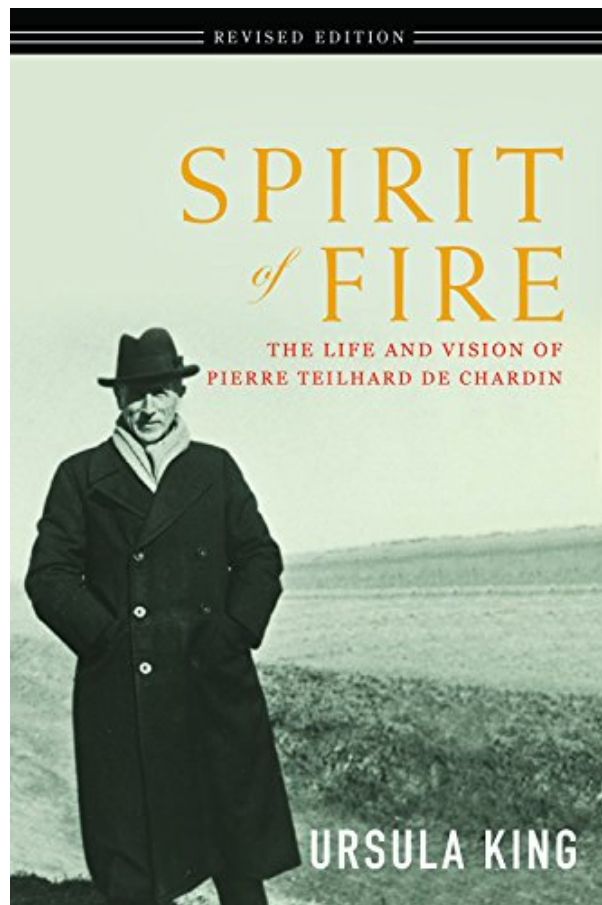


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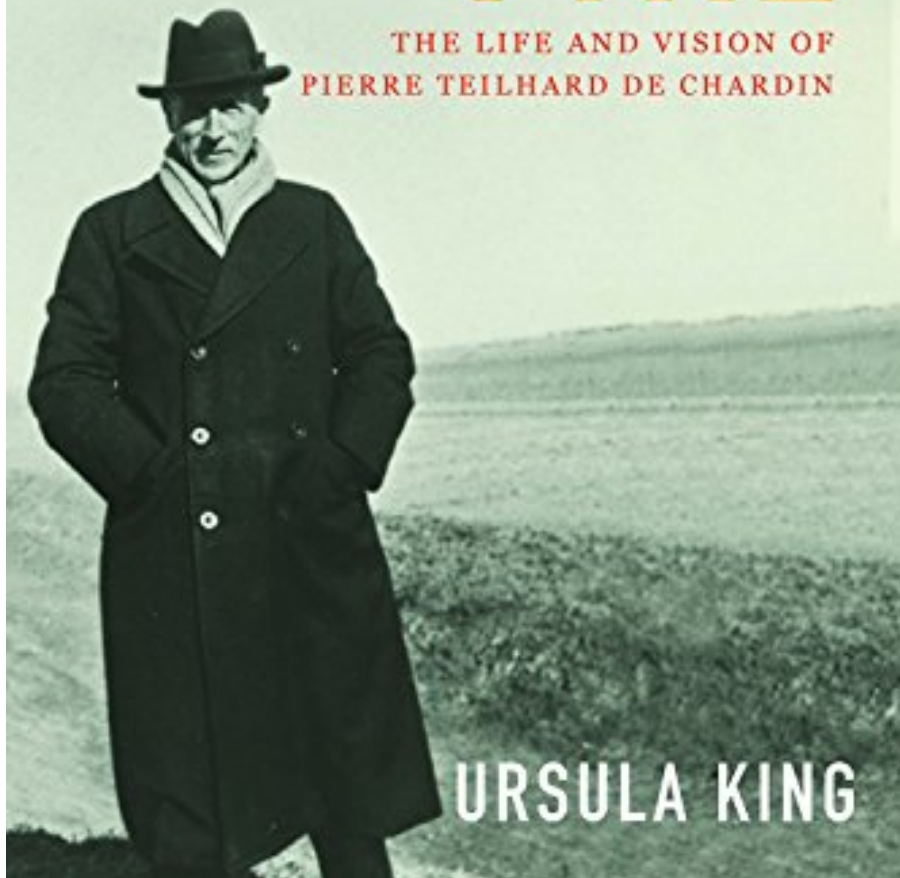
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## **Amazon.com Review**

Teilhard de Chardin, a 20th-century Jesuit priest and paleontologist, is a favorite theologian of contemporary notables such as Al Gore, Mario Cuomo, Marshall McLuhan, and cyberguru John Perry Barlow. Cuomo has said, "Teilhard made negativism a sin. He taught us how the whole universe--even pain and imperfection--is sacred." Ursula King, in *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin*, has written an accessible, entertaining, and lavishly illustrated biography of Teilhard. His writings were all but ignored during his lifetime, but now serve as a lifeline for people of faith struggling to define divine imperatives for ecological responsibility and technological engagement.

