

"Our Dear Retreat" - Epiphany 2014

EMMANUEL EMERGES

MORNING — THE FIRST DAY

Praise

I arise with amazement at the presence of the Holy One.

I arise with gratitude for life.

I arise with hope that all shall be well.

I arise with courage to meet what will be difficult.

I arise with conviction to do what is life-giving.

I arise with amazement at the presence of the Holy One.

I arise with gratitude for life – dynamic, unfinished, inter-connected, unfolding.

Song

HOW GREAT THOU ART

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

**Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!**

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee ...

Space

*On a table, in the midst of the group or at your special chair, put a candle
and some symbol of creation — the world, the solar system, the cosmos
Begin your prayer in semi-darkness. Ask for the light you need.*

Word

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light was good. Genesis 1:1-4

*Light the candle and let its light fill the dark space.
Remember where you were during the first moon landing on July 20, 1969.
What does that moment mean for you now?*

About 14 billion years ago a single numinous speck exploded in what is called the Big Bang, an outpouring of matter and energy that is still going on. This material expanded according to a very precisely calibrated rate, unfurling neither too fast nor too slow. Its lumpy unevenness allowed swirling galaxies to form as gravity pulled particles together and their dense friction ignited the stars. The lights went on in the universe.
Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ "Seeking the Living God..."

*Move your creation symbol to be in the light of the candle.
Look carefully at the pictures from the Hubble telescope.
As a part of the unfolding universe, how do you feel drawn to pray this morning?*



DAYTIME — THE FIRST DAY

*Light your candle even though in the brightness of the day,
its light might be woven into the natural light of the day.*

Word

Psalm of an Emerging Emmanuel

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," I pray with upraised eyes.
Drop down, O Dew of Heaven, that God might walk and talk on earth,
Might heal and feed our sin-soaked world.

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,
My prayers like searchlights comb the starry winter skies.
Descend from the black hole of some neighboring galaxy
To green with your grace our barren earth.**

Such an Advent waiting prayer can be a lifelong profession of patient longing,
Unless I know, with all my heart, that Emmanuel not only comes down
But also comes forth and emerges.

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,
Come forth from deep within me with Christmas luminous beauty.
For my heart has become the sacred crib, the birthing place of God-among-us.**

Peace on earth and justice for all will only become manifest in our lives
When enough of your sons and daughters awaken to your divine design
That has made each of us an emerging Emmanuel.

Edward Hays, *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*

What does the idea of an "emerging Emmanuel" stir in you?

As I see it, there have been two great moments in the history of time. The first is the moment when God-in-relation 'within' becomes God-in-relation 'without'. In other words, the Big Bang or Flaring Forth. The universe is born as a cosmic system of relations reflecting the being-in-relation of its creator. It's God that flares forth into the cosmos. We use the poor word 'love' to describe the impulse which brought the 'with-iness' of God to express itself in creation. If we want to learn more about the creator, we need to read and study the universe. Elizabeth Mary Strub, SHCJ

*If you have access to the Delio DVD, this would be a good time to look at some or all of
part two, and/or re-read Delio's LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF NATURE.
Make note of what attracts your attention and interest. Return there to pray.*

Reflection

Today's readings highlight some of the many ways we have come to understand creation. By whatever names, images, or facts of scientific discovery, creation is Emmanuel: God-with-us.

*Think of your favorite places to be in relation with God in nature.
What is it about the sea or the sky or wind that draws you to Emmanuel?*

Give thanks to God ... Emmanuel.

*Think of family members, friends and colleagues, poets, prophets
and other living beings who have been Emmanuel for you.*

Incarnation is God with us — in friendship.

Give thanks to God ... Emmanuel.

*Think of the brokenness that scars the human family.
Our Jewish friends call us to join in "Tikkun Olam"—mending the world.
Emmanuel is there, too, suffering with the people.*

Ask for strength and creativity ... Emmanuel.

Creation is Emmanuel: God with us

What thoughts, images, desires arise as you stay quietly with this truth?



