

Learning to See the Divine in World and Matter

The spiritual director in a dynamic unfinished universe

INTRODUCTION ORIENTATION [30 Mins]

HANDOUT (For Reflection) [20 Mins]

SHARING [10 Mins]

PRESENTATION [30 Mins]

COMING INTO PRESENCE God is already present in the body. When I am present in the body I am present to God

'When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day.' John 1: 38-39

The very first words uttered by Jesus in John's gospel here: 'What are you looking for' Better translated *what are you seeking?* (Greek *zetien* 34 times) The response of the two 'unnamed' disciples are another question...Where are you 'staying'? (Greek *menein* 40 Times) often translated *abide*, or *remain*. Where are you *abiding*? Where is your heart rooted....we notice something and cannot help following.

'Come and see'

Key words: 'seeking, abiding, seeing'

There is a mystery to who God/Jesus is...There is mystery to what this world is....and there is mystery to who we are...

This mystery surrounds these **Relationships**.... **Creator Creation Creature**

There is a path into this mystery here a path of *seeking, abiding and seeing* Making connections in these relationships. With Mystery there is always more.

Sacred Matter

Intro Brief FILM TEILHARD VISIONARY SCIENTIST

A Jesuit priest_who was also a renowned Scientist (Palaeontologist) and mystic,He brings a synthesis with Science and Faith. He died in 1955 without any of his writings being published. His beloved order and the Church have come 180 degrees since his death. ...and relevant to this exploration today as Teilhard brings together a love of God and a healthy love of the world.

'There is communion with God, There is communion with Earth, There is Communion with God Through Earth'

His seeking included attention to the smallest details of the physical world such as stones fossils and nature radically opened him to God.[] Learning to see is paying attention to detail, paying attention with all my faculties

The stuff of the Universe for Pierre Teilhard is *Spirit-Matter*. '*Matter is the matrix of Spirit. Spirit is the higher form of matter.*' Teilhard's efforts were to help us discover Christ in the heart of matter.

*'It is God and God alone whom the Christian pursues through the reality of created things. For him or her, interest lies truly in things, but in absolute dependence upon God's presence in them'*¹

A PLACE IN NATURE WHERE YOU EXPERIENCE GOD'S PRESENCE (1 minute each)

'*Seeing*. One could say that the whole of life lies in seeing —²

Learning to see is '*being Contemplative*.'

Walter Burghardt s.j. described Contemplation as; 'take a long, loving look at the real.'³

SD's are contemplatives. The practice of Spiritual Direction is contemplation.

Spiritual Directors are the new contemplatives.

Contemplatives create an open space *to see*. There was a time when the contemplative was called a *SEER*. Learning to see goes hand in hand with contemplative practice. There is always more

Seeing is the fruit of grace of 'letting go' to discover the divine at the heart of Matter.

'by virtue of the Creation and, still more, of the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see'.⁴

At the very beginning of the SE of St Ignatius the directee is invited to consider how God sees me...and we are invited to see back. '*I look and God and God looks at me*'. There is a seeing both ways. [26]

EXERCISE BEING PRESENT STONES

Birdlings Flat which borders Lake Elsmere and Lake Forsyth

Waikirikiri (gravelly stream) Waimakariri (cold river)

'Everything is sacred' Pelagius the first significant Celtic teacher) taught that **Grace is given to reconnect us to our nature, which is Sacred and made of God.**

A dominant Christian view on the other hand was that **grace is given to save us from our nature**. We still meet this in our SD practice.....a separation from our true identity as sacred and of God

What was Teilhard seeing that he wanted to share with us?

Throughout my life, by means of my life, the world has little by little caught fire in my sight, until a flame all around me, it has become almost luminous from within. Such has been my experience in contact with the Earth. The diaphany of the divine at the heart of the universe on fire.....CHRIST; His heart; a fire gradually spreading everywhere.

¹ Divine Milieu

² Teilhard de Chardin: The Human Phenomenon, trans. Sarah Appleton-Weber, p. 3

³ Walter Burghardt, SJ

⁴ Teilhard de Chardin., The Divine Milieu, An Essay On The Interior Life.(London Collins 1957), 66

Jesus knew his connectedness with **creation creature and creation**. Identity in Johns gospel as 'I AM' THE SD for Ignatius '**allows the creator to deal directly with the creature**'

In italics under the introduction to the *DIVINE MILLIEU* (which is an essay on the interior life) There are three latin words *In eo vivimus* from acts 17:28 in him we live or 'IN CHRIST WE LIVE' everything in this text must be understood with this backdrop according to Louis Savary. IN CHRIST WE LIVE Where are you staying? Where are you abiding....come and see..... **I abide everywhere**

IN CHRIST WE LIVE

Dynamic Unfinished Universe Creation is far from completed and we as Spiritual Directors are co-creators in this movement toward a hope filled future.

