Summary: While on retreat in 1919, Teilhard experienced a transfiguration-like vision that he shares with us in his essay, “The Spiritual Power of Matter.” During this transformative event, Teilhard is moved to commit himself to a life of struggle in every aspect of his life without yet knowing what these struggles might be. During this retreat/program, we will consider the many ways Teilhard is confronted with struggle—as a scientist, as a believer, as a lover, as a Jesuit, as a mystic, and as a faithful member of the Church—explore some of the more significant examples, notice Teilhard’s responses, and share our experiences so that we can learn better ways of dealing with the struggles that we face in our lives and in our world today.
Summary: In an early essay, Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin provides us with a road map into the intensely mystical environment in which he lived and moved. He describes the stages of his mystical growth in terms of five concentric circles. These circles, which could be more properly imaged as the loops of a spiral that he continually revisited throughout his life, provided him with a sacred path into an ever deepening reality, a reality that is informed as much by the science of his time as it is by his religious tradition. They help us trace his growth and development as he plunged ever more deeply into the heart of matter and into the heart of God, where he found the radiance of a loving, cosmic Person—the God for evolution. During this retreat, through input, prayer, song, film, contemplative activities, and sharing, we follow Teilhard as he travels ever more deeply from Circle to Circle into the arms of the Cosmic Christ.