

SENIOR THEOLOGY SUMMER READING (Prayer and Spirituality) 2010

The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: Ms. Tara Dillon

\*Read Screwtape Letters in its entirety. (Google search, screwtape letters text, 2<sup>nd</sup> entry)

[http://members.fortunecity.com/phantom1/books2/c.s.lewis - the screwtape letters.htm](http://members.fortunecity.com/phantom1/books2/c.s.lewis-the_screwtape_letters.htm)

\*(Following MLA guidelines), complete the following questions and expand your thoughts in a well-developed essay for each separate question. Use quotes and references from the work to support your reasons. This is due the **FIRST DAY** of class and will be collected with **NO EXCEPTIONS**.

**1.** Much of the appeal *The Screwtape Letters* derives from Lewis's startlingly original reversal: telling a story about Christian faith not from a Christian point-of-view but from the perspective of a devil trying to secure the damnation of one's man's soul. Why is this strategy so effective? What does it allow Lewis to accomplish that would have been impossible in a more straightforward approach?

**2.** Love is an important theme in *The Screwtape Letters*. Describing the human idea of love and marriage, Screwtape tells Wormwood: "They regard the intention of loyalty to a partnership for mutual help, for the preservation of chastity, and for the transmission of life as something lower than a storm of emotion" (p. 72). Screwtape is also confounded by God's love for man, which he grants as real but irrational. What is Lewis saying, in the book as a whole, about human and divine love?

**3.** Over the course of *The Screwtape Letters*, the state of the patient's soul fluctuates as he experiences a conversion, doubt, dangerous friendships, war, love, and finally, in death, oneness with God. What major strategies does Screwtape use to tempt the patient into the Devil's camp? Why do these temptations fail? In what ways can the patient be seen as an everyman?

**4.** In spite the patient's triumph over temptation, his glorious entrance to Heaven-"the degradation of it!-that this thing of earth and slime could stand upright and converse with spirits" (p.122)-Screwtape does not lose faith in his own cause. Why do you think Lewis chose to end the book in this ambiguous light? Why is Screwtape sustained by "the conviction that our Realism, our rejection (in the face of all temptations) of all silly nonsense and claptrap, must win in the end"? (p. 124). What warning is implied in the book's ending? In what ways does *The Screwtape Letters* speak to contemporary moral and spiritual issues both within and outside of the Christian Church?