

Daily Meditation 04/22/2023

Earth Day 2023: Lessons of Celebrating & Exulting

Good morning. Happy Earth Day to everybody.

Today we're meditating on "Earth Day 2023: Lessons of Celebration and Exulting." And I get that word "exulting" from the esteemed theologian, Thomas Berry.

And let me share with you his passage. He says, "The human venture depends absolutely on this quality of awe and reverence and joy in the earth, and all that lives and grows upon the earth."

So when he says human virtue depends absolutely on awe, reverence and joy in the earth, I think he's saying that without awe and reverence and joy in the earth, we're not going to make it as a species. We have to return to the primal force and primal source of goodness, blessing---what I call Original Blessing---recognition of this fact of Earth's uniqueness and beauty and specialness and our place on it, and how it's come to be over 13.8 billion years, the earth that we know.

And then his famous line, "In the end, the universe can only be explained in terms of celebration. It is all an exuberant expression of existence itself."

What a marvelous passage and what an essential one, by which we can reinvent all our work, all our professions, education, politics, religion, economics, the way we live on the Earth. Agriculture, media, art, the way we live on the Earth.

Are we living with exultation, with joy, with reverence? Notice, these are Via Positiva words, aren't they?

So, you know, I included the word "exulting" in the title, again, straight from Thomas Berry. And I went to the dictionary to learn more about this word because, thank God, it's not overly used. It's not dead yet, like so many words are, thanks to the advertising industry.

Exultation. To leap up. From the word "sultare"-- to leap, to leap for joy, to be extremely joyful. Rejoice, exult, filled with or expressing great joy or triumph. The act of being exultant.

So I did go back to this word that I wasn't that familiar with, actually. *Sultapori, sultation*, to leap, to dance; the action or process of leaping or jumping.

So, Earth Day is a day for leaping and jumping and dancing, according to Thomas Berry, who in fact was a pretty serious guy!

But I think this is the gift of this day--to remind us that things begin with the Via Positiva, begin with our falling in love with the Earth and with our awe. And learning more and more and more about our Earth's journey in this cosmos and its journeys are all the lessons we're learning from Webb telescope, and the rest, today. They all feed our hungry souls, eager to exult, made for celebration. Along with all the other species as well. "It is all an exuberant expression of existence itself."

And then Berry goes on to say that "The way is opening for each person to receive the total spiritual heritage of the human community, as well as the total spiritual heritage of the universe. And within this context, religions can be reinvented, because religious antagonisms of the past, when you overcome particular traditions, can be vitalized, and the feeling of presence to a sacred universe can appear once more to legitimize and sustain human affairs. We have to be present to the sacred universe."

And, finally, he says, "We must feel that we are supported by that same power that brought the Earth into being, that power that spun the galaxies into space, that tilted the sun and brought the moon into its orbit."

Amen.

Happy Earth Day. Exult!

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.