

Holy Week 2024

The Cosmic Cost of Arising

So, okay, I'll give a little teaching first and then at the end of it we'll touch base about work groups and things like that, how the day flows.

But early on in Holy Week, as we are on Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week, you kind of have time to do stuff because it hasn't gotten locked in with all the rituals and the set obligation pieces yet.

So it seemed to me with that kind of an open invitation that what I'd like to do today is to start cosmic and do some stuff that might be in some ways sort of uber broad spectrum pondering of a question.

But a question which I think is at the heart of Holy Week and certainly is for people that were raised with any kind of exposure whatsoever to the Christian tradition.

And I think most of you in this room were raised that way.

I know a bunch of you are, you know, I don't know if you'd even call it "recovery Catholics," but it's like, "Get me out of here Catholics."

And some of you have similar wounds from the evangelical tradition as I do from the Christian science tradition.

So a lot of us are still really in some sort of an inner argument with the religion of our upbringing.

It doesn't sit comfortably for a lot of people.

So I thought as we work cosmically, I'd like to tear right into the difficult, the most difficult question in Holy Week.

And after we've sort of had a look at that, we can begin then as we get closer to the rituals to sort of land and watch how the various parts work.

But I want to paint the big cosmogonic picture today.

And to start with this assertion that Teilhard de Chardin makes toward the end, the very end of his *The Human Phenomenon*.

He says, "Unless Christianity is understood to be the most realistic and cosmic of faiths and hopes, nothing has been understood of its mysteries."

And I go on to comment, "By realistic, he means capable of validation within the real world, not simply as a theological speed game or an interior landscape of myth and metaphor."

In other words, can the claim it makes be actually verified and validated in a universe that's 14 billion years old and unfathomably spacious?

Does it still hold its own there?

And by cosmic, he means coextensive with the actual dimensions in created order and still fully intelligible and coherent at that scale.

So do we have to enter what I sometimes so snarkily refer to as the Jesus theme park in order to celebrate Holy Week?

Where you buy these wonderful, sentimental but really limited theological assertions.

And as soon as you go out of church, it's like coming out of the old movie theaters and you blink and your eyes get used to the light again and off you go and say, "What was that all about?"

I mean, is there any way you can intelligently do your Christianity with the whole of yourself and not merely with the part of yourself that you've labeled as religious or a professional broker of religion or dutifully observant out of respect?

So that's the question.

And the rubber hits the road in Holy Week because for the central, almost the central originating call of Christianity is the insistence that in this event that we celebrate on the cross and the events leading up to it, the death, the resurrection, that an event happened that changed the order of the cosmos, that set the whole created and uncreated world on a new footing.

And you see that in all the great hymns that go ricocheting through the New Testament, the idea, "He has made known to us his hidden purpose, made so kindly in Christ from the beginning to be effected when the time was ripe, that all heaven and earth be brought together in unity through Christ."

In other words, this event was not just a human act of martyrdom and with maybe a miraculous ending, but a cosmic act of reconciliation that changed the footing of the world, set things on a fundamentally new foundation, and put us forever after in contact with a cosmogonic force.

That's the claim.

And first of all, before you start unpacking these wild claims, you can't immediately jump to, "Is it true or not?"

That's the mistake everybody makes.

The first thing you have to do is to detain yourself for a good long time in the space of, "Is it empirically true?"

For right or wrong, can you observe that people believed this way and that a certain thing happened out of it?

And I think when you ask that question, "Does it have history and time and space?"

you can say, "Yes, indeed.

This is how the first Christians believed."

And that it brought with it such a force that within 30 years or less, they had established themselves as a profoundly new invasive species in the garden of religions.

Talk about barbarity, it holds nothing to Christianity.

It kind of took over.

Because there was power, there was cosmogonic power in this belief.

If people had not had it, there is no way that Christianity would have gotten out of the temple in Jerusalem.

No way.

It was the force, the sense that some occurrence had been unleashed through this man that set the world on a whole new foundation.

And it's that belief that gives rise to some of the most powerful, compelling, mystical poetry, speculation, and art throughout the history of Christianity.

Watch it from the tympanum, the west wing doors of the cathedrals, to some of the lofty prose of beginning with St.

Paul and coming right down to Teilhard de Chardin.

