

Fri., 24th April 2020**To all members of our International English-Speaking Community of the Parish of Luxembourg Notre-Dame**

We carry on reading step by step “*The Mass on the World*” written in 1923 by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a Jesuit priest, a theologian and a palaeontologist, whilst he was working as part of a team in palaeontological fieldwork in the Ordos desert, a barren landscape, west of Peking, near the border with Inner Mongolia.

Today, let us read the third section (out of three) of Part V, “Prayer”.

It is the final part of the essay. It follows Part I, “The Offering”, that was the equivalent of the Offertory at Mass; Part II, “Fire over the Earth”, that was the equivalent of the *epiclesis*, the moment at Mass when the priest calls the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine to make them become the Body and Blood of Christ; Part III, “Fire in the Earth”, that was the equivalent of the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and Part IV, ‘Communion’, read last week.

Prayer (3/3)

[...] And then, Lord, at that point where all things are set ablaze, do you set upon me through the united flames of all those internal and external influences which, were I less close to you, would be neutral or ambivalent or hostile, but which when animated by an Energy *quae possit sibi omnia subjicere*¹ become, in the physical depths of your heart, the angels of your triumphant activity. Through a marvelous combination of your divine magnetism with the charm and the inadequacy of creatures, with their sweetness and their malice, the disappointing weakness and their terrifying power, do you fill my heart alternately with exaltation and with distaste; teach it the true meaning of purity: not a debilitating separation from all created reality but an impulse carrying one through all forms of created beauty; show it the true nature of charity: not a sterile fear of doing wrong but a vigorous determination that all of us together shall break open the doors of life; and give it finally—give it above all—through an ever-increasing awareness of your omnipresence, a blessed desire to go on advancing, discovering, fashioning and experiencing the world so as to penetrate even further and further into yourself.

For me, my God, all joy and all achievement, the very purpose of my being and all my love of life, all depend on this one basic vision of the union between yourself and the universe. Let others, fulfilling a function more august than mine, proclaim your splendors as pure Spirit; as for me, dominated as I am by a vocation which springs from the inmost fibers of my being, I have no desire, I have no ability, to proclaim anything except the innumerable prolongations of your incarnate Being in the world of matter; I can preach only the mystery of your flesh, you the Soul shining forth through all that surrounds us.

It is to your body in this its fullest extension—that is, to the world become through your power and my faith the glorious living crucible in which everything melts away in order to be born anew; it is to this that I dedicate myself with all the resources which your creative magnetism has brought forth in me: with the all too feeble resources of my scientific knowledge, with my religious vows, with my priesthood, and (most dear to me) with my deepest human convictions. It is in this dedication, Lord Jesus, I desire to live, in this I desire to die².

Ordos 1923

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth” (Ps 123 (124), v. 8)

Fr HP

¹ “Which is able to subdue all things unto itself”.

² Pierre Teilhard de Chardin died in New York on Sunday, 10th April, 1955. It was Easter Sunday...