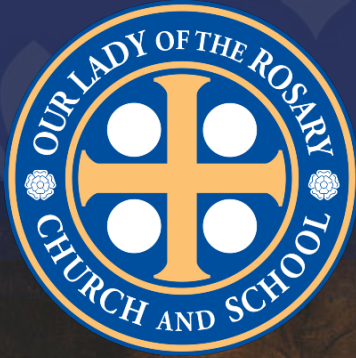




English IV Curriculum

Grade 12



Course Overview

Course Description

This course examines the spiritual and moral drama of the modern soul through the mythic and theological imagination of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Dante Alighieri, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Set at the crossroads of classical form and Christian vision, these works confront the questions of identity, freedom, suffering, and grace in a world fractured by pride and longing for redemption. Students will journey through allegory and epic, satire and testimony—ascending from the depths of spiritual blindness to the heights of divine glory. Guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition, the course explores literature not as escape, but as a path to wisdom, while ultimately considering what it means to be fully human in a disenchanted age.

Why We Teach It...

We teach Modern Literature to form souls capable of wonder, conscience, and courage. In a world tempted by illusion and despair, these works reveal the truth of the human condition—our longing for meaning, our battle with pride, and our hope for redemption.

Through the mythic vision of Lewis and Tolkien, the theological ascent of Dante, and the moral witness of Solzhenitsyn, students are invited to see suffering as formative, freedom as a spiritual calling, and literature as a path toward wisdom. These authors do not flatter modernity—they challenge it. And in doing so, they awaken the desire to live not comfortably, but truly.








Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

-  Trace the journey of the soul through myth, allegory, and testimony, recognizing literature as a mirror of man's longing for truth and transformation.



Course Objectives | Continued...

-  Analyze the moral and theological themes of modern texts through the lens of the Catholic intellectual tradition.
-  Interpret symbolic and imaginative language with clarity, attending to structure, tone, and meaning.
-  Articulate the relationship between suffering, conscience, and grace in the face of evil and moral failure.
-  Compare how characters embody or reject virtue, and how their choices reveal the nature of freedom and the reality of sin.
-  Evaluate literature as both a critique of modernity and a recovery of the eternal through form, beauty, and moral vision.
-  Understand that man is not merely a thinker or consumer, but a creature ordered to glory.
-  Affirm that imagination, rightly formed, can lead the soul toward wisdom, joy, and God.

Source Material

C.S. Lewis, Till We Have Faces
C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce
J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring
J.R.R. Tolkien, The Two Towers
J.R.R. Tolkien, The Return of the King
Dante Alighieri, Paradiso (trans. Anthony Esolen)
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago (excerpts)
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart" (Harvard Address)
The Holy Bible (selected passages)
Catechism of the Catholic Church (selected sections)
St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae (selections on grace and virtue)
G.K. Chesterton, On Stories (optional supplementary reading)



Central Themes

- ☞ Man is a spiritual and moral creature, ordered by nature and grace to seek what is true, good, and eternal.
- ☞ The imagination, rightly formed, is a faculty of truth, revealing realities too deep for mere reason.
- ☞ Suffering is not meaningless—it can refine the soul, awaken conscience, and prepare the heart for grace.
- ☞ Freedom is not the absence of limits, but the power to choose the good in love and truth.
- ☞ Evil deceives through pride, illusion, and despair—but it is undone by humility, fidelity, and mercy.
- ☞ The modern world risks forgetting God, and with Him, the meaning of man.

Key Concepts

Myth & Meaning
Moral Imagination
Allegory
Symbolism
Conscience
Free Will
Divine Providence
Grace
Virtue & Vice
Pride
Humility
Sacrifice
Heroism

Friendship
Temptation
Redemption
Literary Form
Tragedy
Epic Journey
Frame Narrative
Classical Structure
Theological Vision
Sub-Creation
Poetic Justice
Narrative Voice
Modern Crisis

Modern Crisis
Totalitarianism
Materialism
Despair
Interior Freedom
Witness
Memory
Truth and Suffering
Faith in Exile



On Writing

All written work in this course integrates Our Lady's Writing Curriculum, a program rooted in the tradition of the classical oration and the progymnasmata—the ancient exercises that trained students in the art of eloquence, clarity, and persuasion. Students will be guided through structured stages of composition, learning to narrate, describe, argue, and exhort with both precision and grace.

