**Theologians/Church documents statements on faith and reason**

**Day 1 Quotes**

**Anti- unity positions**

**Scientism Quotes**

* “[R]eligion was the race's first (and worst) attempt to make sense of reality. It was the best the species could do at a time when we had no concept of physics, chemistry, biology or medicine. We did not know that we lived on a round planet, let alone that the said planet was in orbit in a minor and obscure solar system, which was also on the edge of an unimaginably vast cosmos that was exploding away from its original source of energy. We did not know that micro-organisms were so powerful and lived in our digestive systems in order to enable us to live, as well as mounting lethal attacks on us as parasites. We did not know of our close kinship with other animals. We believed that sprites, imps, demons, and djinns were hovering in the air about us. We imagined that thunder and lightning were portentous. It has taken us a long time to shrug off this heavy coat of ignorance and fear, and every time we do there are self-interested forces who want to compel us to put it back on again.”

― **Christopher Hitchens,** [***The Portable Atheist: Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever***](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1558637)

* “I am continually astonished by those theists who, far from having their consciousness raised in the way that I propose, seem to rejoice in natural selection as 'God's way of achieving his creation'. They note that evolution by natural selection would be a very easy and neat way to achieve a world full of life. God wouldn't need to do anything at all! Peter Atkins, in the book just mentioned, takes this line of thought to a sensibly godless conclusion when he postulates a hypothetically lazy God who tries to get away with as little as possible in order to make a universe containing life. Atkins's lazy God is even lazier than the deist God of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment: deus otiosus - literally God at leisure, unoccupied, unemployed, superfluous, useless. Step by step, Atkins succeeds in reducing the amount of work the lazy God has to do until he finally ends up doing nothing at all: he might as well not bother to exist. My memory vividly hears Woody Allen's perceptive whine: 'If it turns out that there is a God, I don't think that he's evil. But the worst that you can say about him is that basically he's an underachiever.'”  
  -- Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p118-119
* “Searching for particular examples of irreducible complexity is a fundamentally unscientific way to proceed: a special case of arguing from present ignorance. It appeals to the same faulty logic as 'the God of the Gaps' strategy condemned by the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Creationists eagerly seek a gap in present-day knowledge or understanding. If an apparent gap is found, it is assumed that God, by default, must fill it. What worries thoughtful theologians such as Bonhoeffer is that gaps shrink as science advances, and God is threatened with eventually having nothing to do and nowhere to hide. What worries scientists is something else. It is an essential part of the scientific enterprise to admit ignorance, even to exult in ignorance as a challenge to future conquests. As my friend Matt Ridley has written, 'Most scientists are bored by what they have already discovered. It is ignorance that drives them on.' Mystics exult in mystery and want it to stay mysterious. Scientists exult in mystery for a different reason: it gives them something to do. More generally, as I shall repeat in Chapter 8, one of the truly bad effects of religion is that it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding.”

-- Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, p 125-126

* “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is He impotent. Is He able but not willing? Then is He malevolent? Is He both able and willing? Whence then is evil?”

-- [Hume, David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume) (1779). [*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_E7dbAAAAQAAJ). Penguin Books, Limited. p. [186](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_E7dbAAAAQAAJ/page/n189)

* There is a fundamental difference between religion, which is based on authority, [and] science, which is based on observation and reason. Science will win because it works.

*-- "Stephen Hawking on Religion: 'Science Will Win'" by Ki Mae Heussner, abcnews.go.com. June 7, 2010*

* “Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the Universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the Universe going.”

*"The Grand Design". Book by Stephen Hawking, 2010.*

* “The intelligent beings in these regions should therefore not be surprised if they observe that their locality in the universe satisfies the conditions that are necessary for their existence. It is a bit like a rich person living in a wealthy neighborhood not seeing any poverty.”

*Stephen Hawking (2009). “A Brief History Of Time: From Big Bang To Black Holes”, p.105, Random House*

* “I want to put on the table, not why 85% of the members of the National Academy of Sciences reject God, I want to know why 15% of the National Academy don’t.”

― **Neil deGrasse Tyson**

* “God is an ever-receding pocket of﻿ scientific ignorance.”

