

*Philosophical Notes -  
Teilhard de Chardin*

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**NOTES ON TEILHARD de CHARDIN**  
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1. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle both believed that the highest ideal of man the thinker must be to reflect right up to its final causes, the whole world order.
2. Man believed that the entire world with all its order could be known with sufficient certainty. The earth was the center of the universe. Around the earth were a number of concentric spheres – the sun, moon, five planets. Around these were the stars in an eighth sphere.
3. Upon the earth lived plants and animals, all placed at man's service to provide him with food and clothing.
4. Everything was in a beautiful order – as a whole – within which all things had their place and purpose – all bore witness to the wisdom and omnipotence of the Creator. This allowed man to find a meaningful place for himself within the great totality of things.
5. Everything was made for man. This was the thinking of medieval thought.
6. Dante's **Divine Comedy**, the **Summa Theologica** and all other great serious minded books expounded these ideas.
7. **Copernicus** and **Galileo** put an end to this way of picturing the world. **Van Leeuwen** (microscope) also shattered this belief.
8. This produced great uncertainty about the ordered cosmos.
9. This brought about the question as to whether man was, if not a totality accidental and superfluous-product in some remote corner of the cosmos, unimportant in this impenetrable universe.
10. Where does man fit into this vast cosmos, this universe?
11. Many scientists today have a feeling that the various natural sciences until now so carefully distinguished and separate from one another, are tending more and more to **converge** so that the boundaries between astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology appear as a fundamental **unity**.
12. Evolution, **Einstein's** contribution, and **Mt. Palomar**, have given man a new vision of the cosmos.
13. What is man's role in this vast universe?
14. This is the **fundamental work of Teilhard de Chardin**. He began to

consider this entire question, to construct in outline a coherent notion of the cosmos, and above all, man's place within this universe.

15. He also drew attention to the philosophical and theological consequences which are implied in a new vision of the cosmos.

## TO COMPREHEND THE UNIVERSE

1. What does it have to teach us about its intrinsic structure and development?
2. What is man's place in this strange and marvelous universe?
3. Why not study the universe from its phenomenon point of view rather than from its metaphysical, theological or ethical aspect? Look at the cosmic in its totality and its intrinsic cohesion to discover the meaning concealed in that totality.
4. The world is more than just planet, or the stars more than just orbiting wonders. There is a cosmic phenomenon, a deeper structure and inner dynamic that transcends all – that has a regard to what is most specifically distinctive of the whole.
5. Try to uncover the inner meaning that lies concealed within the world phenomenon.
6. Example: Study a timepiece – we can study its dimensions, weight, shape, relationship but we never understand time as such. It is meant to indicate the hour of the day, the year or years, but we really do not understand time and what it implies.
7. We can have the objective function but not the characterization of what we are talking about.
8. A new term was introduced to study all this – the term is **phenomenology** – a study of the whole set of phenomena – the totality of the cosmic phenomenon – its structure and intrinsic meaning. What is its relation to man, not in terms of his structure and his connection with other structures but above all in his interior being?
9. Man experiences his being – but how does that coincide with the world around him and especially with the cosmic world that exists?
10. The world must be viewed as a whole – a totality – rather than as a series of planets, stars, galaxies – each essentially seemingly independent of the

others.

11. Just as one studies a Ruben or a da Vinci, it is not possible to understand them unless one understand the times in which they lived, the social, political, economic and religious aspects that existed. These were not independent of the painting. So with the world. It is not independent of man.
12. The world does not have a static character but passed through a long course of evolution – but why this evolution? Why this tremendous change?
13. From our standpoint, the world falls into two parts: the past and the future – separated from each other by the elusive and ever-fleeting wall of now.
14. To understand all this, we must understand the past and endeavor to understand the future – at least the direction the world will take.

### LOOKING AT LIFE: THE OLD AND NEW WAY

1. A century ago we looked at the world as a venture into space: the size and volume of this earth, the distances between planets, stars and spiral nebulae and their relative positions to one another.
2. Slowly we have come to realize that the picture thus formed was that of only a moment – a fleeting moment – a mere fraction of a long succession of changing circumstances. We have discovered that time changes everything.
3. We saw everything constricted in dimensions, mechanistic structures and static character.
4. It was not until now that our time has realized to some extent the gigantic dimensions and amazing structure of the universe or universes.
5. People believed that the combination of all that we see, the elements, the planets, stars, galaxies, were in some way **put together** and had only an accidental link with one another. It was as if all the component parts were merely mechanical and that mutually independent entities had been conjoined artificially.
6. But science has gradually made it more and more clear that all entities are interconnected so that we see the cosmos as a mighty organic whole in which every single thing is related to everything else.
7. The world in which we live presents itself to us not as a machine, artificially contrived, but as an **organism** building itself up from within by a stage by

stage process of growth.

