Spirit)—who creates the world (the many and the whole) for life with God, who chooses Israel to be light for the nations, who becomes flesh, whom Catholics and many other Christians confess at the centre of their Eucharist, who is at the centre of the introduction to theology we teach all students at my college. Although God takes the whole into God's bosom, this God is not "the whole", or any part of the whole. God is wholly other, wholly other than the whole, maker and re-maker of the whole.

Newman did not think that the idea of "religion" could rescue us from our rival ideas of God. "General Religion", Newman said in one of the original lectures, "is in fact no Religion at all", so that it is quite impossible to think one can avoid "the odium of not teaching religion at all" while also avoiding "any show of contrariety between contrary systems of religion".⁴ But the "religious" contrariety or exclusiveness that concerns Newman in *The Idea* is not disagreement among Christians (Catholics, Orthodox, or Protestants), or between Jews and Christians, or Muslims, or Hindus or Buddhists, or members of other religions—or even the Deism that was often the religion of utilitarians Newman is so well known for criticizing. The religion that Newman explicitly excludes in *The Idea of the University* is not these religions but what he will variously call the religiosity of "the educated mind" (I, 8, i [127]) or "a gentleman's [or lady's] religion" (I, 8, v [136]); I, 5, ix [89]), "the Religion of Philosophy" (I, 8, viii [140]).

Newman does not object to what we might call the "essence" of the educated mind, the gentleman, or philosophy. He objects when they become "religious". I think this is what he is getting at. Liberally educated persons have "the power of viewing many things at once as one whole". They know what and how and why to include (parts and the whole), and to exclude (things that are neither parts or a whole). They are, as I have said, "catholic" (with a small "c"). For example, they will include any and all religions, insofar as they know or can be known in their parts or as a whole; they will exclude any religions, insofar as such religions claim knowledge of something not a part or a whole. Literature and Science thus can make religion "a mere province of their universal empire" (II, 10, ii [Ker 408]). Since Catholics (and Jews and Muslims and theists) claim that God is creator of the whole, liberally educated religiosity will exclude such folk—not personally (you can keep your faith, as long as you keep it to yourself) but corporately (publicly).

This is (Newman thinks) knowledge-its-own-end, as a whole, turned

into a god that rivals God (1, 6, iv [97]). But Newman thought that all such gods (gods who are a part of the world, or the world as a whole) were “but a function, a correlative, subjective reflection and mental impression, of each phenomenon in the material or moral world, as it flits before us” (I, 2, vii [37])—not only the phenomena, one by one, but also as a whole. If we have power of viewing the whole, we do not have the power of viewing this God; even worse, knowledge of the whole and the parts can become a god who rivals God.

So here is the problem Newman is posing for himself, and us. My subtitle “Catholics and Religious Exclusiveness” is not what it might seem, for what I am trying to suggest, standing on Newman’s shoulders, is that two sorts of “catholics” have two sorts of problems of religious exclusiveness. Catholic Church people (Catholics with a capital “C”, let’s say) share beliefs and practices (ideas) with members of a variety of religions, especially those that profess belief in God creator of heaven and earth, or all things visible and invisible. But they are also different from and disagree with other God-believers in different ways, excluding beliefs and practices incompatible with their own. Specifically, Catholics exclude the religion of the liberal arts and sciences. How then can Catholics (the Church) be crucial for the integrity, the wholeness of a university? Second, liberally educated people are also catholic (with a small “c”), insofar as they have acquired the power to see many things as a whole in finite and ever-enlarged ways. But such folk also have a problem with religious exclusiveness. Insofar as the educated person knows many things as a whole, why would one need to know anything else, particularly a God who is maker and re-maker of the whole and the many—even more a God who selects a particular people to be light to the nations and becomes messianic flesh? Will not the educated person have to exclude at least those kinds of religion that have knowledge of the One who is other than the whole, wholly other—or include them in ways that deny their wholeness? Catholics who are liberally educated—and his original lectures surely had them primarily in mind—have a double problem, called to chastise the very liberally educated religiosity that in turn chastises them. But if catholics of both sorts—Catholic Christians or the liberally educated—have these problems, how can the liberally educated possibly include Catholics, or how can Catholics be crucial to the integrity of the university? That is Newman’s problem.