And some of the beautiful canticles that I got to sing as a medievalist in the church are just saturated with this spirit that we are celebrating in this kind of minor martyrdom in Jerusalem, an event that changed the nature of creative reality.

So today we absolutely do not know how to touch that claim.

Well, the fundamentalists know.

You just keep screaming it.

But most who have grown up in more sort of progressive and inclusive stripes of world religion find this at best embarrassing and at worst intellectually appalling.

Because what you're dealing with is a totally ordinary, run-of-the-mill, garden variety political misstep and assassination.

A tricky community, a guy strung up, claims that he was the son of God, and off you go.

And the only reason that any attention was paid to it whatsoever is probably that he was white, more or less Semitic, whitey-past.

These things go on in Africa all the time.

Anybody remember the Hutus and the Tutsis?

The world is saturated every day with these martyrdoms of people for causes and we don't even hear about the story.

So there seems to be something really entitled to begin with to our liberal ways of thinking about things, about calling this one person out and then pasting on it the story that he rose from the dead.

And of course we can see in the history, and again I'm talking as a medievalist here and not as a theologian, that Christianity was worried about that claim from the start.

Some of the earliest little bits of plays and medieval dramas and medieval homilies were all about trying to head people off of the past by saying, "Oh well, the Romans and the Jews, as they always are called, concocted this plot to say that he claimed to rose but they just really stole his body."

So that's actually, you find it in the Gospel texts, they were so worried that they were going to do this damn thing that the Christians tried to head it off of the past and say, "Well, they said they were going to do this, but guess what?

We actually did it and it's because it was correct."

So they were uneasy about this story and there's good reason why they were uneasy.

Because from standpoints, certainly in the Gurdjieffian tradition, what you're really dealing with is a Kesdjan resurrection.

The idea that Jesus rose and the physical body was not thrown across into doctrine until Tertullian in the third century, who was the one with his particular sort of coarse mind that couldn't distinguish between first body and second body, insisted that he bodily rose.

Till then, people had a much better sense of the flow between worlds.

What you know when you look at the resurrection appearances, the seven or so resurrection appearances, is that Jesus is always present to the exact degree that it fills and takes away the doubt of the person he presents to.

That's the one constant.

For somebody like Thomas, who has been much maligned in tradition and says, "Well, unless I see his flesh and sides, I won't believe."

Well, here's my flesh and sides, you know.

To someone like Mary Magdalene, who only needs to see, that's all she gets.

She's told, "Don't touch me, because you don't need this.

You've got your doubt satisfied."

John never had any doubt in the first place.

He goes and sees the empty tomb and groks the whole thing.

People never said at the beginning that he's physically risen from the dead.

What they said was that he's alive and he's present and he's with us in Jerusalem.

We had a lot more flow in the early churches.

It got coarser and literalized by about the fourth century, as a lot of things moved more coarse.

But at any rate, nowadays, liberal Christians find it virtually impossible to touch this one anymore.

It's like the proverbial third rail.

It's going to create howls of superstition, magical thinking, and an arrogant dismissal and exclusivism of the other religions.

Yes, these things are true.

They raise their ugly head in force in the planet today.

What's happened in the liberal tradition is to completely divest themselves from that, and even to divest themselves from the idea that Jesus was any particular, that his death had any particular significance more than anyone else's death.

There's a tendency to essentially downsize Jesus from cosmogonic warrior to brother and martyr and victim.

We just love victims nowadays.

They're so manageable.

Is there any way that we can return to this claim that Jesus' act of salvation that went on here randomly in some hanging spot outside of the walls of Jerusalem changed the foundations of the cosmos?

Is there any way we can still touch that claim?

Or is it just gone the way of Adam and Eve and the flat earth?

Is it something we just have to grow up and get over?

So that's the question I want to sit with and bring in some perspectives from the Gurdjieffian Ray of Creation to perhaps create a new way of approaching this, I think, key question of Christian identity.

And Christian identity not just Christian as opposed to Jew or Buddhist, but the ability to claim identity with any religion that offers a hard particularity at its core.

So I want to look at that.

I will say it was really, really, really easy to advance this claim that Jesus' death had somehow changed the foundations and actual physical composition of the world in the old flat earth cosmology.

It fits really well there.

The flat earth cosmology meaning essentially it's biblical cosmology.

