

## **Toast for Brian Edward Brown**

By Ashley Hubaykah

On the Occasion of the 2016 Thomas Berry Award

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"The destiny of humans cannot be separated from the destiny of Earth."

(Thomas Berry)

In reflecting on my time with Dr. Brown, whether it was in class or working in the religious studies office, I come to this popular quote by Thomas Berry. My class with Dr. Brown, Story of the Universe was consumed with the work of Thomas Berry, or should I say, Wonder Berry. I can't lie to you, Dr. Brown and everyone here and say I understood the importance of him and his teachings because I didn't at all. In fact, it all went right over my head. But one of Dr. Brown's most sacred gifts is his ability for his passion of what he teaches to ultimately allow students to understand his message. Moreover, because he was so passionate about his class, I was determined to understand share in that passion too. Because of Dr. Brown my mind has been opened to a whole new way of thinking and has influenced how I live out my own personal prayer life. His class has influenced most importantly the nature walks I take with my rosary. Without Dr. Brown, I would have never been exposed to the peace and oneness that is possible with our Earth. Dr. Brown, thank you for being an influence on me academically and spiritually. It was your passion from Story of the Universe that led me to Catholic Creation Theology, the Yale Conference, Thomas Merton, and Light The Way in September. Not to mention, your

presence in the office is irreplaceable. I mean, how could you not love Dr. Brown? Dr. Brown, you are treasured and loved by me and everyone in this room. You have grounded me in something that I will continue to live out for the rest of my life and that is said best by Thomas Merton.

"The sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer,  
the wind in the tree is my prayer, for God is all in all."

(Thomas Merton)

Thank you for your dedication to Iona, your students, and most importantly, for influencing my own personal journey.