

1-8-17 **God in his creation:** Epiphany means manifestation – the invisible God made manifest to us – such that even creation cries out. Pope Benedict says that when Christ was born every creature offered a sign of gratitude: the angels offered a hymn; the heavens offered a star; the Magi offered gifts; the shepherds offered praise; and the earth offered a cave. When Jesus was born, all creation shouted with joy. When Jesus dies, the heavens and earth were shaken.

If there is one thing both the atheist and the believer can agree upon is the beauty, the power, and majesty of creation. Where we disagree is in the Judeo-Christian belief that creation manifests the light and love of God to us.

Today we have the legacy of Carl Sagan, Richard Dawkins, and Stephen Hawking – all brilliant people in their own right. Sagan, a famous astronomer and cosmologist, said that belief in God and an afterlife amounts to “wishful thinking.” Dawkins, an evolutionary biologist, claims with near certainty that God does not exist and faith is “a fixed false belief.” Stephen Hawking, a theoretical physicist and cosmologist, calls heaven a myth created for “people afraid of the dark.”

What a shame for otherwise brilliant people to naively believe that all reality must be weighed, measured, and quantified for it to exist. There is a long list of Catholic scientists who in their quest for learning maintained God at the origin of all existence. Roger Bacon, 13<sup>th</sup> century mathematician, is considered the father of the scientific method. Copernicus, 16<sup>th</sup> century mathematician, known for his heliocentric theory also developed the quantity theory of money which is the principle of modern economics. Nicolas Steno, of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is the father of modern anatomy and geology. Gregor Mendel, of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is the father of genetics. Georges Lemaitre, 20<sup>th</sup> century physicist, was the first to propose the “big bang” theory. All of these men were Catholic clerics – Steno was a bishop - whose love for learning incorporated the light and love of God manifested in his creation.

It is our faith which teaches that God created everything out of nothing and did so out of love for us. No one has ever proven otherwise. Moreover, if we broke everything down to its bare essence, there are two things every person needs: light and love. I know of no atheist who does not appreciate the light from the sun, the moon, and the stars above. I know of no atheist who does not desire to love and want to be loved.

Pope Benedict says that the first sign of charity must be *"sought in creation... the heavens, the earth, the waters, the sun, the moon, and the stars."* He continues, there is *"a Divine message secretly inscribed in Creation... a sign of the loving faithfulness of God Who gives His creatures being and life, water and food, light and time."* *"Light and love,"* the Pontiff says are *"the primordial creative power that moves the universe."*

As the Magi discovered following the Star, God's creation is a first step toward the light and love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ. The Magi were the scientists of their day. In their pursuit of truth they studied not only the material universe but the Hebrew Scriptures as well. There really should be no conflict between modern science and our ancient Faith. For there are really two separate questions at play. In general, science searches for the answer to the question how? Faith searches for the answer to the question why? The Magi asked how the star got there. They discovered why the star was there - and fell down in worship. This teaches us that the object of both faith and science is the truth about the universe in which we live. And truth never contradicts itself.

Both the atheist and the believer can agree that creation is awesome to behold. What the believer understands and the atheist denies is that the light and love of God is made manifest in his creation – but one must always seek the truth with humility in order to ascertain it. I close with the words of Werner Heisenberg, who won the Nobel Prize for creating quantum mechanics: “The first swallow from the cup of the natural sciences makes atheists, but at the bottom of the cup is God.”