**― Neil DeGrasse Tyson**

* "I have never seen the slightest scientific proof of the religious theories of [heaven](https://www.learnreligions.com/what-happens-when-a-christian-dies-700369) and hell, of future life for individuals, or of a personal God... Not one of all the gods of all the various theologies has ever really been proved. We accept no ordinary [scientific fact](https://www.thoughtco.com/scientific-method-p2-373335) without the final proof; why should we, then, be satisfied in this most mighty of all matters, with a mere theory?"

-- Thomas Edison, (*The Columbian Magazine,* January 1911)

Pro Science

* “Nothing within the universe itself can exist to explain the fact that it exists.”

― **Guy Consolmagno,** [**God's Mechanics: How Scientists and Engineers Make Sense of Religion**](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1179029)

Miracles CS Lewis- Excerpt for classroom reading.

8 MIRACLES AND THE LAWS OF NATURE

“It’s a very odd thing– As odd as can be– That whatever Miss T. eats Turns into Miss T.”

* W. DE LA MARE

Having cleared out of the way those objections which are based on a popular and confused notion that the ‘progress of science’ has somehow made the world safe against Miracle, we must now consider the subject on a somewhat deeper level. The question is whether Nature can be known to be of such a kind that supernatural interferences with her are impossible. She is already known to be, in general, regular: she behaves according to fixed laws, many of which have been discovered, and which interlock with one another. There is, in this discussion, no question of mere failure or inaccuracy to keep these laws on the part of Nature, no question of chancy or spontaneous variation. The only question is whether, granting the existence of a Power outside Nature, there is any intrinsic absurdity in the idea of its intervening to produce within Nature events which the regular ‘going on’ of the whole natural system would never have produced.

Three conceptions of the ‘Laws’ of Nature have been held. (1) That they are mere brute facts, known only by observation, with no discoverable rhyme or reason about them. We know that Nature behaves thus and thus; we do not know why she does and can see no reason why she should not do the opposite. (2) That they are applications of the law of averages. The foundations of Nature are in the random and lawless. But the number of units we are dealing with are so enormous that the behaviour of these crowds (like the behaviour of very large masses of men) can be calculated with practical accuracy. What we call ‘impossible events’ are events so overwhelmingly improbable—by actuarial standards—that we do not need to take them into account. (3) That the fundamental laws of Physics are really what we call ‘necessary truths’ like the truths of mathematics—in other words, that if we clearly understand what we are saying we shall see that the opposite would be meaningless nonsense. Thus it is a ‘law’ that when one billiard ball shoves another the amount of momentum lost by the first ball must exactly equal the amount gained by the second. People who hold that the laws of Nature are necessary truths would say that all we have done is to split up the single events into two halves (adventures of ball A, and adventures of ball B) and then discover that ‘the two sides of the account balance’. When we understand this we see that of course they must balance. The fundamental laws are in the long run merely statements that every event is itself and not some different event.

It will at once be clear that the first of these three theories gives no assurance against Miracles—indeed no assurance that, even apart from Miracles, the ‘laws’ which we have hitherto observed will be obeyed tomorrow. If we have no notion why a thing happens, then of course we know no reason why it should not be otherwise, and therefore have no certainty that it might not some day be otherwise. The second theory, which depends on the law of averages, is in the same position. The assurance it gives us is of the same general kind as our assurance that a coin tossed a thousand times will not give the same result, say, nine hundred times: and that the longer you toss it the more nearly the numbers of Heads and Tails will come to being equal. But this is so only provided the coin is an honest coin. If it is a loaded coin our expectations may be disappointed. But the people who believe in miracles are maintaining precisely that the coin is loaded. The expectations based on the law of averages will work only for undoctored Nature. And the question whether miracles occur is just the question whether Nature is ever doctored.

The third view (that laws of Nature are necessary truths) seems at first sight to present an insurmountable obstacle to miracle. The breaking of them would, in that case, be a self-contradiction and not even Omnipotence can do what is self-contradictory. Therefore the Laws cannot be broken. And therefore, we shall conclude, no miracle can ever occur?

