

Session brings 'second spring' to Notre Dame

By Father John S. Hayes

In the sweltering, record-high heat of summer, the Friends of Cardinal Newman convened in conference, searching for a "second spring" at Notre Dame University on the weekend of June 12-15. Cool, quiet classrooms afforded respite from humid weather as 150 scholars, theologians, lecturers and self-styled Newman "buffs" met to discuss the life and writings of the distinguished English prelate.

In the keynote address, Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco drew an analogy between Newman's sermon "Second Spring" and Vatican II, both of which express renewal — indeed revival — of the Church. The archbishop cautioned, in Newman's own words, "Should the springtime of the Church turn out to be an English spring, bringing hope and joy yet withal keen blasts and cold showers and sudden storms?" Just as tensions followed the restoration of the hierarchy in England, when Cardinal Newman spoke in 1852, so, too, cold showers and sudden storms followed Vatican II, Archbishop Quinn suggested.

Discussions focused on the relevance of Cardinal Newman's thought in today's Church. Father Albert Bartlett SJ, president of McQuaid Jesuit High School from 1966 to 1972 and now professor at Fordham, spoke of Cardinal Newman's social attitudes. In an interview, Father Bartlett pointed out examples of the cardinal's interest. "Newman is a man for our times, too," Father Bartlett observed. "He was strongly opposed to war — the Crimean War — in his time. He was likewise opposed to imperialism. He was much interested in ecumenism. Always, he showed great love for the Church."

Several speakers touched on the delicate subject of Cardinal Newman's canonization. Father Vincent Blehl, SJ, postulator of the Cause for the Canonization of John Cardinal Newman, worked with the Congregation of the Causes of Saints in Rome to trace the slow progress of Newman's cause.

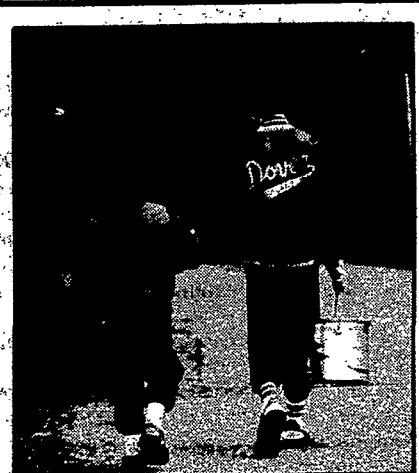
"Canonization, when?" asked Father Blehl. "We had hoped for beatification by 1990, the centenary of Cardinal Newman's death. But the Congregation will not give any commitment. The cause is moving along. Suspicion of Newman's orthodoxy is no longer a prevalent opinion today."

The cost of the process presents a formidable obstacle. Father Blehl cited a figure of \$50,000 as "just the beginning" and appealed to the Friends of Newman for support.

Monsignor Anthony Stack of Wimbeldon, England, who is also associated with Cardinal Newman's cause, was moderately reassuring. The study of the prelate's life and writings, completed at the first level in the Diocese of Birmingham, was sent to Rome in 1986. "No rapid result is to be expected," said Monsignor Stack. "Is Newman a saint?" We will know when the Church says "yes?"

Prominently displayed in the building where the conference was held is a memorial honoring the recently retired president of Notre Dame University, Father Theodore Hesburgh, CSC, who served the university from 1952 to 1987. The bronze tablet reads: "A Catholic university is a place where the Church does its thinking."

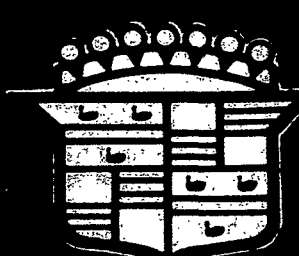
Appropriately enough during this week in June, a segment of the Church did its thinking about John Henry Cardinal Newman here at Notre Dame.



GOIN' FISHIN' — In compliance with our U.S. postal permit, the Courier-Journal will not publish on July 9. Have a happy Fourth of July.

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