

**PRAY** Jesus, please help us see beneath the surface. Remind us to go beyond first impressions, and look for the real person behind appearances. Thank you for the people who see us as we really are. Amen.

3rd Sunday of Easter



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# SPIRIT

By Chris Tures

Choose an adjective describing yourself at the beginning of this year. Choose another adjective describing yourself now.

**Reflective**

**Faithful**

**Laughable**

**Popular**

**Ignorant**

**Committed**

**Angry**

**Prayerful**

**Confused**

**Inspired**

**Alienated**

**Scared**

**Confident**

**Compassionate**

**Crazy**

**Kind**

**Zealous**

**Adventurous**

**Invisible**

**Goofy**

**Altruistic**

**Exciting**

**Dynamic**

**What has changed?**

NICE GUYS FINISH

**C**ulture shock set in my first day of high school. I drifted in the floods of new faces—all unrecognizable. And girls. So many new girls. I came from a small, Catholic grade school. My eighth grade class had only 31 kids. It was a very closed environment; we had to get along or the entire class dynamic fell apart. My transition from grade school to high school was like moving from a small town to a metropolis.

I refuse to deny that romance is the foremost thought of practically every high school student. High school drops teenagers right in the middle of a seemingly endless pool of dating possibilities.

At first, I clung to the kids I knew from grade school. Through them, I expanded outward and met people

they knew from other schools and then their friends. In grade school, I was one of the most popular kids in my class along with a couple friends. We dated pretty much whichever girls in our class we wanted to. Subconsciously, I assumed my dating ability would carry over into high school. I was wrong.

**T**hough many groups existed in this school—the jocks, the emos, the Jesus kids—I

quickly saw that the ‘beautiful people’ unofficially ruled. They had established themselves as the most desired figures on campus—or maybe they just had the most connections. At this school, the guys everybody knows are the six-foot-two, clean-cut jocks and the beautiful girls are either smart athletes in yoga pants or peppy perfect-hair and



**SORT OF**



make-up queens. I mean, they don't look that way by accident.

I had the misfortune to be crushing on one of the most attractive girls in my grade, whom I thought was just as viable a dating option for me as any other girl. We talked on the phone for a while until she revealed her big crush on the "cutest guy in school," who turned out not to be me.

I tried to start relationships with some of the other women every guy wanted to date but had similar results. I gradually realized that I was acting superficial and maybe these so-called popular kids were more fun to talk about than be around. I didn't even know these girls with whom I was infatuated.

I'm short. I'll be the first to admit it. I'm 5'8". This stature may be giant for a sixth grader, but it hardly compares to the jocks who roam the halls of my high school. My height limits my dating options to girls shorter than myself.

I also commit stylistic errors by not wearing brand-name clothes. Any contest based heavily on physical attractiveness further limits my dating options.



## **P**ossibly the most restrictive dating measure during my sophomore and junior years was the clique-congruency

**test:** a) Do we have mutual friends?  
b) How do you dress?  
c) Are you cool?\*

d) Are your friends cool?\*

e) What do my friends think of you?  
(\* definition of cool depends on clique preference). All the above limitations lead me to a conclusion about myself: I have my own label.

I am a sensitive guy and a good listener. Okay, what guy doesn't secretly want to think he's sensitive? But, hey, girls line up to spill their guts to me. My female friends outnumber my male friends three to one. The girls tell me their problems and I give them advice. Then, they thank me.

Oftentimes, I get compared to a big brother or even sometimes (gasp) their father! What girl wants to date a guy that reminds her of a nuclear family member?

I had a crush on a girl who complained about how some beautiful jerk treated her like trash. The so-called compliment that I will never forget came during a conversation with her.

"He's so hot," she said.

"Ya think so?" I asked, fueling her desire to speak more of Mr. Perfect.

"Are you kidding me? He's got a perfect body, he's captain of the soccer and basketball teams, he's got a 4.6 grade point average, and he's such a great dresser, but..."

"But what?"

"I just wish he had your personality."

OUCH!

I don't understand how so many beautiful, intelligent girls ignore the fact that the guy they like is a rotten human being who treats them like dirt simply because "He's SO hot!" It's discouraging. Granted, I am no Johnny Depp, but I am no troglodyte either.

**If you take the time to get to know me, I figure you will find I am a beautiful person.**

I think the real beautiful people are the ones who aren't so obvious. I know "beauty is on the inside" is a cliché, but it's true. External beauty fades.

Now I have a girlfriend, and believe it or not, she is one of the most beautiful girls I know. She



spent the energy to get to know me, and I her. We talked on the phone for a month and a half and became great friends before we started dating. We just celebrated 10 months of dating. We fight sometimes, but we always resolve the problem. I found someone who likes me for the person I am and not the person she expects me to be. She is one of my best friends.

Lately, it seems like all the 'beautiful people' act tired of each



# SUNDAY GOSPEL

3rd Sunday of Easter

## The risen Jesus brings peace.

**NARRATOR 1:** The two disciples returned to Jerusalem and explained to the eleven and those gathered with them what had happened on the road to Emmaus and how Jesus was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**NARRATOR 2:** While they were still speaking about all this, Jesus himself stood among them.

**JESUS:** Peace be with you.

**NARRATOR 1:** They were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost.

**JESUS:** Why are you so shaken? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; it is really I myself. Touch me and see, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as I have.

