

Book of Hours

Reflection #77 more on temps vierge

In my hunger to understand Merton's concept of time & Spirituality, I searched my bookshelves this week and did find more on temps vierge which I have quoted below.

By the way, I discovered that I typed the web site on Judith Carpenter's book with the wrong spacing last week. HERE is the correct web address If you are interested in purchasing Peacework Quilt by Judith Perry Carpenter: www.seafirepress.com

Here's more on Thomas Merton's temps vierge: "contemplation, then is a gradual interiorizing of consciousness, a going inside to quiet our minds, calm our hearts, and move toward deeper levels of our own nature. It is aided by regular intervals of silence and solitude, stillness and serenity that allow our lives to be listening to the ever-speaking mystery of God." Merton reminds us that while our existence is noisy; our essential being is silent; beneath the clamor of our chaotic lives there is a resonant ground of silence. In this rich silence ~ the silence of God~ we taste the sweetness of our own souls, the peace of our own hearts. Merton encourages us to take every opportunity to feed on this silence, soak it into our bones so that we might hear the the divine One say in us: 'I am' The contemplative discovers that the secret of our identity is hidden and revealed in the love and mercy of God. There is nothing else worth living for, 'only this infinitely peaceful Love Who is beyond words, beyond emotion, beyond intelligence.' In this sudden awakening we come to realize that all of reality is swimming in meaning, charged with the glory of authentic nature, a true destiny, a personal revolution that energizes 'a certain special way of being alive.' It is for this self-transcendence and communion that we exist, becoming the likeness of the One whose image we are radiant centers of reconciling love, extending the circumference of mercy and care throughout the earth. In that likeness we become peacemakers, justice builders, caretakers of creation, and witnesses to the sufficiency of the next breath and heartbeat, of each familiar and friend, in a world gone mad for money and power and things. Such contemplative traction aids us in resisting the vertigo of our times which would pull us all off course in the various storms of history.

In Merton's teaching, contemplation is the practice of supreme mindfulness and care. Yet, Paradoxically, it's fruit is a serene carelessness, as we are progressively freed from self-preoccupation and neurotic concern; we are allowed to live without the paralyzing anxiety that would extend its rule to our souls. There is no need for harried, hurried vexation.

God is hidden within, and all things that are not a means of bringing the heart to this tranquility in the divine will are useless. This is the fruit of contemplative praise that arises from the hidden ground of love: the discovery of God in the discovery of our true self. and in that love which is the reality of both God and self, to embrace the world.

The Master of PRAISE;

Merton The Psalmist

The windows are open, Let the psalms fly in.

Thomas Merton spent his life writing about contemplation, yet his own way of prayer was in fact surprisingly simple. centered entirely on attention to the presence of God and to His will and His love....a kind of praise rising up out of the center of Nothing and Silence....not thinking about anything but a direct seeking of the Face of the Invisible. Much has been written about Thomas Merton the Monk, contemplative, spiritual master, social and ecclesial prophet, pioneer of interfaith dialogue, critic of art ,culture and literature, and of Merton the poet, but not explicitly about Merton the psalmist. Yet there is a virtual psalter lacing through his voluminous writings, both poetry and prose, that comprises an elegant and contemporary voice of Christian praise. He insisted that his own personal task was not simply to be a poet and writer, still less a commentator or psuedo-prophet, but "basically to praise God out of an inner center of silence, gratitude and awareness...my task is simply the breathing of this gratitude from day to day, in simplicity, and for the rest turning my hand to whatever comes, work being part of praise."

Thomas Merton A Book of Hours, Kathleen Deigmen with a forward by James Finley, Soren BooksNotre Dame ,Indiana, 2007,