

Ground of All Being

Powers of the Universe Personified

Edmund Rice 1762 - 1844

Creative Powers of thy Universe

One second after the initial Flaring Forth, all that existed was hydrogen, for the most part, helium, energy and the powers of Universe.

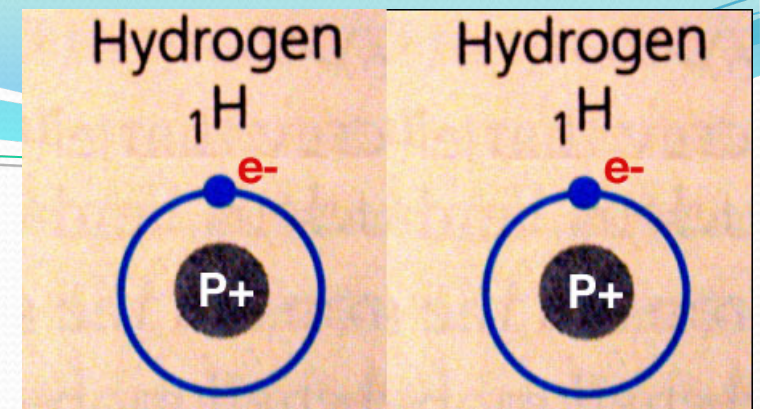
This was enough call forth the unimaginable possibilities that lay within hydrogen itself.

From this mass of undifferentiated hydrogen came galaxies and stars, butterflies and rose buds.

There was nothing extraneous added to the primal mix.

Hydrogen and the powers of the Universe were all that was necessary.

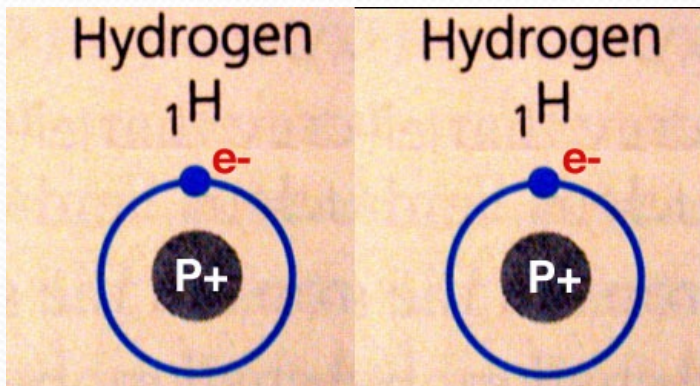
Hydrogen itself contained all the potential necessary to generate the butterflies and the rosebuds and everything else that constitutes the mysterious Universe of which we are part.



Hydrogen + Powers of Universe

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All That Exists





Edmund Rice 1762 - 1844

The Powers of the Universe

- Centration
- Allurement
- Cataclysm
- Transmutation
- Transformation
- Emergence
- Homeostasis
- Synergy
- Interrelatedness
- Radiance

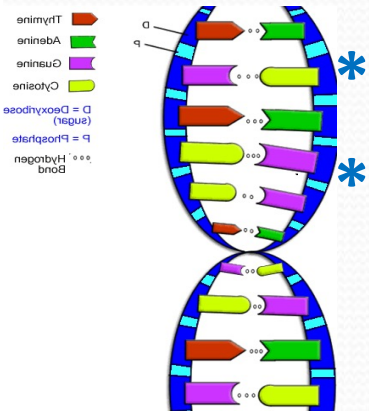


The Power of Centration

Power of Centration

- The Universe loves and cultivates difference. This distinctiveness is reflected in:

- * The multiplicity of life forms
- * The patterns of leaves
- * The stripes of zebras
- * The crystal pattern of snow fl
- * The call of the emperor pengu
- * The finger print of humans
- * The DNA of all living things





Edmund Rice's Home

Callan, Co. Kilkenny





The Power of Allurement

The Power of Allurement

- The power of allurement in the Universe is the power of attraction. When this power of attraction manifests in the world of matter, it is called gravity.
 - * It is this allurement that converts clouds of hydrogen into stars and galaxies.
 - * Another kind of allurement enabled the Earth to enter into a new relationship with the Sun through the creativity of the bacterium that produced the chlorophyll molecule.
 - * In the animal world, allurements manifests as sexual bonding, herd instinct, flocking, shoaling, etc.
 - * In the human this allurement is manifested in sexual and social bonding and in attachments of all kinds. We human experience the power of allurement in many ways.



