

Daily Meditation 12-18-23

Science Calls Earth “A Rare Gem in a Universe Very Hostile to Life”

Good morning.

Today we continue our meditations with physicist Marcelo Gleiser. From his article on "Exoplanet Discoveries," reveal Earth's profound rarity in the cosmos.

I was very moved and excited to be reading this article. And we have devoted two daily meditations to it now, one on Saturday, and the one this morning, Monday. And of course, the Saturday one was summarized again in the summation meditations on Sunday morning.

Why am I so excited? Well, this is what Creation Spirituality is, after all. It's a beating of the drum, in favor of a cosmic awareness. And what we get from Gleiser's article and many other contemporary scientists, is the Good News, the special news, that in this vast, vast universe of 2 trillion galaxies, each with hundreds of billions of stars, and with billions of planets, Earth has a special place.

And we don't know how special yet, in the sense that we don't know how many other planets we'll find, with our "Goldilocks" situation, where life and advanced complex life is truly happening.

But we do know what we know. And that is, what's happening on Earth is not always for the good, because intelligent life can, as Thomas Aquinas says, one human being could be more evil than all the other species put together.

So intelligent life has this brilliant side. It also has a shadow side. And they are related. It is the brilliance of intellect and creativity that can create evil as well as wonder.

Now, one person who spoke of these things, 75 years ago, was Teilhard de Chardin, when he said,

Because it is not sufficiently moved by truly human compassion, because it is not exalted, or sufficiently passionate in admiration of our Universe, our religion is becoming enfeebled.

I don't think it's only our religions, that's becoming enfeebled. Our education is enfeebled, our politics, our economics. All of it is aiming too low.

It's not building on the compassion that humans are capable of, and all the great spiritual teachers — Jesus and Mohammed, Dalai Lama and the Buddha, Thich Nhat Nanh,, Black Elk — all of the spiritual traditions teach us that we're capable of compassion.

But as Teilhard says, "compassion and admiration of the Universe go together. We have to bring forth that exalted energy that we're capable of."

And Teilhard has another statement, apropos of this whole theme of Creation Spirituality, a spirituality that doesn't just begin with the human, but begins with the power and beauty and wonder of the Universe that have been brought to us today in whole new forms and fashions, from the Webb telescope and so many scientists, exploring the universe on our behalf. So Teilhard said,

Do not forget that the value in interest of life, is not so much to do conspicuous things (though we must have this ambition), as to do ordinary things, with the perception of their enormous value.

Ordinary things with the perception of their enormous value. "This I think, is the mystic to come," says Teilhard.

Notice he's talking, 75 years ago, about the mystics to come. And my whole thesis is that we are all mystics, we are called to be mystics, lovers, therefore, and prophets, who are warriors who interfere with the ongoing possibility of love and compassion.

But what he's saying, "the mystic to come," is there, within us all: to do things with the perception of their enormous value.

I think realizing that we're part of this unique Earth, this alone brings enormous value to everything we choose to do, and not to do. This is tremendous news, I think, in the time of Hanukkah, the time of Christmas, the time of Kwanzaa, celebrating their best capacities.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.