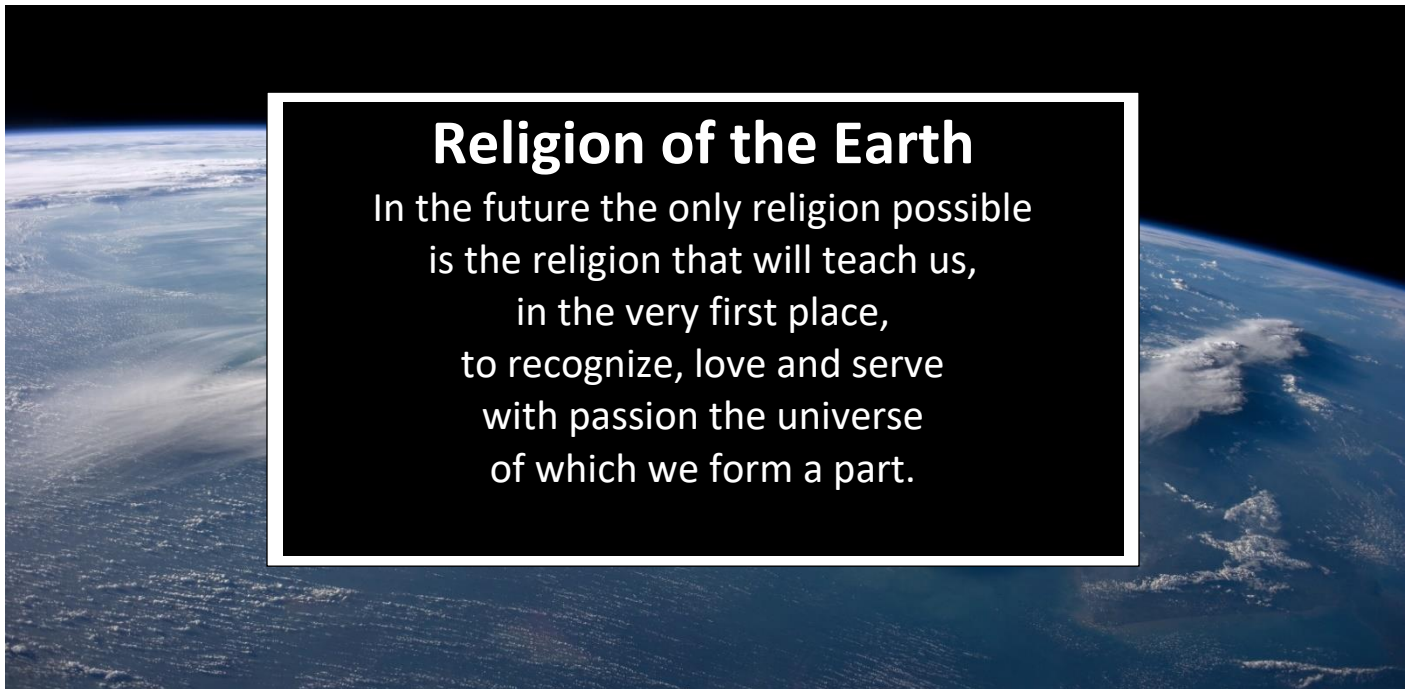


So he talks about a new religion for the earth: one that will teach us **first** to recognize, love and serve with passion the universe of which we form a part.



Here’s a question: if we just want to return to normal, we just want to be back with our friends and have a party, we just want to go to our favorite places and shop again. That kind of mentality has led to global warming, has led to vast economic disparities, has led to the inequalities of the planet we live on. We can’t stay there. We must begin to wake up and love this universe with a passion, of which we are each a part.

