

***Opening speech at the autumn Scientific Session
with the theme
SCIENCE, RELIGION, SOCIETY***

Dear participants,

We are opening today, September 23, 2011 at the Monastery of "Acoperământul Maicii Domnului," the Autumn Scientific Session of the Academy of Romanian Scientists in collaboration with the Archdiocese and Archbishop of Tomis and Suceava and Radauti, debating for the second time a much discussed issue "Science, religion and society," especially since we are in the beginning of the 21st century facing the knowledge society and, why not, a society progressing to that of consciousness.

In fact, the notion of science comes from the Latin "scientia" which translated means knowledge. In the current perspective, science includes an amount of information about the "machinery of nature, of natural causes and its natural processes".

Depending on the field studied, we acknowledge a great variety of sciences: physics, mathematics, astronomy, biology, genetics, ecology, etc.

Over time scientists have tried to discover the objective truth and believed, but their faith was wrong because no one was able to divide their personality and separate the scholar from the "philosopher" or the inner "believer." Speaking of a human being, we encounter the paradox of its objectivity on nature of because the scientist (scholar) filters knowledge first through his senses, which are subjective, the mind which is also subjective, and then through her or his own philosophy which is subjective, too.

It follows that science seeks truth, but never reaches to knowing the "absolute truth" for the simple fact that human consciousness itself is relative and evolving.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant said that all knowledge, all human knowledge bears the imprint of its own structures of mind. That is, in order that man could be able to interpret the facts, he projects on them her or his own designs of judgment. As Kant, the Swiss psychiatrist Jean Piaget says that all human knowledge is of genetic origin.

On this origin depends how our mind is built.

Therefore, tomorrow's discoveries shall set in perspective the scientific certainties of today. For example, Euclid's geometry theorems for thousands of years were an "absolute truth" until the nineteenth century when the Russian mathematician Lobacevski and Transylvanian Janos Bolyai identified the non-Euclidian geometry which is outside the scope of application of Euclid's theory.

Another well-known example is the mechanical physics Newton's theory considered universal for hundreds of years until Einstein stated the relativity theory.

Very recently, two American scientists from the nuclear reactor Mc. MASTER (Dr. Henry Schwarcz and Dr. Jack Rink) overthrew all dating of the paleontologists, using for the first time the method called "Electro Spin Resonance" with Cobalt 60. They have established that the skull of "Java man," assessed so far to about 300,000 years has actually only 30,000 years. Therefore, the performance of modern technology brings new information in human knowledge and not only.

But what is religion?

The word religion comes from the Latin "re-ligia = reread" i.e. the act of repeating the Scriptures according to Cicero, or "re-ligia", which means "to bind, to reconnect, to link with God."

Today we can say that religion is an ideology, or a conception of life that recognizes the existence of a supernatural and invisible power that controls nature and human destiny and that of the world, and to which man owes obedience, respect and worship. Like science, religion offers man Understanding that has Divinity as a referee.

It reveals man the truth about God, world and man.

The two fields "science and religion" are totally parallel, but they intersect in the discussions concerning the origin and creation of the world.

Today, modern science cannot explain exactly the origin of the physical Universe. One must first accept the existence of non-physical spiritual universe unknown to us. In this situation we can explain the appearance of Big Bang as a necessity of a divine nature known and accepted by Christianity.

Scientists have found that the Big Bang was more than 15 billion years ago, as the only physical point of spiritual universe.

CERN experiment in Switzerland is known as a kind of Big Bang with the participation of Romanian physicists and aims to identify that particle, "boson Higgs," created at a very high energy, called the God particle. This experiment, according to researchers, brings new contributions to the knowledge of the universe.

Even today, the origin of the world is one of the greatest mysteries of mankind. Science and religion provide answers concerning the origin of our world and the origin of mankind, respectively.

Science deals with the natural sphere, and religion accounts for the supernatural. Science deals with Creation, and religion is concerned with the Creator.

According to the philosopher and physicist Pierre Duhem (1861-1916) "the claims of science are inherently limited, so that they leave room for other truths, such as the metaphysical and religious truths, which by their nature are more inclusive."

In this respect, Albert Einstein also stated and I quote: "Religion is the noblest impulse for scientific research. The one who did not know it I find to be dead or at least blind. Recognizing the existence of what is impenetrable for us, recognizing the manifestation of the highest reason, in front of which our mind is quite primitive, represents the true religious sentiment.

Religion consists of a humble admiration of the high spirit, which reveals the self in the little that we can know of reality, using our weak and transitory reason. This conviction is at the basis of any superior scientific work." (End of quote).

The words quoted show that science does not refer to the whole reality in which we live, but only to a certain aspect of it, and as our religious experience is as real and fundamental as the scientific one, the recognition of the two can not bring any damage to human knowledge, but approach the question from two different angles.

The dialogue between science and religion has always existed and its revival is part of a general process designed to accomplish the understanding of the world through these both ways of knowledge offered as well by religion and by science.

Having said these, we consider that the topic of the themes in discussion is eloquent and comprehensive enough to provide, in our opinion, the success of this scientific session.

Thank you!

Gen. (r), Professor, M.D., PhD., Dr. H.C., Vasile Cândea

President of the Academy of Romanian Scientists