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Fr. George Coyne: Science, Faith and God -- 1 of 2

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Fr. George Coyne

Episode 1: How did the Vatican Observatory come to be? (19 min.)
How did the Vatican Observatory come to be? "The reason is a very simple one," Fr. Coyne tells Tom Fox. In 1582, the calendar had to be reformed. Easter was slipping back -? it was becoming a winter festival. The Jesuit mathematicians and astronomers who Pope Gregory XIII appointed to solve the calendar problem, continued to build telescopes and study the stars. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII formally founded the Vatican Observatory to show that the church has a serious interest in all intellectual human pursuits. Coyne says, Leo appointed religious priests to dedicate their lives to trying to understand the universe through scientific means.

This is an encore presentation. The podcast first aired in May 2007.

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Fr. George Coyne, S.J. on Science, Faith and God
Jesuit Father George Coyne retired last year after more than 40 years with the Vatican Observatory -- the last 28 years as observatory director, splitting his time between Italy and Tucson, Ariz. Coyne talks to Tom Fox about the history of the observatory, the Vatican's involvement in astronomy, and how he separates -- and combines -- his faith life with science.

More quotes from Coyne

"If I believe in God, then why shouldn?t I as a scientist ask, 'What kind of God would create a universe like this?' That really enriches, gives a deeper meaning, to my faith." 'The universe glorifies god in a way that I would have never known had I not tried to understand the universe scientifically.' " Theologians have this beautiful idea of continuous creation, but to my mind, even Catholic theologians do not use it enough with enough of an understanding of modern science to really reflect on its rich meaning. Creation did not happen once 14 billion years ago. Creation is continuing. God is continuing to work from outside the universe with the universe and from within the universe with the universe."

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