

Question 131 – Mark Shea and the Ostriches

Robert,

Mark Shea opened up a blog about your geocentrism conference. I don't think it turned out the way he wanted it because there is a lot of support for you. Here is the URL. Care to comment on it?

<http://markshea.blogspot.com/2010/09/celebration-of-crank-and-quack-science.html>

Peter R.

R. Sungenis: Peter, I usually don't spend time on Internet blogs or forums, especially when most entries are given by people who don't feel the social responsibility to use their real names but feel more comfortable with the anonymity of a pseudonym for some odd reason. I feel somewhat compelled to respond on this occasion, however, since our *Galileo Was Wrong* conference has created such a storm of interest, both pro and con (e.g., I did an interview with *Der Spiegel* last week, and the *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Times* have expressed an interest in covering the conference. We also received over 200,000 hits on our galileowaswrong.com website last week, so much so that we had to increase our bandwidth).

That being said, let me first address Mr. Shea's comments. Unfortunately for the rest of us, Mr. Shea continues to indulge us with his attempts at chleuasmus. It wouldn't be so bad except for the fact that I've asked Mr. Shea, if he feels so strongly inclined to ridicule geocentrism, then he should accept at least one of the numerous invitations we've offered him over the years to debate the issue in a public forum. Alas, Mr. Shea consistently refuses to engage, preferring to hide behind his censored blog so that he can exhibit his mordant sense of humor. Shea only proves our point when he, in characteristic style, banned Mr. Rick Delano (a strong supporter of geocentrism with scientific facts at his fingertips to back it up) from his blog. Shea's flimsy excuse was: "I'm tired of kooks who can't decide whether arrogant pride or fact-immune stupidity is their strong suit," yet it's ok for Shea to fill his blog with constant sarcastic ridicule of fellow Catholics who have a contrary opinion to his, and it's ok for Shea to pose "fact-immune stupidity" as proof for his cosmological position, as you will see below. The real truth is that Mr. Delano was a bit too good at getting under the façade of modern cosmology to suit Mr. Shea's tastes and therefore he got the Shea boot. This is the world of Mark Shea: "you play the game the way I want you to play or I will take my ball and bat and go home." It's absolutely sickening to watch.

As for Mr. Shea's accusation that the geocentrism conference makes the Catholic Church "perfect piñatas for the Make Fun of the Church crowd," who of us is really doing so? Is it the Catholic apologist who shows the world the plethora of scientific evidence supporting geocentrism and uses it to defend the decisions of the medieval Church against Galileo (as even Mr. Chicken the quantum physicist, who prefers not to be "flamed" as a geocentrist, has nevertheless admitted on Shea's blog), and who has also discovered that those scientists who refuse to accept the geocentric evidence do so, by their own admission, because they have a prior philosophical commitment to viewing the earth as merely a speck of dust in the remote recesses of space that found itself there all by chance?

Or does the real embarrassment come from an obnoxious blogging Catholic who feels not the slightest guilt for ridiculing and rejecting the numerous official decisions of the Catholic magisterium of the 17th and 18th centuries that condemned heliocentrism as formally heretical; who has no guilt for ignoring the absolute consensus of Church Fathers who rejected the heliocentrism of the Greeks; and who has no guilt in disregarding the exegetical patrimony of his Church that was not afraid to take Scripture at face value (e.g., "this is my body"; "whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood")? If we can believe that a wafer is no longer a wafer but is really God, then how is it that we can't trust that same Church when it tells us the earth doesn't move? I find it quite odd how Catholics like Shea can embrace something as mysterious as transubstantiation and yet totally reject geocentrism, especially when science outrightly rejects transubstantiation but has given us an amazing amount of evidence for geocentrism.

Obviously, the embarrassment comes from the Catholic who makes the 17th and 18th century popes and cardinals look like a bunch of bumbling idiots who didn't have the common sense to stay out of the cosmos, much less give a fallacious assessment of its motions. It is precisely Mr. Shea's "forget-the-tradition" apologetics that has encouraged unbelievers to conjure up every excuse for their sin and rejection of the Catholic Church by using the excuse; "Well, if the Church got it wrong on such a simple thing as whether Scripture teaches that the earth moves, why in the world should I trust it with my soul and any other interpretation of Scripture?" "If they were so blind when dealing with Galileo, why should I trust it when it tells me not to practice contraception or homosexuality or remarriage after divorce?" Yes, indeed, Galileo has become their perfect excuse and they have been using him for nearly 500 years. For centuries Shea's apologetic has been trying to answer their excuse but every attempt has been an utter failure. (There is even one author, Redondi, who claims that the answer is that the Church never really condemned Galileo's cosmology but only his atomism. This is a true sign of desperation, since the historical record shows that it was only Galileo's insistence that the earth moved that the Church addressed).

