

Astrobiology News December 2013:
Clergy Event at the Adler Planetarium on February 18, 2014

As 2013 comes to a close, I wanted to update everyone on our plans for “Celebrating Clergy Contributions to Science” at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago. Our date is now set for Tuesday, February 18th. Yes, it’s a week after Evolution Weekend, but it’s also the date that Br./Dr. Guy Consolmagno S.J., curator of the Vatican Meteorite collection and planetary scientist, will be able to join us to share some of the fascinating history of the Vatican Observatory. You may recall that I wrote about Guy a few months back, in the context of his research on Jupiter’s icy moons, most notably Europa, whose sub-surface oceans may be suitable for life.

Although I will be sending out a more detailed schedule in January to those who have emailed me with interest in attending – and you are still welcome to do so – I thought I’d share some details of what we’re planning. The event will take place during public planetarium hours, from mid-morning through Adler closing time. We have a room reserved in *CyberSpace* (<http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/exhibits/cyberspace>) for presentations, although we will spend part of the day out and about touring the museum (including a behind-the-scenes tour of the collections archived by the Webster Institute for the History of Astronomy), seeing the live show *Cosmic Wonder* (<http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/shows/cosmic-wonder>), and experiencing floor demonstrations for the public, which will be tailored specifically to scientific contributions made by clergy and lay leaders in religious communities throughout the day. We expect the event to be publicized in local media as well as through Adler’s social media channels.

A few of our confirmed presenters and/or participants include retired minister Chuck Ruehle, who, together with his wife Sue, also a retired minister, is building a Science Center in Tanzania; Rev. Bruce Booher, who leads astronomically-themed retreats and maintains the mysteryandawe.com website; representatives of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago’s *Teaching Religion and Science across the Seminary Curriculum* project; Catholic theologian Thomas O’Meara O.P., author of *Vast Universe: Extraterrestrials and Christian Revelation*; Rev. Phil Blackwell, Senior Pastor of the First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple (with whom I had the pleasure of coordinating an Astrobiology presentation series several years ago), and Br. Guy. There will also be information available on various efforts or people, including women in the Society of Ordained Scientists (<http://www.ordainedscientists.org/>), and the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church USA, Katherine Jefferts Schori, who holds a Ph.D. in oceanography.

If you plan to join us in February, but haven’t emailed me yet, please do so as soon as possible (gwolfchase@adlerplanetarium.org) and I will include you on the list of participants. I would like to supply Adler’s floor managers with a finalized list of participants by the end of January. Also, if you have not already done so, I encourage you to fill out the still-open Survey Monkey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VH39L3J>

Remember, your responses will be invaluable to us as we plan future ways to partner scientists and clergy in ways that model positive interactions between science and religion!

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy 2014,

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