Prayer

O God of the universe, your vastness is beyond our power to imagine, but you have come among us and revealed yourself in Christ. As we continue to celebrate this coming, may we recognize again our dignity and serve one another with respect for the diversity of your gifts to us. We ask this for all creation in union with Christ who radiates in all and through all to your honor and glory forever. Amen.

EVENING — THE FIRST DAY

*Light your candle and let its light spread
into the darkness of the place where you are praying.*

Word



The shepherds of the galaxies, the Hubble Telescope astronomers, have released photos of the universe from fourteen billion years ago. As I attempt to fathom the very notion of billions of years, my gaze settles on a large maple tree outdoors. Nestled in the fork of the trunk and a snow-covered limb, a squirrel wrapped in its tail is sleeping. Its ability to slumber

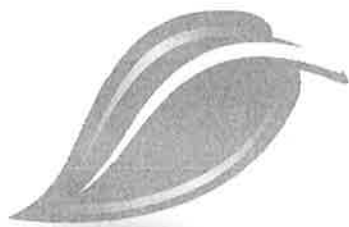
while so precariously balanced is as mind-boggling as the distance of light-years — equally deserving of the “I-don’t-know-what” of God. Awareness is a gift. Meditation on God’s mystery, whether it be the creation of the universe or the ingenuity of providing squirrels with tails for winter sleeping, is a gift. The presence of God in one’s life is a gift. Carmelites of Indianapolis, *Hidden Friends*



*What in the vast mystery of creation boggles your mind, gently comforts your heart?
How have you been aware of the presence of God today?
What hope stirs in you for tomorrow?*

Reflection with Music — *your choice*

The universe is unfinished. Creation is unfolding. Human choices make a difference. We have been blessed with a spirit of newness in Pope Francis. We are on a path of rapid discovery ... who he is, how his vision and values will shape our church, how others will be drawn to goodness because of him. So in the spirit of this day, and in thanksgiving for Francis, let us bring together all of the graces of today by praying the Cantic composed by Francis of Assisi.



Most High, all powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing. **To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no one is worthy to mention Your name.**

Canticle of Creation

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.



Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong. **Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.**



Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. **Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.**

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living being can escape. **Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.**



Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility. **AMEN**

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INCARNATION — GOD'S SELF-COMMUNICATION

MORNING — THE SECOND DAY

*Light your candle and alongside the cosmic symbol, add a nativity/Christ child figure.
If possible, listen to some quiet music — for example, Gregorian chant for Christmas:
"Dominus dixit ad me..."*

Praise

I arise with amazement at the presence of the Holy One.
I arise with gratitude for life.
I arise with hope that all shall be well.
I arise with conviction to do what is life-giving.
I arise with eyes ever alert for beauty.
I arise with openness to greater truth.
I arise with desire for continued transformation.
I arise with amazement at the presence of the Holy One.
I arise with gratitude for life.

Song

OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN

Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the Source, the Ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see. Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessed when the Virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, bears the Savior of our race,
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed His sacred face. Evermore and evermore.

Word

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2: 6-7



Word

A Psalm of Longing from Edward Hays, *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*

My spirit hungers for your love, O Divine Maker of hearts,
For the taste of your joy and the aroma of your peace.

**May this time of prayer fill me with the whisper of your presence
And let me feel the touch of your hand upon my heart.**

How I long for the depths of your love, to know your quiet constancy,
The feast of your friendship that leads me without end.

**Oh, how my soul longs for you. You elude all names we give you
And dwell beyond the grasp of brilliant minds.**

Your essence pulses within every atom yet extends beyond the far frontiers of space,
Unscanned by the strongest telescopes.

Awaken me to your presence, now, this moment, in my heart.

*When all was calm and silent
and the night was half spent,
Your all-powerful word
bounded from your throne in heaven*

Wisdom 18:14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The
light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it. John 1:1-5

Reflection

What are the deepest longings of your heart today?

What gives you life in the ordinariness of most days?

*When you take some "sabbatical" time, even for an afternoon,
what do you choose to do to be refreshed? Do you do it often enough?*

Intercessions

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, who became flesh and dwells among us this day and always.

Christ shall be called Wonderful! Christ shall be called Peace!

On the first Christmas day new joy entered our world;
may we try by our lives to share joy with others each day.