We have gone too quickly. It is certain that the billiard balls will behave in a particular way, just as it is certain that if you divided a shilling unequally between two recipients then A’s share must exceed the half and B’s share fall short of it by exactly the same amount. Provided, of course, that A does not by sleight of hand steal some of B’s pennies at the very moment of the transaction. In the same way, you know what will happen to the two billiard balls—provided nothing interferes. If one ball encounters a roughness in the cloth which the other does not, their motion will not illustrate the law in the way you had expected. Of course what happens as a result of the roughness in the cloth will illustrate the law in some other way, but your original prediction will have been false. Or again, if I snatch up a cue and give one of the balls a little help, you will get a third result: and that third result will equally illustrate the laws of physics, and equally falsify your prediction. I shall have ‘spoiled the experiment’. All interferences leave the law perfectly true. But every prediction of what will happen in a given instance is made under the proviso ‘other things being equal’ or ‘if there are no interferences’. Whether other things are equal in a given case and whether interferences may occur is another matter. The arithmetician, as an arithmetician, does not know how likely A is to steal some of B’s pennies when the shilling is being divided; you had better ask a criminologist. The physicist, as a physicist, does not know how likely I am to catch up a cue and ‘spoil’ his experiment with the billiard balls: you had better ask someone who knows me. In the same way the physicist, as such, does not know how likely it is that some supernatural power is going to interfere with them: you had better ask a metaphysician. But the physicist does know, just because he is a physicist, that if the billiard balls are tampered with by any agency, natural or supernatural, which he has not taken into account, then their behaviour must differ from what he expected. Not because the law is false, but because it is true. The more certain we are of the law the more clearly we know that if new factors have been introduced the result will vary accordingly. What we do not know, as physicists, is whether Supernatural power might be one of the new factors.

If the laws of Nature are necessary truths, no miracle can break them: but then no miracle needs to break them. It is with them as with the laws of arithmetic. If I put six pennies into a drawer on Monday and six more on Tuesday, the laws decree that—other things being equal—I shall find twelve pennies there on Wednesday. But if the drawer has been robbed I may in fact find only two. Something will have been broken (the lock of the drawer or the laws of England) but the laws of arithmetic will not have been broken. The new situation created by the thief will illustrate the laws of arithmetic just as well as the original situation. But if God comes to work miracles, He comes ‘like a thief in the night’. Miracle is, from the point of view of the scientist, a form of doctoring, tampering, (if you like) cheating. It introduces a new factor into the situation, namely supernatural force, which the scientist had not reckoned on. He calculates what will happen, or what must have happened on a past occasion, in the belief that the situation, at that point of space and time, is or was A. But if super-natural force has been added, then the situation really is or was AB.And no one knows better than the scientist thatAB cannot yield the same result as A. The necessary truth of the laws, far from making it impossible that miracles should occur, makes it certain that if the Supernatural is operating they must occur. For if the natural situation by itself, and the natural situation plus something else, yielded only the same result, it would be then that we should be faced with a lawless and unsystematic universe. The better you know that two and two make four, the better you know that two and three don’t.

This perhaps helps to make a little clearer what the laws of Nature really are. We are in the habit of talking as if they caused events to happen; but they have never caused any event at all. The laws of motion do not set billiard balls moving: they analyse the motion after something else (say, a man with a cue, or a lurch of the liner, or, perhaps, super-natural power) has provided it. They produce no events: they state the pattern to which every event—if only it can be induced to happen—must conform, just as the rules of arithmetic state the pattern to which all transactions with money must conform—if only you can get hold of any money. Thus in one sense the laws of Nature cover the whole field of space and time; in another, what they leave out is precisely the whole real universe—the incessant torrent of actual events which makes up true history. That must come from somewhere else. To think the laws can produce it is like thinking that you can create real money by simply doing sums. For every law, in the last resort, says ‘If you have A, then you will get B’. But first catch your A: the laws won’t do it for you.

