

## Daily Meditation 3/30/2023

### Creation: Original Blessing, Original Goodness at Work

Good morning.

Today we're meditating on the topic of Creation: Original Blessing, Original Goodness at Work. And I call upon Genesis 1, the very first page of the Jewish and Christian Bible, which tells the story of how every creature is good. And all together, the whole circle of creatures, including humans, is very good. And as I bring out at the end of the essay, the meditation, this means the entire Bible begins with the via positiva; it begins with an invitation to look for good.

That's not always easy to do. There's a lot of struggle in life, there's a lot of evil in the world. So there's a spiritual commitment to look for the good. And the fact that the Bible begins this way separates it from a lot of philosophies over the centuries that suggest that evil is what dominates, you can't do anything about it, you just need to adjust, etc.

That's not the biblical story at all. The story is that we can choose. Deuteronomy: "I put before you life and death; choose life." Choose the good.

When we're deeply wounded, when others are deeply wounded, we're in a fog of uncertainty and shadow, darkness, it takes a commitment, a trust, to look for the good.

Now, I depended a lot in my meditation on Thomas Aquinas, because he is one of the great thinkers who insisted on the goodness of creation.

Rabbi Zalman Schachter has this important teaching, and realistic teaching, down-to-earth teaching: he says, "There's more good than evil in the world, but not by much." It's humorous, really, but it's profound, for sure. There's more good than evil in the world, but not by much.

What this means, of course, how it translates, is that we're in this struggle together, to put good forward so that it does out-balance the evil. It's an effort. You can't be naive about it. There's plenty of evil in the world. But there's even more good. Rabbi Zalman's language: a little bit more good.

We have to discern and fill ourselves up with this experience of the via positiva, the goodness. And reading people like Thomas Aquinas really helps. He says, "Blessedness is grounded on nature. There is no thing that does not share in goodness and beauty."

But Julian Norwich has exactly that teaching too. She says that "God is the goodness in nature"... God is the goodness in nature. So goodness is God. God's presence among us.

He says - Aquinas says - "We bless God by recognizing the divine goodness"...by recognizing the divine goodness.

"God blesses us by causing goodness in us"...causing goodness in us. So, we carry goodness and goodness has been caused inside of us. It increases, it develops, it matures, it deepens, strengthens, becomes stronger.

Aquinas says, "The Holy Spirit proceeds as a love of the primal goodness whereby the Creator loves the Godhead, and every creature."...The Holy Spirit proceeds as a love of the primal goodness whereby the Creator loves the Godhead and every creature...so there is a primal goodness. There's an original goodness, which is another term from Aquinas, and original freshness, another term.

And this is all what I mean by original blessing. This is the world in which we live, believe it or not. Let us be instruments of that same blessing and that same goodness.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.