

Inspiration for *Earth is the Womb of God*

Rev Brigid Beckman 8-20-23

“You cannot hate your sister or brother and love God.” ~ 1 John 4:20

From *The Rebirthing of God” Christianity’s Struggle for New Beginnings*

“Julian of Norwich, the 14th century Christian Mystic, said most simply but most radically that we are not just made by God, we are made of God. We are born from the very womb of the Divine. This is why Julian so loves to refer to God as Mother as well as Father. She sees us as coming forth from the essence of the one who is the source of all things.

What does it mean that we are made *of* God rather than simply *by* God? In part it means that the wisdom of God is deep within us, deeper than the ignorance of what we have done. It is to say that the creativity of God is deep within us, deeper than any barrenness in our lives or relationships, deeper than any endings in our families or our world. Within us...is the capacity to bring forth what has never been before, including what has never been imagined before. Above all else, as Julian says, the love-longings of God are at the heart of our being.

We **and all things** have come forth from the One. Deep within us are holy, natural longings for oneness, primal sacred drivers for Union. These longings are at the heart of our being waiting to be born afresh...In St John's gospel, Jesus speaks of the need to be “born anew”...[This] is Waiting to a radical re-emergence of the Divine from deep within us. we do not have to create it. we cannot create it.

but we can let it spring forth and be reborn in our lives. we can be part of midwifing new holy births in the world. (ix-x)

Chapter 1: Reconnecting with the Earth

“The first thing that is said about humanity in the Hebrew Scriptures is that we are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Everything else written about us in our scriptural inheritance needs to be read in light of this foundational truth: that within us is the likeness of the One from whom we have come. or as Julian of Norwich puts it we are made “of God.” We are made of the Light that was in the beginning. We are made of the Wisdom that fashioned the universe in its glory of interrelatedness. We are made of the Love that longs for oneness. This is not to deny our capacity for falseness and for the ugly betrayals that tear us apart. It is simply to say that deeper still is our of-Godness. (1)

“Everything that has unfolded in space and time was present in utero in the universe's beginnings, so interrelated are we and all things with that initial flaring forth of light. Teachers in the Celtic world have been saying something similar for a long time. in the 9th century just go to your Regina said that all things in the universe were made together and at once. he did not mean that we and all things became visible at the same time. he meant that we and all things have been hidden in the secret folds of nature, waiting for the time of our manifestation. We have been latent in the matter of the universe since its inception. Now is the time of our emergence. (5)

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin knew that “at the heart of matter is the heart of God.” The deeper we move into the mystery of any created thing, the closer we come to the Divine Presence. He also believed that what the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation teaches us is to see that ‘We can be saved only by becoming one with the universe.’

The story of the Incarnate Christ points to the Oneness of Heaven and Earth the Divine and the human, spirit and matter. it points not to an exclusive truth, but to the most inclusive of truths. it does not limit the sacredness to one man at One Moment In time. It reveals the essential sacredness of every person and everything that has been created. ...Such teachings hold radical implications for how we see and treat one another as individuals and nations, and for how we relate to the resources and creatures of the earth. (8)

[Our] primary blessing to the world [is] living in relationship to the sacred *humus* of the earth. Oneness with the Divine would be experienced... as a communion with God through earth. We must 'let the very heart of the earth beat within us.'

In 1 John 4:20, John the Beloved writes 'you cannot hate your brother or sister and love God.' You cannot do it because they are one. Teilhard's version of this would have been to say that we cannot hate the earth, we cannot neglect or abuse the Earth and claim to love God. We cannot do it because they are one. Not only do we need a new way of seeing, but we also need to forge a new way of living. We must usher in a radical rebirth of our relationship with the earth and its creatures if we are to thrive." (10)

The Sun by Mary Oliver

Have you ever seen
anything
in your life
more wonderful

than the way the sun,
every evening,
relaxed and easy,
floats toward the horizon

and into the clouds or the hills,
or the rumpled sea,
and is gone--
and how it slides again

out of the blackness,
every morning,
on the other side of the world,
like a red flower

streaming upward on its heavenly
oils,

say, on a morning in early summer,
at its perfect imperial distance--
and have you ever felt for anything
such wild love--
do you think there is anywhere, in
any language,
a word billowing enough
for the pleasure

that fills you,
as the sun
reaches out,
as it warms you

as you stand there,
empty-handed--
or have you too
turned from this world--

or have you too
gone crazy
for power,
for things?

A Blessing for Transfiguration

(from a forthcoming book of blessings by Christine Valters Paintner)

Radiant God,
open our eyes to all the ways
the sacred shimmers before us,
how gold pours forth from the robin's throat,
how sunlight returns each morning,
how the moon glitters across still water,
how laughter around the table kindles joy,
how kindness can change lives.
Free us from our need to seize these moments,
to make of them stone monuments
rather than tabernacles of light
we carry with us in our hearts.
This vision is not a call
to stay on the mountain
but to gather our treasures
into an open embrace,
to make the slow pilgrimage into the world,
to share them freely after our descent,
in a world so hungry for beauty.
Help us to remember
to keep our seeing clear, attuned,
present to your unfolding before us.
Let us see your glow
erupting in all the hidden corners,
in all the places you
have been forgotten.