

Daniel's reflection for week beginning June 17th. The Intimacy between the Holy Spirit and Creation

Pope Francis wants us to grasp the closeness, the unity, the intimacy between the Spirit and all Creation. They are inseparable. This is an astonishing realisation for us, and we have to truly make it our own in mind and heart if it is ever going to lead us towards the 'ecological virtues' and spiritual conversion he pleads for. Teilhard de Chardin had a unique insight into the interweaving of the evolving planet and the work and play 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 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."

Diarmuid O'Murchu's *In the Beginning was the Spirit* liberates the Holy Spirit from our deadly doctrinal descriptions and definitions. 'Spirit,' he writes, 'is the wellspring of all possibility, the restless pulsation of every movement of Creation and of every desire in the human heart. It is the power of becoming that awakens every stir of imagination, wisdom, creativity ... We strive for something more because deep within us, the Spirit lures us to do so.' The restlessness is a divine one, the fruit of the enlivening, energising, empowering and uniting Spirit that blows where it will, and that never ceases to amaze and surprise us. This is the 'spirit of life' that Pope Francis wishes to reveal to us during these pivotal times in the journey of the Church. At such times, O'Murchu believes that 'we know instinctively and intuitively that all is one, that relationship defines the very core of life itself.'

Our lives, our faith, our prayer, our grasp of the significance of evolution are all radically transformed when we see them through this understanding of the Holy Spirit, through this lens of Incarnation. Does this dawning realisation lead to falling on our knees in personal and universal contemplation and adoration? Of course it does. All the writers we are quoting in this book give examples of this breakthrough. De Chardin, for instance, prayed: *'I love you for the extensions to your body and soul in the farthest corners of Creation through grace, through life, through matter. Lord Jesus, you who are as gentle as the human heart, as fiery as the forces of nature, as intimate as life itself, you in whom I can melt away and with whom I must have mastery and freedom; I love you as the world, as this world which has captivated my heart; and it is you, I now realise, that people, even those who not believe, sense and see through the magic immensities of the cosmos.'*

Pope Francis is telling us that this 'Spirit of life' lives in the core of the natural universe, firing and energising its inevitable evolution, tenderly 'calling us to enter into relationship' with him, holding all creatures in their finitude and death, and urging and drawing the world forward towards an unfathomable future. Beautiful, comforting, healing words for millions of us.'

(An Astonishing Secret pp106-107)