

Regional Authority pays tribute to man with great feel for rural Limerick

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

THE Mid West Regional Authority adjourned its monthly meeting in Adare for half-an-hour on Tuesday, as a mark of respect to Dr Newman.

He was described by Cllr Jim Houlihan as "one of the most outstanding men to have served Limerick in any capacity".

Praising his intellect and ability, the Regional Authority chairman, Cllr Michael Healy, said that the late bishop was also "a saintly man who will be sadly missed by his flock".

Dr Newman, he said, had a great feeling for rural Limerick.

Cllr Houlihan said that it was a

sad day. The Bishop, who was never afraid to confront controversial issues, was also a humane person held in high regard even those who opposed him.

Cllr Houlihan described him as "a shining light to rural people."

"As a sociologist," he said, "he made his mark as a champion of the cause of rural people."

Cllr Frank Prendergast said that the whole nation would be effected by his death.

Dr Newman, he said, had one of the finest intellects in the Irish hierarchy this century.

"Sadly," Cllr Prendergast added, "he became a hate figure for the liberal establishment in this country. But I can't think of anyone less lib-

eral than some of the Irish liberals. They broke the first rule of debate by going personal. The Bishop felt very hurt. But he never resorted to personalities himself."

Cllr Prendergast said that the Bishop saw himself as the custodian of public morals, and felt it his duty to speak out on the orthodoxy of the Catholic position.

"I am sad that he is gone," Cllr Prendergast said.

Cllr Mary Jackman said that he was a man of great intellectual ability. He spoke his mind at all times. But behind the academic front, he had a great sense of humour, and related well to young people, always posing for pictures with children at Confirmation time.

Cllr Jim McCarthy described the late Bishop as "intellectually honest".

"If there was a view that needed to be expressed, he expressed it," he said.

In the field of education he was a man ahead of his times, Cllr McCarthy said, and contributed much to the way in which educational services have developed in County Limerick.

Cllr Pat Kennedy said that the Bishop had pioneered physical planning in the country over 30 years ago.

There had always, Cllr Kennedy said, been a great relationship between the Bishop and the city, and he denounced "one or two peo-

ple who had tried to break that relationship".

"I believe he will be remembered when the people who attacked him are forgotten," he said, referring to the controversial 1974 civic reception for the Bishop.

Cllr Michael Brennan said that Dr Newman was a great Irishman and a great Churchman.

Sen Jan O'Sullivan remembered the Bishop as a person who enjoyed a good conversation and who always looked you in the eye.

More than some others, she said, she wouldn't have agreed with many of his views. "But I respected them."

She had written to him after the controversial refusal to allow her to

read the lesson at last year's Civic Week Mass when she was Mayor, asking him to explain the doctrine on which he had made his decision, and this he did.

"He believed in what he believed in," she said.

She said that Dr Newman was not as sensitive as Cllr Kennedy was suggesting, and he also respected the views of those who disagreed with him.

Cllr Joe O'Gorman said that he would always be remembered by the people of Cratloe as the saviour of the old church there.

"His picture is in every house in Cratloe from Confirmations," Cllr O'Gorman said.

A reincarnation of Bishop O'Dwyer

By SEÁN RUSHE

I FIRST saw Dr. Jeremiah Newman circa 1967 in Sligo, when he addressed the IVEA annual congress on Rural Centrality, a subject made topical at

the time largely through his own endeavours as a sociologist.

His audience of 300 or so could not help remarking how — most unusual for such an address — he continually graced the stage and



**DR JEREMIAH NEWMAN:
1926-1995**

made his emphasis with much gesticulation of the hands.

It was not a vintage performance, not least on account of the theoretical subject matter but also on account of the didactic style and ponderous delivery.

It was a classroom lecture rather than an address to public representatives and professional people. For some years prior to the Sligo paper Dr. Newman had worked extensively in this field, work which involved an intensive survey of the towns and villages in County Limerick which he must have got to know like the back of his hand.