Allurement at Work in Edmund

- Edmund was drawn deeply to his wife, Mary. This we know through the depth of his grieving after her death.
- Edmund was drawn in a special way to his daughter, Mary.
- Edmund was a penal Catholic. He cleaved to his God & faith.
- As young man, he loved to dress elegantly
- He was a social animal and loved to sing and to dance
- He was drawn to the market place and the cut and thrust the world of business.
- The power of allurements has its distortions: it is said that the Rices were acquisitive when it came to land.



The Power of Cataclysm

The Power of Cataclysm

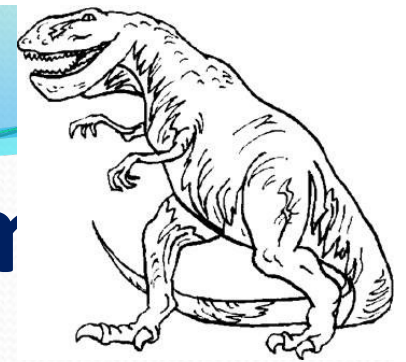


Volcanoes
Earthquakes
Tsunamis
Tornadoes
Meteorites

Famines
Plagues
Droughts
Blizzards
Fires



The Power of Cataclysm



- Within the Universe, chaos/cataclysm is part of the creative process:
 - * The chaotic death of a star is essential to the birth of new stars and associated planetary systems
 - * Earth got its moon as a result of a giant meteor from space
 - * Volcanoes fertilise the Earth with volcanic ash
 - * Tsunamis and earthquakes re-configure the Earth surface
 - * The flood waters of the Nile irrigate the land
 - * Forest fires are essential to the life cycle of many plants
 - * Sixty five millions years ago, the meteorite that led to the extinction of the dinosaurs enabled the mammals to thrive.

Edmund's Cataclysmic Experience

- Early in 1789, Edmund's dreams were shattered. In January that year his wife died soon after childbirth.
- The surviving child, Mary Rice was a special child.
- When Edmund launched his teaching initiative, his helpers left within a couple of days.
- His Bishop, Dr Hussey, grew suspicious of him and questioned his motives
- After he had founded the congregation, several of the early members left him. Some refused the Brief of 1820.
- Dr Murray, Archbishop of Dublin withdrew his support in 1831
- He was the subject of hate mail to Rome.
- Financial and political difficulties threatened the survival of the institute.



The Power Transmutation

The Power of Transmutation

- There were seven great transmutation moments (moments of grace) in the history of the Universe:
 - * The mutation from plasma to hydrogen & helium
 - * The mutation from clouds of hydrogen and helium to primal stars and galaxies
 - * The mutation from primal stars to stellar systems such as our planetary system
 - * Earth mutation from molten rock to solid planet
 - * The mutation from complex chemicals to living cells.
 - * The mutation from primitive life to complex life.
 - * The mutation to self-aware beings



Transmutation in the Human

- In the human, transmutation manifests as the emergence of a new kind of person.
- It implies a significant change in attitudes, values, ways of being and relating.
- In the Christian tradition, the words that best describes it is conversion.

Transmutation in Edmund's Life

- Chaos either leads to extinction or to new life. When our dreams are shattered, we have to search for new meaning in the rubble.
- Our fundamental beliefs and values can undergo a profound change.
- When the context changes radically, then the time for transmutation has come.
- We need the courage to accept the new path that life is opening up for us.
- When you reflect on Edmund's life you can detect this dynamic very clearly at work.
- Transmutation is the path of personal conversion. It opens up a new way of being and acting for us.
- From 1789 to 2002 was a period of transmutation for Edmund.



The Power of Transformation





Power of Transformation In Humans

- The power of transformation in the Universe expresses itself in an eagerness to get to life. Recall the observation of Freeman Dyson “ the Universe must have known we were coming.
- When the human aligns him/herself with this power of the Universe, the outcome is manifest in a nurturance of life.
- A transformed person nurtures life wherever it is threatened.
- In Edmund’s case, this this is exactly what we see happening.
- He looked around to see where was life threatened and he focused his attention and his resources there.
- Edmund became an agent for change in his environment.

Signs of Transformation in Edmund

- He cared for his invalided daughter
- He began to see with new vision – the lens of need
- He continued to develop his business
- He scanned the horizon of his social environment
- He allowed his heart to be moved by the plight of the poor
- It was as if the fragility and vulnerability of his own daughter opened his heart to others who were fragile and needy.



