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Brandon: If you only see through one lens, you're going to have a distorted view of the world. You're not going to know the world in its full meaning, in its full depth, its full beauty.

Welcome to The Leader's Way at Yale, the podcast at the intersection of spiritual leadership, innovation, and transformation from Berkeley Divinity School at Yale. I'm your host, Brandon Nappi.

I am both amazed at the implications that AI brings to our world and simultaneously incredibly concerned. I can't imagine a better person to help us sift through all of the complexities and to help us navigate many challenging issues surrounding AI than Sister Ilia Delio. Sister Ilia is a Franciscan sister. Her background is both in theology and in science. She's a doctorate in pharmacology from Rutgers University. Her area of specialization was neurotoxicology and spent many years working on Lou Gehrig's disease. She went on to teach at Washington Theological Union at Georgetown, and she's currently professor of theology at Villanova University. She's the author of 20 books. Her latest book, *Re-enchanting the Earth: Why AI Needs Religion*, I found to be really, really helpful at beginning to reflect on the implications of AI and the church and the world and the evolution of culture. I'm so thankful for this conversation. I hope you enjoy it.

Brandon: Sister Ilia Delio, welcome to The Leader's Way podcast. It's so great to have you with us.

Sister Ilia Delio: Thank you, Brandon. It's nice to be here.

Brandon: It's such an important time to talk about AI because of the ways AI is changing life on our planet. Before we start catastrophizing, I thought it would be really helpful to step back and reflect a little bit. Before we dive into AI, I'd love to

hear your vocation story. How did you become a sister and what led you to teach and to study and to research at the intersection of science and religion?

Sister Ilia Delio: I am a cultural Catholic from New Jersey, so brought up in an Italian-American neighborhood. Going to church on Sunday was the thing to do, but I went to Catholic school, grammar school, and I think since the time I was knee-high, I was lured by the Franciscan sisters that we had as our teachers. I always felt this draw to religious life. Even going to mass, there was something mystical about it, and I loved the consecration at the time of the Eucharist and all that kind of stuff. I always had this God center from the time I could walk. My mother had a sister actually who had become a sister, and it didn't last. It was like eight years, and I always had heard the bad stories, had she had to leave at the back door, and she married this divorced man who was Protestant, and then she divorced him. It was just like a downward trend all the way. I said, "Oh, dear." I better not tell her what I'm actually thinking.

I always loved science. I majored in biology, was pre-med, wanted to go to medical school, and got as far as the interview, but froze at the interview stage. It was so competitive in those days that I kind of wanted to go, but then maybe not. I was never as driven as I see some of my students today. I wound up going to graduate school and got a master's, and then a doctorate in neurobiology, and then pharmacology. My area was actually spinal cord research. I was working on models of Lou Gehrig's disease. I was an electrophysiologist, so I was interested in the electrical component of the nervous system. Then my work was aligned with similar pathologies in Alzheimer's disease, and I landed a post doc at Johns Hopkins in neurology and neuropathology. But prior to doing that, I came across the life of Thomas Merton, and I had never heard of Merton. I was really fascinated by this figure. I really identified with him. He was a very worldly person, a literary person, very engaged in people and politics and thought, and then left it all to go to this cloister to live entirely for God in the silence of the desert. I thought, "That's exactly what I want to do."

I finished my PhD, interviewed at Hopkins. It all went well. Then I kind of never showed up, quite honestly. I went to the Holy Land on a cheap flight. I wrote everyone a postcard telling them I was having a great time. They all thought I

eloped with someone. It was kind of funny. I was like, "Well, kind of." I wound up entering a very traditional Byzantine, discalced, Carmelite cloister. I was a cloister nun for four years in the Byzantine Rite. I went to a Ukrainian Rite high school, so it wasn't too unusual. It was somewhat unusual.

My classmates from New Jersey Medical School really could not understand what happened to me, either too many drugs in the laboratory or something happened along the way, but she was mentally not right. Fact is, I was always allured by this complete dedication to a godly life and this living for God. I was a very traditional Catholic. Vatican II was not on my radar. I wore the full floor length habit with the quaffinol. That lasted, I always say, once the drugs were off, I began to wake up. I said, "Oh, what am I doing here?" It was a beautiful life in some ways. The cloistered life is a very rhythmic life, very ecological, very tied to the earth. We did a lot of farming, planting. We grew all our own food. Today, the same monastery has a whole animal farm and stuff like this.

