



# Institute For Theological Encounter With Science and Technology

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## The Hazards of Creationism

In late October, Pope Francis made some remarks supporting the theory of evolution. Although he merely echoed what Pope John Paul II had said about evolution two decades ago, nevertheless a media frenzy ensued. To understand why, it's wise to remember that both print and TV media thrive on controversy, whereas agreement or conciliation aren't exciting.

A variety of creationists (some Catholic, some Protestant) provided the media with the controversy they were seeking. The creationist movement began about a century ago, right after World War I. Creationists read the first chapter of Genesis quite literally, dismissing interpretations that see the Biblical writer as someone trying to convey the essential meaning of God's revelation to a set of very limited human beings. By that dismissal, several thousand years of scholarship were brushed aside.

In our contemporary world there are plenty of strident atheists who delight in bashing religion every chance they get. The biggest name in the field is Richard Dawkins, but their strategy is the same in every case: set up a "straw man" notion of religion, involving a creator that is something like Plato's Demiurge; then give reasons for disbelieving in such; then associate all religions with that straw man. A favorite tactic is to invoke the question thought up Bertrand Russell a century ago: "If your God is so powerful, why did it take him so long to create the world we see around us?"

The creationists take that bait and try to defend such a god of limited power, by trying to shrink the time frame. That is a strategy that is guaranteed to lose the argument. (Indeed, by agreeing to play by the other guy's rules, you're set up to lose any game or argument.) As soon as one accepts the notion that God has to watch time go by the way we humans do, it's all downhill. As I have often written previously, making God subordinate to time is placing a false god (i.e., time) ahead of God. St. Augustine said 1600 years ago that God created space and time together. A lot of people forgot that over the centuries, and when Isaac Newton came along, the notion of time being absolute and immutable took hold.

On the other hand, if God is recognized as the transcendent Creator of time who is merely present to all time, then the struggle between creationists and atheists vanishes. And if God chooses to use Evolution as his mechanism of creating, we're not going to object or second-guess God (the term "Monday Morning Quarterback" comes to mind). To a physicist, it is absolutely astounding to look at the basic equations governing the universe and discern therein a pathway by which God could create a being capable of loving God in return. The atheists see no such pathway, no direction, only meaningless random variation.

How dearly we wish that the creationists would abandon their literalism (and associated Demiurge imagery) and embrace the Christian vision of an omniscient, omnipresent God who knew what He was doing in the first place; and who expressed it to humans in a metaphorical way that allowed our distant ancestors to grasp it. Regrettably, the media's enduring thirst for controversy will probably postpone that day for many years, during which atheists will continue bashing their stereotype of religion.

*Thomas P. Sheahan*  
Director, ITEST

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## Announcements

### Webinar with Father Spitzer, SJ

We had a successful first of three scheduled webinars with Father Robert Spitzer, SJ, on October 28th. We had a mixed audience -- ITEST members, high school teachers of religion and science, college professors from Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Connecticut, and others. Father Spitzer talked about ways for teachers to collaborate in teaching Science and Faith on the high school level with suggestions for helping to stem the tide of increased skepticism among our young people. If you missed the first webinar, you may view it at <http://mp125118.cdn.mediaplatform.com/125118/wc/mp/4000/5592/5599/40716/Lobby/default.htm> Simply fill in the information requested and you will have access to the entire webinar. If you had already registered for the seminar, just click on the "already registered" button, wait for the webcast button to appear, click on that and it will take you to the webcast.

Webinar Two (February 3) will deal with The Big Bang, Transcendence and Intelligence: Teaching the unity of science and theology; Webinar Three (March 11) will deal with Evolution, Christianity and Contemporary Science: Teaching confluence instead of conflict.

We will contact you via e-mail with information on the February 3, and March 11 webinars in time for you to register.

### Economic Justice in the 21st Century – Myth or Reality?

The ITEST Board of Directors has chosen the topic of Economic Justice as our emphasis for the October 2015 conference at the Rigali Center in St Louis, Missouri. Three of our invited speakers have already agreed to participate. Edward J. O'Boyle, economist and Senior Research Associate at the Mayo Research Institute will provide a commentary on the economic aspects of Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*. We are printing Part II of that commentary in this issue of the Bulletin. Dr. Hermann Friboes, Adjunct Professor at Holy Apostles College & Seminary also teaches at the University of Louisville. His paper, *From St. Paul to Pope Francis: 2000 years of Catholic Social Justice*, will provide

"..an overarching view of the development of the social justice focus of the Catholic Church over the centuries." Dr. Martin Rafanan, Community Organizer, Fast Food Worker Movement and Co-Chair of the Workers Rights Board of Missouri Jobs with Justice, will connect economic issues with social justice by discussing the national issues of the relationship of the activities of low wage/fast food workers and local economies.

We will have more detailed information about scheduling, registration costs and so on in future ITEST bulletins.

### Award for ITEST Board Member

Congratulations to Sister Carla Mae Streeter, OP, ThD, who received the Congregation Temple Israel's Malachi Award for Interfaith Relations and Understanding. Carla Mae was unanimously selected by an independent panel of leaders and representatives from a broad spectrum of faith communities. The award, which includes a check for \$5000, recognizes the importance of interfaith cooperation in the greater St. Louis area. Carla Mae Streeter, OP is a Dominican of the Congregation of Catherine of Siena in Racine, Wisconsin. She is presently a professor (emerita) of Systematic theology and Spirituality at Aquinas Institute of Theology, a graduate school of Theology and Ministry sponsored by the Dominicans of the Central Province adjoined to St. Louis University in St. Louis.

Her experience includes eleven years of lay leadership training on the parish level, spiritual direction, and social advocacy. Carla Mae has been active as a facilitator for several religious congregations, and has served her own community in the renewal of its own constitution and in its theological renewal. She lives in St. Louis where she is active in Interfaith Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis and other ecumenical and interfaith efforts. Carla Mae serves on the boards of ITEST, the Institute for the Theological Encounter with Science and Technology, the Living Insights Center, a gathering place for the religions of the world, the Workers Right Board of Jobs with Justice, and the Peace Economy Project, an advocacy group that urges the economic shift from excessive military spending to human and social needs.



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## A Commentary On Evangelii Gaudium:

### Part II of II Parts

By Edward J. O'Boyle, Ph.D.

