

## EDITORIAL

Zippering a black robe, folding out the colors of a colleague's hood, finding another's regalia, checking the tilt of a cap, greeting a retired colleague still recovering speech after a stroke, seeing in one *real* room friends long confined to squares on a computer screen, all of us lining up to fill reserved rows of carefully distanced seats. In the second year of preoccupation with a novel virus that has brought illness, deaths, separations, disruptions, confusion, fear, changes good, bad, and uncertain, we were marking the inauguration of the sixth president of our seminary.

We had marched together in these robes before, but this was different and especially moving. We were joined by delegates from sister institutions in a time when travel can be difficult and received greetings delivered in person and by letter, reminding us of shared faith and work. I wonder if perhaps we were given a small taste from a far more difficult past, when survivors of persecution gathered for the First Council of Nicaea, some no doubt seeing old friends much altered and meeting for the first time others with whom they had exchanged letters.

With the bustle of preparation, medieval clothing for the event, pipe organ, orchestra, and choir, our gathering of collaborators for an inauguration seems also to offer a glimpse of the future and of the true, unseen present. In *That Hideous Strength*, C. S. Lewis illustrates concretely certain abstract concepts that he discusses in the essay "The Weight of Glory" and elsewhere. Readers of the novel view the company of diverse friends at St. Anne's as they prepare for a festive meal. Garments are selected that suit them perfectly, and during the evening of solemnities and joy, each is transfigured. Their unique glories shine with the brilliance that Lewis had observed when he commented that "there are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked with a mere mortal" and that "the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship."<sup>1</sup> Now and then we see and experience what Scripture promises will be brought to full fruition.

Meanwhile, I have slowly begun learning the workings of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, a partial record of correspondence between past, present, and future members of a society of people who have chosen the word "evangelical" to describe themselves. We have chosen this word because we care about the good news that comes from the God of the heavens who made and therefore rules the sea and the dry ground, who has displayed his grace, compassion, patience, loyal love, righteousness, and more to the extent even of sending his beloved Son

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<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (1949; New York: HarperOne, 2001), 45–46.

to die and rise again on behalf of rebels, enemies without strength to save themselves. And he teaches us to love our neighbors, not envy or worship or dismiss or hate or ignore or use or look down on, but instead to welcome others, following the example of Christ, who loves and welcomes us.

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