

TOWARDS A NEW RELIGION?

DIETRICH VON HILDEBRAND

TEILHARD DE CHARDIN: TOWARDS A NEW RELIGION*

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I am publishing this text because I still cannot forget the “meeting” with the philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin (Teilhard de Chardin’s ideas and discussions about them in exile and in Lithuania. Monograph, 2024) ...I read that book and was horrified, in the full sense of the word, I could not understand HOW it was possible to write such nonsense and I did not continue any further. I am never categorical in my assessments, but this time I was influenced by the free thoughts of that “a la philosopher”...I shared my opinion in a private conversation with the authors of the book dedicated to him and I am not afraid to repeat that the goal of such a “philosophy” (which is supported by the logic of thinking, to turn the world upside down and inject pseudo-ideas into it, broken from a finger...and although they are very dear to the Jesuits, do they have a connection with science...With Science? Teilhard de Chardin was not a representative of ANY science, and his understanding of quantum physics, the structure of the atom is zero. He was not a scientist. At that time, few people believed that in fact "matter no longer exists", that everything is consciousness. The views of this "thinker" also conflict with the quantum foundations of physics, modern science, and Christianity, so I would advise a thinking person, and especially a Christian, to first read the authoritative text by Dietrich von Hildebrand.**

I met Teilhard de Chardin in 1951 at a dinner party, which was organized by Fr. Robert Gannon, SJ, then president of Fordham University. He had been highly recommended by the eminent theologians Henri de Lubac and Mr. Bruno de Solages. I was therefore full of expectations. After the meal, Fr. Teilhard gave a long lecture on his own views. **The lecture was very disappointing, as it showed complete philosophical confusion,** especially regarding Teilhard's concept of the human person. I was even more disappointed by his theological primitiveness, as he completely ignored the crucial distinction between nature and the supernatural. After a lively discussion, in which I dared to criticize his ideas, I had the opportunity to speak with Teilhard personally. When our conversation turned to the saint Augustine, he shouted loudly: "Do not speak of this unfortunate man - introducing "He ruined everything supernatural."

This remark confirmed my impression of the crude naturalism of his views, but it also struck me from another perspective: the perspective of Saint Augustine, the greatest of the Church Fathers.

– criticism has betrayed that Teilhard lacks a true sense of intellectual and spiritual grandeur.

However, it was only after reading several of Teilhard's works that I fully realized the catastrophic consequences of his philosophical ideas and the complete incompatibility of his theology-fiction (as Etienne Gilson calls it) with Christian revelation and the doctrine of the Church.

Many Catholics consider Teilhard de Chardin a great scientist who reconciled science with the Christian faith, presenting a new theology and metaphysics, taking into account modern scientific discoveries and thus fitting for our scientific age. However, the reconciliation of science and Christian faith has never been necessary, because true science (unlike false philosophies disguised as science) can never be incompatible with the Christian faith. Science can neither prove nor disprove the truth of faith.

Moreover, real scientists are also unimpressed by Teilhard's efforts.

"Teilhard is not a biologist," says Jean Rostand, "he has neither the education nor the spirit of a biologist. [...] He deliberately ignores embryology..." Nobel laureate Sir Peter Medawar spoke of Teilhard's confusion of mind and exaggerated expression, which, he said, bordered on hysteria. He stated of *The Phenomenon of Man*, that the procedure used in this work is unscientific. Sir Peter added that Teilhard's works generally lack scientific structure, that his competence in his field is modest, that he knows neither what a logical argument is nor what a scientific proof is, that he does not adhere to the norms that are necessary for scientific work.

A gifted jumper

I know of no other thinker who so skillfully leaps from one position to its opposite, without himself noticing the leap and not paying attention to it. Therefore, I want to talk about the main trend of his thought, to determine the logical conclusions of the core of his doctrine - what was most dear to him.

One of the most glaring philosophical flaws in Teilhard's system is his concept of man.

It is a great irony that the author of *The Human Phenomenon* completely overlooked the nature of man as a person. He fails to see the abyss that separates man from everything around him. an impersonal world, and a completely new dimension of being, which is represented by the person.

Teilhard considers "self-consciousness" to be the only difference between a human being and a highly developed animal. However, if we compare the limited type of consciousness that can be observed in animals with various aspects of human consciousness, we immediately see how wrong it is to consider the latter only as an addition to *self-consciousness*. Personal consciousness is actualized by knowledge - the bright consciousness of the object revealed to our mind, the ability to adapt our mind to the nature of the object (*adequatio intellectus ad rem*), the understanding of the nature of the object. It is also

actualizes itself in the process of derivation, in the ability to ask questions, seek truth, and in the ability to create an I-Thou communion with another person.

All this implies a completely new type of consciousness, a completely new dimension of being. But this miracle of the human mind, which is also revealed in language and in man's role as *homo pictor*, is completely inaccessible to Teilhard, because **he insists on considering human consciousness as nothing more than self-awareness, which has gradually evolved from animal consciousness.** The Scholastics accurately perceived the dimensions of personal consciousness, calling the person a self-governing being. Compared to a person, every impersonal being is as if asleep: it simply lives its existence. Only in the human person do we find the awakened a being that truly controls itself, despite its randomness.

