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## **Francis in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences emphasizes the responsibility of humanity in creation**

Vatican City, 27 October 2014 (VIS) – This morning the Holy Father attended the plenary session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences held in the Casina Pio IV, during which he inaugurated a bust of Pope emeritus Benedict XVI, whom he described as “a great Pope. Great for the strength and penetration of his intelligence, great for his important contribution to theology, great for his love of the Church and of human beings, great for his virtue and religiosity”. He recalled that Benedict XVI was the first to invite a president of this Academy to participate in the Synod on new evangelization, “aware of the importance of science in modern culture”.

Pope Francis chose not to focus on the complex issue of the evolution of nature, the theme the Academy will consider during this session, emphasizing however that “God and Christ walk with us and are also present in nature”. “When we read in Genesis the account of Creation, we risk imagining God as a magus, with a magic wand able to make everything. But it is not so. He created beings and allowed them to develop according to the internal laws that He gave to each one, so that they were able to develop and to arrive and their fullness of being. He gave autonomy to the beings of the Universe at the same time at which he assured them of his continuous presence, giving being to every reality. And so creation continued for centuries and centuries, millennia and millennia, until it became which we know today, precisely because God is not a demiurge or a conjurer, but the Creator who gives being to all things. The beginning of the world is not the work of chaos that owes its origin to another, but derives directly from a supreme Origin that creates out of love. The Big Bang, which nowadays is posited as the origin of the world, does not contradict the divine act of creating, but rather requires it. The evolution of nature does not contrast with the notion of Creation, as evolution presupposes the creation of beings that evolve”.

He continued, “With regard to man, instead, there is a change and something new. When, on the sixth day of the account in Genesis, man is created, God gives the human being autonomy, an autonomy that is different to that of nature, which is freedom. And he tells man to name everything and to go ahead through history. This makes him responsible for creation, so that he might dominate it in order to develop it until the end of time. Therefore the scientist, and above all the Christian scientist, must adopt the approach of posing questions regarding the future of humanity and of the earth, and, of being free and responsible, helping to prepare it and preserve it, to eliminate risks to the environment of both a natural and human nature. But, at the same time, the scientist must be motivated by the confidence that nature hides, in her evolutionary mechanisms, potentialities for intelligence and freedom to discover and realize, to achieve the development that is in the plan of the Creator. So, while limited, the action of humanity is part of God's power and is

able to build a world suited to his dual corporal and spiritual life; to build a human world for all human beings and not for a group or a class of privileged persons. This hope and trust in God, the Creator of nature, and in the capacity of the human spirit can offer the researcher a new energy and profound serenity. But it is also true that the action of humanity – when freedom becomes autonomy – which is not freedom, but autonomy – destroys creation and man takes the place of the Creator. And this is the grave sin against God the Creator”, he concluded.

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