I really love the life in many parts. I could not reconcile it with the incarnation. God entered into the midst of a busy, messy world, and I couldn't understand leaving the busy, messy world to find God. I asked to take a leave and I was sent to live with German Franciscan sisters. I thought, "Well, because I actually went back to Rutgers to do a postdoc in neurotoxicology." In the lab, I worked on issues of methylmercury poisoning in sensory nerves. Then, in my life, I was living with these lovely German Franciscan women. I thought, "Well, they are more fun. They actually drink beer on Sunday, and they drive cars. This must be the place for me." I entered them and had to redo the novitiate and basically have gone through boot camp a few times over. Still very traditionally, wore the full habit, very regulated herbarium up at four, our private silent prayer and the mass and all that kind of stuff.

I ran my postdoc at Rutgers and realized my heart wasn't in research at that point. One day I was in the lab with a full habit on and this guy came in and said, "I'm looking for Dr. Delio." I'm like, "Well, that would be me." It was too weird. I was in the novitiate. I was driving the novice director a little crazy because I asked a lot of questions and had a lot of ideas about things. She was going through some kind of midlife crisis, and they called me in and said, "Well, we'd like to send you to

school to study maybe spirituality or theology." I said, "Well, I don't know much about either, but theology just sounds better. Spirituality just sounds kind of fluffy." I had actually no idea. I just thought, "Theology, read some books and write some papers. I can't be that difficult." After going through medical school courses, it all seemed pretty lightweight, but of course, that wasn't true. I had to go to Catholic school. I wound up going to Fordham University with a car that had been in four accidents. They sent me to the Bronx in this really beat up car, and I lived with the Ursuline sisters.

But to make a long story short, once I got into theology, I was like a fish who found water. I did not realize I was living on dry land. I loved theology. It was its own science for me. I thought like a scientist, but I was actually really delving into, and I loved the patristic fathers. I loved the great fathers of the church and wrote my master's thesis on an aspect of Augustine's rule and then my doctoral dissertation on Bonaventure's mysticism of the crucified Christ. Yeah, very traditional. Love the church, love the traditions, but I never lost sight of science, quite honestly. I was always a scientist, and I think I still am.

Brandon: Thank you for sharing your story, Sister Ilya. I was just smiling and thinking. Another life blown up by Thomas Merton and Francis of Assisi. For those who may be listening and aren't familiar with Théard, what can you say about him? Can you share a bit about his life and how he's foundational for the work that you're doing right now in AI?

Sister Iliia Delio: So Théard Desjardins, Pierre Théard Desjardins, was a French Jesuit born in 1881 and died in 1955. He was a paleontologist, so he was a scientist by training. His specialty was the Eocene era, about 54 million years ago of human evolution. He is one of the discoverers of the picking man, which kind of gave him the claim to fame. He was known in his day as an excellent scientist. He kept very detailed records of his archaeological findings, and he was a careful observer of nature. But he was a Jesuit. He was really deeply devoted to actually the sacred heart of Christ. Deep devotion to the divine love poured out into this incredible creation.

He never really claimed to be a theologian. He didn't say, "I'm a scientist who

wants to be a theologian." He said, "I'm writing as a scientist." And so people often, they judge him harshly. He's been criticized on so many levels by theologians when I'm like, "He actually wasn't trying to be a theologian." So I think we've got to give the guy some credit here. He realized there's a wholeness in nature. No matter how far back we go, there's a wholeness that cannot be reduced to anything other than its own wholeness. And so he begins with this idea of wholeness in nature, even fragments of bones. There's a wholeness to them. And so just a little aside here, I always say that Jesuits are Franciscan wannabes. You know, that they kind of, for whatever, don't like to wear brown robes or something. Both of these wonderful charisms have a deep sense of incarnation. And by that, we mean that materiality is not mere matter. There's a sacredness. There's a godliness at the heart of matter itself. For Francis, it was the goodness of things, you know, this incredible beauty of trees and leaves.

And Teilhard spoke about an ineffable, a hiddenness at the heart of matter itself. Matter really mattered for him. You know, it wasn't just stuff that we build or use. It was the place to find God. And so he brings these things together. His faith in Christ and then his scientific knowledge. And he begins to try to construct a way of understanding how do these things work together. And I think one of the things that really drove Teilhard and drives his vision is evolution. It's not just a random event or survival of the species or just natural adaptation or selection of genes. You know, he wasn't Darwinian. He was very much influenced by Henri Bergson. And Bergson had this idea that there's a vital impulse in nature. There's something that's hidden. It's ineffable. But there's something driving nature. Now, quantum physics today might have some explanation there.

