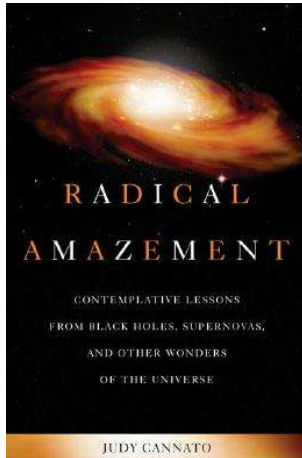


BOOK REVIEW

Cannato, Judy. *Radical Amazement*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Soren Books, 2006.



Judy Cannato is a Catholic author, retreat facilitator and spiritual director. She explains the background to her writings thus: "Several years ago I began to read and reflect upon what is called the New Universe Story or the New Cosmology. The life-changing encounter excited me with its magnificence and resonated with a truth to which my own spiritual path had led: all is one. All of life, on the most fundamental of levels, is connected, and therefore all are included and held in the heart of God."

The sub-title of this book, "Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas and Other Wonders of the Universe" is a succinct summary of its contents. Cannato describes this book as "an invitation to live contemplatively, to get caught up in an awe-filled vision that evokes an immediate, active, and compassionate response." She believes that a paradigm shift is needed, and suggests that "[a] little God – one concerned only for human beings who are like us or should be like us – will never do. The new paradigm includes all creation and is large enough to contain the immensities of the universe. In this new vision we are all connected, all part of a cosmogenesis that continues to unfold".

In simple, engaging language, Cannato explores theories of the origins of the universe, cosmology, evolution, photosynthesis, morphogenic fields, holons, black holes, supernovas and dark matter. Her writing is never dull or ponderous; it is clear, elegant and engaging. Consider this discussion of morphogenic fields: "self-organising systems ... integral to the identity of each of us as individual persons and as members of various groups ... [w]hen we maintain ourselves as a system committed to love, we create a morphogenic field of peace, one in which gentleness and patience flow out of a humble recognition of our connectedness to all."

Each chapter in *Radical Amazement* follows the same format: a reflective discussion of current scientific findings and their implications for human spirituality; a series of contemplative exercises which build on the previous discussion; a formal concluding prayer.

This is a text for today, a book for anyone seeking a way to integrate the insights of the new sciences with the message of Jesus Christ.