Teilhard's disregard for the individual approaches complete madness when, in *The Phenomenon of Man*, he claims that collective consciousness would be superior state of evolution. He believes that the Earth would not only become covered with countless grains of thought, but would also be enclosed in a single shell of thinking, so as to functionally become with one huge grain of thought on a stellar scale.

Several major errors are intertwined here. First, **the idea of non-individual consciousness is contradictory.** Second, it is a mistake to believe that **this impossible fiction could contain something higher than individual personal existence.** Third, **the idea of a "superconsciousness" is in fact a totalitarian ideal:** it presupposes an absolute opposition to the true community, which essentially presupposes individual persons.

Destruction

The existence of the human person is so individual in its essence that the idea of merging two persons into one is fundamentally impossible. It is also impossible to want to be another person. We can only want to be *like* another person. Because at the moment when we should If we were to become another person, we would necessarily cease to exist. It is the very nature of man as a person that he remains this one individual being. God could make him to destroy, although revelation tells us that God does not intend to do so. However To believe that a person could renounce his individual nature without ceasing to exist and being destroyed by that act is tantamount to blind ignorance of what is person.

Some people claim to experience a kind of "union with the cosmos" that "expands" their individual existence and is presented as a supernatural consciousness. acquisition. However, in reality this union exists only in the consciousness of the individual person who experiences it. Its content, namely the feeling of merging with the cosmos, is actually the experience of one specific person and in no way represents the collective consciousness.

From what has been said about Teilhard's ideal of the "collective man", it should be clear that he does not understand not only the nature of man as a person, but also true communion.

and the nature of community. After all, true personal communion (in which a much deeper unity is achieved than in any ontological fusion) presupposes a unique
Compared to the union achieved by the conscious merging of souls in mutual love, any fusion of impersonal beings is only a juxtaposition.

Teilhard's ideal of "superhumanity" - his totalitarian concept of community - shows the same naive ignorance of the abyss that separates the glorious realm of personal existence from the impersonal world. It also reveals his blindness to the reality of being.

hierarchy and hierarchy of values. Pascal says: "Man is but a reed, the weakest thing in nature..." However, he brilliantly illuminates the incomparable superiority of one individual man over the entire impersonal world when he adds to this famous remark: "but if the universe were to crush him, man would still be nobler than that which killed him: he knows that he is dying, and the universe knows nothing of the superiority he has over it."

Deceptive avoidance of responsibility

Another aspect of Teilhard's blindness to the essentially individual character of man is his exaggerated interest in man as a species. Again, he fails to see the differences between man and ordinary animals. A dominant interest in the species is perfectly normal when man is dealing with animals. But it becomes grotesque when it comes to man. Kierkegaard highlighted this idea when he emphasized the absolute superiority of the individual man over the human species. Teilhard's own attitude is betrayed by his attitude to

The Hiroshima bomb. The supposed progress of humanity, which he sees in the invention of the nuclear weapon, is more important to him than the destruction of countless lives and the terrible suffering caused to individual people.

It is true that Teilhard spoke repeatedly about personality and the superiority of personality against impersonality. Indeed, he often explicitly rejects the possibility that the existence of the individual person will disappear. For example, in *The Construction of the Earth* he writes: "Since there is neither a fusion nor an extinction of the individual persons, the center which they seek to reach must necessarily be separate from them, that is, it must have its own personality, its own autonomy." But within two pages he is already enthusiastically talking about "the totalization of the individual in the collective man." Teilhard then explains how this contradiction will dissolve in Omega: "All these so-called impossibilities disappear under the influence of love."

Nowadays, it has become fashionable to accept contradictions as a sign of philosophical depth. They are considered contradictory only as long as the discussion remains on the logical level, and become uninteresting as soon as it reaches the religious sphere. However, this fashion does not eliminate the fundamental impossibility of reconciling the contradictions. No fashionable paradoxes, emotional outbursts, exotic capitalization of words can hide Teilhard's fundamental misunderstanding of human nature. The concept of "person" in Teilhard's system

loses all real meaning because of the pantheism it contains. The "collective man" and the "totalization" of man are ideals that are objectively incompatible with the existence of the individual person, or, more precisely, inevitably mean the destruction of the person.

We can understand that the monistic tendency leads him to try to eliminate all real antitheses. He wants to preserve the integrity of the person, but he speaks enthusiastically about totalization. He reduces all opposites to different aspects of one thing, and then claims that the contradiction in the statements in question is due only to the isolation or overemphasis of one aspect. But if you read Teilhard carefully, you can always detect his main concern, you can always tell where he is going. This is illustrated by the passage in *The Construction of the Earth about the differences between democracy, communism, and fascism*.

