

Vatican Observatory “Science Guy” Wins Carl Sagan Medal
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When you think of famous public science communicators, Jesuit astronomers might not immediately spring to mind, but you can find one on video discussing the scientific and philosophical aspects of the question, “Why did the Universe begin?” in *The Universe: A Walk Through Space and Time* exhibit gallery at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago.¹ In fact, Br./Dr. Guy Consolmagno, SJ has a long history with the Adler and many other institutions of science education. He has also been a guest of honor at several science fiction conventions and has appeared on the popular Colbert Report.²

On July 2, 2014, Guy was awarded the Carl Sagan Medal for Excellence in Public Communication in Planetary Science by the American Astronomical Society.³ The reasons listed for choosing Guy to receive this award include his “decades-long track record of communicating planetary science to the public while maintaining an active science career” and his “unique position within our profession as a credible spokesperson for scientific honesty within the context of religious belief.” Guy is identified as “a rational spokesperson who can convey exceptionally well how religion and science can co-exist for believers.”⁴

Coincidentally, I first learned Guy had received this award while checking my email at a symposium that was dedicated to the memory of another Vatican Observatory scientist and friend. Earlier this month, the Clavius Symposium was held at the University of Notre Dame in honor of Fr./Dr. William Stoeger, SJ, a Vatican Observatory cosmologist who passed away in March.⁵ Guy writes of Bill, “I could say that he was both the smartest man and the holiest man I have known, but he would have rejected that characterization out of hand. So I will only say that his goodness and his genius never ceased to move me. He's the only person I know who could both understand and work with the mathematics of the Big Bang, and also direct retreats for women Religious”.⁶

Guy will present a public lecture at the Adler Planetarium this November, where he'll also sign copies of his new book, *Would You Baptize an Extraterrestrial?... and Other Questions from the Astronomers' In-box at the Vatican Observatory* (coauthored with Fr. Paul Mueller, SJ).⁷ The book will be released on October 7, 2014, and more information about Adler's event with Br. Guy will be forthcoming!

¹ <http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/exhibits/the-universe-a-walk-through-space-and-time>

² <http://thecolbertreport.cc.com/videos/zwjey6/gold--frankincense-and-mars---guy-consolmagno>

³ <http://dps.aas.org/prizes/sagan>

⁴ <http://dps.aas.org/news/aas-division-planetary-sciences-announces-2014-prize-winners>

⁵ <http://home.cogeco.ca/~clavius/>

⁶ See <http://www.jesuitscalifornia.org/document.doc?id=567> for the full tribute.

⁷ <http://www.amazon.com/Would-You-Baptize-Extraterrestrial-Astronomers/dp/0804136955>).