

## **Thomas Berry award presented to Dr. John Grim**

**May 20, 2017**

John has just said in his moving talk, “When Pierre Teilhard de Chardin set out to tell his own story, one question especially engaged him: ‘What endures and carries us forward?’”

I submit that John Grim endures and carries us forward.

John endures in linking us all to Native Americans, especially the Crow people, who first loved and cared for this land and teach us reverence for Earth.

John has endured in the four-day Sun Dance, on the Crow reservation fasting and praying with all the prayers brought to him by his friends and colleagues.

John endures, with his wife, Mary Evelyn Tucker, to create ten volumes of the World Religions and Ecology series, and the ten conferences at Harvard that inspired them.

John endures and carries us all forward in his love for his students, his penetrating articles for *Teilhard Perspective*, and his responsibilities as President of the American Teilhard Association.

He endures and carries us forward in his publications, many authored with Mary Evelyn.

Further, as John has said in his talk “Teilhard’s insight into *matter-spirit* was of endurance as relational, as integral to everything else as it changes.”

John’s matter-spirit contribution is entirely and beautifully relational.

John relates his work and that of Mary Evelyn’s through his embodied spiritual wisdom shared extravagantly with so many colleagues, in published writings, focused within varied academic fields, offered gracefully to students, faculty, family and friends, as well as in all the countries traveled in, and international symposia spoken at and contributed to. We are amazed to consider and reflect upon the web of relationships he has fostered. Yet, John does so not with breathless intensity and anxious concern but with levity, care, and deep insight.

John’s relationality is incisive: I have experienced his editing on an early chapter about Native American spirituality. His suggestions and corrections were clear, direct, knowledgeable, supportive, and authoritative.

Finally, in addition to endurance that carries us forward, and relationality, John has spoken about Teilhard’s work that “at the heart of this integral cohesion binding all the particularities of cosmogenesis is action.”

John does not simply study Native American and Crow traditions, he enters into a deeply contextual and informed familial and tribal commitment with the Crow people that lasts to this day.

He not only studied for his Ph.D. under Thomas Berry but enjoyed living with Thomas and fellow students at the Riverdale Center for Religious Research.

He, through his many commitments, promotes the Great Work to enhance the Earth Community. Over decades, he has attended to the importance of social justice and to a deep understanding of Thomas Berry to bring the Great Work to fulfillment in care of Earth.

We are privileged to know John as we grow and are nourished through his endurance that carries us forward, his warm relationality, and his commitment toward action. John is part of sacred evolution and we are privileged to know, to love, and to be loved by him.

Nancy Wright wrote this and read it along with the citation:

**Citation on the Thomas Berry Plaque**

The American Teilhard Association

and

The Thomas Berry Foundation

Present

THE THOMAS BERRY AWARD

To

John Allen Grim

in recognition of his 30 years of service as

President of the American Teilhard Association

and celebrating his lifelong dedication

to the “Great Work”

through co-creating *Journey of the Universe*

and the field of religion and ecology.

Union Theological Seminary

at Columbia University

New York City

May 20, 2017

In the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the  
American Teilhard Association