

Death Cab for Cutie's "I Will Follow You Into The Dark" tells the story of someone with an intense longing for relationality and a willingness to explore spiritual unknowns. Certainly this person would be an ideal target for outreach? But there's a perception of the church and institutional mythology that has definitely influenced their spirituality. Ultimately, this is a song concerned with the **eschatological**.

The perspective on the church held in this song is more than simply post-Christian, it is deliberately removed from Christianity. The Church has been an instrument for legalism, abuse, and fear. The singer did not encounter honest relationships, humility of belief, and an embracing view of love from Catholic school (which is equated to the powerful Roman Empire). In this context, then, the singer is dissatisfied with answers given to the ultimate end of life and existence. Despite that, the singer has found a love that is strong enough to embrace the mystery of death for the sake of the beloved. This is an amazing encapsulation of Christ's over-arching plan for salvation.

what is eschatology?

Theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.

The study of the encompassing meta-narrative about the beginning and end of our existence; The Great Controversy.

ESCHATOLOGICAL KEY THEMES

• Heaven • Hell • An ultimate resolution to the conflict between Good and Evil • Life after death • The church's witness to spiritual reality • The eternal significance of our relationships. • Christ's relationship to us, the Beloved.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What happens when we die?

Are our eternal fates merely spoils of war to be fought over by Heaven and Hell?

How has the institutionalized church influenced this person's approach to spirituality?

Where is God in this song?

If you were to hear this song as a conversation with someone, how would you respond to their Catholic school experience?

Is Heaven (and/or Hell) ultimately just a end destination we can "check" into, much like a motel (as evoked in the "vacancy signs" imagery)?

What does this song say about death?

Is a complete understanding of Heaven and/or Hell essential for a mature life of faith?

What is love in this song?

Is this song really concerned with the future or is it instead rooted in the present?

What did Christianity offer the singer? Why was this not sufficient?

What are the singer's priorities?

How could this tie in with Christ's descent into Hell?

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

Activity

Reflect in conversation upon your experience with religious education. What picture of love and God was taught there?

Film

What Dreams May Come with Robin Williams provides another perspective on love beyond death. Consider viewing the film as parable with Williams' character as living out Christ's mission and passion.

Scripture

"I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." *Matthew 28:20*

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." *Romans 8:37-39*

"Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame." *Song of Solomon 8:6*