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For many years Jesuit priests have been called on to “share in the task of building a Christian social order ... [by mastering] one or other of the social sciences -- *lest they do more harm than good.*” [Becker 1991, p. 50; emphasis added]. Several Jesuits, including the Germans Heinrich Pesch and Oswald von Nell-Breuning, along with the Americans Thomas Divine, Bernard Dempsey, and Joseph Becker, answered that call by preparing themselves academically in economics and economic affairs. Pope Francis, also a Jesuit, has answered the same call in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* where he discusses several important economic issues. A pity he did not heed his predecessors' advice.

Part I of our commentary, which was published in the preceding issue of the Bulletin, examined *Evangelii Gaudium* on economic gain vs. goodness, inequality, profits, freedom, and the market. Part II addresses private property and subsidiarity; in the last section we present our final remarks.

### PRIVATE PROPERTY

In §189 Pope Francis asserts that the “private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common good ...” Sadly, he does not call attention to the comprehensive statements of his predecessor in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.

Based upon and justified by the Church's principle that “God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples” [*Gaudium et Spes*, §69], John Paul II in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (hereafter *SRS*) argues that private property is not exclusively private in nature, that it has a social function. Employing language that applies to residential property sales, John Paul asserts in *SRS* that “private property ... is under a ‘social mortgage’.” [John Paul 1987a, §42].

John Paul's assertion that private property is under a social mortgage raises two questions. First, why is the principle of private property subordinated to the principle of the universal destination of the goods of the world? Second, what kinds and amounts of social mortgage payments or

other transfers are sufficient to satisfy the demands of the social function of private property?

To address these questions, it is necessary to differentiate private ownership of property from how that property is used as John Paul suggests in *SRS*.

... the *option* or *love of preference* for the poor ... is an option, or a *special form* of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ, but it applies equally to our social *responsibilities* and hence to our manner of living, and to the logical decisions to be made concerning the ownership and use of goods. [John Paul 1987a, §42; emphasis in original].

The principle of the universal destination of the goods of the world addresses the issue of the *use* of the goods of the world. The principle of private property deals with ownership.

Regarding the first question, the principle of private property is not an absolute principle because, as John Paul argues, God created the universe for the benefit of all humankind. The goods produced through the ownership of private property are the means by which human material need is met and for that reason alone private property is subordinate to the universal destination of the goods of the world.

Further, humans who do not own private property are thereby limited in their access to the goods produced by that property and if all human beings truly are created equal how can they claim equality if they are denied access to all that they need to survive as humans? In other words, private property ownership is a lower-order principle and therefore subordinate to the use of that property.

As to the second question about the kinds and amounts of social mortgage payments or other transfers that satisfy the demands of the social function of private property, there

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are two basic forms: private and public. Two examples of private forms suffice for our purposes. One common private arrangement involves the business enterprise that employs persons who have no private property of their own. The employees share in the goods produced in that enterprise through the wages paid by the owner of that property. A second private form is the voluntary transfer of funds generated from production at private enterprises to organizations that provide services for those in need either by those enterprises acting individually or collectively through such community-based appeals as United Way.

Two examples of public arrangements that qualify as social mortgage payments include taxation and regulation. Taxation transfers some of the proceeds from the ownership of private property to public use to provide for such public services as police and fire protection and education. Regulation restricts the ways in which a private property owner may use his/her holdings by setting limits, for example, on hazardous emissions into the environment and through zoning ordinances that set limits on the specific activities that are acceptable in a given location.

In the end social mortgage is grounded in social justice as set down by Pius XI in his 1937 encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*.

Now it is of the very essence of social justice to demand *from* each individual all that is necessary for the common good. [Pius XI, § 51. Latin text translated into English; emphasis added].

Because what is owed to another depends very much on how one defines and measures that obligation, social mortgage as with all contingent being is constituted of two norms, one positive, the other negative. The positive norm functions in the actuating mode and explains how much of the goods produced by owners are to be shared with others. The negative norm operates in the limiting mode and explains why no more than that must be shared.

The principal *positive* norm is the material need that humans are not able to meet acting alone. That unmet need may be defined in absolute or relative terms. An absolute income standard addresses the following question: How much income does an individual/family need to purchase the goods and services required to maintain a minimal standard of living? A relative income standard addresses

this question: How much income does this individual/family have relative to the income of others?

Regarding the positive norm as to how much must be shared with others under social mortgage, at minimum it must be sufficient to address basic human needs. This norm must be constructed to incorporate both an absolute standard of need and a relative standard because human beings are at once individual and social beings, with the absolute standard reflecting human individuality and the relative standard human sociality.

The chief *negative* norm is the ability of private property holders to meet that need. Following the principle of subsidiarity, unmet need is to be addressed preferentially through private action because private persons and groups in general are closer to the parties requesting assistance and therefore better able to detect false claims of unmet need and to rank authentic unmet need by its scope and intensity.

The negative norm that explains why no more than the goods that meet basic human material need are to be shared by property owners under social mortgage is problematical. In a poor country, the overall level of production from private property may be so small as to make earning a living difficult even for property holders. What is shared is widespread impoverishment. In a wealthy country, however, the level of production from private property may be so substantial as to make possible a level of assistance well beyond basic human material need.

The question then is how much above that basic-needs threshold is owed under social mortgage? The answer lies in the conscience of property holders because if as a result of government intervention more than the goods required to meet basic need is demanded of the holders of that property, those holders may respond by reducing production making it more difficult to reach that threshold of support. Government action in other words may be self-defeating.

Better to leave that decision to one's own conscience provided it is properly informed to avoid the crass materialism to which John Paul calls attention in his warning that "the more one possesses the more one wants." [John Paul 1987a, §28]. By having and wanting more, the holder of private property puts his/her development as a

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person at risk of becoming a genuine *homo economicus*, a rational, utility-maximizing machine driven by an acquisitive desire.

The properly informed conscience could lead to strictly private action either individually or collectively or to public action. Here again preference is given to private action as against public action on grounds that being located closer to the parties claiming assistance, private action likely is better informed as to true extent of human material need.

### PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

In §240 of *Evangelii Gaudium* Francis says that “It is the responsibility of the State to safeguard and promote the common good of society,” and cites §168 of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* where the lead sentence reads as follows: “The responsibility for attaining the common good, *besides falling to individual persons*, belongs also to the State, since the common good is the reason that the political authority exists.” Sadly, as noted earlier, Francis fails to affirm John Paul’s insight regarding the two principles that guide state action in economic affairs: subsidiarity to assure economic freedom and solidarity to defend the weak, limit the autonomy of the parties who determine conditions in the workplace, and provide basic support for jobless workers (see John Paul 1991, §15).

Whatever principles, convictions, beliefs, or sentiments might have prompted *Evangelii Gaudium* and however much we may admire and put them into practice, there is no excuse for using material from a Church document selectively to drive home a point that seems to set the principle of subsidiarity on its head. Just as he found nothing useful in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* on the question of private property, nowhere in *Evangelii Gaudium* does Francis cite the origins of subsidiarity in *Quadragesimo Anno*.

In §206 Francis sees economic affairs in a global context: “Each meaningful economic decision made in one part of the world has repercussion everywhere else.” Then he seems to toss aside the principle of subsidiarity: “... it is becoming increasingly difficult to find local solutions for enormous global problems which overwhelm local politics with difficulties to resolve.” Additionally, by calling for “a more efficient way of interacting” he

implies that something more than the market is needed to “achieve a healthy world economy.”

By affirming a preference for private enterprise compared to public enterprise, the principle of subsidiarity effectively decentralizes ownership and control of economic activities that in turn (1) lead to a greater diversity of goods and services produced because entrepreneurs have a freer hand; (2) a smaller risk that large-scale mistakes will be made because in general private enterprises have a smaller reach than public enterprises; and (3) private enterprises will be more responsive to their customers because they are driven by economic gain.

The principle of subsidiarity in effect encourages the establishment of private organizations midway between the state and the person. There are two kinds of intermediary bodies in the economic order of special interest: supra-firm alliances and inter-firm partnerships. These bodies fulfill the general functions of the “vocational groups” that Pius XI refers to in *Quadragesimo Anno*.

An inter-firm partnership is cooperation between two or more firms in which there are no new formal organizational arrangements. A supra-firm alliance is cooperation between two or more firms by means of a distinct, formal organization which has a staff and its own decision-making role. Of the two, the supra-firm alliance is the more complex organizationally and more subject to attack as collusive.

An inter-firm partnership involves a nonformalized understanding between, for example, a producer and supplier, an employer and employment agency, an entrepreneur and a banker in which their day-to-day relationship is governed by more than the profit-maximization principle. Such an understanding may arise initially from the firms’ sharing common space such as a parking lot or garage, a hallway or elevator, a loading dock or delivery agent. An understanding may arise even among competing firms that form a critical mass in one location in order to better serve each one’s best interests without exploiting the others involved. Examples abound in the United States both today and years ago: Chicago (railroads), Detroit (autos), Silicon Valley (computing), Pittsburgh (steel), Milwaukee (beer), St. Louis (shoes), New York (finances), Boston (medical education). Such partnerships known locally as “antique alley,” “farmers

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market,” “restaurant row,” or “flea market” develop even in small cities.

To be an authentically separate level of decision-making, supra-firm alliance must be formalized and largely independent of the larger and more powerful public authority, that is outside the direct control of the state. The supra-firm alliance must be voluntary (so as not to usurp control from a member of the group that is functioning satisfactorily) and representative of the various private-individual organizations that are allied (so as to know more precisely its own domain). The supra-firm alliance should be supportive but nonintrusive in the sense that if a member encounters organization-specific dysfunction in the workplace and asks for assistance, the group should be ready and willing to provide whatever help it can in order to deal with the dysfunction in a satisfactory fashion.

At the supra-firm level, control of the workplace proceeds not through owning property but through sharing problems. Thus, the workplace at the supra-firm level may be defined as any work site(s) where dysfunction is occurring that cannot be managed satisfactorily at the intra-firm level and where the immediately affected persons voluntarily request assistance from a private group of persons all of whom are familiar with the work site(s), understand the dysfunction occurring there, and have some direct interest in the good or service produced there.

Supra-firm cooperation falls into two general classes: industry-specific and area-specific. As to the industry-specific type, the cooperating firms likely are competitors in the product market. With respect to the area-specific variety, the allies may compete in the product market and probably compete in the resource market, particularly the labor market. Two examples reflect the diversity of such alliances, and drive home the lesson in subsidiarity that when private enterprise acting alone cannot manage certain problems it is not necessary to turn immediately to government for assistance.

Advanced Book Exchange (AbeBooks) is the world’s largest online marketplace for used, rare, and out-of-print books. The exchange brings together thousands of independent booksellers worldwide. Each seller decides the books that are listed, their general condition, price, and other information. Buyers can browse the books through a convenient search function. The on-line exchange allows

buyers to comparison shop and sellers to reach a much wider market.

PRIDE of St. Louis, which was established in 1972, is a voluntary labor-management organization in the construction industry that meets monthly to identify and deal with stress points that interfere with the completion of building projects on time and within budget. PRIDE members include representatives from the various building trades, construction firms, architectural and engineering firms, and material suppliers. It is an example of private group decision-making that seeks to find ways to deal with problems in the construction industry that cannot be addressed by private individual decision-making. PRIDE eliminates the need for public group intervention.

AbeBooks is an industry-specific alliance. PRIDE is both area-specific and industry-specific.

The alliances and partnerships we have in mind are expressions of the organizing and energizing force of cooperation. What distinguishes these alliances and partnerships from collusive arrangements is that they yield positive-sum outcomes. Rather than being condemned, these types of alliances and partnerships should be affirmed as means that ultimately help meet human material need and satisfy human wants.

At a time when big government is getting bigger, creating even greater distance between decision-makers and the persons affected by their decisions, intermediary organizations such as AbeBooks and PRIDE offer promise for slowing the growth of big government thereby helping preserve the free exercise of economic initiative. The need for maintaining private control of economic decision-making is necessary even when big government is good government because as Jesuit Joseph Becker audaciously asserts in his defense of the principle of subsidiarity “good government is not a substitute for self-government when the governed are persons.” [Becker 1959, p. 9].

## FINAL REMARKS

*Evangelii Gaudium* presents two fundamental problems for the careful reader: content and style. With regard to content, our comments have been restricted to the sections relating to subjects in economics: economic gain vs. goodness, inequality, profits, freedom, the market, private property, and subsidiarity. In the most general terms,

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problems with every one of these topics originate with an inadequate understanding of basic economics that Jesuit economists Divine and Dempsey warned about years ago.

