

Daily Meditation 04/15/2022

Good Friday as a Cosmic Event

Good morning.

Today we have meditated together on the theme of Good Friday and Good Friday as a cosmic event. Too often I think Western religion has committed a kind of reductionism on much of its great feast days and remembrance days, such as the day of Good Friday, which honors and remembers the horrible death of Jesus on the cross, crucified by the Roman Empire.

Remember, they crucified thousands of Jews in order to terrorize people, because they were at odds with the Jewish religion, which did not buy into all the religions of the Empire, and indeed, the Emperor himself being being called a filio dei, son of God. So, Jews paid a price for this, just as the early Christians did, being thrown to the lions, and so forth.

But Good Friday is about the death of Jesus. And as I point out in the essay, this was considered a cosmic event by the early Christians, that something profound had happened that affects the whole universe. And this is true, of course, and the Jewish tradition is true, whenever evil reigns and triumphs over good, or the poor, or the dispossessed, the widow, or the orphan, as is often spoken of, in the Jewish Scriptures.

As I point out, the Gospel stories are diverse. But each of them is speaking to the cosmic event that the cross represented. And of course, one of the archetypal dimensions to the cross is that it's the four directions, and four directions represent north, south, east, west, a cosmic awareness that humans take in.

Now, Julian of Norwich, the wonderful creation mystic of the 14th century, who lived through the pandemic, the bubonic plague through her entire lifetime: it first hit when she was seven; she lived into her 80s, and it kept coming back in waves.

She's explicit about the cosmic dimension to the cross. She does not privatize it or sentimentalize it. Here's what she says.

All creatures of God's creation that can suffer pain, suffered with him, meeting with Christ, on the cross with Jesus --

...all creatures of God's creation that can suffer pain suffered with him. So even the cosmos was affected. She says,

The sky and the earth failed at the time of Christ dying, because he too, was part of nature.

Notice this whole awareness builds on her appreciation of the sacredness of nature.

She says,

God is the goodness in nature.

And so nature was ruptured when the goodness in Jesus was put to death in a violent and atrocious way, on the cross.

Of course, this is immediately applicable to what's going on in Ukraine at this time. So many innocent people are being slaughtered, tortured, destroyed.

Now I allude to the cosmic story from one gospel of the painting of the universe curtain in the temple being ripped in two, and I allude to other stories about the apocalyptic earthquake, and how the dead rose from their tombs at this event. And another gospel talks about an eclipse of the sun.

All of these are cosmic expressions: the artists who put together these stories tell us what is the real meaning behind the crucifixion, the cross, at the hand of the Empire? And of course empire is today, wannabe empires are still at it.

And of course, the destruction of the planet is another crucifixion, because Gaia, Mother Earth is, I think, being treated today as Jesus was treated in the first century.

And so today too, apocalyptic imagery rises, but so do scientific facts: that we are facing our extinction, we are facing the extinction of millions of other species. And a lot of upset if climate change and the forces behind it triumph, instead of a rediscovery of the sacredness and the goodness of nature, of divinity in nature.

And so the archetypal lessons of Good Friday are of course with us still.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.