

The Divine Milieu: A Spiritual Classic for Today and Tomorrow

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*The Divine Milieu** is one of the greatest books of spirituality written in the 20th century. This book conveys a spiritual message that strikes a chord of love and hope, deeply affecting our very relationships with God and with the world. Though small in size, its impact over the past four decades has been large. *The Divine Milieu* has helped shape today's spirituality by its inspiring impact on some of the official documents of the Vatican II Council, and its modifying some Catholic schools of thought. It has also heralded a spirituality for future generations. We can even say that the 21st century will find in this book some very important guideposts pointing to the one Spirit and the one earth that the new spirituality is so eager to see materialized.

Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1995) did not intend to write a book on Christian doctrine, theology, morality, or asceticism. What he wrote was a description of a journey to God in the most intimate way, through existence itself, portraying the spiritual attitude that Christians should take vis-a-vis the modern world. Full of the author's passion for God and the world, *The Divine Milieu* charts a path that unites personal and cosmic salvation.

This book is truly a total act of living faith in God and in His creation. This paper will seek to clarify and elaborate on the major themes of Teilhard's spiritual classic.

The Divine Milieu: Its Meaning

The term *milieu* in French has no exact equivalent in English where its closest approximations are "environment" or "surroundings." These English words, for example, miss the connotation of *centre* which is part of

*Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, revised Harper Torchbook edition, Perennial Library, Harper & Row, New York, 1968. Abbreviated here by "DM." Originally published in French as *Le Milieu Divin* by Editions du Seuil, Paris, in 1957.