

Daily Meditation 11/19/2022

Yeats on Celebration, Praise and Festivity

Good morning.

We're continuing our meditation on praising and on festivity.

And I begin the essay with the wonderful ditty, from the Celtic poet Yeats:

We must laugh, and we must sing.

We are blessed by everything.

Everything we look upon is blessed.

Blessing is just a theological word for goodness. What's being said is that there's goodness all around us. There's goodness in relating to all the goodness around us, all the blessings around us. These good things bless us. And we come alive because we respond to them. Because we are not taking for granted. Because we are paying attention.

And this, of course, has everything to do with my phrase, *original blessing*, in all the history of our origins. It's a good history. It's a beautiful history. We're here because of so many blessings, and original blessings.

Meister Eckhart says that "creativity causes the soul to rejoice"...causes the soul to rejoice.

And so I break into a litany at the end of this meditation, a litany of festivals, because of festival is a group act of rejoicing. And I think we ought to be asking ourselves more about putting on festivals: what kind of festivals can we share with one another that will remind us of the grace that nature is, the grace that communities are, and that diversity is.

You can look through this litany -- I begin with festivals of cuisine, clothing, garments, and costumes, of languages, of music, the various visages, faces that we display to one another. And I go through a whole list, obviously, an open-ended list.

But all this is an effort to name the blessings and the goodness that is all around us, the beauty. Remembering that the word for good in Hebrew, that is found in the cosmological creation story, Chapter One of Genesis, different beings are created and "this is good, this is good, this is good," and all together, they're "very good." That very word can also be translated, "beautiful," and at the end, "very beautiful."

And humans were on board then at the end, just as we are in today's scientific creation story, that the whole circle of life is good and beautiful, and ultimately, altogether very good and very beautiful.

So there's so much to celebrate, and to make festive, to call in the puppet makers to remind us of the playfulness that is deep within our existence, the playfulness of the universe to have brought us forward.

As the Upanishads say,

Know the nature of creating: where there is joy, there is creating. Know the nature of joy: where there is the infinite, there is joy.

Joy, creating, responding to creating, sharing the creating. All of it is a symphony of joy and jubilation, as Hildegard of Bingen put it, who's over my shoulder here. All of it is a festivity.

"Life is a festivity," as Thomas Merton said.

And as Thomas Berry puts it, "You can summarize all of the universe in one word: celebration."

Celebration. It is all an attempt by the universe to, well, to be festive. Festivals abound. The universe is one grand festival, or is Berry put it, "a grand liturgy to which we are invited." Therefore, a sacred festival.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.