

There is one field of science in which I have to confess I have an unseemly, perhaps even unhealthy, interest: quantum physics. I'm especially interested for this reason. Many physicists today are looking for a TOE (theory of everything). It used to be called the unified field theory. Scientists hoped to explain in one paradigm the four fundamental forces of nature. In theory, a TOE would explain everything: how things came into being, why there is something rather than nothing, human consciousness, religion, God, miracles, even resurrection, I suppose. Wouldn't that be exciting? People of faith have looked for support for their religious beliefs, for belief in God, for an afterlife. Wouldn't it be great if science could show that there was some evidence of the transcendent?

For example, the Big Bang theory of origins is thought to be more consonant with belief in a creator than alternative theories. That the universe seems to be calibrated for life's existence, that everything fits together so well, suggests to some, the existence of God. Some have thought that there was room for God in chaos theory. Others have thought that mathematics is a sign of the existence of God. Think of it: the human mind manipulating pure abstractions that turn out to describe something that happens in the real world. Isn't this an argument for intelligent design? Others have thought that room for God can be found in the quantum foam of infinitesimally small.

In recent years, the search for the theory of everything has turned to "string theory." To explain the existence of a veritable menagerie of subatomic particles, some theorize that all result from a vibrating, oscillating, dancing filament that they named a "string." What that means, speaking metaphorically, is that everything we see, everything we regard as real, everything we take to be solid, the whole world, the entire galaxy, in all its complexity and wondrous beauty—ourselves included—is more like the

melody of a musical composition than anything else. This theory is exuberantly, aggressively, wonderfully, fabulously complex. So abstract is it that only a few people understand it. There is now no way to test whether it is correct. Some doubt that it can ever be tested. To liberate the strings would require a collider well beyond the energy of the recent Large Hadron Collider in Cern. It would take the energy of the known universe! The language used to describe the theory is metaphorical and poetic. It approaches philosophy, much to the dismay of scientists.

Of course, hardly anyone thinks that studying science will force the conclusion that there must be a God. Science is not a substitute for faith. Science will never make faith unnecessary. But for one who has already found God, understanding science reveals what God has done in this world and cannot help but strengthen faith.

For people of faith this is no great revelation. We think that we are surrounded by evidence that there is a God. We've always thought that creation reveals the creator. A few moments ago we heard the opening words of a text sacred to billions of people: IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH." This is why the psalmist can remind us that "THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD, AND THE FIRMAMENT PROCLAIMS HIS HANDIWORK" (19:1). That is why the Apostle Paul can write this in his letter to the Romans: "FOR WHAT CAN BE KNOWN ABOUT GOD IS EVIDENT TO THEM, BECAUSE GOD MADE IT EVIDENT TO THEM. EVER SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, HIS INVISIBLE ATTRIBUTES OF ETERNAL POWER AND DIVINITY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BE UNDERSTOOD AND PERCEIVED IN WHAT HE HAS MADE." We find the same thing expressed in Judaism and Islam: natural phenomenon are God's signs in the universe and studying them is almost a religious obligation. Science and spirituality have a common goal, the quest for truth.

But apart from this can one find God in quantum physics? in superstring theory? I obviously think you can in this way: Why should we be interested, do you suppose, in the composition of matter beyond the atoms that make up everyday useful compounds? What is the purpose of our exploration of the farthest reaches of our universe and of the infinitely small? Why should we worry about the nature of space and time, or the “Fabric of the Cosmos.” That’s physicist Brian Greene’s recent book. It’s subtitled: “Space, Time, and Texture of Reality.” Isn’t that a great title? Even beyond that. Why do you think we have the intelligence to probe the answers to these questions and to devise these stupendously complex answers? The intelligence of human beings is far greater than what is strictly needed for survival. Our intelligence is far beyond that of our closest relative on this planet. For what reason?

I think the answer is found in Genesis: “LET US MAKE HUMAN KIND IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS.” What does it mean to be made in the divine image, after the likeness of God? It means that we have been given, to an extraordinary degree, the capacity to know and to love. We are the works that reveal par excellence the existence of God. God has given us the desire for the search, the intelligence to conduct the search, and ability at the end of our quest to choose the Truth, to choose God in love.

Today we celebrate the great feast of Easter. It is the climax of the church year because it celebrates the central mystery of Christianity: our redemption through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter tells us about the God of creation. The women who come to the tomb are utterly unprepared for what they find. The tomb cannot contain Jesus. God refuses to accept the human “no” to the messenger of his redemption, to his incarnate word of love.

Although there is much about resurrection we do not know, Easter

does tell us that the death of Jesus is not the end of the Story. But neither is his resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is the promise of a new beginning. Through the power of God there is always a new beginning. The gift of resurrection is the gift of hope. Haven't you ever wondered why it is that hope never seems to die. Even in the midst of violence, failure, tragedy, war, sin and death—the whole sorry human litany—people don't give up. Resurrection says that these things are not ultimately to determine human destiny, are not to have lasting control over those made in the image of God. People rise to the occasion, perform heroic deeds, act without regard to personal safety, respond in a way breathtakingly generous.

Easter is a call to discipleship. The world into which the Christ is raised is different but not completely changed. Paul is careful to argue in Romans that new life in Christ does not remove the faithful from a world still in bondage to evil. Resurrection of Jesus is available only as a foretaste. As long as life lasts, we are part of a creation that groans in travail, awaiting the birth of the new for the whole of creation. We are called to work for the liberation of all those still living in the shadow of death, still under bondage.

Above all Easter is a call to continue that search for God. Someone once said that you cannot find the truth without being in love. For that you need people. You need a community of people, a community of love and faith. The search for truth requires the desire for communion with that ultimate truth that lies at the heart of all existence, the God of love and life. It is a most exciting journey, a journey that will never end.

May the God of the universe, of superstring theory and quantum physics, the God of music and poetry, the God who is Father, the same God who raised Jesus from the dead, bless you and your families this Easter. Baptized into the death of the Lord may you also rise with him to

new life and love forever.