

Science and faith are not opposed, Pope Benedict teaches

Vatican City, Mar 24, 2010 / 10:34 am (CNA/EWTN News).- A “friendship” exists between science and faith, said the Holy Father during his catechesis on Wednesday morning in which he spoke of St. Albert the Great, “one of the greatest teachers of scholastic theology” and the patron of those who study natural sciences. He used the saint’s example to urge young people to seek God’s guidance for their “life project.”

As a teacher, scholar and writer in the 13th century and “being a man of prayer, science and charity,” said the Pope, St. Albert “enjoyed great authority in his interventions, in various events of the Church and of the society of that time.”

There was “something of prodigious” about the culture of the Dominican, the Holy Father said, explaining that beyond philosophy and theology his “encyclopedic interests” included every other known discipline at that time including physics, chemistry, astronomy and even botany and zoology.

Pope Benedict said that this teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas still has much to teach us, particularly, he pointed out, “St. Albert shows us that there is no opposition between faith and science.”

St. Albert, the Pope remarked, “reminds us that there is friendship between science and faith, and that scientists can, through their vocation to study nature, follow an authentic and absorbing path of sanctity.”

“A man of faith and prayer,” he was able to “serenely cultivate the study of natural sciences and advance the understanding of the micro and macrocosm” and doing so “to nourish (his) thirst and love for God.”

His dedication to the sciences was not accidental. The Bible, pointed out the Holy Father, “speaks to us of creation as the first language through which God ... reveals to us something of himself.”

Referring to the Book of Wisdom in particular, he said that the “phenomena of nature, endowed with greatness and beauty” are affirmed, “they are like the works of an artist, through whom, by analogy, we can know the Author of creation.”

All scientists who are inspired in their work like St. Albert was, see a world that “appeared and appears as the good work of a wise and loving Creator,” the Holy Father noted.

“Scientific study is thus transformed into a hymn of praise,” he observed.

At the beginning of his address, the Holy Father had recalled St. Albert’s path to finding his vocation, following his calling from his native Germany to the Dominican order in Padova, Italy.

Drawing inspiration and a lesson for today’s youth from the experience of the 13th century saint, Pope Benedict XVI said, “often, in the years of youth, God speaks to us and indicates to us our life project. As for Albert, also for all of us personal prayer nurtured by the Word of the Lord, the association with the Sacraments and the spiritual guidance of illuminated men are the ways to discover and follow the voice of God.”