

## PETER MURNANE uses the image of drawing ends together to illustrate the birth of Jesus as the beginning and the end.

A man who had worked on Melbourne's ill-fated West Gate bridge once told me that in the days before it collapsed during construction killing 35 men, the workers knew well it was under dangerous stress. They were alarmed at the rust flakes that began pinging from the iron deck after the engineers had placed heavy concrete blocks on one of the halves, to force them to meet in the middle.

It is often hard to bring the ends together. Machinists and surgeons are familiar with the problem, not to mention accountants and families on limited budgets. When we have gained a few kilograms our belt can defy us, but the many rifts that divide our world today are no joke.

### Making Divisions

Cunning manipulators use the media to convince us that we need to be defended from the various "others" who are our "enemies". They subtly demonise Muslims, Blacks and criminals. They call "illegal" those people fleeing for their lives from countries smashed by our wars. Society's leaders try to convince us that life is a perpetual struggle between us and "them". The same leaders profit from our fear and by giving us what they call "security". They profit from the dividing walls, the prisons and most of all, from the wars and weapons themselves.

### Exploiters and Exploited

Our attention is distracted from the real gap: between exploiters and exploited; between billion-dollar arms deals and land-grabs and those left landless or suffering the effects of ensuing pollution. The more suspicion and conflict they can create, the more opportunities there are for the cunning to collect their spoils.

### Born into Relationships

Was it meant to be like this? Moments after our birth, gentle hands held us and took care of us. Those hands,

whether white or "coloured"; local or "foreign", were guided by hearts that felt deep compassion for our weakness and our needs. They cared for this helpless creature, newly separated from its mother, because it was just like themselves.

We have a need and a hunger to relate to others.

How can we reach a point where we cause others pain; wage war without rules; even bomb civilians and torture prisoners because "their side" has different political goals or different beliefs? How do such chasms of greed and anger grow and widen in our hearts?

### Separated by Self-Centredness

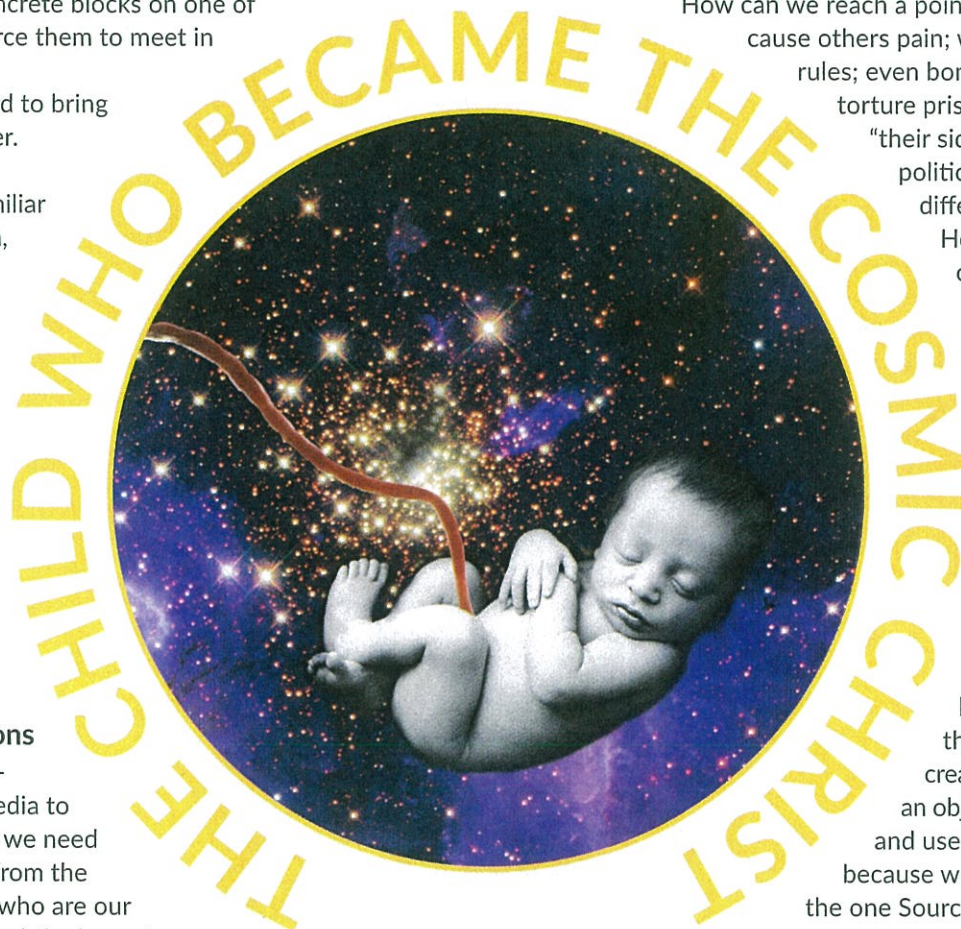
In the last few centuries since the Enlightenment, we began more than before to see the world with its creatures as merely an object to study and use. We forgot that because we all come from the one Source we are related to every aspect and every life. We began to lose our reason to love. Success

