

GLIMPSE

Old and New

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The old this is now the new that. This seems to apply mainly to bodily age and probably is true with increased health aids and physical exercise. When applied to bodily attractiveness there might be something new as well. There are confusing terms about a person's comeliness. What is the difference between, *beauty*, *pretty*, *beautiful*, *gorgeous*, and *wow*? What once was *cool* is now *hot*. Are there grades so that the old *pretty* becomes the new *beautiful*? The bigger question is about whether or not *beauty* is in the eye of the beholder. Freckles and dimples are attractive or blemishes according to who's looking.

I was driving along a few years ago and a rancher-friend of mine pointed to a huge beef-cow and with excitement stated that the cow was just so *beautiful*. To me a cow like that is huge, a bit immobile, dirty, preoccupied with preparing to be steaks and hamburgers by being so committed to devouring the contents of its feedbox. Perhaps the rancher saw dollar signs plastered all over its abundant withers. His eye enjoyed the bovine-beauty. I was enjoying the next hamburger.

Men it seems are not so cute, pretty or beautiful. Actually *cute*, in the statement, "he thinks he's so cute", is a put-down. Men are handsome, hunks, charming, well, manly. These terms are somewhat bland and non-descript. I have noticed young women students here often refer, with some delight, to a new boyfriend as being "just so nice". Nice? When a male student refers to a certain young woman, "nice" would not be said with much enthusiasm or inviting of some kind of future. I suppose it is all about who's looking, what is being looked for and why?

The old *holy* is now the new what? Put more directly, the new *holy* is the old what? As with physical beauty, holiness has little to do with "seems-to-be" and outwardliness. When I was a new-comer to the Jesuits there was a fellow-companion who kept absolutely perfect silence, he wouldn't say "hello" to Jesus if it were not recreation time. I of course, talked to everyone at all the non-recreation times. Jesus would have gotten quite an interview no matter when. Well Brother

Silent wasn't so holy; he was just shy and still is today. I wish Jesus would talk to him about that.

The new *holiness* doesn't do "seems" and is something believed rather than achieved. I can feel like that big-old cow standing in muddy separation, unaware of much, self-preoccupied and not too worried about *being*. The new *holy* is immeasurable, unobservable nor labelable. The new *holy* does not know much about that old term. I remember my mother's response to my father, in a high school class I was teaching. He was the kind of fellow who would never appear on a holy card and when one of the students asked him if he thought he was holy, my father laughed and said, "You don't know me very well, I am far from holy." My mother interrupted him with all the really holy ways he lived. That long list shut him up pretty quickly and nobody laughed. She really did know him and his inside where the new *holy* seems to hide from the one who can feel like that muddy cow.

More than how my mother knew and viewed her husband, does God hold us within and we do not have to know it, cannot know it. We love measuring, observing, labeling, but holy is our participation in the mysterious holiness of God which cannot be measured, observed or labeled. It just might be easier to believe in God than it does to believe in what God has said and does say about each of us. It is only a glimpse, be sure to talk with Jesus if He appears.