It is therefore inaccurate to define a miracle as something that breaks the laws of Nature. It doesn’t. If I knock out my pipe I alter the position of a great many atoms: in the long run, and to an infinitesimal degree, of all the atoms there are. Nature digests or assimilates this event with perfect ease and harmonises it in a twinkling with all other events. It is one more bit of raw material for the laws to apply to, and they apply. I have simply thrown one event into the general cataract of events and it finds itself at home there and conforms to all other events. If God annihilates or creates or deflects a unit of matter He has created a new situation at that point. Immediately all Nature domiciles this new situation, makes it at home in her realm, adapts all other events to it. It finds itself conforming to all the laws. If God creates a miraculous spermatozoon in the body of a virgin, it does not proceed to break any laws. The laws at once take it over. Nature is ready. Pregnancy follows, according to all the normal laws, and nine months later a child is born. We see every day that physical nature is not in the least incommoded by the daily inrush of events from biological nature or from psychological nature. If events ever come from beyond Nature altogether, she will be no more incommoded by them. Be sure she will rush to the point where she is invaded, as the defensive forces rush to a cut in our finger, and there hasten to accommodate the newcomer. The moment it enters her realm it obeys all her laws. Miraculous wine will intoxicate, miraculous conception will lead to pregnancy, inspired books will suffer all the ordinary processes of textual corruption, miraculous bread will be digested. The divine art of miracle is not an art of suspending the pattern to which events conform but of feeding new events into that pattern. It does not violate the law’s proviso, ‘If A, then B’: it says, ‘But this time instead of A, A2,’ and Nature, speaking through all her laws, replies ‘Then B2’ and naturalises the immigrant, as she well knows how. She is an accomplished hostess .

A miracle is emphatically not an event without cause or without results. Its cause is the activity of God: its results follow according to Natural law. In the forward direction (i.e. during the time which follows its occurrence) it is interlocked with all Nature just like any other event. Its peculiarity is that it is not in that way interlocked backwards, interlocked with the previous history of Nature. And this is just what some people find intolerable. The reason they find it intolerable is that they start by taking Nature to be the whole of reality.And they are sure that all reality must be interrelated and consistent. I agree with them. But I think they have mistaken a partial system within reality, namely Nature, for the whole. That being so, the miracle and the previous history of Nature may be interlocked after all but not in the way the Naturalist expected: rather in a much more roundabout fashion. The great complex event called Nature, and the new particular event introduced into it by the miracle, are related by their common origin in God, and doubtless, if we knew enough, most intricately related in His purpose and design, so that a Nature which had had a different history, and therefore been a different Nature, would have been invaded by different miracles or by none at all. In that way the miracles and the previous course of Nature are as well interlocked as any other two realities, but you must go back as far as their common Creator to two realities, but you must go back as far as their common Creator to find the interlocking. You will not find it within Nature. The same sort of thing happens with any partial system. The behaviour of fishes which are being studied in a tank makes a relatively closed system. Now suppose that the tank is shaken by a bomb in the neigh-bourhood of the laboratory. The behaviour of the fishes will now be no longer fully explicable by what was going on in the tank before the bomb fell: there will be a failure of backward interlocking. This does not mean that the bomb and the previous history of events within the tank are totally and finally unrelated. It does mean that to find their relation you must go back to the much larger reality which includes both the tank and the bomb—the reality of wartime England in which bombs are falling but some laboratories are still at work. You would never find it within the history of the tank. In the same way, the miracle is not naturally interlocked in the backward direction. To find out how it is interlocked with the previous history of Nature you must replace both Nature and the miracle in a larger context. Everything is connected with everything else: but not all things are connected by the short and straight roads we expected.

The rightful demand that all reality should be consistent and systematic does not therefore exclude miracles: but it has a very valuable contribution to make to our conception of them. It reminds us that miracles, if they occur, must, like all events, be revelations of that total harmony of all that exists. Nothing arbitrary, nothing simply ‘stuck on’ and left unreconciled with the texture of total reality, can be admitted. By definition, miracles must of course interrupt the usual course of Nature; but if they are real they must, in the very act of so doing, assert all the more the unity and self-consistency of total reality at some deeper level. They will not be like unmetrical lumps of prose breaking the unity of a poem; they will be like that crowning metrical audacity which, though it may be paralleled nowhere else in the poem, yet, coming just where it does, and effecting just what it effects, is (to those who understand) the supreme revelation of the unity in the poet’s conception. If what we call Nature is modified by supernatural power, then we may be sure that the capability of being so modified is of the essence of Nature—that the total events, if we could grasp it, would turn out to involve, by its very character, the possibility of such modifications. If Nature brings forth miracles then doubtless it is as ‘natural’ for her to do so when impregnated by the masculine force beyond her as it is for a woman to bear children to a man. In calling them miracles we do not mean that they are contradictions or outrages; we mean that, left to her own resources, she could never produce them.