8. The world is not a fundamentally changeless and static whole – but an enormous process, an evolution happening and going on for thousands of millions of years and always moving on into an incalculable future.
9. Thus it points us to the fundamental and dynamic **unity** or **oneness** of the world. Our world or cosmos is not static but entirely dynamic.
10. Consequently, there are three principal characteristics that are presently considered:
  - i. we live in a universe gigantic in its dimensions
  - ii. it is building itself up organically as a cohesive whole
  - iii. it is impelled by an inner dynamic and energy towards its completion
11. The ideas of evolution (**Darwin**) are not only applicable to human beings, but also to the cosmos as a whole.
12. By “**evolution**” is really meant mutation that in the course of time has taken place both in the biological sense and in the cosmic sense.
13. Biological evolution or mutation is just a segment of a wider phenomenon: the evolution of the universe.
14. Evolution eventually was stripped of all philosophical and theological speculations. It became strictly scientific.
15. When it comes to the evolution of life as such, we are still in the dark and groping – and many explanations given are still incomplete.
16. The phenomena in nature – evolution – can be confidently affirmed that it exists without being able to account for its internal structure.
17. Difference, scientifically speaking between fact and theory: fact is something that can be actually observed while theory is something that is not open to observation and cannot be reproduced experimentally.
18. Philosophers and theologians have to acknowledge evolution as a firmly established fact – it actually happened in a particular instance of the universal evolution.
19. Our world is in a system of motion – a system of becoming and of growth. Man and the world cannot be viewed in isolation from each other. Man is the highest expression of the energies operative in this world – at least on this

planet.

20. To comprehend the world without bringing man into the picture must result in a thoroughly mutilated notion of the world and makes it impossible to see the world in its totality.
21. As **Teilhard** conceived it, “**the phenomenon of man**” is of capital and central importance for arriving at a right concept of the world. The whole evolution of the world was in the direction of man, has let the emergence of man who forms the crown and climax of it.

### AN IMMENSE PSYCHIC EXERCISE

1. To obtain our notion of the universe we have to confine ourselves to a study of this earth. We take this planet as a typical sample of what the universe is like. What happened eons of time here may and could have happened on other planets - up to a point.
2. On our planet - there is a continuous and uninterrupted flow of events and changing conditions. It is apparent that there have been three very different and clearly distinguishable elements of stages.
3. **First Stage:** The earth's crust solidified after a process of cooling down. No possible life because of the tremendous heat - there is a presence of inorganic matter not merely gaseous.
4. **Second Stage:** Begins when life first emerges and the various forms of life gradually unfold. We cannot know when this started but we have taken a minimal limit two thousand million years.
5. Fossils have taken us back 700 million years. Bacteria (blue algae) are considered as being the oldest forms of life.
6. During this second stage is the development of all forms of life: fish, birds, mammals of all types, plants - a marvelous upsurge and progress of life with an infinite variety of changing forms of life.
7. About five or six hundred thousand years ago a new phenomenon made its entry - a phenomenon so novel and potent that before very long it had begun to change the face of the earth and to add a further dimension too: the dimension of mind.
8. **Third Stage:** Man entered upon the terrestrial scene. The earth acquired a second “**envelope**” - the envelope of mind or **noosphere** - far greater than

merely life.

9. These three stages can be summed up in three words: **matter - life - mind**.
10. These three words also express the totality of our cosmos.
11. Every change, every mutation -- whether geological, biological or cultural -- presents a complex problem. Not only must man try to understand what these changes were but also attempt to trace their causes and to find out what they imply for the course of events as a whole.
12. There are two fundamental important considerations: the emergence of life and the emergence of the mind - the coming to birth of man. These are the two hinges of history.
13. There is a fundamental difference and distinction between matter and life and between animal life and man, as there is an intrinsic cohesion between all these.
14. There is a great difference between vegetal and animal life beyond the chemical elements.
15. The biosphere originated from the geosphere and the noosphere from the biosphere.
16. How did this come about? It is especially more difficult to answer in logical issues the development when it comes to man. It raises very profound scientific, philosophical and theological issues.
17. The move, the transition from geosphere to biosphere, or from inorganic to organic matter is a certainty. It cannot be reproduced scientifically or proven scientifically but all science believes this is the development that took place. How? That is the problem to unravel.
18. Teilhard saw the transition from inorganic to organic matter as plausible - **the maturation process of matter**.
19. Surface contracts to a point; the solid disintegrates, liquid boils, a change of state occurs, a **mutation** takes place -- a cell is mutated. This is a **first instant** and thus a phase mutation of a protoplasm was formed **once and only once** on earth just as nuclei and electrons were formed once and once only in the cosmos.
20. Much later -- when life had gradually developed and had reached a high degree of complexity, an equally critical phase mutation was to occur once more in the mighty process of evolution. Life was **hominized** and a new



phenomenon was manifested in the womb of life: the entry of animal - and even - eventually man.

