

Daily Meditation 01/17/2022

MLK Day, 2022

Morning.

Happy feast day to you. Martin Luther King, Jr. feast day.

And in honoring him, we honor many of his accomplishments and much of his being. And I want to place his gifts to us in the context of the questions we've been asking for a couple of weeks now in our daily meditations. Can he assist us with redefining masculinity? With moving beyond patriarchy's dualisms and versions of masculinity to something more authentic? They can readily link up with the Divine Feminine and with the spirituality that is a balanced spirituality.

Remember that one of the themes around the Sacred Masculine was to emphasize what Hildegard of Bingen teaches, and what Webster's Dictionary teaches, and what Thomas Aquinas teaches: that virtues are the heart of real meaning of masculinity. Aquinas, who you will recall, says that virtue is a participation in the divine power.

So, we ask in what ways does Dr. King's work--teachings in life and death--instruct us about virtues that matter, about conscience and manliness, about walking our talk and living out our values even when there is opposition?

One virtue that leaps into my mind, speaking about King, is courage. Courage. Two French words: a large heart. *Coeur large*. And clearly, he had it.

He was asked one day, how can you march through Skokie, a suburb of Chicago, knowing that people want to kill you? Because you have to love something more than the fear of death, if you're going to live.

Love something more than the fear of death if you're going to live.

And he speaks to the topic of courage explicitly on many occasions--especially by approaching its opposite first, which as I've said before, is a very useful methodology for approaching a spiritual theme or topic. So, the opposite of courage, of course, is fear. Living out of fear instead of courage.

And here is something that he wrote. (These quotes I have in my book, *Christian Mystics*. This is page 324.)

"When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some had been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement, and misrepresenting its leaders. All too many others have been cautious, rather than courageous, and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows."

The anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows.

And he tells us his response to this.

"In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? Yes, I see the church as a body of Christ. But oh, how we have blemished and scarred that body, through social neglect and fear of being nonconformists."

Next, he says that "There was a time when the church was very powerful, in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days, the Church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society."

There was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society.

"Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated, to be 'astronomically intimidated.' Things are different now. So often the contemporary Church is a weak, ineffectual voice for an uncertain sound. So often, it is an arch defender of the status quo."

It is so often the arch-supporter of the status quo.

"Far from being disturbed by the presence of the Church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the Church's silent and often vocal sanction of things as they are."

Then he delivers a very strong statement that echoes, certainly, in our own time.

"But the judgment of God is upon the Church as never before. If today's Church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early Church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club, with no meaning for the 20th century. Every day, every day, I meet young people whose disappointment with church has been turned into outright disgust."

Those are teachings from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., worthy to be considered on this, his feast day. Because he did not succumb to fear. He worked out of its opposite, courage. And he built that up for so many people who marched with him and went to jail with him. Some who died as he died.

And this is to be honored today. And this is the pathway into a healthy masculine.

Thank you, Dr. King.

Happy feast day to everybody.

See you tomorrow.