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Daniel's Reflection for week beginning 23rd June –

Cosmic Connection of the Heart – part 1

Our understanding of the Holy Spirit is mostly too limited and too undeveloped. It is time now to acknowledge and release her surging power throughout all life. We need to begin delighting in, and celebrating the dynamic Spirit pulsing through the Church, through humanity, through the evolving universe and through every corner of our own hearts

We were on our way back home after Benediction one bright night, many decades ago, my mother and myself, when she reached for my hand and suddenly stopped walking. 'Look up,' she said, 'Look up and listen.' I still remember it as a mystical moment. Something inside us stands in amazement under the sky at night. There is a curious bond, a sacramental intimacy, between the universe of our heart and the heart of our universe, as they spin around each other in a web of wonder.

At the Opening of the Paralympic Games in London, Stephen Hawking said, 'Look up at the stars, not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious.'

There was a hidden hint of theology and cosmology in my mother's remark that winter's evening. We sense the cosmic connections by heart. Pentecost is taking place whenever invisible mystery is becoming visible, whenever the unknown becomes accessible, when incarnate divinity lights up our soul. It is taking place wherever life moves on towards its final goal, wherever the evolving universe is unfolding towards its ultimate realisation, because it is the Holy Spirit that is facilitating and enabling that compelling attraction.

Theologian Karl Rahner deplores the poverty of our theology of the Spirit, deeply misunderstanding its universal significance and primal potency. He reminds us that the Holy Spirit is revealed as the divine power in the deepest heart of each person and of this earthly world. This power is the graced centre of creation, divinely imbued with the evolving potential to reach its completion when God is 'all in all'.

'And here the earth,' he writes, 'behind her continual development in space and time, sinks her root into the power of the all-mighty God . . . his Spirit has already begun to transform the world into himself . . . the new creation has already started, the new power of a transfigured earth is already being formed from the world's innermost heart . . .'

Priest and scientist Teilhard de Chardin had a unique insight into the interweaving of the evolving planet and the work of the Holy Spirit. His Pentecost moment came when he was inspired to recognise that all becoming and developing in an expanding universe is animated by the divine drive of the Holy Spirit. 'For Teilhard,' wrote Professor Ursula King, 'the heart of God is found at the heart of the world, and the living, natural world is shot through with the presence of the divine, with what he eventually was to call "the divine milieu".'

By this he meant that our universe is a christified one, infused by the divine presence in all that happens. The cosmic Christ is the centre of the universe, of humanity, of each person, and 'at the heart of the tiniest atom'. For him faith consecrates the world. It sees the 'divine fire' hidden in the body of the world. 'Oh the beauty of Spirit,' he exclaimed, 'as it rises up adorned with all the riches of the earth'. His faith was incarnational, sacramental and Christ-centred.)

(Excerpt from Tablet article)