This problem is worsened by a failure to cite empirical evidence for statements that beg for documentation. Some of this problem could have been avoided had Francis leaned on the scholarly work of John Paul notably in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Centesimus Annus* and Vatican adviser Barbara Ward [1962] whose insights in the 1960s on the four factors regarding the nature and causes of global poverty and hunger are relevant even today. The content of *Evangelii Gaudium* bearing on economic affairs could have been enriched further by including the research of American Catholic social economists William Waters, Peter Danner, Stephen Worland, Albino Barrera, Charles Wilber, Anthony Scaperlanda among others.<sup>1</sup> As with the German Jesuit Heinrich Pesch, all of these Americans understood that “religion cannot produce grain . . . .”

As to style, Francis engages in hyperbole rather than careful scholarly language to drive home his message. Consider the following direct quotations, emphasis added.

Today *everything* comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful *feed upon* the powerless. §53.

The culture of prosperity *deadens* us; we are *thrilled* if the market offers us something new to purchase. §54.

This imbalance (income inequality) is the result of ideologies which defend the *absolute* autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation. §56.

The *thirst* for power and possessions knows *no limits*. In this system, which tends to devour *everything* which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule. §56.

... *unbridled* consumerism which feeds the market ... §70.

We can no longer trust in the unseen forces and the invisible hand of the market. §204.

... the economy can no longer turn to remedies that are a new *poison*, such as attempting to increase profits by reducing the work force and thereby adding to the ranks of the excluded. §204.

The language Francis uses may win favor with progressives on the far left but hardly comports with his central theme of the joy of the Gospel. Sadly, on economic issues he has done more harm than good.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Citations to their publications are available from the author on request.

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*“This crazy movement called Christianity says that the church’s Lord has the final word, another whole way of re-evaluating people. It is not in terms of the kind of criteria by which the economic and legal systems work. It is simply the gift called love. But that is part of the new age. That’s the end of the world.”*

– Dr. Bob Bertram.  
“Science, Technology and Economic Systems”  
ITEST meeting March 1985.

## God, Professors, and Evolutionary Biology Classes

By Stacy Trasancos

Professor David P. Barash recently wrote an opinion column in the New York Times titled “God, Darwin and My College Biology Class.” Professor Barash is in the psychology department at the University of Washington. He teaches courses on sociobiology. He explained in his essay why he gives undergraduate students “The Talk.” No, it’s not about sex. The talk is about faith and science. He says:

“And that’s where The Talk comes in. It’s irresponsible to teach biology without evolution, and yet many students worry about reconciling their beliefs with evolutionary science. Just as many Americans don’t grasp the fact that evolution is not merely a “theory,” but the underpinning of all biological science, a substantial minority of my students are troubled to discover that their beliefs conflict with the course material.

“Until recently, I had pretty much ignored such discomfort, assuming that it was their problem, not mine. Teaching biology without evolution would be like teaching chemistry without molecules, or physics without mass and energy. But instead of students’ growing more comfortable with the tension between evolution and religion over time, the opposite seems to have happened. Thus, The Talk.”

While professor Barash’s essay may upset some people, it does not ruffle me much. I have no problem with the above statement. To the extent that the “tension between evolution and religion” is interfering with his biology classes, yes, the teacher needs to address that tension and avoid distractions. Long tangents about religion can distract from teaching the science. Besides, there is a vast array of opinions about how to interpret the two in light of each other.

Barash noted with chagrin that Stephen J. Gould’s NOMA (non-overlapping magisteria) is the “received wisdom in the scientific establishment.” (For those who don’t know, NOMA basically holds that science and religion can co-exist in their own separate spheres and minimally inform each other in the search for truth.) Barash believes that the two cannot stay separate, and he feels that “accommodat-

ing” religion imposes some “challenging mental gymnastic routines.”

I agree that the two cannot stay separate, but I take exception to his solution. In “The Talk” he tells students that as evolutionary science has progressed, the “space” for faith has narrowed. He tells them that “no literally supernatural trait has ever been found in *Homo sapiens*,” and that we are all just animals. He tells them that “living things, including human beings, are produced by a natural, totally amoral process, with no indication of a benevolent, controlling creator.” He concludes by telling them that it is not the duty of science (or science professors) to do the

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### Stacy Trasancos, PhD

Stacy Trasancos is a wife, mother of seven, and joyful convert to Catholicism. She has a PhD in Chemistry from Penn State University and a M.A. in Dogmatic Theology from Holy Apostles College and Seminary. She worked as research chemist for DuPont before becoming a full-time homemaker in 2003, and has advanced knowledge in the fields of nano-meter scale materials, polymers, elastomeric fibers . . . cooking, dish-washing, and stain removal.

She designed and served as Editor-in-Chief (2011-2014) of Ignitum Today, a website for young adult Catholics, and is currently Editor-in-Chief of Catholic Stand. She is a regular contributor at Strange Notions and The Integrated Catholic Life™, and has published in refereed science journals and Catholic magazines. She teaches chemistry classes for Kolbe Academy, and serves as Assistant to the V.P. of Administration, Alumni Association President, and Adjunct Professor at Holy Apostles. She recently joined the ITEST Board of Directors.

She is the author of *Science Was Born of Christianity: The Teaching of Fr. Stanley L. Jaki*. Most of her time is devoted to raising her youngest five children, and worrying about her two oldest, with her husband in a 100-year old restored mountain lodge in the Adirondack mountains.

mental gymnastics to reconcile faith and science. Okay, an atheist professor thinks science doesn't provide evidence of God. And dogs bark.

But here's the thing. Rather than bringing clarity to the classroom, he brings more confusion by imposing his own beliefs about religion. It is enough to say, "This is a science class, please do not distract the class with questions about religion." But what does he do? He imposes his beliefs on the students by making the very statements about faith that he asks the students to avoid. He is the one bringing religion into his science class.