Unfortunately, few Catholics, if any, never considered that maybe, just maybe, the Church was actually led by the Holy Spirit to condemn heliocentrism, just as it was led by the same Spirit to condemn every other heresy that came its way. That's an apologetic I can be proud of; an apologetic that takes away all the "embarrassment" when we face the world and its excuses for sin.

The embarrassment comes when I hear people like Mark Shea implicitly teach that somehow the Holy Spirit was on vacation in the 17th and 18th centuries, and who prefers to have the Church corrected by such immoral characters as Galileo (who fathered three children out of wedlock, and deserted two of them); by Newton (who was an Arian and believed the Catholic Church was the whore of Babylon and said that the world would end in 2060 because we should add the 1260 years of Rev. 12 to 800 AD when the Catholic Church reached its apostate peak), and Einstein (who committed adultery on his first wife; abandoned her three children; committed multiple adulteries on his second wife and was thinking of marrying her 20 year old daughter, and finally divorced the wife and abandoned the daughter). Ironically enough, the science of both Newton and Einstein, if applied

correctly, supports geocentrism, not denies it, but since Mr. Shea has no education in physics, telling him these things is like dealing with a child.

As for Mr. Shea's "simple and elegant response from the Sanity-Based Community to the lunacy, I give you this..." from which he then leads us to a time-lapse photo of the earth apparently turning. It is precisely for this kind of "fact-immune stupidity" from an obvious opsimath that has earned Mr. Shea his reputation as an inept hit and run artist. I have lost count of the times I have explained to Mr. Shea that such biased pictorials prove nothing, since the camera on the Galileo satellite obviously had no sign from Elmer Fudd next to it saying "this is the absolute wefwence fwame upon which to place the camwa." Of course, I don't think Mr. Shea even knows what an "absolute reference frame" is since he knows no physics. The whole basis for geocentrism is that if the earth is motionless and space is rotating around it (which all scientists who know the physics agree is a perfectly viable option, including Mr. Shea's favorite scientist – Albert Einstein), then the only thing the time-lapse photos reveal is Mr. Shea's scientific ignorance and inability to learn new things. Fortunately, even Dr. Einstein admitted to the simple logic that Mr. Shea refuses to learn, namely: "The struggle, so violent in the early days of science, between the views of Ptolemy and Copernicus would then be quite meaningless. Either CS [coordinate system] could be used with equal justification. The two sentences: 'the sun is at rest and the Earth moves,' or 'the sun moves and the Earth is at rest,' would simply mean two different conventions concerning two different CS" (*The Evolution of Physics: From Early Concepts to Relativity and Quanta*, Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, 1938, 1966, p. 212).

Here's my prediction: none of this will make any difference to Mr. Shea. Mr. Shea is on a campaign to promote his own ideas, which is the same thing he recently did with the Old Covenant issue. No one in the history of the Catholic Church has taken his view (i.e., that the Old Covenant is not revoked for unbaptized Jews) yet he insists on holding to this piece of fiction simply because, by his own impeccable estimation, he is "within the pale of orthodoxy." Yet for Mr. Shea it is impossible to see geocentrism within "the pale of orthodoxy," even though the Church taught it vigorously for most of its history and science has given us plenty of evidence of its viability. No, Mr. Shea has one concern. One sticks his proverbial finger in the air each morning and determines which way the political/religious winds are blowing. If they are blowing against a new approach to cosmology, then, by golly, we must declare this new approach an "embarrassment" since it will make the Catholic Church look like primitive fools who never advanced from the stone age. That is the world of Mark Shea.

