

Earth takes care of us, not we of it

This is one of those quotes that leap out of the page at you - recognition that it is an idea that takes us out of out, into a more ecological space. It is taken from Lyn Margulis' book *The Symbiotic Planet*, and the whole quote is even more confronting. "To me, the human move to take responsibility for the living Earth is laughable . - the rhetoric of the powerless. The planet takes care of us, not we of it."

It takes only a moment to digest this quote to see how a non-anthropocentric paradigm can alter one's 'normalised' view of this subject. The illusion of our separateness from nature has hidden from us the intense and complex interrelatedness of our relationship to the planet. Western philosophy and metaphysics have long regarded the 'self' as standing apart from the rest of the natural world, whereas on deeper inspection we come up with a quite different picture.

When talking about reality, it is reasonably accepted to say that we each construct our own version of it and of the universe. The default position is to identify what we see visually with the 'real' world, but the real world for a blind or deaf person is immediately recognised as different. Even for sighted people their supposed 'real' world is qualified by their history and culture. Our 'self' does not stand isolated, but like it or not, stands absolutely dependent on, and participating with, our sacred surrounds. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin had a name for this - *le Milieu Divin*.

The human is a highly evolved emergence of the evolving planet. We embody within us systems of communication, delivery, defence, nutrition, culminating in the phenomenon of what we call consciousness and intelligent mind. Quite apart from this we are embedded in an evolving set of systems set in motion nearly 14 billion years ago that monitor, control, react, balance, protect our planet and its life. We call these Earth's Living Systems or sometimes Eco-system Services. The emerging spiritual metaphor for this is 'Gaia.'

All our spiritual teachers encourage some kind of meditation or mindfulness as a means to personal fulfilment. The mystics remind us continually of our unity

with everything and everybody. Eastern thinking reminds us of our identification with the deity, which implies deity as the system which encompasses all systems, because systems do not come from nowhere. All systems have a relationship to previous systems. This is the essence of evolutionary thought, and is in contrast to the reductionist thinking we are used to where we tend to study systems (things) in isolation.

This kind of thinking is relatively new, and might be described as the science of cybernetics or systems theory. Recent prophets of this are/were Fritjof Capra and Gregory Bateson. Typically Bateson reminds us that no ecological system is completely closed, and consciousness is not a closed system either. Nor can we manipulate it easily. As Earth's systems malfunction around us we can expect our relationship to Earth to undergo change as well, because our systems are so interrelated. Possibly this is one of the sources of our 'response to the cry of the Earth', because we are part of Earth. We become part of the feedback mechanism which is a part of larger systems. In the words of Australian ecologist John Seed: "I am the rainforest protecting itself." We need to

cooperate with Earth's living systems if we are to allow Earth to take care of us properly. Human affairs need to reflect Earth's systems. In the language of Thomas Berry, human jurisprudence must reflect Earth jurisprudence and ultimately the Great Jurisprudence which has produced our universe and keeps it in a dynamic balance.

In the prophetic theological language of Meister Eckhart: "I have often said that God is creating the entire universe fully and totally in this present now. Everything God created six thousand years ago - and even previous to that - as he made the world, God creates now all at once."

We are being invited into an expanded relationship with Earth and Universe; to see ourselves not just in the context of a separated self, but in terms of a holistic net of relationships that holds us in a sacred embrace.

Maybe next time we use the phrase 'care of the Earth' it may give us pause for thought. Trevor Parton



What's going on at Glenburn?

You will have noticed a small difference in the layout of the newsletter this time. The hope is to give readers better access to the Centre's programs and activities. Over the past three or four years multi-day retreat have not been as popular as they were, and we have shown more emphasis on weekend and one day activities. At the same time small groups still want to use our facilities and more and more individuals choose to come up and spend private time, many looking after themselves in the hermitage flat.

Leonard continues to pamper the orchard trees, while Colleen, Trevor and Rod keep the vegetable garden in order. Richard is great in the grounds. Even though Mary White does not work at the Center anymore, she still cares for the bee hives, and presented us earlier this year with a lot of delicious honey.

The online course on ecological spirituality remains on our website and is now accessible free of charge. Have a look through and get back to us if you would like to have a go at it. There is a button on the bottom of this page to go straight to it.

The seasons come and go according to the laws of nature and we are of course just finishing Spring. Wildflowers arrive and bloom within a day or two of the same date each year. This

brings to mind the beautiful quote from Rilke: "Spring is like a child who has learned poetry by heart."

Our famous leaning tree which partly fell in November 2000 celebrates its seventeenth year halfway suspended in its initial fall due to a storm. Subsidiary vertical shoots have come up from

its leaning trunk and are now over



twenty feet tall. Quite a marvel!

Our resident wallabies regularly present us with a new joey most years. Nearly every morning they can be seen grazing on the green grass, not taking much notice of us humans.

