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Daily Reflections



SAINT HILDEGARD OF BINGEN, VIRGIN AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

By Sister Christine Hilliard, CSJ

A Quote

"There is the music of heaven in all things and we have forgotten how to hear it until we sing."

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Reflection

In 12th century Germany, Hildegard served as a woman religious, physician, writer, poet, preacher, musician and playwright. She was blessed with a deep understanding of God and creation, and an even deeper appreciation for their relationship. One of her central concerns was for the environment: "All nature is at the disposal of humankind, but we are to work with it because without it we cannot survive." She offered a picture of the cosmos and human beings as

proclamations of God's love, "living sparks" or rays of God's splendor, just as the rays of the sun come from the sun itself. Human beings are called to be co-creators with God in shaping all the elements of the universe. Hildegard maintained that through Christ, humans and the cosmos, even if estranged from God by sin, will find the way back to God.

During her lifetime, Hildegard embarked on many preaching tours throughout the Rhineland, and her reputation as prophet (spokesperson for God) extended far beyond her native land. Besides religious writings, she wrote on medicine and physiology, studied the use of medicinal herbs, and composed popular religious music.

The psalm from the Scripture Readings of the Mass of St. Hildegard of Bingen:

Hallelujah!

*I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart
in the company and the assembly of the just (i.e., in the temple).*

*Great are the works of the LORD,
exquisite in all their delights.*

*Majesty and glory are his work,
and his justice endures forever.*

*He has won renown for his wondrous deeds;
gracious and merciful is the LORD.*

*He has given food to those who fear him;
he will forever be mindful of his covenant.*

*He has made known to his people the power of his works,
giving them the inheritance of the nations.*

PSALM 111:1-6

In this psalm, a temple singer praises God by reciting the LORD's actions in the history of Israel, focusing on the covenant relationship. Recognition and thanks are offered to God with the singer's "whole heart." Notably, in Hebrew understanding a person's mind and will reside in their heart so the singer expects to bring her whole self to the act of praise within the worshiping community. The singer is depicted as both a leader in song as well as a teacher and a reminder of God's interaction in the life of the people. This mirrors the life of Hildegard.



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For Pondering

As you consider Hildegard and Psalm 111:1-6, what do you say to your Creator God? What do you hear your Creator God saying to you?

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