

Daily Meditation 01/26/2023

Chenu, Aquinas, Teilhard on the Holiness of Matter

Good morning.

Today we celebrate the holiness of matter that is spoken about by Thomas Aquinas, by Père Chenu, by Teilhard de Chardin, among others. And this is important because so much religion in the West has been dictated by dualists who see spirit and matter in conflict, competition.

This is not how Chenu sees it, or Aquinas, or Teilhard, and of course Chenu and Teilhard were contemporaries. And both of them were French, one a Dominican, one a Jesuit. But Teilhard, of course, being a scientist, was reflecting and wrestling with the whole idea of evolution. And of course Chenu was too, as all of us in the 20th century were trying to understand more deeply the meaning of the discovery, if you will, a revolution in the late 19th century.

And here are some more statements by Teilhard, that move us to think and to feel more deeply. He said:

To understand the world, knowledge is not enough. You must see it, touch it, live in its presence, and drink the vital heat of existence, in the very heart of reality.

...Drink the vital heat of existence, in the very heart of reality.

It's interesting, he talks about seeing, touching, living, drinking, this vital heat of existence. The word for wisdom in both Hebrew and Latin, comes from the word for taste. Like the psalmist was talking about, "taste and see that God is good." Or Teilhard is saying "taste and see that existence is good. Life is good."

Another statement about what life is all about. Teilhard says,

Love is an adventure and a conquest...

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...that survives and develops like the universe itself, only by perpetual discovery.

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Think of a couple in marriage...

in a marriage.

There's a continuous discovery going on. And that builds love, that deepens love and strengthens love. Love is an adventure. It survives and develops like the universe itself only by perpetual discovery."

So again, Teilhard is putting our microcosmic lives into the macrocosmic setting. That perpetual discovery is what evolution is about, too. Things are always evolving. And you know, the universe is expanding. So too, with the love energy that is ours, in our small circles, our relationships, our communities, our nations, our globe, all of that is a microcosm of the macrocosm.

And this too is what Chenu and Aquinas talk about: that love is that dynamic energy where discovery -- and curiosity, which leads us to discovery -- is integral to the whole process of love, of finding and knowing and celebrating.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.