# A Spirituality for Our Times

## A Retreat with Thomas Berry

The Thomas Berry Project
Loyola Institute for Ministry ● Loyola University New Orleans

**Group Retreat Guide**

Developed by Carol Lenox, Marion Danforth, Jennifer Shimek, Tom Ryan, and Tracey Lamont
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***Note**: This retreat guide is designed for both in-person and online gatherings. There is a corresponding PowerPoint. The opening and closing prayers, use and number of readers, and the leader script are suggestions. Adjust as needed for the intended audience.*

*Note to retreat leader: As participants arrive, ask for up to eight volunteer readers. Depending on the number of readers you plan to use, you may want to have handouts with the readings to distribute to the readers. For zoom retreats, you will need to call on the readers at the appropriate time.*

**Retreat Design**

**Timeline for Retreat (times are approximate)**

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|---|---|
| 2 minutes | Introduction |
| 2 | Opening Prayer |
| 10 | Introduction to Video Clip |
| 16 | Watch video clip from “An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality” |
| 10 | Silent Reflection and Journaling |
| 20 | Small Group sharing |
| 5 | Large group sharing |
| 5 | Introduction to Lectio |
| 10 | Three reflections by Thomas Berry |
| 10 | Silent Reflection and Journaling |
| 20 | Small Group sharing |
| 10 | Closing and Final Prayer |

TOTAL TIME: 120 minutes

**Introduction to the Reflection (2 minutes)**

The leader begins by posting the overall question to be explored and asking participants to keep this question in mind throughout the session:

> How might your deepest fulfillment emerge not from personal achievement or security, but from discovering your place and responsibility within the living Earth and the unfolding universe, and responding to that calling with your life?

***Note:*** *This question is not meant to be answered at the beginning. Individual answers to this question are meant to be explored throughout the session.*

**Opening Prayer (2 minutes)**

> As we gather together, may we awaken to the universe in which we live.
> To a world of meaning.
> To a world of intimacy.
> To a world of wonder.
> Lead us to lament for the ways in which we have brought devastation to this world.
> And help us to find fulfillment in bringing forth our own unique gifts to the celebration of this wonderous, integrally connected universe.
> Amen.

**Introduction to Video Clip (10 minutes)**

Leader: We are going to frame our time together around a video clip from a lecture that Thomas Berry gave at Loyola titled "An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality." One might wonder - what does ecology, the study of how organisms interact with one another and with their environment, have to do with spirituality? The word "spirituality" carries many definitions, but it can primarily be understood as our experience of being part of something greater than ourselves, something which is Divine in nature. Out of our spiritual experience of this sacred something, we find meaning and purpose in our lives. How do we, as organisms on this planet, interact with all the other organisms we live amongst? How do we learn from them and experience the Divine in our experience of them? And why is an integrated, reciprocal relationship with all of creation necessary for us to find spiritual fulfillment in our lives? We will start by putting Thomas Berry in conversation with Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*. (Cue Reader #1)

Reader #1: "The primary liturgy is the natural world. The primary manifestation of the Divine is not found in books, in human words – it is found in the natural world. As Saint Paul said in Romans: 'Through the visible world we come to know the invisible things of the Divine'." (Thomas Berry, "An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality" Interview)

Reader #2: "God has written a precious book, 'whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe.' Contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us, since 'for the believer, to contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a paradoxical and silent voice.' We can say that 'alongside

revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a Divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night'." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* #85)

Reader #3: "…the salvation of our souls is dependent on our capacity for communion with the world in which we live, the outer world, because our inner world is shaped by the outer world. And that's one of the reasons why the devastation that we are bringing on our outer world is simultaneously a devastation of our inner world. And it is that inability to establish rapport with an inspiring, ennobling outer world is one of the basic reasons why we have a distraught inner world of people and why humans cannot be human if they are isolated from the wonders about them." (Thomas Berry, *Emergent Universe* Lecture)

Reader #4: "As part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect. Here I would reiterate that 'God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement'." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* #67)