But what about those tensions? Where should they be discussed? They need to be discussed outside of science class and with the guidance of someone competent to instruct in the faith. A lot of believers add to the confusion too, particularly those who think everyone must agree with their scientific interpretations to have real faith. In my opinion, people on all sides of the evolution and religion debate get too worked up and too impatient trying to claim all the answers. By our very human nature, we do not know everything and never will. We advance in knowledge. We are discursive creatures. It's perfectly acceptable, even laudable, to say, "I don't know." By defining what you do not know, you more effectively guide your discovery. The apparent conflicts or tensions between science and faith are not the result of God's incomplete knowledge or poor planning; they are the result of our partial understanding. We explore into the mysteries to seek more understanding. Scientists know this intimately, though some of them will not admit it.

We don't know exactly how humans or anything else evolved, just that it all did. We don't know exactly how God created the first man and woman, just that He did. We don't know exactly how God might have guided the evolutionary process, instituted physical laws, or granted free will and intellect to the human being. We just know that He did, He does, and He will. Our theories are explanatory; we try to find explanations by forming hypotheses and testing them. The work of science is to discover how the material world works. Regarding faith, we have the divinely revealed deposit of truth, i.e. Scripture and Tradition upon which dogma is founded. The work of theology is to understand those truths and to interpret and communicate them. Science can indeed be guided by faith, and faith can indeed be enriched by science—but only if you

have faith. Does it require challenging intellectual effort? Yes. So?

A believer needs only to state that he or she sees science as the study of the Handiwork of God. Note, that is not an argument but a statement. Nothing about evolutionary theory can ever be a threat to faith because believers interpret scientific discovery in a fuller scope of reality. Where faith is certain, science—never forget this—is provisional. If you are so inclined, study evolutionary theory in confidence. It is fascinating and underpins biological sciences just as Barash says it does. And if your science teacher is not religious? You probably shouldn't consider him an authority on faith.

Never forget this either. The non-religious worldview is ultimately incoherent because science only gets you so far. Science points to greater realities beyond it. Even the scientific method demands a Christian worldview. To do science, we all have to view the world as ordered, symmetrical, intelligible, and predictable, and we have to fundamentally believe that we are rational beings who can gain knowledge about our world.

If people do not understand what I have just said, then yes, evolutionary theory may seem to threaten the "space" for faith. I really don't know how to address this problem except to say that it demonstrates precisely why religious education needs to precede science education in priority, consistent with the words of Christ, "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" The student who is confident in his or her faith should be free to study science and the professor free to teach it without invoking his own mental gymnastics routines to try to avoid mental gymnastics routines. This human endeavor we call science ought to unite us, plain and simple.

*an "...evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!"*

– Pope Francis  
"Evangelii Gaudium"  
11/26/13

(Written as a theological response to the challenges facing today's Catholics, especially young adults, the authors submit this white paper for discussion and implementation)(Eds.)

## The Challenge of Today's Catholic Context for Faith/Science Education

### Today's U.S. Catholic Culture

We are no longer a Catholic community of the ghetto, safely ensconced in Catholic neighborhoods centered around a national Catholic Church. We find Catholic families dispersed in suburban neighborhoods, rural communities, and single Catholics occupying inner city lofts.

We can no longer take for granted that Catholic young people are the religion of their parents simply because that is what is expected. They are Catholic if they have chosen to be so. They will choose to be so if they identify with a Catholic community that lives out what they hear proclaimed in the midst of liturgical celebration. If they are not in touch with such a community they may have joined the ranks of the "nones," those who do not identify with any organized religion.

There is no longer the *generic* Catholic. Instead we have several forms of Catholicity. One is the *sectarian* Catholic. This form of Catholicity wants to hear only the tried and true language of their childhood, the language of the Baltimore Catechism and the language that stresses the difference of the Catholic community from the dangerous world always seeking ways to criticize the church. This form of Catholicity stresses defense and the apologetic approach to the doctrinal certainties that bring some security in a materialistic secular culture.

The *convenient* Catholic, sometimes called the cafeteria Catholic, picks and chooses a faith life that fits now and then into a busy life. Their connection to a parish is tentative, "Now you see me, now you don't." Their perspective is highly individual. They accept those teachings that are convenient, and they reject those that are not, with little or no real inquiry. They know they are Catholic, but do not take it too seriously. They may even be ready to explore other traditions as these catch their interest or curiosity.

Finally, there are the *committed* Catholics, in varying degrees. These young people or not so young people have developed a *we consciousness* beyond the *me consciousness* of the convenient Catholic. They take their faith very

seriously, and are in various stages of authentic spiritual development. They are very aware that real growth comes from a community of individuals who are also intent on genuine discipleship. The above distinctions, and others of varying degrees in between, are the Catholic face in present day U.S Catholic culture.

### Catholic Identity

Taking for granted that we aim for a committed and intentional Catholicity, how will we know it when we see it? Three characteristics highlight the uniqueness. First, the person's perspective is *incarnational*. They are centered on the fact that the Divine Mystery has imprinted itself on the human genome, and has come to meet us face to face. This revelation is the core of their spirituality, implying an intimate relationship with Christ Jesus. Second, as a result of this union of the Divine with the material world, they have a *sacramental* worldview. They see all of created reality, the biological, physical, sexual, psychological, and social, as windows to the Holy. They are not separatists or dualists. They evidence this sacramental worldview in the formal and explicit celebration of this sacramentality in a ritual way, in contrast to their fellow Christians who may avoid giving material signs such importance. Finally, the committed Catholic who is maturing will be a *communal* person. He or she will value the presence and influence of communal leadership in its clerical and lay forms, treasure the richness of the sacramental system and liturgy and manifest this importance by their presence, and be deeply conscious that they *are* the church as the mysterious historical extension of the risen body of their Head, the risen Christ, with whom they have a deep personal relationship. This relationship and connection will be visible through the direct social advocacy they pursue in contemporary political, social, scientific and economic issues and causes. They live their faith culturally.

### The Importance of Psychology, Philosophy, and Theology

Thus the need for being constantly updated in the affairs

*Continues on page 11*

of the *world*. Psychology gives us insight into the development of the human person. An authentic human psychology will present this knowledge in the context of the permeating presence of the Holy, not as though the Holy did not exist. Philosophy needs to sharpen the intelligence of the committed Catholic, not only to awaken an awareness of various systems of thought, but to present a knowledge of our own intelligence as our consciousness weighs the value of these systems in the pursuit of the knowledge that points to ultimate truth. Theology stretches the horizon of understanding beyond what is empirically measurable. It uses reason to explore the data that faith presents to us. It is the reflection on and articulation of Divine Mystery as it moves in human history.