It is time to take a closer look at what Newman means by “Catholics”, and “integrity” to see how he resolves this problem of religious exclusiveness.

Integrity:

Benedictine (Poetry), Dominican (Science), and Jesuit (Practice)

At the same time as Newman was giving the occasional essays that came to constitute the second half of *The Idea of a University*, he was writing a history or histories of the university that give us a handle on the problem of how the Catholic “whole” reconfigures the catholic “whole”—essays published in three volumes of *Historical Sketches*.

In one of these sketches, Newman distinguishes three periods of Catholic education (the ancient, the medieval, and the modern), and correlates them with three Catholic Religious Orders. The first period was the era of the breaking up of society, the Christian response to which is represented by St. Benedict. The second was the period of reconstruction, represented by St. Dominic in the middle ages. The third was the period of the Reformation, the beginning of “the modern” era, represented by St. Ignatius. Newman assigns each of these persons a discriminating “badge”—to Benedict, “the element of Poetry; to Dominic, the Scientific element; and to St. Ignatius, the Practical”. Thus, “the three several Orders were (so to say) the births of Poetry, of Science, and Practical Sense”—or, as Newman also puts it, Imagination, Science, and Prudence (“in the Aristotelian sense of that comprehensive word”).⁵

Newman tells a story of how Benedictines originated, then (more briefly) Dominicans, and finally (and most briefly) Jesuits—with due apologies to other religious orders also involved in education. But he is very careful to warn readers not to confuse his narrative of Education with a life history that proceeds from imaginative (Benedictine) youth, through scientific (Dominican) middle age, to the old age in which experience falsifies our imaginative aspirations, and reason breaks down “under the weight of the facts”, leaving us old, disillusioned modern men and women, or Jesuits.⁶ This is the temptation of some nowadays—tempted to think that the modern era is the most corrupt one or the first humane one, as if our idea of the university was the idea of the university, or (perhaps especially for those of us at Jesuit colleges and universities) tempted to think that a Jesuit university is either the first genuine Catholic university or the first really corrupt one. Not so Newman. The Catholic Church, he says, “did not lose Benedict by finding Dominic; and she has still both Benedict and Dominic at home, though she has become the mother of Ignatius. Imagination, Science, and Prudence, all are good, and she has them all. Things incompatible in nature, coexist in her; her prose [Ignatian] is poetical [Benedictine] on the one hand, and philosophical [Dominican] on the other.”⁷ Newman’s idea of a university develops, extends the Benedictine, Dominican, Ignatian tradition into another, calling this educational tradition to adapt to its new conditions only by reappropriating its old traditions.

Newman's point was not an exercise in institutional history abstracted from his personal life. It was also deeply personal. Newman was a member of a religious order called the Oratory of St. Philip—named after a sixteenth century saint who was neither Benedictine, nor Dominican, nor Jesuit. Yet Newman once said—in 1850, from the only piece I am quoting not written at the time of the essays in *The Idea of a University*—that St. Philip learned from Benedict *what to be*, from Dominic *what to do*, and from Ignatius *how he was to do it*.⁸ We need to read Newman's remarks about St. Philip on the last few pages of part one of *The Idea* [I, 9, ix] in this light, for this is one of the two places Newman mentions Ignatius in his book.⁹ Philip, he says, "was raised up to do a work almost peculiar in the Church — not to be a St. Ignatius, wrestling with the foe, though Philip was termed the Society's bell of call, so many subjects did he send to it." Newman too distinguished his Order from the Jesuits, even as he also sent persons like Gerard Manley Hopkins to the Jesuits. Further, Philip faced his age "not with argument, not with science, not with protests and warning, not by the recluse of the preacher, but by means of the great counter-fascination of purity and truth". He "preferred to yield to the stream, and direct the current, which he could not stop, of science, literature, art, and fashion, and to sweeten and to sanctify what God had made very good and man had spoilt" (I, 9, ix 116).

