

In his allegorical fantasy called *The Great Divorce*, British author C. S. Lewis presents an interesting parable about the souls of the dead.

The story begins with the protagonist waiting in line at a bus stop. He describes his surroundings as a town with “mean streets, always in the rain and always in evening twilight” ... with “dingy lodging houses ... windowless warehouses ... [and] stations without trains” ... And short of “the little crowd at the bus stop, the whole town seemed to be empty.”

And so, he waits at the bus stop.

Even in waiting, there are people who for various random and lame excuses get out of line and leave. And eventually, the bus arrives, “blazing with golden light” and bright colors. Once the crowd has fought its way onto the bus, it takes off — literally, that is, off the ground and into the sky.

When the bus lands again, it is in the most beautiful place imaginable. Yet there is a problem once they get off of the bus. The travelers on the bus, who came from the dismal grey city, are mere ghosts. And everything beautiful place is much too substantial for them to work with. The blades of grass poke through their feet, and even one leaf is much too hard for any one of them to lift.

In this miraculous setting, the ghosts are met by spirits who encourage them to follow them up higher, toward a beautiful light. Those who struggle to move along become more and more substantial and begin to shine with an inner light.

But for the most part, the majority of the ghostly travelers choose to return to the dismal grey town. Each of them coming up with flimsy excuses, imagined complaints, and deluded reasons for why they will not stay in paradise or even attempt to go on to their ultimate destination.

Today’s readings call us to reflect on our ultimate destination. During this month of November, the Church calls us to contemplate what have been traditionally called the *Four Last Things*. These four things are (1) Death, (2) Judgment, (3) Heaven, and (4) Hell.

In the allegory, Hell is a dismal, dingy, wet, and drab little town. While heaven is far more substantial and real. When we are too attached to ourselves, our passions, our desires, our emotions; then we are attaching ourselves to things that are less real than our ultimate destination — which is Heaven, and union with God the Most Holy Trinity.

The Old Testament reading from the Book of Daniel tells us:

*“the wise shall shine brightly
like the splendor of the firmament,
and those who lead the many to justice
shall be like the stars forever.”*

Like those in the story who continued on and pressed on despite the discomfort of moving from un-reality to reality — we are called to ‘shine brightly’ for God in Christ.

At present, we are somewhere in between reality and un-reality.

Yet, in the Letter to the Hebrews, we are told that:

*[Jesus] “by [His] one offering ...
has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated.”*

That is supposed to be us. We are the ones made perfect by His offering — the offering, the sacrifice, that will soon be re-presented on this altar.

We can reflect on our own thoughts — are we preoccupied with the future, or with daydreams, or fantasies. Is the grass greener on the other side? Has our work, or material gain taken a higher position in our lives than the people around us, or the Persons of the Trinity?

Jesus tells us in the Gospel that these earthly things will pass away, but His “*words will not pass away.*”

Let us immerse ourselves in that Word. Let us receive the graces poured out on us.

We are made for God ... we are made to love ... we are made to serve God. Anything else ... Everything else ... that we do ... or that we have ... should be secondary.

As the Psalm said: “*You are my inheritance, O Lord!*” Let us claim our inheritance, the inheritance of Eternity.

As we near the end of the Church Year, let prepare ourselves for Advent by seeking the reality of God. Let us move from un-reality to reality, and as we do so — despite the difficulties involved, we, too, will become more substantial, and more and more like our Heavenly Father, who has chosen us in Christ and filled us with the inheritance of the Holy Spirit.