

Daily Meditation 06/17/2022

Folly & Faux Masculinity, Neo-fascism and Violence

Good morning.

Today we meditate on the sad and dangerous and important reality of the rise of violence in our time, the organizing of violence, institutionalized violence, therefore. Much of it happening in these men's groups such as the group that invaded Idaho, to create mayhem at a Pride parade, which is called the Patriotic Front group.

And of course, the Proud Boys, the Oathkeepers, who led the charges into the nation's capital on January 6, cheered on by the President and several elected politicians in Washington.

And afterwards, also, not at all criticized by most of one political party in Washington. Apparently, they're very content with the Proud Boys and Oathkeepers leading a crowd that killed people and maimed and killed police officers protecting our elected leaders.

And of course, a president who doesn't have the manliness to accept defeat in an election. Apparently, when you're that rich and raised in such a rich capitalist family, you don't learn at an early age that it's important to lose as well as to win and to lose with grace and to praise others.

Meister Eckhart said, "Who is a good person? A good person praises other people."

Unfortunately, we have very powerful people in America who cannot step out of their own ego enough to praise other people or even to admit defeat.

And so the lies mount. No community can survive on lies, period. Lies are the obstacle to community. Truth is, as Thomas Aquinas says, the objects of the heart, truth and justice.

So I do think that in all this rise of authoritarianism and fascism in our time that the whole subject of manliness, of masculinity -- what does it mean? -- is at stake behind it. Many, many men today are not in touch with authentic manhood.

And I invoke Hildegard of Bingen and others, the whole tradition built around morality and ethics as virtue. To realize what Hildegard of Bingen realized: the word manliness, virtue is strength, inner strength. Virtue is what makes us virtue includes the word man, "vir" in Latin: Vertus, Vir. Virtue is whole and strong and generous, giving and forgiving.

So a crisis of masculinity, which is obvious in a time of fascism, is a crisis of virtue.

And I bring in our educational systems too: I think in many ways, January 6 was a report card an American education. How much does American education deal with virtue?

And then, of course, there's the question of the lack of rites of passage for boys becoming men. And in that regard, our whole culture needs to take responsibility, and certainly religions too, that there is a shift in a young man's consciousness that ought to be ritualized, to be respected, honored. But also in ritual.

There should be demands on the part of the new young men to join older men, to step over the threshold of boyhood into adulthood. But adulthood has everything to do with developing habits, good habits, and that's what virtue is about.

I think a culture that is rushing into fascism, authoritarianism, and uber-masculinity, instead of authentic masculinity, that has to carry assault weapons around to have an identity, and then to be supported by politicians, supposedly grown men, who can't even raise the age of assault weapon to 21, and more importantly, can't even know the difference between an assault weapon and a hunting rifle, sees no difference whatsoever apparently -- these people are suffering from a sick masculinity and a lack of virtue.

And what do we get? We get not only 18-year-old boys shooting up elementary school of children, but we get supposed adults who were policemen standing out the door, outside the door for an hour, afraid to go in.

That's no virtue, that's lack of virtue, lack of courage, lack of following through on one's oath to protect the people, to serve the people and certainly the children in a time of grave need.

Let us pray that men in America and around the world who are tempted to authoritarianism and institutionalized violence at this time, otherwise known as fascism, that they might wake up before it's too late. To find their true selves and their true capacity as fathers and adults in a society that seeks virtuous men and women, boys and girls.

Thank you. See you tomorrow.