

Pope says science can unite humans with God

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VATICAN CITY (RNS) Pope Benedict XVI told scientists that their research can lead to knowledge of God by revealing the natural order of the universe.

The pope made his remarks on Thursday (Oct. 28) before a plenary session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at the Vatican.

The evident logic governing the universe "leads us to admit the existence of an all-powerful Reason, which is other than that of man, and which sustains the world," Benedict said.

"This is the meeting point between the natural sciences and religion," the pope said. "As a result, science becomes a place of dialogue, a meeting between man and nature and, potentially, even between man and his Creator."

The academy is a group of 80 eminent scientists, including more than two dozen Nobel laureates, who promote research into natural science and related philosophical issues. Membership is without regard to religious affiliation.

One of the academy's most famous members, British physicist Stephen Hawking, provoked controversy last month by arguing in a new book that the existence of the universe provides no evidence of the existence of God.

"Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing," Hawking wrote. "It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going."