You don't even yet have a geocentric world, a sphere revolving around it, but you've got the earth is a flat sort of island above which and below which floats the sea of chaos and darkness.

And you see this really strongly in Old Testament and the Genesis stories.

It's flat earth cosmology.

And most of Christian theology just basically borrowed flat earth theology.

And in flat earth theology, it's really easy because the world is way smaller and because it was easy to create the whole orderly plot.

We all know as by Adam came death, so in Christ comes the resurrection and life.

We've got the plot.

Eve screwed up.

She gave an apple to Adam.

Adam ate.

The sin of disobedience was launched that created this ugly scar.

Somebody had to pay the price despite God's wheedling and dealing of Israel through the whole Old Testament and never quite stepped up to the plate and paid the price.

So God sent his only son to be the new Isaac on the sacrificial pile to somehow pay the price that had to be paid so that redemption could be made whole.

So that was the classic story.

If you grew up fundamentalist, you know this story.

Jesus died for your sins.

But the story began to unravel.

And if you look, the story was actually unraveling by the time of the Renaissance.

And why some of these people like Copernicus and Galileo, God knows, were so threatening to the church was because they began to knock the props out of the story in which the need of a necessary debt to be paid made any sense at all.

And then Teilhard took it a step further.

When you began to get evolution and people could begin to sense, "Oh well, you know, this is not a story that's 11,000 years old, folks."

This is a story that's, you know, here on the planet Earth alone is 4.5 billion years old.

It began to become more and more clear and say, "Well, was there an Adam and Eve?"

And my grandson Jack nailed me on this question when he was four.

He said, "Grandma, which came first, Adam and Eve or the dinosaurs?"

Where he was trying to deal with two scales, you know?

Good boy.

I mean, he's part of this new generation.

But so I think there's absolutely no doubt that the reason that Teilhard got busted, as you know he did.

He was flying high in 1926 with a real appointment at the Institut Catholique in Paris and adoring students flocking to his doorstep.

And then somebody apparently leaked a private letter he had written in answer to a private question he had received about, you know, Adam and Eve and did original sin arise?

Was there an Adam and Eve?

And Teilhard is an evolutionist specializing in the early paleontology of the Pleistocene Age, you know, like 11,000 years BC to 100,000 years BC.

Had to say in all good consciousness, "No, there is no history whatsoever on the planet that God created a man and a woman, you know, pulling the woman from the man's rib and then, you know, set the whole cosmic drama in motion by exiling him."

Well, you see what's at stake.

When you've got a story that you know is fragile, you're going to have to kill everybody that threatens it.

Isn't that what human beings do?

You know, don't change the story for God's sake.

Kill the human beings that oppose it.

But they said, "Oh my God, they're knocking out Adam and Eve and if you knock out Adam and Eve, you know, you've knocked out the cosmic debt that has to be paid.

And so let's knock out Teilhard."

And they did.

They had him packing away on a boat to China and for 20 years he never came back and he was never permitted in his lifetime to, you know, he touched the third rail.

And so what you see in the church and for me, I can have compassion here, you know, I can also get mad as hell, but I can understand why.

Because the church is absolutely correct in its intuition that there is a cosmic debt, there is a cosmic cost to the arising of everything.

It's absolutely correct.

And if you try and pull that out, and it's usually carried in atonement theology.

And atonement theology, before you start looking at its horizons, says there's a price to be paid.

This is not a free ride, guys.

This is not a free lunch.

This has been costly and there's a cost to be paid.

And the moment you pull that out of dead center in Christianity, you wind up with a bloodless and banal Christianity and an entitled one.

You get a bunch of sort of Unitarian do-gooders.

That something collapses.

And as atrocious as many of us feel atonement theology is, the alternative, no atonement whatsoever, is far worse.

Because it winds up very, very quickly denuding human beings in any sort of sense of remorse of consciousness, collective purposiveness to move, transformation, repentance.

And remember in Gurdjieff everything begins with remorse of consciousness.

And there's not a single story anywhere in Beelzebub of anybody waking up without first recognizing the horror of the situation.

The sense that, you know, we human beings, how could we manage to have gotten off the mark so badly?

And until you see that and feel it in yourself and take responsibility for yourself, nothing's going to happen except for the absolute sclerosis of ego-selfhood, which is what we're now suffering from.

