

Daily Meditation 9-08-25

America's People-Shortage vs. ICE Deportation Mania

Good morning.

In today's daily meditation, we're talking about welcoming the stranger, about looking at immigration from another perspective, and how the young people who immigrate, and very high percentage of those immigrants are young people, are doing us a great service, not only because they're willing to do hard work, but also because they have young families.

And this is a real boon to so many of our countries around the world. China, South Korea, Japan and European countries too, and even India, are on a difficult track, because their populations are aging much more quickly than their younger population. So a side to the immigration issue, that it's attention that it deserves.

So in thinking about a video meditation today to help this daily meditation, I really thought of my chapter in *Original Blessing* entitled "Holiness: Cosmic Hospitality." Cosmic hospitality.

I met a young man once who was wild about my *Original Blessing* book. He bought many copies for his friends when he was a student at Stanford. And what struck him the most about the book was that chapter on Cosmic Hospitality. He said, "I love to have people over. And it just really summarized my life's values."

So let's take a look at some of the insights in this chapter. I was struck when I picked it up this morning, in light of the daily meditation for me, I begin with Pierre de Chardin saying, "What we are all more or less lacking at this moment, is a new definition of holiness." And then Simone Weil says something parallel. She says, "Today, it is not nearly enough to be a saint, but we must have the saintliness demanded by the present moment. A new saintliness, itself, is without precedent."

And so what both are saying is that holiness evolves. And according to different moments in history, and the evolution of humanity and the needs of humanity, we're going to keep an open mind about what holiness is all about. Mechtilde Magdeburg, a Beguine from the 13th century: "How should one live? Live welcoming to all." And Hildegard of Bingen a century before, in the 12th century: "I welcome all the creatures of the world with grace." With grace.

And Erik Erikson, the psychologist, has written: “The true sense of those who transfer the state of householdership, to the house of God, becoming father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter to all creation, to all creation, rather than to their own issue.”

Now this flies in the face of our vice president, who said several months ago, love is mostly about your family, your immediate family, and then if you have energy left over, you can go a little further. And he was castigated for saying that by the present Pope, before he was Pope, and who reminded us, Pope Leo the 14th before he was Pope, by writing forcefully against Vance's proposal. He reminds us that we have this cosmic sense of love that extends to all creatures and all creation, as Erik Erikson says.

And of course, this also puts in the limelight the latest efforts by the current administration, to rip money away from the EPA, and to clamp down now on wind power. They're trying to destroy wind power, and pretending they're in complete denial about climate change and about the rest of creation, and the price all of creation is paying for climate change, not just humans, but certainly humans too.

So the idea that spirituality and even holiness is about welcoming all of creation, Cosmic Hospitality is my word for that. I develop it, then, in this chapter.

Hospitality comes from the word for host or hostess. Surely, the Creator God, when you look at all of creation, is a gracious, abundant, and generous host and hostess. She has set out for our delight, a banquet that was 13.8 billion years in the making: the banquet of rivers and lakes, rain and sunshine, rich earth, amazing flowers, handsome trees, dancing fishes, contemplative animals, whistling winds, dry and wet seasons, cold and hot climates. A banquet that works, that we call creation. It works for our benefit as humans, if we behave toward it as reverent guests. And God has declared in Genesis 1, the first page of the Bible, that this banquet is “very good.” And so are we, blessings ourselves, invited to the banquet. “Blessings” meaning “good beings.”

And then the whole tradition of the Eucharist, of the Last Supper, being a banquet of Thanksgiving. It's what Eucharist means in Greek, after all. All this puts hospitality at the center of things in the Christian view of the world.

Hospitality is about a relationship. One can't be hospitable without guests. God plays a host for us, but also becomes the banquet for us in the Eucharistic story. So God is a guest as well as a host. And this is when the deep meanings of continuous incarnation and continuous creation, that we're in this ongoing relationship with the divine, and it can be very intimate, as eating together is.

As one New Testament scholar has written: *Meal sharing and fellowship, whether with notorious tax collectors and sinners, or with his friends, casual or close, is a fundamental trait of the historical Jesus. In that way, Jesus shows himself to be God's eschatological messenger, conveying the news of God's invitation to all.*

An invitation to all, including especially those officially regarded at the time as outcasts, or we might say immigrants in our time.

Now that doesn't mean that countries should not have borders, they should not have rules for getting in. And that has to be corrected. But at the same time, it does not countenance the killing that happened this past week, where the administration decided to blow up a boat, supposedly with 11 people on it, a boat that was 1,000 miles from our shores. It's against international law to do something like that.

And the whipping up of scapegoats, the whipping up of racism, the whipping up of hatred of immigrants, is not only evil in itself, but it's self-destructive. Because immigrants bring gifts to us, as I point out in this article. And there too, there's a mutual relationship in being hospitable, being good hosts and hostesses, and good guests on this earth, in the short time that we have to live with one another.

God bless you all. We'll see you next week.