On the score of social and demographic knowledge, therefore, no contemporary Irish churchman was more fitted than he for the See of Limerick.

Subsequent to his consecration, I met him on a number of occasions, professional and social, but I

had an opportunity of observing the Bishop's style and thinking, and to his credit I must record that I found him a well informed and fair minded participant. Unlike some of his Episcopal confreres, he was sympathetic to the national education system and, once satisfied with their credentials, welcomed the involvement of lay people in the administration of schools.

Our social contact was limited mostly to the perfunctory handshake and small talk, but on a few occasions it took on a greater depth.

When in 1980 I gave him a copy of my thesis on Dr. O'Dwyer, he responded in kind with a copy of his latest book, *Maynooth and Georgian Ireland* (1979), a factual account of the seminary from its founding in 1795 to the 1830's, and in which he makes no attempt whatever to hide or condone the human frailties and consequent convulsions

and low.

But the proof reading in the book was atrocious, and when I told him so he agreed, professing as an excuse extreme preoccupation with other affairs.

However, when a moment later he informed me that he was well into his next volume, I began to wonder of his scholarly mind was ever to be weaned from the groves of academe.

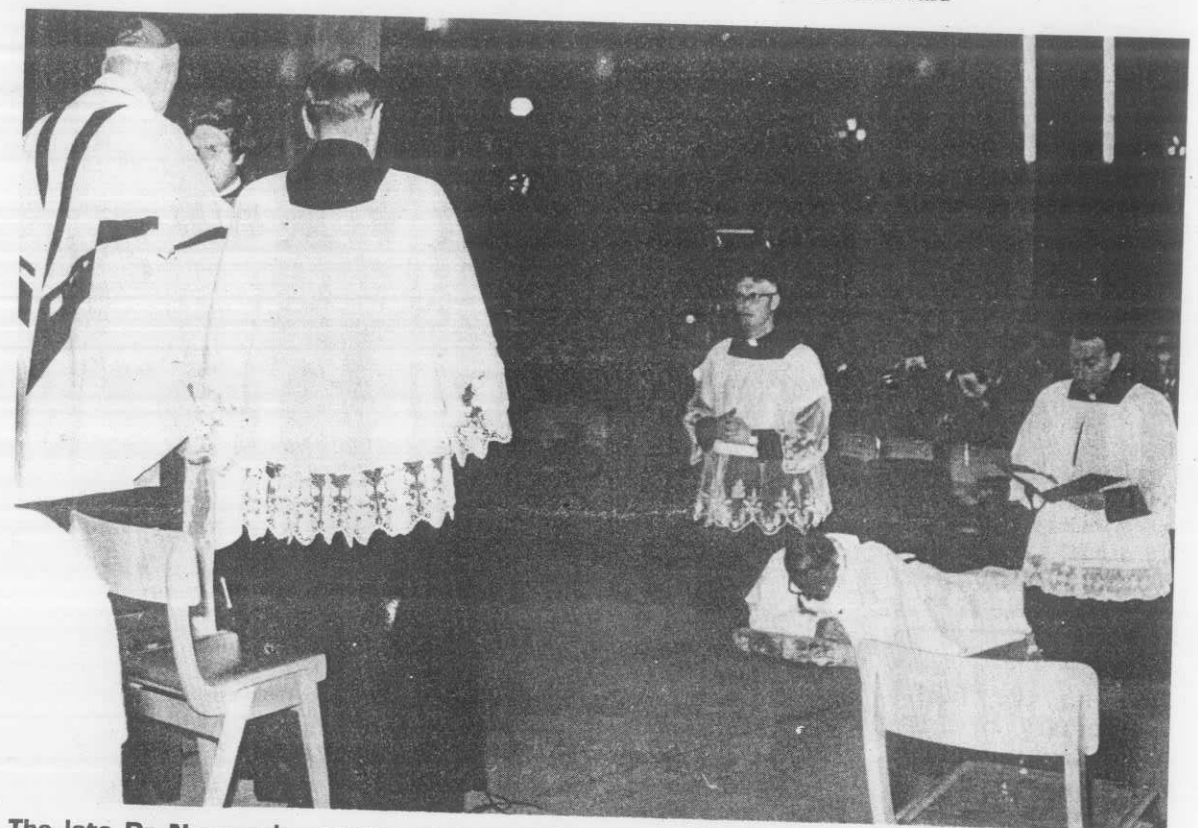
A bishop whose thoughts I know much more about is his tempestuous predecessor, Dr. Edward Thomas O'Dwyer (1886/1917), with whom it is tempting to make certain comparisons, with enormous reservations, of course.