A cursory reading of this passage might give the impression that Teilhard does not deny the individual character of man. However, a closer, critical examination of other

The background of the passages clearly reveals not only the impossible attempt to connect individuality and totalization, but also what Teilhard is striving for, what his main ideal is, where his heart is. This is totalization again, superhumanity in Omega.

The tendency to eliminate antitheses also illuminates the false concept of Teilhard's community, the concept of the union of persons. All this is conceived according to the model of fusion in the sphere of matter, so the radical difference between unification in the sphere of matter and the spiritual union that occurs through true love in the sphere of individual persons is not noticeable. For Teilhard, love is simply cosmic energy: "...that energy which, having set the cosmic mass in motion in general, arises from it to form the Noosphere - what name should be given to such an effect? Only one - love." The man who could write like this clearly did not understand this highest act that essentially presupposes a conscious, personal being and the existence of You, nature. In the unity and harmony of Teilhard's totalitarian communion there is no room for true self-giving in love. This unity and harmony is actualized through the merging into one mind, and is therefore radically different from *concordia*, from the blessed union of which the Mandatum [of Holy Thursday] speaks: "*Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor*." The latter is not "common thinking," but mutual, reciprocal love and union in Christ, based on a personal love

the answer that every person gives to Christ.

In a monistic world there is no place for *the intentio unionis* and *the intentio benevolentiae characteristic of true love*. Because in such a world, "cosmic energy" creates everything. moves independently of man's free response. When we interpret things that are merely analogous as constituting an ontological unity, or when we take the metaphysical and analogous concept literally, we inevitably prevent a true understanding of the being in question. Every monism is ultimately nihilistic.

Procrustes de Chardin

Closely related to Teilhard's concept of man is another major philosophical error, namely his failure to grasp the radical difference between spirit and matter.

Teilhard examines energy as if it were a species, and then transforms matter and spirit two *differentiae specificae of this kind*. But there is no kind of energy.

Energy is a concept that applies to these two radically different realms of being only by analogy. Teilhard did not understand this; he even speaks of the "spiritual energy of matter."

So Teilhard is one of those thinkers who delights in constructions and hypotheses, without worrying too much about what is "given." Maritain once said, "The main difference between philosophers is whether they see or do not see." Teilhard has a lot of imagination, but no intuition, no listening to experience. So Teilhard tries to project consciousness into inanimate matter; there is simply no basis for this except his desire to create a monistic system. Instead of listening to the voice of being in experience, he arbitrarily weaves into it. It is indeed surprising that a man who attacks traditional philosophy and theology for their abstractness and their attempt to adapt reality to the to a closed system, he himself tries to force reality to fit into the most abstract and unrealistic system imaginable.

The inconsistency of Teilhard's thought is also evident when he accuses communism of being too materialistic, of seeking only the progress of matter, thus ignoring spiritual progress. His admirers might call this proof that Teilhard clearly distinguished matter from spirit and recognized the superiority of the latter. In fact, it proves nothing of the sort. Teilhard always distinguishes matter and spirit, but considers them only as two stages in the evolutionary process. Physical energy becomes—transforms—spiritual energy. However, to consider the difference between them only as stages of the process, or, as one might say, to consider the difference "gradual" means not understanding the nature of the spirit at all. Again, monism prevents understanding of reality and creates the illusion that it is possible to connect what cannot be connected.

Denial of free will

Teilhard's misunderstanding of human nature is again evident in his implicit denial of human free will. "The moral and social development of humanity," he says, "is undoubtedly the authentic and 'natural' consequence of organic evolution." In support of this

By treating human spiritual life as an evolutionary process that by definition operates independently of human free will and transcends the boundaries of the individual, Teilhard explicitly denies the decisive role of human freedom. Thus, he once again fails to notice the radical difference between man as a person and a highly developed animal;

It is obvious that free will is one of the most important and profound characteristics of a person.

Back to Omega

The role of free will is decisively revealed in a person's ability to cultivate moral values and vices. After all, this highest human quality presupposes free will and responsibility. However, Teilhard recklessly reduces the antithesis of good and evil to simple stages of evolution, to more degrees of perfection - this is undoubtedly a classic case of philosophical impotence. Moreover, he ignores the crucial importance of the moral question, which is vividly expressed in the immortal saying of Socrates: "It is better for a man to suffer injustice than to do it." Teilhard ignores the whole drama of human existence, the struggle between good and evil in his soul, or, more precisely, it is overshadowed by the evolutionary growth towards Omega.

Thus, Teilhard's thought is hopelessly at odds with Christianity.

Christian revelation presupposes certain fundamental natural facts, such as the existence of objective truth, the spiritual reality of the individual person, the radical distinction between spirit and matter, the distinction between body and soul, the unchanging the objectivity of moral good and evil, free will, the immortality of the soul—and, of course, the existence of a personal God. Teilhard's approach to all these questions reveals an unbridgeable gulf between his theological fiction and Christian revelation.

This conclusion is inevitable when listening to Teilhard's oft-repeated arguments about "new" interpretations of Christianity. He repeatedly argued that we can no longer expect that modern man, living in an industrialized world and the scientific age, will accept Christian doctrine as it has been taught for the past 2,000 years.

