



TEILHARD PERSPECTIVE

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President's Corner

John Grim, July 2020

A Reflection on Thirty-Three Years as President of the American Teilhard Association

At the online Annual Meeting on June 6th, 2020 of the American Teilhard Association (ATA), the Board of Directors announced that Kathleen Duffy would become the next President of ATA. This event was a meaningful moment of transition for Mary Evelyn Tucker and myself. I have held the office of president since 1987, and Mary Evelyn has been Vice President since 1979. We have shared leadership responsibilities all these years and I am thankful for her presence in my life. So, also, I feel immense gratitude for the editorial work of Donald St John, Arthur Fabel, and Kathy Duffy in bringing forward *Teilhard Studies* issues #17 to 80. My thanks as well to Tara Trapani for her many years of help in preparing the *Teilhard Perspective* for publication. Thanks also

to Elizabeth McAnally for keeping the ATA website up to date. In this same sense of gratitude, I deeply appreciate the consultative discourse of the Board of Directors and Advisory Board over these many years. I recall many of the board meetings held in such diverse settings as the small upper room overlooking the august Refectory at Union Theological Seminary, to the Dean's office

at General Theological Seminary. Having had Union Theological as our primary Annual Meeting site, we thank these institutions, along with the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, for their considerations in holding these annual gatherings. Knowing the cost of meeting space in New York City, these have been no small acts

of generosity about which our membership should know and acknowledge in their diverse ways. Similarly, many of you also know of the untiring work of Tara and Paul Trapani who extended their efforts with the American Teilhard Association in assisting at so many Annual Meetings. We thank



ATA Annual Meeting 1993, Union Theological Seminary
Photo credit: Gretchen McHugh, courtesy of J. Murray McHugh

them for undertaking the complicated logistics of the membership list, reservations, set-up, and handling unexpected requests.

Importantly, I fondly remember prior presidents, especially Thomas Berry, who transmitted to us a style of leadership and a sense of emerging social, ecological, and cosmological issues that have deeply affected my tenure in office. More than once, I would hear myself saying to someone who asked about the purpose of ATA: It is not that we have placed Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and his thought on a pedestal as the conclusion of our work; rather, we are interested in assisting and promoting those who are carrying on this work in their respective fields of endeavor. In this sense, I am especially pleased to hand on the presidency of ATA to Kathleen Duffy, SJ who has the energy and keen desire to bring Teilhard's thought into ever-widening circles of understanding, contemplation, and practice.

I would like to make a further final comment in this *Teilhard Perspective* newsletter about Pierre Teilhard de Chardin whom I know largely from reading English translations of his letters and thought. He is, like all of us, an amazingly complex person, but unlike most of us he undertook extensive reflections in the face of struggle with his Jesuit Order, his Roman Catholic Church, his scientific discipline, his own human condition, and his tumultuous historical times. As I have also come out of this Catholic tradition, I share his sense of the layers of sacred embodiment when he wrote: "Adherence to Christ in the Eucharist must inevitably, ipso facto, incorporate us a little more fully on each occasion in a christogenesis which itself ... is none other than the soul of universal cosmogenesis" (*Introduction to the Christian Life*, 1944, X, 166). Here is a thinker fully aware of his ritual and sacramental commitment as a priest and finding in that language a way to express a profound contemplative cosmology, revealing itself through him. His evolutionary insights into a larger cosmogenesis called him into an awareness of mystery in the unfolding universe that continues to activate wonder.

I am aware that ATA has many members who are not overtly Christian or religious; yet who find insight and hope in Teilhard's spiritual

perspective and writings as the ATA has transmitted and explored them. This openness and understanding of a shared contemplative groping—often expressed in religious thought and yet not limited to those institutional expressions—seems remarkably important to me. Thus, when Teilhard writes in a spiritual perspective that is not overtly Christian, something connects across diverse religious lives in ways that open compassionate discourse. This reach surpasses Teilhard's anthropocentric emphases and extends into the Earth community. For example, when he writes: "Love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mystical of cosmic forces. Love is the primal psychic energy. Love is a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution" ("The Spirit of the Earth," 1931, VI, 32, 33, 34). This may be reduced by some as a particular and exclusive Christian spiritual insight, but I do not share that interpretation. Religions complete one another. Thus, it may occur that a Muslim, or a Buddhist, or a Confucian will read, experience, and articulate something about Teilhard's insight here that is utterly transformative in the context of their own religious path. So also, we now have voices who are bringing insights of a cooperative love in the living Earth community connecting mineral, plant, and animal life.

