

A Cosmic Resurrection



The Universe makes all things New

The history of life on Earth demonstrates that species come and go. Throughout the biological history of life on Earth, there have been five major extinctions of life, and biologists tell us that we are now in the grip of the sixth major extinction – the Cenezoic Extinction. It is reckoned that 99% of all the species that have ever lived have become extinct. No species that has become extinct has ever been re-generated in any subsequent biological era. It seems to be the case that when it comes to generating living species, the Universe never repeats itself.

Transformation not Repetition

The era of the dinosaurs like the era of the dodo is gone forever. The dynamic of the Universe is a dynamic of transformation rather than a dynamic of repetition. In the death of primal stars, for example, the potential for creating more complex stars and solar systems is generated. Out of the death of the tiny acorn, rises the majestic oak.

A Dynamic of Divine Homecoming

Inherent in the creative power of the Universe is the drive towards greater complexity and sophistication. The journey of life is not a purposeless meandering through time and space, but the unfolding of a deep mystery – the homing instinct embedded in the simplest speck of matter to return to its Creator. The salmon returning to the source of its first emergence is a beautiful metaphor for this hope-filled expectation of a divine homecoming.

A Journey of Increasing Complexity

When we examine the evolutionary process that has led to the emergence of the self-aware human, what we observe is that life has consistently followed a path of greater complexity. Teilhard de Chardin called this path the primary axis of evolution. We humans are the Universe coming to self-awareness. As a species, we have been tempted to strut the Earth with a certain degree of arrogance because of our present status. It has rendered us insensitive to our collaborative role within the great web of life. We need to be team players not arrogant loners.

We journey towards greater Complexity and Self-Awareness

Another lesson to be learned from reflecting on the ways of the Universe is a realisation that we humans are species on a journey. We are not the finished product. Who knows what deeper levels of complexity and self-awareness lie open to our species as we travel the evolutionary journey? This possibility is not a fanciful day dream, or some groundless flight of fancy. In fact, it lies at the very heart of our Christian tradition.

Jesus: Transformation into Glory

The early Christian community in celebrating the Resurrection were celebrating the transition from the earthly Jesus to the Cosmic Christ. It was, simultaneously, an affirmation of continuity and discontinuity in the life of Jesus. Through the resurrection experience, the earthly Jesus had transformed into the Lord of Glory, the Cosmic Christ.

The Cosmic Christ

Some of the earliest Christian writings reflect this profound belief in the Cosmic Christ, whose emergence encapsulated the hope and the expectation of a similar transformation, not just for humans, but for the whole of creation. The author of the Letter to the Romans wrote about the whole of creation groaning in expectation of this unimaginable transformation. Teilhard proclaimed

this ultimate destiny, as the Omega Point, the point where the upward surge of creation is engulfed in the downward embrace of the Divine – like a child stretching for the warm embrace of a loving parent.

The Omega Point

For Christians the Omega Point is the "the terminus ad quem" not just for some select few but for the whole extravagant creation that a prodigal Creator has sustained and nurtured through all of its existence.

Questions for Reflection: If the dynamic of resurrection/transformation is central to the evolutionary story of life, where do I see it operating in my own life? What transformation do I wish for on a personal level? What transformation do I wish for at a local level? What transformation do I wish for at a global level?