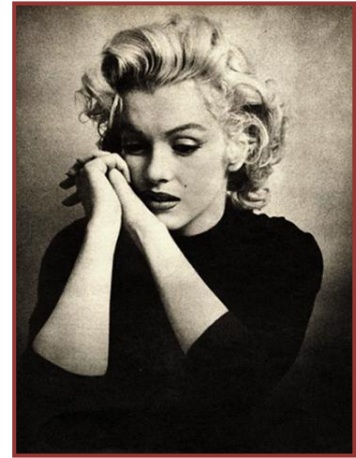


## Marilyn Monroe, the Icon

Marilyn Monroe has become a kind of icon – a symbol, in a way – of the sensuality and emptiness of our time. Born Norma Jean Baker on June 1, 1926, she spent much of her childhood in foster homes. She began her career as a model, which led to a film contract in 1946.

As an actress, she became a major sex symbol, starring in a number of commercially successful motion pictures during the 1950s, including *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *The Seven Year Itch* and *Some Like It Hot*. Her final completed film was *The Misfits*, co-starring Clark Gable with the screenplay written by her then-husband, playwright Arthur Miller.

The final years of Monroe's life were marked by illness, personal problems and a reputation for being unreliable and difficult to work with. She died on Aug. 5, 1962, from an overdose of barbiturates. Officially classified as a probable suicide, the possibility of an accidental overdose as well as the possibility of homicide have not been ruled out.



Arthur Miller, in his autobiography *Timebends*, tells of his marriage to Monroe. During the filming of *The Misfits*, he witnessed Monroe descend into the depths of depression and despair. He was fearing for her life as he watched their growing estrangement, her paranoia, and her escalating dependence on barbiturates.

One evening, after a doctor had been persuaded to give her yet another shot, she was sleeping. Miller stood watching her, reflecting: "I found myself straining to imagine miracles. What if she were to wake and I were able to say, 'God loves you, darling, and she were able to believe it! How I wish I still had my religion and she hers.'"

What a sad commentary. And while religion and a belief system are important, real spiritual vitality and inner peace are achieved through a relationship with God's Son, Jesus Christ. He makes all the difference.

– Beecher Hunter