Newman's university is clearly focused on "Dominican" *scientia*—although a case could be made that Newman himself was more Benedictine than Dominican, although more Dominican than Jesuit. But Newman's Catholic university is Benedictine, Dominican, and Ignatian, and more; he calls Ignatian universities (for example) to remember that they must also be Dominican and Benedictine—that they are unintelligible except as participants in a tradition more catholic and Catholic than themselves. The Catholic "whole" is not a single thing; it is as incomplete as it is cumulatively built out of definite, contingent, and diverse particulars such as Benedict, Dominic, and Ignatius. It is out of such diversity that the wholeness, the integrity of the Catholic Church is constituted—a wholeness that refuses any monochrome or monotone wholeness, even as it refuses to be an arbitrary assemblage with no history, or idea. Benedictine and Dominican and Jesuit are necessary not simply for each other's well-being but for each other's being. They constitute a whole (a Catholic). (On this reading, all Benedictines or Dominicans or Jesuits are Catholics, but not all Catholics are Benedictine or Dominican or Jesuit or have even wanted to be such. Catholics like myself at universities associated with specific religious orders should be learning what is to be learned from the specific missions of these orders, convincing the Benedictine or Dominican or Jesuit Part that it needs the Catholic Whole,

and convincing the Whole what they are missing without this Part.)

An analogous point could, of course, be made about poetry and science and practice—particularly if these are themselves taken to be analogous to the arts and sciences and professional programs. Like Benedictine and Dominican and Jesuit, poetry and science and practice *became* a whole. Also like them, they *are* a whole. But this does not mean we should lose poetry when we learn science, or that we lose science when we engage in personal and professional practice. Knowledge is at the centre—most importantly the science of the whole that is philosophy—and so philosophy not as autonomous discipline but as the (Dominican) soul of a (Benedictine and Ignatian) body with many members, where the body is our version of the seven liberal arts, including natural and social and historical sciences. But this philosophy and all the other sciences will be disembodied without being embedded in poetry, in literature, in writing, in history—just as philosophy is essential for articulating the intelligibility of these arts and crafts. Similarly, professional programs in business, education, engineering, medicine—or undergraduate programs like journalism—are programs in practical wisdom, Aristotelian or Ignatian prudence of various sorts. But without Newman’s poetry and science, the lives of students and the professional lives of faculty (not to mention administrators and university labourers) will become “a subordinate part of some powerful machinery [the culture of professionalism, we might say], useful in its place, but insignificant and worthless out of it” (1, 7, vii [119, Newman quoting Edward Copleston]). Newman’s favourite poet in this regard was the ancient Roman Virgil, the Virgil of the *Georgics*—a poem on farming, the cultivation of crops, the raising of cattle, the keeping of bees. An education that is too far from the bread and wine that nature has given and human hands have made—from what Newman called the “wild, irregular beauty” of decentralized, Benedictine life—will be all practice and science and no poetry.¹⁰

It is thus that the university is a whole—that is, rivals now living together toward intellectual peace, a community of communities, poets and scientists and practitioners.¹¹

There is no time or space here to pursue further how Benedictines and Dominicans and Jesuits (and other religious orders) constitute a single Catholic Church—or the problem created by the fact that there are seemingly decreasing numbers of men and women in such Catholic religious orders, at least in most English-speaking countries. Nor is there time and space to pursue further how poetry and science and practice can live neither indifference to each other nor at war but as a whole, as a diverse intellectual community—and the problem created by the fact that there are seemingly decreasing numbers of us who know enough of poetry or science or professional practice to make these links. We have to face a

different problem. “The whole” that constitutes Newman’s university is a complex whole, just as “the whole” that constitutes the Church is a complex whole. But what is the relationship between these complex wholes? Newman would say that the Church (Benedictine, Dominican, and Jesuit) is necessary for the “integrity” of the university (poetry, science, and practice). What does he mean by this?

In another of the historical essays written at the same time as the essays in the second half of *The Idea of a University*, Newman sketches the tale of the university arising out of Greek Athens’ desire to know. The “university” arises as a place where such persons gather “from all parts in one spot” for “the living and, as it were, bodily communication of knowledge from one to the other”. But the demand for and supply of knowledge that is the interchange of students and faculty needs (Newman says) land and buildings, endowments and libraries to flourish—and these he calls the “college”.¹² We should not let ourselves be distracted by Newman’s odd use of the terms relative to our own use from Newman’s main point—namely, that the university and college, thus defined, need each other. As Newman puts it, the College (grounds and buildings, libraries and endowments) is necessary for the “integrity” of the University (the bodily communication of knowledge between teachers and students). What does he here mean by “integrity”?

