

Daily Meditation 07-11-23

Coming up for Air: Spirituality and Justice from Thomas Aquinas

Good morning.

In today's meditation, we move on from wrestling with the Supreme Court scandals of our time... not move on so much as move deeper, to find the source of our own outrage and also the source of our own energy to carry on nonviolent protest improving our limping democracy and limping jurisprudence.

We call upon a saint and a scholar, Thomas Aquinas, who had so much to say about justice. He really was a champion for justice, and he urges the rest of us to get on board.

And there was plenty of injustice in his time in religious circles and societal circles, and they ran together quite closely. And the big thing that was happening was a movement away from the linkage, for centuries, between monastic religious movement and the feudal system. Between them, they dictated education, they dictated economics, they dictated politics, and religion. And all this was breaking up because the feudal system was breaking up in the 12th century.

And Francis of Assisi and Dominic, founders of the Franciscan order and the Dominican order, were part of this new wave of protest, if you will, of looking at things in a different way.

And universities were happening. And Dominic, and Aquinas especially were very engrossed in that struggle, which did mean taking education away from the monastic system, which had held it almost exclusively for centuries. So, there were plenty of battles, and Aquinas did not shy away from them, even though he was a scholar. And he took the part of the newer generation that were eager to see life unfold differently, see the spread of decision-making going far beyond the feudal hierarchy, if you will.

And part of Aquinas' revolutionary thinking was to bring in Aristotle who was a pagan philosopher, because he insisted science is so important, and that science is not restricted to one's religion. And even though Aristotle was pagan, he had plenty to say. And was smarter than most believers who were looking at the universe, looking at human nature. So he wanted to fold Aristotle's insights into the Christian tradition and the biblical tradition.

So in today's readings, I think there's some marvelous statements from Aquinas, when he says the saints "have a heart full of justice....The saints have justice, charity, and effects of this kind, which are most like God."

That the holy hearts are full of justice.

So there we have that fourth dimension of holiness that we've been writing about for a couple of months now and meditating on together: Joy, generosity, courage, and justice. I think those are four dimensions to holiness that stand out today in our need and in our testing of spirits: joy, generosity, courage, and justice.

And I think Aquinas has so much to say about it: "The vision of God is arrived at through justice."

...through justice.

It can be arrived at through contemplation too and of course service; justice is a kind of service. But all this is part of the path to divinity, the Way, as in I AM the Way.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.