Finally, I, like many of you, have Teilhard as a *vade mecum*, a good companion on the journey. This companion tells one story that is many stories. These stories are told as relationships coursing through all the many narrations. Life is telling its story that is our story, whether prose, poetry, weeping, song or laughter. This is how I read Teilhard when he writes:

In the beginning was Power,
intelligent, loving, energizing.
In the beginning was the Word,
supremely capable of mastering and shaping
whatever might come into being in the world of
matter.

In the beginning there were not coldness and
darkness:
there was Fire.

(*The Mass on the World*, 1923, XIII, 121-122)

Teilhard's Enduring Vision

By Mary Evelyn Tucker
ATA Vice President 1979-2020

The first time I read Teilhard I was fascinated. It was 1965, and I was only in high school. I knew there was something important there but was not sure how to understand it. I recognized Teilhard's poetic and cosmic voice in *The Divine Milieu*. But I was young and there were no theology classes that were interpreting Teilhard. Indeed, there were only a few of his books available in English at the time. He had passed away in New York in 1955, when I was 5 years old. Ten years later his books were still being translated from French to English by Harper & Row. While his ideas caught on in some circles, it took time for his worldview to be absorbed.¹

I read Teilhard again when I went to Japan to teach in 1973-1974. I was searching for a broader vision after tumultuous college years in Washington DC, amid the upheavals of the '60s. I began with Teilhard's letters in *Making of a Mind*. These had a deep impact on me as they were written during World War I when he served as a stretcher-bearer. His ability to see meaning in the midst of such suffering and death was remarkable to me. When I went on retreat in Japan with more of his writings, Teilhard's ideas began to penetrate, especially his cosmic sensibility and evolutionary perspective. It took a journey into a completely different culture to open me to this. Indeed, it was in Japan that I came to appreciate Teilhard's worldview outside the confines of my American upbringing, Catholic heritage, and European travels.

Although I had spent a year in England as a sophomore in college, nothing prepared me for the experience of living in an Asian society. In American colleges at the time there were almost no courses on Asia except at the ivy league

universities. Gradually I began to absorb some of Japan's ancient history, culture, and religion. I immersed myself in the study and practice of Zen Buddhism and spent hours wandering through the Zen gardens in Kyoto. It was through Zen that I began to experience a cosmic sensibility where my "small self" melded with the immensity of the universe. This experience was a gateway to understanding Teilhard. I glimpsed his feeling for the whole universe as infused with the divine. This was an opening to the great mystery of the "within of things" in which we dwell and seek our deepest meaning.

From this time on, I read Teilhard with great intensity. His vision of a dynamic unfolding universe out of which all life emerges was a revelation to me. His keen interest in activating human energy and encouraging a zest for life became a motivating dimension of my own journey. I was able to move away from the bleakness of existentialism, which had gripped me during my college years. When I returned to the United States and met Thomas Berry in 1975, my interest in Teilhard deepened. It was that year that Berry became President of the American Teilhard Association and I served with him, first as treasurer, and then as vice-president. When my husband, John Grim, became president in 1987, this partnership for the Association continued.

All through graduate studies with Berry at Fordham and with Ted de Bary at Columbia, Teilhard's vision was a guiding and motivating presence. John and I organized Teilhard talks for 20 years with Thomas at his Riverdale Center for Religious Research. The first Saturday of each month during the academic year we invited a speaker and had a pot-luck dinner. A remarkable community grew at Riverdale—one that brought Teilhard's thought into dialogue with contemporary topics, such as religion and science or the environment and bioregionalism.