“Edmund opened his whole heart to Christ present and appealing to him in the poor.”

The Power of Interrelatedness





Power of Interrelatedness

- Another word for interrelatedness is care.
- The only reason the emperor penguins survive through an Antarctic winter is due to the power of interrelatedness.
- The Universe blesses with survival those species that care for their young.
- Species that do not care for their young need to compensate by producing enormous numbers of offspring.
- Within the human, the power of interrelatedness emerges as compassion.

The Power of Interrelatedness at Work in Edmund

Moved by compassion :

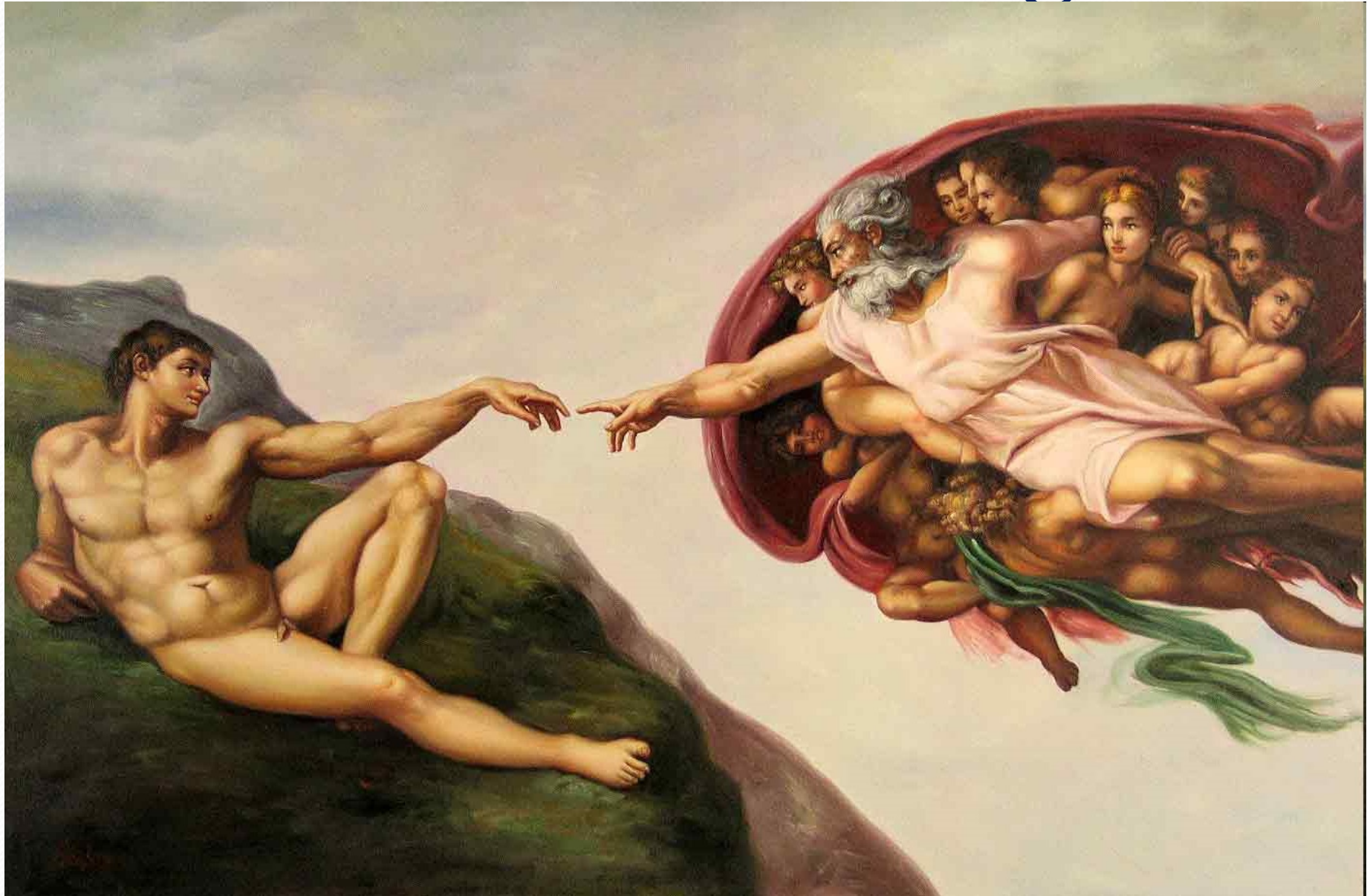
- * Edmund visited the prisons
- * He accompanied condemned men to the gallows (in the wake of the 1798 rebellion)
- * He campaigned for the Repeal of the Penal Laws
- He collaborated in setting up an organisation to provide
- * He began to feed the hungry children of the streets.
- . He began to reflect on the root cause of the plight of the poor and began to dream about ways of tackling the problem.