Teilhard reinterprets Christianity by asking: "What is suitable for our for the modern world?" This approach combines historical relativism and pragmatism with radical blindness to the very essence of religion. Historical relativism alone confuses ideas sociohistorical "vitality" on the one hand, and its validity and truth on the other.

However, to claim that a fundamental natural truth may have been valid in the Middle Ages but is no longer valid in our era is complete nonsense, and the absurdity becomes even more drastic when it comes to religion.

Man always remains essentially the same in terms of the moral dangers he faces, his moral duties, his need for redemption, and the true sources of happiness.

When it comes to religion, the only question that can be important is whether it is true or not. The question whether it corresponds to the mentality of the age or not cannot be important in accepting or rejecting religion without betraying the very essence of religion. Even the sincere atheist admits this. He will not say that we can no longer believe in God today; he will say that God is and always has been only an illusion. From the view that religion must be adapted to the spirit of the age, it is only a small step to the absurd fantasies about the necessity of inventing a new religion, which we associate with Bertrand Russell or the Nazis. ideologist Bergmann.

Far from God

In a 1952 letter, Teilhard wrote: "As I like to say, the Christian God (the one who exists) above) and the Marxist God (who is in front), this is the only God whom we can worship in spirit and truth from now on." In this sentence, the abyss separating Teilhard from Christianity is revealed in every word. To speak of a Marxist God is, to say the least, very unexpected, and Marx would never have agreed to it. However, the idea of a synthesis of the Christian God with the alleged Marxist God, as well as the application of the term "God" to both Christianity and Marxism at the same time, shows the complete incompatibility of Teilhard's thought with the doctrine of the Church. Also, pay attention to the words "from now on" and "we can". They are key to Teilhard's thinking and undoubtedly reveal his historical relativism.

Distortion of the heritage of faith

In his important book, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, Jacques Maritain observes that Teilhard is most concerned with preserving Christ. But Maritain adds: "But what Christ!" Indeed, here we see the most radical difference between the doctrine of the Church and the fiction of Teilhard de Chardin's theology. Teilhard's Christ is no longer Jesus, the God-man, the epiphany of God, the Redeemer; instead, He is the originator of a purely natural process of evolution and at the same time its end—Christ-Omega. An indifferent mind cannot help asking: why should this "cosmic force" be called Christ?

It would be the height of naivety to allow oneself to be misled simply by the fact that Teilhard made this supposed cosmic force is called "Christ," or his desperate efforts to bring this pantheism into traditional Catholic terms. His basic worldview, which does not include original sin in the sense used by the Church, has no place for the Jesus of the Gospels. Christ. For if there is no original sin, then the redemption of man through Christ loses its inner meaning.

Christian revelation emphasizes the sanctification and salvation of each individual person, leading to the beatific vision and, at the same time, to the communion of saints.

Teilhard's theology emphasizes the progress of the earth, the evolution leading to Christ-Omega. There is no place here for salvation through Christ's death on the cross, because man's destiny is part of pancosmic evolution.

Thus, Teilhard's conception of man and his implicit denial of free will, his tacit amoralism and totalitarian collectivism distance him from Christian revelation - despite his efforts to reconcile his views with the teaching of the Church. This he only partially understands the incompatibility: "Sometimes I get a little scared when I think about how I have to change my mind about vulgar notions about creation, inspiration, miracle, original sin, resurrection, etc., so that I can accept them."

The fact that Teilhard applies the term "vulgar" - even if not in a pejorative sense - to the fundamental elements of Christian revelation and to the way they are interpreted by the infallible magisterium of the Church should be sufficient grounds for revealing the gnostic and esoteric nature of his thought.

Teilhard writes to Leontina Zanta: "As you already know, my interests and inner concerns are the efforts to create within myself and to spread a new religion (you can call it a better Christianity), in which the personal God would cease to be the great monolithic owner of earlier times in order to become the soul of the world; this is what our religious and cultural stage demands." Thus, not only is the Christ of the Gospels replaced by the Christ-Omega, but the God of the Old and New Covenants is replaced by a pantheistic God, the "soul of the world" – and again on the basis of the pitiful argument that God must be adapted to the man of our scientific age.

It is not surprising that Teilhard reproaches Saint Augustine for introducing the distinction between nature and the supernatural. **In Teilhard's pantheistic and naturalistic "religion" has no place for either the supernatural or the world of grace. In his view, unity with God is essentially an assimilation in the process of evolution, not in the supernatural life of grace that is infused into our souls through baptism.** Why is one inclined to displace the other? If Teilhard's concept of participation in the evolutionary process were a reality, it could only be a form of *concursum divinum*. But however great and mysterious *the concursus divinus*, that is, the support that God gives to each of our a moment of natural existence and without which we would sink back into nothingness, This *natural* metaphysical connection is separated from grace by an abyss. Whether Teilhard explicitly denies the reality of grace or not is of little importance: his ecstasy over the natural contact with God in the supposed process of evolution clearly reveals the secondary role he assigns to grace, if any.