### Educational Challenges

How are we to challenge our parents and students to become this kind of Catholic? We will need to meet them where they are. They use technology, and so we will use every means to reach them there: moodle, apps, facebook, texting, etc. We will speak in *relevant* language, not religious jargon. We will be aware that the first contact with genuine community may be social activity. We will not back off, shocked, at those who question the very existence of God, but *arm ourselves with information* that anticipates these very questions. Unless we are aware of these educational challenges, and become very intentional about creating a distinctive and collaborative Catholic identity, we may settle for students who really do not know who they are in a country, our own United States, that is caught in the cultural dilemma of wondering about its real place in the global community. We need to provide our students with authentic Catholic witness, an identity they are proud to profess.

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### New Book from ITEST Member, Agustin Udias, SJ

We are pleased to announce the recent publication of *Jesuit Contribution to Science: A History* by long-time ITEST member, Jesuit Father Agustin, Udias. Published by Dordrecht: Springer, 2014. This book presents a comprehensive history of the many contributions the Jesuits made to science from their founding to the present. It also links the Jesuit dedication to science with their specific spirituality which tries to find God in all things. The book begins with Christopher Clavius, professor of mathematics in the Roman College between 1567 and 1595, the initiator of this tradition. It covers Jesuits scientific contributions in mathematics, astronomy, physics, natural history and cartography up until the suppression of the order by the Pope in 1773. A special attention is given to the works of Athanasius Kircher and Roger Boscovich. Next, the book details the scientific work the Jesuits pursued after their restoration in 1814. It examines the establishment of a network of observatories throughout the world and details contributions made to the study of tropical hurricanes, earthquakes and terrestrial magnetism. It presents such important figures as Angelo Secchi, Stephen J. Perry, James B. Macelwane and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. From their founding to the present, Jesuits with their scientific work have trodden an uncommon path to the frontiers where the Christian message is not yet known. Jesuits' work in science is also an interesting chapter in the general problem of the relation between science and religion. Its engaging story will appeal to those with an interest in the history of science, the history of the relations between science and religion and the history of Jesuits.

*Father Udias earned his PhD in Geophysics at St Louis University in 1964. During his long career of successful teaching in Spain, he also received a number of awards and honors: member of Academia Europaea, fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and member of the American Geophysical Union, among others. ITEST published a notice of Udias's 2010 book, *Ciencia y Religion: Dos visiones del Mundo*, in the Fall issue of the *Bulletin*, Volume 41, #4.*

## Where is the Poetry in our praise of God?

Fr. Robert Brungs, SJ

*(From Reflections, 1992)*

I have not thought very much before about the quality of our praise of God. Recently, however, several things have come together which have made me wonder why, with all the sophistication we have acquired (or think we've acquired), is our praise in word and song no better than the Psalmist's. The Psalms, written as long as three millennia ago, surpass our poetic sense of the marvels we have received from God's hand. I have been wondering about that now for some weeks.

One possible reason is that we find no awe anymore in the heavens. Perhaps we think that, because we can predict some heavenly phenomena with great precision — things like the appearance of comets and eclipses — there is no mystery left in the heavens. Perhaps we are imbued with the notion that, if we can hang a name on something, it is somehow under our control. Yet to give the name pulsar, or quasar, or black hole or brown dwarf or whatever, to something out there does not give us any control at all. The Psalmist could look to the heavens and see the handiwork of God. What do we see there?

Today, we can see far beyond the ability of the Psalmist. With the invention of the telescope in all its forms we have expanded our sensorium beyond anything that could have been imagined even four hundred years ago. But even with our expanded sight and our discovery of galaxies, neutron stars binary stars and things we can't name or understand we have not poured out such praise of their Maker as did the Psalmist. Our physical vision has expanded by many orders of magnitude, but our praise has not. This is only one area where science has provided us with an awareness of both the delicacy and awesomeness of physical systems.

As the Psalmist could look out and see the macro-world, we can now, with our array of microscopes, behold a micro-world just as beautiful as the heavens. It is as complex a world with a delicacy of structure that we do not observe in the heavens. Yet, even with this much greater ability to see the handiwork of God that was hidden to the Psalmist, we have not surpassed the ancients in our praise of the Creator.

We now know, for instance, that all living systems are

unified at the level of the amino acids. The same components of DNA build mosquitoes and academic deans or neuroscientists. But our praise of the Creator has not grown either in its quantity or quality. We are well aware now — another gift of the life scientists — that women as well as men contribute to the genetic makeup of their children. Yet, even after some hundreds of years, not all of our theology has sufficiently incorporated that rather basic notion.

In a certain sense, we could call the historical influence that science has had on our self-understanding and on our understanding of the immense cosmos about us a kind of demythologizing, a becoming aware of both our limits and our interconnectedness with the rest of creation. We have learned from Copernicus, Galileo and Newton that the heavens and the earth follow the same physical laws, that there is a physical unity throughout the universe. We have learned from Darwin that there is a unity of all living systems at the level of the species. The work with recombinant DNA has deepened our understanding of the unity of all living systems at the level of the amino acids, the basic building blocks of those systems according to our present understanding.

Can it be, on the other hand, that Christianity itself has downplayed the poetic quality of our praise. Is it more difficult to be in awe of God who is immanent in the cosmos and in us in Our Lord Jesus? Is it easier to praise a purely transcendent God who thunders on us exclusively from on high, who continually erupts in a completely unpredictable way into our history? The theory has a certain plausibility about it, doesn't it. God is so much easier to domesticate to our desires and horizons now that he has pitched his tent among us, isn't he? I believe that we all do this and maybe none more than the highly educated and sophisticated.

If we read St. Paul and St. John carefully we realize that they teach us that creation is in Christ. The Hymn Paul quotes in Colossians is clear evidence of creation in Christ. The Council of Chalcedon defined that Christ the Son of God is one and the same as Christ the son of Mary.

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Creation in Christ is creation in the incarnate God. The wonder should be no less. Part of the problem may well be the notion that long ago came into theological currency that there was a “pure” nature that subsequently fell and needed redemption. In such a theological understanding, creation is of less interest than redemption and we fall into the trap of some kind of “spiritual” Christianity that see little value in the creation, in the material reality all about us. This, I would expect, would dampen our praise for God’s handiwork as evident in all the beauty that surrounds us, from the unimaginably big to the imperceptibly small.

