

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE *SENSUS FIDELIUM* AND THE CURRENT CHALLENGES OF SYNODALITY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to offer Newman’s original intuitions about the concept of the *sensus fidelium*, which is of great importance to the Synod for the Synodal Church. The study presents the context and ideas of Newman’s article ‘On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine’ from the *Rambler* (1859). Then, it offers some of the primary challenges of the current synodal process in dioceses with questions to which Newman may offer the proper angle. In this way, the need for proper discernment of the *sensus fidelium* is to be pointed out so that both pastors and laity may live in the Church as in a true family.

Keywords

J.H. Newman; Sensus fidelium; Sensus fidei; Synodality; Hierarchy; Laity

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The Synod for a synodal Church (2021–2023) is one of the most important events in the past years regarding the contemporary life of the Catholic Church. Not simply because it attempts to collect information about the Church from the whole world, from many different areas and worldviews, but especially because it emphasises our common goal: to live in the Church of Christ as a *communio*. All people, the whole People of God, walk together as a family towards our Father. But if the language about the family is used, then it is necessary to think about whether the Church has the tools to ensure that relationships within it are indeed maintained as relationships within the real family. We must ask whether the Catholic Church has the means to order the relationships in the Church as a family so that the decision-making is

founded upon a prayerful discernment of all members of the family. One of the instruments that could help the Church achieve such a goal is the *sensus fidei*, the supernatural sense of faith mentioned by the Second Vatican Council in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* 12 and 35, and which is so dear to Pope Francis, who sees its potential in developing correct relationship between the hierarchy and the laity.¹

In his address on the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis referred directly to the *sensus fidei* of the people of God:

After stating that the people of God is comprised of all the baptised who are called to ‘be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood’ (*Lumen Gentium* 10), the Second Vatican Council went on to say that ‘the whole body of the faithful, who have an anointing which comes from the holy one (cf. 1 Jn 2:20,27), cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*) of the whole people of God, when ‘from the bishops to the last of the faithful’ it manifests a universal consensus in matters of faith and morals)’ (*Lumen Gentium* 12).²

Then, he presents a vision of how the *sensus fidei* is to be manifested not only as a one-time event during the Synod of Bishops but as the reality of a Church that always listens:

A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realises that listening ‘is more than simply hearing’. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the ‘Spirit of truth’ (*Jn* 14:17), in order to know what he ‘says to the Churches’ (*Rev* 2:7).³

¹ See: Pope Francis, *Apostolic Constitution Episcopalis Communio on The Synod of Bishops*, 5. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzione-ap_20180915_episcopalis-communio.html#_edn29.

² Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, ‘Address of His Holiness Pope Francis,’ 17. October 2015. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html. See also: Pope Francis, *Episcopalis Communio*, 5.

³ ‘Address of His Holiness Pope Francis,’ 17. October 2015.

This theological concept of the *sensus fidei* indeed enjoys great popularity today. In 2014, a document of the International Theological Commission *Sensus fidei in the Life of the Church* was published. The ideas of this document, together with those of Pope Francis, have contributed to introducing the *sensus fidei* – together with the *sensus fidelium* – as one of the leading concepts of the present Synod. It suffices to point out how this concept is repeatedly mentioned in the official documents of the Synod. Official Vademecum of the Synod states:

...the teaching authority of the Pope and the bishops is in dialogue with the *sensus fidelium*, the living voice of the People of God (cf. *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, 74). The path of synodality seeks to make pastoral decisions that reflect the will of God as closely as possible, grounding them in the living voice of the People of God... It is noted that collaborating with theologians – lay, ordained, and religious – can be a helpful support in articulating the voice of the People of God expressing the reality of the faith on the basis of lived experience.⁴

