

TEILHARD 2005

On the weekend of April 7th -9th in 2005, the American Teilhard Association joined with the Fondation Teilhard De Chardin and the Association des Amis de P. Teilhard De Chardin of Paris in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in New York City in 1955.

The three day commemoration began with a Symposium on Friday at the United Nations in new York City, attended by 600 persons and entitled *Global Spirituality and a Sustainable Future*. Cosponsored by the French Mission to the United Nations, UNEP, UNESCO and the Forum on Religion and Ecology, the symposium was moderated by John Grim, President of the American Teilhard Association. It began with a short film on the Universe Story produced by Neal Rogin, and then featured as speakers Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker, who spoke on the cosmic context of our emerging planetary civilization.

Other speakers included Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute; Bertrand Collomb, Chairman of Lafarge Group and Chair of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and Steven Rockefeller, Chair of the Rockefellers Brothers Fund and chair of the Inter-national Drafting Committee of the Earth Charter. Also featured was a televised welcome to the gathering by Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate for 2004.

On Saturday morning, April 8th, a smaller symposium on *The Influence of Teilhard's Thought on Scientific Research* was held at the synod hall of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in upper Manhattan. The panel discussion included Ludvico Galleni, Professor of Biology, University of Pisa; Mark McMenamin, Professor of Geology, Mount Holyoke College; Kathleen Duffy, Professor of Physics, Chestnut Hill College; Harold Morowitz, Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study and James Skehan, SJ, professor of Geology at Boston University.

Saturday afternoon saw a magnificent celebration of Teilhard's vision in the great sanctuary of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, attended by several thousand persons. The liturgical event featured readings and comments on Teilhard's vision, dance and choral works, and music by the organist of the Cathedral, along with members of the Paul Winter Consort. Following a welcome by John Grim and Dean James Kowalski the celebration was composed of four sections, each honoring a dimension of the Teilhardian Vision. Under the general title of *The Epic of the Universe*, these sections included *The Flaring Forth*, *The Emergence of Life*, *The Fire of Consciousness* and *the Fire of the Spirit*.

Following readings from Teilhard and interspersed with dance and music, the homilies were delivered by Brian Swimme, Astrophysicist; Miriam Therese McGillis, Founder of Genesis Farm; Ursula King, Emeritus Professor of Bristol University and Helen Prejean, *Author of Dead Man Walking*. The impressive celebration touched many, and gloriously expressed the trans-forming vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

On Sunday morning, a small group including the French delegation traveled on a pilgrimage to the grave of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, located at the Culinary Institute of America, a former Jesuit seminary on the Hudson River north of New York City. In the

after-noon, a celebration of the *Mass on the World*, written by Thomas King, SJ, was conducted by him at the St. Ignatius Roman Catholic Church in New York City.

The events of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the death of Teilhard were coordinated by the Rev. Franklin E. Vilas, D.Min, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the American Teilhard Association. The events were made possible in part with grants from the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation, the Germeshausen Foundation, the Kendeda Sustainability Fund of the Tides Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation and the Owlsley Brown Charitable Foundation.