The Sacrament of Everyday Life



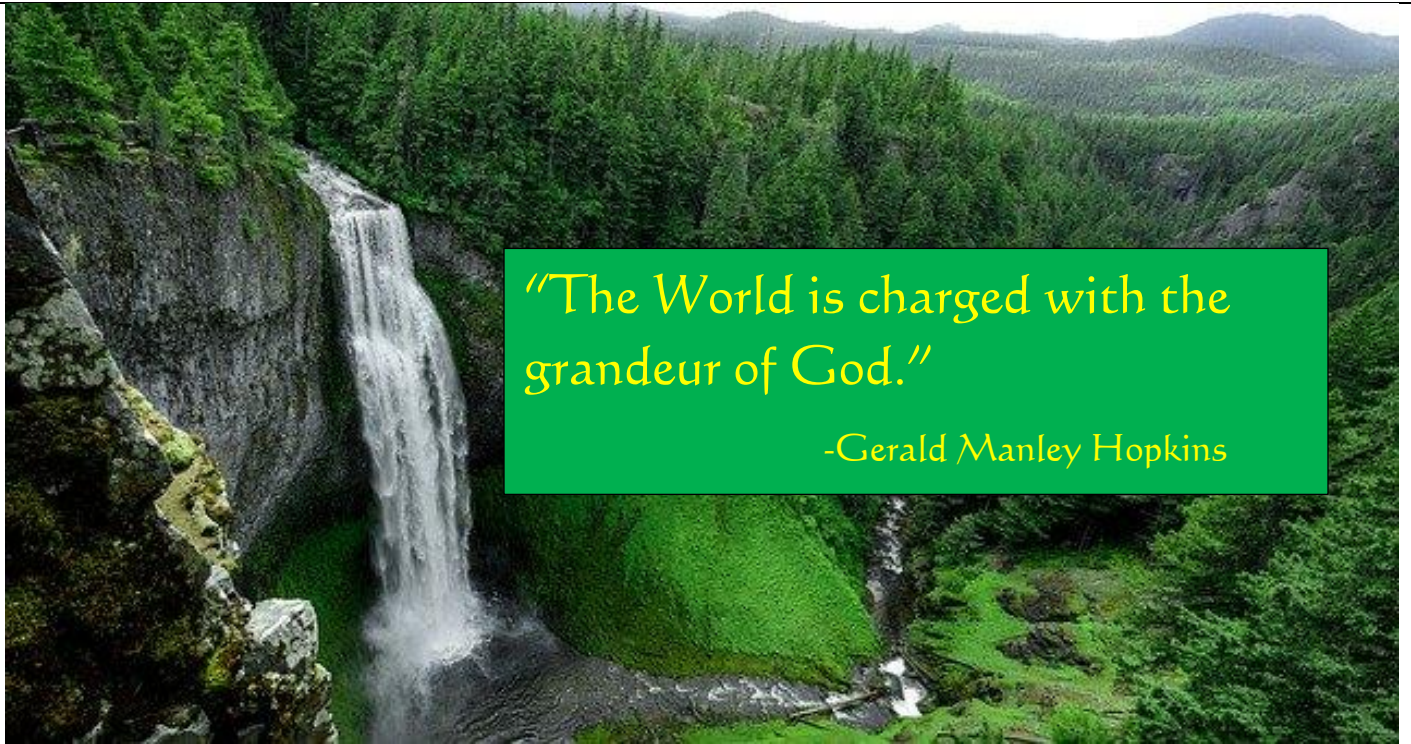
So let's take a look at this sacrament of daily life, because in order for us to really engage in this big picture that Teilhard holds out for us. We have to begin on the level of concrete, everyday life we find ourselves in. Here are some lovely pictures that kind Greg found for me. Fantastic, right? On the left the scientist measuring things, and on the right, a mother, the holiness of being a mom, right? the holiness of being a child, the holiness of being a scientist in discovery.

Why Does God Create?



- **Why does God create?**
- **Because God is love.**
- **Love is the reason all things exist.**
- **The Giver is the gift.**

