

Fri., 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**To all members of our International English-Speaking Community of the Parish of Luxembourg Notre-Dame**

Last week, from Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 onwards, we started to read 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.

- On Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we started with a short biography of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin until that year 1923 when he wrote that piece of mystic literature (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/03/24/facing-unusual-times-part-1/>).
- On Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we continued with a brief introduction of the essay itself and we listened to a large excerpt of Part I, “The Offering”, in its French original version accompanied by a piece of organ music in the background (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/03/25/facing-unusual-times-part-ii-by-fr-hp/>).
- On Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we read Part I in full, “The Offering”, in its English version (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/03/26/facing-unusual-times-part-iii/>).
- On Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020, it was suggested you found some quiet time on our own over the weekend to ponder and reflect with Part I of that essay. Tips for personal prayer were given. If you wish you go back to them this coming weekend (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/03/27/facing-unusual-times-part-iv-by-fr-hp/>)

This past week:

- On Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we read Part II of *The Mass on the World*, “Fire over the Earth”, 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 (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/03/30/facing-unusual-times-part-iv-by-fr-hp-2/>)
- On Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, and today, Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, we read Part III of the essay “Fire in the Earth”, which was divided in two sections. It is the equivalent of the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/04/01/facing-unusual-times-part-vi-by-fr-hp/> & <https://catholic.lu/2020/04/03/facing-unusual-times-part-vii-by-fr-hp/>).

As was the case for last weekend, below are some tips which you may find helpful to accompany you this weekend on your own spiritual journey accompanied by *The Mass on the World* by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

*To be continued after Easter...*

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

Fr HP

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### **I. Preparing my Prayer: Preambles**

Make sure your smartphone, your computer and any other electronic device is switched off in order for you not to be disturbed whilst you take this time for silent meditation.

Determine how much time you wish to devote to this quiet time of inner reflection and stick to it (it may be 15, 20, 30 minutes, etc. Simply make sure that you can have that time in full for you alone without being interrupted).

Find a suitable place where you can really be in silence and a suitable bodily position so that you are not disturbed by an aching joint or any other physical disturbance.

Turn inwardly to God "your Father who is in that secret place" (Mt 6, 6) and ask him for the grace to genuinely acknowledge Him as Creator and Saviour and remember all his goodness and riches for all humankind (or anything else you would like to ask God for in your spiritual life today, that is: to help you acknowledge that God "is the one, only Lord", and anything that may help you "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength" and "love your neighbour as yourself" cf. Mk 12, 28-34).

N.B.: You may choose to experience such a prayer time every day. Each time though never forget to go through the preambles before you start praying. They are essential steps to prepare oneself to meet and listen to the Lord "who is in that secret place", waiting for me, waiting to talk to me, if only I am ready to take the appropriate means to listen to Him.

### **II. Praying**

On page 3 to 6, you will find diversified tips to pray which make use of the text of *The Mass on the World* by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in relationship with The Scripture

### **III. Finishing my Prayer: Talking to God "as one friend speaks to another" (*SpEx*, No. 54)**

See at the end of this document on page 7 (after the tips of prayer of Part II) how you are invited to conclude your prayer.

Fri., 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**II. *Praying with the Text of The Mass on the World by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin***

Read again slowly Part II, “Fire over the Earth”, and Part III, “Fire in the Earth”, in full and simply pause and remain with one or two sentences that are inspiring for you. Let them echo in your own life and experience.

For instance:

1. “In the beginning was the *Word*”

“Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate”

*“In the beginning was Power, intelligent, loving, energizing. In the beginning was the Word, supremely capable of mastering and moulding whatever might come into being in the world of matter. In the beginning there were not coldness and darkness: there was the Fire. This is the truth”. (Part II)*

*“In the new humanity which is begotten today the Word prolongs the unending act of his own birth; and by virtue of his immersion in the world’s womb the great waters of the kingdom of matter have, without even a ripple, been endowed with life. No visible tremor marks this inexpressible transformation; and yet, mysteriously and in very truth, at the touch of the supersubstantial Word the immense host which is the universe is made flesh. Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate”. (Part III)*

These two paragraphs give in a sense an echo of the Prologue of John’s Gospel (Jn 1, 1-18)

It may be an opportunity to read again that Prologue and ponder the unequalled daring gift that God made us in sending His only begotten Son for the salvation of human kind.

Read again that Prologue and pause wherever it gives you some occasion to pray to God, thanking Him for his goodness, thanking Him for the Creation, thanking Him for His salvation through His son, the “light of the world” (Jn 9, 5).