Or, to put it another way: if the personal God, Creator of heaven and earth, is replaced by God-the-soul of the world; if the Christ of the gospels is transformed into Christ Omega; if redemption is replaced by a natural process of evolution, what *is left* for grace?

Maritain expresses this well in *The Peasant of the Garonne*. After acknowledging that Teilhard's spectacle of the divine movement of creation towards God is not lacking in grandeur, Maritain observes: "But what does it tell us about the secret path which is more important to us than any spectacle? What can it tell us about the essential mystery of the Cross?" and the redeeming blood, and also about the grace whose presence in one single soul is more valuable than all nature? And what about this love which makes us co-redeemers with Christ, and about these blessed tears through which His peace enters our soul? The new gnosis, like all other gnosis, is a "poor gnosis."

In Teilhard we find a complete reversal of the Christian hierarchy of values: for him cosmic processes are above the individual soul. Scientific research and work are above moral values. Action as such, that is, any connection with

process of evolution, is more important than contemplation, the destruction of one's sins and repentance. Progress along the evolutionary path of world conquest and totalization is more important than holiness. **The abyss that separates Teilhard's world from the Christian one is becomes clear when we compare Cardinal Newman with Teilhard.**

Newman says in his *Conversations to Mixed Congregations* :

"Holy purity, holy poverty, renunciation of the world, a taste of heaven, the company of angels."
"The protection, the smile of the Blessed Mary, the gifts of grace, the working of miracles, the communion of merits - these are high and precious things, things to be looked at, things to be spoken of with reverence."

Teilhard says:

"Once, to worship God meant to prioritize things, turning them over to Him and offering them to Him. Today, to worship means to give oneself body and soul to the Creator—to unite oneself with the Creator so that through our work and research we can complete the world."

Teilhard's ambiguous use of classical Christian terms will never allow a person with a *sensus supranaturalis* to misunderstand him. Such a person will never be able to conclude, with Henri de Lubac, that his theology-fiction is a "possible" addition to Christian revelation. Rather, he will agree with Philippe de la Trinite that it is "a deformation of Christianity transformed into an evolutionism of a naturalistic, monistic, and pantheistic character."

Teilhard's writings are characterized by a kind of confusion, a sliding from one concept to another - a cult of ambiguity, closely linked to his monistic ideal. He systematically erases all the decisive differences between things: for example, the difference between hope and optimism, between Christian charity (which is essentially directed at the individual) and admiration for humanity. Furthermore, Teilhard ignores the difference between eternity and the earthly future of humanity, both of which he merges into the totalization of Christ-Omega.

There is certainly something moving in Teilhard's desperate attempt to combine the traditional emotional attraction to the Church with a theology radically opposed to the Church's doctrine. But this apparent devotion to Christian concepts makes him even more dangerous than Voltaire, Renan, or Nietzsche. His success in bringing in a pantheistic, gnostic The transformation of monism into Christian garb is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the book *Divine Environment*.

To many readers, the terms Teilhard uses sound so familiar that they may exclaim: how can one accuse him of not being an orthodox Christian?

Does n't he say in *the Divine Setting* , "What does it mean for a man to be a saint if not to truly hold on to God with all his might?" Of course, that sounds completely orthodox.

But in reality, Teilhard's concept of "holding on to God" conceals a transition from the sacred to the

characteristic heroic virtues to cooperation in the evolutionary process. The importance of achieving holiness in the moral sphere, obedience to God's commandments, and following Christ is quietly replaced by an emphasis on the need to, for lack of a better word, effectively develop all human abilities.

Teilhard makes this clear, although he uses traditional terminology:

"[...] and what does it mean to adhere to God to the fullest extent if not to fulfill in the world organized around Christ precisely that function, humble or important, to which nature and supernatural nature assign him?"

Thus, for Teilhard, the very meaning of the individual person lies in the fulfillment of his function in the whole – in the process of evolution; he is no longer called to glorify God by following Christ, which is the only common goal of every true Christian.

The transfer of the cross to Christ-Omega is also couched in apparently traditional terms:

"To the peaks hidden from our human eyes, to which we carry the cross, we ascend along the path of universal progress, the royal way of the Cross, that is, the supernaturally ordered and extended path of human effort."

Here we see that Christian symbols hide a radical Christianity.

a transformation that takes us out of the Christian orbit into a completely different one atmosphere. However, sometimes Teilhard would shed his Christian cloak and openly reveal his true position. In 1934 he wrote:

"If, through some inner revolution, I were to lose faith in Christ, faith in a personal God, belief in the spirit, it seems to me that I would continue to believe in the world. The world (the value, infallibility, and goodness of the world) is – without a doubt – the first and only thing I believe in."

Yet, no matter how obvious the heterodoxy of Teilhard's theology, some Catholics elevated him to the rank of a Doctor of the Church, even to that of a Father of the Church.

For many uneducated Catholics, he became a kind of prophet.