This religion and science dialogue broadened considerably in 1982-1983 when the

¹ Moreover, in 1962, just before Vatican II, the Church issued a *monitum*, a warning against Teilhard's writings directed to heads of Catholic religious orders and seminaries. Such an admonition has lasted until today, even though Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict, and Pope Francis have drawn on Teilhard's thought.

cosmologist, Brian Swimme, came to study with Thomas, and a new partnership was born. Over the next ten years Brian and Thomas worked to write *The Universe Story*, motivated by Teilhard’s comprehensive evolutionary perspective. They aimed to make *The Phenomenon of Man* more accessible when told as a story in which humans have a vital role to play. Similarly, my work with Brian and John in creating the *Journey of the Universe* was to tell the evolutionary story in film form. The hope with the Journey film, book, conversations, and online classes (MOOCs) is that these will assist in activating human energies for the flourishing of the Earth community. Teilhard remains the great inspiration behind these works.

Conclusion:

For forty-five years the American Teilhard Association’s annual May meeting at Union Theological Seminary at Columbia was an occasion of great celebration and joy. Spring flowers were in bloom in the courtyard; Fanny de Bary and Jayne Ann McPartlin brought flowers for the lunch. Our final meetings at Union were in 2017 to honor John’s 30 years of service as President and in 2018 to anticipate Kathy Duffy’s book, *Teilhard’s Struggle: Embracing the Work of Evolution*. It is fitting, then, that John and I are stepping down and ushering in a new era with Kathy Duffy as President. We wish her well in this role and will be there to support her and the new officers as board members. It has been one of the singular honors of our lives to serve the American Teilhard Association. It is one of our great joys to continue to feel the inspiration of Teilhard in our life and work.

ATA Online Annual Meeting June 6, 2020

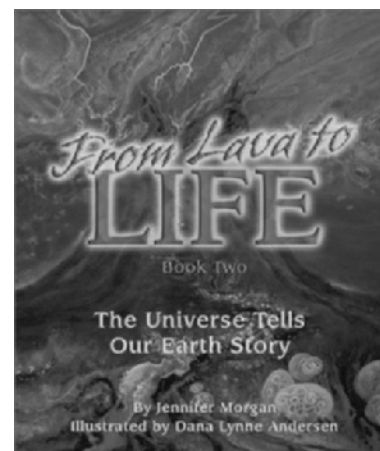
On Saturday June 6, the ATA held its first-ever online annual meeting via Zoom. The theme was “Voices of the Great Work Inspired by Teilhard,” and the event included 10 presentations by contemporary Teilhardians on their Teilhard-inspired work and projects. Here we present brief

summaries of those presentations and an abbreviated biography of the presenters. For full-length bios, more information about the event, and to view the recording, go to our site at: <http://teilharddechardin.org/index.php/ata-annual-meeting>

(listed in order of presentation)

**Jennifer Morgan:
Deeptime Network**

Jennifer Morgan discussed how Teilhard influenced three people—Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme, and Miriam MacGillis—who in turn inspired her to write a Universe Story Trilogy for children: *Born With a Bang*, *From Lava to Life*, and *Mammals Who Morph*. Moving from Cosmos to



“Cosmogogenesis,” a fundamental Teilhardian understanding, is a core idea in her books and in all of her work. In her presentation, she further discussed how she was introduced to other “lineages” exploring a grand narrative of the universe—Montessori Cosmic Education, Big History, and Systems Theory—and seeks to foster interconnection with a “New Story” lineage started by Teilhard. She founded the Deeptime Network (dtnetwork.org) where these lineages intersect, offering professional development for teachers and courses/study groups for all, as well as providing a place where members can post resources and events and connect with others around the world.

Jennifer Morgan is an award-winning author, storyteller, and educator inspired by the work of Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Berry, and Brian Swimme. Her Universe Story Trilogy is used in classrooms around the world, particularly in Montessori schools as part of the Cosmic Education Curriculum, and have received the Teachers Choice Award, Nautilus Semi Finalist,

highest ratings from AAAS and endorsements from Jane Goodall, Neil de Grasse Tyson, astronaut Edgar Mitchell, Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme and others.