Nevertheless, questions about the *sensus fidei* persist, especially the questions regarding the practical discernment of when the *sensus fidei* manifests itself and when it is perhaps merely the opinion of a believer or even of a larger community (or a particular Church). For, as the document *Sensus fidei in the Life of the Church* says, there is a difference between a simple opinion and the expression of the *sensus fidei*: 'It is clear that there can be no simple identification between the *sensus fidei* and public or majority opinion. These are by no means the same thing.'⁵ Moreover, Declan Marmion draws attention to even more serious questions concerning the substance of the *sensus fidei*: 'The neurological issue is how to determine the *sensus fidei*. Whose *sensus*? Which *fidelium*?'⁶

⁴ *Vademecum for The Synod on Synodality*. Official Handbook for Listening and Discernment in Local Churches: First Phase [October 2021 – April 2022] in Dioceses and Bishops' Conferences Leading up to the Assembly of Bishops in Synod in October 2023, chapter 1.3, <https://www.synod.va/en/news/the-vademecum-for-the-synod-on-synodality.html>.

⁵ International Theological Commission, *Sensus fidei in the Life of the Church*, 118. Available at https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html.

⁶ Declan Marmion, "A Church that Listens": Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church,' *New Blackfriars* 102, 1100 (2021): 453, doi:10.1111/nbfr.12609.

Because of the complicated questions posed here and even more complicated answers that could arise from them, let us return to one of the most interesting intuitions about the *sensus fidelium*, which were at the same time quite moderate: to John Henry Newman and his groundbreaking work in the article ‘On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine’, published in the July 1859 issue of the Rambler.⁷ By presenting the context and content of the article as well as Newman’s treatment of the *sensus fidelium*, we shall highlight some important ideas that should be taken seriously regarding the challenges the current synod brings with itself. The matter in scope regards the very nature of engaging the lay faithful in the life of the Church – dogmatically as well as practically. Exploring Newman’s views thus can help us order relationships in the Church, our home, and avoid falling short of exaggerated expectations.

1. Context of the Article and its Topic

Newman was not the first modern theologian who dealt with the *sensus fidelium*. John J. Burkhard offers a historical overview of theological perspectives on the *sensus fidelium*, and with Newman he confirms that he already had a solid foundation on which to build.⁸ Newman, in Burkhard’s opinion, was, however, the first who

⁷ In this article, we discuss Newman’s intuitions about the *sensus fidelium*, which pre-date the current distinctions between *sensus fidei*, *sensus fidelium*, and *consensus fidelium*; hence, we will refer to them in the spirit of Newman’s article and not in the precise distinctions of current theology. For Newman’s understanding of *sensus* and *consensus fidelium* and its further development in theology see: Fáinche Ryan, ‘On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine: From Newman to the Second Vatican Council and Beyond,’ *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 106, no. 423 (2017): 340–358. Gerard Mannion summarises the current nuances between these three concepts as follows: ‘While *sensus fidei* refers to the believer, *sensus fidelium* refers to what is believed and so has an objective dimension, whereas *consensus fidelium* adds the notion of “universal agreement” to the latter concept. *Sensus fidelium* is often equated with the notion of *sensus Ecclesiae* (i.e., the sense or mind of the church) on a given matter (e.g. in the documents of the sixteenth century Council of Trent).’ Gerard Mannion, ‘Sensus Fidelium and the International Theological Commission. Has Anything Changed between 2012 and 2014?’ in *Learning from All the Faithful: A Contemporary Theology of the Sensus Fidei*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze, Peter C. Phan (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers. Kindle Edition, 2016), 71.

⁸ John J. Burkhard, OFM Conv. *The Sense of the Faith in History. Its Sources, Reception, and Theology*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2022), 85.

contributed to the fact that the 'sense of the faithful' would no longer remain merely a fine point of technical theology known only to scholars and clerics. Newman moved the 'sense of the faithful' into the very life of the church where practical and theoretical decisions are made.⁹

For a better understanding of the circumstances in which Newman's article 'On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine' was published, we mention that only recently, in 1854, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was dogmatically defined by Pope Pius IX and that the entire Catholic world was involved in the preparation of this definition through the consultation of the bishops on the faith of the faithful. It was this significant fact that prompted Newman to address the testimony of the whole Church as an important element for possible future magisterial definitions. In his article, however, Newman is not concerned with the consultation of bishops on the opinion of their faithful but with the consultation of the faithful themselves. This fact was astonishing and original at the time.¹⁰