So there is a cost to be paid for arising.

And I've felt all along, you know, I've been working at this for fifty years now I think, because I sensed in my first encounters with Christianity the absolute centripetal importance of the paschal mystery and the sacrifice that's paid and offered as somehow being the driveshaft of everything else.

I knew that was important.

And I always gravitated my way back to the churches that somehow or another still stood behind it because it just gave you a deeper quality of holiness.

But I came to see a long time ago that the real problem is that we've tried to stick the blame on human beings.

And a lot of my own work, which I'm going to come back to, is on Friday, when we talk about Good Friday and the cost of the arising at a more tight focus level.

A lot of the problem has been to say that the human beings are uniquely the ones that screwed up, that everything was perfect and hunky-dory until we started messing around with forbidden fruits.

But the cost is carried and borne across all orders, created and uncreated, as an objective, an impartial price for the arising of somethingness out of nothingness.

The only two people I have found who have named that absolutely clearly are Jacob Boehme and G.I.

Gurdjieff, both in their own ways.

But it's the one thing that for me is the tie rod that connects.

A lot of people say, "Well, how can you be a mystical Christian in the Fourth Way because they seem to be going in opposite directions for three quarters of the time?"

But on that they hold an absolutely, for me, firm cornerstone.

There is a cost of the arising of something out of nothing.

And the one that ultimately pays it is the source of all arising, God.

And with the very first crack that allowed something to come into being at all, we also set in motion the maelstrom of passions, of worlds, of impartialities and partialities and anxieties and survivalisms that are the inevitable shadow side of anything coming into being.

And the good news is that once the cost is seen to be jointly shared, collectively owned, everything comes into perspective.

And you can begin to see how the created and uncreated orders are always working together to heal the necessary crack that runs through everything in order that there can be something.

So that's what we're going to look at.

And I think the Gurdjieffian perspectives are extremely helpful because Gurdjieff just starts, you look at all the Obligolnian Strivings.

And if there's one thing they have in common, it's this insistence there is a cost to be paid.

And to be a real human being is to step up to the plate voluntarily and be willing to pay it.

Not only your own, remember the fourth striving?

"To pay as quickly as possible for the cost of your own arising in order that you might be able then to lighten the sorrow of our Common Father."

And notice he doesn't say lighten the burden of humanity or any good altruistic thing like that.

"In order to be able to lighten the sorrow of our Common Father."

He understands.

He understands how deeply this cuts.

And that the ultimate altruism for any of us, including Jesus Christ, is the willingness and in some sense the complete total offering of ourself to lighten the sorrow of our Common Father.

And if we can get there on our own, you are an evolved human being.

You've made it.

You understand what's at stake and how you fit in the whole.

But you can't get there easily.

I mean, any kinds of shortcuts always wind up blowing up in your face.

There's a path that has to be followed toward the development of a self, a conscious inhabiting of that self, a development.

I think finally it's the Kesdjan self that begins to be able to make this voluntary self-offering.

So it's really important to have it because the ego self will not ever, ever, ever be able to do it.

It's too scared.

It's too frightened.

It's too compulsively into bargaining.

So that's the second tier that the Gurdjieff work opens up for me that makes it basically the best commentary on Holy Week that I know.

And for me, the privilege of being able to work with the teachings in this kind of context, where for Christians it's to come back and look at Holy Week through a whole set of different eyes that don't hold Holy Week narrowly like Jesus died for your sins, but hold it against the whole drama that's laid out in Beelzebub of a cost of an arising, something that must be paid, and of the gradual growing up of human beings that are able to understand this and step up to the plate.

That's the scale that adds a whole new light.

And then the dimension that I'll look with later about how the paschal sacrifice seen in that light is a direct infusion of that quality of mercy into our atmosphere so that we don't work in despair.

So that's where we're going.

We'll get to that part later.

What I wanted to talk about today, just to finish up the cosmological aspect of this discussion.

There was a line I read recently that Joseph wrote that I just love.

He talked about the value of not just gathering, but understanding that when we get to a certain place, it becomes a consecrated vow to be paid.

And what else can you do but do what we are vowed to do?

He says this quite specifically in Exercise 18.

My booklet is in the other room.