He offers an abstract definition as well as a concrete example. Here is the abstract definition which I earlier warned is so different from our own: “By the ‘integrity’ of anything is meant a gift superadded to its nature, without which that nature is indeed complete [whole] and can act, and fulfil [make whole] its end, but does not find itself, if I may use the expression, in easy circumstances.”¹³ Newman’s “integrity” is not just wholeness, but something more --something superadded. What is this?

Rather than here analyze this definition, consider the concrete example Newman gives. What does it take to be happy? Newman (following his favourite philosopher on such matters, Aristotle) says that happiness has two characteristics: it is something I am, or have, “a state of the soul”; and yet your and my happiness also depends on others—on what Newman and Aristotle call “external goods”, like luck—or divine grace.¹⁴ But how can we or I be happy when my happiness depends on “external goods” like luck, or the grace of a god, or acts of terrorism over which you or I or we have so little control? Here Newman and Aristotle argue against the temptation to regard happiness, or knowledge, or ourselves, as whole or integral independently of others—and in favour of an idea of integrity in which my or your or our integrity (wholeness) depends on others. Newman and Aristotle argue against the notion—relatively standard today, if I am not mistaken—that a person or institution of “integrity” will stand on his or her or their own, independent of others, autonomous, self-ruling,

invulnerable to the sight and touch and knowledge of others. But Newman's person cannot be a "whole" person without other persons. We need the (superadded) gift of other persons in order to be persons of integrity ourselves. I began by equating integrity and wholeness. But Newman's integrity is more than wholeness. It is (I suggest) what Newman and the Bible sometimes call fullness (*pleroma*)—abundance, not mere being but well-being, not mere life flowing but life overflowing.¹⁵

How does such "fullness" help us address the problem of religious exclusiveness with which I began?

Fullness: The Utility, Inflation, and Deflation of Knowledge

Let us grant that the complex whole that is the university is constituted by something like poetry and science and practice, while the complex whole that constitutes the Church is Benedictine and Dominican and Jesuit. What is the relationship between these complex wholes since, as I argued in the first section, taken in their wholeness, they exclude or seem to exclude each other? Newman's abstract answer is that the Church is necessary not for the "essence" of the university but for its "integrity". I have argued that what Newman means is that knowledge of the triune God is necessary, not for the university's "being" but for its "well-being", not for its mere "wholeness" but for its "fullness". Let me give examples from Jesuit practice, Dominican science, and Benedictine poetry.

Newman, you will recall, says that the Jesuits are exemplars of Prudence ("in the Aristotelian sense of that comprehensive word"). Jesuits are "the school and pattern of discretion, practical sense, and wise government".¹⁶ What does this mean? Consider this shocking quotation from one of Newman's historical sketches. It is the Jesuit Order's "very genius to prefer this most excellent prudence to every other gift, and to think little both of poetry and of science, *unless they happen to be useful* [my italics]".¹⁷ This sounds exactly the opposite of what Newman had warned us against: knowledge-its-own-end is not (Newman insists) mere useful knowledge—not a mere personal acquirement or professional skill. In other words, Newman's Jesuits here sound very much like the utilitarians Newman criticizes in *The Idea of a University*. This will not surprise latter day critics of Jesuit colleges and universities—whether Benedictine or Dominican, lay (like Pascal) or episcopal.

