

One and Only

Somebody Special

We all want to be someone special. Every one of us has something inside of us that wants to prove that we are unique. What do we have that proves we are worth choosing, that we are worth loving? Some people have a long list of accomplishments or qualities that seem to prove that they deserve to be the One and Only...but where does worth really come from? The answer to this question makes all the difference.

Discussion Questions

1. What is one accomplishment that you used to consider important that you no longer do?
2. Why do you think people are tempted to derive worth and identity from accomplishments? Even though we know that there are always people who are going to be better at everything than us, why do we return to this?
3. There is a difference between taking joy in accomplishment/excellence and taking one's identity in accomplishment/excellence. Have you ever had an experience where you simply took joy in a job well done without being tempted to get your identity from that work?
4. Many people strive to be good. Catholic Christians are no different. What do you think of when you hear that "you may not be as bad as you could be...but you are not as good as you should be"? Is there a degree of shame there? Does that reveal anything about where you might be getting your worth from?
5. What would your worth be without God (on a scale of 0-to-infinity)? What makes you say that?
6. Being special (as a Christian) means that you have a special strength/gift to offer. What way could you serve others as the One and Only "you"?

God in Real Life

- I. If we begin with the good we do (or don't do) to define our worth, we will always come up short — if we are honest. But the Catholic Christian understands that one's perception about themselves proceeds as follows: Relationship — Identity — Mission. We first are brought into relationship with God through Jesus and the Spirit. This makes us sons or daughters of God. And this gives us our mission. How will this week change for you if you begin to grasp that your works flow from your relationship and identity, not the other way around?

Be Transformed

Scripture has a balanced view of the human person:

- A. While Psalm 139 talks about the great mystery of the gift human beings are by God's creative work (see Psalm 139: 13-15), Psalm 144 talks about how fleeting is the life of a human being: "LORD, what is man that you take notice of him; the son of man, that you think of him? Man is but a breath, his days are like a passing shadow." (Psalm 144: 3-4)
 - B. Jesus talks about the worth of even the most (seemingly insignificant) human being in Luke 12:6-7.
 - C. In ancient culture, children amounted to non-persons. They were "zeros". Jesus makes it clear that He (the true One and Only) identifies with those who have no unique value (Mark 9:30-37). Our greatness comes from His self-sacrificing love, not anything we offer Him (Ephesians 2:4-9).
 - D. "The infinite value of each human soul is not a Christian doctrine. God did not die for man because of some value He perceived in him. The value of each human soul considered simply in itself, out of relation to God, is zero. As St. Paul writes, to have died for valuable men would have been not divine but merely heroic; but God died for sinners. He loved us not because we were lovable, but because He is Love."- C.S. Lewis (The Weight of Glory)
 - E. The Catechism of the Catholic church notes: "The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (article 1); it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude (article 2). It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment (article 3). By his deliberate actions (article 4), the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience (article 5). Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth (article 6). With the help of grace they grow in virtue (article 7), avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son¹ to the mercy of our Father in heaven (article 8). In this way they attain to the perfection of charity." (CCC 1700).
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To the Heart

“For Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

How much more then, since we are now justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath.

Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life.” (Romans 5:6-10)