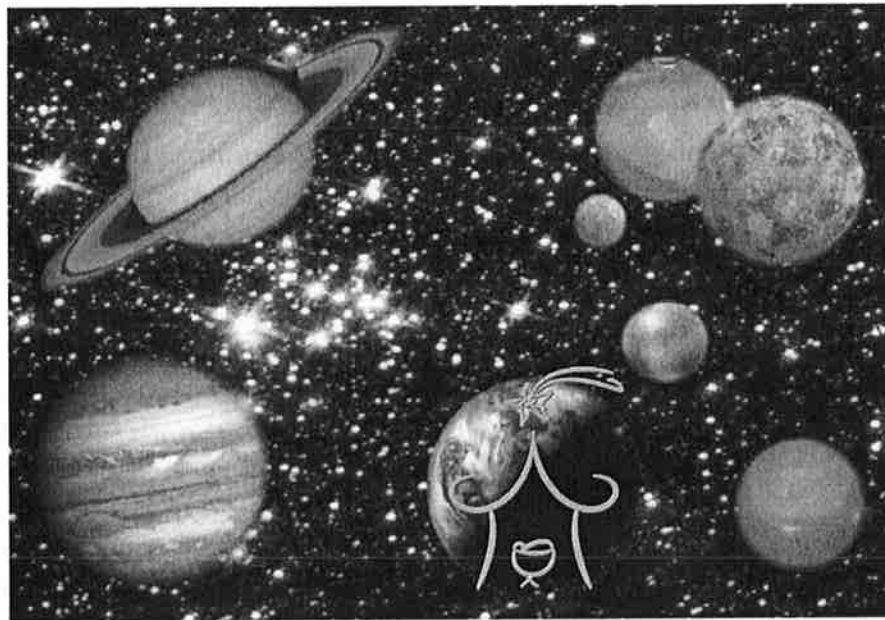
On the first Christmas day fresh hope entered our word;
may we bring hope to those who are heavily burdened.

On the first Christmas day love was visible in a child;
may we show our love for others in concrete ways of friendship and service.

On the first Christmas day the promise of peace on earth was proclaimed;
may we be lovers of peace and demonstrate this love by reflective responses to life's challenges and trials.

On the first Christmas morning new glory broke through the darkness; we rejoice in our brother, Jesus.

**May we deepen our relationships with God and one another in love and reverence.
This we ask through Jesus, born this day and through all ages. Amen.**



OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN

O ye heights of heaven, adore Him; angel hosts, His praises sing;
Powers, dominions, bow before Him and extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring.
Evermore and evermore.

Daytime — The Second Day

OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN

Word

As I see it, there have been two great moments in the history of time. The second moment, dear to us and to anyone who has prayed her way through the Exercises, is the Incarnation (creation being the first moment). Now that there are thinking beings to catch the meaning, God-in-relation overflows into creation to become 'created' in Jesus. God-in relation turns inside out in an act of love which points the way back to its source. We learn that we exist in loving relation to all of creation and creation's God. Elizabeth Mary Strub



To explore the meaning of Jesus Christ in evolution, it is helpful to keep several ideas in mind. The first is that creation and incarnation are not two separate events but one process of God's self-giving and self-communication. When we talk about the incarnation, we are also talking about creation. The God who creates is the God who saves because salvation is new creation. Ilia Delio, *The Emergent Christ*

Reflection and Discussion

We will never exhaust probing the meaning of the incarnation: God's desire to share God's self with us; total self-gift: kenosis; becoming human that we might become divine. But how quickly we skip over what we could learn from Jesus as a child.



In "Lessons from the Book of Nature" Ilia Delio writes: *"We are so weighed down by our worries and concerns; we are divided within and without. Jesus asks that we become like little children (Mt 18:3), to live in the awesome present; to surrender in love to a God of incomprehensible love; to see the beauty and goodness of every person and living being, to celebrate the wonder of life."*

What we learn from nature is no different from what we learn from the child Jesus...and all children: *"...equilibrium, sameness, fixity of species or perfect order is not what we are about. Rather nature [and the holy child] shows signs of playfulness, spontaneity and creativity."*

Are we ready for adventure, risk, spontaneity, creativity and novelty?
Are you ready to spend time this afternoon in this (child-like) spirit? How?

