



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN A CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY
THE VATICAN OBSERVATORY SCHOOL IN ASTROPHYSICS**

Friday, 28 June 1996

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to greet you on the occasion of this fourth conference in the series devoted to dialogue between philosophy, theology and science. As you continue to consider God's action in the physical world, you turn now to the complex issue of the nature of life itself, seeking to arrive at a fuller understanding of the universe and man's place within it. Your dedication to this undertaking is in line with the Church's long tradition of intellectual commitment, as expressed for example by Saint Augustine: "*Intellectum valde ama*" (S. Augustini, *Epistula* 120, 3, 16) truly love the intellect, truly seek after understanding.

2. If scientific endeavour, philosophical inquiry and theological reflection are to bring genuine benefit to the human family, they must always be grounded in truth, the truth which "shines forth in all the works of the Creator and, in a special way, in man, created in the image and likeness of God" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Veritatis Splendor*, Introductio). *This is the truth which "enlightens man's intellect and shapes his freedom"* (*Ibid.*). When related to this truth, advances in science and technology, splendid testimony of the human capacity for understanding and perseverance, spur men and women on to face the most decisive of struggles, those of the heart and of the moral conscience (Cfr. *Ibid.* 1).

3. What you do as scientists, philosophers and theologians can contribute significantly to clarifying the vision of the human person as the focus of creation's extraordinary dynamism and the supreme object of divine intervention. Thus there is an intimate link between the development of scientific perspectives on divine action in the universe and the betterment of mankind. Those who work through the sciences, the arts, philosophy and theology in order to advance our

understanding of what is true and beautiful are walking a path of discovery and service parallel and complementary to that followed by those who engage in the struggle to improve peoples' lives, fostering their genuine good and development. In the final analysis, *the true, the beautiful and the good are essentially one*.

4. From this point of view, I consider that this series of Conferences, seeking to relate and unify the knowledge derived from many sources, offers an important contribution to that exchange between religion and science which I have made every effort to promote since the first days of my Pontificate. Grateful for the work you have already done in this field, I pray that you will continue to pursue with professional expertise this important inter-disciplinary dialogue.

Upon you and your work I invoke the blessings of Almighty God.

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