But for Teilhard, he follows that idea of an Elan-Bital. There's a vital impulse in nature. And he then begins to associate that with what he called the Omega Principle. A principle of centriety. A principle that holds the whole together without being reduced to any fragment, without being destroyed by any of the forces of nature. It's the force that keeps on guiding nature. And of course, he begins to associate that principle of Omega with God. So he speaks about God Omega in evolution. And then he begins to really try to understand, well, evolution itself. There's a becomingness. There seems to be a universe that's not finished. It's unfinished. There's a dynamism in nature here. It's moving towards something.

And so he began to put these things together with some of the Pauline ratings that the whole creation is groaning. The Spirit groans the creation as it yearns for that new birth. We make up in our bodies what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. So he has this idea that we're growing into something. And therefore, he puts together evolution and Christianity. And says several things.

One, he says, Christianity is a religion of evolution. In other words, it's bringing together divinity and materiality or sarks. And it's uniting these things. And it's giving rise to something new, new life. We might call that the risen Christ. But something new is taking place. And it is the one religion that posits that divinity is fully immersed in materiality. We're not Gnostics. We're not docetic. God just doesn't appear in matter. We either claim that God is really mattered or not. You can have sort of a little bit of this and a little bit of that. I think we still grapple with this, even doctrinally. We still have Calcitan, which was, in my view, kind of the political, sort of like Democrat, Republican thing, like the Antiochians and the Alexandrians. Let's get them together and they stop fighting with one another. And so we have kind of a political formula. But I don't think we've ever really fully embraced incarnation as the full kenosis of divine love.

But this is what God is. And Teilhard gets that in his own way. And therefore, he speaks about something he said is taking place in evolution. And that's the incredible thing here. And of course, no scientist is going to agree with that. They're like, no, dude, there's nothing taking place. This is just science. Just physical laws happening. But this is where actually technology will, I think, play a role. There's something taking place here. And our question is, what is it? We haven't always been human Homo sapiens. There have been a number of species before us, right? Different hominid and hominid type of species. And we're not going to be always Homo sapiens in the future, around the cusp of being something new. So newness is the name of the game for Teilhard. And basically, it's novelty, creativity, and future.

Those are the three pillars that he builds on. He was kind of forced out of his native country. And he spent decades in China and Africa. At the end of his life, I think he suffered quite a bit, actually. Not just physically. He did have a heart condition. But I think he suffered mentally, sort of a dark night of the soul. Not being

understood, not being accepted, and then rejected by his own Jesuit confreres. So he kind of knew his end was coming, about 1950, asked to return to France, and the Jesuits declined his application to return to his native France, and he was sent to a community, the Jesuit community, in New York City, on 83rd Street. He was there just a few years, working at the Renegrin Foundation. And he suffered a massive heart attack, I think, and died.

Very, very simply, you know, in Hastings on the Hudson, in what is now today the Culinary Institute of America, very simple grave, just a few rocks on it. I don't know if he ever thought that what he did would ever see the light of day, quite honestly. Because he was not allowed to publish a single thing of his spiritual writings or theological musings during his lifetime. The lesson here, if you want something to live on, give it to your best friend, who's a woman.

I just want to throw that in there. Because his secretary, she must have known that there was something special here. And she preserved his writings and made sure that they were circulated among the friends of Teilhard, and then they were copied, etc. I don't know if he died thinking that anything he ever thought would ever come to any kind of fruition. And so here we are, almost 70 years later. Yeah, he died in 1955, so 68 years later.

Brandon: Teilhard's notion of this evolutionary dynamism, this newness, this emergence, leads us to AI. And I'm wondering if you could tell us the story of how this book came to be. What made you want to dig into AI?

Sister Ilia Delio: Well, I have been fascinated, actually, by computer technology since my initial readings of Teilhard on the future of man and his notion of the new sphere and the ultra-human. These are terms that he coined to speak of what could possibly emerge with what he called like minds that are linked together electronically. I have been teaching a course on technology and the human person on the undergraduate level at Villanova University. My first book was actually, my first course was actually at Georgetown on Facebook and Jesus, you know, or what would Jesus tweet type thing. It has morphed into technology and human person. And then a few years ago, I did a doctoral seminar with one of my colleagues at Villanova, George Teener, on transhumanism, posthumanism, and the new

materialisms. So I became involved in the philosophy of artificial intelligence and then the philosophy of mind and really what's been going on since. Quite honestly, this is not all that new.

