



# Communities of Informed Judgment: Newman's Illative Sense and Accounts of Rationality

*Aquino F*

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Is Christian belief rationally acceptable? Must every Christian defend his or her beliefs with exhaustively logical arguments, or is belief solely a matter of faith rather than logical argument? In *Communities of Informed Judgment*, Frederick D. Aquino offers an alternative route, showing how John Henry Newman's notion of the illative sense of reasoning paves a way for constructing a fresh account of the rationality of Christian belief. Moving beyond both modern and postmodern accounts of rationality, Aquino constructs a proposal of informed judgment, blending Newman's notion of the illative sense of reasoning with recent work in social and virtue epistemology.

The first part of the book focuses primarily on Newman's treatment of the illative sense in the *Grammar of Assent*, with the *University Sermons* as a backdrop. The second part addresses the problem of securing a common standard of justification. Though Newman acknowledges the social and communal facets of judgment, his focus is primarily on the personal dimension. Aquino develops Newman's insights into a social epistemology of informed judgment, transposing the problem of common measure into a problem of trusting the illative sense as a reliable belief-forming process in communities of informed judgment.

An original contribution to Newman studies, the book has an interdisciplinary focus, drawing from recent work in social epistemology, virtue epistemology, and cognitive science. It also takes up issues relevant to the philosophy of religion, epistemology of religious belief, systematic theology, ecumenical dialogue, and studies in John Henry Newman.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Frederick D. Aquino is Assistant Professor of Theology at Abilene Christian University. He serves on the editorial boards of *Newman Studies Journal* and *Christian Higher Education*, and is the editor of *Journal for Case Teaching*.

### PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"An important contribution to Newman studies and to the systematic theological investigation of belief formation by merging 'Newman's account of the illative sense with insights from recent work in social and virtue epistemology.' "Michael C. Martin, *Anglican Theological Review*

"[A] well-executed retrieval and expansion of Newman's concept of the illative sense using the resources of contemporary epistemology in the analytic philosophical tradition."J.A. Colombo, *Theological Studies*

"Aquino offers invaluable insights into Newman's argument concerning how the formative experiences encountered by an individual within these larger communities contribute to his or her understanding of the relationship shared by faith and reason."- Todd C. Ream, *Catholic Books Review*

"This is a significant work that seeks to encourage a fuller understanding of Newman's thought and the coming to faith. It is highly recommended for serious students of theology."-Lucien J. Richard, OMI *Catholic Library World*

"Frederick D. Aquino has done justice to the complexity of Newman's thought and demonstrated its continuing relevance for theology, epistemology and ethics. He moves confidently between Newman's most important writings on the nature of truth, and the work of contemporary theorists, especially in the field of virtue ethics. His study illuminates aspects of Newman's thought that have often gone unnoticed and gives him a voice in the ongoing debate about the way in which individuals and communities ascertain the truth. By augmenting and challenging Newman's insights with the results of contemporary research, Aquino opens up new perspectives for both Newman studies and theological epistemology."?Prof. Terrence Merrigan, Faculty of Theology, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

"By drawing out the communal notions found just beneath the surface of Newman's thou

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