

## Father Frank Budenholzer, SVD

Growing up in the Chicago area, the presumption in our household was that Christian faith and empirical science were mutually supportive. My father was a professor of engineering at Illinois Institute of Technology, and my mother is a physical therapist with a background in physiology. During my years of preparation for perpetual vows and priesthood as a member of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), there was a gradually emerging presumption that I would work as an academic, bringing together religion and science. In my major seminary years, I discovered the philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, which became the intellectual framework for my working in religion and science. After ordination in 1972 and completing my Ph.D. in physical chemistry (molecular collision dynamics) in 1977, I was assigned to teach at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei, Taiwan.

After studying Chinese for two years, I began teaching and doing research at Fu Jen. I taught the basic undergraduate physical chemistry courses and related courses in mathematics and molecular collision dynamics. While I had done molecular beam research during my graduate studies in the U.S., in Taiwan I became a theoretical-computational chemist in molecular dynamics. I also continued my study of the thought of Bernard Lonergan and published a number of articles applying his thought to basic problems in epistemology and metaphysics that impinge on the religion-science dialogue.

After a stint in relatively heavy administration, in 1997 I took a sabbatical year at the University of California in Berkeley. However, I did relatively little chemistry, spending most of my time at the Center for Theology and Natural Science, a unit of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. After returning to Taiwan, I gradually shifted my research and, to some extent, my teaching, to religion-science.

In Taiwan, approximately 1.5% of the population identifies as Catholic, with Protestant Christians at about 3%. Buddhism and Taoism are the largest religions in Taiwan. However, the majority of Taiwan's people are adherents of what is usually referred to as "folk religion" with elements of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, together with the veneration of various local deities. The majority of university students, both at Fu Jen and in general, consider themselves non-religious, meaning that they do not consider themselves as belonging to any clearly defined religious group. After returning from my sabbatical, I taught religion and science in the department of religious studies and in the general-curriculum program. Religion in Taiwan, of course, includes Buddhism and Taoism, and courses have to be adjusted accordingly. Religion and Science means something very different in Buddhism, Taoism, folk traditions, and Christianity. (See my paper "Religion and Science in Taiwan: Rethinking the Connection," *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Vol. 36, 2001, 753-764.)

In 2001, I with other colleagues here at Fu Jen, established the Center for the Study of Science and Religion, first in the College of Science and Engineering, and subsequently in the University-wide Center for Catholic Studies. The center continues to sponsor various activities – lectures, conferences, a reading club – related to science-religion themes.

Over the years I was invited to teach graduate courses in the Department of Philosophy. These included Lonergan's *Insight* and *Method in Theology* and the Philosophy of Science. Two of my former Philosophy students are now teaching Philosophy here at Fu Jen and, under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Science and Religion, we conduct a bi-yearly Lonergan conference.

What I have described above is primarily academic, and given my busy administrative and teaching schedule, there is relatively little time for pastoral service. But conversations, particularly with faculty members both at Fu Jen and in other universities, are precious opportunities to share both my Christian faith and my academic side in science and philosophy.

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