Why did Newman come up with such a concept? As with most of Newman's groundbreaking ideas, this one was born out of a very practical and timely reason: because of disagreement with his ideas.¹¹ For when the May issue of the journal *Rambler*, whose editor was Newman himself, came out, there was an uproar over the words that bishops should consult the lay faithful in matters that concern them – at this point, the matter of debate was education. Bishops were shocked that they should 'consult' laity.¹² When criticism of the article reached Newman, he stood by those words once more and even stressed that the lay faithful should be consulted exactly as they were before the definition of the Immaculate Conception: 'If even in the preparation of a dogmatic definition the faithful are consulted, as lately in the instance of the

⁹ Burkhard, *The Sense of the Faith in History*, 85.

¹⁰ Let us note that while today we use the term 'faithful' in a sense of the laity together with the hierarchy, in Newman's times 'faithful' meant only the laity.

¹¹ For a closer view on Newman's life at the time of writing the article, see: Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 463–489.

¹² Newman's main accuser was Dr. John Gillow, a priest and a professor of Philosophy and Theology at the Ushaw College. He criticised Newman as he understood that the infallible portion of the Church would have to consult the fallible one. He even said that this principle is 'at least *haeresi proxima*'. See C. S. Dessain et al (eds.), *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* XIX (The Birmingham Oratory, 1969), 134. Volumes cited hereafter as *LD*.

Immaculate Conception, it is at least as natural to anticipate such an act of kind feeling and sympathy in great practical questions...'¹³

The July article is, therefore, Newman's return to this misunderstanding and his desire to engage more deeply with the role of the laity in the Church. First, he addresses the linguistic problem caused by his use of the English word 'consult'. This, according to Newman's opponents, implied that in order to define doctrine, it is necessary to consult with the laity and only then proceed with the definition. Newman explains that the word 'consult' in English does not in all cases mean 'to consult with someone', but in a general, broader sense of the word, it is an attitude of trust that we show to someone: 'But the English word "consult", in its popular and ordinary use, is not so precise and narrow in its meaning; it is doubtless a word expressive of trust and deference, but not of submission.'¹⁴

It is nowhere implied that the authority has to submit itself to the opinions of those who were consulted. Still, Newman insists that it was and is necessary to know the position of the lay faithful on the matter: 'Doubtless their advice, their opinion, their judgment on the question of definition is not asked; but the matter of fact, viz. their belief, is sought for, as a testimony to that apostolical tradition, on which alone any doctrine whatsoever can be defined.'¹⁵ Thus, Newman requires knowledge about the attitude of faith on the part of the lay faithful and not their counsel. Moreover, if their attitude of faith is necessary for any new definitions, it is only because the *sensus* and *consensus fidelium* are related to the evidence of the truth of the faith and to the Apostolic Tradition. If the Church is to be faithful to the Apostolic Tradition, then the Magisterium must consult this *sensus fidelium*, not omitting it under any circumstances, since it is a serious source of faith.

Why did Newman argue that? What is this faith of the faithful that must not be omitted? The answer may be indicated by the words of the contemporary theologian Richard Gaillardetz, who, in his reflections on the *sensus fidei*, states what the spiritual experience and faith of the believer are. He views these categories as 'a rich web of narratives, rituals, devotions, artistic productions, exemplary moral witness, and daily

¹³ LD XIX, 129.

¹⁴ John Henry Newman, 'On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine,' *Rambler* (July 1859): 199. Available at <https://www.newmanreader.org/works/rambler/consulting.html>.

