

ZE10102809 - 2010-10-28

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-30793?l=english>

## **POPE: SCIENCE ISN'T TO BE WORSHIPPED OR FEARED**

### **Calls for Greater Synthesis With Philosophy**

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 28, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is cautioning against two extreme attitudes toward science: that it holds all the answers to life's problems and that it is to be feared.

The Pope said this today in an audience with participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. The theme of the assembly is: "The Scientific Legacy of the Twentieth Century."

"Unfortunately, the popular image of twentieth-century science is sometimes characterized" in "two extreme ways," the Pontiff said.

"On the one hand, science is posited by some as a panacea, proven by its notable achievements in the last century," he explained. "Its innumerable advances were in fact so encompassing and so rapid that they seemed to confirm the point of view that science might answer all the questions of man's existence, and even of his highest aspirations."

"On the other hand," the Holy Father observed, "there are those who fear science and who distance themselves from it, because of sobering developments such as the construction and terrifying use of nuclear weapons."

He noted that science "is not defined by either of these extremes."

Rather, Benedict XVI stated, "its task was and remains a patient yet passionate search for the truth about the cosmos, about nature and about the constitution of the human being."

He noted that "the progress made in scientific knowledge in the twentieth century, in all its

various disciplines, has led to a greatly improved awareness of the place that man and this planet occupy in the universe."

"In the last century," the Pope continued, "man certainly made more progress -- if not always in his knowledge of himself and of God, then certainly in his knowledge of the macro- and microcosms -- than in the entire previous history of humanity."

Church's esteem

"Our meeting here today, dear friends, is a proof of the Church's esteem for ongoing scientific research and of its gratitude for scientific endeavor, which it both encourages and benefits from," he affirmed.

The Pontiff added, "In our own day, scientists themselves appreciate more and more the need to be open to philosophy if they are to discover the logical and epistemological foundation for their methodology and their conclusions."

"For its part," he said, "the Church is convinced that scientific activity ultimately benefits from the recognition of man's spiritual dimension and his quest for ultimate answers that allow for the acknowledgement of a world existing independently from us, which we do not fully understand and which we can only comprehend in so far as we grasp its inherent logic."

"Scientists do not create the world," the Holy Father pointed out. "They learn about it and attempt to imitate it, following the laws and intelligibility that nature manifests to us."

He added, "The scientist's experience as a human being is therefore that of perceiving a constant, a law, a logos that he has not created but that he has instead observed."

"In fact," Benedict XVI affirmed, "it leads us to admit the existence of an all-powerful Reason, which is other than that of man, and which sustains the world."

"This is the meeting point between the natural sciences and religion," he said. "As a result, science becomes a place of dialogue, a meeting between man and nature and, potentially,

even between man and his Creator."

The Pope proposed "two thoughts for further reflection" looking ahead to the 21st century.

"First, as increasing accomplishments of the sciences deepen our wonder of the complexity of nature, the need for an interdisciplinary approach tied with philosophical reflection leading to a synthesis is more and more perceived," he said.

The Pontiff continued, "Secondly, scientific achievement in this new century should always be informed by the imperatives of fraternity and peace, helping to solve the great problems of humanity, and directing everyone's efforts towards the true good of man and the integral development of the peoples of the world."

--- --- ---

On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text: [www.zenit.org/article-30786?l=english](http://www.zenit.org/article-30786?l=english)