Writing is not treated as a mere skill, but as a moral and intellectual discipline—a means of pursuing truth and communicating it rightly. In keeping with the classical model, students will imitate excellent forms, internalize timeless principles, and ultimately express their own judgments with charity, courage, and rhetorical power.

Assessments

Summative: 45%

- Exams
- Essays
- Recitations
- Quizzes

Formative: 35%

- Quizzes
- Weekly Writing Assignments
- Expository Essays

Conscientiousness 20%

- Pop Quizzes
- Homework
- Classwork
- Participation



Scope & Sequence

Unit 1 | The Face of Truth

3 Week

Week 1-3 Overview

Students will begin the year with C.S. Lewis's reimagining of the myth of Cupid and Psyche—a classical tale transformed into a Christian meditation on love, pride, and divine hiddenness. Through the voice of Orual, a queen blinded by self-deception, students will confront the nature of true love and the painful journey toward self-knowledge and grace. Blending classical form with Christian vision, the novel invites students to question what it means to see clearly—both oneself and the divine—and to ask what must die in us before we can be made new.

Central-One-Idea

True vision begins when the soul abandons illusion. Orual's journey is the soul's pilgrimage—from pride to repentance, from self-justification to truth, from demanding an answer to becoming the answer. Only in surrendering her false face does she begin to see the face of God.

Great Question(s)

- What is love, and how does it become distorted?
- Why is God silent—or does He speak in ways we do not understand?
- What must be stripped away before the soul can be healed?

Sources: *Till We Have Faces* by C.S. Lewis; *The Symposium (excerpt)* by Plato (optional); Psalm 51; Isaiah 55; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§27–49, 355–384 (*Man's capacity for God; the Fall; vocation to beatitude*)



Week 4-6 Overview

Students will continue their study of C.S. Lewis with *The Great Divorce*—a theological fantasy that presents a dreamlike journey from a grey, joyless city toward the threshold of Heaven. Along the way, the narrator witnesses souls confronted with eternal choice: to cling to pride, bitterness, and illusion, or to surrender to the fierce mercy of divine love. Through a series of vivid encounters, Lewis exposes the lies we tell ourselves and the subtle ways the soul resists grace. Echoing the moral structure of Dante and the allegorical method of the classical tradition, the text invites students to consider whether we truly want what is good—or merely what is familiar.

Central-One-Idea

The gates of Heaven are open, but the soul must choose to enter. It is not Hell that holds us fast, but pride. Only when we relinquish illusion and love the truth more than the self can we become real and receive joy.

Great Question(s)

- Why do some reject grace, even when it is freely offered?
- Is Hell a prison we are sent to—or one we choose?
- What must a soul surrender in order to become real—and why do so many refuse?

Sources: *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis; *Luke 18:18–30*; *John 3:19–21*; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§1033–1037, 1730–1742 (*Hell, Freedom, Responsibility*); *Dante Alighieri, Purgatorio* (selections, optional)



Week 7-12 Overview

Students now ascend with Dante into the final canticle of the *Divine Comedy*—a poetic vision of the soul’s union with God. Guided by Beatrice, the image of divine wisdom, Dante travels through the celestial spheres, encountering saints, angels, and the perfect order of Heaven. In contrast to the pain and struggle of *Inferno* and the labor of *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso* offers a world of radiant joy, intellectual clarity, and harmonious love. Yet its beauty requires preparation: students must learn to see with the eyes of the soul, to think theologically, and to imagine a cosmos ordered not by desire, but by charity. This is not the end of a journey—it is the fulfillment of what the soul was made for.

Central-One-Idea

Heaven is not merely a reward—it is the perfection of love. In *Paradiso*, the soul becomes what it was always meant to be: fully alive in the light of truth, wholly ordered to God. The Beatific Vision is not the loss of self, but its transfiguration.

Great Question(s)

- What does it mean to see God—and can the soul bear such a vision?
- Why is love the force that moves the stars?
- How does divine order heal the will and restore joy?

