Columns
Social Justice



Sr. Mudita Menona Sodder created the icon "The Cosmic Christ" in 2020. The piece, which took eight days to complete, represents the belief that all are icons of God, crafted in His image. The process emphasizes the profound spiritual significance of this representation of the second coming as the Cosmic Christ in all His splendor and glory. (Mudita Menona Sodder)



by Mudita Menona Sodder

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We live in the toughest, most challenging times in human history, and our humanity is studiously on the wane. With the collapse of the global industrialized civilization, speaking the unvarnished truth, we all need to release the inner gorilla; and hunger for wholeness. In today's age of the image, scarred by wars, climate change and religious fanaticism, embracing struggle and walking with hope is the need of the hour.

Ecology is the new theology today, and theology is all about relationships. There is a close relationship between the universe and all of us. How we live the present moment this Christmas in today's gun culture, global climate change and religious disharmony is vital. We all need to be a pillar of focus about reality and accept fragility and the possibility of death with sacredness. We also know that evolution wants humanity to learn to achieve a critical mass of predicament consciousness. We thus need to serve life, which is precious. For this to materialize, we all must experience life to grow in these enigmatic-laden times. The guiding force or the right direction then becomes the practice of compassion toward each other, all sentient and non-sentient beings and life. Love in action will then have to be our working guide.

> Can we begin to stitch together the patchwork of living entities by connecting to each other this Christmas?
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Janet Erskine Stuart, a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, once said, "The way to do much in a short time is to love much. People will do great things if they are stirred with enthusiasm and love." We know that ideas are bullet-proof, spirituality is our true nobility and we are all aristocrats born of the inmost ground of divinity. Mother earth, our common home, can no longer wait for us to remove our shoes and recognize that we live on holy ground. Can we dare to follow the methodology of love this Christmas by removing our shoes of greed, ignorance, individualism,

consumerism and apathy? We all stand on holy ground, living off each other. In the web of life, we are all dependent on each other — sharing, sacrificing and reaching out to others in need, a bonded duty toward society.

Perhaps somewhere, somehow, we have simply lost direction. And yet, we all know that we can change direction and veer on to the right path. Our knowledge and resourcefulness as an earth community are phenomenal! Christmas is a call, an invitation and a challenge to interior conversion, communal transformation and external revitalization, letting go, to let emerge and to re-create. Knowing our responsibility as co-creators with God, we know that we have to work from within the recent horrors of war, climate chaos and destruction to birth into being a new creation. Inclusive love that is ready to suffer and surrender is the only response. We all know that this, in essence, is the true meaning of the paschal mystery and Christmas.

Crisis is an opportunity, and survival trumps bickering and war. Regeneration can restore our broken and wounded planet. We need to unleash the transformative power of communal wisdom to gestate, incubate and cultivate deep listening within our mega-galactic planet. This will need an action plan for the world to come together, end the climate crisis in one generation, and put life at the center of every decision we make.

This will demand lifestyle changes. A minimalistic lifestyle, or at least a lifestyle of moderation, will then become necessary. Solar farms and green energy, stopping/cutting down fossil fuels and food waste and geoengineering are the keys to stopping out-of-control warming. Turning apprehension into action by getting involved and searching for solutions is important. Uruguay, for example, produces 98% of its electricity from renewable sources.

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Thinking out of the box, being innovative and more flexible this Christmas, can we buy less and make do with what we have? Reducing beef, cheese and milk consumption, can we help even in a minuscule way? Modest portions of meat like chicken often produce less greenhouse gas than vegetarian diets. Our health will be better with no red meat. Global biodiversity will rise. Insects like bees and butterflies will increase and help pollination, and in turn, crops will produce a higher yield.

Regenerative techniques to preserve the soil, and more connection with our clothes for value and longevity will show us the right direction, give us purpose and lead us along the right pathway. We have to stop our insatiable buying, our throwaway culture and our seeds of conflict.

We humans have erased half the planet in the last 200 years. What we need now is reciprocity. Can we begin to stitch together the patchwork of living entities by connecting to each other this Christmas? Happy generative Christmas 2023, planting seeds of understanding and building compassionate human communities of living hope.