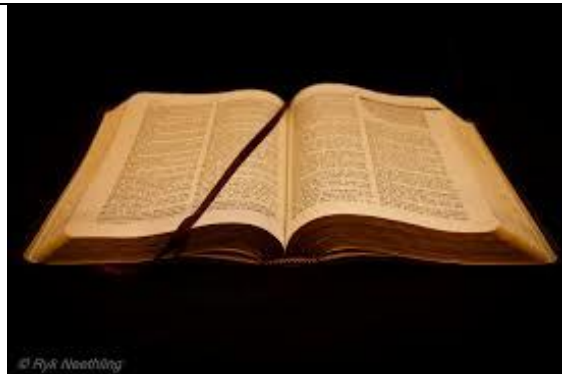
In order to appreciate this sacrament of everyday life, I think the first thing is to really to begin to ask why does God create it all? This power, we talk about this power of ultimate meaning. Very simply. In the New Testament it is love. God is love. Love is to share itself. Love loves the other. Therefore, love is the reason all things exist. If we had to sum up a catechism, a unitary catechism, it would be right there. Love is the reason all things exist. And God is love. And therefore, the Giver is the gift. There is no Gift and Giver; the Gift is the Giver. That's the beginning of sacramental life.



You know Gerard Manley Hopkins, the wonderful English poet who was an admirer of Duns Scotus wrote wonderful poetry. In one of them he says "The world is **charged** with the grandeur of God." Scotus got it, right? An incarnational view of the world means that the world is **charged** with love, like love in the trees, love in the water, love in the wind and the air and the light.



Book of Nature



Book of Scripture

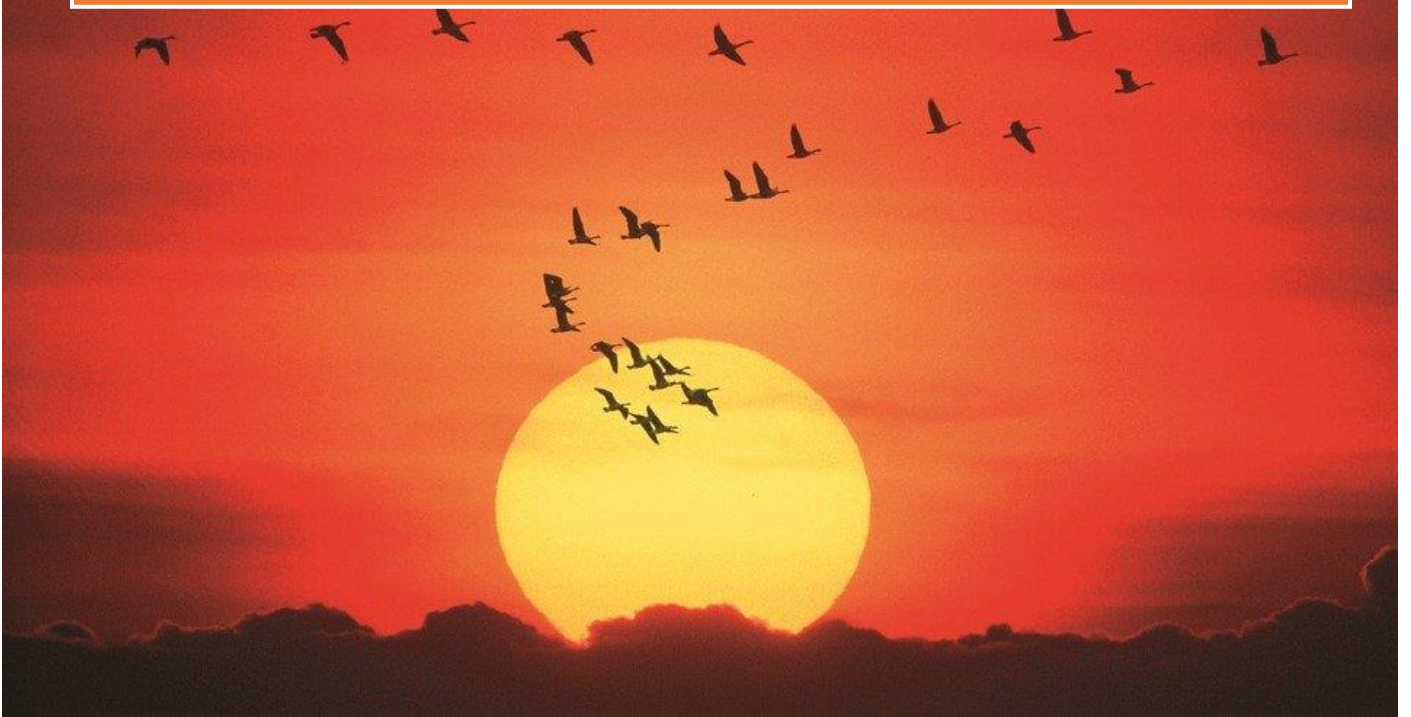
Of course you know this type of thinking is not new. It is not New Agey at all by any means. If you go back to the Middle Ages, and even before, many of the ancient writers and many of the mystical writers spoke of the Book of Nature. In fact the first book of Revelation, if you want to go all the way back to Genesis, is Nature. God reveals Godself