But this rivalry between knowledge-its-own-end (poetry/science) and professional (useful) knowledge is implausible not only if we recall that the professional school of medicine at Newman's university was apparently regarded as his best school but also if we recall that Newman's poetry and science and practice form a whole, as do Benedictines and Dominicans and Jesuits. But how are these two wholes related? Newman would say that we

need to think about utility more integrally, wholly, and abundantly than the utilitarians. Newman clearly criticizes those who reduce education to the useful and measurable (e.g., I, 7, ii [110]); in this sense he would be critical of the utilitarian strategic planning and outcomes assessment that always threaten to consume administrators, even as they are resisted by many faculty. The debate between twenty-first century utilitarianism and Newman-like Christian Aristotelianism surely differs in different nation-states; but it is also the central place where the battle between what Newman calls “the university” and “the college” takes place nowadays. Nonetheless, Newman does not so much reject utility as capture it for, integrate it into, his own view of knowledge for its own sake. As he quite simply puts it, “though the useful is not always good, the good is always useful. Good is not only good, but reproductive of good..., diffusing good, or as a blessing, or a gift” (I, 7, v [117]). The good diffuses itself, gives itself freely, abundantly—a distant analogy of the God who loves us first, beyond our fears and wants. All this talk of goods and blessings and gifts will sound like poetic obfuscation to utilitarian bureaucratic rationality. But as Jesuit “practice” (exercises, spiritual and otherwise) is part of the larger whole of “Benedictine arts and Dominican sciences”, so Newman makes “utility” part of a larger, more abundant whole of the diffusion of good. This is how to think utility more fully, more abundantly. When Newman says we need a Catholic university “practically speaking”, he is proposing the “practical” as prudence informed by love, not a pragmatic, utilitarian calculus.

But it will not do simply to integrate utility into just any larger whole—at least when the whole into which the university must integrate the god of utility and practice is the whole of arts and sciences. But the arts and sciences have or are (we have seen) their own gods by which they colonize God and Religion, “measure and proportion it by an earthly standard”, “tune it, as it were, to a different key”, “circumscribe it by a circle which unwarrantably amputates here, and unduly develops there”, persuade the believer “to explain away or to hide, tenets under which the intellect labours and of which it is ashamed—its doctrine, for instance, of grace, its mystery of the Godhead, its preaching of the Cross, its devotion to the Queen of Saints, or its loyalty to the Apostolic See” (I, 9, ii [151]). Again, the problem is not the arts and sciences (and practice) in themselves—their “essence”, as it were; the problem is arts and sciences (and practice) turned religious (I, 9, i [149]). How, then, shall we distinguish those aspects of liberally educated religiosity that should be included and those that should be excluded?

As it turns out, the problems with the natural sciences turned religious and the arts turned religious are quite different—so Newman has to treat them differently. Newman says that the Physical Sciences are tempted to

ignore what he calls Theological Truth, and Literature is tempted to corrupt it (I, 9, 2 [152]). These are, in effect, two modes of excluding each other, one in which we ignore each other and the other in which we include each other but only on our terms. So if theological truth is to include arts and sciences more abundantly than they include it, not only must theology not practice either mode of exclusion (as Newman thinks happened in the Galileo affair), it must respond to each mode of exclusion differently. Oversimplified and stated in casuistical (Jesuitical?) terms, everything will depend on whether we (you and I and our disciplines, including theology) are tempted to inflate or deflate what we know—to claim that we know too much or too little in matters of our world or ourselves or God.

Suppose we (you and I) are among the powerful in matters of knowledge, the epistemically mighty we might say. That is, we know. And what we don't know we will know when we see it, when we find it. Enlargement of our mind will never involve changing it as a whole, much as the liberally educated will constantly change or enlarge its parts. In such a case, we are inflated, puffed up, our minds enlarged but with hot air—"sure to become but a great bubble, and to burst" (I, 4, 12 [73]). If so, we will need to be brought low, reminded that if knowledge-its-own-end is comprehensive and ever-enlarging, it is also finite. This applies to any of our disciplines, fields, areas of study: no one of them is the whole, not even theology. Indeed, the God to be truly known is wholly other than our finite aspirations, the ever-greater God (to use an Ignatian axiom), the One than whom a greater cannot be conceived (as Anselm famously put it). Such is God's fullness.