***Gospel according to John, Chapter 1, verses 1 to 18 (Jn 1, 1-18)***

1. In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God.
2. He was with God in the beginning.
3. Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him.
4. What has come into being in him was life, life that was the light of men;
5. and light shines in darkness, and darkness could not overpower it.
6. A man came, sent by God. His name was John.
7. He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that everyone might believe through him.
8. He was not the light, he was to bear witness to the light.
9. The Word was the real light that gives light to everyone; he was coming into the world.
10. He was in the world that had come into being through him, and the world did not recognise him.
11. He came to his own and his own people did not accept him.
12. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name
13. who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself.
14. The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.
15. John witnesses to him. He proclaims: ‘This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me has passed ahead of me because he existed before me.’
16. Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received -- one gift replacing another,
17. for the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.
18. No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.

(Source: <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/en/new-jerusalem-bible/john/1/>)

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You may also take that opportunity to pray (again) the Angelus, for instance on Saturday and/or Sunday at 12:00 noon, which gives an echo to Jn 1,14: "The Word became flesh, he lived among us".

*Text of the Angelus*

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, etc...

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to Your Word.

Hail Mary, etc...

V. And the Word was made flesh,

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord,  
Your Grace into our hearts;  
that as we have known the incarnation of Christ,  
your Son by the message of an angel,  
so by His passion and cross  
we may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection.  
Through the same Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

(Source: *A Simple Prayer Book*, Catholic Truth Society, 2010, p. 10-11 and  
<https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1138>)

You may also pray with a recorded version of the Angelus on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pWgyBmWw5g>

or with a more elaborated version of the same prayer on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwCCdBqzB58&autoplay=1&list=PL58g24NgWPly4HUWplqHmXz0GCEcFy5Vw>

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2. “But you, my God, are the inmost depths, the stability of that eternal milieu”  
 “Radiant Word, blazing Power, you who mould the manifold so as to breathe your life into it”  
 “I thank you, my God, for having in a thousand different ways led my eyes to discover the immense simplicity of things”  
 “I shall savour with heightened consciousness the intense yet tranquil rapture of a vision whose coherence and harmonies I can never exhaust”  
*“So, far from light emerging gradually out of the womb of our darkness, it is the Light, existing before all else was made which, patiently, surely, eliminates our darkness. As for us creatures, of ourselves we are but emptiness and obscurity. But you, my God, are the inmost depths, the stability of that eternal milieu, without duration or space, in which our cosmos emerges gradually into being and grows gradually to its final completeness, as it loses those boundaries which to our eyes seem so immense. Everything is being; everywhere there is being and nothing but being, save in the fragmentation of creatures and the clash of their atoms”. (Part II)*  
*“Radiant Word, blazing Power, you who mould the manifold so as to breathe your life into it; I pray you, lay on us those your hands--powerful, considerate, omnipresent, those hands which do not (like our human hands) touch now here, now there, but which plunge into the depths and the totality, present and past, of things so as to reach us simultaneously through all that is most immense and most inward within us and around us”. (Part II)*  
*“I thank you, my God, for having in a thousand different ways led my eyes to discover the immense simplicity of things. Little by little, through the irresistible development of these yearnings you implanted in me as a child, through the influence of gifted friends who entered my life at certain moments to bring light and strength to my mind, and through the awakenings of spirit I owe to the successive initiations, gentle and terrible, which you caused me to undergo: through all these I have been brought to the point where I can no longer see anything, nor any longer breathe, outside that milieu in which all is made one”. (Part III)*  
*“At this moment when your life has just poured with superabundant vigour into the sacrament of the world, I shall savour with heightened consciousness the intense yet tranquil rapture of a vision whose coherence and harmonies I can never exhaust”. (Part III)*

These paragraphs may be an opportunity to pray with one of the following Psalms (see below and p. 6 – choose only one of them for one prayer time), for instance going outside, finding a suitable place – respecting the required social distancing! - and contemplating God’s Creation.

### ***Psalm 8***

1. Yahweh our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the world! Whoever keeps singing of your majesty higher than the heavens,
2. even through the mouths of children, or of babes in arms, you make him a fortress, firm against your foes, to subdue the enemy and the rebel.
3. I look up at your heavens, shaped by your fingers, at the moon and the stars you set firm-
4. what are human beings that you spare a thought for them, or the child of Adam that you care for him?
5. Yet you have made him little less than a god, you have crowned him with glory and beauty,
6. made him lord of the works of your hands, put all things under his feet,
7. sheep and cattle, all of them, and even the wild beasts,
8. birds in the sky, fish in the sea, when he makes his way across the ocean.
9. Yahweh our Lord, how majestic your name throughout the world!