Brandon: So in your book, *Reenchanting the Earth, Why AI Needs Religion*, you remind us of Carl Jasper's work and his insight that religion developed in the axial period. I wonder if you can describe this period for those of us who maybe don't know about this history, or maybe it's been a long time since our undergraduate class when we encountered this topic. And then the second part, you describe our own age as a second axial period. So maybe you can build the bridge and help us understand what might be happening now based on your sense of what was happening back then in the axial period.

Sister Ilia Delio: Yeah, the axial period is the term that Carl Jasper's coined around 1949. You know, not everyone accepts that because I don't want to box in history like this is exactly it, but it's a heuristic, right? To kind of understand these broad movements that took place. And I think simply to find the axial period is that period in all major parts of the world where there was sort of a breakthrough in consciousness and a recognition of the human person as person. That is, as one who is endowed with freedom and a sense of transcendence, etc.

One way to appreciate the axial period is to understand pre-axial period. So by axial, I take that primarily to refer to levels of consciousness. So pre-axial consciousness or the pre-axial period was having a sense of or an awareness of spiritual unity in nature, human community, you know, what we call today indigenous spiritualities or primal spiritualities, which are very beautiful in their own way. Primal in the sense, not that there's something old about them, it's an awareness. What does it mean to belong to the whole? Maybe that's just one way to put it. And for pre-axial spiritualities, it's this sense of spiritual unity. That which runs through the course of the trees is the blood that runs through my vein is the spirit that runs through the sky.

Axial period actually emerges, I think, with the discovery of moving from a flat earth cosmology to a 3D cosmology, you know, as the Greeks began to observe it. And that kind of length with height and depth, you know, that belong to the

Ptolemaic cosmos, eventually described by Ptolema, really gave a sense of awareness of distinction, you know, of the human person. And now the human person now was related to creation, but also could conceive of oneself as distinct, one who was not finding an identity in nature, but related to nature. So we have the rise of the world religions during this period. So including the ancient traditions of Jainism and Hinduism, and then Judaism, Christianity, Islam. What's interesting is the person as person emerges, and then religiously, it's the sense of divine transcendence, that there's a divinity beyond us, there's something beyond the visible world. Also a sense of the monk or the solitary one. So the Plutonian, you know, flight of the alone to the alone idea.

Then our own age, which we can mark with the discovery of relativity in 1905, you know, that early, early 20th century with Einstein and others, and the discovery of a Big Bang universe, really kind of began to usher in a new consciousness, which today we can speak of a shift in consciousness from transcendence to imminence from solitary to community, from otherworldly to ecological. So we are what we might call a second axial consciousness. It's a breakthrough in all parts of the world. And this second axial consciousness has definitely been deepened or expanded by the internet. You know, we have today what we call global consciousness, which would have been really unheard of in 1950, a time when air travel itself was like, wow, you know, that was like amazing.

So cell phones, all the stuff that we are now so used to and embedded with in our daily lives, these did not exist. And now they do exist. And everything about us has radically changed our whole new awareness. And that means not only our sense of the world has changed, our sense of ourselves has changed the human person. And I think this is hard to rest our heads around, but we are. Evolution, not just that we're in evolution, we are evolution now on the level of consciousness. Something about us is radically changing. It's radically shifting.

Brandon: You quote Alfred North Whitehead when he said religion will not regain its power until it can face change in the same spirit as it does science. And so I'm wondering if you could share what led you to source Whitehead in that way. What sorts of shifts in transformation does religion need to undergo if it is to support us as we move into the second axial period?

Sister Ilia Delio: Kind of a P.S. there in the axial period, I think we are quickly approaching the third axial age. You know, a lot of our lives has lived in the rearview mirror. So we're just still in the first axial period. We're quickly going through the second axial period. I see the third axial period on the horizon with space travel and exploration of extraterrestrial life. So I just want to put that out there.

Alfred North Whitehead was contemporary of Teilhard, two process thinkers, right? There's no indication that they had any direct correspondence or anything, but they were both grappling with the fact that science and religion are like a pair of eyeglasses, two lenses of knowing the one world. And if you only see through one lens, you're going to have a distorted view of the world. You're not going to know the world in its full meaning, in its full depth, its full beauty. And so Whitehead, like Teilhard, thought that religion has to be open to the same kind of paradigm shifts that science has undergone.