How would you like to live this part of the incarnational mystery today?
Do something this very afternoon in a child-like way — sing, dance, go to the park, PLAY!

*I was God's delight day after day,
Rejoicing at being in God's presence continually,
Rejoicing in the whole world,
and delighting in humankind.*

Proverbs 8:30-31

Evening – The Second Day

After some "Sabbath time" this afternoon, begin the evening by giving
thanks for the enjoyment of doing what you love.
Reflect on the need you might have, each week, of a "day without a "to do" list.

Word

"What do you need to cease from?" Whenever I talk with an individual or a group about Sabbath keeping, I ask that question. "Rushing around and being busy all the time" is the most common answer. The second most common answer: "Multitasking, always trying to do more than one thing at a time." The Sabbath gives us a delightful opportunity to consider where we need to slow down, where our lives have too much motion and activity. Once we have decided when to observe a Sabbath, we need to address two practical questions:

- On my Sabbath, what will I cease from doing?
- What can we do on the Sabbath to experience true rest and draw near to God?

Lynne M. Baab, *Sabbath Keeping*

When you think about ceasing from doing some of the activities that
usually fill your days, what fears come up?
What might happen, both positive and negative?

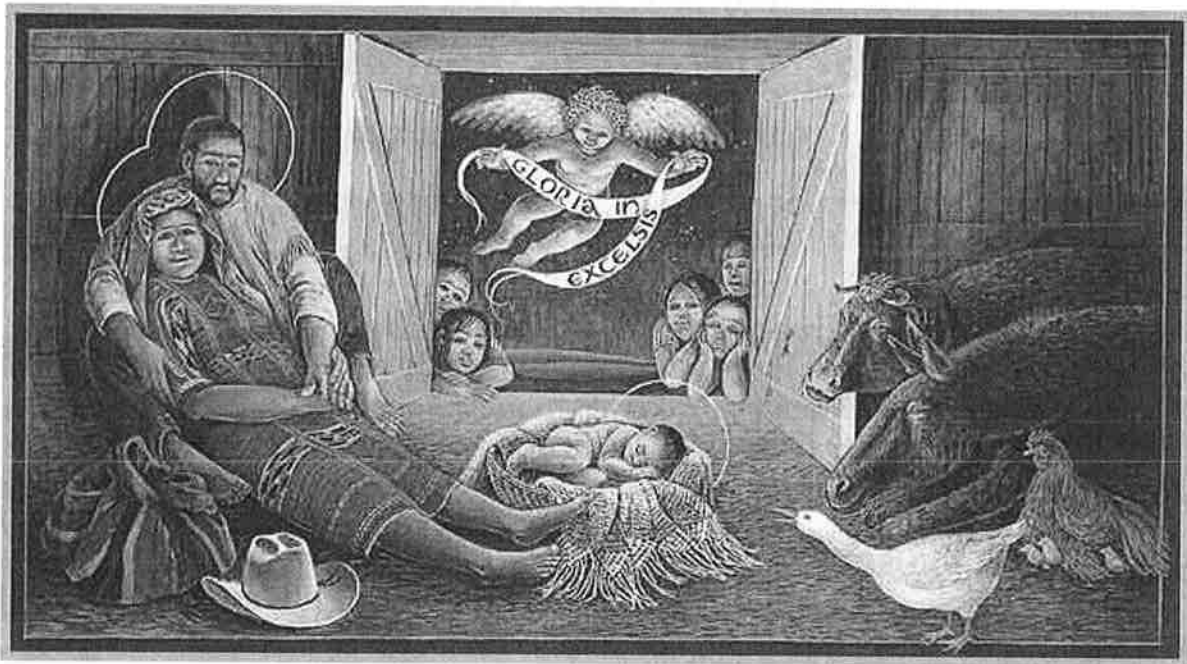
*Pray about your reactions to the invitation to cease from certain things on your Sabbath.
Ask for God's guidance about what is best for you to cease from doing.*

Bring your fears to God.