Sources: *Paradiso* by Dante Alighieri (trans. Anthony Esolen); *John 17*; *Revelation 21–22*; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§1023–1029, 1720–1726 (Heaven; Beatific Vision; Happiness); *St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I-II, Q3* (on happiness)



Week 13-17 Overview

Students now enter the mythic world of Middle-earth, where courage is tested not in triumph, but in endurance. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien begins a tale of quiet heroism, ordered sacrifice, and providence at work behind the veil of shadow. Though set in a pre-Christian world, the narrative is steeped in the moral order of classical virtue and the spiritual logic of grace. As Frodo takes up the burden of the Ring, and the Fellowship forms around a shared vow, students will examine the cost of responsibility and the mystery of strength in weakness. This is not a story of grand victories, but of faithful beginnings—a pilgrimage walked in hope through peril and doubt.

Central-One-Idea

Greatness is not found in power, but in bearing what others will not. The journey begins when ordinary souls choose the narrow path—not for glory, but for love of what is good.

Great Question(s)

- Why is the burden of the Ring given to the smallest and least?
- What makes a fellowship strong in the face of evil?
- How does Tolkien redefine what it means to be heroic?

Sources: *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien; Luke 22:24–27; 2 Corinthians 12:9–10; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§1804–1813 (*The Cardinal Virtues*); *St. Augustine, City of God* (Book XIX, excerpts – optional)



Week 18-22 Overview

As the Fellowship is broken, each member is cast into a trial that will reveal the depth of his character. In *The Two Towers*, Tolkien deepens his moral vision—portraying virtue not as a single heroic act, but as a long obedience in the same direction. Aragorn begins to rise into true kingship, not through conquest, but through prudence and restraint. Sam and Frodo continue their perilous journey, where the weight of the Ring grows heavier and the light more distant. Meanwhile, Gollum becomes both guide and warning—a mirror of what Frodo might become. In this fractured world, students will explore how interior choices shape outward fate, and how fidelity often means choosing the good without assurance of victory.

Central-One-Idea

In the face of darkness, the greatest strength is faithfulness. The true test of the soul is not in grand triumph, but in quiet perseverance when the end is hidden and the burden great.

Great Question(s)

- How is virtue tested when hope grows thin?
- Can a broken fellowship still fulfill its mission?
- What does Gollum reveal about the danger of unchecked desire?

Sources: *The Two Towers* by J.R.R. Tolkien; *Romans 5:3–5*; *Philippians 2:1–11*; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§1808, 1810, 1832 (*Fortitude and perseverance*)

Week 23-27 Overview

The journey reaches its end—but not without cost. In *The Return of the King*, Tolkien brings his epic to fulfillment through images of sacrifice, resurrection, and the healing of a broken world. Aragorn ascends not merely to power, but to service, revealing the true nature of kingship as ordered love. Frodo's path, now nearly unbearable, becomes a passion narrative—culminating in a salvation achieved not by might, but by mercy. Students will explore how the climax of the story echoes the Christian drama: evil is overcome, yet the wounds remain; the world is renewed, yet not without sorrow. The Scouring of the Shire and Frodo's departure remind readers that the greatest victories are inward, and that some healing lies beyond this world.

Central-One-Idea

True victory is not the absence of suffering, but the triumph of grace through it. The King returns not to dominate, but to restore—and the faithful bear wounds that only Heaven can heal.

Great Question(s)

- What does it mean to be a king—and what kind of crown does true victory require?
- Why does Frodo succeed—and why can he not stay?
- Can a world be saved and still marked by sorrow?

Sources: *The Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Isaiah 53; Revelation 5; Luke 24:13–35

Catechism of the Catholic Church §§440, 618, 1045–1050 (Christ the King, participation in suffering, new creation)

Unit 7 | A World Split Apart

4 Weeks

Week 28-31 Overview

In this final unit, students confront one of the darkest chapters of modern history through the luminous moral witness of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. In *The Gulag Archipelago*, the Soviet labor camp becomes a crucible in which the soul is tested, refined—or destroyed. Yet even here, amidst humiliation and brutality, Solzhenitsyn discovers that freedom is not political, but spiritual; that conscience cannot be imprisoned; and that repentance is the beginning of hope. His Harvard address, *A World Split Apart*, diagnoses the moral collapse of the modern West—not through tyranny, but through comfort, cowardice, and the rejection of truth. Together, these works offer a final warning and a final call: to choose truth over ideology, conscience over ease, and fidelity over fear.

Central-One-Idea

A society may kill the body, but not the soul. True freedom begins in the heart that fears God more than man, and a civilization that forgets truth will not long remain free.

