

Daily Meditation 02/04/2023

Words from Sister Dorothy and Those Who Knew Her

Good morning.

Today we continue our reflections on the life, thinking and martyrdom (pardon me) of Sister Dorothy Stang. She was from Ohio, from a rather large Catholic family; she grew up in a farm and they were very close.

I'd like to invoke another voice from Central America, and that is Ernesto Cardenal. He was a priest and a monk who spent some time with Thomas Merton, at Gethsemani Monastery, as a novice. Then he moved back to Nicaragua. And he joined the Sandinistas in revolt, revolt against the persecution of his country. And he joined the new movement in opposition to the government that was doing things like throwing people out of planes over an active volcano.

I visited that volcano when I was there the year I was silenced by the Vatican. I also visited Ernesto Cardenal, and he's a poet. He was working then on a major poem, a big book like this, called *Cántico cósmico*, the Cosmic Song, about the history of the universe, as we understand it today, and he showed me his library, about how he had books by Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, and was studying the new cosmology to write that poem.

But I think his teaching in this one passage I'll share with you very much speaks for the spirituality of Sister Dorothy. Very much a creation spirituality and Cardenal was very much a Franciscan in his spirituality. Here is what he says; this is on page 334 of my *Mystics* book.

Nature is religious in its very essence. The star-studded firmament, for example, is one great supplication. The spirit of every landscape is a spirit of prayer, and so is the deep silence of solitary places.

The crickets and the stars speak to us of God, and what they are telling us is that they were created by God.

The entire cosmos aspires to a union with that God from whom it has gone forth....The law of love is the supreme physical and biological law of the universe. And also the one and only moral law. ("I give you a new commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.")

So like Teilhard, Ernesto Cardenal sees love permeating the universe, permeating nature here on Earth. And it calls us forth as well.

And of course, Sister Dorothy represents that love, and that commitment to preserving the rainforests, the creatures there, and the work of the peasant farmers and what Jesus called "the least among us," at least in terms of material wealth and power.

Thank you, Sister Dorothy.

And thank you, we'll see you tomorrow.