



## PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

MESSAGE FROM JACQUES CHIRAC  
PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

TO THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE COLLOQUIUM  
FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE DEATH OF PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

NEW YORK, THURSDAY APRIL 7, 2005

Dear friends,

My first words, at the opening of this colloquium devoted to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a visionary driven by a universal conscience, are to pay tribute to His Holiness Pope John-Paul II. I wish to salute his tireless actions to serve the dignity of mankind, reconciliation and peace. I would like to remind you of the message of trust and hope he carried across all the continents, and which so marked the United Nations General Assembly, when he spoke there, ten years ago, on the occasion of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary.

Today, it is the memory of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin that brings us together, half a century after his death. He was a man who was also carried by his faith, and by drawing on his experience as a man of science, sensed the emergencies of our time, and pleaded for the world to take a certain direction. Fifty years on, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's work finds a singular echo.

He was one of the first to warn humanity of the dangers of "pillaging the planet" as he put it, to see the need for sustainable development, now underway, as mankind becomes aware of the physical, material and ecological limits of our planet.

Faced with global warming and the erosion of biodiversity, we now realize that our wealth and power could be their own worst enemies. The appetites of modernity are holding the future to ransom. There may be no way back from the imbalances resulting from our actions, the over-exploitation of nature and the reckless pursuit of profit.

We are just beginning to understand that we now need to invent a new relationship between man and nature. Driven by a "jealous, overwhelming, absorbing" passion for geology and the origins of man, Teilhard de Chardin long studied, from the volcanoes of the Auvergne region of France to the deserts of Egypt and the Asian steppe, how and why the earth was formed. Since Beijing Man was discovered, he had wondered about the evolution of our species and man's place in the universe. He designed a new philosophy of progress based on a harmonious relationship between man and nature, and redefined an ethics of solidarity on a planetary scale.



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France was the first country in the world to include an environmental charter in its Constitution, placing the values of solidarity and environmental responsibility at the heart of its own social pact and its efforts on the international stage. This commitment coincides with the intuitions of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

He sensed the convergence that marks our world, this drawing in on itself of our planet. He expected awareness to progress, for humanity to move towards greater solidarity. What we call globalization was perceived by Teilhard de Chardin as the expression of a uniting of the planet, confirming the necessary emergence of a universal conscience, a global citizenship.

Teilhard de Chardin wished for a keystone for the global system. He stressed the preventive role of an international framework capable of collective and united reactions. His ideal of convergence coincides with today's needs, combining the moral requirements of dignity and equality, the need for peace and security, economic interests and the preservation of the future.

The creation of the UN laid the foundations for this framework sixty years ago. On a daily basis, with the advance of globalization, its relevance and necessity is confirmed. With the current reform of the United Nations system. With the United Nations Environment Organization, which France suggested be created. With the body for improved economic and social governance of globalization, the idea for which, launched by France at Monterrey, is slowly but surely making progress.

All the developments currently underway; the need for solidarity and sharing that underpins them; our stubborn efforts to ensure that globalization means more progress and prosperity for all - all this converges with Teilhard de Chardin's premonition. I am certain that he would be delighted today to see energies being mobilized, a global conscience emerging and taking shape, with the ambition of setting up global political governance, asserting universal values and the enacting of rules on a planetary scale.

As you begin your work, I would like to pay tribute to the visionary work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, to this exceptional mind, sometimes misunderstood by his contemporaries, who was a precursor to so many developments of our world, and whose intellectual and moral rigor continue to inspire us today.

Thank you for your attention.

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