Reader #5: "'…I give you beauty, I give you wonder, and I give you fulfillment. And I bring you to your greater self.' We might say that the universe is the greater self ... because nothing could be itself without everything else....Our greater self is our true self. That's why we have this intimacy of relationship with the outer world because that's who we are....We discover ourselves in the rainbow. We discover ourselves in the various animals. We discover ourselves in this gorgeous planet in which we live." (Thomas Berry, *The Need for Recovery of Western Civilization* Lecture)

Reader #6: "'God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other'." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* #86)

**View Video 1 (16 minutes)**

Leader: We are going to watch an excerpt from a talk that Thomas Berry gave to Loyola University New Orleans called "An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality." In this clip Berry invites us to probe the question: How do we obtain fulfillment? He speaks of awakening to the universe as a world of meaning, a world of intimacy, and a world of beauty, and of the imperative to take care of our planet so as not to damage the experience of the Divine that can only be found in our sensory experience of the world about us.

Watch video clip from "An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality"

**Silent Reflection and Journaling (10 minutes)**

Leader: We are now going to take some time for silent reflection and journaling followed by group sharing. The following questions are meant to guide this time. We will take 10 minutes of

silence, after which we will come back together and then be sent off into breakout groups for 20 minutes to share.

Show the following questions on the accompanying PowerPoint. Suggest that participants pick one or two for reflection.

- What does it mean for you to "awaken to a universe" rather than to isolated objects or goals, and how might your sense of purpose change if your life were consciously "universe-referent"?
- How does the idea that humans exist for the fulfillment of the universe, rather than the universe for human fulfillment, challenge or deepen your religious, theological, or spiritual assumptions?
- In what ways does our culture's attitude toward the natural world sffect our ability to obtain fulfillment? How can we turn from acts of devastation towards the planet Earth to acts of reciprocity and intimacy with the natural world?
- Where do you notice the connection between the health of the natural world and your own inner life—imagination, emotions, faith, or sense of soul—and what losses or renewals do you perceive there?

**Small Group Sharing (20 minutes)**

Leader: We are now going to move into small breakout groups for 20 minutes. I invite you to share some of the insights you gained from the video and your subsequent reflection. Use the questions for guiding your discussion.

***Note**: If you are in person, suggest that participants break up into groups of 3 or 4. If you are on zoom, create groups of 3 or 4 in which to send participants.*

**Large Group Sharing (5 minutes)**

Leader: I invite one person from two or three groups to share an insight from their group's discussion.

**Introduction to Lectio (5 minutes)**

Leader: We are going to hear sections from a series of three different lectures or interviews given by Thomas Berry. Each serves as an insight into what a spirituality for our times involves. In the first section, Berry speaks of awakening to the "scripture" of the universe. In the second section, he offers a prayer of lamentation for how we have treated our home and the other beings that live here alongside us. And in the final section, he offers up glimpses of how we might fulfil our roles in the universe, what our "ministry" might be as we bring our own unique gifts and talents to the fulfilling of the universe.

Leader: After we read each clip, we will take a few minutes of silence. I invite you to write in the chat box a word or phrase or brief idea that resonated with you as you listened.

**Three Insights from Thomas Berry (10 minutes)**

***First Insight: Scripture***

Reader #8: Christians have always had the idea that there are two scriptures: there is the scripture of the natural world and there is the scripture of the bible, and we read these in relationship to each other. But we overemphasized a transcendent deity taught to us in human language over and against the sense of the Divine that we get from the sun and the moon and the stars, from the birds that sing in the evening, from the flow of the rivers, from the mountains, from the seas. A verbal scripture cannot be the only scripture, because as soon as it is given in language it takes on the distortions of language. It involves a sociological context and takes on a historical moment when the revelation was given. It is so highly conditioned that now we have to learn the language, we have to learn the circumstances in which the revelation was given, and we have to learn the historical moment. That requires something much more than the immediacy when you look at the stars in the heavens. The psalms themselves tell us that we learn about the Divine from the stars in the heavens and from the beauty of the earth. We have such a beautiful earth! We needed something that would inspire us. Only such a realm could reveal the Divine to us. Only such a world could fulfill the demands of the human soul, the human imagination. Only such a world could sustain the solace or pains of life. Our sense of the universe is our sense of the Divine. Out of the universe has come life, consciousness, beauty, and wonder. Our universe provides us with a revelatory experience of the Origin from which it emerges. Few indeed it seems are those whose vision of the stars, the ocean, the song and flight of birds, the mating rituals of the various life forms does not evoke some sense of inner spontaneity, a guiding principle, a consciousness, a trans-material presence manifested throughout the material embodiment. (Drawn from Thomas Berry, Emergent Universe Lecture, Education in the 21st Century Lecture, Church in the 21st Century Lecture, and The University in the 21st Century Lecture)