And, you know, I've heard this argument that, oh, well, science always changes, but religion, you know, is divinely intended and never meant to change. Well, that quite honestly, that's just silly, you know, just never always been this way. And God is quite at home with change, quite honestly. And so I think both Whitehead and Teilhard really sought to develop what we're calling today an open theism. It's not the classical theistic relationship of a static God world relationship based on the kind of philosophical idea that God is immutable, ubiquitous, omniscient, you know, et cetera, et cetera, but that God is the dynamism of love or the dynamism of the wholeness of life who is truly related and in deep relationship with all that God creates.

And so what both of them realize is quite honestly, we can't even talk about God from conscious material life. Like without conscious life, we can't say whether or not God exists. You know, you can't even form that argument. It takes a level of consciousness to know, even to utter the word God, whether or not you accept or reject God. So I just want to put that out there that, you know, theology does have to by nature begin with human existence and not some kind of divine revelation that there's something up there that precedes us and comes before us and whatever. However, we concoct these things.

They both realize these things that science and religion, what does it mean for religion to shift science? We understand can shift, right? Okay, so we have the big bang universe, not that we understand it at all, nor do we shape our daily lives by it because we're still living pretty much in a Newtonian universe on many levels. Our systems, I think our political systems, our educational systems, are very Newtonian still. And it's why we're not really fit for the world that's quickly evolving. But religion itself has developed a deep inner fear to change. There's a deep resistance. And phenomenology may be as far as we're at. Wow, we can't have an experience of the world with us. They're really terrific. But I think, you know, we have to go more.

We're going to have to grapple with the fact that our language of being is conceptual. We can do better. That's all we're saying here. If we say science and religion must work together, what we are saying is that science now informs us about reality in a way we didn't have this knowledge before. So it gives us new insights. We either are going to accept those insights and then understand our reality in a new way from a religious or theological perspective or not.

Brandon: So where does Jesus fit into this worldview? Obviously, as a Franciscan sister, you care about Jesus. And Francis himself was such an embodied follower of Jesus. Can you talk about how Jesus figures into all of this theologically? And what is the impact of the incarnation in your thinking on evolution and AI?

Sister Ilia Delio: Yes. So I do have a new book coming out. It's called *The Not Yet God on Carl Jung, Thayer Desjardins, and the Relational Whole*. I think actually Jesus figures quite large for me. I am actually a very committed Christian. And I believe that Christianity has something really vital to offer to today's world, but not in a narrow sense, in the widest sense of bringing science and religion into a new kind of wholeness. So I don't think we're triumphantly, you know, like, "Wait, look at us, we're the real deal." Like, no, I don't think so at all.

Okay, this is my radical, radical view. I don't think even Jesus came to start a church. I think actually it's the end of institution. And it's the beginning of a new humanity. That's what I see in Jesus, the beginning of the new human. And that new human is one who pushes boundaries, who disrupts what is juridical and

legalistic, and really looks to engage the flesh of the human. The poor, the disenfranchised, those who are marginalized, those who are left out. Today, Jesus would be with the LGBTQ community. He would be with all those who feel excluded by our cultures. And that's what I think Jesus represents for us.

But as a symbol of what we are, I think what Jesus is about is what we're supposed to be about, you know? So it's not just like putting it all on Jesus, like, "Yay for Jesus." Like, Jesus was a historical figure, you know, in whom God truly broke through. And there was something deeply godly about his life that was recognized as the Christ. But I think there's something about us that we have to name as well that is godly.

We have been too, too, too, too, too passive. And we keep throwing it all onto a savior figure. And I think, you know, Jesus said, "Look, I got to go so the Spirit can come, you know? The Spirit's going to lead you to all things, to the truth. You know, you're not only going to do what I do, you're going to do greater works than me." So, you know, according to John's Gospel, Jesus, like, just don't, like, follow me. I'm going to build a big church and he could all come and pray to me. It's more like, "No, let me get out of the way so you can be following the way," you know? And honestly, I think Christianity is a great idea. I don't think really, it's been born into its full meaning. We're kind of Christian wannabes, you know?