The Power of Emergence

The Power of Emergence



Emergence/Creativity

- Another name for the power of Emergence is Creativity.
- When the circumstances are propitious the Universe spontaneously creates.
- Galaxies & Stars are creative
- Atoms and molecules are creative.
- Planet Earth is creative in a countless variety of ways.
- The biosphere of the Earth is creative.
- Humans aligned with the Universe are creative.
- Creativity is of the very nature of the Universe and all that emerges from it.
- We humans, fruit of the Universe, are fundamentally creative.

Edmund's New Dream



Liberation Through Education

Power of Emergence in Edmund



- How did creativity manifest in the life of Edmund?
- Edmund surveyed the circumstances around him.
- He focused on the plight of those who were poor and searched for a response.
- His response was both simple and creative.
- He decided to provide a system of education for abandoned and neglected youth to give them a sense of their own dignity and worth as human beings.
- In the Waterford of his day, the plight of abandoned youth was a problem no one seemed to be able to address.
- Edmund's dream is still unfolding.



The Power of Homeostasis

Homeostasis in the Universe

- The power of homeostasis is the power the Universe has to protect the life it has created. Homeostasis is what sustains life in times of chaos, cataclysm and threat to life.
- Earth's mean temperature (14°C) and the salinity of the sea (3.5%) have varied very little for millions of years.
- The balance of gases in the atmosphere varies very little – Oxygen 21%, Nitrogen 78%, Argon 0.9%, Carbon dioxide 0.039%
- The human body maintains the acidity of the blood at a pH of 7.4.
- Body temperature stays at 98.6° F.
- The balance of the various species in habitats self-regulates through the predator/prey relationship

Protecting the New Life



- On the first day Edmund opened school, over a hundred and fifty undisciplined youngsters between the age of 7 and 20 crowded into the “school”.
- Two paid assistants hired by Edmund to help with the work lasted two days. Edmund was left there on his own.
- His advisers and some of his friends urged him to be realistic and forget the whole thing.
- Edmund resolved to hang in the with his “crazy” idea. All through its infancy, Edmund protected with dogged perseverance the infant congregation he had called into existence.
- The Universe blesses with continued life those life forms that protect the new life they have created.

66 Law - Sunday October 19th 2008.



Synergy Collaboration



Synergy In the Universe

- Synergy is about working together; it is about collaboration in the work of nurturing life.
- The Universe rewards species that collaborate by granting them enhanced life. The reverse is also true.
- The reality of Synergy is that a group can do more than the sum of the potential of the individuals.
- The human brain contains 10^9 neurons. Stretched in a line the neurons would reach from the Earth to the Moon and back. A chain of end to end neurons would never evolve consciousness.
- When all of the brain neurons function together as a coherent organism, a self-aware consciousness can emerge.



Surviving By Synergy



The Power of Synergy in Edmund



- After several months of solitary endeavour, Edmund's example attracted a few followers from his home town of Callan.
- Before long he had recruited a small band of dedicated volunteers.
- Gradually, he moulded these volunteers into a family of co-workers who shared his ideals. It was synergy at work.
- In 1820 the Congregation of Christian Brothers was formally approved by PP Pius VII.

The Power of Radiance



The Power of Radiance



Everything in the Universe radiates, from particles to Galaxies, and all that is in between. Everything radiates photons of light. What we radiate reflects the depths of who we are:

In the human context, the radiant power of the Universe:

- Draws us into our own authority.
- It enables us to bring hope and joy to others.
- It creates in us a deep appreciation of beauty
- It creates echoes, causing our message of hope to reverberate across time and space

Edmund's Radiance

1762



1844



Echoes of Edmund

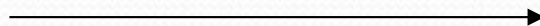
- Over two hundred years on, Edmund's radiance continues to shine in all sorts of ways and in all sorts of people across the globe.
- His example continues to inspire the minds and hearts to strive for a better world.
- One way to look at this is to see it as the Universe endorsing his life and his values and his initiatives.
- Replicating what Edmund did is not a guarantee of a an appropriate response for to-day. The challenge now is to find the appropriate response by aligning with the power of the Universe to-day.
- Life is never static. The Universe has moved on from Edmund's time.
- What the Universe blesses is a response that is appropriate to the prevailing circumstances.