in Nature, in light, and in plants, and in animals. Scripture is, in a sense, the second book of Revelation, not the first one. Bonaventure would say we got the book of Scripture because we lost sight on how to read the book of Nature. Thomas Berry S.J. said now that we know the book of Scripture, we need to go back and read the book of Nature with new eyes. I think that's very true. We've become too bookish. We have lost sight of the book of Nature is the reality of the world.

A Sacramental World

“Anyone who truly knows creatures may be excused from listening to sermons, for every creature is full of God, and is a book.”

-Meister Eckhart, *Sermons*



Meister Eckhart, a very insightful Dominican mystic, said, “Anyone who truly knows creatures may be excused from listening to sermons, for every creature is full of God, and is a book.” So, if we are lamenting that we can’t get good homilies on Sunday because the churches are closed, Eckhart would say “Well, go outside and listen, listen to the birds. Listen to the wind. Observe the world because everything is speaking God.”



Catholicity

Catholicity is a virtue of ceaseless wonder; a consciousness of the whole empowered by God/Love.

This brings us then to what catholicity is about. It is not about becoming Catholic. It's about having an awareness of the whole. That's actually the original meaning of catholic, as it was coined by the Greeks, of katolikos, right? According to the whole. It means we have an awareness of the whole that inspires in us a virtue of ceaseless wonder; of awe; a consciousness of the whole that's empowered by Love, more than just a mere scientific measurement.

The Grace of Being



- **God is gift = grace [gratia]**
- **Grace is everywhere and likely to go unnoticed:**
 - ❖ **Depth**
 - ❖ **Mystery**
 - ❖ **Attention**

So this Grace of Being that is God, this wholeness of life that is Love itself, means that grace is everywhere. But it's often unnoticed. You know, I mean, if we're just talking a walk. It's one thing this pandemic can do for us: it slows us down from our rather frenetic lives. I know for myself I've taken more walks in the last two months than I have in the last three years. It has given me a new opportunity to notice the people and places around me. It gives me a chance to notice the things of nature again. You know how oftentimes we are running through nature. We're trampling on it as we step over the grass. We just whiz by a group of flowers. But we don't take the time to really just be with being itself, to be with the bees, to be with the flower, to take in the depth of its beauty, the mystery of it all. I mean it's pretty fantastic the way bees will pollinate a flower. I think our technology hasn't quite caught up with the bees, quite honestly. This type of amazement, this catholicity, requires attention, right? It requires us to be in the moment.

The Sacramental Life



-A “sacrament” is any person, place, thing or event, any sight, sound, taste, touch or smell that causes us to notice the love which supports all that exists.

-How many sacraments are there?

***Infinite – as many as there are things in the universe.**

-There is nothing that cannot be a sacrament.

-Liturgy recapitulates the sacred depth of everything because everything is graced being.

So this kind of being attentive to is the sacramental life. Sometimes I think people think there's only seven sacraments. In the Middle Ages when the sacraments were proposed, seven was the universal number. The medievalists were very semiotic (study of signs and use of them for interpretation); they were always symbols and signs. So that's what seven symbolizes. It symbolizes the three—the trinity—and the four—the cosmic forces. But **a sacrament, truthfully, is any person, place, thing or event, any sight, sound, taste, touch or smell that causes us to notice the love which supports all that exists.** How many sacraments are there? An infinite number: there are as many sacraments as there are things in the universe. Which means, as Teilhard said, “There is nothing profane below here for those who know how to see.” There is

nothing that cannot be a sacrament. Even the Covid-19 virus, given it's own ecological niche, is sacramental. Taken out of that niche, it can be deadly. What a sacramental life does for us is it causes us to notice and to attend to things in their own beingness, without manipulating them, violating them, controlling them. Liturgy is meant for us to sum up for us the sacred depth of everything. Going to mass was never meant to be the end all to be all. It was meant for a stimulus to see a sacramental world.