Then, of course, we have Mr. Armstrong (not to be confused with David Armstrong) to follow suit with his desire to obfuscate the issue even more and do the same dance as Mr. Shea into the depths of demagoguery with such calculated comments as: "Are they [geocentrists at the conference] going to expose how NASA faked the moon landings and how they use laser beams to make crop circles to secure more federal funding, too? Riveting! Cutting Edge!" and who then also claims that by critiquing the popular apologetic that faults the Church and praises Galileo I am "sowing distrust and discord." I find it rather amusing how Mr. Armstrong ignores his own slander, and that of Mr. Shea, as a prime example of causing distrust and discord among brethren. Of course, Mr. Armstrong doesn't bother telling us where HE thinks crop circles come from, but it's ok to ridicule Sungenis for

making a suggestion as to their origin so that people don't believe they came from aliens. Similar to the Vatican's astronomer, Guy Consolmagno (who recently said he would baptize an alien),

[<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1312922/Pope-astronomer-Guy-Consolmagno-Aliens-souls-living-stars.html?printingPage=true>]

...perhaps Mr. Armstrong also believes in aliens who make crop circles. It wouldn't surprise me, since Mr. Armstrong will apparently accept anything that NASA tells him.

In such cases I applaud the common sense approach of JWS who replied to Shea and Armstrong with the following: "How can the Pillar and Foundation be "Crank" and "Quack"? Interesting position. What else has the Church been wrong about Mr. Shea? If the scientific evidence is neutral - which it clearly is - and Scripture and the Church have clear proclamations for a static, central earth, why are you choosing to side with man's theories? Don't we always take faith over the world?"

Another intelligent comment came from Chicken Man, who stated the following: "If the earth is the center of the universe, it would make no difference to current astronomy, because it would be almost impossible to use the earth as the standard reference frame in any meaningful way because we would have to make the calculations either much more exact or we would have to simplify the calculations to the point where the effect of geocentrism is reduced to a negligible amount. In either case, most scientists would ignore the whole thing and just get on with the job. We simply do not have the ability to address the ramifications of geocentrism at this stage in the history of science. For now, it remains, primarily, a philosophical/theological issue without any influence on the day to day working of science."

May I suggest to Chicken Man that the issue is not whether science should be permitted to get by with the plausibility of a geocentric universe and then go on with business as usual. Rather, the challenge for science is to show us why it has such a steadfast devotion to heliocentrism when it simply has no proof to back up its claim. Since all our present university textbooks insist that it is a tilted and moving earth which cause the seasons, apparently, these science authors believe there is only one accepted solution to the scientific evidence that can be interpreted in two different ways. Obviously, modern science is certainly not dispassionate about whether the earth moves or not. In fact, it has promoted heliocentrism as the fulcrum upon which western civilization is based and has used the so-called scientific proofs of heliocentrism (e.g., Foucault pendulum, retrograde motion, etc.) to create its autonomy from the Church and, more importantly, to make its greatest claim in the second millennium, namely, that since the Catholic Church was wrong about the cosmos, it is wrong about many other things.

As for whether the "calculations would have to be much more exact," I am not precisely sure why Chicken Man says so. If you read the physical mechanics sections of *Galileo Was Wrong: The Church Was Right* they show that modern science agrees that all the forces and movements are precisely the same in the geocentric and heliocentric systems. The only thing that changes is whether one of the celestial objects is stationary (e.g., the earth). All the centrifugal, Coriolis and Euler forces in the two systems are exactly the same. That's

why Eddington could say, for example, "The bulge of the Earth's equator may be attributed indifferently to the Earth's rotation or to the outward pull of the centrifugal force introduced when the Earth is regarded as non-rotating" (*Space, Time and Gravitation: An Outline of the General Relativity Theory*, 1923, pp. 24, 41). We have exhaustive studies of this phenomenon done by Barbour and Bertotti and many others that show the precise equivalence between a rotating earth in a fixed universe to a fixed earth in a rotating universe. I don't think Chicken Man has availed himself to those sections of GWW.

So the next question is: which of the two is the reality? Well, along those lines GWW presents scientific evidence to show that only the geocentric model has the support of the cosmos, since the isotropy of the CMB, gamma-rays, x-rays, quasars and any other energy or object in the universe all show earth as their center. The science community is in absolute consternation about this evidence, and they all admit that the Copernican revolution has come to a halt. If people would only read what we have to say and stop being brow-beaten by the likes of Mark Shea and David Armstrong, we could easily show that the Holy Spirit has never abandoned the Church and we can put our trust back in the magisterium, and in Tradition and Scripture.

