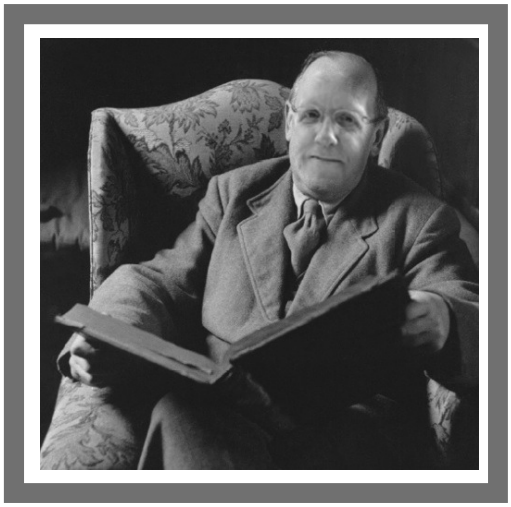
Dear JWHC Scholar,



- "gobbledygook"

HNR325A. Monday/Wednesday/Friday 1.15-2.10

The Sacramental Imagination: Glimpses of God in Fiction

Fall 2012

p.s.

The Inklings (or the Oxford Christians) were a group of academics, publishers, clergy, and other intellectuals who met weekly during the 1930s and 40s in various places throughout Oxford, England, to discuss their writings, their concepts of God, and the Church. As a result of their many conversations and debates, they devised a particular definition for the kind of fiction that they wrote, read, and enjoyed: mythopoeic. Such fiction, they believed, presents its readers with "a real though unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on the human imagination," thus drawing a picture or image of that which is most often considered inexpressible. In this tutorial we will examine the mythic fiction of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, G. K. Chesterton, Charles Williams, Flannery O'Connor, and Anne Rice, attesting to how their fiction shapes within them and us a sacramental imagination. Using these authors understanding of how mythopoeic fiction develops our imagination, we will tackle questions like these: What is our picture of God? How does God choose to operate in our lives? Must we choose between a Christianity based on philosophic propositions or a life of mystery and faith? What place does the Christian Church play in our lives and our understanding both of God and people? Must we all believe the same doctrines concerning God, heaven, hell, sin, sanctification—to name a few—to call ourselves Christians? Through a close examination of the fiction authored by these authors, we will develop research projects that demonstrate our understanding of the sacramental imagination and what part it plays in our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.