

Thomas Berry on Differentiation

This summer, June, July, and August, the New Story Group will explore the writings of Thomas Berry. In June we will focus on Berry's concept of differentiation. In July and August, we will explore the concepts of subjectivity and communion respectively. "Subjectivity and differentiation are fulfilled in communion." A Berry quote to ponder is this: "The greater the differentiation the greater the perfection of the whole, since perfection is in the interacting of diversity, the extent of the diversity is the measure of the perfection."

Thomas Berry on **The Story**.

- "It's all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective."
- "...a new story is needed, one that integrates the material and spiritual dimensions of evolution."
- "Just as the earth is a bio spiritual planet, the universe is a physical, spiritual, and biological reality."

The **Old Story** is about separation from the divine; it is dualistic in the opposition of heaven and earth, in us vs. them, and between humans and the earth; viewing the earth as a resource rather than being in relationship. The old story has led to the destruction of the earth and its ecosystems, to racism, to classism, and to numerous other forms of othering.

The **New Story** is one of radical interdependence between individuals, between groups, and with all the variety within and on the earth. The New Story is one of sanctity which is omnipresent in individuals, in animals, in plants, in soil, in rocks, in atoms, and in galaxies and all in their and our infinite diversity and, as well, in their interconnections. "

To quote Thomas Berry "The greater the differentiation, the greater the perfection of the whole..."

Thomas Berry describes the three basic principles of the New Story: **differentiation, subjectivity, and communion**. Today we will focus on differentiation.

Differentiation

"From the elementary particles to all the myriad forms of the animate world, to the complexities of galaxies and planetary systems. We live in a universe of unending variety. We once saw the night skies as filled with things we called twinkling stars. Then we learned more about the stars and that they were all different, and we learned that some were actually planets, and they were all different. We learned about nebulae and galaxies, all of which were different. The more intimately we become acquainted with anything, it seems, the clearer our recognition of its differences with anything else in the world."

An invitation to share.

- There are many people who, in different ways, are living the New Story, in the arts, in education, in science, in service, in justice, and in numerous other ways.
- Your understanding and experience about differentiation, on the human and more than human level, as one of the basic principles of the New Story.