Day 2: Lesson plan part 1

* “Truth never contradicts truth…” ~Lateran Council V Session VIII, on the human soul
* “For even if faith is above reason , nevertheless, no true dissention or disagreement can ever be found between them, since both have their origin from one and the same font of …eternal truth…” Pope Pius IX, Qui Pluribus 1846

* “ Even though faith is above reason, there can never be any real disagreement between faith and reason, since it is the same God who reveals the mysteries and infuses faith, and who has endowed the hum mind with the light of reason”
* “Not only can faith and reason never be at odds with one another but they mutually support each other, for on the one hand right reason established the foundations of the faith and , illuminated by its light, develops the science of divine things; on the other had, faith delivers reason from errors and protects it and furnished it with knowledge of many kinds” ~First Vatican Council Session 3- Chapter 4 1870
* “Since there is nothing of truth in the natural order which abrogates faith in teachings divinely transmitted, but many things which confirm it; and since every discovery of truth can lend force to the knowledge and praise of God, accordingly whatever contributes to the extension of the boundaries of knowledge will always do so to the pleasure and joy of the Church” Pope Leo XIII, Immortale Dei 1885
* There should be no real disagreement between the theologian and the physicist, provided that each confines himself within his own territory… (the rest of this quote is beneficial to understanding of interpretation of Scripture in light of Science and the reading of the fathers) Pope Leo XIII Providentissimus Deus 1893
* “The Physicist tells us of laws; the Theologian of the Author, Maintainer, and Controller of them; of their scope, of their suspension, if so be; of their beginning and their end. This is how the two schools stand related to each other, at that point where they approach the nearest; but for the most part they are absolutely divergent.” ~St. John Henry Newman, Idea of a University
* “According to the measure of its progress, and contrary to affirmations advances in the past, true science discovers god in an ever increasing degree, as though God were waiting behind every door opened by science. We would even say that from this progressive discovery of God, which is realized in the increase of knowledge, there flow benefits no only for the scientist himself when he reflects as a philosopher…and how could he escape such reflections?” ~Pope Pius XII, Address to the Pontifical academy of sciences, 1951

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/proofs-for-the-existence-of-god-in-the-light-of-modern-natural-science-8950> ( the whole address is worthwhile)

* Therefore if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God. Indeed whoever labors to penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind, even though he is unaware of the fact, is nevertheless being led by the hand of God, who holds all things in existence, and gives them their identity. Consequently, we cannot but deplore certain habits of mind, which are sometimes found too among Christians, which do not sufficiently attend to the rightful independence of science and which, from the arguments and controversies they spark, lead many minds to conclude that faith and science are mutually opposed. 2nd Vatican Council, Gaudium Et Spes SS 36

* Scientific books and periodicals deal with astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology overflow with information that staggers ones mind as they explain the inner workings of visible creation and especially living organisms….With their own tools scientist are showing that a change universe is an impossibility. Thomas Dubay S.M. Faith and Certitude 234,236
* “The virtual relationship between science and faith is also founded on these premises concerning the fertile connection between understanding and believing. Scientific research leads to the knowledge of ever new truths about man and about the cosmos, as we see it. The true good of humanity, accessible in faith, unfolds the horizons within which the process of its discovery must move.” ~Pope Benedict XVI General audience 2012
* “The gaze of science thus benefits from faith: faith encourages the scientist to remain constantly open to reality in all its inexhaustible richness. Faith awakens the critical sense by preventing research from being satisfied with its own formula and helps it to realize that nature is always greater. “ ~Pope Francis Lumen Fidei Ss 34

**Evolution specifically**

* “ It does not seem to me to follow that creation is denied because the Creator, millions of years ago, gave laws to matter. He first created matter and then he created laws for it — laws which should *construct* it into its present wonderful beauty, and accurate adjustment and harmony of parts *gradually*. We do not deny or circumscribe the Creator, because we hold he has created the self acting originating human mind, which has almost a creative gift; much less then do we deny or circumscribe His power, if we hold that He gave matter such laws as by their blind instrumentality molded and constructed through innumerable ages the world as we see it. ~John Henry Cardinal Newman, Letter on a book about Darwinian theory, 1868

