

Daily Meditations 11/25/21
Thanksgiving, 2021

Good morning.

Happy Thanksgiving to everybody!

In today's meditation, we're reflecting on the meaning of thanks. What a wonderful virtue it is.

And I cite Thomas Aquinas, who says that "Religion is a supreme thankfulness or gratitude." It is a virtue of thankfulness or gratitude at the extreme level. And he invokes the whole idea of the Sabbath, that the Sabbath is a remembrance occasion for giving thanks for our existence.

Today, of course, that means the health and the well-being of Mother Earth and the soil and the waters and the air, and, of course, the other creatures.

All this is becoming much more demanding in our time, that we not take any of this for granted. And they really develop this virtue of gratitude that Thomas Aquinas talks about. He says, "Gratitude is paid spontaneously. Thanking is less thankful when it is compelled."

So gratitude is not meant to be a law. It's meant to be something we truly feel deeply from our insides.

And he says, "Gratitude depends chiefly on the heart." Gratitude depends chiefly on the heart. So it's from the heart that we are called to honoring the creation and giving thanks for it, not taking it for granted. And remembering to keep holy the Sabbath day as is told in Genesis.

And his brother, Meister Eckhart, who came after Aquinas, summarizes it this way. He says, "If the only prayer you say in your whole life is 'thank you,' that would suffice."

The only prayer you say in your whole life is "thank you," that would suffice. That really is the heart of the matter, our giving thanks for being here.

And of course, taking advantage of what being here is about, and not wasting our time or despoiling the earth for others to arrive and learn to be grateful.

There's another teaching from Aquinas that I think is very apropos of his talking about the virtue of thanks and gratitude. And this is when he says, "It is a great thing to do miracles, but it is a greater thing to live virtuously."

It's a great thing to do miracles, but a greater thing to live virtuously. So for him, living virtuously is greater than miracles.

And this really, I think, embellishes the whole theme we've been developing for several days, if not weeks. I brought the importance of that masculine side of our commitment to character and to developing the virtues that matter.

They are strength. They are strength. They are manliness, as Hildegard of Bingen says. They are our virility, as Webster's Dictionary says. They're the healthy masculine.

The whole reason we're talking about this these days is that we have so many examples parading across our internet and television screens and news items, about the unhealthy masculine.

Much of it is being incarnated by politicians, who are distorting the very meaning of masculinity, and are in fact exploiting this young man, Kyle, with his arguments for self-defense attending a protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

So this is what's happening, that there is this cloud of confusion that is being kicked up by certain ideologies and people carrying these ideologies. And so I think it really behooves us to listen to wise people, like Hildegard and Thomas Aquinas, about what "virtue" really means.

And why this is the medicine, the medicine, this inner strength is the medicine for a lot of the anger and the abuse and the power-over dynamics of a toxic masculinity.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.

Happy Thanksgiving!