

Daily Meditation 06/07/2023

Robert Hanssen, Opus Dei, and the Opposite of Generosity

Good morning.

Today we're meditating on the opposite of generosity. And it is a very useful method to talk about spiritual concepts that way, as a beginning: what's the opposite of justice? Injustice. You get a feeling for the importance of justice.

So the opposite of generosity as I pose in today's meditation is words like greedy, selfish, unkind, cruel, harsh, mean, stingy, and ungenerous. And I point out how this opposite of generosity is encapsulated in the life of Opus Dei member who died yesterday, Robert Hanssen. A film was done about him called *Breach*, because the stories is very harrowing, actually, and it made good Hollywood fodder.

Here's one person's comment from Ireland, about Opus Dei there.

The secret organization Opus Dei has targeted the socially powerful in Irish society, and many public servants would be slow to protest against a group when such dissension may result in covert professional censure.

So in Ireland, as in the United States, and in many, many countries in the world, Opus Dei goes where the power is. At first glance, it looks like Opus Dei is a good idea because they talk about how lay people at work in their professions is important to their existence as an order. But as one observer has put it, on further investigation, priest-dominated narrow in outlook, and ultra-conservative are the signs of Opus Dei wherever it is. They are called integrants, where religious faith and political identity are one, are integral together. And in that way, they curry favor with far-right organizations wherever they are.

They also operate secretly among university students and recruit, recruit, very enthusiastically. And of course under Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, they received carte blanche, became utterly independent of any other control, such as bishops and so forth. So they really flourished. And, of course, many many of the bishops, archbishops and cardinals appointed under those popes were either Opus Dei are very, very close to them.

Cardinal Hoffner alone was a close friend of Cardinal Ratzinger; when he tried to hand two parishes of his growing diocese to Opus Dei, to Opus Dei, priests, the parishioners protested so vehemently he had to abandon his strategy.

Escriva, the founder, once said to *Time Magazine*,

Opus Dei has nothing whatsoever to do with politics. It's absolutely foreign to any political, ideological, cultural tendency or group. Opus Dei is not to the right to the left or to the center; the aims of the association are nothing but spiritual.

Those are words from Escriva. But you might ask Leonardo Leo about that, about the right wing on today's Supreme Court, which is directly, directly connected to Opus Dei and his work in getting Opus Dei onboard.

Opus Dei was very opposed, Escriva was very opposed, to the Second Vatican Council. And they were very involved in supporting the CIA-backed coup under Chilean President Salvador Allende. In fact, one of them became Pinochet's foreign minister and was later revealed he was an important CIA agent at the time. And when Allende tortured and killed many citizens and many clergy the alliance became obvious.

So, there's just a very long history and I put a foreword and a chapter on Opus Dei in *The Pope's War* that reveals that this movement is the opposite of the spirituality of generosity.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.