Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, July 16th

Isaiah 55:10-11

Psalm 65

Romans 8:18-23

Matthew 13:1-9

Jesuit Brother Guy Consolmagno, director of the Vatican Observatory since 2015, finds it altogether baffling that some still see science and religion as being somehow opposed. People think of both science and religion as “big books of facts,” he says. “Everything about that description is wrong.” Our scientific understanding “constantly changes, constantly grows.” The same is true for religion. If it were a book of facts, he says, “You could just memorize it. Both science and religion are taking what we thought we knew and trying to understand it.” (“A Canticle to Creation” by Kathleen M. Carrol, St. Anthony Messenger, July 2017, Volume 125/Number 2, pp. 26-30)

Permit me to scatter some seeds of science and how it can affect our understanding of religion.

Let me propose a new understanding of “God”. Let’s do an Einsteinian thought experiment. (This methodology worked well with dear Albert as was seen in the National Graphic series called “Genius” about Albert Einstein which program premiered on April of 2017, starring Geoffery Rush.)

Let us look at science and look at religion and propose that God is energy. That is the nature of the Divine is energy itself.

“Do you mean that same energy that lights up a light bulb?” Yes. “Do you mean the same energy that powers Alon Musk’s new Tesla Model 3 car?” Yes. “You’ve got to be kidding.” Nope. “I don’t say to my light bulb when I turn it on, ‘Hello God!’ I don’t kneel down before my car and worship it as the All Powerful Being Who Made Me.”

Okay. Okay. Let’s get something clear. Science tells us how nature works. Religion tells us why. Let’s look at science and see if it can revolutionize our understanding of God. And let’s remember that throughout salvation history, our understanding of God has gone through different phases.

What do you mean “different phases” of understanding God?”

Well, let’s look at the bible and see the evolution of our understanding of who God is. Let’s postulate that the bible is written for people. People change and so do the stories told by the bible. When the bible started with Abraham, he had a family that was surrounded by other people who would just as readily wipe them out. So God wipes out all of the enemies of the people of God. To the early Israelites, God was a warrior king. To the Israelites in captivity, God was in the details of following the religious traditions by the letter of the law. God was a taskmaster not to be trifled with. So different notions of who God is according to the realties of the people of various times. God didn’t change. What people ‘needed God to be’ changed. Their understanding of God changed. That is why Jesus became man and dwelt among us because our understanding of God was way out of whack.

So maybe it’s time for another notion of who God is because of the scientific revolution of Quantum theory which redefines the reality in which we live. How about our understanding of God is that God is energy?

“But how can energy be a person?” Our God is a person. Our God is three persons. Our God has one nature. Can these three persons have the one nature of energy? Let’s look at what science can tell us.

Take a nucleus of an atom (a proton and a neutron) and smash it into another nucleus of another atom and see what happens. It breaks apart into all sorts of things. (And we thought the atom was the smallest part of everything.)

Scientists have a standard model of these elementary particles. The atom reveals quarks and leptons and bosons. There are six quarks. They named the quarks up, down, top, bottom, charm and strange. Each of these has a mass, charge, spin, and color. So we can say that each quark has a personality of its own. If that is the case, cannot energy on a greater level have a personality of its own?

So in our mind experiment, energy can have a personality. So cannot God who is three persons have the nature of energy itself? This, I believe, can lead to a greater understanding of our God for the new reality in which we live. God is energy.

If so:

How can we relate to God now? How can we relate to each other? How can we relate to animals? How can we relate to the earth? What does death mean then? What can the afterlife be for us? How do we relate to those who have gone before us? How can we relate to those who come after us? If God is energy?

As I say, this is a mind experiment. As such it is mindboggling. So stay tuned.