21. When and how did the cosmos assume a new dimension -- the dimension of the mind?
22. There is a separation -- a chasm -- between man and animal.
23. Because man is reflective, man is not only different from animal but quite **other**. It is not a matter of change of nature resulting from a change of state. With man, life enters upon a new phase, the phase of reflective, conscious being.
24. This is **not** the end of matter -- we have to understand that this phenomenon of reflective consciousness must be comprehended within the totality of cosmic evolution. Life has **fanned out** into more and more complex forms.
25. This gradation is different in each life form. The current of life flows onward without interruption. On the face of it, there is little change: reproduction, multiplication, ramification, nutrition, death. This goes on in all life and in man also. Yet down deep a change has taken place -- the life-stream in man -- the object of his own reflection is doubling back.
26. Man is trying to raise himself into a new sphere in reality -- into another world of reality. Man seems to have crossed the barrier of reflection into a source of wholly new created entities previously quite inconceivable. Abstraction, logic, calculation of space and time, anxieties and dreams of love -- all of these activities of inner life are nothing else than the effervescence of the newly-formed centre as it explodes and unfolds unto itself.

## THE LAW OF INCREASING COMPLEXITY AND INCREASING CONSCIOUSNESS

1. The universe presents itself as a succession of events. The most important moments to be: build-up of matter, vitalization of matter and hominization of life.
2. This is an artificial system proposed by man. Actually everything constitutes a continuous whole and continuity in the process.
3. The question comes up whether that process, taken as a whole, shows any kind of intrinsic orientation. There does not seem to be a seesaw movement, a to a fro between different poles but rather a gradual ascent in once direction.
4. Is this being guided by a Higher Being towards a predetermined goal? This is a philosophical question and outside the immediate discussion. The immediate question is how and why does this take place.
5. It seems evident that an increasing complexity brings about a more complex organism, ending up with the most complex organism entity in our world -- **man**.
6. It is the being in whom all prior forms of complexity are repeated and surpassed. There is a fascinating rule here. Besides a progress to a larger or smaller, there is one towards what is more complex.
7. Not that there is a movement in complexity towards a more intricate mechanism, but rather they exhibit a great richness of internal organization and manifest in their structure an even greater degree of intrinsic unity and quality of concentration.
8. Note in nature the chronological series of phenomena: the spiral nebular from which the universe is built up consists principally of hydrogen atoms -- converted to helium and more complex elements.
9. These combine into complex chemicals arising as the planets.
10. From these come primary forms of life which in turn become continually more complex until finally we have the most complex of all -- man -- with self- consciousness and freedom.
11. This is called by Teilhard **INVOLUTION** and interiorzation. It is this that establishes man as the most complex -- an orientation toward an ever increasing degree of consciousness.
12. Witness the change from **homo erectus** to **homo sapiens** to **homo**

**sapiens sapiens** (the latter has a consciousness of his being and not merely the ability to think).

13. This is based to a degree on the biological evolution of the brain but even more so, a gradual growth of psychism.
14. Is there a direct connection between the two? Are the two phenomenon directly related?
15. It cannot be denied or affirmed. Man is a mind and matter constitution that is a substantial unity. There is a psychological infrastructure between the mind and matter. There is an activity that is found in both.
16. Modern neurophysiology confirms the inter-relationship between the two.
17. By consciousness one must understand every kind of psychism imaginable to the human phenomenon -- from the most rudimentary forms of interior perception to the most reflective thought.
18. Teilhard concluded that the reflected or spiritual perfection and the material synthesis of thought are but two aspects or connected parts of the once and the same phenomenon.
19. The interiority, the within of things, psychism consciousness has also to be included in the evolution of the universe and assigned its due place within the whole.
20. The exterior which related only to the observable connections and dimensions of material things -- and an interior, an interior aspects of things, which is to be envisaged as co-extensive with their exterior and in some degree present in them all, are all a part of the reality of the universe. The latter is the par excellence of man.
21. The interiority is found, in all different degrees, in all living things, both plants and animals, but different degrees. Only is man consciously aware of it and is capable of acting up it.
22. If we want to arrive at a coherent account of the universe -- we must accept that, in varying degrees, all creatures possess a certain interiority, an interior aspect.
23. The universe then appears as a coherent whole which has evolved in a particular direction. It is moving in the direction of the **mind**.
24. Man is not a spectator, observing nature and its environment. The earth is not the center of the cosmos. Man is not an off-shoot of the animal kingdom,

a member of the group of primates and the only difference between him and them is a matter of degree.

