



10 April 2018

Media Release: Vatican Astronomer to visit Broken Bay

Br Guy Consolmagno SJ, the Vatican Astronomer, will visit the Diocese of Broken Bay in late April for a series of presentations about faith and science.

The first is at the Catholic Youth Broken Bay Twilight Talks event at Hotel Pennant Hills on the evening of Tuesday 24 April, followed by a presentation on Saturday 28 April at Waitara in the morning, and a special night time event on Monday 30 April on the Central Coast, with a viewing of the night skies.

Br Guy will share with us, that firstly, there is a Vatican Observatory and secondly that the Church supports mainstream science. "I hope that people come away with a new joy in looking at the stars, especially people in Australia where you have such a wonderful sky to see!" said Br Guy. "The joy we get from the universe is very much a joy from the Creator who delights in sharing creation with us."

When we look up the stars, most of us just see small lights twinkling; Br Guy sees a lot more.

"Since I was a child I have known the stars by name," said Br Guy. "Seeing them now reminds me of all sorts of moments in my life when seeing them meant something special, perhaps when my father first named the summer triangle, or when I felt homesick in Africa and then saw overhead my familiar friends.

"I also remember one wonderful moment in Sevenhill in South Australia, looking at the Milky Way, and then seeing the Magellanic Clouds off to the south (something I can't see in the northern hemisphere); seeing the two, I suddenly realised that I am not just looking at a streak of stars 'out there', that we and our solar system are actually in the middle of this disk, that we are very much a part of this whole universe."

Being the Director of the Vatican Observatory is a varied and interesting role, which keeps Br Guy excited all the time. "It is just so much fun... to look at the stars, to handle the meteoritic rocks that fell to us from the asteroid belt, to understand (at least a little bit) about what they are telling us," said Br Guy. "The universe is beautiful; so are the laws that describe how they work. I do feel a constant joy, a joy that reminds me of my favourite moments of prayer."

When asked if he himself would like to travel into space, Br Guy answered, "I never wanted to do that when I was a kid; I didn't want to be an adventurer, I wanted to be the guy who sent off the adventurers... Gandalf, not Bilbo! But as I have grown older I have become more adventurous, and now my motto is to never walk past an open door without at least taking a peek through. So, sure, who wouldn't jump at the chance to go into space?"

Being an Astronomer and a Jesuit Brother is an unusual combination. But Br Guy sees himself first as a Jesuit Brother.

"I remember hearing my father, who had a very successful career, saying that his most

important vocation was being the father of a family,” said Br Guy. “Likewise my first commitment is to my Jesuit family. If I were asked to move to a parish, serve soup in a soup kitchen, I would be happy to do it.”

Looking up at the stars, Br Guy believes wholeheartedly that it makes him, and others, feel closer to God.

“I hear him laughing with delight, the way that an artist enjoys an audience that gets what he or she is trying to do. It is a form of conversation between us, which is to say, it is a form of prayer. And then I hear, ‘But wait! There’s one more thing...’ and I can’t wait to see what’s going to be revealed next.”

Tickets are free to all Br Guy’s events in Broken Bay, but bookings are essential as there are limited places available. Go to www.dbb.org.au for more information and how to book.

Br Guy’s tour dates:

Tuesday 24 April: Twilight Talks with Catholic Youth Broken Bay. Hotel Pennant Hills, 352 Pennant Hills Road, Pennant Hills. 6.30pm – 9.00pm (*A young adult event, please register by email at youth@dbb.org.au*)

Saturday 28 April: “In awe of the Universe: Connecting Science and Faith”. The Light of Christ Centre, Yardley Ave, Waitara. 10am – 12.30pm

Monday 30 April: “Looking up at the Stars: We’re All Connected”. St Peter’s Catholic College, 84 Gavenlock Rd, Tuggerah. 7.00pm – 9.30pm (includes a viewing of the night sky with telescopes (weather permitting)).

Br Guy will be available for a limited number of media interviews. To arrange an interview, please contact Melissa Loughlin, Manager, Office for Communications, Diocese of Broken Bay Ph 02 9847 0722, mob 0421 121 517 or email melissa.loughlin1@dbb.org.au