

Daily Meditation 11/1/2021

All Saints Day

00:03

Good morning.

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Today we're talking about All Saints Day, and the meaning of holiness in our time. And of course, it's also the time that COP26 is meeting in Glasgow, talking about the important future of our planet, and indeed of our species, and millions of others, although it seems quite dependent on people, human beings, Homo sapiens, truly waking up. Certainly that has everything to do with the meaning of holiness.

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As Rabbi Heschel says, in the first paragraph of our meditation today, holiness is not the monopoly of any particular religion, or tradition. That's kind of stated in a negative way. Putting it positively, that holiness, saintliness, free will, is within all people, all cultures, and all religions.

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And I think at this time in history, we all have to step up. And, as I said, all hands on deck, that means dig deeply into our own potential for depth, for holiness, and for responding to the holiness of creation itself.

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So Simone Weil, whom I quote, also says, it's not just about saintliness, but what saintliness is required at this present moment. A new saintliness, she says... a new saintliness. And of course, she wrote in the 30s and early 40s.

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But this is echoed by Teilhard de Chardin, the great Jesuit scientist, mystic, and mystic and prophet. He says: "What we are all more or less lacking, at this moment, is a new definition of holiness, a new definition of holiness."

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And I think we can look around the people whom we respect and admire today and see that (and one such person is Greta Thunberg). see that the prophetic voice is part of holiness, and especially the prophetic voice on behalf of the holiness of creation, and all its creatures.

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And in my book, Original Blessing, which I wrote, what, 35 years ago, one of the chapters is called "Holiness as Cosmic Hospitality: Creation Ecstasies Shared Constitute the Holy Prayer of

Thanksgiving in Praise." So that's the definition of holiness that I proposed 30-35 years ago, cosmic hospitality.

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And in it, I talk about the fact that we are all invitees, we are guests on this planet, and that creation and the creator in 13.8 billion, billions of years have set the table for our planet, and eventually for our species, so we are all guests. But a true guest also is willing to give back. And so a true guest then becomes a host. That's cosmic hospitality.

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I quote the psychologist Erik Erikson, who says:

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"The true saints are those who transfer the state of householdership to the house of God, becoming father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter to all creation, to all creation, rather than to their own issues."

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And so, family, while it's very important as a springboard to so much else, is not everything we're here to do. And neither is nation, everything we're here to do. We are here to give back to creation itself, to the cosmos. And it's in that context that I like to celebrate the theme of Thanksgiving, as in Psalm 98:

04:40

"Let the sea thunder and all that it holds, and the world, with all who live in it. Let all the rivers clap their hands, and the mountains shout for joy."

04:52

All this acknowledgement the celebration, this reception of the beauty of existence. The joy of living, that even the sea, and the creatures in it, the world, the rivers, the mountains are clapping their hands and shouting for joy. And Psalm 50:

05:14

"Let thanksgiving, let thanksgiving be your sacrifice to God. Fulfill the vows you make to the Most High. Whoever makes thanksgiving his sacrifice, honors Me. To the upright person, I will show how God can save."

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And so it's in this context of our being hosts and hostesses, as well as reverent and respectful guests on this planet, that I think the language and the imagery, the metaphors, for a new saintliness might well be found.

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This banquet we've received, as in Genesis one, that is not only very good, but very beautiful -- this we cannot take for granted. We cannot just take in and exploit; we must give back to future

generations of human beings, and of so many other beautiful species that have their rights on this planet as well.

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And in many ways, the the archetype, the metaphor of the Eucharist as a Thanksgiving meal-- that's what "Eucharist," means in Greek, is to give thanks, that meal shared by all creatures, this is part of the energy of the Messianic banquet that we enjoy. As the prophet Isaiah says;

06:49

On this mountain, Yaweh, Sabaoth will prepare for all peoples, a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines, a food rich and juicy, a fine strained wine. On this mountain. Yahweh will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples and the shroud enwrapping all nations, and will destroy death forever."

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So this promise of even more to give thanks for is ancient. And I think this is calling us to the courage and the imagination and the willingness to let go and sacrifice, that this moment in history demands if we are to avert the worst of climate change?

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And this is a call for the holiness of all of us and our communities.

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Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.