¹⁵ Newman, 'On Consulting the Faithful,' 199. Newman's emphasis.

human interactions'.¹⁶ It is something so natural, so deeply embedded in the ordinary experience of life and something that manifests itself in a particular way in prayer, art, piety, and acts of mercy. But it is not a kind of 'a primitive or inchoate, predoctrinal stage of the Christian faith'.¹⁷ It is the faith of the ordinary day. Gaillardetz stresses that it is precisely such a lived faith that is to have 'existential priority in the Christian life'.¹⁸

We find a similar emphasis on the lived faith of the laity in Newman. In his article, he offers an interesting and engaging survey of historical instances where lay people have contributed greatly to the preservation of the purity of the faith, concluding as follows: 'In most cases when a definition is contemplated, the laity will have a testimony to give; but if ever there be an instance when they ought to be consulted, it is in the case of doctrines which bear directly upon devotional sentiments.'¹⁹ With these words about piety, Newman resonates words about the reality of life that is close to the laity, the reality of ordinary faith and its inarticulate form that is so rich yet so important. It seems right to conclude that Newman and Gaillardetz would agree today on an understanding of the *sensus fidelium* that is bound up with this existential dimension of faith.

As he goes on to say, '[t]he faithful people have ever a special function in regard to those doctrinal truths which relate to the Objects of worship.'²⁰ Then, he offers some examples: the worship of the divinity of Jesus, the worship of the Real Presence of God in the Eucharist, the veneration of the saints who enjoy the beatific vision of God in heaven, or the very last dogma of the Immaculate Conception. In these cases, it is not a question of a formal theological dispute but of an attitude of faith that manifests itself in a sensitivity to the existential topics of the Christian life, that is, piety. Newman emphasises that it was not the hierarchy but the laity who insisted on these objects of devotion, and thus it is largely thanks to them that the Catholic faith has been preserved. This was a shocking claim at the time. Newman was not afraid

¹⁶ Richard R. Gaillardetz, *By What Authority? Foundations for Understanding Authority in the Church*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018), 184-185.

¹⁷ Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?*, 185.

¹⁸ Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?*, 185. See also: Josef Mikulasek. "'Nesaturovanost' Tradice Círke," *Studia Theologica* 20, 3 (2018): 49-73. doi:10.5507/sth.2018.010.

¹⁹ Newman, 'On Consulting the Faithful,' 229.

²⁰ Newman, 'On Consulting the Faithful,' 229.

to write bluntly that, in the Arian heresy, ‘the body of Bishops failed in the confession of the faith’ but the laity ‘was faithful to its baptism’.²¹ It was thus the oft-rejected ‘Ecclesia docta’ and not the ‘Ecclesia docens’ that saved the faith of the Church: ‘...the voice of tradition may in certain cases express itself, not by Councils, nor Fathers, nor Bishops, but the “communis fidelium sensus”’.²²

Of course, Newman’s ideal was that the whole body of the Church should function properly, that neither the laity nor the hierarchy should be marginalised, and that health should flow through all parts of the body of Christ. In the last paragraphs of the article, Newman offers the state of the Church in his day, which abounds, in his words, with devout, dedicated bishops, faithful to their ministry, but the laity are in the background. He assesses that, despite the quality of the pastors, there is still a need for both good hierarchy as well as good laity: ‘Yet each constituent portion of the Church has its proper functions, and no portion can safely be neglected.’²³ Immediately he adds that there is need for ‘*pastorum et fidelium conspiratio*’,²⁴ that is, the common breathing of both pastors and faithful, and not only of the pastors themselves. For when the *sensus fidelium* is spoken of, all are really reckoned with, not only a part of the Church. As Newman writes elsewhere in the article, ‘*Conspiratio*, the two, the Church teaching and the Church taught, are put together, as one twofold testimony, illustrating each other, and never to be divided.’²⁵

In the article, Newman presents not only his own theological ideas but mentions how he relies on the authority of the Roman theologian Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876). It is Perrone’s influence that is noted behind the definition of the Immaculate Conception. While discussing Perrone’s work, Newman offers the words of Gregory of Valencia (c.1550–1603) on the role of the *consensus fidelium*. Gregory taught that in controversies about the faith, it is the consensus of all the faithful that carries great force, on which ‘the Supreme Pontiff *is able and ought to rest upon...* as being the *judgment or sentiment of the infallible Church*’.²⁶ It is because of such a bold statement that Newman

²¹ Newman, ‘On Consulting the Faithful,’ 213–214.

