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***Catholic Physics - Reflections of a
Catholic Scientist - Part 15
A Lesson from Two Homilies:
Don't Argue on the Internet.***

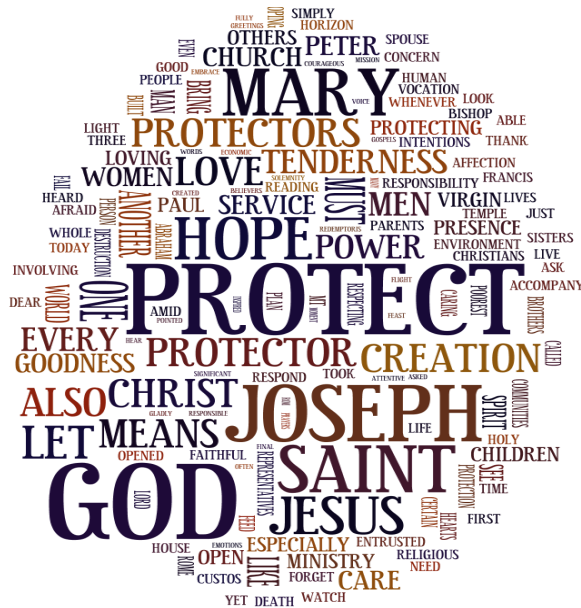


- ♦ 1200's
- ♦ Authority on physics, geography, astronomy, mineralogy, chemistry, zoology, and physiology
- ♦ "The aim of natural science is not simply to accept the statements of others, but to investigate the causes that are at work in nature"
- ♦ He understood that the Church is not opposed to study of nature
- ♦ Patron Saint of Scientists

A Lesson from Two Homilies: Don't Argue on the Internet.

"Non in dialectica placuit Deo salvum facere populum suum" ("It is not by arguing that God chose to save His people"). St. Ambrose

"Fortunately, there have always been pastors who have understood more about theology than most professors." Karl Barth



From The Archdiocese of Dublin
Pope Francis Inauguration Homily

A recent article in Crisis magazine by James Kalb reminded me of two homilies I recently heard, and of the lesson I should have learned from these. The homilies were given by two different priests, both foreign-born: Fr. X, Vietnamese, one of the boat people who escaped the Communists at an early age; Fr. Y, Nigerian, a Dominican. (Aren't we fortunate, as a missioned nation, that bread cast upon the waters has returned?) The Crisis magazine article is about the futility of argumentation on the Internet, a conclusion with which I heartily concur.

As the quote and the title of this post suggest, argumentation is not the way to evangelize. This was the lesson of the two homilies. It's been a while since I heard them, so forgive me, Fr. X and Fr. Y, if I don't recast them exactly as you spoke. Fr. Y was discoursing on the Gospel, Matthew 10, in which Jesus sends the apostles out and tells them "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet." (Matt 10:14) In his homily Fr. Y said that one should not contest with those—family members, friends, ...—who dispute your faith. You should state what you believe and show, by the example of your life, what your faith means to you. Fr. X's homily took off from the moving paean on the great gift of love, in First Corinthians, "... If I have not love..". Fr X said we have to love our enemies and those who contest with us, otherwise we are not Christians. We cannot disparage them or wish ill for them.

All this I should try to achieve (but often fail to) in my responses to those contending on the internet. If a Geocentrist, or a believer in the Young Earth refuses to debate honestly the scientific premises of their beliefs, I can do no more than point out where they might seek other opinions. If an atheist refuses to read the books refuting Dawkins that I recommend—I cannot, as with giving my dog medicine, coat the pill with peanut butter and slip it into his mouth. (One of our dogs was very adept at licking off the peanut butter and spitting out the pill.) So, the only thing to do is to love these people (even if I don't like them) and pray for them. Perhaps the Holy Spirit will imbue them with grace, as it did one fervent atheist, Anthony Flew, who came to believe "There is a God". And this is all I can hope and pray for.

From a series of articles written by: Bob Kurland - a Catholic Scientist