Leader: We will take a few moments of silence while you share a word or phrase or brief idea that resonated with you as you listened.

***Note**: If you are in person, invite the participants to speak their word or phrase out loud. If you are on zoom, invite the participants to type their word or phrase into the chat box. You can then read them out loud to the group.*

***Second Insight: A Prayer of Lamentation***

Reader #9: How might we see this land as a Divinely blessed land to be revered and dwelt in as a light, gracious presence? How might we feel the Divine in every breeze that blows across the landscape. See the Divine in every flowering plant? Wonder at every buffalo crossing a meadow in daylight and every firefly in the evening? If in the present we have not been sensitive to the deeper meaning of this world, we come here as pilgrims, penitants. We bring with us the

promise of dedicating ourselves to relieving the oppression we have imposed on the past and begin a new era in our presence here. We begin to understand that the way to the world of the sacred is through the place of our dwelling. We will awaken to the beauty of this land. We will listen to the teachings of this land. We will accept the discipline of this land. We will absorb in the delight of this land. We come here as pilgrims to beg a blessing from the mountains and the valleys and all their inhabitants. We beg a blessing that will heal us of our guilt over what we have done. A blessing that will give us the guidance and the healing and the energy that we need. For we can never bring a healing to this earth until we are first blessed and healed by it. To make ourselves worthy of this blessing is a task to which we dedicate ourselves with the hope that all the children of the earth, the children of every living being, can more serenely enter the future as a single sacred community. (Adapted from an interview Thomas Berry gave to Kathleen O'Gorman)

Leader: We will take a few moments of silence while you share a word or phrase or brief idea that resonated with you as you listened.

***Third Insight: Ministry***

Reader #10: To restore the dignity of the plants, the rivers, the mountains, the oceans, and the animals and birds and insects – that is the spirituality that is before us. This is the vocation of the future. It is not a question of choice. We did not ask to be born at this time. We were chosen to be here at this time and to do this work. The nobility of our lives is how we deal with this. If we don't have an integral relationship with the natural world then we won't be integral human beings. And if we aren't integral human beings then we can't be spiritual beings. We have been chosen and given something to do. We have a mystical destiny to join in the great liturgy of the universe. The created world is fulfilled in itself and in its role as being a celebration of the Divine. And the human gives this celebration a very special quality. We are that being in whom the universe finds a way of expressing itself and celebrating itself and its numinous origin in a special mode of conscious self-awareness. We all have something we can do, no matter what aspect of life we are in. We are self-creative just as the universe is self-creative and we are asked to live in fidelity to our own special gifts. Through our music, our dance, our poetry, our teaching, our leadership, and our scientific endeavors, the natural world is fulfilled in the human and the human is fulfilled in the natural world. (Drawn from Thomas Berry, An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality Lecture, North American Continent Lecture, Education in the 21st Century and Ecozoic Era Classroom Discussions, The Universe as Moral Guide Interview, Cosmological and Ecological Contexts Interview, and An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality Interview)

Leader: We will take a few moments of silence while you share a word or phrase or brief idea that resonated with you as you listened.

**Silent Reflection and Journaling (10 minutes)**

Leader: We are now going to take some time for silent reflection and journaling followed by group sharing. The following questions are meant to guide this time. We will take 10 minutes of silence, after which we will move into breakout groups for 20 minutes to share.

