

Daily Meditation 03-23-22

The Evil of War 2.0

Good morning.

In yesterday's meditation we considered the ongoing process of letting go, and how it culminates in giving birth.

And in today's meditation, we're talking about the creativity that goes along with war and war making.

War is itself a creative act. But raising the question from Dag Hammarskjöld: do you create or do destroy? So we can destroy with our creativity and imagination.

Imagine all the effort it took to create the terrible weapons that our contemporary warfare brandishes. Vladimir Putin is using the Ukraine war to try out some of his new weapons, such that supersonic missile that cannot be brought down by any defense mechanisms we currently have, because it flies so high and so fast.

So what we see is, of course, the damage and the destruction of these weapons in our daily newscasts, which are in effect, a running experience of evil that is not just about evil coming from one man or one nation; it is our collective capacity for evil as humans, to use our imaginations for exactly what Dag Hammarskjöld warns us about.

What we do with our imaginations and our creativity? Do we use it to bring new creativity into the world? Or do we use it to destroy? That is a moral question for our time.

And then, as I point out in the meditation, Pope Paul IV went to the United Nations in 1965. And his most famous line was "never again, war; war, never again." But here we are, 85 years after World War II. And 30 some years -- or 57 years after Pope Paul's visit. And we're seeing it again: a war blazing away in Europe, in the largest country in Europe, next to Russia, Ukraine.

So these issues, these moral issues, come up with every generation: what we do with our creativity. And they're very much with us today. And we're all finding it hard to look at the nightly pictures of devastation, sadness, and death, and separation of families. The destruction of so many efforts by humans to build, to use their creativity to build a community, build a society, all these buildings have been blasted to smithereens, including the people inside them.

So it really is a moment, this moment of war, to take stock, and ask what is going on inside of us and inside of our own cultures? To play out this challenge, this moral challenge from Dag Hammarskjöld. Do you create? Or do you destroy?

And this is, too, what Otto Rank is saying: that it is the artist in us, the creative one in us, that is the real linchpin to our humanity. Are we going to use our creativity, to beat up on ourselves? That's the *artiste manque*. Or to beat up on others, such as Putin is doing? Or are we going to find another way to deal with this tremendous power?

We have a power that the Bible says is the image of divinity itself, the image of God; this is why we're so powerful. And this power can be used for good or for ill; for evil or for the advancement of the sacred.

Thank you; we'll see you tomorrow.