We can also show from the history of interferometry beginning all the way back to Arago in 1818 through Miller in 1925 that the earth has been shown to be motionless in space and that the only way heliocentric science could try to mount some plausible escape from these experimental findings was to reinvent physics, which is why Einstein is so revered today. As Einstein's biographer put it, after the 1887 Michelson-Morley experiment: "The problem which now faced science was considerable. For there seemed to be only three alternatives. The first was that the Earth was standing still, which meant scuttling the whole Copernican theory and was unthinkable" (*Einstein: The Life and Times*, p. 110). If Einstein was not going to go back to a non-moving earth, he had only one other option. He had to turn physics upside down in order to avoid the implications of the experimental evidence that showed the earth wasn't moving. He fooled people for a while with his Special Relativity theory, but in the end he failed, since when Special Relativity failed he had to invent General Relativity to replace it but that shift ended up supporting geocentrism, for as Hoyle notes: "We might hope therefore that the Einstein theory, which is well suited to such problems, would throw more light on the matter. But instead of adding further support to the heliocentric picture of the planetary motions, the Einstein theory goes in the opposite direction, giving increased respectability to the geocentric picture" (*Fred Hoyle, Nicolaus Copernicus: An Essay on His Life and Work*, p. 87).

Moreover, Einstein had to take back the ether for General Relativity that he denied for Special Relativity, and he also had to renege on the finite speed of light in General Relativity that he allowed for Special Relativity. Interestingly enough, both the claim to the absence of ether and the finite speed of light were the two things that Einstein had previously used to deny Michelson-Morley's experimental evidence that showed the Earth wasn't moving! The whole Einstein era is a mass of contradictions, but modern science has worked very hard to keep everyone in the dark, for who would want to risk his livelihood and reputation (and be compared to lunatics who walk around with tin foil hats) by suggesting that popular science has pulled the wool over our eyes for the past hundred years.

On Shea's blog "Jon W" adds: "If Sungenis wants to argue for geocentrism and can find equations and solutions that fit all the experimental observations and can defend them to a panel of scientists, then he's welcome to try. But to take his case to people who have only a mild interest in and less knowledge of the physics and expect them to adjudicate between extremely complex theories and take a stand the Magisterium has not insisted on, that makes him a freaking Modernist and an obnoxious one at that."

First, the equations have already been worked out. We have three whole chapters (Chapters 8, 9 & 10) which use the equations and principles provided to us by modern science to show the viability of geocentrism. When scientists see these equations, then they can use them to educate the public. I'm not expecting every Tom, Dick and Harry to understand the complexities of astrophysics. I am asking them, however, to use their common sense. For example, anyone with common sense can understand that if a camera above the earth is rotating with the rest of space, then obviously the camera cannot be used as proof of a rotating earth. As for being an "obnoxious freaking modernist," I wish people would make up their mind what group they want to put me in. Others accuse me of being a "freaking traditionalist" since I keep badgering them to pay attention to the patristic, medieval and papal patrimony we have regarding geocentrism.

The only "modern" dimensions of this issue I use are those that come from modern science. I have found that modern science is my best support for the traditional belief in geocentrism. It's too bad the Church of the 17th century didn't know the things about the cosmos we know today. According to one historian, it would have been an open and shut case against Galileo: "It is both amusing and instructive to speculate on what might have happened if such an experiment could have been performed in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries when men were debating the rival merits of the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems. The result would surely have been interpreted as conclusive evidence for the immobility of the Earth, and therefore as a triumphant vindication of the Ptolemaic system and irrefutable falsification of the Copernican hypothesis" (G. J. Whitrow, *The Structure and Evolution of the Universe*, 1949, 1959, p. 79).

Jon W adds: "And when you factor in his extreme philosophical and theological naïveté: so as not to be able to distinguish between different cultures' kinds of narratives and the kind of data it is legitimate to get out of them, then he definitely fits the definition of 'crank' and 'quack.'"

So, in essence, what Jon W wants us to believe is that the Church for 1800 years was also "naïve, philosophically and theologically," and didn't have the ability to "distinguish between different cultures' kinds of narratives," and thus was filled with a bunch of "cranks" and "quacks" when it condemned heliocentrism and Galileo. This is truly embarrassing. Jon W simply doesn't comprehend the implications of what he is saying. He only fools himself, as well as those who gullibly listen to him.