*What is it that would enable you to experience resting in God?
What helps you to be thankful? To listen to God?*

**For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel:
In returning and rest you shall be saved;
In quietness and in trust shall be your strength. Isaiah 31:15**

This evening, rest in knowing God's love for us.



OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN...

This is He whom Heaven-taught singers sang of old with one accord;
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets promised in their faithful word.
Now He shines, the Long-expected; let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory
Evermore and evermore.

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INCARNATE RELATEDNESS

Morning — The Third Day

Praise

I arise with amazement at the presence of the Holy One.

I arise with gratitude for life.

I arise with hope that all shall be well.

I arise with courage to meet what will be difficult.

I arise with conviction to do what is life-giving.

I arise with eyes ever alert for beauty.

I arise with openness to greater truth.

I arise with desire for continued transformation.

I arise with compassion for the hurting ones in the cosmos.

I arise with grief still settled in my spirit.

I arise with a sense of kinship with all whom I love.

I arise with determination to make good choices in using my time.

I arise with willingness to help those who will need my care.

I arise with hesitation as I think about pain that may come.

I arise with longing for ever greater inner freedom.

I arise with happiness, knowing I am invited to live life fully.

I arise with love for the Holy One, my Intimate Companion.

I arise with amazement at the presence of the Holy One.

I arise with gratitude for life.



Song

ALL ARE WELCOME

Let us build a house where love can

dwell and all can safely live,

A place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;

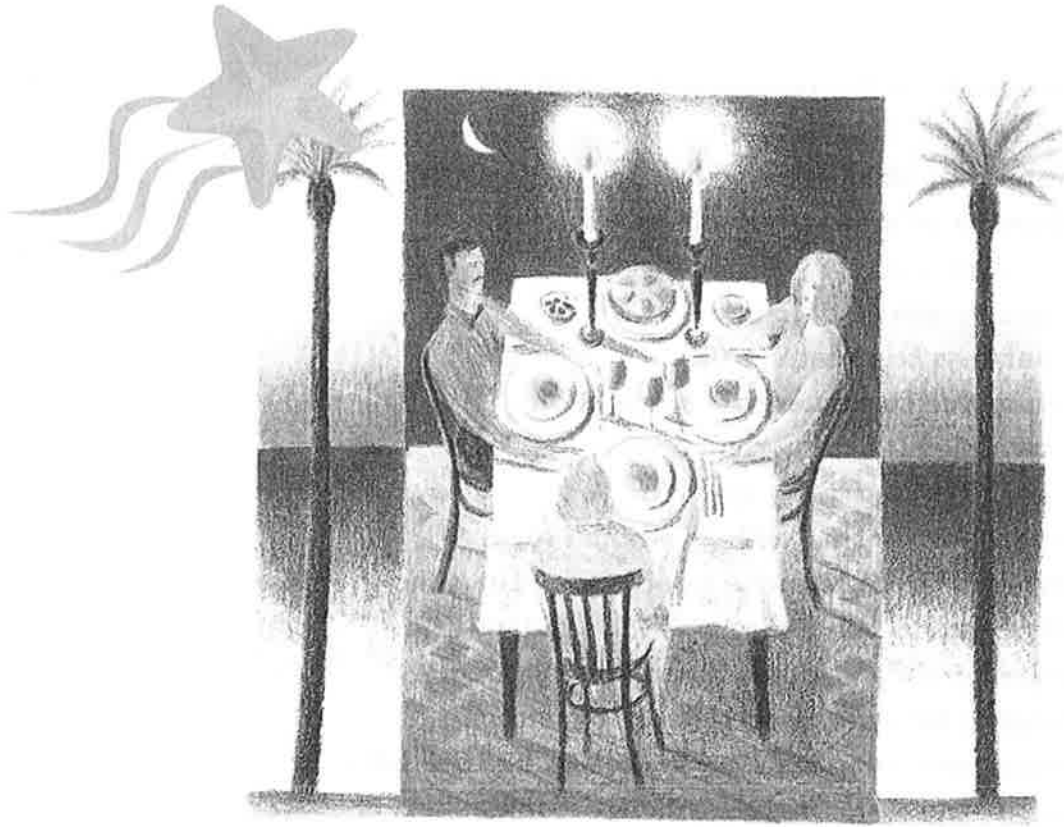
Here the love of Christ
shall end divisions;

All are welcome, All are welcome, All are welcome in this place!



Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

All are welcome, all are welcome, All are welcome in this place!



Word

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely...When Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable..."sit at the lowest place". ... "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or rich neighbors...but invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind."

Luke 14: 1-13

*Light the candle on your prayer table
and add to the other items already there, a symbol of meal sharing.*

Reflection

*Call to mind the people, places and events that, for you, speak of brokenness.
Is it illness, poverty, greed, narrow-mindedness that is the cause?*

Prayer

God, lord of heaven and earth, this morning we express gratitude for the birth of Jesus, our brother and savior. He is the daystar from on high, the lightbearer who each day brings the dawn to us who watch patiently for his coming.

Lord Jesus, you have brought daylight and freedom to our imprisoned hearts; and you are with us today in the stranger, the hungry, the unwanted.

**Spirit of truth, lighten our dark hearts:
kindle our cold love: that we may echo
wholeheartedly the message of love
which is now ours to share. We make
this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.**



Word

Jesus showed us a "conscious love," one that sees, feels, and unites with others for the sake of life. Conscious love gives birth to unity because it is love for and with another; it is the type of love that sees the world with new eyes and a new heart; it is love that is not afraid of oneness because it knows the One-God at the heart of life...Jesus initiates a new Big Bang; his life symbolizes a new Singularity, an explosion of cosmic love that ushers in a new presence of God. ...if creation is to move forward towards its completion and transformation in God, what took place in the life of Jesus must take place in our lives as well. God evolves the universe and brings it to its completion through the cooperation of human beings. Thus, it matters what we do and how we live in relation to God, for only through our actions can we encounter God.

Ilia Delio *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*

*Look at your candle, your cosmic symbol, your nativity figure,
your sign of meal sharing and ask:*

do these all come together for me each day?

*If not, what would bring about a greater integration of
creation-incarnation-cosmos-human family?*

*Glory be to God whose power working in us can
do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.*

Daytime — The Third Day

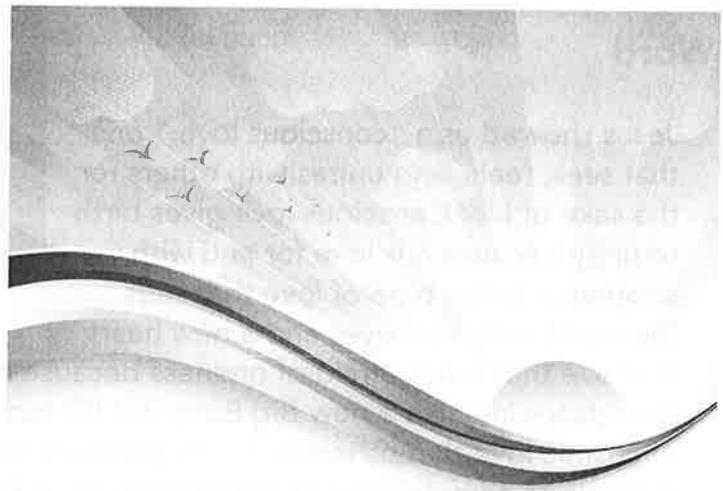
Word

We are privileged to live in a time of awakening. Gradually the meaning is becoming more clear. Incarnate relatedness in love is meant to inform our spirituality, drive our reverence for creation, our care of the earth, our work for justice, our solidarity with the poor, and whatever planning we do. As we struggle to do this we are "being turned into the one we reflect". Elizabeth Mary Strub

God is not a lonely deity at the top of the medieval cosmos, spinning the stars and governing the heavens; rather, God is selfless love poured out by the power of the Spirit as dynamic newness of love desiring a beloved — to make whole, to unify, to evolve toward an infinite depth of love.