We continue to be disturbed by the amount of timber being taken from our native forests nearby. Old growth trees which supply hollows for birds and possums are not being replaced fast enough, given the 2019 bushfires. Still large amount of ageing trees are being cut down for

use as paper and other non-valued products.

The exciting thing is that there is a growing support for The Great Forest National Park project, which would protect or unique forests. We ought not to take them for granted. The Victorian forests represent a precious habitat for scores of plants and animals.

We are featuring this year celebrations of the equinoxes and the solstices. We see this as a highly symbolic way of once again re-connecting with the Earth Mother. This issue's article spells out clearly I hope the dependence and intimacy we have with the whole universe story. Margie Abbott, author of the ground-breaking volume *Sparks of the Cosmos* has agreed to assist us with these Earth Days celebrations.

You will notice that we are not conducting the 12-week sabbatical course in February. This is the first time for a decade or more. Numbers have ceased to make it viable.

At the foot of pages 2 and 3 you will see links to sites of interest.

Very best christmas blessing to you all.

Colleen, Leonard, Richard, Rodney, Trevor

2018 Program

2018 PROGRAM

The monthly weekend retreats commence 10.00am on Saturday and finish with lunch. Depart about 2.00pm. The monthly retreat fee is \$210.00

MAR.3-4 MARCH RETREAT - THE EMERGING NEW CONSCIOUSNESS I

Looking at the prophetic figures of the last 100 years from the religious and the secular traditions, in as far as they witness to a new human-Earth relationship.

Religious: Teilhard de Chardin, Sri Aurobindo, Matthew Fox, Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme, Pope Francis.

Secular: Rachel Carson, Jean Gebser, Jean Houston, Joseph Campbell, Gregory Bateson, Ken Wilber, The Earth Charter, the Nature Writers

MARCH 17TH - AUTUMN EQUINOX CELEBRATION.

Each year our Earth' orbit passes through two points where its angle of tilt is side on to the sun, giving days and nights of equal length – hence equinox. The ancients saw the autumn equinox as a celebration of harvest, mirroring the inner journey of the soul. Our world needs a reconnection of the human and the Earth, particularly the seasonal celebrations. 1100.am to 2.30pm. No charge. Bring some food to share.

APR. 7-8 APRIL RETREAT - THE EMERGING NEW CONSCIOUSNESS II

Both the religious and the secular prophetic figures have in common, a sense of the sacred nature of our world, and a

desire to maintain its integrity. Both are called to acknowledge and celebrate the beauty and importance of the created order.

MAY 12-13 MAY RETREAT - THE UNIVERSE STORY RE-IMAGINED.

Tony Hempenstall and Peter Harney from the Archer Earth Community in Queensland offer us new insights to our appreciation of the Human and Earth Story, and the integration of both into our spirituality. Enter the Ecozoic era with our vision clear.

MAY 26 DANCE WORKSHOP

Circle dancing with Robyn Sussems is a popular annual event, with a reflective day of ethic dances and meditations. 10.00am - 3.00pm. Fee \$40. Lunch provided.

JUN. 2-3 JUNE RETREAT - ECHOES OF EARTHSONG

EarthSong wound up its activities in December 2017. Over its fourteen year life, themes around nature and soul were consistently looked at. Here is an opportunity to re-live some of those experiences in which many of us found so much fulfilment. Some members of the former EarthSong Presentation Team will facilitate.

JUNE 24 WINTER SOLSTICE

The winter solstice marks 'the birth of the light'. This is because the days will now get longer and the nights shorter. We celebrate around a fire for warmth, and tell the stories of our culture. At the darkest time of the year, we have reason for hope. 1100.am to 2.30pm. No charge. Bring some food

[GLENBURN WEBSITE](#)

[ARTICLES ARCHIVE](#)

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to share.

JUL. 1-2 JULY RETREAT - THE WISDOM OF THE FEMINE

A Celebration of the spiritual wisdom brought to us by people such as Anne Primavesi, Jean Houston, Julia Cameron, Anne Hillman, Annie Dillard, Joanna Macy, Rachel Carson, Jane Goodall, Edith Stein, Simone Weil, Wangari Maathai and the list goes on...

AUG. 11-12 AUGUST RETREAT - MODERN DAY SAINTS.

The legacies of people like Mahatma Ghandi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, and others. What are the soul lessons they have left us so that we can live out our unique lives.

SEP. 10-18 SEPTEMBER RETREAT - THE FLINDERS RANGES RETREAT.

Spend a week in the Flinders Ranges among the ancient gorges that were home to the earliest multi-cellular life, and still are inhabited by unique flora and fauna. Daily reflective opportunities help us to integrate the world and our spirituality. Comfortable but rustic accommodation in shearers' quarters. Good kitchen, bathrooms and washing. Cost \$1700.

