

## Daily Meditation 05-05-23

### Sadness & Acedia: Julian, Hildegard, Aquinas on the Opposites of Joy

Good morning.

We continue our meditations on joy, and also considering its opposite, which is sadness or acedia.

We're doing this in today's meditation and we bring in Hildegard of Bingen, who had a lot to say about what she called the coldness of acedia, the coldness of not caring, because joy is about caring, and it's about light, she says.

In my book on Hildegard, one of my most recent books, in one of the chapters, I put her in the room with Howard Thurman, and the two of them are in dialogue, you might say, and Howard Thurman says that the real miracle is that life itself is alive. It's this awareness, that intuition, of the specialness, of aliveness.

He says, "*Life* is alive," and he underlines "life." It's in italics.

*This is its abiding quality, as long as it prevails at all, to put Life synonymous with Vitality. All living things continue to survive as long as that essential vitality, is available to them.*

And I comment that "vitality" is a good word for "spirituality."

And then Hildegard addresses the Holy Spirit. She says, "You're the life of the life of all creatures."

...the life of the life of all creatures.

*The Holy Spirit is life giving life, all movement. Root of all being, Purifier of all impurity. Absolver of all faults. Balm of all wounds. Radiant Life, worthy of all praise, the Holy Spirit resurrects and awakens everything that is.*

So that was one of her poems to the Holy Spirit, who resurrects and awakens everything that is.

She talks about light and the role that light plays: "The stars shine, radiating with life-light, all creation is gifted with the ecstasy of God's light," she says. God is like "true light that gives light to all things." And God "lives in every created thing."

That is a statement on the Cosmic Christ or the Buddha nature, or the image of God. The Word -- the Cosmic Christ -- "is the light of all lights and it gives light of itself. "

We are flooded with light itself in the same way as the light of day illuminates the world. Christ is "the true light that gives light to all lights, light of all lights and gives light of itself."

This emphasis on light, life, and beauty, and that beauty shines, beauty seizes our attention, our imagination. And it may be the beauty of a butterfly, or a bug. It may be the beauty of a tree or the sky, the sunset, maybe the beauty of the sun rising and setting every night. We want to attune our minds to beauty.

How much beauty is there, that speaks to us every day that we find ourselves enveloped by beauty, life, light, all of which is enough to banish our sadness, because it is deeper.

Life, light, and beauty are deeper than all the pains and troubles that come our way.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.