

Everything is a miracle

By Dr. Colin Derdeyn

There is a great quote from Albert Einstein: “There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” From my vantage, there is nothing in science that threatens or challenges faith, and nothing in faith that threatens science, unless people are using one or the other inappropriately. I think they inform each other, actually. The more we learn (through science), the more we appreciate our existence and the world we live in, as a miracle.

Everything is a miracle. It is awe-inspiring and humbling to know that all matter, time and space started from an infinitesimally dense, single tiny point 14 billion years ago and that we now live in a vast, expanding universe filled with two trillion galaxies, each containing billions of stars, hurtling through space away from each other and at increasing speed. That all matter that we can see (except the dark matter we can't see) started as hydrogen atoms in the earliest stars, and then through cycles of collapse, super novae explosions and rebirth, heavier atoms and metals were formed. We are truly stardust! That subatomic particles can be connected by quantum effects across great distances in ways we still don't understand. That life formed on our planet. That we, and all other living things, evolved from these early forms of life. And that we are capable (to some degree) of being conscious and aware of all this marvelous complexity of life and beauty around us. And that we are capable of love and cruelty, of forgiveness and hate, and of self-awareness and incredible denial and self-deception. We are biologically, psychologically, and socially complex beings.

As a scientist, I marvel at what we have learned. Science, fueled by our imagination and desire to learn, has allowed us to delve into the mysteries of the world and we are so much richer for it.

What about the relationship of faith and science? Dr. Rossi and others have already contributed some scholarly blogs on the history of the relationship of the church and the science of the day. It is a fascinating and complex story. I'm not going to recapitulate that here. Rather, I'd like to focus on how I reconcile my faith with my scientific orientation.

There are many ways to God and to experience the presence of God. For me, it is through wonder and awe at this world. Its beauty, complexity, and vastness. Faith is ultimately a choice – a choice to believe or not. The tools and methods of science cannot prove the existence of God, but neither can they prove the absence of God. A first cause (God) for this universe, and all that is in it, is a real possibility. You can choose to believe that if you'd like. I do. This is not a difficult leap of faith for me. The second leap is harder and one that I sometimes struggle with– that this God is present and active in our lives today, and manifested himself on this planet in the person of Jesus, in order to show us the path we are meant to take. The path of love, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice, dying to self. If I accept the existence of God in the universe, this second leap of faith also becomes achievable for me. If there is a God, anything is possible.