

Pertaining to Everything

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John Main said that the great fault of the church is to underestimate the power of the gospel by reducing it to morality and social conformity. This is how the mystical tradition has long challenged institutional Christianity. Science today often reminds us, better than the church does, about the wonder of reality. [. . .]

The embodied self that each of us manifests is a microcosm of the cosmos and of an eternal reality that extends across all time. Microscopic pictures of our interior organs look amazingly like photos of galaxies and star clusters. The body is a “nano cosmos” (a nano is one billionth of a metre) and a wondrous beauty unites the cosmic and the micro-cosmic.

The little space within the heart is as great as this vast universe The heavens and the earth are there; all that is and all that is not: the whole universe is in Him and He dwells within our heart. (*Chandogya Upanishad*)

In Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells embodied. In him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible; and in Christ all things hold together. (*Colossians1*)

In Christ, in that little space in the heart, we are in all and all is in us.

After meditation: “Swan” by Mary Oliver in *DEVOTIONS: Selected Poems* (New York: Penguin, 2027), p. 62.

Did you too see it, drifting, all night on the black river?
Did you see it in the morning, rising into the silvery air,
an armful of white blossoms,
a perfect commotion of silk and linen as it leaned
into the bondage of its wings: a snowbank, a bank of lilies,
biting the air with its black beak?
Did you hear it, fluting and whistling
a shrill dark music, like the rain pelting the trees,
 like a waterfall
knifing down the black ledges?
And did you see it, finally, just under the clouds—
a white cross streaming across the sky, its feet
like black leaves, its wings like the stretching light
 of the river?
And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything?
And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for?
And have you changed your life?