(Source: <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/en/new-jerusalem-bible/psalms/8/>)

***Psalm 18 (19) (vv. 1-6)***

1. The heavens declare the glory of God, the vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork,
2. day discourses of it to day, night to night hands on the knowledge.
3. No utterance at all, no speech, not a sound to be heard,
4. but from the entire earth the design stands out, this message reaches the whole world. High above, he pitched a tent for the sun,
5. who comes forth from his pavilion like a bridegroom, delights like a champion in the course to be run.
6. Rising on the one horizon he runs his circuit to the other, and nothing can escape his heat.

(Source: <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/en/new-jerusalem-bible/psalms/19/>)

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***Psalm 103 (104)***

1. Bless Yahweh, my soul, Yahweh, my God, how great you are! Clothed in majesty and splendour,
2. wearing the light as a robe! You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
3. build your palace on the waters above, making the clouds your chariot, gliding on the wings of the wind,
4. appointing the winds your messengers, flames of fire your servants.
5. You fixed the earth on its foundations, for ever and ever it shall not be shaken;
6. you covered it with the deep like a garment, the waters overtopping the mountains.
7. At your reproof the waters fled, at the voice of your thunder they sped away,
8. flowing over mountains, down valleys, to the place you had fixed for them;
9. you made a limit they were not to cross, they were not to return and cover the earth.
10. In the ravines you opened up springs, running down between the mountains,
11. supplying water for all the wild beasts; the wild asses quench their thirst,
12. on their banks the birds of the air make their nests, they sing among the leaves.
13. From your high halls you water the mountains, satisfying the earth with the fruit of your works:
14. for cattle you make the grass grow, and for people the plants they need, to bring forth food from the earth,
15. and wine to cheer people's hearts, oil to make their faces glow, food to make them sturdy of heart.
16. The trees of Yahweh drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon which he sowed;
17. there the birds build their nests, on the highest branches the stork makes its home;
18. for the wild goats there are the mountains, in the crags the coneys find refuge.
19. He made the moon to mark the seasons, the sun knows when to set.
20. You bring on darkness, and night falls, when all the forest beasts roam around;
21. young lions roar for their prey, asking God for their food.
22. The sun rises and away they steal, back to their lairs to lie down,
23. and man goes out to work, to labour till evening falls.
24. How countless are your works, Yahweh, all of them made so wisely! The earth is full of your creatures.
25. Then there is the sea, with its vast expanses teeming with countless creatures, creatures both great and small;
26. there ships pass to and fro, and Leviathan whom you made to sport with.
27. They all depend upon you, to feed them when they need it.
28. You provide the food they gather, your open hand gives them their fill.
29. Turn away your face and they panic; take back their breath and they die and revert to dust.
30. Send out your breath and life begins; you renew the face of the earth.
31. Glory to Yahweh for ever! May Yahweh find joy in his creatures!
32. At his glance the earth trembles, at his touch the mountains pour forth smoke.
33. I shall sing to Yahweh all my life, make music for my God as long as I live.
34. May my musings be pleasing to him, for Yahweh gives me joy.
35. May sinners vanish from the earth, and the wicked exist no more! Bless Yahweh, my soul.

(Source: <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/en/new-jerusalem-bible/psalms/104/>)

Fri., 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**III. Finishing my Prayer: Talking to God “as one friend speaks to another” (*SpEx*, No. 54)**

Shortly before the end of the period I have assigned myself for this meditation (15 min, 30 min, etc.) I gather what the Lord has given me in the depth of my heart.

I let the Spirit inspire in me a prayer to the Lord:

- I may give thanks to the Lord for His goodness for me, for the people who have been part of my personal growth, my spiritual journey, etc.
- I may ask God to help me see what little step I feel called to take in order to bring my own, limited but meaningful contribution to the common efforts deployed, to bear more fruits, to help others grow in their own faith, etc.
- I may be inclined to ask for God’s forgiveness if there is something for which I believe I require His healing power and loving care, etc.
- etc.

In all cases, I finally formally end my prayer with the “Our Father”, slowly.

N.B.:

1. After my prayer - not during my prayer! - I may take some notes in a small notebook, to remember what has been most striking for me during that time of prayer.
2. I may experience such a prayer time every day. Each time though I will never forget to go through the preambles before I start praying. They are essential steps to prepare oneself to meet and listen to the Lord “who is in that secret place”, waiting for me, waiting to talk to me, if only I am ready to take the appropriate means to listen to Him.