

Heart Felt Awakening

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Photo by Jeffrey Guy on dreamstime.com

The ripple effect of time passing, following a heart-felt awakening as we look towards Pentecost in these 50 days, and extend our vision to 50 years, 50 decades, 50 millennia and an eternity in Christ-Omega.

It is Easter Day as I begin to write this reflection. I am stunned by the intricate detail of the gospel descriptions of the Pascal Mystery. I'm reminded that 'in dying Christ destroyed death' and 'in rising Christ restored life'.

On this day of resurrection, I also reflect on the death of Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin since this day is an anniversary of his deathⁱ. It takes me into the sweep of history and all that lies ahead. It is on Teilhard's writings that I am drawing deeply in these last years of my life, finding new insight into cosmic history and unfolding. His writings help me understand the state we are in as a global community.

I am also drawn to the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which Teilhard carried with him for most of his lifeⁱⁱ. From his early learning from his mother ... through the years of World War 1 ... and on to his exile in China and New York, he never gave up his quest to be true to the Heart of God and the meaning of matter/things.



On the back of this picture, he had written with his own hand in French, translatedⁱⁱⁱ as:

Jesus: Heart of the World
The Essence and the Driving Force of Evolution.
Sacred Heart: The Driving Force of Evolution.
The Heart of Evolution.
Universal Jesus:
Heart of the Heart of the World
Centre of the Cosmic Sphere of Cosmogogenesis.
Heart of Jesus.
Heart of Evolution:
Unite me to you!

This picture is unlike most images of the Sacred Heart which bring into clear focus, perhaps a bleeding heart or a cruel cross^{iv}. At the centre of Teilhard's card is a light filled space that brightens his clothing, his face, and his hands. Within the light a pale shadow of a heart is visible if you look closely. We notice how his prayer lifts from the simple name Jesus to Sacred Heart to Universal Jesus to Centre of the Cosmic Sphere. We read and reflect in wonder at the words Essence, Driving Force, World, Evolution and Cosmogeneration. The prayer concludes with the simple yet profound petition: **Unite me to you!**

Jesus the Nazarene, as Son of God present from the beginning of all time and space, serving, suffering, dying and now resurrected, ascended, and glorified. The themes are rich and beg for the kinds of understanding which Teilhard brought to us. He worked from an integration of a deeply religious and mystical life with his practical, searching, and truthful quest in his professional life as scientist. His prayer lifts us from a sense of our own insignificance to an intimacy that isn't matched in any other way. We become one with this Jesus, this Christ, this Centre of the Cosmic Sphere – about which so much more is known now than in Teilhard's time over 100 years ago or could even have been imagined by Earthlings over 2000 years ago.

In our childhood, we learned of Genesis in an ancient Hebrew myth of the days of creation. We are learning now of Cosmo-genesis^v in the writings of cosmologists, prophets, mystics and the faithful of every time and place. Evolution, once spurned by the Church, and now embraced - Creative Evolution, one of Teilhard's constant themes.

So as we move on in this season of the 50 days (Pentecost), we turn within to ask how sincerely we might pray the prayer of Teilhard's Sacred Heart card. We know the stories of Jesus from early years, through the child in the temple, through to his baptism, his temptation, his healing and teaching, his ministry, and his obedience unto death. To what extent do we know this Jesus as Heart of our World – as troubled as it is? Heart of our continuous Evolution – as mysterious as this is? Centre of the process of Cosmogeneration – as new as it is to our philosophy and theology? It's sometimes tempting to give up our Truth quest - to lack the devotion, the steadfastness and the obedience that may cause us to suffer uncertainty in the world today and to long for the good old days when things seemed simpler. Yet it is just as easy to be inspired by these themes and to go on working to bring our theology in line with the ever-unfolding Love of God – unconditional, undeserved, and more intimate than any earthly relationship could ever be.

Some weeks ago, I had a dream of a child, myself, sitting on the floor of a bedroom in which there were two beds facing in different directions. In one bed was my mother, asleep. In the other, my sister, also asleep. I began to dig at the side of my mother's bed. Somehow, as can happen in dreams, the floorboards were no hindrance. The sand was white and soft and pliable. I was intent on digging a hole in the sand. My mother woke and sat up to watch me. My sister remained asleep. I stayed intent on the task before me.

