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# Pope Benedict Address Pontifical Academy of Sciences

## Urges Cooperation Between 'Worlds of Science and Faith'

By Ann Schneible

ROME, Nov. 9, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Pope Benedict XVI addressed members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences who have gathered for a plenary Assembly on the theme: "Complexity and Analogy in Science: Theoretical, Methodological and Epistemological Aspects."

The theme of this gathering of scientists, the Holy Father told those in the assembly, "touches on an important subject which opens up a variety of perspectives pointing towards a new vision of the unity of the sciences. Indeed, the significant discoveries and advances of recent years invite us to consider the great analogy of physics and biology which is clearly manifested every time that we achieve a deeper understanding of the natural order. If it is true that some of the new notions obtained in this way can also allow us to draw conclusions about processes of earlier times, this extrapolation points further to the great unity of nature in the complex structure of the cosmos and to the mystery of man's place within it. The complexity and greatness of contemporary science in all that it enables man to know about nature has direct repercussions for human beings. Only man can constantly expand his knowledge of truth and order it wisely for his good and that of his environment."

He noted that participants in the assembly were engaging in "the ongoing dialectic of the constant expansion of scientific research, methods and specializations and... the quest for a comprehensive vision of this universe in which human beings, endowed with intelligence and freedom, are called to understand, love, live and work.

"In our time," the Pope continued, "the availability of powerful instruments of research and the potential for highly complicated and precise experiments have enabled the natural sciences to approach the very foundations of corporeal reality as such, even if they do not manage to understand completely its unifying structure and ultimate unity. The unending succession and the patient integration of various theories, where results once achieved serve in turn as the presuppositions for new research, testify both to the unity of the scientific process and to the

constant impetus of scientists towards a more appropriate understanding of the truth of nature and a more inclusive vision of it."

Interdisciplinary approaches to complexity, the Holy Father went on, also demonstrates that "the sciences are not intellectual worlds disconnected from one another and from reality but rather that they are interconnected and directed to the study of nature as a unified, intelligible and harmonious reality in its undoubted complexity. Such a vision has fruitful points of contact with the view of the universe taken by Christian philosophy and theology, with its notion of participated being, in which each individual creature, possessed of its proper perfection, also shares in a specific nature and this within an ordered cosmos originating in God's creative Word."

The logical and analogical order found within nature, moreover, is the very quality which "encourages scientific research and draws the human mind to discover the horizontal co-participation between beings and the transcendental participation by the First Being. The universe is not chaos or the result of chaos, rather, it appears ever more clearly as an ordered complexity which allows us to rise, through comparative analysis and analogy, from specialization towards a more universalizing viewpoint and vice versa. While the very first moments of the cosmos and life still elude scientific observation, science nonetheless finds itself pondering a vast set of processes which reveals an order of evident constants and correspondences and serves as essential components of permanent creation."

The Holy Father concluded: "In the great human enterprise of striving to unlock the mysteries of man and the universe, I am convinced of the urgent need for continued dialogue and cooperation between the worlds of science and of faith in the building of a culture of respect for man, for human dignity and freedom, for the future of our human family and for the long-term sustainable development of our planet. Without this necessary interplay, the great questions of humanity leave the domain of reason and truth, and are abandoned to the irrational, to myth, or to indifference, with great damage to humanity itself, to world peace and to our ultimate destiny."

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