

Teilhard de Chardin's Response to Modern-day Anguish

Pierre Leroy, SJ¹

Introduction

Recently, I received from Teilhard's grand-niece, Marie Bayon de la Tour, the original French manuscript of the lecture that follows. This lecture, which Marie found among her grandmother's papers, was written and delivered at a conference in Brussels, Belgium on October 16, 1968—just 50 years ago—by Père Pierre Leroy, SJ, one of Teilhard's dearest friends. Of course, Teilhard was not alive at the time, but the two had become such close friends that Leroy felt confident that he could rely on what he knew of Teilhard's thought to help him and those he counselled through this time of particularly severe anguish. Reflecting in 1968 on major social problems in France and throughout the world and knowing Teilhard's heart more than most, Leroy shares what he imagines Teilhard would suggest.

Leroy's theme—how would Teilhard's respond to the anguish of 1968 France?—goes to the heart of many of the questions that trouble us so deeply during this period of our history. We too find ourselves in a time of great anguish—both locally and globally, in Church and in Society. We struggle with questions similar to Leroy's: Is there hope? And if so, what are the fundamental components of a vision that will inspire us to work for change? Knowing Teilhard's deep concern for his Church and his World, we can be sure, as Leroy was, that he would have an opinion. In words that follow, Leroy guides us in ways that will give us faith, carry us onward, and help us to endure.

¹ Brussels, October 16, 1968, Mary Helen Kashuba, SSJ, DML, trans.