

# In the Darkness Grows the Green: The Promise of the Solstice

Catherine Wright, Wingate University  
c.wright@wingate.edu <https://www.thewrightcotheologian.com>

"Winter is a lesson about the fine art of loss and growth. Its lesson is clear; There is only one way out of struggle, and that is by going into its darkness, waiting for the light, and being open to new growth."

Circle of Life -- The Heart's Journey Through the Seasons

**Question:** How do people of faith name, understand, and respond to suffering they encounter today?

To see the green growing in the darkness we need to begin a pilgrimage of the heart, mind and spirit. This is not for the faint of heart. Exploring the suffering inherent to our fertile and fragile world, and that which is inflicted on others, is the great work we are taking on together. To begin to appreciate how to respond to suffering today means learning our creation story anew and discovering God's presence and activity in this beautiful and broken world

## Stage One: Categories for Describing Suffering

**Scripture Writers:** Retribution-Expiation; Messianic Suffering; Divine Discipline (Apostolic Suffering); Call to Greater Intimacy; Witnessing as Test of Faith and Purification; Lament; Mystery; Cosmic Travail

**Early Church Fathers & Mothers:** Punishment-Retribution (Divine Wrath); Testing and Purifying; Schooling in the Ways of Divine Wisdom; Medicinal Suffering; Aesthetic Theme of Harmony; Steadfast Witness; Mystery

**Voices from the Margins:** (More contemporary voices -- suffering of those deemed 'other' in society): Breakdown of Relationship; Resistance to Unnecessary Violence Against Well-Being

**Voices from the Holocaust:** Radical Suffering

## Stage Two: Exploring Creation with New Eyes

Telling the story of how we came to know we are stardust by looking deeply into creation.



**Day One**

## **Stage Three: Theological Contributions to Our New Creation Story**

### **Early Voices (18-20th Century):**

Parson-naturalist Gilbert White

Poet and Jesuit Gerald Manley Hopkins

Anthropologist and theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Lutheran theologians Albert Schweitzer and Joseph Sittler

Methodist process theologian John B Cobb

### **Midwives of Ecotheology (1980s):**

Thomas Berry

John Haught

Jurgan Moltmann and Gordon Kaufman

Sallie McFague

Douglas John Hall

Raimon Panikkar

Rosemary Radford Ruether

Sean McDonagh

Dorothee Soelle

Jean Vanier

John Polkinghorne and Arthur Peacocke

Matthew Fox

Green Sisters and Ignatian Farm



## **Stage Four: Outlining the Four Pillars of an Ecological Theological Anthropology**

a) Eschatological Hope

b) Intrinsic Worth of Creation via Diversity and Interconnectivity

c) Sacred and Cosmic Communion

d) Kenotic Kinetic - Cadence of Life and Death