SEPTEMBER 22ND - SPRING EQUINOX CELEBRATION.

One of the most joyous events of the year, growing, planting, birds nesting, and in our country the explosion of wattle - so brilliant at Glenburn. It is a time for celebrations of gratitude and planning for the coming season. 1100.am to 2.30pm. No charge. Bring some food to share.

OCT. 6-7 OCTOBER RETREAT - ECOLOGY AND COSMOLOGY

It is possible to walk blindly through life not having examined the worldview of our culture. Each individual has a unique path to travel which may be quite different to our cultural legacies. Living our own authentic lives is a celebration of own inner creative potential.

NOV. 10 DRUMMING WORKSHOP

Singer/Songwriter and drummer Christina Green offers an excellent day of drumming, singing and meditation. Drums are supplied and no previous experience is required. 10.00am - 3.00pm Fee \$40. Lunch provided

NOV. 17-18 NOVEMBER RETREAT - FOREST RETREAT.

Spend some reflective time among the ancient giant eucalyptus trees of the Toolangi State forest, an area hopefully soon to be named the Great Forest National

Park. Experience the beauty and presence of the primeval forests from which we emerged.

DECEMBER 22ND - SUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION.

This is the traditional Yuletide of the Northern hemisphere. In Australia the main focus is the birth of Jesus and the celebration of mid-summer, and the blessings brought to us from all points of the compass. 1100.am to 2.30pm. No charge. Bring some food to share.

DEC. 19-22 CHRISTMAS RETREAT

A four-day period for private reflective time which includes the Solstice day. \$115 per day.



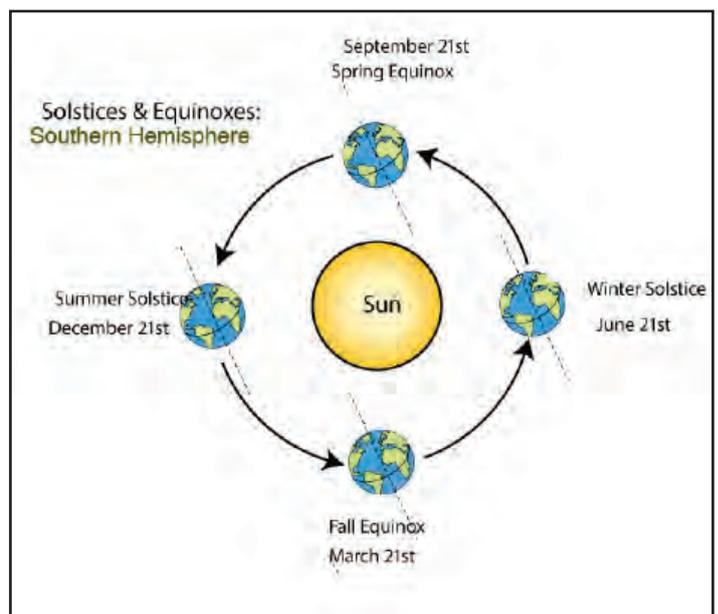
RACHEL CARSON



EARTH RITUALS 2018

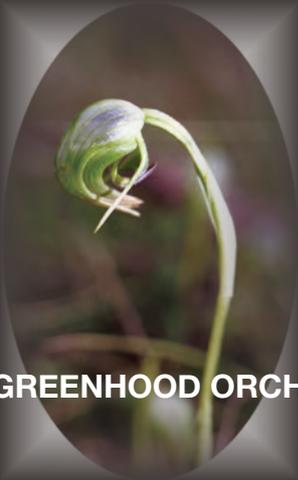
Equinoxes and Solstices have been occasions of celebration for millenia. They help to keep us in touch with the sun, earth and planets with which we live in communion. The movement of Earth around the sun has four very distinct moments. This due to the tilt of the Earth's axis, which gives us the hot and cold seasons, and the days when daylight hours are the same as the night. In these days of space exploration we have been amazed to see the huge variety of the planets and their satellite moons. Imagine what another civilization on another planet would marvel at, when they examined our planet in the same way. This is added reason to celebrate our planetary beauty and not take it for granted. We can celebrate the four compass directions just as many indigenous people have done. This is sometimes called the Prayer of the Four directions, and incorporated in this is acknowledgement of the seasons of the year. The form of the prayer would be different dependent on what hemisphere you are in. This is also true of the diagram accompanying this article.

Equinoxes and solstices do not occur on the same date every year: it depends on what time zone you are in at the moment the Earth passes that critical point in its orbit around the sun.





RICE FLOWER



GREENHOOD ORCHID



BLUE SUN ORCHID



HANDSOME FLET PEA



PINK FINGER ORCHID

NOVEMBER
WILDFLOWERS AT
GLENBURN



LEOPARD ORCHID



BIRD ORCHID



DARK EYED SUSAN



RICE FLOWER



POTATO ORCHID