The 'Sacramental Principle'

**That which is always
and everywhere—must be**

- **Noticed**
- **Accepted**
- **Celebrated**
- **Somewhere, sometime**



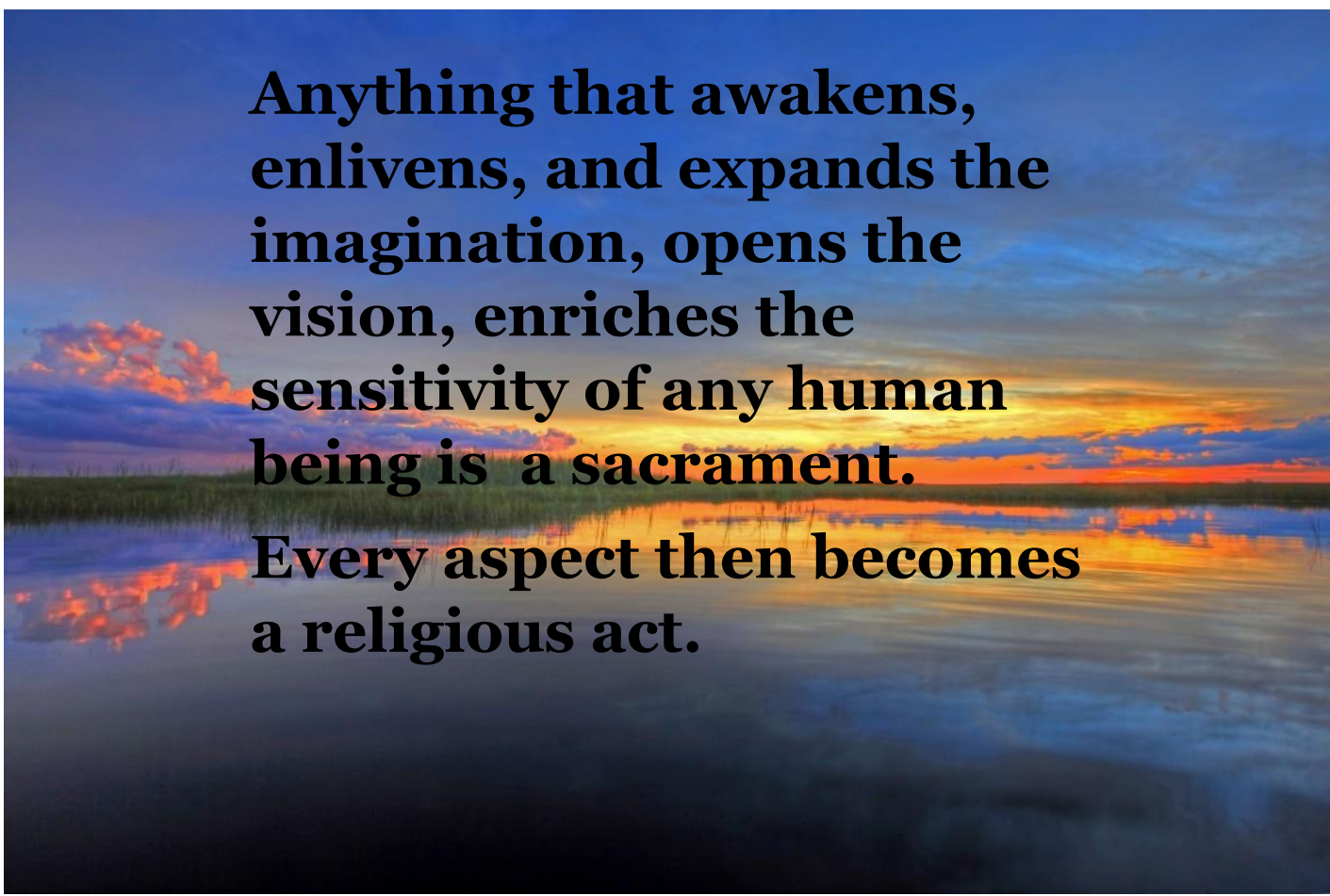
So there is such a thing called the Sacramental Principle, that every person, no matter what faith or no faith can live. The principle is attending to that which is and always and everywhere. It must be noticed, accepted, and celebrated by someone, somewhere, sometime. I once had a friend that went on retreat, a Jesuit friend. He told me he spent the entire week just being with a buttercup. You think to yourself, that's incredible! But that's the kind of attention we are talking about here.