While the scientific understanding of the past few centuries has diminished our stature as being at the physical center of the universe and being a species totally set apart from the other species, still it has enhanced our dignity as the world to which Christ came and as the species into which he became incarnate. We know from revelation that our world is the center of the created universe in the order of salvation and the order of the final Kingdom of God. We know also that the human species is the one which God chose to enter physically. We know that in Christ we can master our drives and finally become integral and integrated persons — Freud notwithstanding. Science has displaced our ideas that we are at the physical center of things; revelation has disclosed that in the new creation in Christ we are at the center of God’s will for creation. Unfortunately, little of this information has penetrated into the consciousness or work of the ecclesial/theological community.

This is not to place excessive blame on the magisterium or the theologians. A share of the culpability can be laid upon the occupant of many a chair of humanities studies. This, of course, does not disqualify them from membership in the human race. If it did the planet would practically be uninhabited. It does, however, harm the Church and limit the praise due to God. It stifles both the poetic and theological imagination of the Church. In short, it inhibits any real growth in our appreciation of the creation God has given us. Scientists are also to blame for the lack of praise we give. So, there’s plenty of blame to go around.

It is quite possible the whole course of the intellectual history of the world plays a part in our lack of wonder and our voiceless praise. I may be off base in what follows: it’s really little more than a reflection out loud. It does seem to

me, however, that as we grow more deeply in our learning we tend toward the more general and the more abstract. The more sophisticated we become, the more abstruse we seem. It is possible that that’s a normal course for humans in a fallen world (I don’t pretend to know whether such a way of thinking is a relic of original sin). But I think the observation is accurate: we tend to get more abstract in our thinking as we learn more.

Love, however, seems quite the opposite. The more deeply we love something, the more our attention is focused on specifics. We are more concerned with the shape of the nose, for example, the color of the hair than with some generalized form. Paul assures us that it’s love that makes the building grow. We say in our culture that love makes the world go around.

From all we know from revelation God is a God of specificities, not generalities. He doesn’t need universal concepts to understand himself, us or all the myriad creatures of the universe. I know that it’s always dangerous to say what God can and can’t do. But as far as we can tell, God doesn’t work or know or love in general.

We have to reclaim our religious understanding from generality and from abstraction. Our Creator is specific. Our Savior is specific. Our King is specific. The Church is historical, therefore, specific. We are specific. More, each of us is unique, without real human copies. This must be the wellspring of our love. And it is out of this love that our praise will mount to the heavens. Praise cannot be the property of only the untutored and unlettered.

Why doesn’t the Church attract the poet, the musician, the painter as it once did? This, I realize, is a tangled question since it deals with human motivation which is as tangled as anything in the universe. But if we love, we praise. I believe that it’s as simple as that. And if we can bring to our love the vast repertory of our knowledge (accompanied by a realization of the greatness of our ignorance) we can praise God for those extraordinary and mysterious gifts he has scattered for us throughout the universe. Cannot we come to love and praise as greatly as the Psalmist did three thousand years ago?

## Faith Within Science

By Thomas P. Sheahan

For quite some time, science has been presented to the public in a distorted way. Reports of statements by scientists are often stated as absolutely certain truths, never mentioning any doubts or questions. Seldom do reporters inquire about how they became so certain, why they have such high confidence.

That image simply isn't true. A major disconnect exists between what really happens and *reported* science. Real science is always subject to revision, never "absolutely final." In everyday conversation, a person might say "I'm absolutely certain about that" but among responsible scientists, even the strongest affirmations always begin with "To the best of our scientific knowledge at this time ..."

Maybe, given the history of corrections in science (which come slowly), it might be wiser to show a little humility and allow for the possibility of a revision.

The 20th century gives a perfect example of how that process works, in the way Quantum Mechanics superseded Classical Mechanics. What we term Classical Mechanics was basically invented by Isaac Newton in the late 1600s, and refined by many other scientists over the next two centuries. By the end of the 19th century, it appeared to nearly everyone that Classical Mechanics was *absolutely true*.

Philosophers were making much of the concept of *determinism* that necessarily followed from the physics-principle that if you knew the exact position and momentum of all bodies at any one time, you could predict everything that would happen in the future. Among other things, this determinism implied that there are no real choices open to humans, no such thing as free will. It seemed to be necessary to choose *either* religion or science, but not both.

Imagine the difficulty of being a clergyman in those days, trying to convince your congregation that it's important to choose between good and evil, when the accepted "sure thing" science of the day said that everything that happens is determined by position and momentum of particles, and humans are merely subject to blind molecular forces.

That philosophy of determinism also gave credibility to things like *Social Darwinism* and theories of racial superiority, which had very ugly consequences.

Then along came Quantum Mechanics circa 1925, which replaced Isaac Newton's equations with a more fundamental understanding of how atoms behave. Classical Mechanics was shown to be just a *limiting special case* of reality, applicable to big objects. Baseballs and trains still move as usual, but atoms behave quite differently from what had been believed. Philosophically, a very significant correction was forced upon Classical Mechanics: It is *impossible* to know both the position and the momentum of a particle exactly. That change completely undermined the philosophy of determinism.

As word got around that determinism was out, a lot of spokesmen for morality breathed a sigh of relief. From a religious point of view, it turned out that God created a pretty flexible universe after all.

Physicists, chemists, biologists and others immediately started using Quantum Mechanics to explore new ideas and invent new devices. An important change came over science, in that we must trust the testimony of others in order to grasp the experimental basis for the theory. Centuries ago, you could repeat for yourself all the original experiments of Faraday or Galileo, etc.; but no more – many quantum experiments are too complicated. You wind up believing what others state they observed. In that way, *faith* enters the realm of science. Today it's routine practice to read a technical journal and believe what another scientist says is valid. The progress of science has become an interlocking system of *faith* in other human beings.

One of the foremost physicists of the 20th century, Richard P. Feynman, famously said "*Nobody* understands Quantum Mechanics." That statement is very likely correct. One counter-quip is "shut up and calculate," meaning that Quantum Mechanics gives correct numerical answers, even if its philosophical interpretation is unclear. The accomplishments of Quantum Mechanics include transistors, lasers, satellite communications, cell phones and countless aspects of everyday life that we take for granted.

