

Eucalyptus rubida

Newsletter of The Centre for Ecology & Spirituality
Newsletter No.70 Spring 2017



There is only one question - How to love this world?

(To view introductory video click [HERE](#).)

If any lines of poetry regularly haunt me, it is this simple challenge to my life. These deeply beautiful lines are from Mary Oliver's equally beautiful poem [Spring](#). It simplifies so well the essential motivation we need to have, as we have our human experience of being creatures of Earth. It is the basic question we need to apply as we do everything in our lives. Mary Oliver's poem is about a black bear awakening as Spring breaks, as so often in Mary's poetry we are drawn into a transpersonal experience of what it means to be bear/human.

In it we are drawn back to that epic chapter of St Paul in his I Corinthians 13.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

I find myself examining my conscience over my own meager efforts to live in a loving relationship with my Universe. We have long put aside the notions that we should be the carers or stewards of the planet, rather than treating Earth and its 'life' as family, with its consequent demands on our love and even sacrifice. We could rewrite St Paul:

If we give lectures on sustainability, but do not have love, we are only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If we think all our science and learning is enough to save the planet, but do not have love, we are nothing. If we donate to all the good causes, and proudly march till we drop, but do not have love, we gain nothing.

When I marched with friends in the 2015 Climate Change Rally, displaying my banner, a young person came up to me and said "right on."



In another of Mary Oliver's poems, she was describing an encounter with two deer ([5 a.m. in the Pinewoods](#)). This mystical experience for her, which some of us may also have had in some way, she expresses in the challenging lines: *This is not a poem about a dream, though it could be. This is a poem about the world that is ours, or could be.*

Can we envisage and create a world for ourselves and others that is filled with the mysteries of the Universe, enlivening our own experience of the unity of all living and non-living 'beings.'

Seeing at close range the wallaby on my morning walk and being struck by its wide brown eyes, or gazing into the eyes of a King Parrot feeding off my hand, I am reminded of the saying of thirteenth century mystic Meister Eckhart:

The eye with which I see God, is the same eye with which God sees me; my eye and God's eye are one eye, one seeing, one knowing, ...

The 2015 Climate Change Rally went almost unmentioned in the press, even though it was possibly the biggest march through Melbourne in recent times.

Lots of people on the march, many



quite young, were deeply devoted to caring for the planet, though they might be surprised if we call them mystics, and spiritual people. For them the world around them is perhaps their only church, and Australia their parish.

There is a growing recognition that the world is a sacred place, not to be divorced from conventional 'religion.' For them God, if he/she exists, is to be found in their experience of the sacred.

Many scientists are astounded when the mystery and sublime creativity of the universe exceeds all their attempts to describe it scientifically.

Scientist Stuart Kaufman professes to be amazed by the ever present creativity he sees in the universe, and can state "*creativity .. is God enough for me.*"

Einstein says:

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.

I don't think language or concept will ever be able to articulate the sacred experience we have when, naked, as it were we realise that we are sacred beings embedded in a sacred story we share across time and space with absolutely everything else.

The quantum physicist David Bohm acknowledged a debt of gratitude to the medieval mystic and mathematician (St.) Nicholas of Cusa who was a follower of Meister Eckhart. Bohm said:

I would say that in my scientific and philosophical work, my main concern has been with understanding the nature of reality in general and of consciousness in particular as a coherent whole, which is never static or complete, but which is in an unending process of movement and unfoldment.

We are all unique and have a different take on reality. This is a huge challenge for us when the norm is to conform to trivial modes of thinking.

Trevor Parton