

Vatican Plans Galileo Celebrations

New Edition of Trial Documents to Be Published

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 29, 2009 (Zenit.org).- The Vatican is not going to be left behind in celebrating the 2009 International Year of Astronomy as it will be offering a Christian orientation to the science-faith debate, says a Vatican official.

Today in the Vatican press office Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, presented a selection of activities the Vatican is preparing for the celebrations declared this year by the United Nations. This year marks the 400th anniversary of the first use of an astronomical telescope by Galileo Galilei.

Events include an international academic congress to be held in Florence in May on the theme: "Galileo Galilei: A New Historical, Philosophical and Theological Reading."

Then, in October, Vatican Museums will host "Astrum 2009: The Historical Legacy of Italian Astronomy From Galileo to Today."

Another international conference will be held a month later, this time organized by Rome's Pontifical Lateran University and focused on "1609-2009: From the Birth of Astrophysics to Evolutionary Cosmology. Science, Philosophy and Theology."

The Vatican Secret Archives is also planning to produce a new edition of the documents from the trial of Galileo.

Finally, the Church in Italy will give particular attention to the Year of Astronomy through an English-Italian Web site called Interdisciplinary Documentation on Religion and Science (www.disf.org).

According to Archbishop Ravasi, the site will publish documents, texts and ideas each month "so as to give a Christian orientation to the debate between science and faith."