25. Man is not to be regarded as a by-product of the animal kingdom. Anatomically, man has a considerable affinity with the higher animals. Historically speaking, he is the latest arrival in the realm of living creatures. His roots are buried in the remote history of the animal kingdom.
26. Man is a phenomenon -- the aspect of reflective consciousness and of freedom. Man is a dawn of a new phase of the world's history. In man, and in him alone the world becomes conscious of itself.
27. Man does become the center -- but this is not a static center -- but a center in the constant process of evolution -- of consciousness and freedom supported by a more complex nervous system and brain. Because of this, man really does stand at the head of nature and dominates it. This gives man his status of dignity and superiority over his natural surroundings.
28. The thought that there may be yet other planets in the universe on which life has evolved in no way detracts from this idea.
29. Even on the supposition that there may be creatures on those planets who enjoy a reflective consciousness and free will, it still remains true that the axis of world evolution passes through the beings possessed of such consciousness. This only corroborates and confirms the basic idea of interiority (growth of consciousness and freedom).
30. Over millions of years, man is the crowning in the constant evolution that is taking place. This course of events is not at an end. We have no reason to think that cosmogenesis has not reached its full and final term and that from now on everything will stay just as it is until the end of time.
31. Evolution moves on -- and stretches out into the unfathomable future. Why should these laws that have governed the past -- all of a sudden lost their force and cease to have any validity for the times to come?
32. It is in man and through man that the world moves on towards greater completion. Man is the only creature orientated towards the future. The animal and plant kingdom is in an apparent stagnation period.
33. Man, on the other hand, moves steadily onward and upward. He shows no trace of any loss of vital energy. He is the only one consciously looking toward life hereafter.
34. Man's mental activity and his urge to expand are always intensifying. There is always a desire for movement ahead. Man is the new beginning. He

certainly will use his creative energies towards completing the evolutionary process.

35. Within the framework of the fundamental laws of nature, man is the architect of tomorrow's future.
36. Will man change over the centuries in stature, in physicality? He has in the past. Will he continue to do so in the future? Will the laws of evolution continue? Why should they stop? Will they stop? Can they stop?

### THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

1. The world appears as a historical process, as an ascent from matter to life, from life to mind. It is a dual aspect: from the exterior to interior; from outward to inward psychic concentration.
2. The whole of evolution exhibits a line of ascent in the direction of ever great complexity and higher consciousness.
3. All this can be seen from a study of the past. This is looking at evolution from only one aspect-- the part that belongs to the past and can no longer be altered in any respect.
4. If, however, we want to understand the world in its totality, we must take a look at the other side of the picture and give our attention to the future.
5. Evolution is **not** marking time: the evolution process in which we are involved and now occupy a central position moves on toward its ultimate completion. The future is generally looked upon only as **events** -- historical events. This is only a small insignificant part of the future.
6. The future can be reasonably predicted by scientists because the laws of science are followed. But what about the future of man as a being and not as a mere biological mortal? The future of man, not from a point of historical events, but man as a thinking man.
7. At present man is preoccupied with the immediate future of man -- culture, politics, scientific exploits, political situations, civilizations, and its survival. These are all limited in the idea of future.
8. Teilhard was not concerned with this or that aspect of man's life and how it may change in the next or two centuries. His attention was not man as an individual or as representing a particular form of culture. It was not the

philosophers view, nor the historians, nor the economists nor the scientists. It was the geologist, and the paleontologist's point -- the cosmic process.

