

Daily Meditation 6-30-25

More Ways to Resist the Billionaire Bill & Honoring Bill Moyers

Good morning.

In today's daily meditation, I am really talking two topics. One is the need to continue to resist what's going on in the current administration, and this time turning to addressing the media: letting them know what your values are, and how this new bill that is being proposed is contrary to your morality and ethics and values.

And secondly, I wanted to pay tribute to Bill Moyers, a really great journalist with great integrity. And I tell the story, of course, of his reaching out with Joe Campbell in their marvelous series — which in fact, was Joe Campbell's swan song. He literally died just at the end of that filming, many weeks of filming. So it was really his farewell to us.

And I was, of course, reflecting on what are the connections between resisting a disturbing political moment in American history, including the recent decision by SCOTUS to give even more power to the executive branch and take power away from the judicial branches, except their own nine seats. What is the connection between that degradation of our democracy that is going on daily in front of our eyes, and the celebration of the life and work of Bill Moyers, and especially in conjunction with Joe Campbell.

And I realize it really is a connection. And I think that connection can be summarized in one word: Cynicism.

I think the more you look at the sins of the present political ideology running our country, the effort to kill democracy and to kill Congress, and to kill the judiciary (except for the Supreme Court), I think, behind it all, it's a profound, profound cynicism.

And what is cynicism? Well, I have a whole section on that in my book on evil, *Sins of the Spirit, Blessings of the Flesh, Transforming Evil in Soul and Society*. And I relate cynicism to the classical capital sin of the Spirit called Acedia. Acedia, A, C, E, D, I, A, which is often translated, mistranslated as Sloth. But it really means, as Thomas Aquinas says, “a lack of energy to begin new things.” And embedded in it is cynicism.

When a person or a group or a society goes cynical, believe me, things go downhill. What does cynicism mean? It comes from two Greek words. One means not caring. Not caring.

I think you can truly say that characterizes the current administration, who are uncaring, profoundly so, toward immigrants who are innocent of any serious criminality. We've seen picture after picture and heard story after story of this reality. And the other word, the Greek word from the word that forms the word Acedia, no, not with acedia, but yes, acedia, is the word Sour. Sour, and that's what cynicism is. It's a sourness. There's a sour attitude toward democracy in our time. It's a sour attitude toward justice, toward the poor, toward those who are trying to work for the poor. It is as if there's a sourness that's taken over our attitude toward law, toward the common good. Dante defined Acedia as "slow love." It's loving a great good with less intensity than it deserves: a slow love.

In other words, no energy behind one's so-called love. That's why Aquinas called it "lack of energy to begin new things." And really Acedia so present in our culture that we have many words for it: Ennui, depression, cynicism, sadness, boredom, listlessness, couch-potato-itis being passive, apathy, psychic exhaustion, having no energy. And the Desert Fathers who actually named these sins, the spiritual sins, called the sin of Acedia "the noonday demon," the most oppressive of all demons, because it leads to coldness of heart, indifference, and neglect. There's no presence of the fire of the Holy Spirit, the fire of creativity, the fire of possibility.

And this is where I think Joe Campbell and Bill Moyers come into the picture so strongly: that they had a fire. Surely Joe Campbell did. And where did it come from? Well, it came from their excitement about the accomplishments of the human race in all the world cultures and all the world religions, so many art forms and so forth. All this came through in a dynamic way in their weeks of dialogue about Myth. An important myth is the stories that move our civilizations, our cultures, our societies, our religions. Aquinas says that Acedia feeds on despair, and "despair tears charity out by its roots." That's cynicism and that's uncaring, isn't it?

Now, what is the medicine for all this cynicism this Acedia, uncaring, and sourness toward democracy, toward one's community, one's society, one's country?

Well, that's where the first chakra comes in. I connect Acedia to the first chakra, insofar as when first chakra is healthy, you are rooted to the Earth. So lowest chakra, there is the Earth. We trigger it by dancing, but also to the sky, to the cosmos. It's what happens when a cosmology is missing. People get sour. The world is filled with sourpusses, because all we can think about is ourselves. It's so thoroughly anthropocentric, like Pope Francis was high with itself. It was narcissism of our species, which was given birth through the ecosystems of Mother Earth herself, as we know her.

So the medicine is cosmogenesis, a new cosmology, a new awareness of the universe. And we're getting these realities daily from the Webb telescope, these pictures, these stories, but also from this newest telescope from Chile. And it's so interesting that Joe Campbell says, in one of these videotape exchanges with Bill Moyers: "the closest thing I know to a planetary mythology is Buddhism, which sees all beings as Buddha beings." Well, that statement just blew my mind when I saw this video, because I had just recently published my book on *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, the Return of the Cosmic Christ, the mythology from the West that honors what the mythologies of the East are. So the Buddha nature in all things is also the Cosmic Christ in all things. And there's also the Salaam, or the image of God in all things, which is the Jewish tradition. All three religions are talking about all things. And all things is the cosmos. It is all 2 trillion galaxies we now know, each with hundreds of billions of stars. And what religion is saying, these religious myths are saying, these big stories, is that the Buddha is in all of these beings, the Christ is in all of these beings, the image of God is in all of these things.

If that's not the opposite of cynicism. I don't know what is. That's how you heal cynicism. You give up on the modern consciousness of anthropocentrism, "I think, therefore I am," the modern consciousness that the human is everything, which is so absurd because we're the least, the last of the creatures to show up in this 13.8-billion-year universe. It's the universe that counts: the universe birthed the Earth, and birthed us, and the sun and the moon and the tides and everything that made life possible on this planet, and human life, and of course, the plant life and the animal life that preceded the human.

This is the medicine. This is how we overcome cynicism. Bill Moyers and Joe Campbell were onto something very important.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.