Christianity is about future...new life....not historical nostalgia for something lost in the past...We have lost sight of Jesus emerging in history as something new, a new way of being for a new world, a new Big Bang, a new relatedness, making wholes for a whole new future.

To enter **New Being** we must be grasped by it...While the natural world flows more readily into patterns of unity according to its own natural cycles, we humans are disconnected. We are created for union, but we have the capacity to disconnect ourselves from wholeness. We can refuse to become whole, to grow, and to enter into relationship with other humans and nonhuman nature. To become New Being is to be open to new patterns of relationship, to long for wholeness through union with others. Ilia Delio, *The Emergent Christ*



*Think back over these days of prayer.....recall familiar themes....
pause over enduring questions.....highlight new ideas.....
express gratitude for the creative grace
that helped you understand how these are all related.*

*How would I express my longing for wholeness?
What gift do I bring to situations of brokenness?
In what ways and with whom am I being called to deeper relationship?*

Evening — The Third Day

Song

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est

Prayer

From uplifted hearts, full of gratitude, may this prayer of thanksgiving rise to You, God of all gifts and of great generosity. We thank you for the times of stillness we have enjoyed these past few days; times which allow us to listen to that holy river of prayer flowing in the heart; for the presence of your holy Spirit within, the Spirit who prays continuously.

These times of quiet heal us, within and without, replenish our spirit with new strength and prepare us to meet the struggles of every day with renewed hope and joy. Like your Son, Jesus, Who climbed mountains at night, who retreated deep into the desert to find you in stillness, May we, after this silent-solitary communion with You, allow our lives to reveal your glory and grace.

Lord, may the seeds of the tree of stillness bear fruit for us And for all the restless world. Blessed are you, Lord our God, who gives us nourishment in times of silence and solitude. Amen.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est

Word

Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, describes the union we are called to through the creation-incarnation reality in her work on the communion of saints, *FRIENDS OF GOD AND PROPHETS*. After these days of retreat, you may want to return to that book to continue reflecting on the union to which we are called. She writes:

The great Spirit of God, Holy Wisdom herself, forges bonds of connectedness throughout the universe. In all of its dazzling variety the world enjoys a profound unity; in all of its evolving, unpredictable change it rides forward with an intrinsic continuity tying the eras together. The underlying interrelatedness of this one world is the gift of the life-giving Spirit-Sophia who calls the community of creation into being and dwells within the world to repair the breaches that disrupt community, all the while luring it into a renewed future.

Reflection

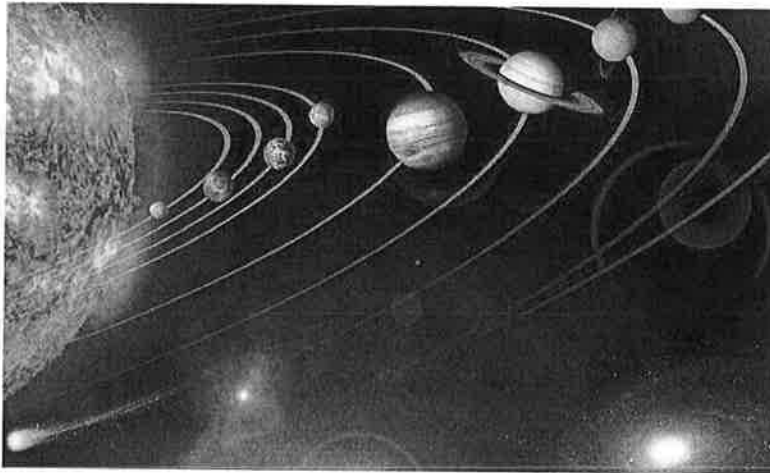
*When Ilia Delio speaks of the future, when she says that life is not behind us
but ahead of us, and that we are dynamic becomings,
that we must be attentive to new attractors in our midst ...*

how do you understand these concepts?

*Are they strange and unknown words?
Are they words you have heard before,
perhaps in reading Teilhard de Chardin many years ago?*

Do they take on new meaning because of our cosmic awareness?

Where do these words take you? What new graced calls do you experience?



Word

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. I Corinthians 13;12-13

So fall in love, again and again!

Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything. Attributed to Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ (1907–1991)