God is "Presence"

- **Sacramental life is a life of *vision***
- Jesus spoke often of "blindness"**
- **To see what is there/present**
 - **To discover the love that sustains all that exists.**



The sacramental life is about presence. The life of vision is the life of religion, because that life of vision is that **seeing** God. God is the shorthand term, or the name, that really gathers up the mystery, the power, the goodness of everything we behold. One of the most common words in the New Testament is “to see, vision.” Jesus often asks his disciples, “What do you see? What do you want to see?” At one point he says to those who want to discredit him, “Is it because you say you see that your blindness remains.” The whole New Testament can be summed up in vision. We either see or we are blind. It really is about sacramental life. We are called to see what is present, what is there. Therefore to see is to love. Angela [Philinia?] has that wonderful saying, “As we see, so we love.” The more perfectly and purely we see, the more perfectly and purely we love, which means that if we do not see, we will not love. A lot of the hatred that is in our world today is due to a lack of love. Therefore, I think the sacramental life is to discover the love that sustains all that exists, the love that moves the sun and the other stars.

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water, likely a marsh or wetland. The sky is a mix of deep blue, orange, and yellow, with some clouds catching the low sun. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. In the distance, there are some reeds or tall grasses. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, black, serif font.

**Anything that awakens,
enlivens, and expands the
imagination, opens the
vision, enriches the
sensitivity of any human
being is a sacrament.**

**Every aspect then becomes
a religious act.**

A sacrament is anything that awakens, enlivens, and expands the imagination, it opens the vision, it enriches the sensitivity of any human being. Every aspect then becomes a religious act. It can be everything from cutting the tomatoes in your kitchen to opening

the front door to get a package and seeing your neighbor to taking a walk and noticing a bird on a tree to watching television and watching the healthcare worker who is really working overtime. Every aspect of life has a depth dimension to it. Our task is to awaken and to see this depth dimension.

“These things these things were here but the beholder/wanting.” Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ



