St. Thomas Aquinas
CATHOLIC CENTER
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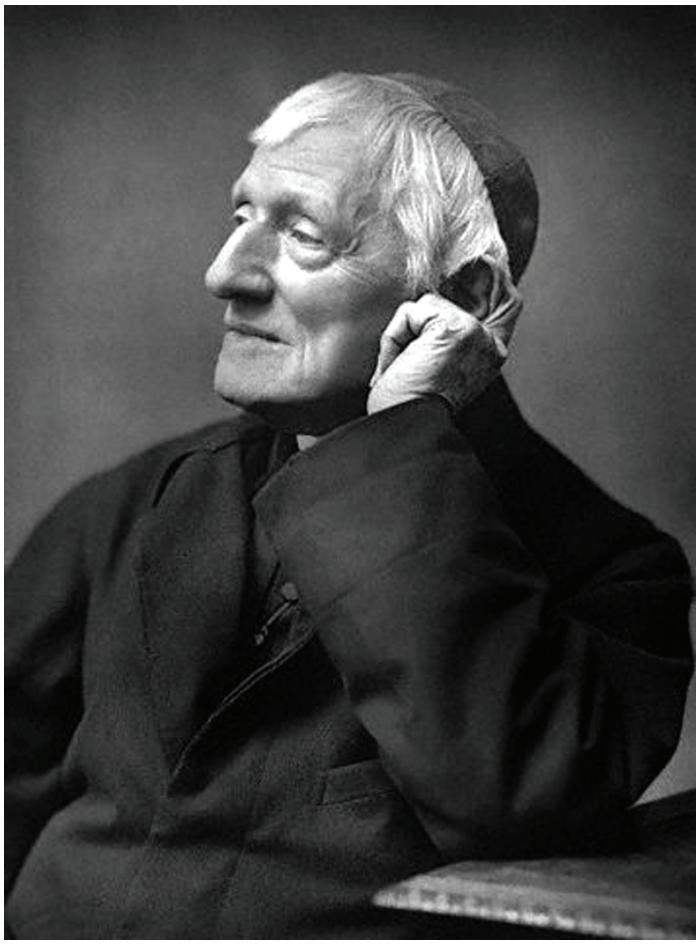
SPRING 2010 LECTURE SERIES

March 8th
7:00pm Humanities 1B50

John Henry Newman's Idea of a University



Rev. Ian Ker

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After dealing briefly in general with Newman's life-long engagement with education, I shall then consider what Newman meant by a liberal education and the liberal arts, by which he did not mean quite what those terms signify today. There has also been misunderstanding about the kind of university that Newman had in mind where students would receive this liberal education, particularly regarding the relationship between research and teaching. Newman's idea was to combine the Oxbridge collegiate tutorial model of a university with the continental model of the professorial research-orientated continental university in the Catholic University of Ireland of which he was the founding president. His aim was to set up in Dublin a university that would be a kind of amalgam of Oxford and the recently founded Catholic University of Louvain, which was Newman's model for his university insofar as it was intended both to be a professorial and a Catholic university. The lecture will conclude with Newman's defense of the idea of a university that would be both academically rigorous and authentically Catholic.

BIO: Ian Ker is Senior Research Fellow in Theology at St. Benet's Hall, Oxford and has taught both English literature and theology at universities in Britain and the United States. He is the author and editor of over twenty books on Newman, including the Oxford critical edition of The Idea of a University. His two most recent books were The Catholic Revival in English literature 1845-1961 (2003) and Mere Catholicism (2006). His biography of Newman, originally published in 1988, was reissued by Oxford University Press in 2009. He has recently completed the first full-length intellectual and literary biography of G. K. Chesterton.

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