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**From Rev Tom:**

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was born in France in 1881. From the beginning it was clear this child was exceptional. Not only was his competency in his school work the marvel of his teachers, but so was his commitment to understanding the nature of the reality presenting itself to us in ordinary life. It was his lifelong endeavour to understand the nature of things that led him to say, *"You are not a human being in search of a spiritual experience. You are a spiritual being immersed in a human experience."* His unique sensitivities as a child meant that his earliest memory was at the age of five or six, his mother snipping off a few curls of his hair. Picking them up, he held them close to the fire that burned them in less than a second. "A terrible grief assailed me; I learned that I was perishable"! He responded to this shocking insight of his impermanence with a deep commitment to the realisation of the permanent, the imperishable. His commitment was to live fully into every moment. He wrote, "It is our duty as men and women to proceed as though the limits of our abilities do not exist. We are collaborators in creation." He realised that our greater reality is our spiritual selves and our purpose is to live the fullest into our physical selves according to the central principal of love, "Love is the affinity which links and draws together the elements of the world ... Love, in fact, is the agent of universal synthesis." Chardin once wrote of his struggle with an aging body, *"Growing old is like being increasingly penalised for a crime you haven't committed"*. This comment, from such an astonishing academic, priest, philosopher, and mystic, prompted in me the question, "How do we age well?" It occurs to me that since aging cannot be avoided, save by untimely death, then it is to be fully experienced and engaged. It is to be "awake" to the journey, knowing God is living the process through our bodies. Our aging body is sacred ground, the tip of God's wonder for the universe. For everything is included, everything is love. It is for us to marvel as God marvels in us.

