

**To all members of our International English-Speaking Community of the Parish of Luxembourg Notre-Dame**

Since Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we have been 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.

In the first week, after 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/>), a brief introduction of the essay itself was given and a large excerpt of Part I, “The Offering”, in its French original version accompanied by a piece of organ music in the background, was offered online (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/03/25/facing-unusual-times-part-ii-by-fr-hp/>).

We then read Part I, “The Offering”, in full 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 and some selected excerpts from the Scripture. Tips for personal prayer were given  
(See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/03/27/facing-unusual-times-part-iv-by-fr-hp/>)

In the second week, 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/>), as well as Part III of the essay, “Fire in the Earth”, which was divided in two sections. Part III 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 the previous weekend, some tips for personal prayer were given on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 (See: <https://catholic.lu/2020/04/03/facing-unusual-times-tips-for-prayer-week-ii-by-fr-hp/>).

During Holy week, we took a break.

This past week, we read Part IV of the essay, “Communion”, divided into two sections  
(See <https://catholic.lu/2020/04/14/facing-unusual-times-part-viii-by-fr-hp/>  
& <https://catholic.lu/2020/04/16/facing-unusual-times-part-ix-by-fr-hp/>).

Again today some tips for prayer are given overleaf for the weekend.

*To be continued next week...*

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

Fr HP

## 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 find 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 and 4, 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 5 (after the tips of prayer of Part II) how you are invited to conclude your prayer.

## II. *Praying with the Text of The Mass on the World by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*

Read again slowly Part IV, “Communion”, 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:

*“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.”*

These three paragraphs may be an opportunity to pray with the first part of Psalm 18(19) or with Chapter 11 from the Book of Hosea.

### ***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/>)

### ***Hosea 11, 1-9***

(N.B.: It is the Lord who speaks and who recalls all His love for His chosen people. But He also deeply regrets how they easily turned to idols. Yet the Lord does not condemn them. Whilst praying with this passage, you may feel drawn to do an examen of conscience).

1. When Israel was a child I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt.
2. But the more I called, the further they went away from me; they offered sacrifice to Baal and burnt incense to idols.
3. I myself taught Ephraim to walk, I myself took them by the arm, but they did not know that I was the one caring for them,
4. that I was leading them with human ties, with leading-strings of love, that, with them, I was like someone lifting an infant to his cheek, and that I bent down to feed him.
5. He will not have to go back to Egypt, Assyria will be his king instead! Since he has refused to come back to me,
6. the sword will rage through his cities, destroying the bars of his gates, devouring them because of their plots.
7. My people are bent on disregarding me; if they are summoned to come up, not one of them makes a move.
8. Ephraim, how could I part with you? Israel, how could I give you up? How could I make you like Admah or treat you like Zeboiim? My heart within me is overwhelmed, fever grips my inmost being.
9. I will not give rein to my fierce anger, I will not destroy Ephraim again, for I am God, not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I shall not come to you in anger.”

(Source: <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/en/new-jerusalem-bible/hosea/11/>)

Or for instance:

*“But because the term towards which the earth is moving lies not merely beyond each individual thing but beyond the totality of things; because the world travails, not to bring forth from within itself some supreme reality, but to find its consummation through a union with a preexistent Being; it follows that man can never reach the blazing center of the universe simply by living more and more for himself nor even by spending his life in the service of some earthly cause however great. The world can never be definitively united with you, Lord, save by a sort of reversal, a turning about, an excentration, which must involve the temporary collapse not merely of all individual achievements but even of everything that looks like an advancement for humanity. If my being is ever to be decisively attached to yours, there must first die in me not merely the monad ego but also the world: in other words I must first pass through an agonizing phase of diminution for which no tangible compensation will be given me”. [...]”*

*“My communion would be incomplete—would, quite simply, not be Christian—if, together with the gains which this new day brings me, I did not also accept, in my own name and in the name of the world as the most immediate sharing in your own being, those processes, hidden or manifest, of enfeeblement, of aging, of death, which unceasingly consume the universe, to its salvation or its condemnation. My God, I deliver myself up with utter abandon to those tearful forces of dissolution which, I blindly believe, will this day cause my narrow ego to be replaced by your divine presence. The man who is filled with an impassioned love for Jesus hidden in the forces which bring death to the earth, him the earth will clasp in the immensity of her arms as her strength fails, and with her he will awaken in the bosom of God”.*

How do these two paragraphs echo with my current experience whilst “facing unusual times”?

How does this sentence: *“an excentration, which must involve the temporary collapse not merely of all individual achievements but even of everything that looks like an advancement for humanity”* resonate with my current experience?

How do these two paragraphs resonate with our current liturgical time: Friday last week we celebrated Christ’s death on the cross and all this past week from Sunday onwards we celebrated Christ risen from the Dead as we listened again day after day in our liturgy to narratives of appearances to many of his followers?

**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 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.
- I may ask God to help me grow in my faith in the Risen Christ.
- 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” (Mt 6, 6), waiting for me, waiting to talk to me, if only I am ready to take the appropriate means to listen to Him.