



SPRING REFLECTION IN THE NEW SACRED SPACE AT MT ARCHER

The wonders and surprises:

I visited the Brisbane Planetarium just this week and could not but turn my mind and heart to the Creator of all things. Such wonders such glorious sights to behold. God is alive and well and we see His glory everywhere. The creation story is certainly God's sacred story and as such is our story too. God's footprint is left in this Universe of ours and more specifically in our home planet mother earth. We only have to look into the night sky to see the millions of stars in our own Milky Way Galaxy to be awestruck at His wondrous work. The story of the Galaxies is just mind boggling. In our own backyard we witness every day sunrises and sunsets here at the Archer where I live at the moment and marvel at such grace filled daily occurrences. It certainly helps me pray morning and evening in our newly completed **Sacred Space**. (Photo included above) The views here are quite breath taking and those that are able to spend a few days with us here at the Archer are able to share in God's bounteous gifting. Tony, Rod, Tom, and I climbed the mountain a few days ago and were spell bound by the view of the Glass Mountains and the Sterling River Valley laid out before us.

In His Image:

"We are indeed made in the image and likeness of God" as the good Book suggests or to put it in Saint Augustine's words "Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee" We come from Him and are destined to return to Him. The gradual unfolding of Gods plan for us over three billion of years are definitely all graced moments in time. From one single cell to the amazing complex family of cells that

we the Homo Sapiens are today is one of the great Mysteries of life. That it happened at all is the miracle; that it took so long is not so surprising.

The Basic Story:

This great story of creation started, so Science tells us, about fifteen billion years ago with the big bang and our planet earth started its journey 4.5 Billion years ago thanks to a Super Nova. Then life on our planet appeared in its simplest form about three billion years ago. We humans came into the story just very recently only 150 thousand years ago. It's only in the last 500 years that we have been able to articulate and understand the magnitude and wonder of this great creative work in a more honest way. At last we humans can reflect and wonder at the Universe of which we are a part. Thomas Berry has us as the **self awareness** of the Universe or if you like the **conscious mind** of all that is. We can even contemplate and enjoy the struggle of contemplating who God is and that makes us very special indeed. Brian Swimme tells us that we must be the carers and guardians of what we are able to enjoy and be aware of.

God's Handiwork:

We only have to look about us to see God's handiwork. The variety of life forms delights our senses and the beauty of our mountains and rivers only helps us draw closer to the Creator of all things. God shows His glorious handiwork most spectacularly in spring time when everything is in flower and life is celebrating being alive. The birds are at their most active singing their praises to the Creator God. Saint Francis certainly called the animals and birds his brothers and sisters. Maybe we need to capture his spirit.

I am living with Brother John Wright here at the Archer and he is a retired Christian Brother who spends some of his time painting and writing. I was admiring some of his work and was able to see John's personality wonderfully displayed in his handiwork. The command he had of the medium was a great testament to his many hours spent learning the skills required to produce such great work. This experience helped me understand that God's work is also on display as I admire the beautiful surroundings I am fortunate to enjoy while here in The Archer.

Human Footprint:

The small section of rain forest which makes up part of this wonderful property allows one to reflect what it must have been like before humans decided the earth was theirs to exploit. One of the sad sights at places like Leyte in the

Philippines where I have been for the last two years was to see very little forest left after 400 years of exploitation. As usual it's the poor people who have suffered because of this. Here in Queensland the Sunshine Coast must have been a wonderful rain forest paradise before settlement took hold. I learn that dairy farming plus tree harvesting were the dominant activities here in years past. Alas both have exhausted the area and left it in very poor condition. I thank God that at last we are learning to respect the earth and understand that we come out of the earth and were not brought in by some imaginary rocket from some distant universe to exploit and use up its resources for our own gain. God meant us to enjoy but also care for this planet and all we have done in the last few years is set about destroying it.

The Test:

This little story is true – *A little boy was very upset when he did not get what he had asked for on Christmas day and therefore on opening the gift flung it away to display his dissatisfaction and his displeasure. Mum was so upset and tried so hard to explain and even tried harder to help the child appreciate the gift he received but to no avail. Needless to say it was a very difficult Christmas in that household that year.* - The analogy may well be stretched a bit but not too hard to understand. This beautiful green garden as it has been called has been trashed. The planet earth, God's gift to us, is dying. (Can God be upset too?) Ecology may well be the **In Word** these days but do enough of us understand it. This earth is all we have and there is no place for us to run should we pollute and make it impossible to live on. This beautiful blue planet of ours is worth preserving and we need to care for it before it's all too late. After changing our ways then we must try to change others. It true that we have to start small if we hope to achieve anything at all.. "From little things big things grow" is a great song sung by Paul Kelly and worth listening to. To be a Christian not only is to care for and love our fellow humans but also to care for and love the wonderful home God has so generously and graciously given us.

The final thought:

I finish with something that has worried me for a long time, and that is asking myself the million dollar question: will I be able to leave this world a better place for me been in it; will I have been responsible for making this place better or worse for those who are to follow. Yes we will be asked "did we feed the hungry or give drink to the thirsty?" "Did we visit those in jail?" "Did we assist the poor when they came to our door?" but we may well be asked also "Did we care for the precious home we call mother earth?"

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