

Daily Meditation 05-27-24

On the Origins of Joy: Who Is Our Beloved?

Good morning.

In today's meditation, which I call “On The Origins of Joy: Who Is Our Beloved?” I'm dialoguing with Andrew Harvey, insofar as he interviewed me about Joy a few days ago. And I hold Andrew Harvey in very high esteem. As I point out, he grew up in India, but he attended Oxford University as a young man. And then went beyond academia to do the work he's been doing for decades, stirring people up to their spiritual roots.

I'd just like to cite from one of his books, this is a particularly important book I think (well, they all are). It's called the “Return of the Mother.” India, of course, is famous for grounding itself in a sense of the Divine Feminine. What's going on currently in India may be of a different ilk, but that is its history. But one chapter 11, page 383 of this book, called “Christ the Mother,” he makes this point: he says,

There is an overwhelming presence of the sacred feminine in Christ himself, discovered intuitively and mystically, the core of one's mind and heart. To receive Christ through Mary is to receive the Christ of the mystics, the Christ who, while rooted in the Father, in transcendence, loved this world, with the humble passion of his mother, The Mother. And in his own person, teaching a life journey.

So this book develops the whole idea of the Divine Motherhood, from many, many angles in many traditions. But that's just one position he takes, and it's very similar to Dorothy Soelle, who points out that the mystical path is the path of the feminine, that goes beyond patriarchy, and what I call the ladder-climbing of patriarchal consciousness.

So I bring out in this essay today, these wonderful teachings from Aquinas, about how love is the cause of joy. If you're looking for joy, look for love. But he says that “the only person who truly has joy is one who lives in love.”

Now, this takes us right into the Via Positiva, doesn't it, and the importance of the Via Positiva. Have we nurtured our capacity for love? And I don't mean just for love of a mate. That's included. But I mean, love of Being itself, love of the Earth, love of the universe, love of our existence, love of the beings that make up our world, and our experience.

Maybe it's like to love a cat or a dog who lives with you. Maybe it's trees. What is it we love? And how does this love bring joy alive in us? And how do we build a culture on love, instead of hate?

So much of our contemporary American culture, I think, derives from the noise of hatred, that was spread very broadly a couple of decades ago by the radio fellow, Rush Limbaugh. I think that his attitude of hatred showed a lot of media people that hatred sells. And it showed politicians the same thing, because politics and media are very attuned in our time. So do we want to lead with hatred, such as Rush Limbaugh spewed in our airwaves for decades, becoming very rich doing it?

Or do we want to operate on love? And finding love and finding goodness? This Trinity that I name, of goodness, love, and joy. Joy is born of love. Love is born of goodness. We love what we see as good. And that is the invitation that Creation Spirituality offers to the world. As Aquinas says,

Love and joy constitute the basis of all attraction, all attraction are about love and joy. Love is the origin, it's the beginning. And joy is the end result. So Joy derives from love.

So we have here a Trinity, goodness, love, and joy. Like Meister Eckhart asks, “Who is a good person? A good person praises good people.”

So our capacity for praise demonstrates our capacity for goodness, and that we're looking for it, we're hunting for it. If you're not hunting for goodness, you're not going to find it. And you're also not going to find love. And you're not going to find joy. It's really that simple. This Trinity that we're naming here, is profound and real and very, very practical.

Now, in this chapter in “The Tao of Thomas Aquinas,” my book here that I'm citing from, the title is actually called “Joy is a Human's Noblest Act,” which is a statement from Thomas Aquinas, our noblest act. This joy, he says, well, then we have to back up. Well, that includes love. OK, then back up again, that includes goodness. Looking for the goodness of the universe that brought us here 13.8 billion years ago, the goodness of our powers of love, of responding positively to goodness. It's all the Via Positiva work, isn't it? And then the joy flows, the joy comes automatically.

Because the question we pose in this essay is — because Aquinas says that everyone takes joy in their beloved — so what a marvelous question: “Who is our Beloved? How many Beloveds do we have?” Are we limited? Who said we're limited to our Beloveds? And I make a list in this essay and meditation, about how many beings and experiences, including music and poetry and sport and all the rest, can be our Beloved.

So I hope that you Wow in this Trinity, this goodness, love and joy, and spread it. Spread the joy. Thank you. We'll see you next week.