But suppose we are among the powerless in matters of knowledge, the epistemically lowly we might say. That is, we know we do not know all *that* much. But we go further. Instead of being inflated and puffed up, we are deflated—tempted to turn the genuine differences between our fields of knowledge into indifference to each other's fields, in doubt as to whether our knowledge matters or whether we are intelligent enough to do the studying or research we have been given, perchance even despairing that what we know makes a difference to the enormous suffering of our public and private lives. If so, Newman's university will raise us up, remind us that if knowledge-its-own-end is finite, it is also comprehensive and ever-enlarging; that if God is wholly other than anything we know as a whole, God is also wholly invested in our lives and our deaths, in both their manyness and their wholeness—a God who calls us to know as we are known.

I do not have time to pursue how we might undertake the complex chore of simultaneously bringing down the mighty and raising the lowly in matters of knowledge, nor the ironies in how Newman does this. For example, Newman surprisingly seems to treat the physical sciences as the

lowly who need to be raised up, and literature as the mighty that needs to be brought low. The reason is because sciences like physics in his day seemed to make no claim to have understood evil and death as a whole, whereas literature sometimes did—indeed, Newman says, “literature is open to the more grievous imputation of recognizing and understanding it [moral evil] too well” (I, 9, vii [1581; cp. I, 5, vii [87]). But pursuing ironies—including addressing the post-modern claim that evil and death may be “the whole”—will have to await another time.¹⁸

Our knowledge must be comprehensive, finite, and ever-enlarged—but it cannot deflate or inflate us in relation to the God who is deeply involved in our world as well as other than us and our world. What we exclude depends on what we include, integrate into a larger whole—and it depends on something more, something superadded to wholeness and even what we today call integrity: the utility of the Ignatian gift-exchange, the Dominican knowledge of all things (including God’s knowledge, God’s *scientia*), the Benedictine poetry of life abundant. Newman’s key example of fullness (which is my way to say what Newman is saying with “integrity”), I suggest in conclusion, is not the wholeness of persons and institutions (universities and colleges), the wholeness of poetry and science and practice, the wholeness of a Church at once Benedictine and Dominican and Jesuit. It is the wholeness of God and the world, specifically (but not exclusively) human creatures, created and redeemed for life with God—a life which is “a superadded gift” to our lives as creatures, without which we not only do not exist as God’s creatures but also do not flourish, live abundantly, as God’s friends.

One final idea. This God who makes and re-makes the world knows that world. God has ideas and indeed *the* idea of us and the world. Indeed, if there is the idea of *the* university—Newman’s title is *The Idea of a University*—only God has it, to share. There is a vision of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures in which the prophets see a time when neighbor will no longer have to teach neighbor, for all—from the least to the greatest—will know God (Jeremiah 31.31). This will be a time of fullness beyond measure, knowledge of the One who is abidingly interesting, the mystery who is the source of intelligibility. Our times do not offer this clarity, or exactness.¹⁹ But those who think out the rivalry between our ideas of the university and Newman’s idea of a university before this fullness of God have the best hope for thinking about our mutual exclusions in a Catholic and hopefully catholic way.²⁰

1 *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated. I. In Nine Discourses delivered to the Catholics of Dublin. II. In Occasional Lectures and Essays addressed to the Members of the Catholic University*, ed. I. T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). I will refer to *The Idea of a University* by part (I or

