

22 December 2008

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Pope Benedict XVI, during a visit at the Nazi camp in Brzezinka, Poland
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[The Pope Recognizes the Importance of Galileo's Astronomy](#)

Pope Benedict XVI was accused of condoning the heresy charges

Some 400 years after Galileo Galilei made his work on the movement of planets public, the Catholic Church, through the words of Pope Benedict XVI, apologized for its mistake, namely accusing the scientist of heresy and sentencing him to house arrest for the rest of his life, in light of the fact that the Earth indeed is not the center of the Universe, which has been common knowledge for quite some time now.

Speaking at the 400th celebration of Galileo's first observations of space via telescope, the Pope paid tribute to the man who changed the way we see our world, and who had the nerve to directly challenge the dogma set forth by the then-almighty Catholic Church, which could burn people at the stake for fictive crimes and false accusations.

Benedict gave his words a twist, suggesting that the early astronomer helped people better appreciate God's creation. If that were the case, then Galileo wouldn't have been forced to spend the rest of his life under house arrest in Florence. After his trial in 1633, he was denied access to the outside world and was deemed a heretic, a title that he kept until this day, in the eyes of the Church, even if scientific evidence pointed to the obvious contrary.

The Catholic Church started to change its stance on Galileo in 1992, when Pope John Paul II said that the Holy See had committed a "tragic error" in judging the astronomer. In those distant times, the widespread view that the Church upheld was that the Sun revolved around Earth, and that our planet was the center of the Universe, which made sense, considering that the Bible says we are God's special creation.

But that's the same book that allowed the Inquisition to kill tens of thousands of people on account of them wearing a pointy hat or going in the forest at night. Also, black kitties were a death sentence, as their owners were inevitably accused of witchcraft or heresy and "purified" through fire. Maybe the Catholics should start apologizing about that first, as those days earned the name of the Dark Ages, and for good reason.