Jordanes adds: "Robert Sungenis is not the pillar and foundation, the Church is, and the Church has never taught infallibly that the earth is the immobile geographical center of the entire universe around which every other celestial body is spinning. If geocentrism really were a doctrine or dogma of the Church, St. Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, central in the

condemnation of Galileo, could not have said: "I say that if a real proof be found that the sun is fixed and does not revolve round the earth, but the earth round the sun, then it will be necessary, very carefully, to proceed to the explanation of the passages of Scripture which appear to be contrary, and we should rather say that we have misunderstood these than pronounce that to be false which is demonstrated. Obviously St. Robert was unaware that geocentrism was an infallible doctrine revealed by the Holy Spirit, or else he could not have admitted the possibility of the Church reexamining the question if scientific evidence disproving geocentrism were to be uncovered."

Interestingly enough, if Jordanes would simply read GWW he would find that all of the Catholic historians who interpret the above words from Bellarmine, without exception, conclude that Bellarmine was not giving any room for science to prove heliocentrism, but was merely making a gratuitous hypothetical argument to tighten the noose even more. The reason for their consensus is obvious – Bellarmine would never have moved against Galileo with the ferocity that he did if he had entertained the slightest notion in his head that science could ever prove him or the Church wrong in the future for doing so. Jordanes needs to read Bellarmine's words in context rather than taking out a snippet and forcing a preconceived conclusion upon it.

As for Jordanes' comment "the Church has never taught infallibly that the earth is the immobile geographical center of the entire universe," granted, but it didn't have to, since the Church of Galileo's day accepted the consensus of the Fathers and the decrees of the Ordinary magisterium as enough authority to declare Galileo "suspect of heresy" and heliocentrism a "formal heresy." Papal infallibility is invoked only in very rare instances. Moreover, the papal infallibility argument is anachronistic, since papal infallibility wasn't formally established until 250 years after the Galileo issue. Those, like Jordanes, who find solace in the "infallibility" card actually do more damage to the Church than help it, for Jordanes now sets the precedent that no one need accept or obey anything the Church has not taught infallibly or that has been the constant teaching of tradition, no matter what high level of authority the Church used to issue its decree.

Even more dangerous is the fact that, if we claim the Church of the 17th century made a mistake in condemning Galileo and heliocentrism, yet it remains a fact that the prelates of that 17th century Church insisted they were guided by the Holy Spirit to do so, then we find ourselves at odds with our own Church, and the Holy Spirit. The fact is, THEY came before us, and we are subservient to their decrees; they are not subservient to us and our opinions.

The Holy Spirit is way ahead of us, for He never facilitated a subsequent decree from the Church that rescinded or nullified the decree approved by Pope Urban VIII in 1633 that declared Galileo a heretic and said that heliocentrism was "formally heretical." How could He, since He has been understood to have been guiding both magisteriums and keeping them from error? How could He let one magisterium contradict another? If we say the 17th century magisterium erred, then it is a fact that the Holy Spirit allowed the Church to err, and if the Church can err in what it then declared as a matter of faith and morals (i.e., it was a matter of faith because Scripture taught the earth didn't move, and Scripture cannot lie), then it can also err in matters of faith and morals today, and if that is the case then we

simply don't have the Catholic Church we have claimed to have. This is an all or nothing game, gentlemen. We can no longer sit on the proverbial fence and shun one period of our official magisterium as seriously misguided and accept the unofficial musings of another period as correcting the former, especially since modern science gives us no help in substantiating the latter.

Continuing his demagoguery, Jordanes adds: "Not that I am much inclined to take seriously the theological and purportedly scientific disquisitions and assertions of a nominally Catholic apologist who doesn't even believe in God's immutability (see Sungenis' "Not By Bread Alone")"

Jordanes is wrong again. I DO believe in God's immutability, and nowhere in Not By Bread Alone do I deny said immutability. Since Jordanes doesn't provide the pages number to prove his contention, he has no evidence, and is thus engaging in calumny. Now, since Jordanes has made a false accusation that he hasn't proven, perhaps he will be man enough to reveal who he is behind the pseudonym "Jordanes" and what his qualifications are to judge these issues and issue such slanderous accusations. My prediction? Jordanes will continue to hide behind the pseudonym and make his slanderous judgments about me. I hope he proves me wrong.