* Speaking of creation and evolution: “ We are faced here with two complimentary -rather than mutually exclusive- realities “ Josef Cardinal Ratzinger- Homily on the creation of man

* “For these reasons the Teaching Authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions, on the part of men experienced in both fields, take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter - for the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God.” Pope Pius XII, Humane Generis Ss36
* **Scientists in favor of unity:**
* “The conflict is not between religion and science, it is between religion and materialism.” Stephen Barr, PhD
* “Materialism is a philosophical opinion…. The basic tenet of so called ‘scientific materialism’ is that nothing exist except matter, and that everything in the world must therefore be the result of the strict mathematical laws of physics and blind chance.” --Stephen Barr, PhD
* “To know the mighty works of God, to comprehend His wisdom and majesty and power; to appreciate, in degree, the wonderful workings of His laws, surely all this must be a pleasing and acceptable mode of worship to the Most High, to whom ignorance cannot be more grateful than knowledge.” Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)
* “Since we astronomers are priests of the highest God in regard to the book of nature, it benefits us to be thoughtful, not of the glory of our minds, but rather, above all else, of the glory of God… [by] thinking God’s thoughts after Him.” Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)
* “Since every particle of space is *always*, and every indivisible moment of duration is *every where*, certainly the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be *never* and *no where*....God is the same God, always and every where. He is omnipresent not *virtually* only, but also *substantially*; for virtue cannot subsist without substance.” Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727)
* “Physical laws can never provide a complete explanation of the universe …. Laws themselves do not create anything, they are merely a description of what happens under certain conditions.” John Lennox
* “Either human intelligence ultimately owes its origin to mindless matter; or  there is a Creator. It is strange that some people claim that it is their  intelligence that leads them to prefer the first to the second.” John Lennox
* “Once you realize that the Bible does not purport to be a textbook of science, the old controversy between religion and science vanishes… Fr. Georges Lemaître
* “The Bible shows the way to go to heaven, not the way the heavens go… I give infinite thanks to God, who has been pleased to make me the first observer of marvelous things… I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use.” Galileo Galilei – Father of Modern Astronomy
* The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glassGod is waiting for you.” Werner Karl Heisenberg.
* “I have always preferred to find the source of that purposiveness, of which the whole course of nature gives conclusive evidence, not in the thing created but in the Creator.” Theodor Schwann  (Dec 7, 1810 to Jan 11, 1882)
* “ Faith and science are two different manifestations of the same reality. When they seem to have conflicting conclusions, it is because our knowledge is not complete.” Stacy A. Transancos
* “One has to but marvel at the periodic table to know the a wise and intelligent God has ‘ordered all thing in measure, and number, and weight’ (Ws 11:21)” Stacy A. Transancos
* “ while God’s truth cannot change, the conclusions of science can and do, and often in quite unexpected ways. And our conception of God’s truth theologically can and does progress in the light of new knowledge.” Chris Baglow

Day 2 : Lesson Plan Part 2:

**Letter to Vatican Observatory**

* “Yet the unity that we seek, as we have already stressed, is not identity. The Church does not propose that science should become religion or religion science. On the contrary, unity always presupposes the diversity and the integrity of its elements. Each of these members should become not less itself but more itself in a dynamic interchange, for a unity in which one of the elements is reduced to the other is destructive, false in its promises of harmony, and ruinous of the integrity of its components. We are asked to become one. We are not asked to become each other.”
* “the impact each [religion and science] has, and will continue to have, on the course of civilization and on the world itself, cannot be overestimated, and there is so much that each can offer the other.
* “If they are to grow and mature, peoples cannot continue to live in separate compartments, pursuing totally divergent interests from which they evaluate and judge their world. A divided community fosters a fragmented vision of the world; a community of interchange encourages its members to expand their partial perspectives and form a new unified vision.”
* “They can also come to appreciate for themselves that these discoveries cannot be a genuine substitute for knowledge of the truly ultimate. Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish.”