Great Question(s)

- How can a man remain free in a prison?
- What is the cost of speaking the truth in a world built on lies?
- Can the West preserve freedom without recovering its soul?

Sources: *The Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (excerpts); “*A World Split Apart*” (Harvard Commencement Address, 1978); *Matthew 10:28*; *John 8:32*; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§1782, 1800, 2495–2499 (*Freedom of conscience; truth in society*)



Course Catechism

This section is structured as a series of questions and answers—intended to cultivate wisdom, virtue, and a love of tradition in the soul of the reader. Drawing from classical education, Christian orthodoxy, and the accumulated insights of Western civilization, this catechism aims to form not only the mind but the moral imagination.



Each question is crafted to provoke contemplation, and each answer is more than mere information—it is a small liturgy of truth, designed to be memorized, internalized, and lived. In the tradition of ancient catechisms, this section assumes that learning is not just for passing tests, but for becoming someone.

Section I | Till We Have Faces

Q: What is Orual's greatest wound?

A: Not the gods' silence, but her own unwillingness to see herself truly.

Q: Why is love not always good?

A: Because love without truth becomes possession, and love without sacrifice becomes pride.

Q: What must be stripped away for the soul to be healed?

A: The false self—the face we make to hide our fear, our pain, and our blame.

Q: What is the answer of the gods?

A: The answer is not spoken—it is given in the transformation of the soul that asks rightly.

Q: What is vision?

A: Vision is the soul's capacity to see clearly through humility, repentance, and grace.



Section II | The Great Divorce

Q: Why do souls choose Hell?

A: *Because they would rather keep their illusions than surrender to joy.*

Q: What must a soul surrender to become real?

A: *Pride, self-pity, and the lie that we are the measure of truth.*

Q: What is grace in this story?

A: *A final offer to step into the light, freely given, fiercely resisted.*

Q: What makes a soul heavy or light?

A: *Love. Only those who love truth more than themselves become weighty with reality.*

Q: What does it mean to be real?

A: *To be conformed to eternal things—not fading shadows, but solid joy.*

Section III | Paradiso

Q: What is Heaven?

A: *The soul's perfect union with God, in whom all desire finds rest.*

Q: What moves the heavens?

A: *Love—the love that orders all things toward their true end.*

Q: Can the soul bear the vision of God?

A: *Only when it is made pure by grace and its will aligned with divine charity.*

Q: Why does Dante need Beatrice?

A: *Because reason alone cannot ascend; it must be led by wisdom transfigured by love.*

Q: What is joy in Paradiso?

A: *The radiant harmony of intellect and will, delighting in truth and burning with praise.*



Section IV | The Lord of the Rings

Q: What makes a hero in Middle-earth?

A: *The willingness to bear a burden no one sees, for a good he may never live to enjoy.*

Q: Why does Frodo succeed?

A: *Not because he is strong, but because he is faithful, and others show him mercy.*

Q: What is true kingship?

A: *To rule in service, with wisdom, justice, and a heart submitted to the good.*

Q: Why must the Shire be scoured?

A: *Because no place is untouched by evil, and restoration requires memory and sacrifice.*

Q: What is the cost of victory?

A: *Wounds that do not heal in this world, and the quiet departure of the faithful.*

Section V | The World Split Apart

Q: What is the first step toward tyranny?

A: *The rejection of truth—and the soul's refusal to call evil by its name.*

Q: What does Solzhenitsyn mean by “interior freedom”?

A: *The power to choose truth, even when all external liberties are stripped away.*

Q: Why did the camps fail to break every man?

A: *Because conscience cannot be chained where God is still feared.*

Q: What is the danger to the West?

A: *Not persecution, but comfort; not oppression, but moral cowardice.*

Q: What must we remember in the face of suffering?

A: *That repentance opens the heart, and in the deepest pit, God still calls.*



Section VIII | Recitations

“I ended my first book with the words ‘No answer.’ I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer.

You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away.

What other answer would suffice?”

—Till We Have Faces

“There are only two kinds of people in the end:

those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’

and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’

All that are in Hell, choose it.”

—The Great Divorce

“In His will is our peace.

That sea all things move in, is the form of God’s light—

Love that moves the sun and the other stars.”

—Paradiso

“Where will I find rest?”

“There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not be the same; for I shall not be the same. I am wounded with knife, sting, and tooth...

It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: someone has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them.”

