

# Vatican: Come Home, E.T.

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by Tommi Avicolti-Mecca, Nov. 19, 2009

Believe it or not, the Vatican thinks there could be alien life on other planets, even though for most of its history it has denied the possibility and even murdered those who proposed the idea.

The Vatican made the proclamation after a recent, five-day astrobiology conference, held to mark 2009 as the Year of Astronomy. With scientists from around the world in attendance, the gathering looked at the possibility of life on other worlds, among other topics.

According to Rev. José Funes, the Vatican's astronomer and director of its observatory, "Just as there is a multitude of creatures on Earth, there could be other beings, even intelligent ones, created by God. This does not contradict our faith, because we cannot put limits on God's creative freedom."

Funes believes that his god most likely is extending to these aliens the same mercy and redemption that he gives to people on this planet. If they arrived on Earth, they would be viewed by the Vatican as "part of creation."

In fact, those aliens would be our "extraterrestrial brothers," Funes says, since god created them, too. Guess he's assuming they're all going to be men or even have gender. They could be hermaphroditic or reproduce in some way we can't even imagine.

One thing for sure: these little green men will not arrive carrying the Roman Catholic version of the bible. They may not even believe in deities, since a race capable of interstellar travel may have abandoned such a concept a long time ago. I wonder how the Vatican will deal with heretic aliens preaching a different philosophy?

The Catholic Church doesn't have a stellar record when it comes to dealing civilly with those who contradict its teachings. Consider Galileo Galilei. The 16th-17th century Italian physicist, mathematician and astronomer clashed with the Roman Catholic Church over the position of the sun in our solar system. After two heresy trials, he spent the remainder of his days under house arrest.

In 1992, Pope John Paul II apologized for the way the Vatican treated Galileo, describing it as a "tragic mutual incomprehension." Not the first.

In 1600, philosopher Giordano Bruno lost his life at the stake for daring to suggest, among other things, that other planets could have life. It's a good thing Rev. Funes wasn't born back then.

It's not a bad thing that the Vatican is accepting the possibility of life on other planets or even the Big Bang, which Funes admits could be true. It's just odd that while it keeps its mind open to the possibility of other forms of intelligent life in the universe, it continues to espouse archaic views on good old everyday Earthly matters.

Which leaves it in the odd position of accepting ET, but not gay marriage or reproductive freedom.

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