



# THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

**“Human Evolution”**  
**Excerpted from**  
*God is Love: The Heart of All Creation*

**Fr. Thomas Keating**

Evolution is possibly; only at the beginning of its possibilities. Such thinkers as Teilhard de Chardin who propose this evolutionary development as God’s way of creating suggests that the divine plan is moving humans as the most developed of rational beings and, hence, capable of knowing, as the great saying I think of Huxley: “In humans the universe becomes conscious of its self.”

Evolution doesn’t in any way contradict the power of God to handle all creation or to bring his plan about, but it suggests that he’s trying to reveal to us how he performs this occupation and is sharing with us secrets that other creatures have not been capable of understanding or receiving. Our present time which is considered possibly by some anthropologists a new axial period may move us into levels of intuitive knowledge that are more in line with the way that the invisible energies communicate and in which God himself operates even on the level of creation

Teilhard’s thought is that biological evolution is really complete as a project – that now that there are enough people that the commandment to increase and multiply and fill the earth has shifted to the spiritual plane or to the level of higher states of consciousness so that the new thrust or focus of evolution is on the human being and its capacity for wholeness which is a term that seems preferred to some of the others. Humans then are at the threshold of a capacity as a race, and not just as individuals, to move into this higher aspect of God that seems to be anticipated in some of the scriptural discussions of apocalyptic discoveries or the New Creation that is described in the Book of Revelation, and so on.

So that puts a great human focus on the main issue or obstacle to moving on in evolution to this focus on higher states of consciousness and the capacity to see God in everything, to respond to every situation according to God’s will, rather than, our inclinations or our particular cultural inclinations and so on.

The spiritual life as it’s been called until now is the most important thing there is to do in life and it doesn’t just mean our salvation or our healing or our wholeness or our redemption or whatever the word is for the healing of the human condition with its limitations and faults and openness to evil, as well as good. So, here is where the contemplative dimension of life which is aimed at prayer and practice to further this capacity for transformation and to realize the New Creation that Jesus spoke

about and the Book of Revelation speaks about and which has been found to be the experience of a significant number of human beings who are sort of pioneers in this area of spiritual evolution, it might be called.

That project now can draw on the evidence of sociology, biology and psychodynamics because we know that everything in the universe is interconnected and interrelated - that our energies when we pass on will be returned to the universe for some other use. Relating is what being really means so that just being born is to be in relation with every other member of the human species – past, present, or to come or – and with all creation because we've depended on all the other levels of evolving creation to have the necessary physiological tools and capacities to function on the human level. We really see ourselves then as a microcosm in which all the major expressions of God's creation are somehow united in a single consciousness which itself then is capable of enormous growth beyond anything that we can imagine. And so, as Jesus prayed, "that they maybe one even as we are one" suggests a oneness and unity that is almost infinite.

Take for instance, the possibility of knowing God at ever deepening levels of consciousness. As Jesus suggested, this is eternal life to know the true God in Jesus Christ whom he has sent. But this is not a conceptual knowledge alone. It requires some background knowledge, some conviction, some experience but it involves the whole being – the heart and indeed the body working in a unified way to do what is God's will in each moment as time goes on. In other words, it's possible to have relationship to God in which God is acting in us more than us. And even science is suggesting today that God is more us than we are.

Here's one example of how theology is enriched by science: If we now know that the human species has a oneness that transcends all differences and that we really are everybody else as well as ourselves and that when we greet someone we're really greeting ourselves on one level. But besides that, everybody has the divine presence in them and is saturated with God. We know as Teilhard says every subatomic particle is Christ and we're trillions of them; so, our very bodies are just saturated with Christ all the time and manifesting in all the organs in more specific ways. All reality can be subjected to quantum physics and so on. Is God manifesting or close to us or relating to us in everything that happens and in everything that we meet? And to live in that world is a very different situation from one of competition and of goals that are really based on infantile programs for happiness such as the three first energy levels of security, power/control and affection and esteem.

It's also that unity of the human race that makes it possible for God to become human in such a way that in taking one person to himself he takes everybody to himself so that we become, if we consent, certain incarnations of Christ. God then is trying to bring us to a new place – an extraordinary place and it requires effort and yet it's the place where we were originally created. The Christian contemplative perspective moves things a little more firmly in that direction than the natural state of human beings. Grace is a participation in the divine life and is always present, always available.