

Daily Meditation 12/16/21

The Opposite of the Sacred Masculine

Good morning.

In our meditation today, I'm speaking of a methodology, which actually I learned about in my studies in Paris, from Father Louis Cognet, who was the head of the spirituality department in those days, a scholar of French spirituality in particular, very interesting man who was also a photographer and a musician. He taught a wonderful course on Bach and the spirituality of Bach, which is a very French thing to do; the French love Bach.

And I remember him saying one day in class that one way to approach a spiritual concept is to go to its opposite first. So that's what we're going to be doing for a little while as we move more fully into the important topic of the sacred masculine: we'll be dealing with the unholy masculine for a little bit.

Which connects directly to our daily news, I dare say.

But I talked about how, in my first book, *On Becoming a Musical Mystical Bear: Spirituality American Style*, now called *Prayer: A Radical Response to Life*, I invoked that methodology in Chapter One, "What Prayer Is Not." So I'll just recite for you here what the sections of that chapter are about, and I think this will trigger your understanding why we're approaching this important topic of authentic masculinity in the way we are, beginning with its opposite.

"What Prayer is Not.

Prayer is not saying prayers.

Prayer is not withdrawal from one's culture. Prayer is not acquiescing to our culture.

Prayer is not causing God to change by our petitions.

Prayer is not talking to God. Prayer is not liturgy.

Prayer is not an exceptional experience."

Now, when you say something like "Prayer is not liturgy," that doesn't mean that liturgy is never prayer. We're just searching for the deeper meaning of prayer. And the same with the phrase, "Prayer is not talking to God." It doesn't mean that talking to God can never be prayer. But prayer is much more than that.

And I think that this is a way to set up our discovery, our hunt for authentic prayer, and then, having kind of deconstructed these everyday versions, definitions of prayer, then we set up for something deeper.

And that is what I build in the book, up to this understanding of prayer as a radical response to life -- radical meaning root -- that there are essentially two root responses to life.

First, there's our Yes, which is mysticism, our love of life in all its manifestations, including embracing the suffering that we have undergo there. And then our No to life is the other route. That is our prophetic vocation, our prophetic prayer, our actions for justice and compassion and healing. These are prayer also.

So in that way too, a kind of trinity is developed: the Yes, the No and Life as Spirit. Our Yes to life, our No to injustice, that which interferes with life, and all of it is a doorway to the Spirit.

So hopefully we'll be developing this kind of methodology as we move along to the subject of the authentic masculine, the sacred masculine.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.