

## **The Universe in You**

*A Homily by the Rev. Molly Housh Gordon*

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Now that we have celebrated the precious gift of young life and reverently dedicated ourselves to its care and nurture, I'm going to get irreverent for a minute.

Sometimes when I read Kenneth Patton's words, which we heard as our opening words this morning, about welcoming the child as a visitor, with star dust in his hair and the pulse of time in her heart, I think...

Yes!

Children ARE just like alien invaders!

First they abduct their hosts' bodies for their own uses, feeding on them as parasitic alien beings would. Then they make their way into the world more painfully than any extra-terrestrial probe I've heard of.

They arrive, looking rather like ET, though sadly devoid of dayglo fingers. And they attempt to make contact using some alien dialect of squawks and cries that we try frantically to decode. Do they come in peace? Or are they here for world domination?

And even if these children are the heart of your heart or the flesh of your flesh, is there not something about them that remains so totally foreign and mysterious?

Think of a tiny infant – how they arrive looking like little old men or baby buddhas and you can tell by watching the light and movement in their eyes that they aren't missing a thing.

What's going on inside those bald little heads? We have no idea – we don't remember what went on in our heads at that age.

Or a young toddler just learning to walk – how they look like little drunks – stumbling around exploring the world, and you can tell they are awash in discovery.

What is going on in their heads? We have no idea – if we remember that age it is in hazy washes of color and feeling.

Or a verbal child learning to say No! or telling hallucinatory stories about robot fairies and zombie whales.

Perhaps we know what is going on inside their heads because they will talk and talk

and talk until they are sure we do... but where in the world is it coming from? We might remember those days; but probably not the creative source that moved through us in make believe stories and songs and play.

Then just when we think we've acclimated our young to earthly living; they've picked our language, sobered up and learned to walk straight... the teenage years arrive, and suddenly we seem to be living once again on different planets, the void of space stretching between us.

Even though we don't remember being Buddha babies or drunken toddlers or tripping tots, we each know or remember the opening of that chasm, the moments of alienation we have felt, growing into our selves. It can be a painful or invigorating tear in space and time, this feeling.

But the good news is this: as we enter into new galaxies of adulthood, we realize that the space between was not a void – but rather the very site of our connection, all of us caught up in this web of stars and planets and dark energy and spirit.

We are all born **of** mystery, **into** mystery, and so remain simultaneously alien and connected to one another, our whole lives long.

We are both alien and familiar - both strangers and family.

We are made of the same star dust, the same electrons bouncing between us in the ongoing unfolding of the quantum universe. Yet we are each in some way distinctly unknowable, a fact that is equally wondrous and frustrating.

I remember when James and I were first falling in love, and we would sit staring at each other in the goopy way that lovers do – meaning positively radiating from our eyeballs.

And I so wanted to get into his head and walk around, that once I found myself yelling in exasperation – I don't know what your eyes are saying! Use your words!

But of course, there were no words for him to let me into his experience. Just as there are none for me to let you into mine, even as I stand here before you – trying my darndest. Poetry helps, but even so.

On a planet full of people, in a universe full of bouncing particles, our individual unknowability can make us feel small and isolated.

But it can also make us feel big and connected, when we understand the mystery within and the mystery without as one in the same.

That mystery extends all the way down and all the way out – always there is something unknowable in our bodies and brains and cells, mystery all the way down

to the ever-changing sub-atomic level – and that same mystery moves at the heart of the universe – stretching out 47 light years around us in every direction and full of the same creative possibility that centers us.

Unknowability itself is not just a limitation of human language or thought. Rather it seems to be the deep way of the universe itself and the connective material between us all.

It is our very alien-ness that marks us as most at home in an unknowable universe; it is our mutual speechlessness that connects us to one another in the human and cosmic stories.

We are far from our origin in the seed of everything, but always at home in the universe, because the rhythm of its mysterious unfolding pulses too in each of us – the light of the very stars waiting to shine in us – the same sub-atomic particles vibrating in and between us in a perpetual exchange of creative possibility and mystery.

And so we sit together in the spirit of wonder, and with wonder comes a profound sense of recognition. This is who we are, together – children of mystery, with star dust in our hair, unknowable yet deeply understood – and always bound together, connected, in the web of stars and planets and dark energy and spirit.

We are in the universe, and of the universe. And the universe is in us. How wondrous. How true.