in the material sciences even led us to believe that ours is the only consciousness in the universe. Is this not hubris, blasphemous self-centredness, worse than in Greek tragedy?

We can reduce everything to digital quantities and market everything living or inanimate, yet cease to remember that this amazing, complex world could exist only because of a Mind greater than ours; not only a Mind, but "the Love which moves the sun and the other stars" (Dante, *Paradiso*, XXXIII).

### Memory of Christmas

Part of our human family retains a memory which we replay and cherish each Christmas: an ancient belief that the Logos, the Wisdom of God, came among us. This memory tells us that he was born among Bethlehem's bleating sheep and goats and was cared for by worried parents. They called him Jesus. This unfathomable mystery of the Christ in human flesh shows amazed believers that nothing





can separate us from the Star-Maker who is seeking us out. Not even the ignorance of those religious people who would fence off "sacred places" and try to keep separate the "holy" from the "profane". The Holy One shares holiness with us all.

### Christ Bridging the Gap

That baby grew into the one who more than any before sought to bridge the gap between the "normal" and the "others"; the lost and rejected, the hated and despised. How do we know? Because he touched them, ate with them and became like them. He was murdered for being on their side. The witnesses say he passed through death and reappeared unexpectedly among his friends, but living now in another dimension, the Cosmic Christ.

This human-God is in every part of the vast universe. Now we can know that Infinite Love is our friend, within reach. This Cosmic Christ, fired by immense personal love for every one of our race, has reached across the gulf of death to re-connect any brokenness; to free anyone afraid of the darkness of death itself.

The love-power of the Cosmic Christ makes nonsense of any theory that the world might remain divided into those whom God accepts and those others rejected forever in "hell". The theories that demanded this dreadful separation as necessary to fulfil God's justice were as doomed as was ancient astronomy, once Copernicus showed that the planets revolve around the sun. Such dualist division is incompatible with the justice of the Cosmic Christ which will heal and restore us all.

The world knew resurrection before the *Logos* came. There were millions of sunrises and spring returned each year to the turning earth. Long before the present, there was a moment when life sprang forth where none had been before. Through subsequent aeons, higher life-forms in their millions evolved from lesser creatures. Now that we humans populate the globe, how many broken people every day are raised to new life by a word, a smile, a hug, or a kiss?

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### Gathered by Love-Christ

All the uncounted stars and planets scattered through the universe with whatever life is on them; all life on our own planet; all these, say the theologians, are the Creator's footprints, visible traces of the Unseeable. They all spring from the mind of the *Logos* – also known to us as *Sophia*/Divine Wisdom, the Cosmic Christ. Since the *Logos* lived among us in human flesh and has conquered death, the universe itself is now the body of Christ.

Christ's followers gather and present to God all that we know and do. At the summit of the Eucharistic celebration we declare that we offer it: "Through Him, with Him and in Him", stating that we ourselves live within the power of the Cosmic Christ. We then break and share the body of Christ, not as

a reward for good deeds or to boost our ego, but to know again what and who we are becoming.

### We Become Love and Forgiveness

We do not wait for the Cosmic Christ to change history. As we begin to understand that we share Christ's life, we no longer imagine that the world is centred on ourselves. No "others" can remain our enemy, for all are becoming part of this Christ, as we begin to change how we treat them.

We do not have to persuade them to follow Christ: they will find Christ in our forgiveness and love.

And what of our future? St Paul, who had himself glimpsed the Risen Christ and was radically changed, wrote gloriously about God's dream to bring all the ends together in "the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him" (Eph 1:10). With such a promise, how can we let fear divide us? ■

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