

Second miracle attributed to Newman paves way to canonization

Catholic bishops have expressed hope that Pope Francis will canonize Blessed John Henry Newman in 2019 after Vatican medics said the inexplicable healing of a U.S. mother was a miracle attributable to his intercession.

The cardinal was beatified in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI in Birmingham, England, after the miraculous healing of Boston Deacon Jack Sullivan.

Archbishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham said the English and Welsh bishops were informed during their *ad limina* visit to Rome in September that the second miracle needed for the canonization of Blessed Newman had been found. It involved a young law graduate from the Archdiocese of Chicago who faced life-threatening complications during her pregnancy but suddenly recovered when she prayed to Blessed Newman to help.

“I understand that the medical board responsible for assessing a second miracle has now delivered a positive assessment to the congregation,” Archbishop Longley told Catholic News Service in a Nov. 29th email. “It is wonderful news that the process for canonization is now moving closer toward its conclusion, and I pray that we may witness the canonization of Blessed John Henry Newman within the coming year.”



Blessed John Henry Newman is seen in a portrait provided by the Catholic Church in England and Wales. CNS photo/courtesy of the Catholic Church of England and Wales

The archbishop said members of the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints will meet early next year "to consider the medical board's assessment and to make its own recommendation" to Pope Francis, who will make the final decision and possibly set a date for the canonization ceremony.

The news that the second miracle had been approved in Rome was revealed by Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth in a weekly newsletter in mid-November. He told the people of his diocese that developments in the cardinal's cause meant that it "looks now as if Newman might be canonized, all being well, later next year." In a Nov. 29th telephone interview with Catholic News Service, Bishop Egan expressed hope that the canonization might take place in October, the month of Blessed Newman's conversion to the Catholic faith.

Newman was a prolific author who had a passion for education, seeing it as way to evangelize the faith. So the news is particularly welcome at the many Catholic colleges and student organizations in Canada and around the world that bear his name. That includes Newman Theological College in Edmonton, which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2019.

Jason West, college president, said he was thrilled to hear that the next step toward Blessed John Henry Newman's canonization has been reached.

"His contributions to the Church, particularly in his understanding of the role of the laity and his critique of emotion driven approaches to religion, whether liberal or conservative, are more relevant today than ever," said West.

Archbishop Longley said the canonization would be a "great joy," especially for the Catholics of Birmingham, the city where Newman founded his oratory.

"I am sure that Pope Benedict XVI, who came to our city to beatify Cardinal Newman, will be joining us as we continue to pray for Blessed John Henry's canonization in the near future," he said.

Before he became a Catholic in the 19th century, Blessed Newman was an Anglican theologian who founded the Oxford Movement to try to return the Church of England to its Catholic roots. Despite a life marked by controversy, he was renowned for his exemplary virtue and for his reputation as a brilliant thinker, and Pope Leo XIII rewarded him with a cardinal's red hat.

He died in Birmingham in 1890, and more than 15,000 people lined the streets for his funeral procession. Scholars believe he was years ahead of his time in his views of the Catholic Church and its teachings.

-With files from Grandin Media