

Consecration Sunday Sermon

The Rev. Devon Anderson | The Rev. Dr. Anne Miner-Pearson | The Rev. Chip Whitacre

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Trinity Episcopal Church, Excelsior, MN

Consecration Sunday's sermon came from an excerpt from Hymn of the Universe by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). It was offered as a meditation on gratitude - the raising up of our thanks and praise and love for the God that gives, and gives, and gives.

DEVON: Since once again, Lord.... I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself beyond these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself; I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it will offer you all the labors and sufferings of the world.

CHIP: Over there, on the horizon, the sun has just touched with light the outermost fringe of the eastern sky. Once again, beneath this moving sheet of fire, the living surface of the earth wakes and trembles, and once again begins its fearful travail. I will place on my paten, O God, the harvest to be won by this renewal of labor. Into my chalice I shall pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this day from the earth's fruits.

ANNE; My paten and my chalice are the depths of a soul laid widely open to all the forces which in a moment will rise up from every corner of the earth and converge upon the Spirit. Grant me the remembrance and the mystic presence of all those whom the light is now awakening to a new day.

DEVON: One by one, Lord, I see and I love all those whom you have given me to sustain and charm my life. One by one also I number all those who make up that other beloved family which has gradually surrounded me, its unity fashioned out of the most disparate elements, with affinities of the heart, of scientific research, and of thought.

CHIP: And again one by one — more vaguely it is true, yet all-inclusively — I call before me the whole vast anonymous army of living humanity; those who surround me and support me though I do not know them; those who come and those who go; above

all, those who in office, laboratory, and factory, through their vision of truth or despite their error, truly believe in the progress of earthly reality and who today will take up again their impassioned pursuit of the light.

ANNE: This restless multitude, confused or orderly, the immensity of which terrifies us; this ocean of humanity whose slow, monotonous wave-flows trouble the hearts even of those whose faith is most firm: it is to this deep that I thus desire all the fibers of my being should respond.

DEVON: All the things in the world to which this day will bring increase; all those that will diminish; all those too that will die: all of them, Lord, I try to gather into my arms, so as to hold them out to you in offering. This is the material of my sacrifice, the only material you desire.

CHIP: Once upon a time [people] took into your temple the first fruits of their harvest, the flower of their flocks. But the offering you really want, the offering you mysteriously need every day to appease your hunger, to slake your thirst is nothing less than the growth of the world borne ever onward in the stream of universal becoming.

ANNE: Receive, O Lord, this all-embracing host which your whole creation, moved by your magnetism, offers you at this dawn of a new day.

DEVON: This bread, our toil, is of itself, I know, but an immense fragmentation; this wine, our pain, is no more, I know, than a drought that dissolves. Yet in the very deaths of this formless mass you have implanted — and this I am sure of, for I sense it — a desire, irresistible, hallowing, which makes us cry out, believer and unbeliever alike: “Lord, make us *one*.”

“The Mass of the World” by Teilhard de Chardin from Hymn of the Universe, Harper and Row, 1961. pg 119-21