It is not surprising, of course, that "progressive" Catholics enjoy Teilhard. "New" theologians, "new" moralists, welcome Teilhard's views because they share his historical relativism—the belief that faith must be adapted to "modern man." Indeed, for many "progressive" Catholics, Teilhard's transformation of Christian revelation is not enough. But on the other hand, it is surprising that many believing Christians allow themselves to be overwhelmed—that they fail to understand the complete incompatibility of Teilhard's teaching with the doctrine of the Church.

This popularity becomes less surprising when viewed in the context of our contemporary intellectual and moral climate. In a period when familiar Heidegger's concept of the essentially "homeless" man and Sartre's "nausea," Teilhard's radiant and optimistic outlook on life are a welcome relief to many. His claim that we are constantly collaborating with God, no matter what we do, no matter how insignificant our role—that everything is "sacred"—understandably cheers many a downtrodden soul. Another reason for this enthusiasm, perhaps even more important, is that Teilhard is credited with having overcome

narrow asceticism and false supernaturalism.

There is no doubt that in the past many devout Catholics viewed the blessings of nature primarily as potential dangers that threatened to distract them from God. Natural blessings, even those that have high value – the beauty of nature and art, natural truth and human love – was viewed with suspicion. Such Catholics failed to notice the positive side of natural goods value to man. They often defended the view that natural goods should only *be used*, that they should never arouse interest and appreciation for their own sake.

However, in taking this approach, they forgot the fundamental difference between *natural* goods and *earthly* goods such as wealth, fame, or success. They forgot that natural goods endowed with intrinsic value should not only be "used" but also valued for their own sake - that it is precisely earthly goods that should only be "used".

Moreover, it cannot be denied that this unfortunate simplification often took hold in seminaries and monasteries, despite the fact that he was never a member of the Church part of the doctrine. That is why Teilhard can, with superficial persuasiveness, accuse the Catholic tradition of belittling nature; and since he himself praises nature, it is understandable that to many his thought seemed like a correct assessment of the goods of nature.

Related to this, Teilhard's claim that traditional Christianity created a gap between humanity and Christian perfection also struck a chord with many sincere Catholics. In *The Divine Environment* he attributes to traditional Christianity the idea that "people must shed their human clothes to be Christians." Again It cannot be denied that Jansenism reflects such an attitude or that Jansenist trends have infiltrated the consciousness of many Catholics anonymously. For example, the archaic Christian doctrine that insists that we must die to ourselves in order to be transformed in Christ is often given an unjustified dehumanizing emphasis in certain religious institutions. In some monasteries and seminaries, the view has been promoted that, before the supernatural grace can be revealed, life, it is actually necessary to kill nature. However, the official doctrine of the Church categorically rejects such dehumanization. As Pope Pius XII said: "Grace does not destroy nature, it does not even change it, it transforms it. Indeed dehumanization is so far from requiring Christian perfection that one can say this: only the person transformed in Christ embodies the true fulfillment of his human personality."

What is important here is that Teilhard himself ignores the value of the higher goods of nature and that, contrary to what he claims, there is a real dehumanization taking place in his monistic pantheism. We have seen that his ideal of collective man and superhumanity is inevitably based on a blindness to the true nature of the individual person and, by extension, to the fullness of human life. But dehumanization also inevitably arises from his monism, which diminishes the true drama of human life—the struggle between good and evil—and which reduces contradictory differences to mere gradual differences on a continuum.

Teilhard's failure to correctly assess the true value of natural goods becomes clear at the very moment he emphasizes their importance for eternity. Speaking about natural goods, he is primarily concerned with human activity, achievements in work and scientific research. He does not mention the higher goods of nature and the God's knowledge, but only activities, performances and achievements in the natural realm.

To these actions Teilhard applies the biblical words *opera ejus sequuntur illos*; but he does so in contrast to the original meaning of *opera*, in which "works" are identified with *morally significant actions*. Even more important is the relationship he sees between natural goods as such and God. In these great natural goods Teilhard He sees no knowledge of the glory of God in the values contained therein; nor does he find in them a personal experience of the voice of God. Instead, he claims an objective and unexperienceable the connection between God and our actions, arising from *the concursus divinus*. He says: "God is in a sense at the end of my pen, my pick, my brush, my sewing needle, my heart, my thought."

Thus, the true object of Teilhard's boundless enthusiasm is not the goods of nature themselves, and abstraction is the hypothesis of evolution. The nature that excites him is not the colorful, sonorous beauty that all the great poets sing about. It is not the nature of Dante, Shakespeare, Keats, Goethe, Hoelderlin, Leopardi. It is not the sunrise or sunset. beauty, not the starry sky – the evidence of the natural world, which Kant, along with the moral law residing in the human breast, considered the most sublime thing.

There is another way in which Teilhard's thought inevitably leads to the dehumanization of the cosmos and human life. His worldview has no place for the antithesis of values and non-values. But any attempt to deny these ultimately important qualitative antagonisms always leads to a certain leveling, even nihilism. The same thing happens when *the hierarchy of values is ignored*, if only because man responds to all levels of values with equal enthusiasm.

