**TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS**

Jen Arnold

Have you ever stopped to consider what attracts you to the Catholic Church? What forms of prayer or worship are most fruitful for you? Towards which ministries are you most drawn? We can answer these questions more deeply when we examine them under a philosophical principle referred to as the transcendentals.

Transcendentals are eternal attributes of being, namely: **Truth**, **Beauty**, and **Goodness**. Every being in creation possesses each of these attributes to some degree or another. Their source is God, who possesses each attribute in its ultimate perfection. God IS truth. God IS beauty. God IS goodness. Humans, since they are made in the image and likeness of God, not only have the attributes as a reflection of Him but are also aware of these transcendentals and are drawn to them because the desire to seek out God is written in the human heart. Upon reflection, you will find that one of the transcendentals moves you toward God more so than the others.

A **Truth** person will be attracted to the Catholic faith because of the truth of her teachings. This person likes to have knowledge about doctrines and God. If you are a Truth person, you have a love of informational reading and you approach the Faith intellectually. The logic of the Church and the genius of her teachings, how the Old Testament prefigures the New Testament, and other intellectual attributes of the Faith, draw you closer and closer to God.

**Beauty** people are attracted to God and the Faith through beautiful things. These people tend to see and experience God in nature and creation. They see God in a sunset or on a hike in the woods. They are moved by religious art, music, stained glass, and Latin chant. The Catholic liturgy, with all of its smells and bells, stirs the Beauty person’s heart to ascend to God in all the splendour that the liturgy has to offer.

A **Goodness** person is attracted to the Faith for its sense of community and the good works it does for the world. These people are drawn to more social activities in the Church because of the friendships they provide. They are also more apt to commit themselves to service projects or sign up to help with activities.

Now, as I stated before, God possesses all of these attributes in their perfection and therefore evenly, as does His Church. This is why we have a beautiful gold monstrance for the Blessed Sacrament, listen to the priest preach truth in his homily, and donate food to St Vincent de Paul for the poor. However, in our imperfect humanity, we will find imbalance as we drift toward one of these more than to the others. It is important to understand how you best relate to God so that you can use your primary transcendental to draw closer and closer to God, while you explore the other two transcendentals more deeply in order to better balance your appreciation for all of the attributes.

It is also important to realize that others around you may be drawn to God and to their faith in a way that is different from yours. You will want to know your spouse’s, children’s, and friends’ primary transcendentals so that you can help facilitate meaningful encounters for them with God. You can also help them recognize those encounters in a way that will be most productive for them while you continue on your mission to become an intentional disciple. If you are a parent or catechist of younger children, you will want to make sure you incorporate elements of truth, beauty, and goodness in every lesson.

Spend some time this week thinking about which one of the transcendentals draws you most strongly into the Church. Spend time asking your family or friends which of the transcendentals appeals most to them. You will learn something new about those around you while developing a sense of how to share God more effectively with them.