

ELCG – Summer Devotional Series
“Voices of Faith”

Week of 29 August 2021 (#1)

By Chad Rimmer

“Humankind, full of all creative possibilities, is God’s work. Humankind alone is called to assist God. Humankind is called to co-create. With nature’s help, humankind can set into creation all that is necessary and life-sustaining.”

– Hildegard von Bingen



Today, I share the words of Hildegard von Bingen (*seen in the bottom left-hand corner of this image of one of her visions*). She is a 12th Century Abbess, composer, and mystical theologian who has encouraged me to a creation spirituality, or a spirituality of creativity.

God has two movements: creation and reconciliation. The creeds and the Bible begin by describing God as creator. Meister Eckhart wrote, “What does God do all day long? God gives birth. From all eternity God lies on a maternity bed giving birth.” The Trinity is a life-

giving ecology. The communion of love is the divine energy that creates life and sustains relationships that create new life.

The letter to the Ephesians affirms creativity as the image of God that all souls bear in the world. Ephesians 2:10 says, “*we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.*” This Cosmic Christ, the creative Word of God made us as the artwork of God, in order to do acts of life-giving creativity. Creativity is the image and likeness of the Creator you bear.

Hildegard wrote that this “power that has been since all eternity, and that force and potentiality is green!” She called this “greenness” viridity, or in Latin, *viriditas*. “*Viriditas* is the natural driving force toward healing and wholeness, the vital power that sustains all life’s greenness.”¹ *Viriditas* is the “wetness” of the Holy Spirit that nourishes the soul to create fruit, just as sap gives life to a tree that creates fruit. “Wetness” is the energy that greens life.

For Hildegard, sin is anything that causes our creativity to “dry” up. In our age of ecological and socio-political exclusion, we know too well that cultures built on ethno-nationalism, nihilism, and patriarchy tend to deny or shame creative impulses that give birth to diversity. Sometimes even work and daily life can leave us feeling dry. Creation spirituality is one way to resist these desiccating forces and tell a new story about who and what we are. Of course, retreats into the mountains and contemplative encounters with more-than-human parts of creation are part of creation spirituality. But the good news is creation spirituality is not reserved for the mystics among us. In fact, it is quite the contrary.

Aspects of daily life including art, work, sexuality, cooking, gardening, and family life are opportunities to experience the holiness of creativity. Instead of seeing daily tasks of being in the world as distracting you from contemplation, a creation spirituality sees daily life as unfolding in the Spirit. Each task an opportunity to express the image of God that you bear. In baptism, we are grafted to the vine of Divine power that keeps us wet and bearing new fruits of creativity each day. Reading Scripture, daily rhythms of prayer, and other spiritual practices that incorporate art, play or fellowship are all ways to nurture a spirituality of daily life with the liberating and never-ending fountain of holy *viridity*.

Hildegard wrote in the 12th century, but perhaps this is the day for her words to revive your capacity to co-create the conditions to sustain life. I invite you to contemplate the image above, and reflect on the following two questions. Or, as she wrote, “Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars. Gaze at the beauty of the Earth’s greenings. Now, think”:

1. What causes me to feel “dry” these days?
2. What part(s) of my day can I see as an opportunity to create life for me and those around me?

When you are ready, you can pray with the words of Hildegard:

¹ Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, Brussels, 1978.

Praise be to you, God, for your Word is living, being, spirit, all verdant greening, all creativity. Your Word manifests itself in every creature.

You have made me full of all creative possibilities. You have called me to assist you in tilling and keeping all that you have made. In each and all things that lie before me today, inspire me with a sense of your Spirit, to set into creation all that is necessary and life-sustaining.

I pray in the name of Christ, Amen.