~Pope St. John Paul II, Letter to the director of the Vatican observatory, 1988

<http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19880601_padre-coyne.html>

**Fides Et Ratio**

1. Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves

3. Men and women have at their disposal an array of resources for generating greater knowledge of truth so that their lives may be ever more human. Among these is *philosophy*, which is directly concerned with asking the question of life's meaning and sketching an answer to it. Philosophy emerges, then, as one of noblest of human tasks. According to its Greek etymology, the term philosophy means “love of wisdom”. Born and nurtured when the human being first asked questions about the reason for things and their purpose, philosophy shows in different modes and forms that the desire for truth is part of human nature itself. It is an innate property of human reason to ask why things are as they are, even though the answers which gradually emerge are set within a horizon which reveals how the different human cultures are complementary.

It has happened therefore that reason, rather than voicing the human orientation towards truth, has wilted under the weight of so much knowledge and little by little has lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being. Abandoning the investigation of being, modern philosophical research has concentrated instead upon human knowing. Rather than make use of the human capacity to know the truth, modern philosophy has preferred to accentuate the ways in which this capacity is limited and conditioned.

This has given rise to different forms of agnosticism and relativism which have led philosophical research to lose its way in the shifting sands of widespread skepticism. Recent times have seen the rise to prominence of various doctrines which tend to devalue even the truths which had been judged certain. A legitimate plurality of positions has yielded to an undifferentiated pluralism, based upon the assumption that all positions are equally valid, which is one of today's most widespread symptoms of the lack of confidence in truth

13. It should nonetheless be kept in mind that Revelation remains charged with mystery. It is true that Jesus, with his entire life, revealed the countenance of the Father, for he came to teach the secret things of God.[13](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html#%24D) But our vision of the face of God is always fragmentary and impaired by the limits of our understanding. Faith alone makes it possible to penetrate the mystery in a way that allows us to understand it coherently.

To assist reason in its effort to understand the mystery there are the signs which Revelation itself presents. These serve to lead the search for truth to new depths, enabling the mind in its autonomous exploration to penetrate within the mystery by use of reason's own methods, of which it is rightly jealous. Yet these signs also urge reason to look beyond their status as signs in order to grasp the deeper meaning which they bear. They contain a hidden truth to which the mind is drawn and which it cannot ignore without destroying the very signs which it is given.

28. The search for truth, of course, is not always so transparent nor does it always produce such results. The natural limitation of reason and the inconstancy of the heart often obscure and distort a person's search. Truth can also drown in a welter of other concerns. People can even run from the truth as soon as they glimpse it because they are afraid of its demands. Yet, for all that they may evade it, the truth still influences life. Life in fact can never be grounded upon doubt, uncertainty or deceit; such an existence would be threatened constantly by fear and anxiety. One may define the human being, therefore, as *the one who seeks the truth*.

38. . Christianity's engagement with philosophy was therefore neither straight-forward nor immediate. The practice of philosophy and attendance at philosophical schools seemed to the first Christians more of a disturbance than an opportunity. For them, the first and most urgent task was the proclamation of the Risen Christ by way of a personal encounter which would bring the listener to conversion of heart and the request for Baptism. But that does not mean that they ignored the task of deepening the understanding of faith and its motivations

39. It is clear from history, then, that Christian thinkers were critical in adopting philosophical thought. Among the early examples of this, Origen is certainly outstanding. In countering the attacks launched by the philosopher Celsus, Origen adopts Platonic philosophy to shape his argument and mount his reply. Assuming many elements of Platonic thought, he begins to construct an early form of Christian theology

42. In Scholastic theology, the role of philosophically trained reason becomes even more conspicuous under the impulse of Saint Anselm's interpretation of the *intellectus fidei*. For the saintly Archbishop of Canterbury the priority of faith is not in competition with the search which is proper to reason. Reason in fact is not asked to pass judgement on the contents of faith, something of which it would be incapable, since this is not its function. Its function is rather to find meaning, to discover explanations which might allow everyone to come to a certain understanding of the contents of faith

The fundamental harmony between the knowledge of faith and the knowledge of philosophy is once again confirmed. Faith asks that its object be understood with the help of reason; and at the summit of its searching reason acknowledges that it cannot do without what faith presents.

