



## WHY A NEWMAN CHAIR OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY?



The American Catholic Bishops wisely recognized that for any number of reasons, all Catholic students would not attend Catholic Colleges or Universities. By fostering the Newman Movement, the American Catholic Bishops have provided resources for Catholic students on other campuses. The Newman Movement has taken a variety of directions throughout the twentieth century, depending on local circumstances and trends in ministry. As early as 1910 many private schools encouraged Newman Apostolates to offer courses and recognized these courses with academic credits. Such courses not only enriched the curriculum but also provide Catholics and other interested students with an opportunity to grow in their religious knowledge as much as in their understanding of other subjects.

Archbishop Francis T. Hurley honored the memory of **John Henry Cardinal Newman** by identifying an endowment generously donated by the Carr family for the purpose of establishing a Chair of Catholic Theology at Alaska Pacific University. The Cardinal Newman Chair of Catholic Theology represents one form in which Newman Apostolates have been established in state and private universities throughout the United States.

The Newman Chair at Alaska Pacific University offers courses for University students and also welcomes interested adults from the community. Members of the community may attend these courses as "observers" for a modest fee. The Newman Chair also sponsors free public lectures and various conferences for the University and Greater Anchorage.

### **JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN (1801-1890).**

John Henry Newman was a 19<sup>th</sup> century English intellectual. His extensive writings as an educator, philosopher, preacher, and theologian laid a foundation for many insights that flourished at the Second Vatican Council. Newman also had an enormous influence on the development of a Catholic philosophy of higher education in the English speaking world. His name has been associated with various Catholic ministries in state and private universities in the United States.

Born in London in 1801, Newman studied at Trinity College at Oxford University and was appointed Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, in 1822. As an Anglican priest, ordained in 1825, Newman was a popular and prominent preacher. He was the leading Tractarian of the Oxford movement (1833-41) that sought to recover and renew the Catholic heritage of the Church of England.

In 1845, the research and reflection undertaken as a Tractarian led Newman to seek reception into the Roman Catholic Church. His most famous work, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), describes his intellectual and spiritual odyssey. Newman was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1847 and founded Oratories in London and in Birmingham where he also opened a Catholic prep school. Newman was appointed as an honorary fellow of Trinity College, Oxford in 1877. Pope Leo XIII awarded him the "red hat" of a Cardinal in 1879. He died in Birmingham in 1890.

During his tenure as Fellow at Oriel (1822-32), Newman recognized that higher education should primarily foster the ability to think. For Newman "the cultivation of the intellect" or the "scientific formation of the mind" was the true purpose of a University education. His mature reflections on this subject were written during an unsuccessful effort to establish a Catholic University in Ireland (1852-58). His lectures and essays from this period were collected in 1873 as *The Idea of a University*. While the rhetoric that characterized 19<sup>th</sup> century erudite discourse, dates the text, Newman's ideals remains the most comprehensive analysis of the nature of a liberal education. His appreciation of the importance of a "catholic" education and the role of a University in cultivating educated Catholics have enjoyed an abiding influence on American Catholicism. Newman's abiding love for Oxford University inspired various forms of an identified Catholic presence on state and private institutions of higher education throughout the United States. For additional information:

- Kerr, Ian. *The Achievement of John Henry Newman* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990)