

Reflection 22 - LIGHT OF THE WORLD

God said "Let there be light" and there was light. He saw that light was good and separated light from darkness. He called the light day and the darkness night. There was evening there was morning: the first day.

The world view that we accept today is radically different to the world view our ancestors had. The idea that this world view might be in a constant state of flux is a hard one to grasp yet that is exactly what is happening and has been going on since time began, and will continue to do so in the future. Just as the universe is in a state of constant change or continuous expansion, so life itself is doing the same and is in a constant state of evolution. Life is a continuous process of birth and rebirth and moving towards more complex expression of itself. It is a bit disconcerting for those who like conformity and an unchanging world, but it seems that nothing ever stays the same. Science tells us that everything is made of molecules and these molecules are in constant motion and from this motion comes energy. Now as we become more enlightened and more aware of the scientific discoveries it seems to me that our understanding of our universe is not made any easier, in fact at times it could be said it is becoming more complex. Our minds are quite incapable of fully grasping the mysteries that the universe has to offer and maybe we will never fully be able to explain the new revelations that science present to us. I said in my 19th reflection that our world view shapes our belief systems and our understanding of the things going on about us. I know none of us ever subscribed to the flat earth society but in the past there must have been many who did. Only a couple of centuries ago it was thought our earth was the centre of the known universe and that our sun revolved around us. In fact Einstein got himself in trouble for thinking the earth revolved round the sun.

When Einstein discovered the formula $E=mc^2$ he changed our way of thinking forever. Energy has to do with matter and the speed at which it moves. I have already said that we are made of molecules and they are in constant motion so when someone says you are a "bundle of energy" they may not realise they were stating a profound truth. Now we could say we are a bundle of light and this would be no less profound. When Einstein generated a formula that had led him to believe that the universe was expanding he was so shocked at his discovery that he fudged the formula to give himself a different answer. He admitted later that this was one of the biggest mistakes he made in his life

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" I always had difficulty getting my head around this one, but John was a mystic and he is telling us here that before the ***"Big Bang"*** God was. My quote at the top of this reflection suggests that the creation of light was the first act of God. So if creation started from one position, ***"The big bang"*** (and we have to suppose there was light to burn here) then it is reasonable to imagine us evolving somewhere along the 15.7 billion years time line. Cosmic energy is not easily

understood but cosmic light is a reality that sets us thinking that there is a connection between Science and Faith. ***“All things were made through Him and with Him; nothing comes to be whatever has come to be found life in Him, life which for humans, was also light. The light that shines in the darkness, light darkness could not overcome”***

This was written some 1900 years ago by St John or one of his faithful followers. The amazing thing is that modern Science now can identify with these words. As I said earlier we are made of molecules and molecules can be broken down into protons and neutrons which break down into smaller parts called photons (packets of light) so in a sense we are in reality “light” created by God. ***“I am the Light of the world”*** are words attributed to Jesus by several of the Gospel writers so it certainly had me thinking that light is very important in helping us understand who we are and where we are heading. (Reflection 21)

I just love this quote ***“The meeting point of science and religion is humility, honesty, trust, and a common passion for the yet unknown”***. In the past the church was very weary of what the world of Science had to offer. However today I would suggest they are drawing closer and closer together as each seeks out the truth without fear of favour. Spirit and light do have the same qualities in so far as both are “non-material” and therefore unable to be grasped or pinned down if you like. Have we discovered a common reality which will help Science and Religion to come together? It is a life long journey to get to know our God? Is Science being drawn ever so slowly to the realization that there must be a power or controlling order which is responsible for all things and keeps everything in its rightful place? While I was teaching at one of our prestigious schools we had the head of our science department who proudly declared himself an atheist. Now I suspect many science teachers would proudly declare their faith in God. May I finish by saying that faith is something to be experienced and something to be lived? The mystical phenomenon of the sun that I and many others witnessed when we were at one of the well known Marian shrines in Europe provided me with ample experience of God’s presents. No scientific explanation could possibly satisfy us in explaining what we saw. If I was to try to explain the experience to my science class all I could do is use story, the story involving bright lights which, though constantly in motion and constantly changing shape, filled the sky so it seemed. The final vision (*not sure what else to call it*) was of the sun appearing as a throbbing heart. I remember turning towards others next to me asking “do you see what I see?” Well here is another mystery to chew on as they explained their experience as something quite different to mine.

In trying to draw this reflection back together we can now say that religion and religious experience are not necessarily the same. Science is helping us experience God with the wonderful discoveries which just blow the mind but also our personal encounters with our God can also blow our mind and in the end both can draw us back to Him from whom we came.
Until next time from Hilongos Br Peter T