



*An early version of Cardinal Newman's arms*

# COR AD COR LOQUITUR

## “HEART SPEAKS TO HEART”

IN BLESSED JOHN HENRY NEWMAN’S WORDS

When John Henry Newman was made a cardinal by Pope Leo XIII in 1879, ecclesiastical tradition required him to adopt a coat of arms. He used elements which derived from earlier generations of his family. He also took great pains to find the right motto. Perhaps he suspected that it would be in use long after the day of his funeral in 1890. Newman adapted a phrase of the seventeenth century French saint, St Francis de Sales, which he had found and used in print years earlier.

*Truly the chief exercise in mystical theology is to speak to God and **TO HEAR GOD SPEAK IN THE BOTTOM OF THE HEART ... Eyes speak to eyes, and HEART TO HEART, and none understand what passes save the sacred lovers who speak.***

Newman never explained his motto in detail but it is obvious that it illustrates a fundamental principle of his life, thought and pastoral work, particularly in founding The Oratory School. As ever with Newman, the phrase has a subtle range of meanings.

## 1: GOD SPEAKS TO US

The inner life of the Holy Trinity is self-giving love. One possible interpretation of the three hearts may be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is God’s generous love which brought about Creation. For love of fallen humanity the Father sent his Incarnate Son who gave his life in sacrifice. For love of redeemed humanity the Holy Spirit is poured continually into the Church. God has not set his creation going and retreated from it. He loves every atom and every soul and is burning for us to respond. The love of God for sinners is the central truth of our Faith. “All through our life, **CHRIST IS CALLING US.** ... He calls us from grace to grace, and from holiness to holiness, while life is given.”



*Left: Fijian and Samoan players at prayer, Rugby World Cup 2011*

*Right: Rembrandt, The Return of the Prodigal Son c.1666*



## 2: WE SPEAK TO GOD

The loving relationship between God and his people is not a one-way thing. We are called to personal communion with God, anchored in love and in open-hearted prayer. We pray as members of the Church. We are also individuals. In a meditation on Christ’s Passion, Newman prayed, “Thou hast died for all, but I know what Thou hast done **SPECIALLY FOR ME.** Thou has done for me, O my love, which ought to make me love Thee with all my powers.”



*Holy Communion during Mass at the Birmingham Oratory*

## 3: WE SPEAK TO EACH OTHER

Through the gifts of the Holy Spirit the divine life is at work in us. We are called to share that love with each other in lives of service. We are called to see everyone as a brother and sister in the Lord. More than that, we are called to see Jesus in each other and particularly in those most in need. Newman the academic knew the power of words only too well. But he knew that written arguments, however good, will only go so far. The Gospel “has been upheld in the world not by books, not by argument, nor by temporal power, but **BY THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE** of such men ... who are at once the teachers and the patterns of it” he wrote. This undergirds his whole approach to education.



*NYC fire fighters carry their chaplain, Fr Mychal, from the twin towers on 9/11*