Kathleen Deignan:

Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit

Sister Kathleen Deignan salutes the influence of Teilhard de Chardin as a foundational mentor and guide from the time she was in high school and throughout her long tenure as an educator and teaching theologian. The fruition of Teilhard's and Thomas Berry's cultivation of her thought and creativity is the newly inaugurated Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona College. The Earth and Spirit Institute is comprised of three discrete ventures: The Iona Spirituality Center that offers programs for spiritual development and celebration; The Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue that promotes the Berrian legacy within and beyond the academy in an array of such as The Journey of the Universe project and monthly "Contemplative Ecologist Circles;" and The Thomas Merton Contemplative Initiative that sponsors inquiry and conversation on a host of contemporary issues illuminated by the legacy of the celebrated monastic writer and public intellectual. Visit us at <https://www.iona.edu/about/iona-in-community/the-sister-kathleen-deignan-cnd-institute-for-eart.aspx>

Kathleen Noone Deignan, PhD is a Sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame and a teaching theologian recently retired from Iona College, New Rochelle, NY, where she now directs the Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit, an enterprise deeply imbued with Teilhard's spirit. A life-long student of his corpus, Sister Kathleen has taught courses and offered a variety of programs on his legacy. The deepest transmission of his vision came through her mentor Thomas Berry, and also Ewert Cousins, with whom she studied at

Fordham University. She now sits on the Board of the American Teilhard Association.

Imogene Drummond, artist:

"Artistic Process Symbolic of Teilhard's Concept of Self-Transforming Phases"

Teilhard inspired me to explore a connection with the cosmos in both the content and process of my work. My presentation at The American Teilhard Association focused on my artistic process over several decades in five phases in five media. The arc of my creative evolution can be viewed as symbolic of Teilhard's concept of the universe developing through self-transforming phases. As I strove to make our cosmic connection more compelling, I embarked on painting expeditions to international sacred sites, wrote and illustrated *Divine Sparks: A New Creation Story*, made it into a film, incorporated the film into *Art Sparks*, an educational creativity program, and created an immersive video installation connecting us to the



The Dream of Spring by Imogene Drummond

universe. Just as the arc of my work symbolizes Teilhard's concept, each of our lives is an example of self-transformation. Just as each grain of sand is the beach, each of us is the living unfolding universe.

Imogene Drummond, M.F.A., M.S.W., A.C.S.W., is an internationally collected painter, award-winning filmmaker, video installation artist, educator, and former psychotherapist. Her *Divine Sparks* film and creativity program connect the creativity and transformation in the universe with

our own potential for creativity and transformation. Her immersive video installation helps people experience that we are all physically part of the cosmos. Due to painting expeditions to sacred sites around the world, Drummond became a member of the Society of Woman Geographers whose membership includes explorers of ideas as well as geography, among them Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart, and Jane Goodall. www.imogenedrummond.com

Angela Manno, artist



Gastrotheca Orophyllax, The Marsupial Frog by Angela Manno from the Sacred Icons of Endangered Species series

My presentation for the American Teilhard Association Annual Meeting illustrates the growth in my art and thinking, focusing on Teilhard’s influence over the course of forty years. In it, you will also find my journey through different mediums that I have chosen to best express

those concepts, from mixed media, color Xerox to two ancient art forms, batik—the ancient method of textile design—to egg tempera & gold leaf on wood, as used in the Byzantine Russian icon paintings from the 14-16th century monastic Russia. As far back as 1971, when I was first introduced to Teilhard in Professor John Haught’s theology class at Georgetown, the evolutionary view has been the framework through which I interpret everything. Following immersive study in the New Story of the Universe, and twenty years of practicing Byzantine iconography Earth, I created a new icon of the whole Earth from space. From there, I began my ongoing project, *Sacred Icons of Endangered Species*, stressing that everything is in the image of the Divine.

Angela Manno is an internationally exhibited artist and iconographer whose work has been deeply influenced by Teilhard, Thomas Berry and her years long practice in Byzantine-Russian iconography under Master iconographer, Vladislav Andreyev. Her award-winning art resides private collections around the world and in the NASA and Smithsonian fine art collections. www.angelamanno.com

Mary Coelho, artist

In the early 1990s my worldview changed fundamentally as I watched Brian Swimme’s video series *Canticle to the Cosmos*. Very heartened and excited, I undertook a study of the cosmic evolutionary story and its psychological and spiritual significance, eventually writing the book *Awakening Universe, Emerging Personhood: The Power of Contemplation in an Evolving Universe* (Wyndham Hall Press). Having been a watercolor painter of realistic landscapes and cityscapes for a number of years, I started to create paintings about the new cosmology. It is some of these paintings that I showed at the ATA



The Magnificent Cosmos by Mary Coelho

event. In addition, I showed a number of accordion books with words from Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme and others that express, together with a series of small paintings, important insights from the new story. A number of accordion books not shown at the ATA event can be seen at <http://newuniversestory.com>

Mary Conrow Coelho brings her theological studies, her background in science as a biology teacher and her excitement about our transformed

worldview to her work as a watercolor painter. In addition to realistic watercolors, some of her paintings have images evoking the new cosmology. Her accordion books are reflections on the insights of voices that speak to the new cosmology in a series of small paintings. Mary is author of the book *Awakening Universe, Emerging Personhood* (Wyndham Hall Press, 2002) and a number of articles.