²² Newman, ‘On Consulting the Faithful,’ 214.

²³ Newman, ‘On Consulting the Faithful,’ 228.

²⁴ Newman, ‘On Consulting the Faithful,’ 228. Newman’s emphasis.

²⁵ Newman, ‘On Consulting the Faithful,’ 210. Newman’s emphasis.

²⁶ Newman, ‘On Consulting the Faithful,’ 208. Newman’s emphasis.

himself ventures to assert the following: 'These are surely exceedingly strong words; not that I take them to mean strictly that infallibility is *in* the "consensus fidelium," but that that "consensus" is an *indicium* or *instrumentum* to us of the judgment of that Church which is infallible.'²⁷ The Holy Spirit cooperates not only with the Magisterium, the hierarchy, but with all the faithful, and in Newman's words, the gift of infallibility is directly related to obedience to the *consensus fidelium*, even if it is the Magisterium that authoritatively (and possibly infallibly) teaches something.²⁸

This is a truly groundbreaking moment. The *consensus fidelium*, which cooperates with the infallible development of the Church's doctrine – instead of simply protecting and witnessing to the truth of faith – is present in the whole body of Christ, not only in its teaching part. Newman relates this *consensus fidelium* with the word *phronema*, which he mentions in the text as an instinct 'deep in the bosom of the mystical body of Christ'.²⁹ Newman discovered this deep instinct in Johann Adam Möhler's work *Symbolik* (1832), who understood this sense as an agency that brings the contemporary Church's teaching and life into symbiosis with the truth of Scripture.³⁰

How should we understand Newman's own understanding of *phronema*? It is obviously related to his later concept of *phronesis* or 'illative sense', which he explains in his *Grammar of Assent* (1870) as the means by which an individual comes to assent to the faith in a real, existential way.³¹ In this sense, *phronema* can be understood as the means by which the whole body of Christ arrives at the assent of faith in a real and intuitive way, which can, of course, later develop into a formulated grasp. Newman evidently believed that the whole body of Christ would instinctively (but not in opposition to the rational assent) accept the truth of the faith and abandon that which is detrimental to the faith.

Before moving on to the second section on the challenges of the present synod, let us summarise what we have so far presented as

²⁷ Newman, 'On Consulting the Faithful,' 208. Newman's emphasis.

²⁸ One must not forget that when Newman speaks of *consensus fidelium*, he means the laity, not the pastors. It harmonises with his understanding of *conspiratio* between the pastors and the laity.

²⁹ Newman, 'On Consulting the Faithful,' 211.

³⁰ See Burkhard, *The Sense of the Faith in History*, 96.

³¹ Burkhard, *The Sense of the Faith in History*, 97.

Newman's understanding of the *sensus fidelium* regarding the lay faithful. These are two things in particular: a moderate understanding of *conspiratio* without radically exaggerating any part of the Church, and the need for a perception of the *sensus fidelium* centred on the devotional realm, on the life of faith. Related to this fact, one can understand the meaning of *phronema* as a way of active participation of the *sensus fidelium* in the truth of the faith in an intuitive rather than doctrinally formulated way.

2. Challenges of Synodality

Pope Francis' vision of a synodal process involving the lay faithful alongside their bishops and theologians unveils its first challenges. As a member of the synodal team, I observe the consultation of the lay faithful; I listen to their opinions, and during these regular meetings, I experience a kind of newmanian moment: does the Magisterium need to consult the laity on so many aspects of the Church's reality (do they care to be consulted)? Who are those *fideles* that are now consulted? Certainly, not all lay faithful were involved in the process. After all, only their representatives are present during the synodal meetings. Also, even these lay faithful do not agree on many topics, and not all of them understand the Catholic faith correctly. So, what consensus? Who will finally decide where it is to be found? And finally: What if the *consensus fidelium* of the lay faithful is wrong?

