

*Marking the end of the Year for Priests &
the forthcoming beatification of John Henry Newman
a new book from Gracewing*

Newman the Priest – A Father of Souls

by Fr Gerard Skinner

Ever since his death in 1890, Newman's name has inspired the thinking and the devotion of many. The story of his conversion is legendary and yet, as the future Pope Benedict XVI observed, 'Throughout his entire life, Newman was a person converting, a person being transformed, and thus he always remained and became ever more himself.' Newman's genius and his prolific output of so many types of writing have, in turn, given rise to innumerable books and articles, these most frequently being academic studies of some theme or other of this eminent Victorian's thought.

Presenting aspects of the life of Cardinal Newman and letting him speak to us in his own words, Fr Skinner draws from the tens of thousands of pages that this great pastor penned and presents Newman as a priest, 'A Father of Souls'. In a series of easily readable sketches we follow Newman's life from the time when he first realised that God was calling him to the ordained ministry until his last years as a priest and Cardinal in the Birmingham Oratory that he had himself founded. Important themes such as his preaching are seen alongside the means by which he felt he was most sustained and strengthened for his life's not insignificant trials. Seven of Newman's sermons conclude this volume.

In the words of Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Newman's 'remarkable life, void of sham and ambition, but steeped in a prayerful communion with the Unseen, while it remained alive to the problems of his age in Church and society, continues to inspire, to uplift and to enlighten.'

Much attention has rightly been given to Newman's scholarship and to his extensive writings, but it is important to remember that he saw himself first and foremost as a priest. In this Annus Sacerdotalis, I urge you to hold up to your priests his example of dedication to prayer, pastoral sensitivity towards the needs of his flock, and passion for preaching the Gospel.

Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Bishops of England & Wales,
1 February 2010

Available from amazon.com (link below)

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Fr Gerard Skinner is a priest of the Diocese of Westminster. He was born in Portsmouth and, after studying at the Royal Academy of Music, London, he trained for the priesthood at the Venerable English College in Rome. He has written and contributed to a number of books including *Saints of the English Calendar*, *The Pallium – A Brief Guide to its History and Significance*, and, with co-author Fr Nicholas Schofield, *The English Cardinals* and *The English Vicars Apostolic*. Fr Skinner has also edited three volumes of the writings of Pope Benedict XVI: *Priests of Jesus Christ*, *Behold, the Lamb of God* and *Regina Caeli – Reflections on Our Lady*.