

Tues., 14th 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 first section of Part IV, “Communion”.

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, and Part III, “Fire in the Earth”, that was the equivalent of the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Communion (1/2)

If the Fire has come down into the heart of the world it is, in the last resort, to lay hold on me and to absorb me. Henceforth I cannot be content simply to contemplate it or, by my steadfast faith, to intensify its ardency more and more in the world around me. What I must do, when I have taken part with all my energies in the consecration which causes its flames to leap forth, is to consent to the communion which will enable it to find in me the food it has come in the last resort to seek.

So, my God, I prostrate myself before your presence in the universe which has now become living flame: beneath the lineaments of all that I shall encounter this day, all that happens to me, all that I achieve, it is you I desire, you I await.

It is a terrifying thing to have been born: I mean, to find oneself, without having willed it, swept irrevocably along on a torrent of fearful energy which seems as though it wished to destroy everything it carries with it.

What I want, my God, is that by a reversal of forces which you alone can bring about, my terror in face of the nameless changes destined to renew my being may be turned into an overflowing joy at being transformed into you.

First of all I shall stretch out my hand unhesitatingly towards the fiery bread which you set before me. This bread, in which you have planted the seed of all that is to develop in the future, I recognize as containing the source and the secret of that destiny you have chosen for me. To take it is, I know, to surrender myself to forces which will tear me away painfully from myself in order to drive me into danger, into laborious undertakings, into a constant renewal of ideas, into an austere detachment where my affections are concerned. To eat it is to acquire a taste and an affinity for that which in everything is above everything—a taste and an affinity which will henceforward make impossible for me all the joys by which my life has been warmed. Lord Jesus, I am willing to be possessed by you, to be bound to your body and led by its inexpressible power towards these solitary heights which myself I should never dare to climb. Instinctively like all mankind, I would rather set up my tent here below on some hilltop of my own choosing. I am afraid, too, like all my fellowmen, of the future too heavy with mystery and too wholly new, towards which time is driving me. Then like these men I wonder anxiously where life is leading me... May this communion of bread with the Christ clothed in the powers which dilate the world free me from my timidities and my heedlessness! In the whirlpool of conflicts and energies out of which must develop my power to apprehend and experience your holy presence, I threw myself, my God, on your word. The man who is filled with an impassioned love of Jesus hidden in the forces which bring increase to the earth, him the earth will lift up, like a mother, in the immensity of her arms, and will enable him to contemplate the face of God.

To be continued...

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

Fr HP