

Prayer of the Month • February 2015

O my Lord and Saviour, in thy arms I am safe; keep me and I have nothing to fear; give me up and I have nothing to hope for. I know not what will come upon me before I die. I know nothing about the future, but I rely upon thee. I pray thee to give me what is good for me; I pray thee to take from me whatever may imperil my salvation; I pray thee not to make me rich, I pray thee not to make me very poor; but I leave it all to thee, because thou knowest and I do not. If thou bringest pain or sorrow on me, give me grace to bear it well—keep me from fretfulness and selfishness. If thou givest me health and strength and success in this world, keep me ever on my guard lest these great gifts carry me away from thee. O thou who didst die on the Cross for me, even for me, sinner as I am, give me to know thee, to believe on thee, to love thee, to serve thee; ever to aim at setting forth thy glory; to live to and for thee; to set a good example to all around me; give me to die just at that time and in that way which is most for thy glory, and best for my salvation.



John Henry Newman, 1801–90

This prayer is taken from *Twelve Meditations and Intercessions for Good Friday*. Newman was a great writer of prayers and meditations, and wrote a lot about himself, in his autobiography, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1865–66), written to justify his spiritual development and the changes and choices he had made. In this Good Friday prayer we can discern an intensity and earnestness that seem to be part of his character. Newman was an ‘all or nothing’ sort of person. Launching himself initially into leadership of the Oxford Movement in 1833, he soon spearheaded its evolution with his *Tracts for the Times*, on various high church themes. The series of tracts came to an abrupt end with no. 90 in 1841, on the thirty-nine articles of religion, to each of which Newman managed to give a catholic twist. His subsequent doubts about the Church of England caused him to resign his post at St Mary’s, Oxford, and retreat to Littlemore with a few friends. He then switched his allegiance from the Church of England to the Roman Catholic Church, and was ordained in Rome in 1846. He always had a strong doctrinal or dogmatic emphasis, and this probably contributed to him being made a cardinal in 1879, and why, in 2010, he was beatified, a stage on the road to being declared a saint. He died of pneumonia at Birmingham Oratory on 11 August 1890, and is buried at the Oratorian cemetery in Rednal Hill, Birmingham. His feast day is 11 August (Church of England), 9 October (Roman Catholic).

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