

With such a foundation, we surely have to let go those old ideas of clerical status. Any attempts to revive them by an insecure generation of young priests is, in any case, almost certain to backfire in a world which shows less and less respect for unmerited authority of any kind. In the Church we have come to see in recent years how the faithful no longer fight against the exercise of authority so much as quietly walk away. If our local parish communities are to reflect the spirit of the children of God, it must be made clear that no one can lord it over others, that no one can pretend to be better than anyone else: in God's Kingdom the first shall be last and the last first.

And maybe this is a central message we should be taking to our world. Society gives lip-service to the notion that governments are there to serve the people, and that the instruments of government should be a "civil service", but the reality is usually so different. At least by the way we exercise authority within the Church - from the global level down to that of the local parish - we could become salt to the earth and light to the world. Our mission is nothing less than to bring the example of Christ the servant to a world where those who exercise authority seem so often to have lost their way.

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## Purpose

### A Prayer by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

*I am created to do something or to be something for which no one else is created;*

*I have a place in God's counsels, in God's world, which no one else has;*

*whether I be rich or poor, despised or esteemed by man, God knows me and calls me by name.*

*God has created me to do Him some definite service;*

*He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.*

*I have a mission – I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next ..... I have a part in a great work;*

*I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.*

*He has not created me for naught.*

*I shall do good, I shall do His work;*

*I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.*

*Therefore I will trust Him.*

*Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.*

*If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;*

*in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;*

*if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.*

*My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end, which is quite beyond us.*

*He does nothing in vain;*

*He may prolong my life,*

*He may shorten it;*

*He knows what He is about.*

*He may take away my friends,*

*He may throw me among strangers,*

*He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide the future from me*

*– He still knows what He is about.*

*I ask not to see – ask not to know – I ask simply to be used.*