But granting the widely different circumstances of their reigns and their widely different personalities, one trait they shared in common — along with courage and child-like faith — was an undying hatred of secularism. I shall illustrate this point by one aspect for each of their respective times:

(a) O'Dwyer's condoning of the 1916 Rising;

(b) Newman's performance in St. John's Cathedral.

(a) In my thesis I wrote as follows: "I have no difficul-



The late Dr Newman's consecration as Bishop in St John's Cathedral by Cardinal Conway. Flanking him are two friends, Fr Paddy Kelly, now a Canon and PP of Athea, left, and Fr Charles O'Neill, now based at Colmanswell.

that they burst into spontaneous applause, their conscience aglow with reassurance and expectation.

The bishop had given them what their instinct craved for: moral certitude of an after-life — the same certitude that finally led his towering namesake into the Catholic Church around the middle of the last century. His ringing phrases were closely similar to those by Bishop O'Dwyer in one of his Pastorals and as Dr. Newman spoke I said to

myself: "My God, this is O'Dwyer speaking from the vaults."

To me it was Jeremiah's greatest hour as bishop and it remains my outstanding memory of him.

Dr. O'Dwyer died in August, 1917, after a brief illness. Shortly before his death he was heard to mutter his autobiography: "A long life and never an unhappy day." By all accounts no such felicity attended the latter days of

Dr. Newman whose via crucis was prolonged.

I had not met him since my retirement some years ago, but in common with the general public I had heard and read stories of various assortment, none of which lessened to any degree my considerable respect for him. After all, I had read his *Georgian Ireland* and I could not forget his fair-mindedness in educational debate or his personal courtesy.

But above all else, I was

bound to remember his performance in St. John's Cathedral when he looked like one who had seen the light and brought for those who listened the two worlds closer together. As such, he qualifies, alongside his greater namesake, as a fitting guide for a stumbling pilgrim, especially when the night is dark and one is far from home.

(Seán Rushe is a former C.E.O. of County Limerick V.E.C.).

WHO DARES SELLS AND PAY UP

A ONE DAY SEMINAR

Specially designed for those in search of excellence in the fields of Sales, Marketing and Getting Paid

THE REVOLUTIONARY PATRICK ELLIS

Author of best-sellers

Who Dares Sells and Pay Up

- Learn powerful sales and success secrets never before revealed.
- Learn how to deal with objections and close the deal.
- Learn how to manage your time and territory efficiently.
- Learn all you need to know about getting paid and more,

At The Castletroy Park Hotel and Conference Centre, Limerick

• Learn all you need to know about getting paid and more,

At The Castletroy Park Hotel and Conference Centre, Limerick

THURSDAY 27 APRIL, 1995

£140.00 per delegate, to include lunch.

BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW.

Call Kate, Vera, at Vera Murray & Associates, Marketing and Communications Services, 93 O'Connell Street. Tel. No. 061-400100.

(8920)

...man was more fitted than he for the See of Limerick.

Subsequent to his consecration, I met him on a number of occasions, professional and social, but I cannot claim that I knew him intimately. Our professional meetings invariably focused on the thorny problems of post-primary education in the county when the various interests vigorously put forward their respective viewpoints.

During these meetings I

...ary from its founding in 1795 to the 1830's, and in which he makes no attempt whatever to hide or condone the human frailties and consequent convulsions that frequently beset that institution during the period in question.