Show the following questions on the accompanying PowerPoint. Suggest that participants pick one or two for reflection.

Ask participants to consider the following questions:

- Recall a moment when the stars, land, water, or living creatures gave you an immediate sense of the Divine—how does this kind of revelation differ from, deepen, or challenge your experience of written or spoken religious language?
- What does it mean for you to approach the land as a pilgrim and a penitent, and where do you feel called to grieve, repent, or ask forgiveness for human actions that have wounded the Earth? Where do you feel called to dedicate yourself in an effort to heal the earth?
- How might your particular place of dwelling—its land, waters, seasons, and creatures—be inviting you to listen, learn, and accept its discipline as a path to healing and blessing?
- How can your unique gifts—whether artistic, professional, social, or contemplative—become ways for the universe to celebrate itself and its Divine origin through you, joining the great liturgy of the Earth community?

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**Small Group Sharing (20 minutes)**

Leader: You are now going to be sent into small breakout groups for 20 minutes. I invite you to share some of the insights you gained from the video and your subsequent reflection. Use the questions for guiding your discussion.

**Closing and Final Prayer (10 minutes)**

Leader: I would like to thank you for choosing to participate and share in the discussion process. We began by posing this question: *How might your deepest fulfillment emerge not from personal achievement or security, but from discovering your place and responsibility within the living Earth and the unfolding universe, and responding to that calling with your life?* We hope that this series of reflections and the insights you have encountered today might strength your understanding and help guide your journey in this wondrous universe.

**Final Prayer**

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

—Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* #246.

**Video Clip Transcriptions**

**Video #1: "An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality" by Thomas Berry, March 1998**

For me, spirituality is fundamentally the question of fulfillment. How does a person obtain true fulfillment in these years of the late 20th century and the emerging 21st century? It's certainly a challenging time, a turbulent time, and for the next generation and the generation after that, probably as awesome and difficult a future or as challenging a future as any generation ever dealt with.

I was thinking of this as regards the collection of essays that I am writing. I gave the title of the book, that I hope to publish within a year, *The Great Work*. How can a person find fulfillment in these times? We are dedicated to personal survival, we get educated in order to find a place in the contemporary economic order. The general practice of religion is not that satisfying on the whole. And the question arises: "How does a person obtain fulfillment?" Just to give you a brief idea of how I approach this subject, I received a book, a manuscript of a book soon to be published, with verses for children, and I was asked to comment on it, and I wrote these lines:

"A child awakens to a universe. The mind of the child to a world of meaning. The emotions of the child to a world of intimacy. The imagination of the child to a world of beauty. It takes a universe to make a child of both an outer form and inner spirit. It takes a universe to educate a child. It takes a universe to fulfill a child. And the work of one generation in relation to the succeeding generation is to bring these two together into their mutual fulfillment, the child in the universe and the universe in the child."

Now, we could take this and use it as regards a human. As humans, we awaken to a universe. We don't awaken simply to this or that, to trees and then to rivers or to clouds. A child experiences a beautiful and a wonderful and fulfilling and exciting universe. And the difficulty that we are experiencing, of the confusion and the impasse that we are witnessing in all the professions, is, I think, because we have somehow lost the universe.

And when I spoke here some time ago about the universe and the university, I said that the difficulty with the university is that it doesn't have a universe. Because without a universe, nothing is going to have any meaning. The universe in the phenomenal world is the only self—what would I say this? The universe is the only self-referent mode of being. The universe is the only self-referent mode of being in the phenomenal world. And that's where everything starts. If we don't have a universe, we are completely lost. But everything goes back to the universe and everything in the universe is universe-referent.

As humans, we are a component of the universe and our fulfillment is in the universe. And the great work to which we are called, everyone is called, and all the professions are called, is to fulfill a role in the universe. And it's why cosmology, or universe-ology, is the primary context of meaning as regards everything that we do. And within the universe, the planet Earth is the more immediate context in which we find meaning. The planet Earth is the fulfillment of meaning as regards everything, every member of the planet Earth. Now, the difficulty of these times, a person would say: "How did we ever lose our awareness of this?" And here is where the traditions, and I think particularly the Christian tradition, has lost itself, or it's lost a substance of what it should be about, because it became alienated from its role in the universe.

