



“The Great Waters of the Kingdom of Matter”: Faith, Religion, Science, and Reality

Registration: <https://forms.gle/BToEkKJ6o9ta7jBF8>

Deadlines: Registration for in-person attendance: March 18th.
Registration for virtual attendance: March 23rd.

Conference: Saturday, March 26, 2022

Sponsored by

Lumen et Vita

The Graduate Journal of Theology

School of Theology & Ministry

Boston College

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Remote and virtual attendance and presenting are possible.

The three best papers (as determined by a panel of judges) will each be awarded \$400.

Prizes are generously funded by the Science for Seminaries initiative of the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion. Boston College’s School of Theology & Ministry received this grant under the leadership of Professor Jessica Black and Professor Dominic Doyle.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.scienceforseminaries.org/school/boston-college-school-of-theology-and-ministry/>

This conference has also been generously supported by a grant from the Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium, of which Boston College School of Theology & Ministry is a member.

More information on the BTI can be found here: <https://www.bostontheological.org>

Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker, Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Scholar

School of the Environment & Yale Divinity School

Yale University

- <https://fore.yale.edu/About-Us/Engage-with-the-Forum/Press-Kit/Mary-Evelyn-Tucker-Press-Kit>
- <https://fore.yale.edu>
- [Thomas Berry: A Biography](#)
- [Journey of the Universe](#)
- <https://teillarddechardin.org>

Dr. Michael Ferguson, Ph.D.

Instructor in Neurology, Harvard Medical School

Lecturer on Neurospirituality,

Harvard Divinity School

Neurospirituality Research Director,

Center for Brain Circuit Therapeutics

Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston

<https://neuromichael.com>

“In the new humanity which is begotten today the Word prolongs the unending act of his own birth; and by virtue of his immersion in the world’s womb the **great waters of the kingdom of matter** have, without even a ripple, been endowed with life. No visible tremor marks this inexpressible transformation; and yet, mysteriously and in very truth, at the touch of the supersubstantial Word the immense host which is the universe is made flesh. Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate.”

-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, “The Mass on the World” in *Hymn of the Universe* (1961)

Faith, Religion, and Science are lenses for viewing reality. Although religious belief and science have long been constructed as being in tension and conflict in Western society, they also work together cooperatively, with mutually-informing perspectives despite different commitments, frameworks, burdens, strengths, limitations, methods, or goals. These tensions and differences in method, however, speak to one another creatively and lead to a greater understanding of reality. Christian theologians have described Faith, Religion, and Reason as aspects of the human experience that assist in the pursuit of truth, and ultimately the search for God. Theologians such as Teilhard have poetically and analytically tried to incorporate the perspectives of science into their theologies. On the other hand, scientists such as Francis Collins (former director of the Human Genome Project and 2020 Templeton Prize Winner) have tried to reconcile personal religious faith with their research. Following such prominent examples of dialogue between these two human areas of inquiry, we seek further conversation and collaboration between these two methods and modalities for encountering reality. Faith, Religion, and Science are embodiments of different human capacities that have much to learn from one another with their own particular perspectives. Sometimes there have been misguided or mistaken attempts to combine them.¹ *Lumen et Vita* seeks to engage and promote learning (in theoretical realms of theology and science and in practical realms such as the social sciences and pastoral practice), dialogue, and collaboration in exploring how these lenses might be used in conjunction to further true knowledge of humanity, creation, and, ultimately, the Divine.

¹ We, the editors of *Lumen et Vita*, do see opportunities for criticism and learning in mistaken, misguided, and harmful attempts at combining science with religion and theology. By honestly assessing the flaws, mistakes, and false notions of figures who have inspired many, we endeavor to more fruitfully bring together Religion, Faith, and Science. Recently, there have been some questions as to whether Teilhard was a supporter of eugenics, ones sparked by John Slattery’s paper, “Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s Legacy of Eugenics and Racism Can’t Be Ignored.” (<https://religiondispatches.org/pierre-teilhard-de-chardins-legacy-of-eugenics-and-racism-cant-be-ignored/>) The editors of *Lumen et Vita* do not support such pseudo-scientific ideas, but it would appear that Teilhard was not a supporter of them. John Haught—a leading scholar of Teilhard and professor emeritus of theology at Georgetown—rebutted Slattery’s work. His response and further explorations of Teilhard’s thought can be found in the Spring/Summer 2018 issue of *The Teilhard Perspective* (Volume 51, Number 1, which can be found here: https://teilharddechardin.org/mm/uploads/TP_Spring_Summer_2018.pdf). This recent conversation highlights the need for scholarship and dialogue between Religion, Faith, and Science in ways that are deep and thorough.

A tentative schedule:

Until 9:30: (Continental) Breakfast

Conference Opening: Remarks by Dean Thomas Stegman, SJ, (Boston College School of Theology & Ministry)
Remarks by *Lumen et Vita's* Editors **Simboli 100**

9:30 - 10:30: Keynote: Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker (Yale): "Teilhard's Influence on *Journey of the Universe*" **Simboli 100**

10:45-12:00: Panels (Concurrent)

Panel 1A: Ecology & Cosmology Simboli 100

Perdian Tumanan (Villanova University): "Reclaiming the Agency of Nature in Modern Technological Advancement and Ecological Apocalypse"

A.J. Hoy (Dusquesne University): "Facing of Sister Earth: Realizing an Ecological Ethic of Alterity"

Jessica Beaudette (Arizona State University): "The Contemplative Bridge: Reimagining Religion in the Practice of Biodiversity Conservation"

Panel 1B: Historical Perspectives Simboli 135

Xiaodi Wu (Boston University, School of Theology): "Living in Tension: An Immigrant's Experience through the Eyes of Paul Tillich"

Elizabeth Foster (Boston University): "An Age of Meddling and Presumption: Clarence Darrow, William Jennings Bryan, and the Hidden Centrality of Eugenics to the Scopes Monkey Trial"

Dennis Wieboldt (Boston College): "Science, Race, and Religion: How American Catholics Leaders Used Science and Faith to Defend Racial Equality During the Civil Rights Movement"

12-1: Lunch Theology & Ministry Library, Atrium

1:15-2:30: Panels (Concurrent)

Panel 2A: Systematic Theologies Simboli 100

Edmund Lazzari (Marquette University): "God's Patience: A Biblical Attribute in Light of Cosmological and Evolutionary Explosions"

Robert Elliot (Boston College): "Cooperative Grace as Shared Intentionality: The Conforming of Humanity to the Triune God"

Max Woolley (Boston College School of Theology & Ministry): "Through Him All Things Were Made: The Divine Ideas Tradition as a Medieval Synthesis of Science, Theology, and Liturgy for the Modern World."

Panel 2B: Persons, Personhood, & Neurons Simboli 135

Barrie Rose Bliss (Pacifica Graduate Institute, California): "Disentangling Codependency from Empathy: A Steinien Phenomenological Trinitarian Account of the Healing of Personhood"

Dohyung (Jacob) Cha (Seoul National University): “Bringing Brain into Eschatology: A Neuroscientific Approach to Already-But-Not-Yet Mindset”

Seth Villegas (Boston University): “The Transhumanist Technoreligion: Towards a Digital Future”

2:45-3:45: Keynote: Dr. Michael Ferguson (Harvard): “Neurospirituality and spiritual water: Johannine and Teresian views of brain circuits and neurochemistry” ***Theology & Ministry Library, Auditorium***

3:45: Conference Closing: Remarks by *Lumen et Vita*’s Editors