

Daily Meditation 11/20/21

Patriarchy's Failure to Offer a Healthy Masculinity and Virility

Good morning.

Today we continue our meditations on healthy masculinity versus the cowardice that we're seeing on display in many politicians. And really, the failure of patriarchy to produce healthy men. Instead it produces toxic masculinity and men who flee from the truth and telling the truth. Cowards really.

And we find this clearly in the Congress this week. So it really raises an important question: what is healthy masculinity? And where, where do we learn about it?

Obviously, not from those who are craven enough not to stand up against a colleague who is encouraging the murder of women in his workplace, which, in fact, is our workplace, because it is the Congress.

So I'm struck by what the real deep teachers of morality and ethics tell us. And I'm thinking right now of people, like Hildegard of Bingen and Thomas Aquinas. And they -- and of course, Aristotle, who influenced Aquinas very deeply -- these people tell us that virtue is a habit.

It's a practice, therefore, of choosing what's healthy, and choosing what's good, and choosing what assists the common good, the whole of the community. And so when we think of the word virtue, we may think of virtues like justice, compassion, love, fairness, forgiveness. All of these habits that we call virtues are about inner strength.

They are about practicing how we respond to events, and how we see ourselves in the world. And also, how we teach our children to respond to events, and see themselves in the world. So virtue is an inner strength.

And the word is actually related to virility. Both of them, virtue and virility, have the word Vir in them. And Vir is a Latin word for man. So it's about manliness.

So we might look here for the real meaning of masculinity, instead of to those wounded men who seem to think that they're on Earth to dominate others, including Mother Earth, and certainly, to dominate women.

And this, then, is the answer to the toxic masculinity that is spread far abroad by patriarchy, which is a mindset, a philosophy of seeing the world in terms of a distorted understanding of gender, of the masculine and the feminine.

That often translates into bad relationships around women and men, including oneself, whether one be a man or a woman.

So the idea that virtue is virility is a very powerful statement, and Hildegard of Bingen writes often about this to her sisters, that she tells them to be strong to be warriors, she says. So she she's telling them to develop their animus,

their strong side, because she certainly had to! She took on the patriarchy of her day; she took on Emperors! Yes, she wrote them letters telling them what to do. She took on Popes, telling them what to do. She took on bishops and archbishops and abbots.

So here was this outspoken woman in the 12th century, a time surely when women were not very often in strong places of power, but she did not let that inhibit her. She spoke the truth, to power and to the patriarchy of her time. But again, she so emphasized virtue, how that is an inner strength. And it is authentic virility, it is authentic masculinity.

And I think we need a real, real big dose of that, at this time in history, because patriarchy has been running almost unabated in its empire-driven ideology, reptilian-brain-driven ideology, for long enough, and we're seeing right near to us the results of this: the extinction spasm that Mother Earth is under, because there has been this distortion of what it means to be masculine.

And we all, women and men, need to clean this up.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.