Ultimately Christianity exists as fulfillment of the universe, the universe has a prior status. Humans— the universe doesn't exist to fulfill humans. Ultimately, humans exist for the fulfillment of the universe and for the fulfillment of the planet Earth. That is the world of meaning. And if we lose sight of that, if we try to make the planet Earth serve the human instead of the human serving the planet Earth, then it's not going to work. …

The human project in every way is integral with the Earth project, and that is where our fulfillment is, in the beauty of the Earth, in the mountains and the rivers and the wonder of things, but we have to take care of that wonder of things. It's a world of meaning, it's a world of beauty. It fulfills imagination, it fulfills the mind, it fulfills the emotions. It's what gives us poetry and music and dance and the— and our literature. It all emerges from the outer world and the inner world. Our inner world wouldn't exist without the outer world. If we damage the outer world, we damage our inner world. If we don't see the stars in the sky and, because of light pollution and particle pollution, our children don't see the stars in the sky, that's not simply a question of pollution or a danger to our health or a danger to our aesthetics. It's a loss of soul. We lose our souls if we lose the natural world. …

As the European peoples, when we came here, came without an idea of joining the great community of the North American continent. We didn't think that we could learn anything from this continent, that we needed to become a member of this society as a North American continent, not to make them subservient to an occupying force and some other continent. We thought, when we came here, we thought that we had the best religion in the world. We had the Bible, and certainly there is a valid way in which you can claim that. But because we had, apparently, we thought we were the best educated, that we had the best political order, that we had the best economic order, that we had everything to give, provided this continent submitted to our exploitation, then we would make this a glorious continent. But what happened was that by refusing to become a member of the North American continent and insisting that it follow the patterns that we brought and submit to the type of economy we insisted on, then we come to the impasse that we are coming to in this present time in which we are not fulfilled because we are devastating that which could fulfill us because the Divine comes to us in and through the natural world.

We have no access to the Divine immediately. Or we do, in a way, that's the idea of having eyes to see and ears to hear and powers of touch and to experience a fragrance. The basic ideas of having these channels of communication is to enter into the mystery of the Divine as it comes to us through the songs of the birds, it comes to us through the wonder of the mountains and the rivers and all the living things. So, we're not angels; we don't go to God immediately the way the angels would go to God. We don't understand things immediately the way the angels do. We go through our experience, our sense experience, and that depends on having a certain sensitivity and honoring of the natural world as the mode, as the locus for the meeting of the Divine and the human.

Now, when I say at the present time, I just wanted to make those comments to establish this setting for understanding of where we are at this present time and what our great work is. And the great work is the vocation, we can say, for everybody. The great work of the future, the spirituality of the future, is not something that is a calling for this person or that person, or

people in economics, or people that are in law or medicine or something like that. It's a universal call for everybody. It's the vocation of everyone. Everyone has a vocation to restore, to move the human community from a position of devastation of the natural world to a context in which we will establish a mutually enhancing presence to the natural world. That is the basic work. That is fulfillment in that calling to establish a mode of being in which the human would be a mutually enhancing presence to the natural world. Because if we don't do—that's the first thing—if we don't do that, everything goes.

Now, there was a time when, perhaps, the great work was theological. There was a time—and, certainly, there was a time—when the great calling was to martyrdom in the early church. There has been a time in recent history when the great calling was the discovery of the Divine in the poor and the suffering and those into the human pathos. But, and both of those still exist, and certainly the alleviation of the human pathos and the discovery of Christ in the poor and the suffering is an abiding of context in which we live our lives. But beyond that, we cannot save the poor, we cannot help the poor, we cannot help the ill if we do not first take care of the context of the planet or of this continent.