9. Like every living creature, man has sprung into being not just as an individual but also as species. What about the human species in which evolution has reached its highest point and is going to develop from now on?
10. Up to now, evolution has been accomplished passively. Not only matter, but plants and animals and even man himself have evolved by an intrinsic drive, by a mysterious energy pent up in creation from the outset.
11. That interior energy, manifested in two aspects, namely, outward and inward, gave rise of consciousness without relying on conscious creation from voluntary effort. We have **undergone** evolution much more than we have helped in the process of bringing it about.
12. Man is now more aware of his task in history and the powers latent within him. A new sort of life has begun and man is slowly awakening with astonishment that something seems to be changing in the very structure of life.
13. In the last two centuries, man has been preoccupied with understanding the past to demonstrate that the appearance on earth of thought went hand in hand, biologically speaking, with a hominization of life. And now man is beginning to realize the advancing hominization of mankind.
14. All science is to some extent focused on the future. To a greater or lesser degree, the purpose of all our researches is to equip us better for living and to give us more and more control over coming events. Our understanding of nature is to help shape the future and what is to happen to us.
15. Our scientific knowledge would be worthless if it did not have some authoritative bearing on the future. If we are to profit from our scientific knowledge it is only to be better able to understand and predict the future.
16. This is just as true when the ideas are applied to the future of cosmic evolution. The fundamental laws that have governed cosmic evolution in the past can be reasonably applied for cosmic evolution for the future.
17. Human evolution, however, goes beyond the exact calculated laws such as scientific or mathematical. We can form a reliable picture of the future and of the Cosmos -- a consciously shared interplay of the laws of nature and human freedom. Our freedom is within a given context -- it is not in a vacuum.

18. This has nothing to do with a deterministic view of history. It has to do with human freedom. Just as one can foresee a behavior based on statistical evidence be it psychological, biological, emotional or any other means, so can there be an understanding of the future based on the interior of man and the laws that governed its evolution.
19. By studying the three main spheres in the structure of the cosmos: the sphere of matter (**geosphere**), the sphere of life (**biosphere**) and the sphere of mind (**noosphere**) -- we discover the evolution that is going on, so we can discover that evolution that is going to occur.
20. It is in the **noosphere** that evolution will take place and that the future will be found. The noosphere is not static, and it is subject to internal process of growth and development. Man stands in the center of this evolution.
21. Man is a questioning, struggling, restless being. His past indicates that he is not a static and immutable landscape in which everything falls into its fixed and final place. It is a struggle, with its ups and downs, its fierce bouts of activity and period of relative and temporary quiet towards a vague sensed ideal of greater human perfection.
22. Everything suggests that man should envisage the future as the continuation of a movement, of a curve, the direction and rhythm of which are already evident to man from the past.
23. In the plant and animal world there tends to be a movement away from unification. There is constantly a subdivision of species that is going on. Both worlds are not moving towards unity.
24. This is conspicuously absent from man. If anything, there seems to be a movement towards unifying the species. Humanity is the key word. All humanity is faced with the same problems and all are concerned with, and involved in, the same adventure that is present at the moment.
25. Slowly, man is becoming one. We are still a long way off from the goal but the pattern is becoming more and more clear. In the deeper aspects of man, there is a strong desire to be one.
26. We are coming to realize more and more that we are all bound up together, that we constitute a great human community and that from now on, in view of the tremendously powerful means of extermination at our disposal, we are locked solidly together in life and death because we have only one choice: either to live together in peace or perish together in total disaster.
27. Theoretically, there are two ways of unifying mankind: by coercion and force or by voluntary rapprochement. The first will lead only to an outward unification and never bring about an authentic interior unanimity, an intrinsic

condition for unity.

28. Only free and close association, only sympathy and affection can do that. These are the truly creative forces of the world of man.
29. In the broadest sense of the word, the ultimate idea is that of love. The word that should be used is **caritas** (a free human act whereby we will the good of another).
30. We are at the beginning of this **planetization**. We are at a moment in history when this is clearly beginning to occur. But to what final point must an evolution process of this sort eventually lead? How can we envision man's psychic life over a thousand or a million years?
31. Will man develop in a higher form of complexity from the present proportional consciousness, a psychic **high tension** of unprecedented power? If the laws of complexity-consciousness operate in the future as it has in the past, then sooner or later this should come about. When? How?
32. Teilhard sees man as mankind in terms of community -- of esprit de corps, and oneness. It is the awakening of a collective super-consciousness with its source in the moral solidarity and union of all men. It is an unitive association of super- individual and super-personal center.
33. Can man command sufficient love for a future center when that center is envisaged as an abstraction of a **thing**? Is not all real love, in the end, focused on a person, on a **someone**?
34. If we conceive of the point **OMEGA** as no more than a condition, a state, an idea, then our attachment to it will soon wither and fall away in the fact of the difficulties surmounted.
35. If, however, we can learn to see it as a **SOMEONE**, then there is a chance that love will tide us over every obstacle and that we shall find the strength to bring evolution to its final term.
36. Our existence as individuals is dependent on, and subject to, a **universal** destiny, within which each of us must fulfill his appointed task and assume his allotted place.
37. The cosmos is a spatio-temporal unity which discloses its inner structure and deeper meaning only when we come to analyze its evolutionary history and lay bare the **inside works** determining the course that history has taken.
38. In its deepest essence the world is a psychic kind of thing. It is psychic phenomenon, as ascent toward more and more perfect consciousness



based on ever more complex structures. This psychic element is the structure of the universe.