Is Quantum Mechanics the final word? No. Over the decades as new sub-atomic particles were discovered, it has been further corrected and advanced to become Quantum Electrodynamics, then Quantum Chromodynamics. In

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striving to assemble one theory that covers everything from quarks to galaxies, we have composed the *Standard Model*, which is certainly very comprehensive, but doesn't quite enable Quantum Mechanics and General Relativity to fit together.

Currently there is great attention given to a branch of theoretical physics called *String Theory*, which uses very elegant mathematics to form a picture of fundamental particles. Here the component of faith is even stronger: to get anywhere, you must *believe* that mathematical symmetry principles are the basis for all reality. *String Theory* does not make any predictions that can be tested experimentally; that shifts the balance even further away from the customary practice of physics, where experiments take precedence over hypotheses and theoretical models. For that reason, a finite fraction of physicists completely reject *String Theory*.

There are many other possibilities for corrections in the future. It is generally believed by cosmologists that most of the universe is composed of *dark matter* and *dark energy*, which are inaccessible to our observations. *Dark matter* is quite plausible: starting from our belief in the law of Conservation of Angular Momentum, we see that galaxies are rotating so fast they would fly apart, unless there is additional unseen (dark) matter present to hold them together. That is a reasonable conclusion.

On the other hand, *dark energy* is a bigger stretch! The universe seems to be expanding faster than it should, based on observations from spacecraft of the last two decades. To account for that, dark energy is postulated, along with a possible "fifth force" that drives the expansion of space. Again, we're dealing with something that cannot be seen; it is only faith in equations that justify the presumption that *dark energy* exists.

In the years ahead, further spacecraft will investigate the far reaches of the universe, and the hypothesis of *dark energy* may be revised. It's important to keep in mind that those investigations will be guided by theory that rests upon a large dose of faith. Scientists who understand the limits of their own profession are comfortable with this reality, and won't commit themselves to believing that any scientific theory is absolutely true and final.

Classical Mechanics is a very good theory ... *for the range it covers*. Likewise, Quantum Mechanics is very good in its applicable range. Will it too be superseded one day? Per-

haps. The fact that I'm unable to imagine *how* doesn't make it impossible. It's a safe bet to anticipate future corrections.

There is a further lesson here. Knowing that faith and belief are significant components of science, it is reasonable to discern a similar role for faith and belief in other aspects of our lives. There is no exclusive single path to knowledge, nor does science have some exalted status with other pathways of learning relegated to second-class status. The human mind is very resourceful, combining different inputs to advance in understanding. Prudent scientists are humble enough to respect that.

In today's world, there are plentiful challenges to religious faith, and some of them lay claim to the "mantle of science." Ignoring the observational evidence from the universe we inhabit, some popularizers of science have invented speculations that the universe created itself, or that there are an infinite number of unobservable universes, etc. Those speculations are entertaining parlor games, not to be confused with rational science. None of these need be taken seriously.

What *is* worthy of serious attention is that the universe greatly exceeds human comprehension. The elegance and mathematical beauty of the laws that govern it virtually shout "intelligence!" at everyone who thinks about it. The most *reasonable* and *responsible* conclusion to draw is that the universe was created by that supreme intelligence. It's a fairly short step from there to the inference that God cares about the universe and the rational beings who inhabit it.

### In Memoriam - ITEST Member

#### Dr. Stephen Veazey

Dr. Veazey, native of Great Britain, physicist and ardent stamp collector, died and rose to new life in July, 2014. He and Father Brungs maintained a long "overseas" friendship stretching back a number of decades. Many a "first cover" of a newly issued stamp made its way to Jesuit Hall the former home of the ITEST offices, courtesy of Stephen Veazey, to the delight of Father Brungs. May Stephen tread the green grass of Heaven where as C.S. Lewis wrote in *The Great Divorce*, the blades of grass are not hard as diamonds, but soft and tender to the touch

We also ask your prayers for ITEST members who are ill. May they feel the restoring hand of the Lord.

*(Characterizing the ever increasing momentum in the Catholic Church worldwide these days is the word “Evangelization.” Surprisingly some identify it with “proselytizing,” whereas others who may have a weak catechetical education identify it with Evangelical Christianity. No single denomination can claim ownership of this word, rather it belongs to all of us. Here is how the Pope describes it in the excerpt below from Evangelii Gaudium (2013) [Eds.]*

**From: *Evangelii Gaudium* “The Joy of the Gospel”  
Chapter Three The Proclamation of the Gospel**

120. In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries,” but rather that we are always “missionary disciples.” If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: “We have found the Messiah!” (Jn 1:41). The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him “because of the woman’s testimony” (Jn 4:39)the woman’s testimony.”So, too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, “immediately proclaimed Jesus” (Acts 9:20; cf. 22:6-21). So what are we waiting for?

121. Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers. We want to have better training, a deepening love, and a clearer witness to the Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others be constantly evangelizing us. But this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelizing mission; rather, each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word, and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us to say with Saint Paul: “Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own” (Phil 3:12-13).

**Response to the O’Boyle Commentary  
on *Evangelii Gaudium***

By Father Al Fritsch, SJ, August 28, 2014

*Below is the introductory paragraph of a 9-page “Letter to the Editor” submitted by Jesuit Father Al Fritsch. By mutual agreement of the ITEST editor and Father Fritsch, ITEST will make the full letter available to readers who request it by contacting [mariannepost@archstl.org](mailto:mariannepost@archstl.org)*

*You may view Father Fritsch’s web site at [www.earthhealing.info](http://www.earthhealing.info) where you can follow daily reflections and discussion of environmental issues.*

The Commentary [Part I of II] by Edward O’Boyle in the summer issue of the Bulletin could perhaps be expected but not with the clever development that occurred. The refreshing letter by Pope Francis entitled *Evangelii Gaudium* is direct, honest, and to the point. And it is most welcomed by all but some doctrinaire free marketers who blend the current System’s materialism into their personal credo. So it appears with this O’Boyle Commentary. Omitted in his discussion is that the Church has never been a champion of materialism whether of a Communistic or Capitalistic variety. To belittle our Holy Father and to begin by using Jesuit names is an affront deserving rebuttal if for no other reason than that I am vowed to defend this humble and astute Pope against attacks that cloak an outdated rationality, which does not fit the current state of economic and political affairs. As a fellow Jesuit, chemist, and environmental friend on Facebook, Pope Francis deserves my defense.