



THE IMPLICATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC EVOLUTION TO THE SEMANTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

George V. Coyne, S.J.
Le Moyne College, Syracuse, NY

Friday, 22 August 2014, 8:00am - 3:00pm, ADEM 242

As part of the Cosmology, Evolution, and Belief interdisciplinary seminar cycle of the Convergence of Science, Technology, and the Humanities project: Dr. George Coyne, S.J., a former director of the Vatican Observatory and one of the leading scholars articulating a relationship between natural sciences and theology will give a faculty seminar/workshop at UPRM entitled "The implications of scientific evolution to the semantics of the Christian faith". For more information or to confirm a space, please contact Dana Collins at civis@uprm.edu or extension 5722.

During this seminar Dr. George Coyne, S.J., will address the issue of how what we know from science about the evolution of life in the universe influences our religious attitudes. And to what extent can religious thought contribute to our scientific understanding of the origins and evolution of life in the universe. This twofold question poses the serious risk of transgressing upon the epistemological independence of the various disciplines: theology, philosophy, astrophysics, biology and cosmology, and creating, thereby, more confusion than understanding. Therefore, it is that possible to establish a fruitful dialogue between natural sciences, philosophy and faith? What are the conditions that render possible such interdisciplinary dialogue? From the religious side this dialogue must be limited to the rational foundations for religious belief.

The seminar (workshop) will include the following topics: (i) the Science of the Universe, Cosmology and Life's Origins, (ii) biblical faith and Christianity, (iii) possible models of interactions between natural sciences and religious faith, (iv) the limits of our scientific and religious knowledge, (v) what would both, natural sciences and religious faith, gain from a dialogue?

Brief Biography of George Coyne S.J.

(Taken from the Vatican Observatory Webpage: <http://www.vaticanobservatory.org/about-us/emeritus-staff/75-emeritus-staff/george-v-coyne-sj/334-george-v-coyne-sj>)

Fr. George Coyne SJ was born in 1933, in Baltimore, Maryland, and joined the Jesuits in 1951. He obtained his B.S. in mathematics and his licentiate in philosophy at Fordham University, New York City in 1958; he earned his PhD in astronomy in 1962 from Georgetown University and completed the licentiate in sacred theology at Woodstock College, Maryland in 1965 when he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest. Following his doctoral work he continued his astronomical research at Harvard University and at the Lunar Planetary Laboratory (LPL) of the University of Arizona (UA).

In the 1970s he served as director of the University of Arizona's Catalina Observatory, Associate Director of the Steward Observatory and the Lunar Planetary Laboratory, and as acting director of the astronomy department of University of Arizona. As director of the Vatican Observatory (1978-2006), he founded the Vatican Observatory Summer School, and the Vatican Observatory Research Group. Currently, he is President of the Vatican Observatory Foundation.

Fr. Coyne has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees from St. Peter's College, Jersey City; Loyola University Chicago; University of Padua, Italy; Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland; Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Boston College; Le Moyne College, Syracuse, New York; the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts; Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California. Also among his honors has been the naming of asteroid 14429 Coyne after him.

Dr. Coyne has been active in promoting the dialogue between science and religion and pioneered the series of conferences on "Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action." He has also been active in the continuing debate about the religious implications of scientific evolution. Fr. Coyne is a member of the International Astronomical Union, the American Astronomical Society, the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, the American Physical Society, the Optical Society of America and the Pontifical Academy of Science. In January 2012 Fr. Coyne left the Vatican Observatory to take up a chair at Le Moyne College, Syracuse, NY, where he is teaching astronomy and developing a lecture series regarding the science and religion dialogue.