Sam Guarnaccia, composer:

Emergent Universe Oratorio

Paula's and my work inspired by Teilhard de Chardin began with meeting Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim in 2011, after conceiving and beginning the composition of an Oratorio (a music, poetry, and art collaboration) in response to the climate crisis. It was immediately clear that the Great Work of Thomas Berry, his lectures, writings, and those with Brian Swimme, culminating in the *Journey of the Universe* project with Mary Evelyn, deeply influenced by the cosmic vision of Teilhard, were the foundation with sufficient power to inform the libretto for a musical telling of the Cosmic Story, the only context which could contain the entire landscape of humanity's broken relationship with Earth.

In my musical writing, Teilhard's influence and inspiration were largely poetic—captured by these words: *Throughout my life, the world has...caught fire in my sight, until aflame all around me—has become Wholly luminous from within. -Heart of Matter-* His words—"Driven by the forces of love, the fragments of the world seek each other so that the world may come into being"—are a beautifully poetic description of evolution and emergence!

A premiere of the *Emergent Universe Oratorio* with chamber ensemble and early libretto took place in Shelburne, Vermont, 2013, followed by a complete reworking of the texts, some new music, and development of a score for full orchestra. In 2017, for the World Union of Jesuit Alumni quadrennial World Conference in Cleveland, a World Premiere of the Oratorio was produced in its present form, and in 2018, the International Big History Association produced the work for its biennial World Conference in Philadelphia. The American Teilhard Association

was present for all three events in the persons of Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, and support of the ATA. In March of 2022, there will be a concert of the Oratorio as culmination of a season of dedicated Earth themes by the great professional Albany Pro Musica Chorus, and their Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Jose Daniel Flores-Caraballo. Teilhard's inspiration flows through the noosphere drawing us inexorably toward greater and greater communion with our living Universe.



Emergent Universe Oratorio in Cleveland, Ohio, 2017

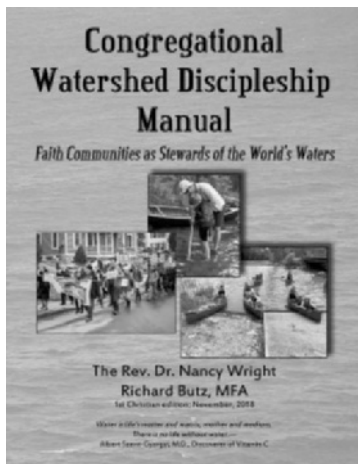
Sam Guarnaccia is a composer, performer, scholar, and founder/director of Sam Guarnaccia Music (SGM) www.samguarnaccia.com. A classical guitarist, he studied privately, at the Royal Conservatory of Madrid, the North Carolina School of the Arts, and received a Master of Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts. He created, and for ten years taught and directed the guitar program of the University of Denver's renowned Lamont School of Music. He has also taught and instituted programs at Middlebury College and the University of Vermont, as Spanish scholar, performer, and composer. His cycle of nine peace songs has been incorporated into a children's peace education curriculum. His work, *A Celtic Mass for Peace*, *Songs for the Earth*, a collaboration with Celtic Spirituality scholar, writer, and teacher, John Philip Newell.

**The Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright:
"What Truly Inspires Me about My Great
Work and Its Connection to Teilhard"**

My great work as an ordained clergy woman for forty-seven years is to connect heaven and earth, matter and spirit, Christianity and science.

