



The Season of Creation

Contemplative Evolution Network

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Yesterday I spent the day with a group from our walking club in the Cobaw Forest, part of the Great Dividing Range, in Victoria's Goldfields area. It was a glorious winter day. A clear blue sky and the warmth of the morning sun soon melted the night's white frost. On getting out of the car, I noticed the fragrance of the clear winter air and the profound silence of the forest. As we began our walk, the silence was shattered by white cockatoos which populate the area in abundance. It seemed as if they were protesting at our presence in 'their space'... or were they excited at sharing 'their space' with us? I will never know what they may have been saying in their deafening cacophony.

Our walk took us beyond the cockatoos' territory and once again we found ourselves in that profound silence. The occasional twitter of birds and a momentary breeze rustling the leaves accentuated the silence. It was balm for my soul.

As we walked up and down the hills and among great granite boulders, I wondered, "What is their story? What is the ancestry that birthed the sandy soil and ancient ferns and fungi?" When I ask such questions, I am taken into an even more profound silence: the story of the birth and evolution of the Cosmos. When we trace our individual stories back far enough, we find our human ancestry and theirs evolved from that same creative process. Everything around me is part of that ongoing story.

One time, sitting on the bank of the upper Yarra, I became engrossed observing the ecosystem of the river with its proliferation of life in the water and along its banks. Everything contributed to the flourishing of the river and its surrounds. I asked myself, "What is the ecosystem in which I belong? What supports my existence and enables me to thrive?" The more I pondered these questions, the further it took me into the astonishing network that is

our interconnected existence: I can only *be* because of everything else that *is*, because nearly fourteen billion years ago, God said, 'Let there be...!' and thereby released a Creative Force of unimaginable potential, initiating a process, a genesis, that over the eons has birthed the Universe as we know it today.

Teilhard de Chardin identified that Creative Force as **Love**, Divine Love incarnate in creation which he also recognised as the Christ. This is the impulse within the created Universe that energises its ongoing evolution.



We can observe this creative Love energy at work in the seasons of the natural world. It is the middle of August as I write this reflection. We are on the cusp of a change of seasons: winter is about to make way for spring. Over the past few months, life slowed down and growth seemed to stop. Deciduous trees, stark in their bare limbs and branches, appear lifeless. Life in our native forests, too, has slowed, though our evergreen native trees don't display this as dramatically as their deciduous

cousins do. Many creatures have hibernated or busied themselves underground, preparing for their next season of work in the open. Winter is a season of promise. As I open my senses to the wintry natural world, I become aware that beneath its external silence it is vibrant with life.

Spring is approaching; nature is preparing for a new burst of life. Jonquils and crocuses have already finished flowering in the area where I live. Many wattles are heavy with golden blossoms. Trees and shrubs are swelling with buds that will soon open into leaf, flower and fruit with seed for seasons yet to come. Birds announce the early dawn, filling the air with their warbles, twitters and whistles, anticipating spring, the season for love making, building nests and rearing their young... The wonder of creation is happening all around us if we care to look.

Some scientists suggest that the Universe arose from consciousness. Perhaps we can say, in the beginning there was a Knower, and everything the Knower knows comes into being: 'Let there be...!' There is a sense in which the Universe itself is conscious. The story of the Cosmos



coming into being displays a sense of direction and purpose.

With the arrival of human beings, the consciousness of the Cosmos becomes reflective. We have the capacity to, not only know, but to know that we know. We can reflect on the Universe, on our experiences and so on. This has brought a new dimension into the evolution of the Cosmos. In the human capacity to reflect on what we know, to discover how the Cosmos came to be, evolution stepped into a new gear. In some way, we have taken charge of the process of evolution. Modern means of communication brings the world into our homes. Whatever happens anywhere in the world can be on our screens as it is happening. Its repercussions of whatever is happening also ripple out all over the world, touching all societies, for good as well as for ill. We are part of a global network, developing a collective consciousness.

Teilhard de Chardin described this collective consciousness as a thinking envelope enveloping the Earth. He called it the *Noosphere*:

All around us, tangibly and materially, the thinking envelope of the Earth – the Noosphere – is multiplying its internal fibres and tightening its network; and simultaneously its internal temperature is rising, and with this, its psychic potential.¹

Ursula King explains:

Just as the zone of life – the total mass of organisms – is the biosphere, a living layer above the non-living world of the geosphere, so there is yet another layer, a sphere of mind and spirit surrounding the globe. It is like a thinking envelope of which all humans are part. All contribute to it through their thinking, feeling, connecting and interacting with each other, and above all, through the powers of love.²

Teilhard did not live to see the development of the internet. I suspect he would have been very excited to see it, because it has sped the development of the collective mind at an astonishing rate.

The powers of love are the numerous manifestations and expressions of love, connection, relationship, inter-dependence, etc. that unites all the elements, solar systems, black holes, galaxies, and so on as *one whole*. Ultimately, those powers of love are one power, one Love: the Love that energises the creative impulse working throughout the Cosmos and within every part of the Cosmos, making it one great living reality. At the same time, each being is its self and acts as its self. Love is the energy enabling each to be itself, including human beings. Love leaves us free to pursue and realise our own dreams and purposes. At the same time, we are part of the greater reality, the entire network of existence. Ilia Delio never tires of reminding us that we are called to be whole-makers. That was the mission of Jesus. It is also what we, Contemplative Evolution Network members, have committed ourselves to. In our daily contemplative hour, we hold our fractured, suffering world in Love, as we ourselves are also held in Love. We consciously send healing Love to all, thereby *Growing the Field of Peace*, which is our focus for this year.

¹ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Planetization of Mankind*, quoted in Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll NY 1996, p.89.

² Ursula King, op. cit. p. 88