
Cosmic Mass

At the International Parliament of the World's Religions

MARY PLASTER

It was my pleasure to join the Cosmic Mass team with my friend, postmodern theologian, and author, Matthew Fox, at the International Parliament of the World's Religions (<https://parliamentofreligions.org/>) in Chicago, Illinois, USA, 14th –18th August 2023.

The Cosmic Mass is a way of updating the church's celebration of mass for the modern day. There is a dance floor so that participants can move and embody their experience. The format follows Matthew Fox's Four Paths of Creation Spirituality which mirrors the traditional liturgy. There is the Via Positiva or celebration of existence; the Via Negativa or sorrow for sins; the Via Creativa, the blessing

of wine and bread as the food of the Cosmic Christ; and finally going into the world with good action – the Via Transformativa. During the whole mass dancing and meditation is supported by imagery, videos and music. You can read more about the Cosmic Mass here: www.thecosmicmass.com. The Cosmic Mass draws from ecstatic sacred dance used by many indigenous traditions around the world. Therefore, there is a connection with our ancestral past.

As a spiritually based visual artist, I have provided giant props (mostly larger-than-life puppets) for 17 Cosmic Masses since 2005, beginning when I was a D.Min. student at the University of Creation

Spirituality in Oakland, California. I live in Duluth, Minnesota, at the tip of the Great Lake Superior, and so the trip for this Cosmic Mass involved an eight-hour drive in a cargo van with an assistant. We brought 15 entities including one moon, four elements and nine wildlife lanterns from my colourful arsenal to the gorgeous but gigantic McCormick Place conference centre in Chicago overlooking Great Lake Michigan.

Below are some photos of the Cosmic Mass which was attended by over 500 people. I wish I could have seen more of the fabulous

overall conference and other presenters, which numbered over 7,000 people.

Mary Plaster, D.Min., M.A. (maryplaster.org) is a trans-disciplinary artist/activist/facilitator based on Spirit Mountain at the southernmost tip of the Great Lake, Superior, in northern Minnesota, USA. She has extensive Creation Spirituality as well as soul companioning training and is founder/artistic director of an annual fall multicultural art festival, Duluth ALL Souls Night (DASN), exploring grief in creative community since 2008.



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Via Creativa – celebrating the Eucharist amongst the glowing wildlife



Fire/Sun puppet with spiral galaxy projection



The Cosmic Mass including 'stars' on the ceiling