Questionable is also Newman's own emphasis on the importance of the laity. Could it really be true that, during the Arian crisis, the laity were so uniformly orthodox and the bishops so heterodoxically unorthodox? It does not seem to be true. According to his critics, Newman altered the historical record to fit his thesis. Nor did he consider the inaccuracy of the ahistorical division between laity and hierarchy, which was not the same in the 4th century as it was in his time. Most importantly, in the 4th century, there was no distinction between life and formulated doctrine that Newman presents. The propositional value of some creedal formulas was much less than the life-anchored truth of Revelation.³²

³² See Michael Slusser, "Does Newman's "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine" Rest upon a Mistake?" *Horizons* 20 (1993): 234-240, doi:10.1017/S0360966900027419.

Therefore, is the role of the laity in the context of the *sensus fidei* and the *sensus fidelium* a serious part of the life of the Church as Newman presents it? The answer is: yes and no. The *sensus fidei* has become a very important object of the teaching office of the Church since at least the Second Vatican Council, and now its practical possibilities are tested in a more tangible way. Thus, one must admit its importance in the life of the Church. However, the objections to Newman as well as current synodal practice point to some of its serious limits, and the presented questions remain unanswered. At the same time, however, Newman himself demonstrates certain important elements that should be taken into consideration during the process of consultations.

Newman's most important principle is the element of *conspiratio*, where two parts of the Church are taken with due importance: the lay faithful and the pastors. Newman was a moderate thinker who avoided extremes. In a similar manner, the synod cannot place undue emphasis on the *sensus fidelium* of the laity without considering the *sensus fidelium* of the pastors. This concern was voiced at the priests' meetings: whether the synod does not overemphasise the role of the laity as an expression of the *sensus fidelium* of the whole Church while the pastors are being omitted. Newman stresses that *conspiratio* cannot exist without pastors. Moreover, the *sensus fidelium* during the synod must not be an expression of the majority opinion; it must not be a democracy where the shepherds will be 'a minority'. It must be an expression of the Spirit that breathes in the faithful as well as in the pastors.

Newman was also very apt in describing the content of the term 'sensus' to which the object of the *sensus fidelium* refers. He argued that the lay faithful are to be consulted primarily in the realm of worship that touches on the faith expressions. Newman's emphasis on *phronema* as an agent of intuitive, primordial grasp of faith resounds with the existential priority of lived faith within the Church. Of course, saying that the consultation of the lay faithful is to be concentrated on the matters of worship does not mean that the hierarchy is supposed to advance future doctrinal formulations without the laity. Neither is it meant that only the hierarchy is to deal with the most important realities in the Church and not the laity. On the contrary, the life of faith is the most precious to the Church. Therefore, to have a say in worship is in no way a humiliation for the lay faithful, but rather an offer of the space that is closest to them: the life of faith in all its dynamism and complexity, with all the symbols and signs recognised by them as important. Thus,

the expression of faith could be brought to the centre of attention of the hierarchy and academic theology instead of doctrinal formulations. Maybe this will be the way how Pope Francis' vision about decentralisation of the Church can find its realisation: through reconsidering the ways of expressing faith in different places as a result of the *consensus fidelium* in different local churches. Eventually, such a result of the Synod could be much closer to the *sensus fidelium* of the laity than any partial decision about the Church doctrine and/or organisation.

Conclusion

There is no doubt about Newman's historical significance. Nor can his importance for the conception of the modern meaning of the *sensus fidelium* be denied. But this study did not want to remain only in the past. It wanted to show that Newman's careful theological treading on unfamiliar terrain can be a model for today when the current synod also ventures into new territory. The *sensus fidelium* in his presentation was not an attempt to radically change the future teaching of the Church. It was a sober attempt that did not go beyond the possibilities of the form of the Church that had been shaped by Tradition. His moderate attitudes stand on firm ground, and it is for this reason that they, but even more so his caution, can be an example for the present. Even today, Newmanian discernment is needed in rethinking the *sensus fidelium* and the practical possibilities of the *consensus fidelium*. For great expectations often end in great disappointments.

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