



Sons of Saint Joseph tm

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SOSJ – 4 - Catholic Authors of the 20th Century: J.R.R. Tolkien
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Eph: 4: 7; 11-16

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. Rather, living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.

Questions

1. How and why would we use fiction to bring people to Christ's eternal truth? Isn't that a contradiction?
2. The lembas, the Elvish bread given to the hobbit and human heroes in the Lord of the Rings, is intended by Tolkien to be representative of the Holy Eucharist. How does this quote help us to understand that: *And yet this waybread of the Elves had a potency that increased as travelers relied on it alone and did not mingle it with other foods. It fed the will, and it gave strength to endure, and to master sinew and limb beyond the measure of mortal kind.* How does this relate to grace in our own lives?
3. The Ring of Power of the Dark Lord Sauron that must be destroyed represents many evil seductions of false freedom and especially how it blocks grace. While anyone is tempted by its power, why are the "weaker" people like hobbits given the task to carry it rather than the more powerful warriors or wizards? Would not it be better if a good wizard like Gandalf carried it quickly to its destruction?
4. In spite of the many different peoples in Middle earth, the stage for the Lord of the Rings, there is a profound sense of universal good and evil, based on a single Creator's design. Why is this essential to everyone agreeing to the destruction of the One Ring? How could moral relativism have destroyed the success of the heroes' task to work together and destroy the One Ring?
5. Gollum is the small, hobbit being who had found the ring, then became corrupted and obsessed by it; depicting enslavement to evil. How does evil possess us and destroy free will, especially as exemplified by the seven deadly sins? And, why is it good that Gollum, a pathetic and evil creature, is permitted to live though he causes great havoc to Sam and Frodo, the ringbearers?