

MOTHER EARTH AND THE EMERGENCE OF LIFE

*“Let the Earth bless the Lord: praise and glorify the Lord forever...
Bless the Lord every plant that grows ...
Bless the Lord seas and rivers, praise and glorify the Lord for ever
Bless the Lord all animals, wild and tame”*

Canticle of Daniel



“The Universe itself, but especially the Earth, needs to be experienced as the primary mode of divine presence.”

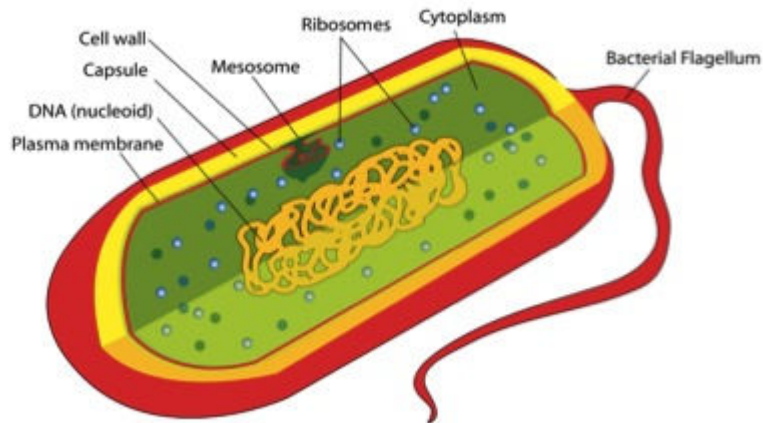
Thomas Berry in *Dream of the Earth*

About five billion years ago, after the death of a giant star, our solar system began to take shape. The self-organizing power of the Universe, was at work from the beginning, bringing order out of chaos. It took about five hundred million years but, by that time, the solar system was looking very much like it looks to day – an average sized star, the sun, surrounded by eight planets and one dwarf planet, Pluto.

The young Earth was a place of indescribable chaos. There were heaving, murky seas, tumultuous earthquakes, fiery volcanoes, blazing meteorites raining down on Earth’s surface from the skies, raging electric storms, and an atmosphere devoid of oxygen. Here in this great cauldron of primeval chaos, Divine energy called forth life from the most unlikely of places, the very Earth itself.

The very first manifestation of life was a tiny bacterium, the prokaryote, yet within this tiny creature was the potential to generate the vast complexity of life that has come to be known as the biosphere. Divine energy is capable of calling forth the most breathtaking outcomes from the most unpromising of beginnings.

The First Living Cell



Ever since it first emerged, Earth has nurtured life with great care. Life has not evolved in a haphazard way through a series of random events. Within the dynamic of life there has been an inherent sense of direction. The vector of life has always pointed towards ever greater complexity.

For nearly four billion years now, Earth, has been nurturing the flame of life. Over this vast arc of time, there have been five major extinction events, the last occurring a mere sixty-five million years ago, bringing about the demise of the dinosaurs. At the end of each of these extinction events, Earth has fanned the flickering flame of life into ever greater manifestations of complexity. This is the mystery and wonder of life – it is as if there has been in life an irresistible urge to get to the complexity that is the human being.

Bio-diversity



Reflection Questions

The giving of New Life is at the very heart of the Christian message. Jesus came that we may have life and have it to the full. To be fully alive is to proclaim the glory of God. All of life is

vulnerable, and new life is especially vulnerable. Because it is vulnerable it needs to be cherished and appreciated.

Questions for Reflection

Where is God for you in this New Story of how life emerged upon the Earth?

When has the emergence of new life evoked profound wonder and awe in you?

Does the season of Spring have any special meaning for you?

How do you nourish the season of Spring in your own life?

Many of our human institutions are in need of new life, how do we form alliances that facilitate the emergence of new life?

Little Poem for Niamh

Your arrival was late –
Advent in July.
Your birth a revelation.
The moment forever etched
in memory
lingers
to be recovered as a blessing.

My maternal examination of you
one of awe, delight and wonder.
No need to check for faults.

Pure perfection in miniature
every detail a work of art.
Pretty puckered lips
eyebrows defining character
tiny fingers unfurling
to clench waiting grown up fingers

A connection is made
promise of a life-time's love.
Monica O'Reilly

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Other reflections on their web page www.edmundrice.eu