



We Mercies

Care for Creation

As you take the next step, remember the traditional custodians of the land

GOD, CREATION AND THE INCARNATION

Jesus sets the pattern.

The Christ is waiting to be born anew.

Christian life is an adventure, God's adventure in love.

We are part of this cosmic adventure in love.

One of the most creative theologians today who are facing the challenge that modern scientific discoveries and theories are presenting to our traditional and long held faith beliefs is the Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio. Recently she visited New Zealand and the Sisters of Mercy there circulated an interview with her in the U.S. Catholic Magazine (April 2011) *Universal Savior: Ilia Delio reimagines Christ*. The topic is one of so great importance for our concept of the divine and our understanding of the Christ that we are devoting this newsletter to giving some extracts from this article. If you would like an emailed copy of the whole article please contact ymclay@bigpond.net.au.

The age of the universe alone requires us to talk about creation and Christ in new language. The whole cosmos, from the big bang on, is that Word of God being spoken in the vast spaces of the universe.

The same Word is made flesh in Jesus Christ, but he's more than the man who walked from Galilee to Jerusalem 2,000 years ago.

Christ is probably the most inclusive term we could use to talk about God's presence. Christ is the one who draws together, who unifies the new creation.

That unity is simply the love of God that binds all things together, and that's where we come in. While the fullness of God's love is revealed in Jesus, what happened to Jesus must happen to us as well.

Every age must discover Christ anew. The world has changed radically since Christians first started reflecting on who Christ is. Science has opened up for us the cosmos in a new way. Now we know that the cosmos is much older than we could have ever imagined – 13.7 billion years.

Science also reveals that the cosmos is dynamic. So ...we're talking about a very dynamic God, a God who is engaged and relational, a God of dynamic love.

These discoveries challenge us to rethink the meaning of Jesus Christ.

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Our traditional christology was formulated in the fourth and fifth centuries [and] reflects an understanding of the universe as fixed and unchanging, not dynamic and evolving.

We [do] have a tradition to work from – the belief that the Word is made flesh was really tied to creation. Christ is the firstborn of creation. Christ is God's love.

In the early Christian thinkers and later in the Franciscans, God expresses God's self in every aspect of created reality. So every person, every tree, every leaf, everything is a little word of the Word of God.

In that tradition we can talk of the whole cosmos, from the big bang on, as that Word of God being spoken in the vast spaces of the universe. And that's not metaphor. Nothing would come to be except as an expression of God's love.

What we're saying is that from all eternity the whole universe is made for Christ. The whole thing is about love, from 14 billion years ago, to the emergence of the human person, to the incarnation in Jesus Christ. It's love being stressed all along, divine love through cosmic history.

It bursts forth in the person of Jesus like a new big bang. Big Bang One is the cosmos; Big Bang Two is God now exploding in human history and giving an explicit direction to the whole course of evolution in Jesus Christ.

A "cosmic christology" is about relationship: God in relationship to us and us in relationship to God incarnate. To be related to the incarnation is to be related to one another and to all of creation. It means seeing the incarnation as the real presence of God in real time, in concrete material reality.

We tend to focus on the historical reality of Jesus. ... But to say Jesus is the Christ means that he is the long-awaited fullness of God's presence. ... Just as Jesus is the Christ, we, too, are part of the Christ mystery, the word-made-flesh, God's love incarnate, which has evolved through 14 billion years. As Raimon Panikkar said, **J e s u s i s t h e C h r i s t , b u t C h r i s t i s m o r e t h a n J e s u s a l o n e .** Christ encompasses the whole cosmos.

Christ is the way we are called to live in this mystery of God's love. As we live in it, Christ is born.

We are to go out and make Christ alive in the universe.

We've become too analytical. But the mystic is one who, through prayer, enters into the mystery of God as love. The mystical way is one of vision. ...What do you see when you see another person? When you see a rabbit? A tree? A sand dune? Do you see only sand? Or do you see something more?

A "cosmic christology" reminds us that every aspect of the cosmos is in Christ, everything is Word incarnate. Everything bears the infinite love of God, each in its own way, which means that there's nothing earthly that doesn't have some divine dignity to it.