

Daily Meditation 01/16/2023

Dr. King on the Failures of Religion

Good morning. A blessed feast day of Martin Luther King, Jr. to all of us.

In today's meditation, we explore some of his important teachings about cautioning us of separating body from soul, and spirit from matter, and justice from spirituality. And he points out that it is not biblical, it is unbiblical to separate matter and spirit, the sacred and the profane.

We admire King for so much and he accomplished so much in just 39 years on this Earth--first with marvelous teams supporting him and for hundreds of thousands of people that he led and ministered to. Indeed, of course, millions during his lifetime and after he died, a martyr.

But we sometimes forget what an amazing philosopher he was. This all-important point about dualism, the danger of dualism, that we see in some teachers such as Augustine and Cardinal Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI.

Now in contrast, my mentor Pere Chenu (c-h-e-n-u)--a French Dominican who was also part of the Second Vatican Council like Cardinal Ratzinger was--he, following the tradition of Thomas Aquinas, who insisted on the integration, or what was called the consubstantiality of body and soul, matter and spirit.

Now Chenu was very explicit, very much in support of Dr. King's philosophy. Chenu writes:

"The human is body and soul. Matter enters into the definition of a human. Matter is not something juxtaposed to an autonomous spirit. And here again, Karl Marx is right against all forms of Cartesianism. Matter is not a fragile, uncompromising support for spirit, not a passing habitation in preparation for a definitive life. It is consubstantially present in humanity and, through what we can see, the operation of the Spirit."

This is very much in line with what Dr. King thought and what Dr. King lived.

Says Chenu (and I'm quoting on page 330 now of *Christian Mystics*):

"History is made by the free acts of individuals in all moments of time, but only through the sociability of humans who live in time. History is not a succession of biographies.

Social progress is characteristically the process whereby acts of interpersonal love become exteriorized, an objective social justice."

And of course, this is what King lived. This is what King taught, preached. And this is what King died for.

Thank you. We 'll see you tomorrow.