

Daily Meditation 10/10/21

Can Cusa Help Us Get to the Truth about Columbus on Columbus Day?

Good morning.

Special blessing on this Indigenous Day, this un-Columbus holiday.

In today's meditations, I share with you the teaching, again, of the 15th century mystic and scientist, Nicholas of Cusa, and what he says about Columbus. And of course he wrote this before Columbus set sail for America, but just before. He was 15th century, after all. Columbus set sail in 1492, sailed the ocean blue.

So, here's Nicholas of Cusa:

"The Lord of Sky and Earth has heard the groans of those who have been slaughtered and imprisoned and reduced to slavery and who suffered because of religious wars."

But notice it's the Creator God, the Lord of Sky and Earth, being invoked here. Now when the Creator God is lost--and this certainly happens when you put in your consciousness humanity and our projects, including taking gold and silver and people from other lands and imposing a religion on people--it's the Lord of Sky and Earth that hear the groans of slaughter, imprisonment, and slavery, he says, and religious wars. And this from a cardinal in the Catholic Church.

And he adds, "The Creator is moved."

Again, Lord of Sky and Earth, and the Creator. It's the Creation Divinity that he's talking about here.

"The Creator is moved with compassion towards humanity and will try to guide all the variety of religions."

All of them! That means "indigenous to one greater unimpeachable harmony, in which all opinion is one." An unimpeachable harmony.

It seems like a very well-timed meditation for this sad day of the invasion of indigenous lands and indigenous religions.

And then, of course, the quote that's offered from Columbus himself about the Arawak nation, the first dwellers on this land whom Columbus encountered, whom Europeans encountered, in this particular voyage of the late 15th century:

"They do not bear arms. Their spears are made of cane. They would make fine servants." i.e., slaves. "With fifty men we could subjugate them all, make them do whatever we want."

Whoa! That last sentence. If that's not a summary of imperialism and patriarchy! "We could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want." What a confession. What an unveiling of the truth, of the intentions and the spirit of European opprobrium and conquest, what empires do to the soul.

(Phew.) I just want to breathe real, real deep.

In my recent book on Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic and Beyond, in the conclusion I talk about the papal bulls of the doctrine of discovery and what they mean. The Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand from Spain, 1493.

This letter from Pope Alexander VI:

"Created the barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith. Urge them to spread the Christian rule. Our beloved son, Christopher Columbus...

(Yes, the same guy who just said, "We'll subjugate them all, make them do whatever we want, and they'll make fine servants," meaning slaves.)

"...our beloved son, Christopher Columbus, discovering very remote islands, even many land sites hitherto had not been discovered by others..."

(Well, they kind of were, since indigenous people lived there, we now know, for 23,000 years, at least.)

He does say, "There dwell very many people living in peace, as reported, going unclothed and not eating flesh. And they do believe in one God, the Creator in heaven, but not in the name of the Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ."

So, the fact that this teaching of the doctrine of discovery was incorporated into American jurisprudence by Chief Justice Marshall in 1823 is truly sobering.

As has been said, "The doctrine has been primarily used to support decisions in validating or ignoring aboriginal possession of land in favor of colonial or post-colonial governments."

All this ambition, all this expansion, all this drive, all this reptilian brain energy. I win, you lose. We have the bigger army and the bigger ships and the bigger weapons and the up-to-date weapons and you don't.

When will this cease? How much of this has permeated our consciousness, our relationship with the Earth, too? That Mother Earth seems so...subjugated.

Is it Mother Earth would make a fine servant, a slave? We can subjugate and make do whatever we want? That seems to be a pretty good summary of our recent relationship to Mother Earth--to take everything we could and give back nothing. But now our generation and future generations are paying the price for that wantonness.

It's a very sobering day, this day of indigenous commemoration. A very important one, one that asks of us our sense of penance for the sins of our fathers. Penance in the sense of transformation. Changing our ways, changing our values, changing our consciousness that the people may live, that the earth may live, and all the wonderful peoples on it. Not just the two-legged peoples, we who are so late coming, but all the other four-legged and winged ones, finned ones and tree people, cloud people.

Blessings to you on this day and to the Creator who, hopefully, as Cusa prayed, can create unimpeachable harmony, in which all opinion is one.

And we're all here to celebrate the gifts of the Earth and our time with one another.

Thank you.

See you tomorrow.