

Dedication to Thomas Berry *In Beauty, Wonder and Belonging- A Book of Hours from the Monastery of the Cosmos (forthcoming)*

Jim Conlon

Thomas Berry is generally understood to be the most significant scholar and spokesperson for the movement that sees the future of humanity and the entire planetary community as unfolding from a new cosmic story. We are grateful for his lifetime of dedication to making possible a more mutually enhancing relationship between humanity and the other-than-human world.

Berry reminds us of the beauty of the cosmos; the enchantment of the universe; and the challenges, dangers, and possibilities that await our children and all those yet to be born of every species. He is a voice for the voiceless, a spokesperson for the deep wisdom that resides in women, indigenous people, our Christian roots, and the new science. He reminds us of the need to nourish our souls and amplify our spirits with the mystery of each meadow and the beauty of a sunset or a star.

He calls forth from us a renewed awareness of our numinous destiny and the legacy that is our rightful inheritance. He reminds us of the danger of “soul death” during this era of human pathos and ecological bereavement. He reminds us that if we devastate the planet, we endanger and extinguish our souls; diminish our sensitivity, imagination, and depth; and lessen our capacity to taste, see, feel, and hear. He challenges us to take back our souls and the soul of our planet.

He reminds us that out of the chaos and devastation of this present moment could come an enormous creativity that could foster harmony and integration for the entire Earth community. We are being offered a “moment of grace,” a time of both chaos and promise. He reminds us that we have been chosen to live at this particular time and that each of us has a unique and significant role to play in life. We have the opportunity to contribute to the transition from the post-industrial era to the ecological age that awaits us. The new era can nourish us and engage our capacities for play, delight, and good work. Berry promises that if we undertake this Great Work, we will know where we are, where we have been, and where we are going: “We begin to understand that the way to the world of the sacred is through the place of our dwelling. We are finally awakening to the beauty of the land.”

Jim Conlon, Ph.D., is the director of the Sophia Center at Holy Names University, Oakland, CA. He holds degrees in chemistry, theology, social science and culture and spirituality. He is a graduate of programs in urban training and community organization. Among his publications are *The Sacred Impulse*, *Ponderings from the Precipice*, *Lyrics for Re-Creation*, *Earth Story*, *Sacred Story*, *Geo-Justice*, *At the Edge of Our Longing*, *From the Stars to the Streets* and the forthcoming *Beauty, Wonder and Belonging- A Book of Hours for the Monastery of the Cosmos*.