Newman later wrote that the influences leading him in a religiously liberal direction were abruptly checked by his suffering first, at the end of 1827, a kind of nervous collapse brought on by overwork and family financial troubles, and then, at the beginning of 1828, the sudden death of his beloved youngest sister, Mary. There was also a crucial theological factor: his fascination since 1816 with the Fathers of the Church, whose works he began to read systematically in the long vacation of 1828. This he regarded as his second formative providential illness. Oxford Movement. The Reverend Mr. John Henry Newman—a writer unsurpassed in style and clarity, a preacher of unparalleled power and grace—the most famous and, perhaps, the most influential Anglican minister in all of England, did the unthinkable: he joined the Roman Catholic Church. In his youth, Newman himself would have thought it unthinkable. Born in 1801, he was the eldest son of a nominally Anglican father and an evangelical Anglican mother. During this time, Newman began to study early Church history and the teachings of the Fathers. He discovered many doctrines taught in the ancient Church, especially the sacramental system and apostolic succession, which had been largely abandoned among Anglicans. This was the first step on his road to Rome.