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# **Love in Evolution**

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*The next two bulletin editions are taken from the first presentation in the summer Godweiser series.*

Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor. In this first session we will reflect on the meaning of love with insights from modern science and the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

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When Jesus was asked what one must do to enter the kingdom of heaven his answer was to **love**: Love God, love your neighbor as you love yourself. Core to our Christian vocation is the call to love.

There are many examples in the gospel about how we are to love. The Beatitudes (Mt 5), the separation of the sheep and goats (Mt 25), and the Father's perfect love described in Mt 5: 44f, which is all inclusive. These descriptions of love are qualities we all strive for, love of enemies, giving to the poor, mourning with those who mourn, etc. But perhaps the deepest desire of Jesus was that we may all be one. Being one with God and each other was so important to Jesus that it was his prayer the night before he died. "May they all be one, Father, may they all be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (Jn 17:21).



Love and unity are but two sides of the same coin. How does God move us toward greater oneness? Through love! Love is an active verb; love is dynamic; love is always transcending itself toward greater union. You have experienced this. Call to mind one of your dearest friends or your partner in life. Trace the stages of change. Your first encounter, heart beats faster-- does she see me? Does he know I exist? You introduce yourself. You flirt; these are the first steps of infatuation. You feel excited when you see each other; you are impatient for time together. You start to hang out; you date. You get to know each other—you have so much in common.

And so the oneness deepens. Initial infatuation gives way to friendship. You share hopes and dreams and fears. You know each other's gifts and faults and you love the person for who they are, warts and all. Perhaps at this stage of life you know their thoughts before they say them, you can finish their sentences so he/she only needs to say a few words. I have heard married couples say, I know him/her better than I know myself. Slowly, one act of love at a time, you are becoming more and more one.



What does human love relationship tell us about divine love. We identify God as love, if God is love, what does this say about the nature of God? God is trinity, a community of relationship; God is a continuous becoming in love. Love is dynamic, relationships are dynamic. They evolve. What does this say about creation? Creation is ongoing, evolving from matter to spirit. We are not observers of evolution. We are not outside of evolution. In fact, God is not outside evolution as though she is watching what she set into motion. Rather God is in evolution and Christ is the leading edge toward which all creation is evolving. This gives new insight into Romans 8:22 “All creation groans aloud the pangs of new birth.”



What is this new birth that we await? What does this mean for us and the cosmos? What is Christ’s role in evolution? What is ours? In The Emergent Christ, Ilia Delio writes about the role of Christ and our role in evolution. **“Love is the metaphor for Christ and that divine love incarnating evolution is the work of the Spirit. To be engaged in the mystery of Christ is to be caught up in the Spirit of new life, creativity, imagination, and openness to the future.”** (p. 5) Some scientists claim that evolution is accidental, random. But as Christians we see evolution as the continuing work of the Spirit. Christ leads the way and as followers of Christ we participate actively in the process when we are caught up in new life, imagination and openness to the future.

This is who we are called to be in the post modern era, men and women who love, who are caught up in new life, creativity, imagination and openness to the future. Christ is leading the way. As St. Paul said it early on- “all creation is groaning to fullness of life.” All creation is moving towards this oneness in love.

**Go Deeper**

Contact Sr. Linda for a chat at 935-9191 x202 or e-mail her at [straub@washucsc.org](mailto:straub@washucsc.org).



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