—The Return of the King

“Bless you, prison, for having been in my life!

For there, lying upon the rotting prison straw,

I came to realize that the object of life is not prosperity

as we are made to believe,

but the maturity of the human soul.”

—The Gulag Archipelago



Week 1

Weekly Logos | Love, Pride, & the False Self

“Before we can understand God, we must first see ourselves. But we cannot see ourselves until our face is stripped bare.”

This week, students explore the nature of love, illusion, and self-knowledge through the voice of Orual in *Till We Have Faces*. We begin by discussing the classical meaning of myth and its transformation in Lewis’s hands. Students are introduced to the concept of divine hiddenness and how false love can mask itself as devotion. Through close reading and reflection, they will confront the painful but redemptive journey from pride to truth.

What Are We Assessing? | The Facts

- Myth is a symbolic story that reveals truth through imaginative form
- Orual is both queen and narrator—wounded, angry, and blind to herself
- The gods are silent—not because they do not speak, but because we do not listen
- The Characters, the places, the actions.

What Are We Assessing? | The Skills

- Read with discernment: trace how Orual’s words reveal more than she intends
- Listen attentively: hear the silences and contradictions in the narrator’s voice.
- Speak precisely: offer oral definitions and insights supported by the text
- Write reflectively: articulate the tension between love and illusion in structured prose



What Are We Assessing? | The Truths

We cannot know the truth until we are willing to be seen.

These truths unify every element of the lesson:


Pride distorts love, and love without truth becomes possessive


The self must die before it can see rightly


True transformation begins not in blaming the gods, but in asking the right questions


The answer we seek is not a reply, but a Person

Assessments | Suggested Types

 Vocabulary Quiz: Myth, Allegory, Divine Hiddenness, Self-Deception

 Criticality: “What does Orual mean when she says the gods do not answer?”

 Reading Annotation: Chapters 1–4, identifying key images and questions

 Discussion: “Is love always good?”

Pacing | By Week

<i>Day</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Monday	Course Introduction: Why we read myth, how Lewis transforms it	Re-read ch. 1–2 closely; annotate Orual’s voice and tone
Tuesday	Orual’s Complaint: What is she really saying?	Write a 1-paragraph analysis (exercise on criticality): “Is Orual’s love true?”
Wednesday	Divine Hiddenness and the Silence of the Gods	Expository: explain Orual’s central accusation against the gods What does she believe they have done to her, and why does she think her complaint is just? Identify and explain at least two specific passages where Orual describes her suffering or expresses her anger
Thursday	Seeing and Being Seen: What is the face, and why must it be stripped?	Keep working on 1-2 page expository essay for Friday’s discussion
Friday	Seminar: “Is love always good?”	None



Teacher Tips

Make Her Words Audible

Have students read Orual's complaint aloud. Emphasize tone, pacing, and emotional charge. Hearing her voice brings out her self-deception more clearly than silent reading.

Use the Mirror Motif

Draw a mirror on the board. Chart what Orual says she sees (gods' injustice, Psyche's betrayal) vs. what is actually reflected (pride, control, fear). Let the image return throughout the week.

Connect Rhetoric to Character

Show how Orual's argument builds ethos (she portrays herself as a victim and truth-teller). Ask: What makes us trust or question her? How does her rhetoric reveal her inner blindness?

Tie Reading to Examination of Conscience

Invite students to consider: What are the "complaints" we carry? Where might our sense of being wronged be masking something deeper? (This can remain private—no sharing required.)

Reinforce Terms through Recitation

Drill key vocabulary (e.g., myth, divine hiddenness, self-deception) orally throughout the week. Tie each word back to a moment in the text. Ask students to define, exemplify, and use them in discussion.

Appendix

Essays In This Course...

Each of the three major essays in this course will follow the structure and spirit of our Classical Writing Curriculum at Our Lady of the Rosary. Students are expected to write with clarity, order, and persuasive force, employing the Classical Oration form:

- Exordium – The introduction that gains attention and builds ethos
- Narratio – Background/context, statement of facts/narration of events
- Divisio – Outline of major arguments
- Confirmatio – 3 Proofs & Sub-Proofs (body paragraphs)
- Refutatio – Address and refute opposing arguments
- Peroratio – The conclusion: moving the heart, restating the truth

Each essay must be a minimum of 3-4 (except long essay) full pages, MLA formatted, and include a bibliography with at least five primary sources and three scholarly secondary sources. This level of work prepares students not only for collegiate academic writing, but more importantly, for thoughtful, ordered argument in service of truth, which lies at the heart of classical education.

