

14 May 2008

By: Gabriel Gache, Science News Editor



Alien God
manchestereveningnews

[Vatican: Nothing Wrong in Believing in Aliens](#)

Alien life doesn't contradict religion

Astronomer Rev. Jose Gabriel Funes, director of the Vatican Observatory, revealed in an interview published yesterday that the Vatican believed that alien life might exist and that it didn't necessarily mean it contradicted the belief in God. Makes you remember the cheerful days of the middle ages, doesn't it?

"How can we rule out that life may have developed elsewhere. Just as we consider earthly creatures as 'a brother', and 'sister', why should we not talk about an 'extraterrestrial brother'? It would still be part of creation", said Funes adding that God created all the creatures of the universe, so believing that aliens exist doesn't interfere with the faith in God.

The interview published by Vatican's newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, states that Funes believes that neither science nor astronomy are capable of contradicting religion, referring to the relation between faith and reason, made by Pope Benedict XVI, one of the key topics for exploration during his papacy. According to science, the universe originated from a single, super-dense singularity some 13.7 billion years ago. Funes on the other hand says that: "God is the creator of the universe and that we are not the result of chance". The Bible is not a science book, but the Big Bang theory is probably the most 'reasonable' explanation for the creation of the universe.

The scientific community and the church have split more than four centuries ago in the outcome of Galileo's persecution, who said that neither the Earth nor the Sun were situated in the center of the universe. In 1633, he was tried for heretic beliefs and forced to deny his theory.

"The church has somehow recognized its mistakes. Maybe it could have done it better, but now it's time to heal those wounds and this can be done through calm dialogue and collaboration", said Funes. The beginning of the reconciliation between church and science began in 1992 with Pope John Paul's declaration saying that Galileo's trial was a "tragic mutual incomprehension".

Since then the Vatican Observatory has been frantically trying to close the gap between science and religion. Its meteorite collection is currently one of the largest on Earth. The observatory was opened in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII and is located in Castel Gandolfo. The team of cleric researchers often participates in studies held at the observatory at the University of Arizona.