

Daily Meditation 01-07-24

Alex Grey and Hildegard of Bingen on the Divine Eye(s)

Good morning. It's good to be back with you again.

And I'm especially pleased with this series we're doing on Alex Grey, and his wonderful painting of "Viriditas," a homage to Viriditas. I think it's a wonderful thing when a 21st century American painter who identifies as Buddhist, and is interacting with the 12th century Benedictine abbess, and recently declared a saint: Hildegard of Bingen.

This wonderful mix shows what richness is embedded in deep ecumenism and learning from one another at the deep level of archetypes, and where artists work and awaken us.

Of course Hildegard was regarded as an artist in her own right, and in her own time. But also, I'm very thrilled even, with the comments section this past week about this painting, and Hildegard and the interaction. I was especially moved by someone who said she's going to give more attention to the work of art, this time.

And I couldn't agree more, how important that is, because art is the natural response to mysticism, to deep love, that and silence. And we need both at this time in history: these depth responses, the Via Positiva and Via Negativa, indeed includes the silence and the emptying.

There is this yearning for meditation and quietness, stillness in our time, and rightly so. At the same time, there's a yearning for action and good action. I think both Hildegard and Alex Grey bring that out and speak to that same reality.

And behind it all is Viriditas, this energy, greening energy, that obviously is an echo of the distress of Mother Earth today, and the need for humans to wake up, and become, as Hildegard says, "wet and green, light and moist and juicy."

Now in my essay for today on Hildegard and Alex Grey and the Divine Eye, I do think there's so much richness in the teachings of Hildegard about the Living Eye, and her calling the Holy Spirit a fire that penetrates everything, and God the Creator, a brightness that shines,

and Christ, a flashing forth that radiates divine fire. All these images which are Yang images, fire. But all of them, of course, trigger the very meaning of the Cosmic Christ or the Buddha nature, or the image of God that dwells in all beings.

Then she goes on and says, "creatures shine in their wonderful origin, and glitter in the beauty of their fullness." Right in that one sentence, is an entire thesis, an entire book on the Cosmic Christ. She goes on: "heaven and earth are resplendent in their abundant making. The Via Creativa is to be found everywhere."

Of course, this is today's science, isn't it? That everything is coming and going, and birthing is constant, and has been from the get-go, 13.8 billion years ago.

And she invokes creatures as wonderful for their wonderful origin. And for me, this is a synonym for the phrase, "Original Blessing," or Thomas Aquinas's phrase, "original goodness," or the phrase I've used previously: Original Grace. We're talking about grace, and we're talking about blessing, and the presence of Divine Wisdom.

Now I refer to John 1. And because Hildegard, in her painting of the multiple eyes, that dominate the tent, which for her is the soul, and the Tent of Wisdom we're here to set up in our lives.

If you go to John 1 -- now here I'm reading from commentary on it from the new English Bible -- and they point out that in John 1:14, the translation they use is this:

The Word became flesh, he came to dwell among us, and we saw his glory, such glory as befits the Father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Now, that phrase, "he came to dwell among us," the literal Greek in this gospel (like the other three are written in Greek), the original Greek means "he pitched his tent among us." We translate it as "dwelt among us," "lived among us." But it literally means, "pitched his tent among us."

And Hildegard picks up on that when she said in that wonderful painting, where she says, "we're born with a tent folded up inside of us." We're so small and tiny. And life's journeys, which she

depicts on the right side of her painting, if you're reading it from the bottom up, is setting up that tent, and the tent is the tent of glory.

Then the commentators say that "there is an echo of the glory of God, which filled the tent with the presence --" which can be found in Exodus 40:30-48 -- "Glory is radiance" (this is the commentary by Scripture scholars,) "therefore the presence of God."

So glory, radiance, presence, Cosmic Christ: It's all in this one sentence! And it's all in Hildegard's painting, and it's there in Alex Grey's painting too.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.