39. The cosmos as a whole is an awe-inspiring and thorough going coherence, a profound organizational unity in which everything is bound up with everything else and takes its raison d'être from its place within the whole.
40. The cosmos is not only grounded in science. It really involves much more than that. It is also meant to give meaning and orientation to our conduct, to an invitation to man to co-operate in realizing that the great end must be reached. It is this **OMEGA!**
41. Mankind is still only in its primary stage. Measured by the standards of evolution, a few thousand centuries are only a brief span of time. There is every reasonable prospect that many thousands, perhaps millions, of years still lie ahead for mankind.
42. Man is still in an **imperfect condition**. And the improvement of that condition will be based upon his **realization of love**. The future of mankind - - and thus the whole evolutionary process stands or falls by the amount of love that we are going to be able to command.
43. And finally, did not St. John say that **God is Love**...And that there is only one command; **LOVE?**

## THE CHRISTOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

### RELIGION EARTHLY AND RELIGION HEAVENLY

1. We have to learn to see the cosmos as an organically evolving whole, the inner orientation of which is centered on the emergence and upward movement of mind; so that cosmogenesis is to be envisaged in the final instance as a noogenesis.
2. This is the first step.
3. To concern one's self only with science and simply to thrust aside philosophical and theological issues – this is a psychologically untenable situation. All scientific work must, in the final instance, be supported and stimulated by some kind of **faith**.
4. There has to be a vital synthesis between the two.
5. The mental outlook of people today is governed predominantly by the natural sciences and the view of the world which they have engendered.
6. There seems to be two discoveries:  
  
**First:** the structurally linked immensity of space which imbues our accustomed way of looking at things with a strain of **universalism**;  
  
**Second:** the discovery of the structurally linked and progressive **duration of time** which in turn introduces into our accustomed perspectives the idea of a possible unlimited progress (futurism).
7. Universalism and Futurism conjoined in our perception of a universe in global growth (evolution).
8. This assessment is most important. It is undeniable that the notion we form of the universe affects the our whole interior life and also our religious sense.
9. Through the undeniable attraction exerted by a close and palpable immensity we feel a demand made upon our natural inclination to worship ...within a few generations mankind has been literally and spontaneously converted to a kind of **religion of the world**, vague in its dogmas yet perfectly clear in its moral orientations. These are: the acknowledged predominance of the totality over the individual; a passionate belief in the worth and potentialities of human endeavor; a lively awareness of the

sacred nature of scientific enquiry in all fields. Just because science has discovered the natural unity of the world – and just how vast it is – modern man can no longer see God, save in the prolongation of a universal progress or maturation.

10. Say what we will, our century is religious – perhaps more so than any other ... only it has not yet found the God whom it can worship. We might say that a new, until now unprecedented, form of religion (a religion that no one has yet been able to visualize or describe because a vision of the universe big enough and organic enough to serve as a basis for it has been wanting) is germinating in the heart of man – in the trail blazed by the idea of evolution.
11. Ever since the Renaissance this natural religiousness, this form of faith and veneration, has been gradually gaining mastery over the soul of man. It has broadened out and intensified over the years, as scientific investigation has made clear, to more and more stupendous effect, the size and nature of this universe and brought home to us just how much mankind may be able to achieve in the way of furthering the progress of this world of ours. Our whole modern attitude to life turns fundamentally upon this sense that we are responsible for the world; and it is this that lies at the root of what has come to be called **modern atheism**.
12. The fact that we are becoming aware of our freedom and our responsibility toward the future is a valuable definitive achievement of contemporary thinking. The lucid aversion to fatalism, to a passive sufferance of life, is perhaps one of the most important things to have transpired within the frame of mind of men today, something with which every world view, every philosophy, every religion must from now on come to terms. The will to improve the world with the aid of more science, more techniques, better organization of its economic and social life – more culture too – represents in contemporary man the most radical force stimulating and actuating his life.

### THE THREEFOLD TASK OF PRESENT DAY THEOLOGY

1. The situation and the renewal which is so badly needed is to be found not in a departure from traditional theology but in a deeper exploration of it.
2. **(1)** Thinking of the new perspectives reached by science; the new picture of the world. Catholic theology is still held in the grip concerning the universe that is extremely narrow and defective. This extremely **cribbed** and static picture undoubtedly had an influence on the way in which the church interpreted and gave formal expression to some of the dogmas of Christianity.