Edmund's Radiance Across the Centuries

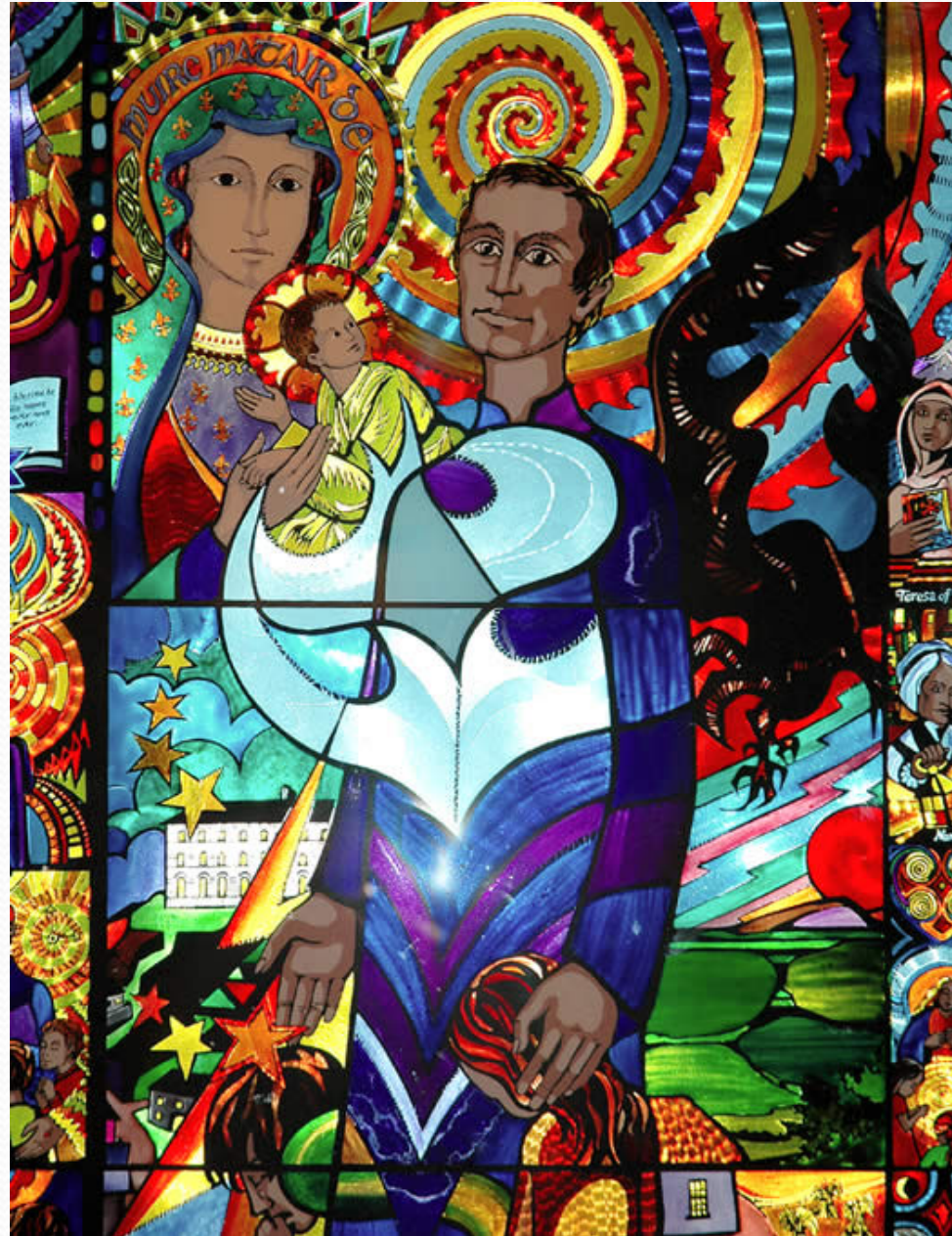
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2008



The Radiance of Edmund





Rising to the Challenge



The Challenge For Us



- How do we live Edmund's Dream Today so that his radiance continues to shine through us?