The principle of "all things are sacred," which sounds so lofty and joyful, is in reality full of a nihilistic denial of low and high, good and evil. This false and insidious attitude of praising everything actually leads to the denial of everything. It reminds me of a remark I once met by a violinist. "I love music so much," he said, "that I

"It doesn't matter what kind of music it is, what matters is that it is music." This statement, which was supposed to indicate an extraordinary love for music, actually revealed that he had no real understanding of music, and therefore no ability to truly love music.

When qualitative differences are not respected, the same thing happens to man. Christian Tradition has always affirmed the revelation of God in nature. *The Sanctus* says: *pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua*. The Psalms are full of God as nature and all its wonderful qualities. The Creator, the glorification. Saint Augustine repeatedly emphasizes the message of God in the beauty of nature. We find the same idea in Saint Francis' love for nature.

However, this appreciation of God's natural revelation presupposes an "upward" "a direction towards God," to use Teilhard's terminology. Natural revelation speaks to us about God, showing us the wonderful wisdom that permeates creation and the natural world. reflecting the infinite beauty and glory of God in the values of goods. Our response to this revelation is either a trembling respect and wonder at the wisdom manifested in the finiteness and mysterious fullness of the cosmos - a look at God the Creator, or at least a deep awareness of the beauty of nature and all the high goods of nature, which also elevates our In both cases, we can perceive the message from above that all true values have the promise of eternity. By lifting our hearts, we can understand that these authentic values speak of the infinite glory of God. All this undoubtedly means an "upward direction."

But Teilhard's "nature" is not about "going up"; it is not a message from above. Since for Teilhard God is *beyond* nature, we should reach Him in Christ the Omega by moving "forward."

In Teilhard's "forward" direction, where everything participates in an evolutionary movement, the goods of nature lose their true value. Their suggestion of something transcendent is replaced by only immanent finitude, becoming a link in the chain of evolution. When evolution is viewed as the fundamental and decisive reality – in fact, it is deified – then every natural good becomes, on the one hand, only a transitional step in the forward movement of the evolutionary process, and on the other, a mute, blunt thing, which leveling monism separates from its true, qualitative, inherent importance.

Therefore, we can only rightly appreciate the higher goods of nature if we see in them the reflection of an infinitely higher reality—an ontologically different reality from them. This "departmental character" of natural goods is wonderfully expressed in Cardinal Newman's remarks on music.

"Is it possible that those mysterious heartbeats, sharp feelings, strange desires for who knows what, and terrible impressions from who knows where would be caused in us by something that is insubstantial, that comes and goes, that begins and ends by itself? It is not so, this cannot be. No; they came from some higher realm, they are of the eternal

outpourings of harmony in the medium of created sound; they are the echo of our home; they are the angels' voice or the Magnificat of the saints..."

It is worth noting another aspect of this problem. The fact that Teilhard sees higher stage of evolution in the modern industrialized world, shows that he lacks an understanding of the true beauty of nature and the high-quality message of God contained therein. Even the most enthusiastic "progressive" cannot deny that industrialization is steadily destroying the beauty of nature. Moreover, industrialization (although perhaps inevitable) cannot be considered a universal blessing, either in terms of increasing human happiness or in terms of fostering higher culture or true humanism. As Gabriel Marcel rightly shows in *Man Against Mass Society*, industrialization poses the danger of gradual dehumanization. The "organic" things in human life

The replacement of nature with artificial ones – from artificial insemination to social engineering – is a symptom of this dehumanization. But Teilhard jumps carelessly from enthusiasm for nature to joy over the progress of technology and industrialization. Again we are confronted with his blindness to antitheses, with his monistic leveling.

Yet it is clear that Teilhard's first love is technological progress. God's creation must be completed by man - not in the sense of Saint Paul, not by collaborating with nature, but by replacing nature with a machine.

Teilhard's poetic expressions, for example when he talks about his vision of evolution and progress, make it clear that he never saw the authentic poetry of nature or the classical "forms" of creation. Instead, he tries to transfer poetry to technology, thus revealing a monistic denial of the essential differences between poetry and prose, organicity and artificiality, sacredness and profaneness.

Of course, it is always impressive when a person seems to have reached a profound vision of being and, instead of taking it for granted, gives it a comprehensive and passionate response. This is also the case with Teilhard. We are far from denying that he saw in matter many aspects, in which which are usually ignored. For example, the mysterious structure and multiplicity of matter, which natural science is increasingly revealing, calls for sincere wonder at this reality and respect for this creation of God. However, since Teilhard does not recognize the fundamental difference between spirit and matter – because his respect for spirit is not proportional to the glorification of matter (remember his "prayer" to matter) - the advantage of this unusual insight into matter is quickly lost.