This is especially in the area of theory of biological evolution. Theologians think and express God's becoming man within the framework of a static view of the world. It is imperative to understand the Incarnation in the setting of this new world. At all events our proclamation of the faith has got to be cut loose from an outmoded world view – which, alas, is not yet altogether the case.

**(2)** Catholic dogmas – the unchanging character which is a matter of certainty for every believer – should be confronted with the picture that modern science presents of the world and with that sense of religion which is a product of it.

It is **not** enough to affirm that there is no conflict, no incompatibility, between the dogmas of Christianity and the perspectives of contemporary science. The important thing is to show how the two terms may be brought together concretely, and a harmonious relation established between them.

There has to be statement in the setting of a world conceived in dynamic terms. The dimensions of the traditional view expressed in cosmic terms: creation, spirit, evil, God, original sin, the cross, the resurrection, the parousia, charity – all these notions, once they are transposed to a **genesis deminsion**, become amazingly clear and coherent.

3. The central problem in this confrontation is undoubtedly that of the relation between God and the world.
4. The point of contact between God and the world is located, for the Christian, in the person of the God-man. Hence the necessity for us to give profounder consideration to Christology and to examine, in the sources of Revelation, the place occupied by Christ in the divine plan and purpose of the world.
5. This relation of Christ to the world – in today's world – is what needs to be understood.
6. The **third point** is **ethos** – renewal of Christian spirituality. An orientation in which science and faith encounter each other and in which the things of earth and the things of heaven, which are man's occupation and concern, may discover their essential unity.

What value does revelation attach to human toil and man's life on this earth? In this world, for the Christian, just a kind of transit-camp, an ante-chamber to eternity, or does it also represent a challenge, a task and a vocation? Do the any forms of human activity – whether in the field of science and of art or in those of techniques, economics, politics, the duties of home, and so forth possess an intrinsic value, an intrinsic orientation with a religious significance?

What it comes to in the end is the old problem of Christian humanism, which aspires to an **incarnational Christianity** and tries to assimilate cultural and social values to the Christian vision of the world.

7. To sum up: (1) have an attitude of openness towards the results and current perspectives of the natural sciences; (2) make the effort to transpose the dogmas of Christianity into the framework of the new picture that we have of the world; (3) ponder seriously on the religious value of human endeavor in the temporal plane.

## COSMOLOGY AND CHISTOLOGY

1. Teilhard approached Christianity from two different directions:
  - a) as a purely historical phenomenon;
  - b) as a theological phenomenon
2. Christianity comprises the following elements:
  - 1) a person of Christ occupies a central place;
  - 2) that Christ will return at end of Age;
  - 3) the return of Christ must be prepared for by the gradual building up of the Mystical Body;
  - 4) the ethics of Christianity is summed up in the commandment love our neighbor
3. There is one problem – the place and function assumed and fulfilled by Christ in the whole of cosmic history. This is not a static world. Is the link between Christ and the world merely accidental? No fall, no incarnation?
4. The cosmos had been created by God without any connection with the God-man. The early Christian concept kept the divine decree regarding the Incarnation outside the original plan of creation and therefore accorded the Incarnation itself no place in the concrete order of things.
5. This makes it difficult to say specifically what place Christ has in the world. It is only within a sinful humanity that he has any function to fulfill: the function of Redeemer, from which a state of moral and juridical relatedness to the whole world ensues as a consequence.
6. Christ is held to be the goal and crowning point not only of the supernatural but of the natural order. Independently of the fall – the whole creation was planned with the God-man in view. Even if man had not sinned, the Word would have become man; for truth is that Christ is the **supreme revelation**

