

Daily Meditation Transcript 08/26/2021
Self-Love and Healthy Pride: Beyond Selfishness

Good morning.

Today we're celebrating healthy self-love, healthy pride, as distinct from selfishness.

Now I love the quote from Thomas Aquinas in the first paragraph of our meditation:

"Self-love is the form and root of all friendship well-ordered self-right love is right and natural so much so that the person who hates himself or herself sins against nature. To know and to appreciate your own worth is no sin."

So what we need is to build up the pride and the dignity and the respect of one another. And Cornell West makes the point that embedded in racism, in response to it, is the despair that is born of a direct attack on the sense of worthlessness and self-loathing that many black Americans have received from the dominant culture.

So all this adds up, whether we're quoting Cornell West speaking on behalf of the black community, or Thomas Aquinas speaking on behalf of the theological tradition from which he comes. All of it adds up to how pride is a virtue; a healthy pride is a healthy virtue; a healthy self-love is a healthy virtue.

And this is the basis of Jesus' teaching that we cited yesterday: that we had to love others as we love ourselves. If we love ourselves badly, then, uh-oh, we're going to be loving each other badly!

Does that have something to do with the the extreme anger and rage not only that burst into the Capitol on January 6th, but that we find on the airwaves, we find in social media all over the place?

There's this cacophony of hatred and rage traveling through so many of our airwaves today that it's really disconcerting, and you wonder if the whole community is breaking down.

So selfishness is a distortion of love and a distortion of healthy pride and healthy self-love. It puts oneself out front and as if oneself is all that matters, it's another form of narcissism.

And community cannot survive on that, society cannot survive! Where is the common good in that? And where is understanding? And where is the self-love that translates into love of others, including future generations to come?

So I think that our time is a time not just a struggle externally but of inner struggle, finding out what is going on in the soul of Americans. That we're killing the planet and not caring about it, going into denial. And that we're literally killing one another in coronavirus by refusing to take vaccination shots, and ending up killing ourselves.

So the world needs more love, not of a sweet and pious kind but of the real kind born of healthy self-love. Maybe it's there that we have to focus our renewal, our sense of recovering our own lovability and dignity and nobility.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.