

Daily Meditation 4/03/2023

Ending the Doctrine of Discovery, continued

Good morning.

Today we continue our meditations on the ending of the Doctrine of Discovery from Pope Francis, a few days ago, a move that I consider to be a truly major moment in Western religious history, that finally held the door on this heinous teaching that came from the popes in the 15th century that it's okay for Christian kings and empires to raid other nations and destroy peoples, and religions, cultures, in the name of a Christian religion.

So I really do think it's a step forward.

And as I point out, the bubonic plague of the 14th century, 100 years before those papal documents, in many respects destroyed the Creation spiritual tradition, because people became so frightened during that horrible pandemic. One out of two, or one out of three, people lost their lives in the bubonic plague. They became so frightened of nature that they could no longer recognize the revelation that comes from nature to us.

And of course, science is trying to understand such achievements as the Webb telescope, or achievements in medicine, and so forth. Research is part of that seeking understanding.

I also want to introduce you to this painting behind me which will be a backdrop for a while in my meditations with you. It's a painting by a friend of mine, MC Richards, a wonderful potter who took up painting at the age of 70, and poet and philosopher.

Her most famous book is this book *Centering in Pottery, Poetry, and the Person*. And this special anniversary issue came out, the 25th anniversary of her book. And it happens to have a new introduction by MC and a forward by myself. This is a good picture of her on the back. She was a wonderful woman and, I'm proud to say, a member of our faculty for many years.

But the title of this painting is *Birthing a New Cosmos*. *Birthing a New Cosmos*.

So being part of our educational project--our master's and then our doctoral program--first at Holy Names College and then at the University of Creation Spirituality, MC Richards is very embedded in the ethos of the new cosmology that was being taught by cosmologist Brian Swimme. And Thomas Berry would visit regularly, and other scientists who taught on our faculty.

So she rendered her version of the new cosmology here. And I think she's talking about seeds and birthing here.

This is all pertinent to what we're talking about, about the return to cosmology that indigenous people never lost. But the Westerners *did* lose. They lost out of fear and anxiety regarding the 14th century bubonic plague, which Thomas Berry says killed the Creation Spirituality lineage for a while in the West. And we replaced the sacredness of creation with the fear of death and, therefore, with an overemphasis on redemption. And then we brought this fear and this is acosmic Christianity to the Americas. And genocide followed.

So this recovery of cosmology such as MC Richards is celebrating here and that the new science is informing us about, all this is part of a new relationship between the wisdom of indigenous peoples and the wisdom of the Christian tradition that *does* celebrate a Cosmic Christ and the sacredness of creation, when it is being true to its deepest roots.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.