



Pope to Vatican Observatory: Church embraces science to find God in Creation

As he meets with the Vatican Observatory Foundation, Pope Leo XIV upholds the Catholic Church's desire to seek God in His Creation through rigorous, honest science.



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Pope Leo XIV held an audience on Monday with the Board of the Vatican Observatory Foundation.

In his address, the Pope recalled that Pope Leo XIII re-founded the Vatican Observatory in 1891, at a time when science was being presented as a rival source of truth to religion.

The 19th-century Pope said he was re-founding the institution so that, “everyone might see clearly that the Church and her Pastors are not opposed to true and solid science, whether human or divine, but that they embrace it, encourage it, and promote it with the fullest possible devotion.” However, in our own times, both faith and science face a more insidious threat from those who deny the very existence of objective truth, said Pope Leo XIV.

“Too many in our world refuse to acknowledge what both science and the Church plainly teach,” he said, “that we bear a solemn responsibility for the stewardship of our planet and for the welfare of those who dwell upon it, especially the most vulnerable, whose lives are imperilled by the reckless exploitation of both people and the natural world.”

The Church's desire to study the heavens through astronomy, he added, shows that she embraces "rigorous, honest science" as an essential aspect of her identity.

Human beings enjoy the God-given gift to gaze with wonder at the sun, moon, and stars, said Pope Leo.

As we gaze at the night sky, we enjoy a treasury of beauty open to rich and poor alike, which the Pope noted remains one of the last truly universal sources of joy in our divided world.

"Contemplating the heavens invites us to see our fears and failings in the light of God's immensity," he said.

Pope Leo XIV went on to lament that man-made light has blinded us to the lights God has placed in the heavens, which he said makes the work of the Vatican Observatory more important than ever.

The work of the Vatican Observatory Foundation, he said, helps students study astronomy through summer schools and workshops.

In this way, the Foundation allows the Vatican Observatory's telescopes to remain "places where the glory of God's Creation is encountered with reverence, depth, and joy."

In conclusion, Pope Leo XIV urged the faithful to never lose sight that the Christian religion is based on the Incarnation, since God made Himself known through His Creation and sent His only Son to redeem it.

"The hunger to understand Creation more fully," he said, "is nothing less than a reflection of that restless longing for God, which lies at the heart of every human soul."