

- 1 John Henry Newman was born on this day in 1801. He became an Anglican priest and was a great religious thinker of his day. He lectured at Oxford University and influenced many. He was one of a group that became known as “the Oxford Movement”. Although they had valued the Anglican Church, many left and became Roman Catholics.
- 2 Whilst still unsure of what he should do, Newman made a tour of the Mediterranean by ship in 1833. One of his poems is called “Lead Kindly Light”, and it reflects on the time his fog-bound ship could see the distant lights of the French port of Marseilles.
- 3 As we are about to read Newman’s poem, we can think of him struggling in darkness, unsure as to what he should do. Should he leave the Anglican Church and become a Roman Catholic? To do so would result in the loss of many of his friends. Newman asks Jesus, the Light of the world, to lead him on, just one step at a time. He is convinced that God has led him so far, and trusts that he will lead him in the future, even through further difficulties. Once life has ended, John will once again greet all who had been his friends (“those angel faces”) whom he continued to love.
- 4 *Lead, kindly light, amid th’encircling gloom:
lead thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
the distant scene; one step enough for me.*
- 5 *I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and, ‘spite of fears,
pride ruled my will; remember not past years.*
- 6 *So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
will lead me on
o’er moor and fen, o’er crag and torrent,
till the night is gone,
and with the morn those angel faces smile
which I have loved long since and lost awhile.*
- 7 Newman left the Anglican Church and became ordained as a Catholic priest. He was created a Cardinal in 1879, and died 11 years later.

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine
to research this topic further.

This material is part of
the prayer and education website
of the De La Salle Brothers
in Great Britain:

www.prayingeachday.org