## **About the Author**

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Pierre Teilhard de Chardin—renowned French Jesuit theologian, mystic, and scientist—helped bring Christian theology into creative dialogue with modern science and explored profound dimensions of the human condition.

Beautifully written and enhanced with scores of photographs that document his dramatic life—from the trenches of World War I, to paleontological research in China and travels in the Gobi Desert—*Spirit of Fire* also explores his difficulties with church authorities, the posthumous publication of his writings, and his ongoing legacy.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

109 of 111 people found the following review helpful.

Before you read the works of Chardin, read this!

By A Customer

This is a fine introduction to the prolific life and writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the most important theologian of the 20th century. Chardin's theology, banned for years by the Vatican, was at least a hundred years ahead of its time. A geologist, paleontologist, mystic, spiritual lover, he proposed that Darwin's theories of evolution were not contrary to God's revelation but actually was Revelation.

King's book does a good job of detailing Chardin's life, his passions, his pursuits, his beliefs and his science. Though dry and slow at times, the author does help to illuminate the theology of someone who isn't easy to read. Though he lived a rich life, Chardin's writing can be somewhat cold and too scientific at times for the layreader to understand. This book, however, is good solid primer and should be the starting point for anyone interested in a man ahead of his time.

32 of 32 people found the following review helpful.

### The Universe And Mankind Are Both Evolving Towards Perfection

By Peter Kenney

Ursula King's biography of Teilhard de Chardin is a fascinating book written in a style which makes a difficult subject seem quite understandable. King weaves the story of Teilhard's life around snapshots of his constantly maturing vision of God, the universe and mankind.

Known for his original concepts such as the ongoing evolution of both the universe and mankind towards perfection and the existence of a global network of self-awareness, Teilhard was always regarded as a loose canon by the Vatican. Consequently, not much of his work was released during his lifetime except for those relatively few items which were privately published and distributed among a circle of his friends. Since his death in 1955 all his books and essays have been made available to the general public. Teilhard nurtured close, supportive relationships with a small number of caring females and left many letters which reveal the importance of these women in his life.

Although at times he is difficult to comprehend, there is no doubt that Teilhard ranks as one of the most prominent thinkers of the twentieth century. The fact that he is recognized as a famous and respected scientist as well as a mystic, greatly increases his significance.

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

### Excellent Introduction to a Life

By Timothy J. Gannon

Fr. Chardin is someone who has touched my heart deeply from the time I first heard about him many years ago. I was fascinated by the few things I heard about his philosophy and theology. I also hear a lot of new-age citations of him that sound like foolishness. His only work that I read with understanding was "Mass on the World." This short piece was a window into a beautiful soul. Ms. King's work is a sweeping and breathtaking panorama of his life and thought. Her observations are well documented with quotes and pictures of his life and works. I am particularly impressed with how she honors his fidelity to the church's magisterium and his vows.

I read this book in three segments. I had to pause to absorb the magnitude of what I read and experienced. The first part was his early life ending with his service in WWI. I remain astounded at his bravery and his complete experience of all the most horrible battles of that war. I do wish the author had made clearer what bored him about the study of Thomas Aquinas. Was he reading poor presentations of Thomas' thought or what problem did he see in Thomas. At his time in Fr. Chardin's life, Thomas was being resurrected by fellow jesuits, one of them, Henri de Lubac, was a close friend. Also J. Maritan and E. Gilson were active. The second segment was his life's work and exile to China. I remain amazed at the energy he gave to science and writing. A powerful mind was at work to make sense of what he learned. I was exhausted reading of his exploits. The third segment was his closing years and his infirmity. This was a prayerful reading. I was especially touched by his words to a friend, "I always feel God's presence now." The only shortfall I'm seeing in Fr. Chardin's life work is how to get where he saw the need to go. How to learn how I can best make Christ present. Too many new-agers have co-opted Fr. Chardin to make us think we can pull ourselves up by the bootstraps to evolve to the next age. All evolution is in God's Providence.

This book really brought Fr. Chardin to life and helped me understand his meaning and message. Another title that brought Fr. Chardin to life is "For the Time Being" by Annie Dillard. Read and Enjoy.

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