- II), discourse (1–9), and paragraph (i–x) and bracket page number (e.g., I, 1, i [1]. The page numbers are usually to Frank Turner’s somewhat abridged edition (Yale University Press, 1996) because it is easily accessible; page references to Ker’s critical edition are followed by his name [1 Ker].
- 2 Newman thinks this is a frequent phenomenon in the development of ideas: “[the history of philosophy or belief] changes with them [old principles] in order to remain the same” (*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* [New York: Image/Doubleday, 1960], Part I, Chapter 1. Section 1, paragraph 7, p. 63. Jaroslav Pelikan argues (with little reference to Newman’s Catholic theology) that Newman’s claims about “research” also require such “development of doctrine” in *The Idea of The University. A Reexamination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992)
 - 3 I am being generous to Newman so I do not get distracted from Newman’s knowledge of “the whole” by his mistakes about the parts (his “acquirements”, he would call them) in matters religious. Newman says that “the first race of Protestants, as with Mahometans, and all Theists” could agree that “God” contains a whole comprehensive theology (I, 2, vii [36]). Elsewhere it is clear that Newman shares the (correct) traditional Christian conviction that the God of Israel is identical to the God of Jesus Christ but he also shares the (incorrect) traditional Christian conviction that the Church replaces (in some sense) the synagogue. Further, he clearly distinguishes the sixteenth century Protestant reformers from contemporary Protestants, who (he seems to presume) are not usually faithful to their forebears (“the first race”)—although Newman’s *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* (1838) is perhaps the clearest brief for re-integrating Catholic and Protestant theologies ever written. Still further, “Mahometanism is essentially a consecration of the principle of nationalism”, although he seems to admire the way “this superstition is. . . still a living, energetic principle in the Turkish population, sufficient to bind them together in one, and to lead to bold and persevering action” (“Lectures on the History of the Turks, in their Relation to Europe” in *Historical Sketches* (New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), volume I, pp. ix–238 (here, pp. 203, 226). And his kindness to Theists (not to mentions Deists) is also limited. When the British Association for the Advancement of Science began their meeting with a profession of their Theism, Newman objected: “I argued if they began with Theism, they would end with Atheism” [Ker 576]. We do not (always? usually? sometimes?) mean the same thing by “God”.
 - 4 “1852 Discourse V. General Knowledge Viewed as One Philosophy” in Ker’s critical edition, pp. 419–34 (here 428–29). Newman is speaking here of Catholic and Protestant “religions”.
 - 5 “The Mission of St. Benedict,” *Historical Sketches*, new impression (London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903), vol. II, pp. 365–430 [originally written 1857 and published 1858], here pp. 365–366. See also “The Benedictine Schools [January 1859]” in *Historical Sketches*, new impression (London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903), vol. II, pp. 431 - 487. This is an important essay on how the poetical but a-political (non-Ignatian) and non-intellectual (non-Dominican) Benedictines became involved in politics and schools, with both gains and losses.
 - 6 “The Mission of St. Benedict,” p. 368.
 - 7 “The Mission of St. Benedict,” p. 369.
 - 8 “The Mission of St. Philip Neri [15 and 18 January 1850]” in *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* (New York, Bombay, and Calcutta:

Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), pp. 199–242 (here, p. 228). Compare “Jesuit Fathers are part of a whole, but each Oratorian stands by himself and is a whole, promoting and effecting by his own proper acts the wellbeing of the community” in *Newman the Oratorian. His Unpublished Oratory Papers*, ed. Placid Murray, O.S.B., D.D. (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd. 1969), pp. 203–216, here p. 210 [1848]

- 9 The other place is II, 6, iii where Newman says that “in St. Ignatius’s Exercises, the act of the intellect precedes that of the affections”—the Dominican Ignatius, I am tempted to say (except that Ignatian/Aristotelian prudence is also Dominican).
- 10 “The Mission of St. Benedict,” pp. 407, 409, 453 (on Virgil); p. 427 (on wild, irregular beauty). A tame, regular beauty would always threaten to dominate the Dominican “truth” and the Ignatian “good”.
- 11 “An assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation.” (I, 5, i [77]) Newman does not expect us to be peaceful at the expense of our rivalries. We are rivals. We aim for peace. In the meantime, we “adjust”—but without denying our rivalries, until our intellectual swords are beaten into intellectual plowshares.
- 12 “Rise and Progress of Universities,” *Historical Sketches* (New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co., new impression 1909 [original 1872]), vol. III, pp. 1–251 [originally written 1854 and published 1856], here pp. 6, 13, 62, 70, 98, 72. The narrative is a fascinating contrast of university and college, Greece and Rome, feminine and masculine, liberal and conservative, Ireland and England, Influence and System as “two great principles of action in human affairs”. “A university embodies the principal [sic] of progress, and a College that of stability; the one is the sail, and the other the ballast; each is insufficient in itself for the pursuit, extension, and inculcation of knowledge; each is useful to the other. A University is the scene of enthusiasm, of pleasurable exertion, of brilliant display, of sinning influence, of diffusive and potent sympathy; and a College is the scene of order, of obedience, of modest and persevering diligence, of conscientious fulfilment of duty, of mutual private services, and deep and lasting attachments. The University is for the world, and the College is for the nation. The University is for the Professor, and the College for the Tutor; the University is for the philosophical discourse, the eloquent sermon, or the well contested disputation; and the College is for the catechetical lecture. The University is for theology, law, and medicine, for natural history, for physical science, and for the sciences generally and their promulgation; the College is for the formation of character, intellectual and moral, for the cultivation of the mind, for the improvement of the individual, for the study of literature, for the classics, and those rudimental sciences which strengthen and sharpen the intellect. The University being the element of advance, will fail in making good its ground as it goes; the College, from conservative tendencies, will be sure to go back, because it does not go forward. It would seem as if an University seated and living in Colleges, would be a perfect institution, as possessing excellences of opposite kinds. But such a union, such salutary balance and mutual complement of opposite advantages, is of difficult and rare attainment. At least the present day rather gives us instances of the two antagonistic evils, of naked University and naked Colleges, than of their