Anyway, I do think that, and here's what Teilhard, he wasn't narrowly Christian. He was, he was cosmically Christian in this way, that he saw the pattern of evolution as moving towards something that is more personalized. And we can say the same thing. The internet has personalized us, whether or not we can see it in that way, because it has also tribalized us in some ways. We all have our little tribes on Facebook and stuff like that. But we are more connected before than we have ever been in the history of human evolution. And so there's something going on here, and that's one thing that Teilhard recognized. And, you know, from a Christian perspective, we can say, "This is the body of Christ in evolution," but we need values, you know? And that's where his idea was technology is not to supplant us, it's to complement. We work with technology in deepening what we are.

I mean, we can build technology for a more compassionate world, for a more just world. We can wire ourselves for a world of shared resources. We can be ecologically more resourceful with technology. Technology is not the problem, we're the problem, and it's the values we either bring to technology or fail to bring to technology, that we give that whoever writing that code free reign to kind of decide our future, while we're off in a church someplace, saying the Hail Mary or our Father, hoping that God will bring us to heaven or something like this. And I'm like, "I think God's like, "What is wrong with those people down there?" You know, they're like, "Totally did not get it." And so that's it. You know, St. Teresa said, "Christ has no body now on earth but yours." Well, she prayed that, she didn't actually write it. But I think the sentiment is right.

You know, I think a lot of the Pauline literature points in this direction. Christ's the mystery hidden since the foundation of the world. As a Franciscan, I'm very scholastic. I think that Christ is kind of the reason for the season, and not in the narrow sense, but this universe has meaning and purpose in the love of God. We have the capacity for a fullness in love. We have the capacity to become a truly unified world. Will we do it? That it may take millions of years and a lot of better technology to get us there. But that we're capax day for sure. That we're capax infinity, yes. And that's something actually that Silicon Valley knows without being religious. That's the problem.

We are too small, too narrow, and too fearful in our religious beliefs. If we really, really believe in a God of incomprehensible love, then we have to live out from that center. And we have to do daring things. We have to do big things. And that's not saying no to technology. We have to have a radical voice in technology to see how we're going to use this, how we're going to be co-creative with technology for a new future.

Brandon: And finally, can you share with us a concern and a hope? What keeps you up at night? And what ultimately leads you to find hope amid all the turmoil and challenge that you encounter in the world today?

Sister Ilia Delio: I do worry that because we are not fully on board with AI, and we are so politically divided, it's a volatile world. I am worried about the survival

of the fittest mentality, even in terms of consumerism. We saw that with the COVID pandemic, you know, people just run and hoard things for themselves. So we don't have a sense of shared being. We don't have a sense of a shared earth. And one of my fears is a computer meltdown, actually a virus that would attack all the computer grids. I think that would be really a wipeout for us. But I do live in hope. I am not just a naive optimist. I guess people say, "Oh, you're such an optimist in the face of everything." I have a great sense of God's love within myself and the sense that that love will, you know, fidelity to God's love, fidelity to that presence of God, allows us to see the light shining through the darkness. It allows us to see the life butting through the charred trees. Where there's God, there's future, you know, and where there's God, there's hope.

And we're here after 13.8 billion years of cosmic life, cataclysmic life, violent life in the cosmos, violent life here on earth, I mean, five major extinctions. We will undergo some kind of extinction. I'm pretty sure that at some point in the future, it's just that is how life evolves, by the way. It's not that we're going to live forever. We have to shift our mindsets, you know. It's not just like God's going to come and whisk us away on some chariot. It's that we're part of something that's so much more than we can conceive or imagine. We're part of a great cosmic drama, a divine drama, a divine drama that's taking place in this huge immense process of life itself. And we have to let go of trying to control this life and engage in this drama as an adventure. And that means to use our gifts, to take chances, to fall down, to get up again, to think in new ways, think out of the box, you know, try new things, try different things, because that's how life actually evolves.

Life is a constant experiment on the biological level. It's always seeking out new, "Let's try this." It's always playful, you know, play is a big thing. And we have to learn to play again. We need to stop trying to control everything. It's one of our downfalls as homo sapiens. We're always trying to control and manipulate. It's like, no, learn to be like a butterfly, like a tree leaf, you know, just kind of go with the flow. And play jump rope and go play hopscotch someplace and just try leaping over a large fence. You know, do the unthinkable and stretch your mind to what seems absolutely ludicrous, because God will probably be there.

Brandon: Sister Ilya, thank you so much for this conversation. Thank you, too, for all the work that you do for the world. You're such a gift to the Church and to our community. So thank you for everything that you're doing, and we're so looking forward to the next book.

Sister Ilya Delio: Thank you, Brandon. Thanks. It was great to be with you.

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