

Daily Meditation 02/03/2023

Speaking of Love, continued: Sister Dorothy Stang

Good morning.

We're reflecting today on Sister Dorothy Stang, her life and work and message and her martyrdom as well. She said,

I know that they want to kill me, but I will not go away. My place is here, alongside these people who are constantly humiliated by others who consider themselves powerful.

And there was a lot of conflict in the area, because the loggers were tearing down the forest. And there were people who were burning down the houses of the peasant farmers and so forth. And there were 19 illegal logging companies in the project area, making continual threats against the rural farmers. A state four times the size of Germany had only 72 men dedicated to surveillance of illegal logging. And to them Dorothy was becoming an increasing nuisance, because she was speaking out about the illegality of the logging. Of course this logging was still going on in Brazil under the previous President recently deposed by two million votes.

One Mayor openly stated: "We have to get rid of that woman if you're going to have peace." And Dorothy said to a friend,

I have learned that faith sustains you. And I've also learned that three things are difficult: as a woman to be taken seriously in the struggle for land reform; to stay faithful to believing that the small groups or poor farmers will prevail in organizing and carrying out their own agenda; and thirdly, to have the courage to give your life in the struggle for change.

She thought that being an American and being an old woman would protect her but she was wrong.

So I think it really is important that we meditate on these many murders in our lifetime. I really think there are more people who have been murdered in South America and Central America in my lifetime than were martyred in Rome, in the early days of the Christian church, but tens of thousands of people have met the fate that Sister Dorothy did.

But let us put our hearts and souls in the spirit of Sister Dorothy: her generosity, her commitment to justice, and her love for the people and for the forest. This goes on.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.