

Daily Meditation 01/10/2023

Dorothee Soelle on the Revolution of Jesus

Good morning.

Today we are meditating on the deeper meaning of religion, which is about becoming mystics or lovers and prophets, or warriors for compassion and justice.

And I'm invoking Dorothee Soelle, a contemporary woman, who is from Germany, but taught in America for a number of years.

There are so many individuals that we can invoke these days. And we will call on other examples too.

But one point to keep in mind is a study that came out recently: the *National Catholic Reporter* talks about it. Actually it came out in 21, not in 22. But it's about how, for the first time in the history of Gallup poll -- a poll that began in 1937 -- when it comes to church membership in America for the very first time, since 1937, the percentage of people in America belonging to a particular religion, church membership has sunk below 50%. And back when they started, it was 73%.

So it's dropped a lot in the six decades.

Now, it doesn't mean that people are less spiritual. It means that they're less churchgoing. And anyone who works in churches is aware that seminaries are closing, and churches are closing. It's kind of a big business today selling off church property and church buildings.

And so more and more, we're seeing what I've been talking about for decades, that the future of religion, healthy religion and spirituality, is more than sociological structures.

Now, Dorothee Soelle, in her own way, saw that too, in her teaching and in her writing, in her deep love of Meister Eckhart, and the importance of the mystics along with the prophetic or liberation theology perspective.

So I want to share with you another poem or two by Dorothee Soelle; she is really worth our attention. I think she was a woman of substance. And she very much represents a very different perspective on the Christian story from that of the recently deceased Cardinal Ratzinger who was so invested in church structures and dogmas, and above all control, control, control of thinkers and theologians, therefore.

Dorothee Soelle writes:

*i believe in jesus christ
who was right when he
like each of us
just another individual who couldn't beat City Hall*

*worked to change the status quo
and was destroyed
looking at him, I see
how our intelligence is crippled,
our imagination stifled
our efforts wasted
because we do not live as he did.*

So she recognizes what a political act the crucifixion was: the Empire in alliance with the religious establishment killed him.

And this is another one of her poems:

*i believe in the spirit
that jesus brought into the world
in the brotherhood of all nations.
I believe it is up to us
what our earth becomes
a valley of tears starvation and tyranny
or a city of god.
i believe in a just peace
that can be achieved
and the possibility of a meaningful life
for all people.
i believe this world of god's has a future
amen*

So those are some poems from Dorothee Soelle, worthy, I think, of our visions and actions for the future.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.