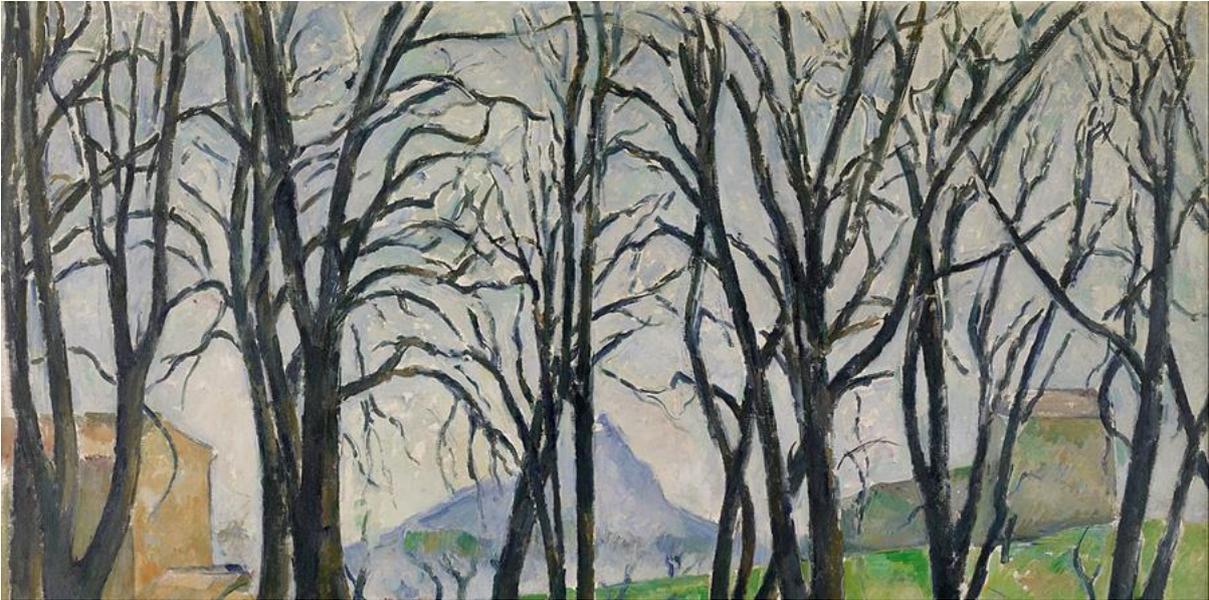


# Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

*From the Center for Action and Contemplation*



*Week Forty-five*

## Science: Old and New

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### **The Great Turning**

Monday, November 4, 2019

*I have set before you life and death . . . therefore choose life.* —Deuteronomy 30:19

Eco-philosopher, Earth elder, friend, and spiritual activist Joanna Macy, now ninety years old, has been promoting a global transition from the Industrial Growth Society to a Life-Sustaining Society for most of her life. She calls it the Great Turning, a revolution of great urgency: “While the agricultural revolution took centuries, and the industrial revolution took generations, this ecological revolution has to happen within a matter of years.” [1] She is hopeful as she sees individuals and groups participating in “1) Actions to slow the damage to Earth and its beings; 2) Analysis and transformation of the foundations of our common life; [and] 3) *A fundamental shift in worldview and values.*” [2]

Macy understands that the third type of action—essentially, a new way of seeing—“require[s] a shift in our perception of reality—and that shift is happening now, both

as cognitive revolution and spiritual awakening.” [3] While the shift may not be obvious in my own generation, we need look no further than the ongoing powerful and prophetic presence of young leaders, like indigenous teenagers Tokata Iron Eyes (a member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe who plays a key role in the “Respect Our Water” campaign) and Autumn Peltier (also a water protector and a citizen of the Wiikwemkoong First Nation); they have been joined recently by Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg, who spoke at the United Nations Climate Action Summit and helped inspire Climate Strikes around the world. In the face of criticism, Greta calls her Asperger’s syndrome a “superpower” that gives her a clear perspective on the climate crisis. May we be motivated by these committed young advocates and lend our voices and strength to heal our wounded world.

Macy explains:

The insights and experiences that enable us to make this shift may arise from grief for our world that contradicts illusions of the separate and isolated self. Or they may arise from breakthroughs in science, such as quantum physics and systems theory. Or we may find ourselves inspired by the wisdom traditions of native peoples and mystical voices in the major religions; we hearken to their teachings as to some half-forgotten song that our world is a sacred whole in which we have a sacred mission. [4]

St. Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179), a Germanic nun, mystic, and healer, was doing this 800 years ago. In her book *Scivias* she wrote, “You understand so little of what is around you because you do not use what is within you.” [5] Somehow, she already understood what science is now affirming: “The macrocosm is mirrored in the microcosm.” Science is finding that the world is an integrated whole rather than separated parts. Nothing in the cosmos operates independently. We are all holons, which are simultaneously whole in themselves, and at the same time part of a larger whole. This understanding is moving us from a narrow, mechanistic, Newtonian view of the universe to a holistic/ecological view. [6] Nothing is static, and if you try to construct an unchangeable or independent universe for yourself, you will be moving against the now obvious divine plan and direction.