

The Catholic Church is under growing pressure to abandon the "homophobic" exhumation and reburial of the body of one its most famous cardinals, in defiance of his wish to lie for eternity next to the man he loved.

Gay rights campaigners have accused the Vatican – which has ordered the disinterment in the first step towards beatification – of attempting to cover up the sexuality of Cardinal John Henry Newman, who died in 1890.

"They have been together for more than 100 years and the Vatican wants to disturb that peace to cover up the fact that Cardinal Newman loved a man. It's shameful, dishonourable betrayal of Newman by the gay-hating Catholic Church."

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