



“A PLANETARY PERSPECTIVE”

for EARTH DAY, April 22, 2023

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The famous photo “Earthrise” was taken from outer space, and now astronaut Ron Garan has made it his mission to let others see the world from a planetary perspective. What he says is so much like what Teilhard de Chardin expressed in his work. Incarnational spirituality fosters an awareness of the inherent value of each being, the fragility and pre-

ciousness of our earthly home, and the presence of the divine here with us. As we humans expand our scientific understanding of the universe, we can better understand the Christ mystery as Sacred Presence.
Michelle Dugan, Associate

“The universe as we know it is a joint product of the observer and the observed By virtue of Creation, and still more the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see.” [Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ](#)

Do I know how to see?

What is my perspective?



Earthrise, taken from Apollo 8, 1968

“When we see our planet from the perspective of space, certain things become undeniably clear. We keep trying to deal with issues such as global warming, deforestation, biodiversity loss, as standalone issues, when in reality, they’re just symptoms of the underlying root problem. And **the problem is that we don’t see ourselves as planetary** But since our human-made systems treat everything, including the very life-support systems of our planet, as the wholly owned subsidiary of the global economy, it’s obvious from the vantage point of space that we’re living a lie. **We need to move from thinking economy, society, planet to planet, society, economy. That’s when we’re going to continue our evolutionary process** A lot of astronauts who go to space come back and they feel that there has been some sort of transformation. And **a term was coined back in the ‘80s called the overview effect**. And the overview effect describes the shift that astronauts have when they see the planet hanging in the blackness of space. There’s this light bulb that pops up where they realize how interconnected and interdependent we all are **I wake up every morning in my bed, but I also wake up on a planet**. In the long term, I’m very optimistic, because I do see quite clearly a blossoming unity spreading across our planet, a blossoming awareness of our interdependent nature. That awareness will eventually reach critical mass and when it reaches critical mass, then we’ll be able to solve the problems facing our planet.

I’m Ron Garan, I’m a former NASA astronaut and former combat fighter pilot and the author of “Floating in Darkness, A Journey of Evolution.”

View Garan’s complete talk on Big Think: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJGCAWTgbn0>

Read the transcript of his talk: <https://bigthink.com/life/overview-effect/>