

What Does It Mean to Be Human?

by Diana Trautwein, p. 39

Deeply impacted by John Swinton's *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*, columnist Diana Trautwein rethinks the value of an educated mind.

1. Diana Trautwein begins her column with an acknowledgment of higher education. What traditions and values does your family have regarding graduation or advanced schooling?
2. What exposure have you had with people suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's?
3. Trautwein questions the familiar Descartes phrase, "I think, therefore I am." What does this statement mean to you? Is there more to our being than our minds?
4. John Swinton's book suggests that we should not view dementia as just biological, psychological, and social but also as greatly theological. How would you find strength from a theological perspective on the frailties of the mind?
5. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin speaks of a Christ who is greater than we can imagine, how does this comfort you when those you love seem to be slipping? What practices or Scriptures help you remember this truth?