

Daily Meditation 04/26/2022

The Sense of Wonder, continued, Original Blessing...

Good morning.

We continue our meditations on our sense of wonder, so well named by Rachel Carson, but also by Thomas Merton. And in today's meditation, there are many references to the same teaching, beginning with Genesis 1. And with John's gospel, chapter 1, Paul talking about the new creation, Jesus talking about presence now, the kingdom of God among us and within us. And Meister Eckhart teaching about the grace of creation, that nature is grace, isness is God. And goodness is a proper name of God, the Creator. All of this Julian Norwich also picks up on when she says God is the goodness in nature.

But Thomas Merton says that every non-two-legged creature is a saint. And I cited his passage about "every plant that stands in the light of the sun is a saint and an outlaw," and so forth. But here are some more observations by Merton along those lines.

The plain flowers of the dogwood outside this window are saints, he writes.

The little yellow flowers that nobody notices on the edge of that road are saints, growing up into the face of God. This leaf has its own texture and its own pattern of veins, and its own holy shape. And the bass and trout hiding in the deep pools of the river are canonized by their beauty and their strength. The lakes hidden among the hills are saints, and the sea too is a saint who praises God without interruption in her majestic dance. The great gashed half-naked Mountain is another of God's saints; there is no other like him. He is alone in his own character. Nothing else in the world ever did or ever will imitate God in quite the same way. That is his sanctity. The goodness of the world, stricken or not, is incontestable and definitive.

Isn't that a statement about original blessing? What Thomas Aquinas called "original goodness?"

And he says, "If the world is stricken, it is also healed in Christ."

All this is, I think, a profound meditation on the via positiva and our returning to the holiness, the sacredness of creation, of nature, which is, of course, the exact opposite of despoiling nature, of hiding our heads in the sand, when there's a global crisis we're calling climate change, and trafficking in denial. And politicians unwilling to face the truth and its tremendous implications for future generations of human beings. And of course, of all these other beings that we are sharing the planet with, and their progeny to come.

So recovering this sense of the holiness, the sacredness of creation, of the specialness, the saintliness, all this is part and parcel of healing the sufferings of Mother Earth, the reality of climate change.

And it surely behooves us to fill ourselves with this kind of gratitude and reverence, love and joy. Beauty that the via positiva is all about as we set out to do our work on behalf of Mother Earth. The via positiva is the springboard for our work of creativity and transformation, of justice and compassion, that awaits us.

That is part of the of the movement. All four paths are included, including, of course, the grief of the via negativa, of truly feeling the wounds of Mother Earth.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.