But he goes through the litany having essentially taken you through one of the many, many drills that we have of collecting from the higher hydrogens, the substances that allow a more subtle being to emerge in us.

And then he says, "I swear never to use these powers for my own enhancement, but always for humanity, for others, in service to others, in service to others."

And yeah, that can sound like a sappy sort of disclaimer if you're not conscious.

But if you are conscious and you understand what you're vowing to, it does change your life.

For me, the Gurdjieff work turned around a hundred degrees when I realized in my first Foundation group experiences, it was all about taking.

I wanted to be more conscious.

I wanted to be more evolved.

I wanted to have a higher being body or four of them or however many I could stuff in my pockets.

Me, me, me, me.

And there was not a real emphasis on serving.

It was kind of out there like, "Oh yeah, when you get one, maybe that's something you can do."

But the focus was completely, a hundred percent, spiritual materialism.

I've never been in such a rampant spiritually materialistic.

We sit here in prayer and we absorb the higher energies and there was never anything made of that "why?"

And the idea that you have a responsibility to evolve, not just an invitation, but a responsibility, so that humanity can come up to the place that it needs to fulfill of the great chain of being in order for the whole thing to keep chugging along, for there to continue to be able to barely create somethingness out of nothingness.

I mean, it's a tight struggle even to now.

I mean, entropy and creativity running neck and neck.

And what we do as human beings is crucial.

And that's again the scale at which we have to see our own work too.

It's not about each one of you becoming brighter and more twinkly and sparkly alive human beings.

It's about being prepared to step up to the plate.

As Rafe always told me, "I want to have enough being to be nothing."

And it's amazing how much being it takes to be nothing.

It's really far easier to have non-being to be something.

That part's a no-brainer.

My consciousness of which I'm so proud.

But we'll get into that when we talk about suffering later.

I want to take just a few minutes to ponder this claim that in this random event on a cross on a hill outside Jerusalem city walls, 2,300 years ago, 400 years ago, whatever it was, an event took place that shifted the cornerstones of the earth.

And of course that boggles the imagination.

It fits in flat earth, but it doesn't fit in our modern kind of expanded cosmos.

But I think it can be understood from the perspective of the Ray of Creation.

And particularly from the way of the Ray of the Creation as I played with it in chapter seven in "Eye of the Heart."

And what I essentially did, the great chain of being, of course, stretches out.

And Gurdjieff's Ray of Creation is his own take on basically the classic great chain of being metaphysical philosophy, where the idea is that the divine, holy, absolute, in formless, boundless absolute projected itself out into the world in a series of increasingly dense realms that move farther and farther and farther away from the divine.

But essentially each bore a true mirror of divine beingness.

And so there was world one, as Gurdjieff often named them, which was the holy, infinite, inaccessible, uncreated.

Christians call it the Godhead.

Before there was form.

World three, which both Boehme and Gurdjieff talk about so brilliantly, though not using exactly that language, the primordial arising of what I would say is the Trinitarian template.

There's a good reason why it's called world three.

Because as Boehme put it, that holy, absolute Godhead existing in a state of infinitely spacious unbounded non-creativity has no intrinsic inner impulse to create, has no mechanism to do that.

In order to bring somethingness out of that steady state of what some of the astrophysicists are calling constant cosmic inflation, you have to create a principle by which manifestation can happen.

And of course I think Gurdjieff's brilliant contribution, making the most splendid Trinitarian theologian of all types, is to create this direct correlation between the Trinity and the Law of Three.

That this was the principle, this was the algorithm by which it became possible for finite being, for new creation to happen.

It's magnificent.

Jacob Boehme was sort of sniffing the edges of this but didn't quite nail it.

Gurdjieff just has it.

So world three creates a world that has within it the capacity to be a self-creating, self-perpetuating, dynamic dance between finite and infinite.

World six is the world of the great Logoic ordering where the fundamental templates are put in place.

Then we get into world twelve, the soul on the scale, the sun, which I named in my own take on it the Christic realm for reasons that will gradually sort of bleed out during the week.

The imaginal then, the Kesdjan world.

Forty-eight, the world of the mental body, human being, with all its busy maps and structures of consciousness and the self completely connected to the first body experience of selfhood.

And then down into ninety-six, the sort of more mechanical version of it that we're living in as a culture today, where anything vaguely resembling creative sustained thinking has long since been suspended or not yet attained.