43. Faith is in a sense an “exercise of thought”; and human reason is neither annulled nor debased in assenting to the contents of faith, which are in any case attained by way of free and informed choice.[46](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html#%241A)

45. Although they insisted upon the organic link between theology and philosophy, Saint Albert the Great and Saint Thomas were the first to recognize the autonomy which philosophy and the sciences needed if they were to perform well in their respective fields of research

46. The more influential of these radical positions are well known and high in profile, especially in the history of the West. It is not too much to claim that the development of a good part of modern philosophy has seen it move further and further away from Christian Revelation, to the point of setting itself quite explicitly in opposition. This process reached its apogee in the last century. Some representatives of idealism sought in various ways to transform faith and its contents, even the mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, into dialectical structures which could be grasped by reason. Opposed to this kind of thinking were various forms of atheistic humanism, expressed in philosophical terms, which regarded faith as alienating and damaging to the development of a full rationality. They did not hesitate to present themselves as new religions serving as a basis for projects which, on the political and social plane, gave rise to totalitarian systems which have been disastrous for humanity.

In the field of scientific research, a positivistic mentality took hold which not only abandoned the Christian vision of the world, but more especially rejected every appeal to a metaphysical or moral vision. It follows that certain scientists, lacking any ethical point of reference, are in danger of putting at the centre of their concerns something other than the human person and the entirety of the person's life. Further still, some of these, sensing the opportunities of technological progress, seem to succumb not only to a market-based logic, but also to the temptation of a quasi-divine power over nature and even over the human being.

As a result of the crisis of rationalism, what has appeared finally is *nihilism*. As a philosophy of nothingness, it has a certain attraction for people of our time. Its adherents claim that the search is an end in itself, without any hope or possibility of ever attaining the goal of truth. In the nihilist interpretation, life is no more than an occasion for sensations and experiences in which the ephemeral has pride of place. Nihilism is at the root of the widespread mentality which claims that a definitive commitment should no longer be made, because everything is fleeting and provisional.

88. Another threat to be reckoned with is *scientism*. This is the philosophical notion which refuses to admit the validity of forms of knowledge other than those of the positive sciences; and it relegates religious, theological, ethical and aesthetic knowledge to the realm of mere fantasy. In the past, the same idea emerged in positivism and neo-positivism, which considered metaphysical statements to be meaningless. Critical epistemology has discredited such a claim, but now we see it revived in the new guise of scientism, which dismisses values as mere products of the emotions and rejects the notion of being in order to clear the way for pure and simple facticity. Science would thus be poised to dominate all aspects of human life through technological progress. The undeniable triumphs of scientific research and contemporary technology have helped to propagate a scientistic outlook, which now seems boundless, given its inroads into different cultures and the radical changes it has brought.

Regrettably, it must be noted, scientism consigns all that has to do with the question of the meaning of life to the realm of the irrational or imaginary. No less disappointing is the way in which it approaches the other great problems of philosophy which, if they are not ignored, are subjected to analyses based on superficial analogies, lacking all rational foundation. This leads to the impoverishment of human thought, which no longer addresses the ultimate problems which the human being, as the *animal rationale*, has pondered constantly from the beginning of time. And since it leaves no space for the critique offered by ethical judgement, the scientistic mentality has succeeded in leading many to think that if something is technically possible it is therefore morally admissible.

101.Finally, I cannot fail to address a word to *scientists*, whose research offers an ever greater knowledge of the universe as a whole and of the incredibly rich array of its component parts, animate and inanimate, with their complex atomic and molecular structures. So far has science come, especially in this century, that its achievements never cease to amaze us. In expressing my admiration and in offering encouragement to these brave pioneers of scientific research, to whom humanity owes so much of its current development, I would urge them to continue their efforts without ever abandoning the *sapiential* horizon within which scientific and technological achievements are wedded to the philosophical and ethical values which are the distinctive and indelible mark of the human person. Scientists are well aware that “the search for truth, even when it concerns a finite reality of the world or of man, is never-ending, but always points beyond to something higher than the immediate object of study, to the questions which give access to Mystery”.