We must put this question of "matter" in its proper perspective. It is a pity to overlook of the wonders hidden in a being that occupies the lowest place in the hierarchy of being. However, this oversight does not affect our knowledge of higher-ranking beings, so it is not a catastrophe. On the other hand, to perceive the lower beings and not to notice the higher ones is to distort our entire worldview, and this is a catastrophe. Moreover, the lower goods To value things as higher is to misunderstand the hierarchical structure of being and thus lose the basis for properly valuing both higher and lower things.

Teilhard's blindness to true values, for example in the area of human love, is shown by these unfortunate remarks about *eros* and *agape*:

"Of course, I agree with you that the solution to the problem of *eros* and *agape* lies simply in the evolutionary tendency (*dans l'évolutif*), in genetics, that is, in sublimation... [It must be found] in the spirit arising from matter through the action of the pancosmos..."

We have already seen that Teilhard's concept of the moral sphere (virtue and sin) is incompatible with Christian revelation. We can now see that the role he gives to the moral sphere is another factor leading to dehumanization.

In Teilhard's system, the unique connection with God that takes place in man's conscience, when he is aware of his moral duties, plays no role. He fails to understand that man never achieves such a close connection with God in the realm of nature as when he listens to the voice of his conscience and consciously obeys moral duty. How pale, in comparison with this - from a purely human and natural point of view - is Teilhard's concept of "conscious" and "unconscious" participation in "cosmic progress"!

And how insignificant is the depth and breadth of cosmic events compared to the liberating transcendence of an authentically repentant person. What event could be greater than David's response to the prophet Nathan's challenge? The secondary role that Teilhard's emphasis on a conscious and personal human dialogue with Christ, and his preference for objective cooperation in the "evolutionary process," reveal most clearly the truly dehumanized nature of his "new world."

Many people are impressed by a thinker who constructs a new world with his own mind, in which everything is interconnected and "explained." They consider such concepts to be the highest feat of the human mind; accordingly, they praise Teilhard as a great synthetic thinker. But the real measure of a thinker's greatness is how much he has realized reality in its fullness and depth and hierarchical structure. If this measure is applied to Teilhard, it is clear that he cannot be considered a great thinker.

These reflections can be concluded with two quotes. Teilhard wrote:

"[Christ] becomes the flame of human endeavor, he reveals himself as the form of faith most suited to modern needs—a religion for progress, even progress on earth."
religion; I dare say: the religion of evolution."

Cardinal Newman wrote:

"The Church seeks not to put on a show, but to do a work. She considers this world and all that is in it to be but a shadow, dust, and ashes, compared with the value of one single soul. She believes that if she cannot do good to souls in her own way, there is no point in doing anything at all... She believes that the activities of this world and the activities of the soul, viewed in their entirety, are

respective spheres are simply incompatible; she would rather save the soul of a single wild Calabrian bandit or a whining beggar of Palermo than build a hundred railway lines throughout Italy or Sicily, unless these great public works were to be devoted to some spiritual good beyond their borders.”

Which of these observations reflects Christ's message?

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* <https://katalikutradicija.lt/tikejimasteilhardas-de-chardinas-naujos-religijos-link>

** T. de Chardin's views were influenced by H. Bergson, J. Böhme, B. Pascal, GWF Hegel, Ch. R. Darwin. In his main works *The Human Phenomenon* (*Le Phénomène humain*, written in 1940, published in 1955, Lithuanian 1995), *The Divine Medium* (*Le Milieu divin*, written in 1927, published in 1957) he combined the truths of science and faith. He considered the main drawback of Thomistic theology to be staticity and concern only for the individual. According to P. Teilhard de Chardin, humanity should be understood as a collective subject, an indivisible organism with a single consciousness. He identified the creation of the world with evolution. He argued that man is the most perfect result of evolution. To understand man, according to P. Teilhard de Chardin, means to learn how the world came into being and how it will develop in the future. He divided 3 stages of the evolution of the universe: lithosphere (before the emergence of life), biosphere (life), and noosphere (human phenomenon). Evolution has direction and meaning beyond the noosphere, in the highest consciousness its peak is reached; this is identified with the omega point - Jesus Christ. The evolution of society, according to P. Teilhard de Chardin, occurs when all individuals merge into an organic community in Jesus In Christ. This integration is promoted by Christian love. Creating the spiritual unity of humanity evolution overcomes evil - the individualism of personalities. Denied dualism, materialism and spiritualism, claimed the monistic unity of matter and the spiritual principle. The spiritual principle already exists in the molecule and atom, in living matter it takes on a psychic form, in man it becomes self-consciousness. At first, the teaching of P. Teilhard de Chardin was not recognized by the Church, his works were forbidden to be printed, later P. Teilhard de Chardin's influence on theology increased. Other important works: *The Appearance of Man* (*L'Apparition de l'homme*), *The Place of Man in Nature* (*La Place de l'homme dans la nature*, both published in 1956), *The Future of Man* (*L'Avenir de l'homme*, published in 1959), *Human Energy* (*L'Énergie humaine*, published in 1962), *Science and Christ* (*Science et Christ*, published in 1965).

***Note: lines in red are mine. Celestina