And we think in mechanical thought bites and ritual actions.

And then down into one ninety-two, the world of sheer primordial craziness, the lowest level at which anything really resembling consciousness can survive.

And then from there on into the embodied and vegetative.

It goes right down and down to world three twenty-four and each one doubling and becoming increasingly insentient and mineralized.

Consciousness in a much more constricted form.

But I got thinking at one point, and it began just as play, that if you really say that one of the big things that happens when you step across from world forty-eight causality, you know, the way we do things, linear progression, earlier causes later, sequential chains, maps, developmental steps, evolution, all that stuff we do in world forty-eight.

If you step into the imaginal world, one of the first things that happens is the whole principle of causality shifts to what I saw as chiastic.

That there is a center of purpose and out of that action flows in concentric rings, which are in symmetrical proportion to each other around that center of purpose.

And so the brainchild occurred to me at one point, "What if you rearranged the chain of being so that it wasn't a chain but a chiasm?"

And where would you put the center?"

And I said, "Well, you know, if you just take and you run your range from world one to world one ninety-two and call it the chiasm of consciousness and divine purpose, what falls right in the middle is world twenty-four."

And there are so many quotes in the Bible talking about that, well, that Ephesian one, "He has made known to us his hidden purpose, made so kindly in Christ from the beginning to be effected when the time was ripe that all heaven and earth be brought together in unity through Christ," Ephesians 1: 1-12.

And Boehme's deepest sense that it buried inscrutably somehow in the heart of this divine unboundary spaciousness was something that Boehme called the scientia, the science or the knowledge.

That there was a divine knowingness that creation, you know, the tango with the finite, was absolutely necessary to the full expression of Godhead.

This is before there was any worlds, any law of three, anything.

Just this knowing.

And the Islamic tradition picks that same mystical insight up.

"I was a hidden treasure and I loved to be known so I created the worlds visible and invisible."

The sense that before there was anything there was just this sort of almost incoherent, certainly unconscious, knowing within the divine that the propulsion to project outward and create a finite world was a necessary condition for the full expression of the treasure at the heart of divine power, divine potentiality.

And the best in all traditions have named that hidden secret ultimately as the fullness of love.

The mystics keep coming back to it on all paths that love is not this sort of a priori thing that exists as a permanent quality of God apart from any created order.

It is something that is loomed and woven and spun like pure gold on the warp and weft of the created and uncreated dancing.

And this was the hidden secret that they all talk about.

So if you take that as the kind of chiastic epicenter, you know, World 24 lands in the middle of that, or right at center, flanked on either side in the first ring out by Worlds 12 and Worlds 48.

The Christic, the highest realization of what can be realized, attained and born still in human finite form.

And the human, us human beings wandering around, most of us not quite in our atmospheres, trying to think our way out of paper bags one right after another.

And then the next circle out takes World 6, the great Logoic world of a bright, brilliant Logoic orderly uprising, counterbalanced with 96, the world of increasing mechanicality, insentientcy, thought bites, slogans, clichés.

And then still further out, World 3, the fundamental originating process of consciousness, you know, in World 3, with the fundamental collapsing or black holding of consciousness in World 192.

So you've got a chiasm that puts in the circle the imaginal, which Jesus called, guess what, the Kingdom of Heaven.

And it is very, very clear to me, you know, without beyond any shadow of a doubt, that the Kingdom of Heaven is the human being living in and fully at home in his or her Kesdjan body.

It's the second body, the second embodied human being.

And I don't mean by that the one who has left the first body behind, but the one who has found a center of gravity that allows the first and second bodies to pour from one into one to another.

So the second body, which is in touch with the whole Ray from higher up, can help the first body to live in the world as we've talked, as it has to be lived in, through this vow,

and not mess up the vow, to move beyond spiritual narcissism and spiritual materialism, to live as a cosmic servant, to live out of conscious love and intentional suffering.

That's the Kesdjan self.

Jesus called it the Kingdom of Heaven and he kept saying it's within you.

So the Kesdjan human being can bridge worlds 48 and 24 and 12.

At the one hand, and this will check out, although I'm not going to go there, but I'll just let some of you, you know, I'm absolutely convinced that it checks out, that your second being body corresponds to the Kesdjan universe.

