September 17, 2021

Good Morning All,

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1. Today's Readings: Friday of the Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time | USCCB

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus:

One of the great saints of the Jesuit order, St. Robert Bellarmine has also been declared a Doctor of the Church and the patron of catechists. This Sunday, we celebrate Catechetical Sunday, so please pray for all those here in our parish and school as well as elsewhere that teach the Catholic Faith.

The article today explains St. Robert's involvement with Galileo and how he handled the debate over heliocentricity (the astronomical model in which the Earth and planets revolve around the Sun) and it's implications with Scripture.

3. Quotes of the Day: *From St. Robert Bellarmine*

~ "If you are wise, then, know that you have been created for the glory of God and your own eternal salvation. This is your goal; this is the center of your life; this is the treasure of your heart."

~ "I will recognize that I have a great bond with and need for God, as he alone is my creator, my maker, my father, my exemplar, my happiness, my all."

~ "Peace and union are the most necessary of all things for men who live in common, and nothing serves so well to establish and maintain these as the forbearing charity whereby we put up with one another's defects."

~ "An ounce of charity is better than a hundred loads of reason."

St. Robert Bellarmine, Pray for Us!
St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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Saint Robert Bellarmine

When Robert Bellarmine was ordained in 1570, the study of Church history and the fathers of the Church was in a sad state of neglect. A promising scholar from his youth in Tuscany, he devoted his energy to these two subjects, as well as to Scripture, in order to systematize Church doctrine against the attacks of the Protestant Reformers. He was the first Jesuit to become a professor at Louvain.

His most famous work is his three-volume *Disputations on the Controversies of the Christian Faith*. Particularly noteworthy are the sections on the temporal power of the pope and the role of the laity. Bellarmine incurred the anger of monarchists in England and France by showing the divine-right-of-kings theory untenable. He developed the theory of the indirect power of the pope in temporal affairs; although he was defending the pope against the Scottish philosopher Barclay, he also incurred the ire of Pope Sixtus V.

Bellarmine was made a cardinal by Pope Clement VIII on the grounds that "he had not his equal for learning." While he occupied apartments in the Vatican, Bellarmine relaxed none of his former austerities. He limited his household expenses to what was barely essential, eating only the food available to the poor. He was known to have ransomed a soldier who had deserted from the army and

he used the hangings of his rooms to clothe poor people, remarking, "The walls won't catch cold."

Among many activities, Bellarmine became theologian to Pope Clement VIII, preparing two catechisms which have had great influence in the Church.

The last major controversy of Bellarmine's life came in 1616 when he had to admonish his friend Galileo, whom he admired. He delivered the admonition on behalf of the Holy Office, which had decided that the heliocentric theory of Copernicus was contrary to Scripture. The admonition amounted to a caution against putting forward—other than as a hypothesis—theories not yet fully proven. This shows that saints are not infallible.

Robert Bellarmine died on September 17, 1621. The process for his canonization was begun in 1627, but was delayed until 1930 for political reasons, stemming from his writings. In 1930, Pope Pius XI canonized him, and the next year declared him a doctor of the Church.

Source: Saint Gregory the Great, San Diego CA

St. Robert Bellarmine, Galileo and Heliocentricity

Today's saint, Robert Bellarmine, was a brilliant Jesuit theologian (1542-1621) who was assigned to lecture on controversial topics at the Roman Collage and was eventually appointed to the Holy Office (what we now call the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith). By about 1605, he was the principal theological advisor to the Holy See.

In this capacity, the problem of heliocentricity was put before him, both by Paolo Antonio Foscarini and Galileo Galilei, two proponents of Nicholas Copernicus' earlier theory of the revolution of the earth around a stationary sun. This theory, which was ultimately proven correct, contradicted the ordinary perceptions of people on earth, and it was considered by most theologians to be contrary at least to the literal sense of Scripture, and to Scripture as generally interpreted by the Fathers.

Bellarmine actually took a balanced position on the subject. He tried to dissuade the Holy Office from condemning the Copernican theory, and he advised Foscarini and Galileo to propound heliocentricity as a hypothesis which was very useful to astronomical calculations, but not as a certain view of reality. The general consensus was that one should not challenge the common interpretation of Scripture unless the evidence for an alternative view was conclusive.

In a letter to Foscarini, Bellarmine wrote:

> I say that if there were a true demonstration that the sun is at the center of the world and the earth in the third heaven, and that the sun does not circle the earth but the earth circles the sun, then one would have to proceed with great care in explaining the Scriptures that appear contrary, and say rather that we do not understand them than that what is demonstrated is false. But I will not believe that there is such a demonstration, until it is shown me.
>
> Nor is it the same to demonstrate that by assuming the sun to be at the center and the earth in heaven one can save the appearances [*e.g.,* explain certain calculations, etc.], and to demonstrate that in truth the sun is at the center and the earth in heaven; for I believe the first

> demonstration may be available, but I have very great doubts about the second, and in case of doubt one must not abandon the Holy Scripture as interpreted by the Holy Fathers.

This was a perfectly reasonable position, which permitted scientific investigation to continue without condemnation by the Church. In fact, it was not until 1633—twelve years after Bellarmine's death—that Galileo got into significant trouble with the Holy Office and the Inquisition for pressing his case less cautiously than Bellarmine advised.

Sadly, while Galileo could be brusque and even rash in his claims, the biggest problem was that there were not more theologians of Bellarmine's quality. If the other Roman theologians had had St. Robert Bellarmine's intelligence, fairness and patience, a great deal of trouble could have been avoided.

But this is nothing new. Over the centuries, on nearly all sides of every question, the need for theological intelligence, fairness, patience—and, yes, sanctity—has been amply demonstrated to both the Church and the world!

Source: Catholicculture.org by Dr. Jeff Mirus