26th Sunday of Ordinary Time

For the past Summer, I have been giving a seminar on religion and science. Once religion was a great supporter of science, especially the Catholic Church. Since the Enlightenment, 1650 to 1815, the world pulled away from the church, not wanting to include religion in their pursuits. Rationality was king. No need for a faith-based science. With the advent of Newtonian physics, science worked well. Newton’s laws worked well with everyday scientific inquiries.

Then along came sub-atomic physics that turned Newton’s laws upside down. These laws didn’t work when investigating what was underneath the everyday world that scientists were used to. This led to more mysteries that scientists weren’t used to. Scientists could explain the ‘what’ of what they were discovering but couldn’t explain the ‘why’.

In this new area of research, science and religion could talk to each other again- putting ‘what’ and ‘why’ together.

Religion can look to science for new ways of thinking about religious matters and science can look to religion for answers to mysteries.

The breach between religion and science has been closed up. At least the possibility is there for those who want it.

The point of my seminar from the pulpit was to show that there need not be reason versus faith and faith versus reason. Science is our friend now. And religion can be an answer to many mysteries discovered by sub-atomic physics.

A word about the Catholic Church – the institution. Catholics have always been involved in science. There is an article from Churchpop.com that explains. The article is entitled “7 of History’s Most Brilliant Scientists People Forget Were Catholic”

**1) Louis Pasteur – Inventor of Pasteurization**

Louis Pasteur, inventor of the process pasteurization (one of the biggest breakthroughs ever for preventing disease), was once praying the Rosary on a train when a young man criticized his devotion as a manifestation of scientific ignorance. Pasteur simply had to introduce himself to dispel this spurious charge of superstition.

Apocryphal or not, the anecdote is confirmed by Pasteur’s many quotes in favor of the life of faith:

“A little science takes you away from God but a lot of science takes you back to Him… Question your priorities often, make sure God always comes first… Posterity will one day laugh at the sublime foolishness of the modern materialistic philosophy. The more I study nature, the more I stand amazed at the work of the Creator.

“I pray while I am engaged at my work in the laboratory… Blessed is he who carries within himself a God, an ideal, and who obeys it: ideal of art, ideal of science, ideal of the gospel virtues, therein lie the springs of great thoughts and great actions; they all reflect light from the Infinite… Do not let yourself be tainted with a barren skepticism… Could I but know all, I would have the faith of a Breton peasant woman.”

**2) Gregor Mendel – Father of Genetics**

Augustinian monk and pioneer of genetics

**3) St. Giuseppe Moscati – Pioneer in Treating Diabetes with Insulin**

Doctor Moscati was one of the first physicians to use insulin in the treatment of diabetes, but his deep intellectual gifts were always at the service of an even deeper belief in the healing power of the Divine

**4) Louis de Broglie – Nobel Prize winner in Quantum Mechanics**

Devout Catholic Henri de Broglie earned the Nobel Prize for his landmark achievement in the realm of quantum mechanics with the wave-particle equation that bears his name. Given his piety, he attributed the voyage of discovery to a desire to know and serve.

**5) Fr. Georges Lemaître – Father of the Big Bang Theory**

Fr. Georges Lemaître, a Roman Catholic priest and professor of physics at Leuven, generated what has come to be called the Big Bang Theory. As to the perennial feud between reason and religion, he states:

“Once you realize that the Bible does not purport to be a textbook of science, the old controversy between religion and science vanishes…

“The doctrine of the Trinity is much more abstruse than anything in relativity or quantum mechanics; but, being necessary for salvation, the doctrine is stated in the Bible. If the theory of relativity had also been necessary for salvation, it would have been revealed to Saint Paul or to Moses.”

**6) Jerome Lejeune – Discovered Cause of Down Syndrome**

Doctor Jerome Lejeune discovered trisomy 21, the genetic defect that causes Down syndrome. While he labored with the intent to find a cure, he decried the pervasive usage of his discovery in prenatal testing for abortion. His pro-life stance may have cost him a Nobel Prize, but St. John Paul II appointed him as the first president of the Pontifical Academy of Life instead.

**7) Galileo Galilei – Father of Modern Astronomy**

Yes, the Renaissance polymath Galileo Galilei was put under house arrest for stating his solar theories as indisputable fact. But St. Robert Bellarmine was amenable to the genius’ innovative discoveries.

And, nevertheless, Galileo remained a practicing Catholic until the day he died. His own daughter became a nun. His personal testimony would not conflict with this assessment:

“The Bible shows the way to go to heaven, not the way the heavens go… I give infinite thanks to God, who has been pleased to make me the first observer of marvelous things… I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use.”

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Ergo, from basic genetics to interplanetary physics, the Church collectively has made more contributions to knowledge about our universe than any one entity in history. The litany of faithful scholars goes on and on!

Indeed it does. In Wikipedia, under the heading of List of Catholic Churchmen Scientists, there are 200 pages of names and an additional 137 pages of Jesuit names. All scientists. All faith inspired.

Our Church, (as institution) has always supported the sciences. Now naïve rational scientists can make use of religious inspired explanations.

For Einstein, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." (Einstein, Albert (1956). ["Science and Religion,"](https://www.religiousnaturalism.org/science-and-religion-2/) *Ideas and Opinions*. New York: Citadel Press, [p. 26.](https://books.google.com/books?id=Q1UxYzuI2oQC&pg=PA26))

Thus ends my foray into the supposition that God is Energy as supported by sub-atomic physics. Thank you for your patience.