Teilhard was a scientist, paleontologist, philosopher, and Christian theologian, as well as a mystic, who influenced me greatly. Thomas Berry summarized my experience of the grafting of Teilhard's views into my heart, mind, and soul: Teilhard "shifted the central focus of Western religious tradition from redemption to creation. This new orientation might be considered the single most powerful aspect of Teilhard's theological thinking. Possibly ... among the most significant theological changes since the sixteenth century."² Teilhard gifted me with energy and theological expression to link ecology and religion, recently in the creation by the church I serve of two *Congregational Watershed Discipleship Manuals* (interfaith and Christian).

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Wright, board member of the American Teilhard Association, is the Pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, S. Burlington, VT and the Environmental Liaison for the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in



America. Dr. Wright coauthored (with Fr. Donald Kill) *Ecological Healing: A Christian Vision* (Orbis, 1993); "Christianity and Environmental Justice" (Crosscurrents, June 2011); and the chapter "Living Water," in *Living Cosmology: Christian Responses to Journey of the Universe* (Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, eds., Orbis 2016). Congregational Watershed Discipleship Manual (Christian and interreligious versions) available for free PDF download or bound copy order at <https://vow4climate.org/manual-order-form-congregational-watershed-manuals>.

² Thomas Berry, "Teilhard in the Ecological Age," in *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth*,

Brother Kevin Cawley, CFC:

Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue



In 2009, after the death of Thomas Berry, four of his students gathered to initiate the Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue to promote his wisdom legacy: Brian Brown, Kevin Cawley, Kathleen

Deignan, and Daniel Martin. The Thomas Berry Forum is an open and inclusive space for ecological education, exploration, and transformation. The Forum is a resource for the Iona College community and for many dialogue partners—regional, national and global—whom we engage in Berry's Great Work to awaken the ecological phase of human development. The Mission of The Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue is to:

- Educate for awareness of the integral Earth community
- Facilitate deeper understanding of human responsibility for care of Earth
- Promote scholarly dialogue and engagement around significant ecological concerns
- Celebrate our communion in the family of God's creation
- Inspire hope and empower action for a sustainable and environmentally just world, with special concern for the most vulnerable members of the Earth community

Brother Kevin Cawley, Ph.D. is Executive Director of the Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue at Iona College. Kevin serves at United Nations Headquarters in New York as the Main Representative of Edmund Rice International (ERI), and he produces a monthly newsletter for this organization on environmental concerns, *Carbon Rangers/Ecozoic Times*.

ed. Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 60.

Santiago Aranda, theatrical producer:
El Corazon de la Materia

In 2017, through the generosity of a Mexican Jesuit, Fr. Enrique Gonzalez Torres, the life of Teilhard came to the stage. The play was written by José Ramón Enriquez, Luis de Tavira and José María de Tavira. The play intertwines the life of Teilhard with some of the current social issues in Mexico. Over 30 actors were involved, including Marina de Tavira, a recent Academy Award nominee. The screenplay has parts in Latin, Mandarin, Tzeltal, and Spanish. The scenes take you from the discovery of the Peking (wo)man, to the Natural History Museum in Paris; from the trenches in WWI to the seminary, Rome and NY. One of the most powerful scenes is the recreation of the mass over the world. The play had two seasons and was presented in 4 cities throughout Mexico reaching over ten thousand people. The project included conferences on science and religion and of the life of Teilhard.



Santiago Aranda has been a member of the Board of the American Teilhard Association since 2008. He has a BS in Environmental Sciences and a BA in Philosophy from the Loyola University Chicago. Sant has done postgraduate studies in Sustainable Design of Human Settlements, Sustainable Construction and in Conflict Resolution including courses on The Earth Story. His professional career revolves around sustainability and shaping our future in the spirit of Teilhard by designing and building several sustainable human settlements as well as energy projects. He has advised new businesses and companies to make their production processes more efficient and incorporate elements of sustainability in them. Between 2006 and 2007,

Santiago guided eco-spirituality programs which focused on caring for the environment and environmental education. He has taught classes and conferences on sustainability, infrastructure design and construction.

