

## Awesome Unfolding Universe

Marie Louise Seckar, O.P.

Marie Louise Seckar, O.P., is a retired Sinsinawa Dominican Sister who began her connections with Thomas Berry and his work through reading his Riverside Papers, and continued her study at Genesis Farm and elsewhere. She is former Director of the Retreats and Spirituality Programs at Sinsinawa Mound Retreat and Conference Center at Sinsinawa, WI, where as Coordinator of the Eco-Spirituality Program, she arranged many retreats around the themes of The Great Work and the Universe Story. Currently she facilitates study groups and workshops on these themes in various locations.

My first introduction to Thomas Berry came through his writings that I found in the Global Education Associates publications in the 1970s. It was a time when I was searching for some understanding of the vague, yet deep connection I felt with the whole of creation through my experiences in nature ever since I was a child. This search was greatly affecting my entire life view. I immediately resonated with Thomas's thinking and began to search out other writings of his. I had read Teilhard's work earlier, but lacked background to understand what resonated there for me. Thomas was the mentor I needed.

This story continued to unfold with various other connections where I met Thomas's influence in Creation Spirituality workshops and continuing education materials where I encountered Brian Swimme and his connections with Thomas. I read anything I could find of both Thomas's and Brian's writing and listened to their videos. I gathered a study group to discuss their presentations.

I finally met Thomas when I went to study at Genesis Farm. One of my treasures is a photo of Thomas and me taken there after one of his presentations. Thomas's influence in my life brought a profound depth dimension to my understanding of who I/we are in this awesome Universe and in this wondrously creative Earth community. To share this understanding with others, I have gathered others in retreats, workshops and study groups in the upper Midwest. Because of Thomas's influence, I was able, as Director of Retreats and Spirituality Programs at our Sinsinawa Dominican Conference Center, to bring in presenters such as Miriam Therese MacGillis, Michael Dowd, Paula Gonzales and others.

I am profoundly grateful to him for all he continues to mean in my life and for his far-reaching influence in helping so many of us in Earth community to understand how we need to reinvent the human at the species level. Thomas's influence on my ever-deepening love of this Universe in "which we live and move and have our being" has fueled my passion to share the treasure I have found in his invitation to become part of THE GREAT WORK so needed in our time.

Thomas, I am eternally grateful to you for opening me to the on-going unfolding of the dynamic Mystery of this awesome Universe. I will continue to share and work so others also awaken to the Great Work to which we are called. The ramifications of your life, your work and your love continue to spread far and wide. You are a treasure to all of us species in this unfolding Universe!

With loving gratitude.