

Daily Meditation 11/21/2022

Thomas Berry's Invitation to Praise the Earth

Good morning.

Today we listen to Thomas Berry, one of the great eco-prophets of our generation, who made it clear that a recovery of the sense of the sacred is essential for an ecological awakening and to save Mother Earth, and to support and inspire the possibility of COP and other efforts to truly care about the environment, to set back the climate change that is engulfing the earth.

And in today's meditation, I have two specific teachings of his, the first being that humans are here to be spokespeople for the universe, and appreciate the universe is a context in which the Divine and the human meet. So in other words, to appreciate that the universe is the ultimate temple and presence of the Divine.

Indeed, this is very much buttressed by Krister Stendahl, the Greek biblical theologian, who said that we can translate the kingdom of God, as employed by Jesus in the gospels, as Creation itself. That Creation is the very meaning of the kingdom of God. In the renewal of creation is the coming of the kingdom.

But Berry stayed clear of theological categories pretty much and he talks about everything is here for the same reason. What's that? For manifestation and for celebration. And that humans have the special gift to articulate this. Other beings articulate it through their manifestation, but they do not reflect on it. So, they cannot articulate it reflectively. But that is our role as humans.

And then in this other passage, which is found in my Christian Mystics book--in fact it's the last of the meditations, Number 365 for every day of the year. There he says, "The human venture depends absolutely on this quality of awe and reverence and joy in the earth, and all that lives and grows upon the Earth. Awe, reverence, joy. In the end, the universe can only be explained in terms of celebration. It is all an exuberant expression of existence."

It goes on!

"A way is open for each person to receive the total spiritual heritage of the human community, as well as the total spiritual heritage of the universe. Within this context, the religious antagonisms of the past can be overcome, particular traditions can be vitalized, the feeling of presence to a sacred universe can appear once more to dynamize and sustain human affairs."

In other words, this is how we will renew our work, our professions, our history, our relationships with one another. And dynamically!

And he ends this way.

"We must feel that we are supported by that same power that brought the Earth into being, that power that spun the galaxies into space, that tilt the sun and brought the moon into his orbit."

This is his promise for a renewed humanity. It has everything to do with renewing our relationship to the Earth and to the universe, and therefore to a sense of the sacred.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.