Prompt I

“Contrasts Between Ghosts and Spirits in The Great Divorce”

Objective

In *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis presents a series of encounters between ghosts—souls from Hell who visit Heaven—and spirits—redeemed souls who try to help them move toward salvation. Through these interactions, Lewis explores themes of sin, free will, grace, and transformation.

Your task is to analyze and compare different ghost-spirit interactions from the book. Consider the following:

- What specific sins or mindsets prevent the ghosts from accepting Heaven?
- How do the spirits respond, and what do they represent?
- What broader theological or philosophical themes does Lewis develop through these interactions?

Guidelines

Develop a clear thesis statement that presents your main argument about what Lewis conveys through these encounters. Support your analysis with textual evidence, incorporating the text in every body paragraph from *The Great Divorce* in MLA format. This may include both direct and indirect citations.

Examples

Direct Citation: The spirit tells the ghost with the lizard, “I cannot kill it against your will. It is impossible. Have I your permission?” (Lewis 98).

Indirect Citation: When speaking to the ghost with the lizard, the spirit insists that the transformation cannot occur without the ghost’s consent, emphasizing the importance of free will in the process of redemption (Lewis 98).

Engage with Lewis’s broader themes, such as the nature of free will, love vs. selfishness, or the idea that “the doors of Hell are locked on the inside.”

Format & Submission

Length: 3 pages, double-spaced

Font: Times New Roman, 12pt

Citation Style: MLA



Prompt II

Objective

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, J.R.R. Tolkien explores profound moral and spiritual themes through the trials of the One Ring and the relationships that sustain those who bear its weight. While Tolkien resisted simple allegory, readers have long seen the Ring as a symbol of temptation, pride, and the corrupting allure of power. At the same time, Tolkien exalts friendship, loyalty, and sacrifice as counter-forces to the darkness encroaching on Middle-earth.

Your task is to write an expository essay that analyzes either the symbolic meaning of the Ring or the role of friendship in the novel. Consider the following guiding questions to help shape your argument.

Topic 1: The Ring as Symbol

What does the Ring represent? Can it be read as a metaphor for political power, pride, or spiritual corruption?

How do characters such as Frodo, Boromir, Gollum, and Gandalf respond to the Ring, and what do their reactions reveal?

In what ways does the struggle for the Ring reflect deeper questions about human nature, morality, or temptation?

Topic 2: The Power of Friendship

How does friendship shape the choices, growth, and survival of the members of the Fellowship?

How do Sam's loyalty, Aragorn's leadership, and the unity among different races model strength through fellowship?

What does Tolkien seem to say about trust, sacrifice, and love through these friendships—and how do they challenge traditional notions of heroism?

Guidelines

Develop a clear thesis statement that presents your main argument about what Lewis conveys through these encounters. Support your analysis with textual evidence, incorporating the text in every body paragraph from *The Great Divorce* in MLA format. This may include both direct and indirect citations.

Format & Submission

Please use the same as before.



Prompt III

What Does Dante Believe Constitutes a Good Life?

Objective

In Paradiso, the final canticle of Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, the poet travels through the celestial spheres of Heaven, encountering blessed souls and contemplating the highest truths of existence. Through this mystical ascent, Dante offers profound reflections on love, reason, grace, virtue, and the ultimate fulfillment of the human soul.

This assignment invites you to engage closely with Paradiso to explore how Dante envisions human flourishing and the good life. Your goal is to interpret Dante's poetic theology and philosophical vision in light of timeless human questions: What does it mean to live well? What is true happiness? And how does one achieve it?

Guidelines

Develop a clear thesis statement that presents your main argument about what Dante conveys through these encounters. Support your analysis with textual evidence, incorporating the text in every body paragraph in MLA format. This may include both direct and indirect citations.

Examples

Direct Quotation: Dante writes, "In His will is our peace" (Paradiso 3.85), suggesting that true happiness arises from submission to divine order, not from self-assertion.

Indirect Quotation: In Canto 3, Dante comes to understand that peace and fulfillment are found in aligning the human will with God's will (Paradiso 3.85).

Format & Submission

Use the same as before

