

Daily Meditation 05/02/2023

Joy, Love, & Consciousness Among All Creatures

Good morning.

We're continuing our meditations on joy, joy being a principle fruit or sign or gift of the Spirit. A sign of it comes from love, and a sign of holiness.

Thomas Aquinas says,

God delights. God is always rejoicing and doing so with a single and simple delight. In fact, it is appropriate to say that love and joy are the only human emotions that we can attribute literally to divinity.

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It's interesting, he says that in his commentary on his Summa Contra Gentiles, which is a book he wrote to communicate with the Gentiles, that is, the non Christians.

He goes on in the same book:

Love and joy exist properly in God, and they constitute the basis of all attraction. Love is the origin and joy is the end result.

So with us too: joy begins with love and then flowers into joy. He says,

Divinity is happiness by the Divine essence. God is happy not by acquisition or participation of something else, but by the Divine essence. On the other hand, human beings are happy, as Boethius says, by dissipation.

...by dissipation.

It is unique to divinity that the divine joy is identical with the divine being. The divine joy gathers up within itself and consummates all joys.

...all joys.

So, this is another way of saying that our joy and the joy of all creatures, the joy of all creation, moves divinity to joy. Aquinas says it gathers up, divinity gathers up, all the joys of the world and consummates them. He says, "

Whatever is joyful in any joy whatsoever, preexists wholly and supremely in the divine joy.

Regarding active joy... he talks about contemplative joy and active joy:

God has the operation of the entire universe. Regarding earthly joys, which lie in pleasure, riches, power, dignity or fame, God possesses joy in Godself and in all other things through the divine delight. In place of earthly riches, God possesses complete self-sufficiency that is desired in riches...And in place of fame, God has the wonder of creation.

...in place of fame, God has the wonder of all creation. So he goes through a list of things that seem to give humans some happiness, including fame, including riches. He says the divine version of riches and fame and the joy that comes with them is different.

And the very wonder of the universe displaces the quest for fame among humans. But again, he places joy within a cosmic context: that all beings are striving for joy and divinity absorbs it all.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.