

Daily Meditation 07/18/23

Art, Healing, Learning Discipline for Freedom, Play & Loving of Enemies

Good morning.

Yesterday we meditated with M.C. Richards and what she calls moral imagination. Of course, I can't think about that without remembering how, years ago, when fundamentalists took over a school board in the state of New Hampshire, their first decree was that henceforth no teacher in a public school could use the word "imagination" in the classroom.

Truly.

And I didn't understand, when I was told the story, why? And the answer was, well, they say that the devil is in the imagination.

Well, yes, the devil is in the imagination. So are angels. So is God. Everything we think or imagine is in the imagination, plus one thing more: something has never been thought before.

But this is not an aberration unfortunately.

This experience was like 20, 25 years ago. But now we have coming out of the state of Florida, the governor, and now in a lot of other states, very busy, squelching imagination, squelching books and taking books out of shelves, books written by Pulitzer Prize winning authors, because there's too much imagination, I guess.

So it's a sad state of affairs. But let us turn from that reality to M.C. Richards. And on the 100th anniversary of her birth, friends of hers put up a sort of a book called *M.C. Richards: Centering Life and Heart, 100 Years*. And it has wonderful articles by people who knew her, from a variety of backgrounds and professions, some of them fellow potters, and some of them Rudolf Steiner devotees like she was.

And I was honored to write an essay myself, and it's the last essay of the book. And of course, wonderful pictures are here of her many pots and plates and her imagination at work over the years, and pictures of her at different stages of her life.

And one of the things she said was that, you know, we can celebrate all the arts in life, but really, there's only one big art and that is the way we live our lives: that art.

Here's a crazy holiday card that she created. You can see it there. It's a crazy outfit on; she did love to decorate herself: she would often paint her shoes, for example, and with wild colors, and that didn't match, and she had various outfits.

But in my article, the last article in the book, I offer what I called "Nineteen Snapshots of a Vigorous Life," and some stories of her and trips we made together.

For example, when we were teaching together in a creation spirituality workshop in Australia for a week, then we flew with one other faculty member in a tiny little plane called the mosquito plane to Uluru, a great sacred rock said to be the navel of the universe by the Aboriginal peoples. And she was so taken by this sacred rock that when she took up painting just a year or two later, her first three paintings were paintings of Uluru, the sacred rock.

And I reproduced in my 19 snapshots an observation by Dan Turner, the editor of our *Creation Spirituality Magazine*, who met M.C. for the first time in Sydney, the airport, and this is what he said:

*She came striding into the airport clad in browns and khakis, as if blown in from the South Australian deserts. A vigorous woman. I expected gray hair and some diffidence. How foolish. What I got was adventure. Energy. Bright wicked eyes and oh yes, gray hair.*

*M.C. did not walk. She strode. She sang the song of the universe in a full throaty growl. She had no time for delicate harmonic rote notations.*

*M.C. loved with a purple romanticism, fully, deeply and with womanly pain, the earth suffering, when it wasn't returned.*

*She did not die before her time. She died at the very moment it was her time to go. And she left us her life in poetry and pottery, in wisdom books. And for those who are fortunate to have known her and contend with her, she left us her soul.*

It's a beautiful naming, I think, of the impression that M.C. made on many.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.