

Daily Meditation 04/27/2022

More Via Positiva from Merton, Eckhart & Thomas Berry

Good morning.

We continue our meditations on the via positiva. And there's a beautiful passage from Thomas Merton's journal that I reproduce about "how beautiful life is this spring "when he observes a small, newborn colt running around the fields.

Now I follow that up with the wonderful passage from Meister Eckhart about how God pours forth, the horse

pours forth, his whole strength in leaping about in the meadow. So too, it is a joy to God to pour out the divine nature and being completely into the divine likeness, since God is the likeness itself.

So just as we enjoy a horse, springing about the meadow, so divinity enjoys us, springing about carrying the divine image and likeness in it. A beautiful, mystical experience, so well told by first, Thomas Merton, his experience with the colt, and then Meister Eckhart, his experience with horses in the 14th century.

But there's a poem by Thomas Merton, and I'd like to share with you, that kind of speaks to the opposite of original blessing, that sometimes we have to work on seeing life as a blessing. And he calls this "The First Lesson about Man," meaning about humans. This is found on page 177-178 of my book on Merton, *A Way to God*. It begins this way:

Man (man meaning humans) begins in zoology.

Okay, so this is his affirmation of evolution that we began as animals.

*He is the saddest animal
He drives a big red car
Called anxiety...
Whenever he goes to the phone
To call joy,
He gets the wrong number.
Therefore he likes weapons.
He knows all guns
By their right names.
He drives a big black Cadillac
Called death.
Now he is putting anxiety
Into space.
He flies his worries
All around Venus.*

*But it does him no good...
Man is the saddest animal.
He begins in zoology
And gets lost
In his own bad news.*

I think this is a stunning and very, very rich poem. And Thomas Merton was one of the few people in America in the 1960s who did not find himself thrilled by Americans going to the moon, or trying to go to the moon. They went to the moon after he died, actually: the year after he died, they landed on the moon, but everyone knew they were preparing to go to the moon. But his point was this: we are now putting anxiety into space and flying our worries all around Venus.

That was his objection, that we were busy avoiding the deeper question of examining our own inner selves, and the cause of all our war and what I call our reptilian brain, excess, so forth. And he said, he felt that we should be more be doing more of that before we start traveling to other planets, and bringing our unexamined selves to these places. And that it could be simply an escape, to want to go to Mars and these other places if we don't do that inner work, which for him is the hardest work and the most important work.

He felt that we were too easily distracted by invitations to, as he says, fly all our worries around the world. He says we're -- here's how he puts it in another place, page 121 here:

Even if humans can fly, so what? They're flying ants. Even if humans fly all over the universe, we're still nothing but a flying ant until we recover a human center and a human spirit in the depth of our own being." ...

...

What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery. And without her all the rest are not only useless but disastrous.

...This is the most important of all voyages of discovery.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.