**NARRATOR 2:** Jesus showed them his hands and feet. In their joy his followers were still disbelieving and amazed.

**JESUS:** Have you anything here to eat?

**NARRATOR 1:** They handed him a piece of broiled fish, which he took and ate before them.

**JESUS:** This is what I told you while I was still with you—that all the things written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and psalms must be fulfilled.

**NARRATOR 2:** Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

**JESUS:** Thus it was written and so it happened that the messiah is to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. In his name, repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Luke 24.35-48



others' superficialities. They want steady relationships with someone they can also value as a friend. Ironically, the compliment queen, who denied me for Mr. Perfect, found out he cheated on her. She called me two days later, wondering if I had plans for the weekend. The thing is, those of us burdened with personalities already date the people who realize that you have to dig to find true beauty.



**QUESTIONS** 1 What qualities make friends beautiful? 2 What is hard about letting people know who you really are? 3 Have you ever 'fronted,' tried to be something you're not for someone else? 4 How are you a beautiful person? Have you given up trying to be perfect? 5 What makes recognizing who Jesus really is hard? 6 What are Jesus' concerns for his followers?

## OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

## Easter calls us to cultivate new life.

**E**aster is the name Christians give to the Sunday that celebrates Jesus' resurrection. East is the direction where the sun rises each morning. The word *Easter* means *dawn*, the awakening of a new day. Mary Magdalene discovers Jesus' tomb empty at dawn.

For Christians Easter is a new day of creation, an eighth day beyond the seven days in the creation story in Genesis, chapter 1. By raising Jesus to new life, God creates a promise of life beyond death and summons us to a future beyond human imagination. At Easter Jesus breathes the spirit of peace upon his followers and sends

them forth to continue his healing mission, to be co-creators of new life with him.

In our time science tells Earth's story as a 13.7 billion year evolution. The Bible's ancient creation story hints that creation is a process by picturing God creating the world we know over seven days. The scientific creation story begins out of a single, unfurling of energy that we call the Big Bang. Everything that is unfolds from this beginning. We live in one vast, interconnected web of life. We share common ancestry with all that lives on earth. Bacteria, trees and plants, whales and kitties are our kin in one community of life.

The universe story helps us recognize that God the Creator Spirit is the energy in all creation. We live and move and have our being in God, in the Spirit whose image is breath and whose power is giving life.

In Jesus God becomes human, one of us in this community of life. Christian churches celebrate Easter and the new life of Jesus' resurrection when Earth is awakening to new life in the northern hemisphere. Hills greening from rain, budding trees, and flowering plants testify to the life-giving, creative power of God. His death and resurrection testifies to the life-giving power of Jesus' love.

**E**very April 22, people celebrate planet Earth, our home where we live as co-creators of its future with God. Astronauts have brought back photos of Earth in space and of Earth's thin, blue atmosphere. We human beings live on different continents, in different

nations, among different families and cultures, but on one planet that is home to all.

The atmosphere is one reality we share with the whole world. The atmosphere allows no do-over; we have no spare or replacement atmosphere waiting in the wings if we mess this one up. Today the United Nations makes action to combat climate change and its impacts number 13 of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals which member nations commit to achieve by 2030. The first three goals are no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well being.

We humans are the life forms that have most to do with messing up Earth's life systems. The people of the United States have the largest carbon footprint of any country on the planet. The U.S. owes a carbon debt to the rest of the world. We all can do our part to pay off our carbon debt, to care for our neighbors around the world.

## PAY OFF YOUR CARBON DEBT AND FIGHT GLOBAL WARMING

Buy organic

☐ Use mass transit

Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs

☐ Fly less

Eat less meat

☐ Use solar or wind energy

Carpool

☐ Drink tap water

Recycle

☐ Bike

Turn lights off

☐ Insulate

Buy local

☐ Demand change

Get a hybrid car

☐ Act now

## Celebrate Earth

**1,800 high school kids** in Buffalo, Minnesota, threw their cans and bottles into the garbage every day. They had no other option.

This problem came up for discussion in science teacher Charlie Keifenheim's Environmental Studies group. The group decided to act.

**The teens refurbished old garbage bins** for recycle bins, repainting them and stenciling in the recycle logo. A key strategy was placing the 16 recycle bins right next to the 16 garbage bins scattered around the school. "People weren't going to go out of their way to recycle," says Zack Schmitz. "It had to be convenient."

Mike Erickson, Zach Schmitz, James Calder, and Dani Stevens helped start can/bottle recycling at their high school.

**Teens needing volunteer hours** for National Honor Society empty the bins. Twice a week they collect enough bottles and cans to fill three 55-gallon garbage cans, which are then collected by the local sanitation company for recycling.

"It was like, if we can do it, why don't we?" says Mike Erickson.

"We were talking about all the environmental problems in the world and saw something that we could do right here," adds James Calder.



## FAITH in ACTION

- 1 Join in Earth Day events in your area.
- 2 Plan your own Earth Day clean-up. Hold an Earth Day teach-in or poster campaign to build awareness of teens' power to work for sustainability.
- 3 Visit [un.org](http://un.org) to learn about actions to reverse climate change.
- 4 Consider raising funds for water projects in the Two Thirds World. Visit [climatekids.nasa.gov](http://climatekids.nasa.gov).

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