

Reflection Friday Week 21 Blessed Dominic Barberi 2022

Blessed Dominic Barberi was born near Viterbo, Italy, in 1792 and joined the Passionist Order. He was ordained a priest in 1818 and worked in Italy and Belgium before coming to England in 1841. His first foundation was Aston Hall in Staffordshire; he established four Passionist houses, and received many Anglicans into full communion, the most famous being John Henry Newman, received at Littlemore near Oxford on 9th October 1845. Blessed Dominic was noted for his personal warmth towards non-Catholics and his zeal in preaching; he drew crowds despite a strong Italian accent. He travelled in his Passionist habit and organised a Corpus Christi procession through the streets of the neighbourhood, possibly the first public procession of its kind in England in modern times. Blessed Dominic died at Reading on 27th August 1849 and was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1963.

God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength, writes St Paul. Some would have thought Dominic Barberi foolish coming to England when he did. Yet the wisdom of God worked through him such that John Henry Newman became a Catholic despite the hostility he received from the catholic leaders of the day. His writings have been influential in helping us understand change in terms of understanding dogma not changing it. It was the personal warmth he received from Dominic that kept him strong.

Dominic writes: *"The door opened and what a spectacle it was for me to see, at my feet, John Henry Newman, begging me to hear his confession and admit him into the bosom of the Catholic Church."* *"When his form came within sight, I was moved to the depths in the strangest way. The gaiety and affability of his manner, in the midst of his sanctity, was itself a holy sermon."*

A man was rushed in to hospital yesterday because he'd swallowed a five-pound note. They are keeping him in for observation - but so far there has been no change!