And since human nature does not change that much in a century or two, anyone who has read this book would be prepared for the odd outcrop of human weakness in the ranks of Catholic clergymen, high

...the 1916 Rising; (b) Newman's performance in St. John's Cathedral.

(a) In my thesis I wrote as follows: "I have no difficulty in accepting O'Dwyer's genuine patriotism and in tracing its evolution from Home Rule pacifism in 1870 to ardent nationalism in 1916. It was a path from Expectation to Frustration. All along one can trace the Bishop's footsteps as he surveyed the ground, examining the foundations that upheld the Catholic faith and watching for dangers that threatened to weaken them. High among these dangers were the lack of a lay intellectual hierarchy trained in Catholic universities, English secularism made all the more dangerous by our intimate dependence on Britain, and lack of material prosperity, a world-wide corollary to colonial control. O'Dwyer all through his life tried to emulate

(Cardinal) Newman's ideal of the truly educated man who relates religion to all human activity, and no doubt, apart from other considerations, he saw in the 1916 Rebellion a powerful blow for Catholicity, an attempt to sever the umbilical cord that joined Ireland to England and through which could all too easily flow poisonous ferments from the urban, industrial and secular agencies which were convulsing Britain in the early years of this century, a development which O'Dwyer viewed with positive horror."

It is my belief that Dr. Jeremiah Newman, while still in his intellectual prime and physically strong, was taking upon himself the mantle of O'Dwyer, i.e., the role of chief spokesman on behalf of the Catholic Hierarchy against secularism in its many variants.

(b) Sometime in the early 1980's, I cannot recall the exact timing and provenance, Dr. Newman was engaged in public controversy with Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien, then, as now, an advocate of a more secular society; and His Lordship availed of a ceremony in St. John's Cathedral to answer his adversary. In an impassioned valediction he proclaimed his duty as a bishop: to preach the Gospel at all times and bring his flock safely home, a duty he would not shirk no matter what the circumstances. The atmosphere was tense as it always is when a strong man speaks with emotion. The tremor in his voice and the obvious conviction with which he spoke so moved the congregation

Bishop O'Dwyer in one of his Pastorals and as Dr. Newman spoke I said to

unhappy day." By all accounts no such felicity attended the latter days of

get his fair-mindedness in educational debate or his personal courtesy. But above all else, I was

(Seán Rushe is a former C.E.O. of County Limerick V.E.C.).

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM JET

You can only get
**JET Home Heating
Oil in the
Limerick area
from**

HOGAN OIL

Jet Depot, Dock Road, Limerick.

Tel: (061) 400611/2

You can only get Jet quality products and Jet Supreme Quality service in the Limerick area from
Hogan Oil, Jet Depot, Dock Road, Limerick.

Do not place your order with any other supplier purporting to be an authorised Jet Distributor.



JET

WE CARE, AND IT SHOWS

**Treat Your Home to Beautiful Tiles
And We'll Treat
You to a
Breakaway
in London**



When it comes to choosing tiles you've every reason to choose Tile Market.

After all, with over 20 years experience in the business you can have total confidence in our name.

You know that nowhere else will show you such an impressive range of wall & floor tiles, which we source from frequent visits around the world.

You can rest assured that our bulk-buying for our network of 15 stores throughout Ireland means exceptional value for money passed on directly to you.

You can feel confident in the knowledge that our friendly and experienced sales staff will offer you all the advice you need to make the right choice.

BUT NOW THERE'S ONE MORE REASON TO CHOOSE TILE MARKET



Between now and 23rd April 1995, when you spend £275 (at normal retail price including VAT) at Tile Market we'll give you a Return Flight to London ABSOLUTELY FREE!

Subject to normal terms & conditions

NOW YOU'VE EVERY REASON TO CHOOSE TILE MARKET!



The Fairgreen, Ballysimon Road, Limerick. TEL: (061) 314577