Your third being body, which Gurdjieff called the soul when he simplified it down to three, is twelve, world twelve.

And it connects your higher intellectual center and you can see and you can understand with a complete compassionate fusion and bear into the world a very high quality of love, which is what Jesus bore into the world, a tiger love, not a pussycat love.

It melts lesser souls that don't have a Kesdjan body to sustain it, but it is real and it can be born in human flesh.

And then you become a first-order martyr and you serve in a way with cosmic force.

So the realm of the epicenter in world 24, just on the other side of that Mi-Fa shock line, and world 12, and world 48 flanking, constitutes the realm of the personal.

The realm in which the self comes into its own, lives, moves, and redeems.

The realm in which we will basically be doing our work while we're finite human beings.

And so when you have that at the center, you can see that something that goes on in the nature of Christ's sacrifice, if you place it within that realm of the personal, you see that it does have within that chiasmic reading of the Ray of Creation a cosmogonic power, because it shifts and makes possible a threshold that had not been attainable before consistently in civilization.

That human beings could now, yes, truly inhabit world 24.

The conditions have been paid, the price has been there, we are supported to do that.

That was not evolutionarily possible up to that time.

And we can touch with that Kesdjan selfhood world 12, from which the real cosmogonic love pours into this world, creating different outcomes.

So in whatever Jesus did out of his realized world 12 being, in that moment celebrated in the church many, many years ago, does have something to do with opening a new possibility for all of us.

And since we are the particular volatile kind of conscious player in the whole thing, to really set the world on potentially a new foundation.

So in that sense, I'm not saying that that solves all the problems, but that provides for me a rich personal and experiential ground in which to explore and live out and weave together theory and practice and sacramental devotion in a way that the thing becomes a whole picture, in which I don't have to apologize for my Christianity by trying to play it out in world 48, where it will never work.

Never work.

I mean, it's always going to make a fool of itself there.

But when you begin to say, "Okay, what if the kingdom of heaven is people being able to live out of their Kesdjan selves?"

And what if this was what Jesus was really helping us to do by not only modeling but transmitting to us at a really cosmogonic level?"

We're going to come back and look at what the Harrowing of Hell means.

I think it's the most under-tapped mystery in the Christian faith.

We'll do that later in the week.

But I just wanted to paint for you the big picture in which I want to work with this and to ask you whether that makes any sense to you as a way of holding on to it.

There is a cost to be paid.

But we are bearing it jointly across the cosmos of the work and the Ray of Creation.

It teaches us how to step up to the plate and do it.

To install, upgrade the equipment that lets us get into the game and then to live out of it responsibly.

And in association with what's going to come to us from still higher.

So there's a wonderful comment by Teilhard de Chardin, who had never heard of Gurdjieff as far as anyone knows, but had very good instincts in some place, where he talks about the realm of the personal.

And I'm going to read that passage to you today as we come to the closing of this particular little Dharma lecture.

He says in "The Human Phenomenon," "So many times art, poetry, and even philosophy have depicted life as a woman blindfolded, cramping down a dust of crushed existences.

In life's profusion, we find the first traces of this apparent hard-heartedness.

Like Tolstoy's grasshoppers, life passes over a bridge of accumulated corpses.

Life is more real than lives, it has been said.

In so far as the general movement of life becomes more ordered, in spite of periodic resumptions of the offensive, the conflict tends to resolve itself.

Yet it is cruelly recognizable right to the end.

Only from the spirit, where it reaches its felt paroxysm, will the antinomy clear and the world's indifference to its elements be transformed into an immense solicitude in the sphere of the person."

Those are big mystical words, but I've been doing Lectio Divina on them for a decade now.

They're so big.

"Only from the spirit, when it reaches its felt paroxysm," the guy who never heard of feeling, you know, sensation, emotion, "will the antinomy, this terrible contrast, clear and the world's indifference to its elements be transformed into an immense solicitude, a tender caring, a mercy in the sphere of the person."

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

It does come together and our bodies and souls willing to place ourselves on the path of Kesdjan transformation are, I believe, taking the first step toward the actualization of what was implanted in the sphere of the personal 2,500 years ago with indeed the capacity to place the world on a different footing, on a different threshold of consciousness, if we can touch it in the right way.