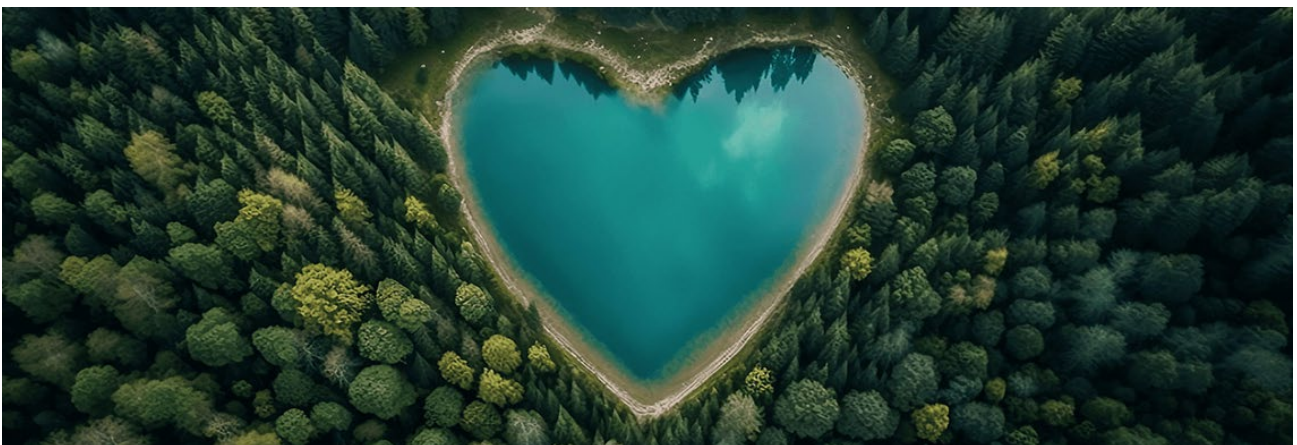


I have taken this dream to different fellow-travellers. In my prayer with the dream the hole in the sand has become larger and larger. It is filled with light, brilliant white light – just like Teilhard’s picture of the Sacred Heart. In my daily meditations with you all, I have drawn comfort, inspiration, and hope from this radiant source of Light which floods our hour of prayer. I am grateful, from within the dream, for the sense of being one with that Flowing Light^{vi} as I sit beside and within it on the floor of this familiar place. I am grateful for the Ngarrindjeri friend who suggested that my mother wants to say something to me. ‘Listen to your ancestors’, she reminds me. ‘They are here, everywhere’. For the first time in my life, I can accept my mother’s pride in me. She too is drawn to and is part of the Light. I’m also reminded of Christ our mother, from Julian’s writings^{vii}. I realise that there are parts of us which are still asleep and may yet wake up to the ever growing and flourishing Light.

That Light, the Light of the Heart of Jesus, the light of my dream, brightens our everydayness, our clothing, our faces, our hands. We go into the World, able to see the Essence of things, the Driving Force that has never left us and is always both behind and ahead of us. Ever ready to learn a healthy pride in ourselves, in our families, and even in our political and religious structures. Yet equally as ready to know that there is much that is ‘not yet’ even in our concept of God, the Holy One, precious Trinity of Love^{viii}.

May this Pentecost, this month of May, see our contemplation shining through the troubles and fears of our World because we know that Light is at its Heart. Light has come into the world and the darkness cannot overcome it. Let us dig spaces to let the brightness grow from within our own hearts and circles. Let us offer community to those who people our lives. Let us pray to be united with the Centre of the Cosmic Sphere of Cosmogogenesis. Let us pray through this month:

Heart of Jesus, Heart of Evolution, Unite us to you!



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ⁱ Teilhard expressed the wish to die on Easter Day and did so, on April 10, 1955. Though the date doesn’t correspond here, Easter Day does mark an anniversary of his death.

ⁱⁱ Augustin Udias, SJ. *The Spiritual Exercises with Teilhard de Chardin*. New York, Paulist Press. 2024:91.

ⁱⁱⁱ The card was a gift to Augustin Udias, SJ, from Georgetown University archives, translator presumably Augustin Udias, though not stated here. See Udias, 2024:91.

^{iv} <https://stchrysostoms.wordpress.com/2020/06/16/sacred-heart-the-heart-of-god/#jp-carousel-12328>

See <http://teilhardsacredheart.blogspot.com/p/henri-pinta-artist-of-teilhards-card.html> for a further reflection on this image – which I found after I had written this reflection.

^v Brian Swimme. *Cosmogogenesis, an Unveiling of the Expanding Earth*. Penguin Books, 2024

^{vi} Kerrie Hide. *Love’s Oneing: A Book about Contemplation*. Macauley Publishers 2023: Chapter IV, p85ff

^{vii} Kerrie Hide. *Love’s Oneing: A Book about Contemplation*. Macauley Publishers 2023: Chapter 1, p3ff

^{viii} Ilia Delio, O.S.F. *The Not-Yet God: Carl Jung, Teilhard de Chardin, and the Relational Whole*. 2023