Frank and Mary Frost, filmmakers

Frank and Mary Frost are in the editing stage of a major documentary on Teilhard de Chardin—the first ever for American television. Teilhard’s life and struggles make for great television—a clerical Indiana Jones, a 20th Century Galileo, a visionary who was not afraid to love. Their approach relies heavily on Teilhard’s own words from his letters and essays and the words of those who wrote to him. They have completed filming his formative childhood years in Auvergne; his Jesuit studies and ordination in Hastings, England; the crucible of Verdun, the most dramatic of 67 places he served in The Great War; his launch in Paris as a shooting star in the world of geology; suppression by his Jesuit superiors and his 25-year exile in China, where the discovery of Peking Man catapulted him to international fame, as well as where he met Lucile Swan, and, finally, his second exile in New York City. All of these are integrated with expert commentary from top Teilhard scholars. In understanding Teilhard the man, we recognize elements of his vision that almost erupt from his intense motivations and struggles—ideas that viewers can pursue more deeply by way of a website and links to many other resources.



Frank and Mary Frost are independent filmmakers. Frank Frost earned an MA in English, and a Ph.L in philosophy at Loyola University, Chicago. His Ph.D. in Cinema is from the University of California. Frank and Mary have produced multiple films for public television, including *To Hope: A Celebration* (with Dave Brubeck); *Scandinavia*; *Bernardin*; *Thérèse: Living on Love*; *The Other Holy Land*; and *The American Creed*. For more information, go to www.teilhardproject.com.

An Integrating Story for a Sustainable Future: A Way Toward New Human-Earth Relations

*By Mary Evelyn Tucker and Brian Thomas
Swimme, Retiring ATA Vice-Presidents*

We know that the obstacles to the sustainable development and flourishing of life's ecosystems are considerable. To meet these challenges, the next stage of evolutionary history will require an expansion of our worldview and ethics. The human community has now for the first time a scientific story of the evolution of the universe and our planet that shows us our profound connection to the evolutionary process. We are only discovering its larger meaning as evolution continues to unfold. This is why we created the *Journey of the Universe*, namely a film, book, conversation series, and online classes to tell the story of cosmic, Earth, and human as an evolutionary epic.

We are realizing, too, that evolution moves forward through transitions—the movement from inorganic matter to organic life, for example, or from single-celled organisms to plants and animals. All such transitions come at times of crisis, involve tremendous cost, and result in new forms of creativity. We are in such a transition moment.

Surrounding this moment is a challenge to older paradigms of the human as an isolated being in a random, purposeless universe. Peter Raskin has called this the Great Transition, while Joanna Macy named it the Great Turning. Our consciousness is shifting from valuing individualism to embracing interdependence on a vast scale. The Enlightenment values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are being reconfigured so that life includes the larger life of the Earth, individual freedom requires responsibility to community, and happiness consists of more than acquiring material goods. We are moving from an era dominated by

competing nation-states to a sustainable, multicultural planetary civilization.

Over the past century, science has begun to weave together the historical story of our cosmos, which emerged some 13.8 billion years ago. At the same time, we are becoming conscious of the rapid destruction of species and habitat taking place around the planet. As we realize the vast expanse of time that distinguishes the evolution of the universe, we see how late our arrival in this process is and how quickly we are foreshortening the Earth's future flourishing.

We need, then, to step back to assimilate our cosmological context. If scientific cosmology gives us an understanding of the universe's origins and unfolding, then philosophical reflection gives us a sense of our place in it. As science reveals to us the intricacy of the web of life, we realize that we are not only unraveling it through our economic progress and rapid industrialization, but that we are destroying our own continuity as a species.

Two major permanent exhibits at the American Museum of Natural History clearly demonstrate our cosmological context and environmental crisis. One is the Rose Center, which houses the Hall of the Universe and the Hall of the Earth, and the other is the Hall of Biodiversity.

The Hall of the Universe is a monumental glass cube with a globe containing a planetarium at its center. Suspended in space around the globe are the planets of our solar system, which are juxtaposed in a fascinating mingling of inner and outer worlds against the garden plaza and streets of New York beyond the cube's walls. After passing through a simulation of the originating fireball, visitors move up an elevated spiral pathway through our twelve-billion-year cosmic journey, from the formation of galaxies to the emergence of our solar system. When they reach the Cenozoic period, which encompasses the last sixty-five million years, they end at one human hair under a circle of glass. The breadth of the hair represents all of human history.

The Hall of Earth reveals the birth of the planet, the evolution of the continents, and the eventual emergence of life. It presents the theory of plate tectonics, not widely accepted just fifty

years ago, as well as deep-sea geothermal life forms discovered only a decade ago. Thus, this exhibit illustrates how new our knowledge of Earth's evolution is.