**of God** in this world and the **masterpiece** of God's creation.

7. The Incarnation was contained, therefore, in the original plan of creation. Christ's place in the cosmos is an organic function: that is, the world is centered on Christ in respect of its intrinsic structure, in its actual mode of being.
8. The principal task of theology today consists in analyzing the relationship in the matter of existence and influence which links Christ and the universe.
9. The whole point is to indicate the place of Christ in a creation with an evolving and convergent character. This offers a better chance of understanding Christ's place and function than was the case with the early fathers.
10. The whole of cosmic evolution forms the keystone and climax of this concept. The power of attraction given to the whole evolutive process is this intrinsic drive and orientation. This universal cosmic center of human – and thus also of cosmic – evolution, in which everything is bound in the end to attain its unity and consummation, is signaled in the phenomenology of the universe by the term: **the OMEGA POINT**.
11. Everything has its being in Christ. Everything is brought into unity by him. In him everything finds its completion, not only in that order of grace but in that of nature too.
12. The essence of Christianity is nothing more or less than a belief in the world's coming to be **one in God through the Incarnation**.
13. While there is a distinction between nature and grace, there is no separation: they interpenetrate each other and the distinction which we draw between various **planes** in the work of God conceals a large measure of anthropomorphism. God's work is **one**.
14. The more one considers the fundamental laws of evolution, the more one becomes convinced that the universal Christ would not be able to appear at the end of time unless he had previously inserted himself into the course of the world's movement by way of birth.
15. Christ is linked, not simply in a moral or juridical context but as it were structurally and organically with the cosmos. In and with every process of creation the world is oriented upon him. All things are created in him: **in ipso condita sunt universa**.
16. Through Christ the world acquires its ultimate unity and cohesion. The point **Omega** is indeed the element at which multiplicity is reduced to unity and on

which all the threads of history converge.

17. Christ is the very meaning of history. The entire lower world is centered in man – but man is centered in Christ and Christ in God.
18. Cosmogogenesis eventuated through biogenesis in a noogenesis – but the noogenesis is consummated in a Christogenesis.
19. Already co-extensive with space and time, Christ, by reason of his position at the world's central point, is also automatically co-extensive with the scale of values which extend from the peaks of Spirit to the depths of matter.
20. The Greek Fathers developed this point of Christ's place in the universe with the expression of **Pantokrator**.
21. The **Parousia** – that is, the return of Christ in glory at the end of time – occupies a central place. This is the point of the **Omega**.
22. Christ defers his return until the human community has realized to the full its natural potentialities and thereby becomes qualified to receive through him its supernatural consummation.
23. And thus we are to understand the whole of history as an ascent of the whole world toward its consummation in the natural and supernatural order – and the two forms of completion do not in any way conflict.

“And when all things have been subjected to him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to the One who subjected all things to him, and God **may be all in all**”

## About Brother Eugene Trzecieski



Eighty-two year old Marist Brother and teacher, Br. Eugene Trzecieski, has worked at Christopher Columbus High School for the last 43 years. Br. Eugene became a Marist Brother at age 17, as soon as he graduated from high school. He started his teaching career in 1950 at New York's St. Ann's Academy and later taught at Archbishop Molloy High School, NY, and worked at the Marist Brothers Training House in Esopus, NY, as the Director of Novices. Over the years he has served Columbus as Academic Dean, Treasurer, Teacher of Latin, Philosophy, Humanities, and English. He was also a key leader in Columbus extra-curricular activities, moderating the National Honor Society for 25 years, creating the school's Student Activities Committee, and founding the Columbus Arts Society for Adults and the Erasmus Culture Club for students. For years he also was in charge of the gardening and landscaping of the school's campus, a job he loved because of his great passion for nature.

Br. Eugene taught at Columbus from 1968 until 2010. Thousands of alumni from the last five decades remember him most for his famous 12th grade "Philosophy of Being" class, which he taught for 43 years straight. In fact, Br. Eugene holds the title of the teacher who taught at Columbus for the most number of years. Many alumni will also remember that Br. Eugene enlivened the campus with his beloved pet, Brandy, a St. Bernard that won the hearts of all the students and became the school's mascot.

Although he no longer teaches, Br. Eugene is still very actively engaged at Columbus, handling all of the school's paper copying and keeping the school archives, a collection that he started in 1968 and that today contains hundreds of bound books and files which he neatly organizes. It was Br. Eugene who came up with the idea to publish the school's first history book to commemorate the school's 50th Anniversary in 2008. He wrote the book entitled "50 Years Exploring Christopher Columbus High School" with co-author and fellow teacher, Mr. John Lynskey.

Around Columbus Br. Eugene is respected and loved by faculty, alumni, and students. He is known as a wise and gentle man who is demanding, kind, and inspiring. He always referred to his students as gentlemen, and never found the need to send a student to detention. Early in his career he came up with a quote that he began teaching to his students; "A mind made noble, leads a noble life." It has been his motto ever since.



**“SOMEDAY, AFTER  
MASTERING THE  
WINDS, THE WAVES,  
THE TIDES AND  
GRAVITY, WE SHALL  
HARNESS FOR GOD  
THE ENERGIES OF  
LOVE, AND THEN, FOR  
THE SECOND TIME IN  
THE HISTORY OF THE  
WORLD, MAN WILL  
DISCOVER FIRE.”**

**Teilhard de Chardin**