The fact is that creation has never stopped. The creative act is one huge continual gesture, drawn out over the totality of time. It is still going on.'⁵

This wonderful sacred world is '*Dynamic*' and '*Unfinished*' and for Teilhard held together and given direction by God. This is affirmed in current scientific understanding.

'SCIENCE has demonstrated beyond all doubt that our UNIVERSE is unfinished. It is still coming into being. Discoveries in Geology, biology, cosmology, and other fields of science have shown that nature is on a journey far from over.'⁶

The future. In this dynamic universe still coming into being, the energies of love are the universal forces giving direction to this evolving Universe. As we pay attention to the finest detail or this sacred earth we can observe everything in the Universe as dynamic and moving toward greater consciousness and greater union.

May they be one as you and I are one is inclusive of all **creation creator creature**

¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God,⁷

Ultimately evolution is toward UNION... Described by Teilhard as CHRIST - OMEGA Love is what calls us to greater union.

'Love is the most Universal, the most mysterious of cosmic forces.'

"The most telling and profound way of describing the evolution of the universe would undoubtedly be to trace the evolution of love."

..ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

⁵ Teilhard de Chardin., *The Mystical Milieu*, Writings in time of War 1917.

⁶ Haught John F. *Resting on the Future*. (Bloomsbury, USA, 2015) 1

⁷ Romans 8:19

Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being. (NRSV) Job 12: 7-10

HANDOUT 15 MINS REFLECTION CONVERSATION 10 MINS

LETTER FROM FRANCIS

Laudato Si 2015 Letter to every person living on this planet. calling for dialogue on the state of our common home.

The call of **Laudato si** is to care for our common home, to shift from **anthropomorphic to a relational paradigm**. CREATURE WITH OTHER CREATURES, CREATURE WITH CREATOR, CREATURE WITH CREATION

Nature our first teacher is crying out to us THE CRY OF THE EARTH

STONES from Birdlings flat bordering Lake Forsyth and Lake Elsmere are degraded and still suffering . BIRD ON WEST This is a mātuku hūrepo an Australasian bittern now endangered - very few breeding pairs left in Waitaha Canterbury

Many of Canterbury's lowland waterways are already degraded, commonly by pollution allowed from large areas of intensive farming. This is the predicament of many lowland rivers. This week, the Government weakened key provisions of the Resource Management Act, meaning more pollution into rivers, lakes, wetlands and estuaries nationwide - such as nitrate from cow urine - is suddenly allowable. This is a disaster for our unique aquatic ecosystems and for efforts to make them healthy enough for our tamariki to enjoy once again. These law changes have been rushed through, without any public input or scrutiny. ⁸

Anna Sintenie. SENIOR RESEARCHER Works now for Environment Law Initiative

There is a lot of work being done throughout Canterbury. Lots of care for the swamps and wetlands, planting and voluntary workers in their droves out on weekends. **This is a path of Holiness. This is responding to the cry of the earth (the poorest of the poor) COMMUNION WITH GOD THROUGH EARTH**

Spiritual Director

Contemplative call the deeper we go we arrive here and discover this connection between Creature Creator Creation we are already one

This is the call of those who believe into Christ *'to participate in finishing the works of God by hearing both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'*⁹

Finishing the works of God

⁸ Anna Sintenie The Christchurch Press October 25, 2024

⁹ Kathleen P. Rushton

*The last words of Jesus in John's gospel were 'It is finished' and he didn't 'give up his spirit' he 'handed over the spirit' to us....so those who **believed into** him "will do the works that I do and, in fact, greater works than I do" (Jn 14:12).*

SHARE WITH SOMEONE

The Spiritual Director in a Dynamic Unfinished Universe

Our regular gatherings 'Walking in Nature' together and alone in silence and stillness and listening to Nature speak to us. Nature is our first teacher.

Mary Betz in Sept Tui Motu writes;

Walking the earth in stillness and awareness can reopen our hearts and minds to what Creation has to teach us. Thomas Merton reminds us (writes Mary) "How necessary it is ... [to spend time] in the fields, in the rain, in the sun, in the mud, in the clay, in the wind" these are our spiritual directors ... They form our true contemplation"

SD's are the *new contemplatives*

There is a cost in today's world

SD's of today need to be: **Contemplatives of Transformation** FABIAN MOOS S.J

We cannot be contemplative unless we engage in action - in transformation LS

We are called to transformation

We are called to be radically contemplative in order to be radically transformative

The illusion is to be contemplative without action.

Contemplative and Contemplative Stance

SHARING IF THERE IS TIME

'The eye through which I see God is the same eye through which God sees me; my eye and God's eye are one eye, one seeing, one knowing, one love.'¹⁰

¹⁰ Meister Eckhart, Sermons of Meister Eckhart