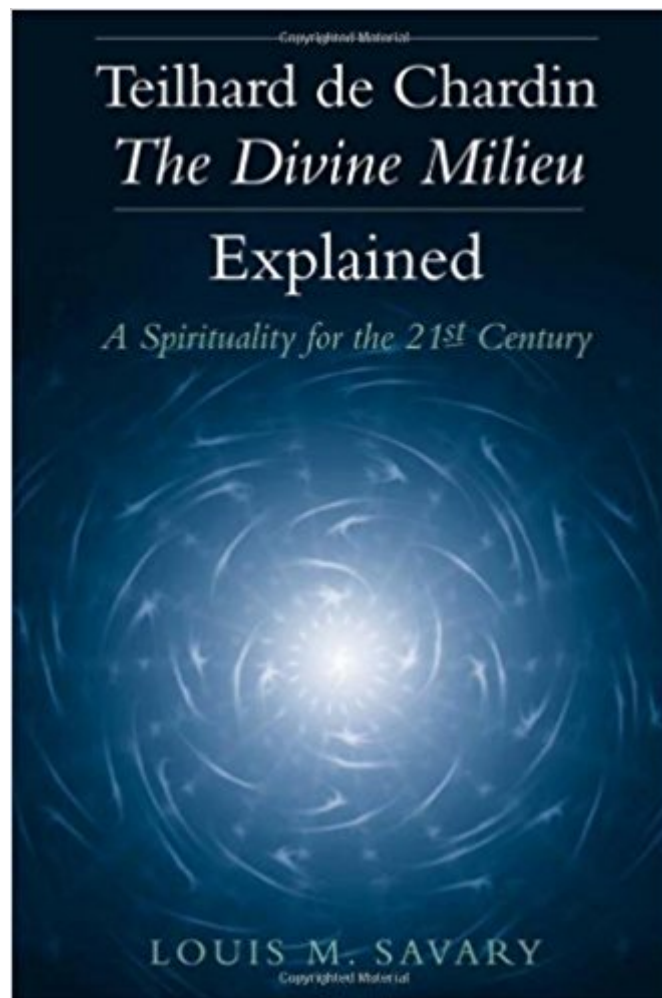




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Teilhard De Chardin - The Divine Milieu Explained: A Spirituality For The 21st Century



Synopsis

A series of ground-breaking spiritual methods that integrate science and faith according to the evolutionary spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Louis M. Savary, PhD, STD, is author of *The Divine Milieu Explained* and *The New Spiritual Exercises in the Spirit of Teilhard de Chardin* (Paulist Press).

The brilliant insights of Teilhard de Chardin as to the purpose of our lives can be tough for even serious readers to decipher. It did not help that since Teilhard was not allowed by the Catholic Church to publish during his lifetime he never had the benefit of working with a good editor. Louis Savary has done a valuable service by clarifying Teilhard's theories. Teilhard's ideas articulated in Savary's book that I found particularly powerful included: Spiritual growth is not about dodging personal sin and saving one's individual soul. We are on earth to advance human progress. An important way we can accomplish this is increasing meaningful connections between people. These human connections can run from building international organizations to establishing personal ties to others. All positive connections contribute to the evolution of life on earth which is dependent on what we do. Any meaningful religious belief has to include enthusiastic acceptance of what is being learned through science. Science is the driving force enabling the enormous growth taking place in human connections and in

knowledge. Advancing human progress is done in the material world. To love God requires loving the world. Man discovers that he is nothing else than evolution become conscious of itself. In whatever field you happen to be engaged in, the way you lose yourself in God is by developing your area of expertise to the fullest. Not developing your capabilities to the fullest is a spiritual failure. For Teilhard all activities become holy and unifying efforts if they are done in ways that promote complexity, consciousness and human bonding. Teilhard wants to remind us that every single particle of matter and thought in the universe is intertwined with every other single particle and thought. Everything is interacting with everything else in one big system of which we are each interacting parts. Praying in faith does not replace human effort. God is not going to give us, simply because we pray, all the new knowledge and skill needed for the future. God counts on us using all the capabilities and resources available to advance science, art and all human activities. Just as each cell in the human body must do its part well, each entity in the world must integrate its activities with billions of others. People who are not members of Christian religions may be contributing in ways that no Christian can. Christ's work is to transform the world, not to leave it behind. At time the emphasis in The Divine Milieu Explained is on why Teilhard's theories are in accord with official Catholic teaching. For many this will be of great interest, but for some it may not be a high priority. What is important to all of us is Savary's clarifying Teilhard's theories so they are more readily understandable.

Louis M. Savary has provided Teilhard admirers with a luminous and penetrating series of insights, reflections and explications of The Divine Milieu. The new book is particularly helpful with what I have always thought of as one of Teilhard's core themes: THE GOODNESS and CONTINUED EXPANSION OF GOD'S WONDROUS CREATION and CREATIVE PLAN. Though there is some redundancy, the book nevertheless uses the repetition to identify and reinforce fundamental principles; for example: Dynamism over Stasis; Order over Chaos; Consilience, Inter-dependence and Inter-relationship of all created things including people over the false supremacy of Individuality; an exaltation of the role of Servant/Participant toward the glory and good of the Lord and Other People in the Creative process over the false god of Masters/Dominators of the Universe and of others. Gone is the cult of personality and glorification of a false notion of "self-made men and women"! I was particularly impressed with the explication of one of my favorite Teilhardian themes - and a most difficult one to explain to others - the "passivities of diminishment" as positive

contributors to the creative process. This break-through revelation is so counter-intuitive and counter-cultural. I now better appreciate how Teilhard perceives these diminishments and travails of ordinary life as disguised blessings and opportunities for sanctification that must be viewed and accepted as integrative parts of "growth" in the wholeness of a maturing creation. In that same vein, I now better appreciate the cohesiveness of all material life with the spirit animating that life, understood with the epistemological expansion of knowledge bursts and spurts that open one's eyes, hearts and minds as never before with each new discovery. To dare to patch a fabulous phrase of the great Teilhard himself, we have the chance, after all other conquests, to "discover fire for the second time in the history of the world" by "harnessing for God the energies of Love". I offer a final comment on another well- developed insight in this fine book by Mr. Savary, to wit, each of us has a part to play in this magnificent and unfolding drama of creation. A mentor of mine at any early stage of my career and education told me this little story that seems apt: In an early agricultural age of this country, a reverend chanced upon a farmer along a road. The farmer was leaning on a fence pondering, perhaps even admiring his crop soon to be harvested. The reverend commented, with repeated salutations and thanks to God, how God had given the farmer an abundance of fertile soil and God-given excellent growing weather, etc etc etc. Finally the farmer spoke gently and without bitterness, "Yes, Reverend, God did a lot here; but you should have seen this place when He was tending it alone!" I think Teilhard would agree that we all have and are expected to play our important roles in this glorious creation God has given us. Louis Savant's book assists readers and admirers to see the luminous and still unfolding truths of Teilhard's momentous insights, now more fully appreciated recently even by Pope Benedict XVI himself. This is a book to read, savor and return to as a companion to The Divine Milieu itself. JOSEPH W. BELLACOSA (August, 2011)

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