

Daily Meditation 05-18-23

Courage, Holiness and Love that Conquers Fear of Death

Good morning.

In this morning's meditation, I share with you some experiences I had with Bishop Casigalida in the Amazon a number of years ago, the year I was silenced, he too was silenced by the Vatican. But it was unusual for them to silence a bishop. And the reason they silenced him was because he called his friend, Archbishop Romero, a martyr, which he was. And now that Archbishop Romero has been declared a saint, that's with a different papacy than the one that silenced Bishop Casigalida, and myself and a wealth of others.

And of course, he supported liberation theology, which the Vatican back then did not want to do. He used to say -- this is in 1997 -- he wrote,

It is important to state that we're not talking about another church. But another way of being church. It is possible and necessary to be the church of Jesus, but in a different way. Throughout history the Church of Jesus has taken on different forms, and there have always been different ways of being a church within it. There's never been so much diversity in the Church of Jesus as today, particularly in terms of the laity. Base communities are an alternative experience of being church, compared to the traditional parish model, for example.

And he talks about the fear that was alive in the Vatican back then, fear of the modern secular world, fear of ecumenical dialogue, fear of the laity, especially fear of women -- this was one of their greatest fears: if women can and should be equal to men in society, why not in the church? -- the fear of theologians, fear of liturgical changes.

One thing he did as bishop was, he supported a grassroots liturgy or mass born of the African and Brazilian poetry and music and dance. But that too, was shut down immediately after they performed it once and to a very wonderful participatory group. And of course, he mentions women's ordination -- this is back in the 1990s.

And he cites Pope John Paul II back then, who, when the Berlin Wall fell was asked if the liberation theology was over now, the Pope replied, "Liberation theology is no longer a problem."

Cassadaga said, "I believe with due respect, that it never was a problem. For us, it was of great importance, a relevant solution, and it continues to be."

I may say that his African-Brazilian mass left an impression on me, because he played the recording of it for me when I was visiting, and I was very impressed that it brought in the music, the body, the sensuality, of different cultures represented in Brazil, such as the the African culture and the indigenous Brazilian culture. That has certainly impacted our Cosmic Masses as well.

Now he visited, made a pilgrimage to Oscar Romero's grave in El Salvador. Now this was before Oscar Romero was canonized the saint by the present Pope. And he knelt at his grave -- and remember Oscar Romero was his friend -- and he composed a poem. That poem ends this way:

*You knew how to drink
the double chalice
of altar and people
with a single hand anointed to serve.
Saint Romero of the Americans, our pastor and martyr
No one
will silence your final sermon!*

That's a little snapshot of Bishop Casigalida.

Now a few years ago, I sent him this book, because there's a section on him in it - The Pope's War. And he wrote me a nice note; he had retired as a bishop, but it was very good to hear from him and to hear that he was living a long life.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.