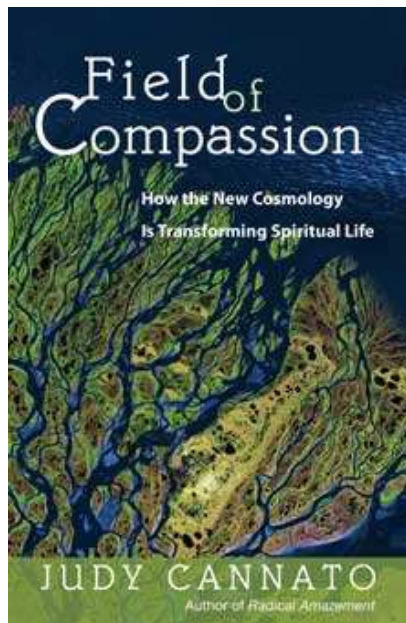


BOOK REVIEW

Cannato, Judy. *Field of Compassion: How the New Cosmology is Transforming Spiritual Life*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2010.



"Judy Cannato is well known as an author and has ministered as a retreat facilitator and spiritual director for 20 years. In this paperback, she examines the connections between science, spirituality, and the practice of compassion. She begins with a look at the importance of stories in our lives and the manifold ways in which they shape and influence our behavior and attitudes. She believes that the Universe Story unfolds through morphogenic fields and the four holons of self-preservation, self-adaptation, self-transcendence, and self-dissolution. Next, the author brings the Universe Story and the Christian Story together through the theological perspective of theologian Karl Rahner. Salvation, Cannato says, is not about 'me' or 'we' but about the cosmos as a whole.

The kingdom of God is a capacious reality for adventuresome believers. When it is added to the Universe Story and the Christian Story, it spurs us on to a new consciousness or 'field of compassion' recognized by unitive consciousness, meditation, and intentionality. Cannato sums up this evolutionary development in a prayer: 'Holy Unity, because of your gracious love, I share in the new consciousness that is emerging. What an awesome gift this is, that you have poured yourself out so generously. May I grow in all the capacities I have – in my self-transcendence, in autonomy, in communion, so that I may know who I am in you and who you are in me. And then, rooted in the knowledge of your love, may I walk freely and compassionately on earth. Amen.'

We are called to be co-creators with God, Cannato asserts, and challenged to incarnate four attitudes: spaciousness, contemplation, commitment, and imagination. These stances fuel the energy needed to manifest and maintain a Field of Compassion: 'Compassion changes everything. Compassion heals. Compassion mends the broken and restores what has been lost. Compassion draws together those who have been estranged or never even dreamed they were connected. Compassion pulls us out of ourselves and into the heart of another, placing us on holy ground where we instinctively take off our shoes and walk in reverence. Compassion springs out of vulnerability and triumphs in unity.' "

Review by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

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