



INCARNATION: A New Evolutionary Threshold By Diarmuid O'Murchu

A Book Review by Terri MacKenzie, SHCJ

Many SHCJ and Associates have appreciated books by Diarmuid O'Murchu, priest, social psychologist, and prolific author. Given our current focus on Incarnation, I was eager to read his *Incarnation: A New Evolutionary Threshold*, Orbis Books, 2017, (218 pages plus an extensive Bibliography and Index).

O'Murchu's main purpose here is **“to reclaim and expand our understanding of Incarnation.”** (p.149) He writes for **“mature adults ... [and those] intellectually curious and seeking a forum where their exploration of faith can become the subject of serious and reflective**

dialogue.” (p.4) He acknowledges that those who limit themselves to traditional beliefs and systems of masculine power might object.

O'Murchu speaks from his basic belief that **“Incarnation names and celebrates the embodiment of God in the whole creation....”** pre-dating Bethlehem by billions of years. Those who already agree can still benefit from his exploration into the incarnational ramifications of evolution, the Great Spirit, anthropology, patriarchy and power, gender and sexuality, identity, sin and evil, suffering, Christmas and Resurrection, and adult education.

O'Murchu blames Aristotle and the Agricultural Revolution for the current masculine power systems. In contrast, he valorizes women in the first centuries of Church history, and he emphasizes the importance of our vocation to cooperate with the Great Spirit in striving to create **“the companionship of empowerment”** — his name for “the kingdom.”

Underlying each chapter is his conviction of the urgency of expanding our identities from isolated individuals to “a radically redefined sense of what it means to be human.” (p.71) “As *Laudato Si* reminds us, we are into a radical new appraisal of faith where the earth itself and its interdependent life-forms require us to embrace afresh ... a profound rediscovery of our vocation as sacred earthlings in the very earth we inhabit.” (p. 77)

I feel the author achieved his aim to provide **“animation and encouragement toward incarnational growth ... in the context of the twenty-first century.”** Given our current efforts to share and expand our understanding of Incarnation, our deepening awareness of our participation in a world in which God lives and acts, and the many documents calling us to action, I believe we can all profit from the information and inspiration contained in this book.