- alliance and its benefits. The great seats of learning on the continent, to say nothing of those in Scotland, show the College of Colleges to complete the university; the English, on the contrary, show us the need of a university to give life to an assemblage of Colleges.” (“Rise and Progress of Universities,” *Historical Sketches*, p. 228–29)
- 13 “Rise and Progress of Universities,” p. 180 [brackets are my own]; ep. pp. 100, 170.
 - 14 Aristotle, *Ethics* I, vii 1098a20 and 1099a31.
 - 15 For example, II, 7, 2 [430 my old ed] and II, 8, 3 [461 my old ed.]
 - 16 “The Mission of St. Benedict,” p. 369.
 - 17 “The Mission of St. Benedict,” p. 369.
 - 18 I have also left a number of issues unresolved in relation to Jesuit practice, Dominican science, and Benedictine poetry. For example, Jesuit practice raises a number of questions about the relationship between knowledge (science) and practice, including the Jesuit university’s specific ways of integrating justice and service-learning into its university (curriculum) and college (financial practices, etc.). Further, I have not pursued the relationship between the Baconian (utilitarian, for Newman) science Newman opposes and Newman’s Aristotelian science—not to mention other conflicting philosophies of science. Finally, Newman says that “[p]oetry may be considered to be the gift of moving the affections through the imagination, and its object to be the beautiful” (“Poetry, with reference to Aristotle’s Poetics” in *Essays Critical and Historical* [New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907], volume I, pp. 1–29 [here p. 29, in the context of a retraction of an earlier view of poetry]); but he also says that poetry provides no view of “the whole”—and therefore “what are we doing all through life, both as a necessity and as a duty, but unlearning the world’s poetry and attaining to its prose!” (II, 4, introduction [Ker’s critical edition 272]). Pursuing the limits of poetry would involve Newman’s idea of death. Thus, Benedictines (Newman says) lived out a *mortification* of the reason and sense that Dominicans and Jesuits would later elevate (“The Mission of St. Benedict,” pp. 375ff). Death is the limit of Ignatian exercise and Dominican knowledge—as we can learn from Virgil’s *Georgics* as well as the Bible. Can “the poet” say what death is? Not entirely. Expressed in a postmodern pun: what if the whole is death, the whole a hole? And what if even the idea of death was dead, i.e., what if there was no intelligibility to death at all? There would be no “idea” of death, or “ideas”—and certainly no “idea of the university” (much less “The Idea”). Such poetic, hyper-inflated claims to know that knowledge amounts to nothing must be deflated. Newman does this in his theology of the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, the death of one saving the whole, dying our death to defeat authentic post-modern insights about death.
 - 19 “We cannot tell exactly what the Catholic University ought to be at this era” (“Rise and Progress of Universities,”). “The Idea” is, apparently, not “exact”. It takes Aristotelian and Ignatian prudence to enact.
 - 20 There is nothing clear and distinct about how God is working on us in these matters. “Divine grace, to use the language of Theology, does not by its presence supersede nature; nor is nature at once brought into simple concurrence and coalition with grace. Nature pursues its course, now coincident with that of grace, now parallel to it, now across, now divergent, now counter, in proportion to its own imperfection and to the attraction and influence which grace exerts over it.” (I, 8, ii [128]; ep. I, 9, i [149]).