

Daily Meditation 06/08/2023

Generosity, Its Etymological Roots and Meanings

Good morning.

Today we're dealing with generosity as one of the signs of healthy holiness in our time. And I have to say I'm very excited about today's meditation, because I find it very interesting to go into the etymology of words.

To me when I first did this research, I was really stunned by the richness behind the word "generosity." In it you have the word *genere*, in Latin, which means to beget or create or cause to exist or bring to life or generate.

And so *genere* is all about the *via creativa*, and generosity is about the *via creativa*. But you also have the word *genus*, behind the word *generosity*, *genus* meaning birth, descent, origin, and especially that of high birth, nobility. Implied in it is father, family, nation, offspring, kind, to be part of a kind, part of a genus.

So this too underscores the dimension of generativity, of creativity that is implicit in generosity: that it is a giving of the self or giving of one's gifts, and all this information, I think, adds to the depth and breadth of this word, *generativity*.

And then we turn to Webster's, which defines *generous* as "magnanimous, kindly, liberal in giving, openhanded, marked by abundance or ample portions, copious." And I go on to talk about magnanimity, because it's such an important virtue to Thomas Aquinas; he writes about it often and keeps returning to it. And he connects it to the virtue of fortitude, courage, which of course we've talked about earlier, that courage is therefore a kind of magnanimity, and magnanimity is a kind of courage, so there's a relationship between courage and generosity.

So the life-giving of Martin Luther King, Jr. to accomplish such amazing things in so short a life, having been gunned down at the age of 39, it's really amazing what he accomplished and underwent, and the giving that he did on a daily basis, but of course, the ultimate giving of his life itself.

And then Aquinas tells us that "it is difficult to be magnanimous, no evil person is magnanimous," and all that would apply to our guest in our meditation yesterday, Robert Hanssen, who got numerous people working for America murdered by the Russians. That to be just is necessary for magnanimity, just in oneself, just in spirit.

And he says, "Magnanimity strengthens a person to take on good tasks, and it takes bravery to do so."

And then he says magnanimity is defined as

...expansion of the soul to great things. Magnanimous people do not expose themselves to danger for trifles, nor are they lovers of danger. They don't expose themselves to danger lightly, but magnanimous people brave great dangers for great things because they put themselves in all kinds of danger for great things: for instance, the common welfare, justice, divine worship, and so forth.

I love that he puts divine worship, the effort to renew worship, on a parallel track with justice and the common welfare. It all takes big heart, magna anima, big soul, to do these things. The magnanimous person knows about forgiveness. They "deliberately determine to forget injuries they have suffered." And they are "more solicitous about the truth than about the opinions of others and what others think"

It would seem that the former president is not too magnanimous a person, seeing as he says that his agenda is retribution. Very far from forgiveness.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.