

- In his marvelous treatise, *The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis reminds us of the tremendous dignity that each and every human being possesses. Our dignity comes from the fact that we have been made by God in His own image and likeness.
- Think about that for a moment: we are made in God's own image and likeness. In other words, we are created by God to be like God!
- To this end, C.S. Lewis remarks: "It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship."
- His point is that if we saw the glorious end for which man is made, if we saw a human soul in Heaven, we would recognize the divinity in it and, therefore, be tempted to worship it.
- Yet, Lewis is also quick to remind us of how that glory for which we are made will be turned to horror if we go to hell. In fact, Lewis calls the soul of a damned person "a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare."
- And so Lewis goes on to say: "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."
- In other words, there is so much hidden from view when we meet another person, or even when we look into a mirror. We cannot see the glory or the horror of what a man's soul, or even our own, will be in eternity.
- And Lewis reminds us that in our interactions with one another, we are in some way, helping each other to attain one of these ends: either eternal glory, or eternal damnation.
- Thus, Lewis says: "It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics."
- So, what exactly is this great weight of glory of which C.S. Lewis speaks? What is this great dignity disguised by our human flesh? Well, unfortunately, it's something that we will not get to behold until we enter into eternity ourselves.
- And yet that wasn't the case with Sts. Peter, James, and John. Our first pope and the two "Sons of Thunder" were given a glimpse of the great weight of eternal glory in our Gospel story of the Transfiguration.
- Atop Mt. Tabor our Lord Jesus is marvelously transfigured before them, such that: "His clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them."
- It's a glory so potent and powerful that it terrifies the apostles. And yet it's the glory to which we are all called.
- Made in God's image and likeness, we are called – as the Prophet Daniel says – to shine like the stars in the heavens! The glory that our souls possess is a ray and reflection of God's own glory, witnessed by Sts. Peter, James, and John.
- Unlike our Lord, whose glory was hidden only by His human flesh, the glory of our souls is obscured by sin as well, which is why we have the Sacraments. Through baptism, Holy Communion, and confession our souls are transfigured and made radiant in glory.

- Yet this glory that our souls possess will only be fully revealed when we get to Heaven and all of our sins have been wiped away. There, we will see the triumph of God's divine mercy gloriously shining through each soul!
- Indeed, each soul in Heaven will reflect God's own glory in a uniquely beautiful way. The more that we come to image Christ in this life by our virtue and holiness, the more brightly we will reflect His glory in the next life!
- This is why we must be so ever conscious of how we live our lives, and especially of how we treat others; for again, as C.S. Lewis tells us, *there are no ordinary people*. All men are created for glory. All of us possess a dignity that's deeper than we can imagine.
- If we wish to protect this glory in ourselves and others, we must first and foremost strive to heed the command given by the Father at the end of the Gospel to listen to His Son, which we do by being obedient to God's commandments.
- For the commandments of the Lord, especially as they are fleshed out in the teachings of the Church, are really protective measures that keep us from abasing our own dignity and that of others. This is especially true with regard the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> commandments.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> commandment is "Thou shalt not kill," which means more than mere murder. In its full context, this commandment enjoins upon us the duty not to harm others in any way. It covers sins such as gossip, slander, and calumny, just as it covers abortion and murder.
- Similarly, the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," covers all lustful sins of the flesh. Sadly, the Church's teachings on these matters (such as homosexual unions, contraception, and fornication) often gets criticized as being old-fashioned and limiting of man's freedom.
- Think of how many in our world today speak of abortion as a "right" and as "health care," and state that to deny women access to abortion limits their freedom.
- Yet, the Church boldly teaches as she does on these matters not to impede our freedom, but to defend our inherent human dignity. Contrary to what so many believe, man does not have a right to kill an unborn child for any reason.
- The pro-abortion slogan: "My body, my choice" is disingenuous because, ladies, it's not just your body; it's a whole other body within you, with its own soul. Every human has value and dignity; every one of us gives glory to God by our very existence.
- Furthermore, man does not have a right to treat the marital act as simply a matter of recreation rather than procreation. Your body is not completely your own. You belong to God, and you have a dignity that you distort and destroy by these sins.
- Even sins that we give little thought to, like a casual, catty comment made about someone we dislike is an offense against their dignity and ours. And we must correct these!
- Brothers and sisters, in his first epistle, St. John writes: *Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*. Truly, none of us is ordinary. We are not mere mortals.
- God has created us with a dignity beyond our comprehension – a dignity and a glory that we will only see in Heaven, but of which we're given a glimpse in the Transfiguration.
- Knowing of His immense love for us, let us prepare ourselves well in this season of Lent for that moment when we will see God as He is, and ourselves as we truly are, by praying more, fasting more, and giving more.
- And let us be ever conscious of how we treat others so that we might respect their human dignity, while also protecting our own.