**Three Insights from Thomas Berry**

***First Insight: Scripture***

Christians have always had the idea that there are two scriptures: there is the scripture of the natural world and there is the scripture of the bible, and we read these in relationship to each other. But we overemphasized a transcendent deity taught to us in human language over and against the sense of the Divine that we get from the sun and the moon and the stars, from the birds that sing in the evening, from the flow of the rivers, from the mountains, from the seas. A verbal scripture cannot be the only scripture, because as soon as it is given in language it takes on the distortions of language. It involves a sociological context and takes on a historical moment when the revelation was given. It is so highly conditioned that now we have to learn the language, we have to learn the circumstances in which the revelation was given, and we have to learn the historical moment. That requires something much more than the immediacy when you look at the stars in the heavens. The psalms themselves tell us that we learn about the Divine from the stars in the heavens and from the beauty of the earth. We have such a beautiful earth! We needed something that would inspire us. Only such a realm could reveal the Divine to us. Only such a world could fulfill the demands of the human soul, the human imagination. Only such a world could sustain the solace or pains of life. Our sense of the universe is our sense of the Divine. Out of the universe has come life, consciousness, beauty, and wonder. Our universe provides us with a revelatory experience of the Origin from which it emerges. Few indeed it seems are those whose vision of the stars, the ocean, the song and flight of birds, the mating rituals of the various life forms does not evoke some sense of inner spontaneity, a guiding principle, a consciousness, a transmaterial presence manifested throughout the material embodiment. (Drawn from Thomas Berry, *Emergent Universe* Lecture,

*Education in the 21st Century* Lecture, *Church in the 21st Century* Lecture, and The *University in the 21st Century* Lecture)

***Second Insight: A Prayer of Lamentation***

How might we see this land as a divinely blessed land to be revered and dwelt in as a light, gracious presence? How might we feel the Divine in every breeze that blows across the landscape. See the Divine in every flowering plant? Wonder at every buffalo crossing a meadow in daylight and every firefly in the evening? If in the present we have not been sensitive to the deeper meaning of this world, we come here as pilgrims. Penitants. We bring with us the promise of dedicating ourselves to relieving the oppression we have imposed on the past and begin a new era in our presence here. We begin to understand that the way to the world of the sacred is through the place of our dwelling. We will awaken to the beauty of this land. We will listen to the teachings of this land. We will accept the discipline of this land. We will absorb in the delight of this land. We come here as pilgrims to beg a blessing from the mountains and the valleys and all their inhabitants. We beg a blessing that will heal us of our guilt over what we have done. A blessing that will give us the guidance and the healing and the energy that we need. For we can never bring a healing to this earth until we are first blessed and healed by it. To make ourselves worthy of this blessing is a task to which we dedicate ourselves with the hope that all the children of the earth, the children of every living being, can more serenely enter the future as a single sacred community. (Adapted from an interview Thomas Berry gave to Kathleen O'Gorman)

***Third Insight: Ministry***

To restore the dignity of the plants, the rivers, the mountains, the oceans, and the animals and birds and insects – that is the spirituality that is before us. This is the vocation of the future. It is not a question of choice. We did not ask to be born at this time. We were chosen to be here at this time and to do this work. The nobility of our lives is how we deal with this. If we don't have an integral relationship with the natural world then we won't be integral human beings. And if we aren't integral human beings then we can't be spiritual beings. We have been chosen and given something to do. We have a mystical destiny to join in the great liturgy of the universe. The created world is fulfilled in itself and in its role as being a celebration of the Divine. And the human gives this celebration a very special quality. We are that being in whom the universe finds a way of expressing itself and celebrating itself and its numinous origin in a special mode of conscious self-awareness. We all have something we can do, no matter what aspect of life we are in. We are self-creative just as the universe is self-creative and we are asked to live in fidelity to our own special gifts. Through our music, our dance, our poetry, our teaching, our leadership, and our scientific endeavors, the natural world is fulfilled in the human and the human is fulfilled in the natural world. (Drawn from Thomas Berry, *An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality* Lecture, *North American Continent* Lecture, "Education in the 21st Century" and "Ecozoic Era" Classroom Discussions, "The Universe as Moral Guide" Interview, "Cosmological and Ecological Contexts" Interview, and "An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality" Interview)