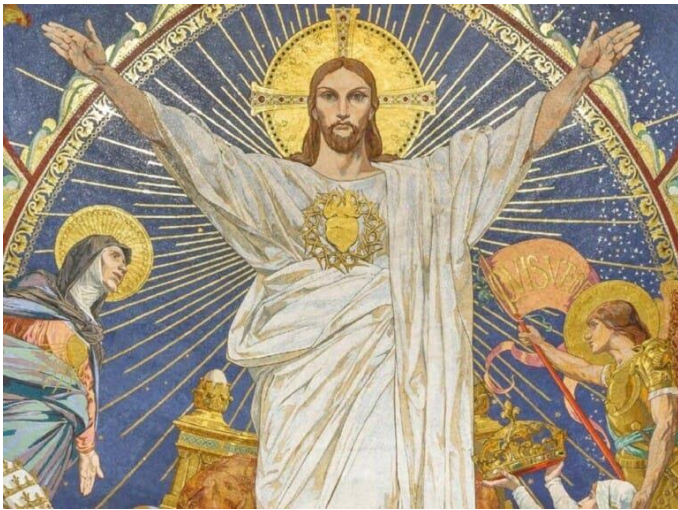


October 24, 2024

Dear Brothers,

Released today, Pope Francis's encyclical – *Dilexit Nos* – is on the human and divine love of the Heart of Jesus Christ. I look forward to reading it and discussing it with you. Meanwhile, in light of the recent conference on the Dual Threats of Climate Change and Nuclear Weapons, I'd like to recommend a book by Mary Frohlich, RSCJ, titled *The Heart at the Heart of the World: Revisioning the Sacred Heart for the Ecozoic Era*. I've been asked to review this book. In her brief survey of the history and devotion of the Sacred Heart, she references our Founder. She writes, "Léon Dehon (1843-1925) told a story of the reign of the Sacred Heart as the establishment of justice for the poor" (p. 35).



For Frohlich, God's boundless and passionate love for humanity, as expressed in the Sacred Heart, is at the heart of creation. According to her, the Sacred Heart does not begin with Christ's incarnation but rather is at the heart of the world since the beginning of creation, from the emergence of the universe to the emergence of the galaxies and solar system to the emergence of all life forms. As conceptualized by Teilhard de Chardin, the Sacred Heart is the

"Omega Point" toward which the universe is oriented, serving as the point of unification with God. For Frohlich, Jesus's incarnation was "to reconcile all things to God" and to "complete the manifestation of God's Living Heart on Earth" (p. 88).

In the context of the current ecological crisis, she asserts that Jesus's core preaching about the *kingdom* of God can be expressed today as the *kindom* of God, in which all life is interconnected and interdependent. She writes, "[The] fact that wild creatures, from viruses to rats to sharks, may at times be

inconvenient or even life-threatening for human beings does not detract from their being equally members of the kingdom that God has created and longs to accompany into the fullness of life” (p. 97). All creatures on earth are our kin. Our vocation is to “live faithfully the life of kinship” within the web of created beings (p. 177).

One other interesting point Frohlich makes is about creation, God's involvement, and science. She acknowledges our need to respect science but emphasizes that God cannot be reduced only to its findings. She rejects the notion of an interventionist God who intervenes in the created world to accomplish things apart from natural processes. Instead, she embraces the concept that divine intentionality gives direction to the evolution and emergence processes. I like the way she explains the "Big Bang" theory from a spiritual perspective. For her, the Big Bang is the "exploding forth of the vast foundation of divine love from the Heart of God" (p. 80).



During their days together, the conference participants reflected on the wonder of God’s creation and the injustices we perpetuate. They are committed to following the See-Judge-Act model of Catholic Social Teaching regarding the devastating effects of climate disruption and nuclear weapons. They recognized these as two profoundly daunting threats but remained steadfast in their belief that we can bring about change and alleviate the suffering of the Earth. Through the love of the Sacred Heart, may we reciprocate God’s boundless love with our care for His creation.

Fraternally,