



Worldwide Teilhard Bulletin

SPECIAL ISSUE

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TEILHARD'S MASS ON THE WORLD
100 YEARS AND MOVING FORWARD
NEW YORK 2023

Retenez la date !

Save the date!

Retenga la fecha!

It is during **week 42, from October 16 to 22, 2023**, that we will celebrate in the United States the writing by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin of *The Mass on the World* a century ago.

That week will be divided between visits to New York in the footsteps of Teilhard and a stay in Poughkeepsie, a town in New York State where Father de Chardin was buried after his death on Easter Sunday 1955. In Poughkeepsie, we will have a celebration at his grave and hear a series of talks that will be streamed.

To help us imagine the atmosphere in which Father Teilhard composed his Mass on the World, we invite you to read some excerpts from his letters which you will find below.

**A few letters written by Fr Teilhard de Chardin in 1923
in the desert of Ordos**

Letters from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon

Hoa-ma-tcheu, July 26, 1923

...Everything is all right, physically and morally. I use this stay in Mongolia, as I did during the war, as a "retreat", by putting me back in front of and within the unique greatness of God...

On the banks of the Chara-Ousso-Gol, August 14, 1923

Today I am writing to you from the bank of the Chara-Ousso, the main purpose of my trip. The Chara-Ousso is a strange river, small and tortuous, which flows 80 meters deep in a cañon it has dug in the middle of a plain of steppes and dunes. We are camped at the bottom of the cañon, in an abandoned meander, and near a Mongolian "house" dug in a small promontory detached from the cliffs (a real fortress). - The Mongol is a friend, and his large family helps us explore, while his goats give us milk. We live among horses, kites, cranes (almost as familiar as in a garden). It is quite bucolic...

Sao-Kiao-Pan (Ordos SE), August 26, 1923

... I think I will love the mosaic of Montmartre, as you depict it to me; yes, a huge Christ, at last – that fills everything, truly a man like us, but truly Everything as well, as the World. [...] I always elaborate little by little, a little better, while praying, my "mass on things". It seems to me that in a sense the real substance to be consecrated every day is the growth of the World on that day, - as the bread is a perfect symbol of what Creation manages to produce, - and the wine (blood) what it seems to lose in exhaustion and suffering, in its effort. -...

Tien-Tsin, October 24, 1923

... In order to "breathe", I am going to start writing the second edition of my "Mass on the World". - If you only knew how limited and narrow the material Earth seems to me... I am really only interested in the Universe to come, I mean the world of living ideas and "mystical" life. - I often feel eager to find people to talk to and listen to about all of these matters. - You can see how much I still need your letters, both in Tien-Tsin and in Mongolia.

A letter from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to Léontine Zanta

On the banks of the Chara-Ousso-Gol (Eastern Ordos), August 7, 1923

... With less leisure than during the war, and less freshness too, perhaps, (the war, for me, was a blossoming of ideas, - an intellectual honeymoon), I have found myself, for the past two months, in a similar isolation, in the presence of realities just as vast. And these two conditions are eminently favorable to meditations on the great Whole. Now, in the vast solitudes of Mongolia, I see the same thing as on the "front" in the old days: a unique operation is being carried out in the World, which alone can legitimize our action: the release of some spiritual Reality, through life's efforts. When I go about on a mule's back for days on end, I repeat, as in the past - for lack of any other mass - the "Mass on the World" which you know, and I think I say it with even more lucidity and conviction than before. As I say to Marguerite, my impression is that I don't stand at a ship's bow any longer, but at the back, leaning on the wake (I can see the trace of what has passed): and it is another mode of detecting the movement of the world...