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by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

[patrickjmarrin@gmail.com](mailto:patrickjmarrin@gmail.com).

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“The skin of his face became radiant while he conversed with the Lord” (Exod 34:29).

Pope Francis says that effective evangelization is not the result of convincing someone with arguments but by attracting them to the beauty of the faith. We ask what it was about saints like Ignatius of Loyola that attracted so many followers. What was it about Jesus that drew such large crowds and, in turn, aroused such jealousy in his critics?

We sometimes identify a special glow with people who are in love or flushed with energy and light as they convey personal enthusiasm or conviction. Children have this beauty and it is also associated with goodness and sincerity in a person.

Today’s first reading describes Moses as “radiant” after his encounters with God. The skin on his face had a burnished brilliance from his direct contact with God’s glory, a word used to describe divine revelation. Because his appearance startled people, Moses wore a veil when he came out of the tent.

Beauty can also have a hidden quality. We catch glimpses of it in a shy person or when it is exposed in a moment of vulnerability or tenderness. We are instinctively moved to protect innocence from unwanted intrusion.

In today's Gospel, Jesus describes God's Kingdom with two short parables that have this quality of attractive yet hidden beauty. A treasure waits to be uncovered in a field. A pearl merchant has an eye for fine pearls as he searches for one of great price. God is present but hidden. The treasure is discovered as a surprise that requires selling everything we own to secure the field in order to possess it. The pearl appears once in a lifetime, and the merchant must sell everything he has to buy it.

Jesus calls his disciples with the look of love. Some respond and others, like the rich young man, turn away because the price is too high or the moment isn't right. Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical "Carousel" has the duet, "If I loved you," sung by a couple exploring the possibility that this moment could change their lives. Only if. There is urgency and agony in their encounter that reminds us how love is always a gift, unpredictable and precious, and requiring a response.

St. Ignatius found God in the Gospels, and he urged others to put themselves in every story until they found themselves face to face with Jesus. He also affirmed that the mystery of God is in all things, waiting to reveal itself to an open heart. The word of God comes to us freely in our everyday lives, and those who find it know the special glow that surrounds the experience, whether hidden or evident.

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