

Spirituality for Today

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You Don't Have to be Pretty to be Beautiful

By Father John Catoir

Everyone wants to be thought of as beautiful or handsome. The multi-billion dollar cosmetic industry, which services both men and women, attests to that fact. But what is true beauty? The answer is both simple and profound. Bette Davis put it best when she said, "I think great beauty is a kind of beauty that has nothing to do with the face."

We all know that there are women in the world with pretty faces, who manage to make themselves ugly by the way they treat others. Remember the TV show *Bridezilla*? All the cosmeticians in the world cannot transform a self-centered shrew into a beautiful woman.

On the other hand, many plain women are indeed beautiful because they have something called inner beauty. This light within transforms them into admirable and alluring women. Many of them do not realize how truly beautiful they are.

There is outer beauty and inner beauty. Outer beauty is only skin deep. It can be improved with some well-applied make-up, all of which will wash off, but make-up can never be a substitute for inner beauty. "Beauty is not in the face, beauty is a light in the heart." Kahlil Gibran maintained that inner light is a spiritual matter. Those who aspire to radiate true beauty need to pay more attention to God's presence within them. The Spirit of Love is eternal beauty.

I recently co-authored a book entitled, "You Don't Have to be Pretty to be Beautiful." It won't be available until February of 2013. If you would like to preorder a copy, I promise delivery postpaid, as soon as it is off the press. Make your \$10 check payable to: IBIS Publishing, PO Box 544, Cary, NC 27512.

The IBIS is a beautiful bird with a long nose. It is also an acronym for the words: Inner Beauty Is Serene. The importance of cultivating a deeper spirituality cannot be overestimated.

One of the most admired American women, during her lifetime and beyond, was Eleanor Roosevelt. Even after her husband, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, died, the United Nations elevated her to head their highest humanitarian service. She left us these words to ponder, "No matter how plain a woman may be, if truth and honesty are written across her face, she will be beautiful."

Maintaining a basic fidelity to the Golden Rule is something most people strive to do. Father Jean-Pierre de Caussade wrote, "The secret of sanctity and happiness rest in fidelity to the will of God as it is manifested in the duty of the present moment," (Cf. his book "Abandonment to Divine Providence").

One of Hollywood's most beautiful actresses, Marilyn Monroe, took her own life because, among other things, she believed she was losing her looks. Never, not even for a second, allow such a depressing thought to enter your mind. You can never lose your beauty when it rests in God.

Try to imitate Audrey Hepburn, the beautiful British actress, who starred in *My Fair Lady*. She aged gracefully, and was a humanitarian right up until her death in 1993. She offered this uplifting thought for struggling women everywhere, "The beauty of a woman is not facial, but true beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul. It is in the caring that she lovingly gives to others."