



Shrove Tuesday 2024

Dear friends,

As we prepare to begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, I thought that, rather than send you a long and detailed letter, I would send you a prayer which doubles as an invitation. It's a prayer written by Teilhard de Chardin, the noted Jesuit priest and paleontologist, which invites us to embrace the *Slow Work of God*. It's a gentle and helpful reminder to give God time and space as we are formed in Christ and the Spirit awakens us ever more deeply to our call. I hope and pray that it will be a blessing to you as you travel through Lent and prepare for Holy Week and Easter:

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything  
to reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way to something  
unknown, something new.  
And yet it is the law of all progress  
that it is made by passing through  
some stages of instability—  
and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you;  
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,  
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.  
Don't try to force them on,  
as though you could be today what time  
(that is to say, grace and circumstances  
acting on your own good will)  
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit  
gradually forming within you will be.  
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing  
that his hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
in suspense and incomplete.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. ...", with a large, stylized flourish below it.

District Chair