The Hall of Biodiversity displays the extraordinary range of life forms that our planet has birthed—a panoply of animals, fish, birds, reptiles, and insects. A plaque observes that we are now living in the midst of a sixth extinction period. It notes that while the five earlier periods of extinction were caused by a variety of factors including meteor collisions and climate change, humans in large part are causing the present one. This prompts us to question not only our role, but our viability as a species. We are the first generations of humans to actually imagine our own destruction, and—while this may be extreme—some suggest this may be necessary for other life forms to survive.

The exhibition notes that we can stem the loss of species and habitat. It offers an arresting series of pictures: current destruction is recorded on one side, and restoration processes are highlighted on the other. The contrasting displays suggest the choice is ours—a bold step that shows that scientists no longer try to stand completely apart from what they study.

These powerful exhibits illustrate how science is ushering us into a macrophase understanding of the universe and of ourselves as one species among others on a finite planet. The fact that the Rose Center presents the evolution of the universe and the Earth as an unfolding story in which humans participate is striking in itself. Indeed, the introductory video in the Hall of the Universe observes that we are “citizens of the universe” born out of stardust and the evolution of galaxies, and that we bear responsibility for its continuity.

Environmental ethicists and religious scholars are being called to re-examine our role as humans within both the larger context of the universe's evolution and the closer context of life on Earth. What is humankind in relation to 13.8 billion years of universe history, or to 4.6 billion years of Earth history? These critical questions underlie our new consciousness of the universe story not simply as a narrative, but as a transformative cosmological story.

Since the earliest expressions of culture, humans have developed cosmologies to describe where we have come from and where we are going. The religious and cultural traditions we have honored for millennia all bear witness to our deep desire to find meaning around us. Over the last two centuries, however, the scientific paradigm has dominated. Some scientists and science-minded philosophers have concluded that while the universe appears to follow certain natural laws, it is merely a random accretion of objects with little meaning and no larger purpose. Scientific and religious cosmologies have thus co-existed uneasily. But the best of modern science shows how we are part of the universe's ongoing journey and how we shape its future form. This can be an important context for ecological, economic, and social transformation in our emerging planetary community.

The integrated story of the origin and development of the universe, of Earth, and of humans could become an inspiring vision for our time. It gives us a sense of common evolutionary heritage and shared genetic lineage that could establish the foundations for sustaining the future. Carl Anthony, one of the leaders of the environmental justice movement, has said this perspective has profoundly transformed his life and work. We, too, can be inspired by it, recognizing that ecological, economic, and social change is not only necessary, but inevitable.

*Please join us in welcoming our new
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*And deep gratitude for years of dedicated
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American Teilhard Association, Thomas Berry, and Journey of the Universe Websites

At the ATA site www.teilharddechardin.org can be found a Biography, List of Writings, Pictures and Quotes, Life Timeline, ATA Events, Teilhard Studies with first page, recent full Teilhard Perspectives, Membership info, Links, and a Brian Thomas Swimme interview on Teilhard.

The Thomas Berry site www.thomasberry.org offers a Biography by Mary Evelyn Tucker, a John Grim essay: "Time, History, Historians in Thomas Berry's Vision," Writings by Thomas Berry, comments on his *The Great Work*, Films about or inspired by, and a List of Books.

A new site www.journeyoftheuniverse.org introduces this Emmy award-winning film, book, conversation series, and online classes by Brian Thomas Swimme, Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, to carry forward the inspiration of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry.

Teilhard Perspective

TEILHARD PERSPECTIVE is published by the American Teilhard Association, a non-profit organization whose goals are to explore philosophical, scientific, religious, social and environmental concerns in light of Teilhard's vision and to clarify the role of the human phenomenon in this emerging understanding of the cosmos.

We welcome suggestions of relevant ideas, books, news, events and contributions of articles for this newsletter. The new editor is Andrew DelRossi. The *Teilhard Perspective* newsletter along with the biannual *Teilhard Studies* pamphlet and Annual Meeting notices are available through membership. Please contact us at: American Teilhard Association, c/o Kathleen Duffy, SSJ, Chestnut Hill College, 9601 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Annual U.S. membership is \$35. See our website for further information on membership.

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