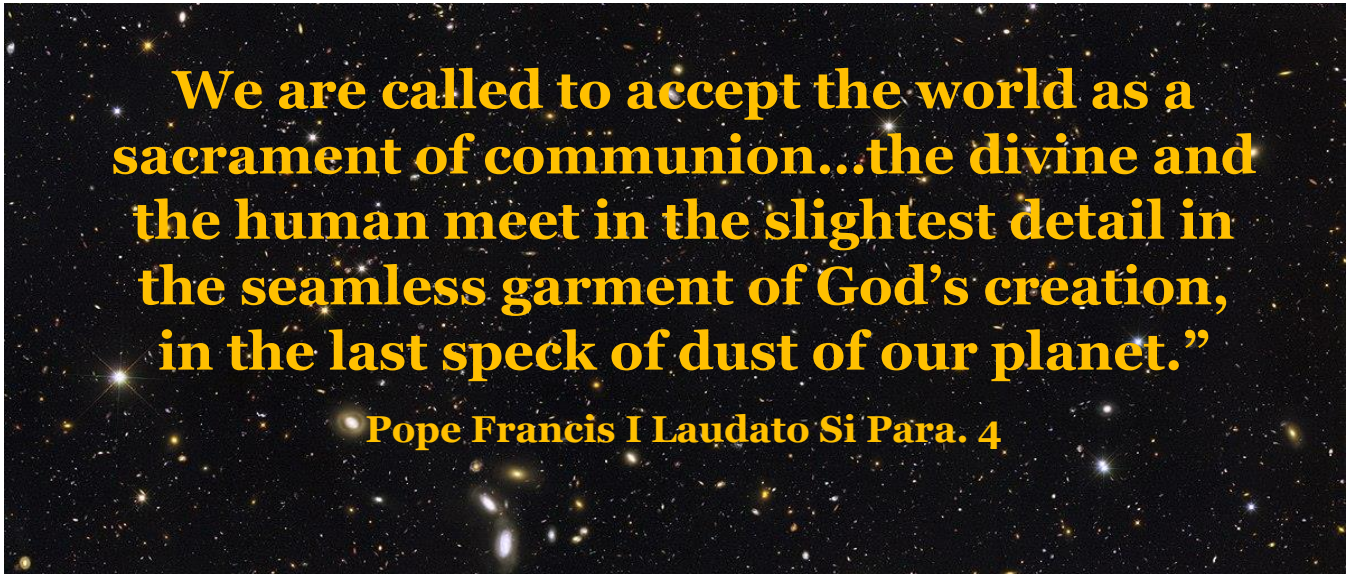
As Hopkins writes in his poem “Hurrahing in the Harvest,” these things, these things were here but the beholder is wanting.” God is not waiting for us to find God. God is already here. The problems of our world are our problems. We have created the conditions for things to go wrong, because somewhere along the way we boxed God into a box, and we became blind. We got caught up with ourselves, self-centeredness. Therefore, beholders were wanting.

The Liturgy of the Present



- The Catholic sacramental life is a training to be **beholders**.
- “See what you believe, become what you see”
- Liturgy is a lifelong pedagogy to bring us to **see** what is there, to behold what is always present; encountering grace.

So I think this is a fantastic time we are in. I know it's kind of crazy to be an optimist in the pandemic. But there's something about the moment we are living in that is a great invitation. We need to read the signs that are all around us. First of all, we are called to be present in a liturgy. If this is indeed a God-filled universe, then the whole of creation celebrates God, right? A liturgy of the present, to be a beholder. You know the Augustinians, I think it was St. Augustine said this, but don't quote me on it. The saying is “See what you believe, and become what you see. See what you believe, and become what you see.” I think the priest says this as he holds up the host. Actually a sacramental sign of what do you see and what do you believe. Liturgy is meant to be as a way of learning how to see. That's why, in the mass, you're sent on a mission to see the world with new eyes and love the world in new ways, that we can behold what is already present: a world full of grace.



We are called to accept the world as a sacrament of communion...the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet."

Pope Francis I Laudato Si Para. 4

Pope Francis in his *Laudato Si* in paragraph 4 he says "We are called to accept the world as a sacrament of communion." The Pope himself speaks of the Incarnation at the heart of the cosmos. "Divine and human meet in the slightest detail, in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet." Everything is holy, including the dust particles that are all around my apartment as well.



Teilhard's Mass on the World

"Since once again, Lord, I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself above these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself, I, your priest, will make the whole earth your altar and on it I will offer you all the labors and sufferings of the world."

I'm not saying we must get beyond mass or liturgy. That's all very fine. It has its role, but it's got to be much bigger than that. I think this little pause in not being able to celebrate the mass should actually be an invitation for us to celebrate the mass on the world. As Teilhard, and I know I've spoken about this before, he is in the Ordos Desert, the vast desert in China where he has no church, no altar. What does he offer? Everything in his midst: his work, his life, his own sufferings. He offers the goods in his midst, so he says, "Since once again, Lord, I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself above these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself, I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it I will offer you all the labors and sufferings of the world." Maybe that's the point we need to highlight here. We have to offer the sufferings as well, the difficulties of our lives, our part of our own priestly offering, the difficulties of maybe not having what we have, the difficulties for those who have lost jobs, how difficult that is in this time. But it's to reassure us that we're in this together, and that God is in our midst.



A deepening of the sacramental nature of everyday life is an awakening of consciousness that can celebrate divinity within the ordinary and, in this celebration, bring to life a sacred civilization.

Eucharist symbolizes a new way of imagining the world we live in.