

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things (Philippians 4:8).



I am the Way, the Truth and the Life...(John 14:6)



I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14)



For how great is His Goodness, and how great His beauty (Zechariah 9:17)

TRUTH, GOODNESS, BEAUTY

“The Church exists in order to communicate precisely this: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in person.”

Pope Francis

Find Beauty all Around

As we come to the end of SD Shares on 26 September 2021, we want to thank all our readers for your support and prayers. A total of 64 articles are in SD Shares on CSC Website, March 2020-September 2021. This weekend we reflect on Truth, Goodness, Beauty, a timely message during the pandemic. We gravitate towards the beauty of God who continues to fill the earth with His Splendour (Philippians 4:8). The Pandemic may plague us and at times prevent us from seeing beauty all around, from being true to oneself, persevering in doing what is always right and pure, doing a lovely and admirable deed for others - even those who treat us badly or those who may seem “unfriendly or unlovely”.

Beauty is in our thoughts and not just in appearance. Beautiful people always see the inner beauty in others

We don't need to study Plato to have truth, goodness, and beauty inform our decisions. We don't need to fully grasp how the ancient triad of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty leads us to Christ and a fuller version of ourselves. We pursue Truth, Goodness, and Beauty when we are putting God first instead of ourselves. When we want to know Him and His world, we will prioritise truth. When we want to love Him, we will obey Him and grow in goodness. When we serve others and reflect God's glory through creation and service, we practice beauty. This will change our homes, work places, church communities. Life is beautiful. But we can get so focused on our personal problems that somehow we forget to enjoy the beauty and positivity around us. Sometimes, we need to take the time to stop what we are doing and smell the intoxicating fragrance of the flowers in the garden. We can draw a parallel between seeing the beauty in everything around us and a mindset of positivity.

For while we may observe the darker side of humanity, and remain cautiously aware of it, we can choose the path to light, instead. Indeed, research proves time and time again that a positive mindset is at the core of a well-balanced mental, spiritual, physical health. The saying "*Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder*," goes to say that defining beauty can be tough. However, God's words can lead us to discover what our individual meaning of beauty truly is and should be; that is deterred from looking at a physical appearance for God looks at the heart in all people and things. We are created in the image of God, and God doesn't make junk! Like a snowflake, every person is unique. No two persons are the same. God sees each of us as a masterpiece. "*I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well*" (Psalm 139:14). Humans gravitate toward the beautiful, and they find all kinds of ways to enjoy, create, and even market beauty. Take a look at magazine covers, popular Instagram accounts, travel blogs, art exhibits and performances, websites, tourist spots around the world, and we are likely to find one thing in common: beauty. The fashion and beauty industries generate billions of dollars of revenue each year for a very good reason: we not only want beauty *in* our lives, but we also want to *be* beautiful. God loves beauty.

As Thomas Aquinas asserts, God "is beauty itself". St. Anselm argues that "God must be the supreme beauty for the same reasons that He must be justice and other such qualities." As the contemporary theologian Michael Horton so aptly states in his book *The Christian Faith*, "God would not be God if he did not possess all his attributes in the simplicity and perfection of his essence." The reason why we gravitate toward beauty is because God created us in *His* image. With so many fake news going viral today, we want to seek truth in all its purity and goodness.

Learning and Exploring the Truth



To see well is an act of humility



TRUE: Something is in a state of being "true" if it is in accord with reality.

GOOD: Something is in a state of being "good" if it is fulfilling its designed purpose.

BEAUTIFUL: Something is in a state of being "beautiful" if it is well-ordered, integrated, unified, harmonised, etc.

The True or truth is defined objectively as the conformity of the mind to reality (what is true as God knows it to be).

The Good possesses a positive quality or perfection that renders something attractive or worthy of value.

The Beautiful can be perceived with our physical senses, like sight, but also by our interior capacities and spiritual receptivity. Like a diamond, beauty can shine with brilliance, sparkle, and attract with radiance and splendour.

Prayer: Dear Lord, you are good, you are true and you are beautiful. All things that come from you are good, true and beautiful, as well. May we experience you through all you are and all that you create. Amen.

Reflection:

1. How is God good? True? Beautiful?
2. How can we bring Truth, Goodness and Beauty in all we do and say?

Pilate asked Jesus, ***“What is Truth?”*** (John 18:38). Pilate did not accept Jesus’ words and decide to stand on the truth. He knew Jesus was innocent, but he did not stand on the truth. Instead, he tried to compromise. When we look around us today, would we say there is more truth than false? Injustice of all kinds, unfair practices, lying and cheating, betrayal of spouses, infidelity, gossiping and spreading rumours about others, etc. When we speak the truth others will unfriend us, tick us off, ostracise us. Speaking the truth in charity is an art and a grace needed. There is a saying, “the truth hurts”.

Sometimes, truth requires us to do things we don’t want to do. For example, Zechariah 8:16 admonishes us to speak the truth to each other and aim for truth as we seek justice. In a world where tolerance is the highest ideal, standing for the truth in public can get us slammed. But as long as we are following Paul’s instruction to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), we are doing the right thing. Unfortunately, that doesn’t mean we will always be rewarded. In fact, we will probably even be ridiculed. Truth is tough, but that doesn’t make it any less true. The world calls us narrow-minded when we believe in ultimate truth. Christ teaches us that the truth will set us free and this promise is true for all ages.

When we are truthful, we embody also the goodness of God. The Bible tells us that the word 'good' actually means holy, pure and righteousness. Literally goodness is godliness. The 'goodness' described as a fruit of the Spirit is not merely moral behaviour, but an excellence of character. This goodness is only possible through God’s grace and mercy.

The Catholic Church teaches that God is truth, goodness, and beauty, as indicated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Each transcends the limitations of place and time, and is rooted in being (CCC #2500). We desire the perfect attainment of truth, beauty and goodness because our hearts are made for God.

For those of us who dedicate our lives to Christ, every decision and every action should be guided by these three properties of being. We need to seek and engage with all that is true, good, and beautiful, in an effort both to draw closer to Him whom they reference, and to proclaim His glory to the rest of the world.

Awareness of the transcendent begins in our heart, in our particular mission in life, our particular vocation. We may talk about Christ in our work and dazzle the eyes and the intellect, and change nobody. But if we are truly living the life of Christ with the fire of the Holy Spirit, which all of us struggle to do and never achieve perfectly, the words that God speaks through us and with us are life-giving words. If they’re also beautiful life-giving words, then their power to give life is greatly enhanced.