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Pope Benedict vs. Signs of Our Times: Einstein, Women

Good morning.

This morning, we continue our meditations on the legacy of Pope Benedict the 16th, with the title of our essay being "Pope Benedict versus the Signs of Our Times, Einstein, and Women."

Now, one of the most important admonitions from the Second Vatican Council was this phrase: "to read the signs of the times." It's a phrase that comes from Jesus in the gospels. And it's a very important element to the renewal of the church, the renewal of Christianity that really stood out in the Second Vatican Council.

And I might add that my mentor, Père Chenu, a French Dominican, was a Peritus, is that is a theological coach for the bishop from Madagascar at the Second Vatican Council. He frequently uses phrase "the sign of the times" in his writings, and we were using it in class. And I was part of his class in 1968, the last year that he taught; he was 75 or 76 at the time.

So in this essay, as well as in the next one, we are dealing with Pope Benedict's relationship to the signs of the times.

Clearly one of the signs of our times is the marvelous discoveries of nature, science, and of nature by scientists. The work I've done with Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, and Rupert Sheldrake and others along the way is a big part of my understanding of the world as a theologian and a spiritual theologian.

And I do think that one of the most stunning and of course, primary foundational discoveries of the early 20th century, dated 100 years ago, was of course Einstein's discovery of the theory of relativity. Now, an intelligent, thoughtful thinker would include this in his or her world consciousness, not resist it.

Such a person, for example, is Otto Rank, one of my very favorite psychologists, who is finally getting a little credit for being the founder of humanistic psychology. [Abraham] Maslow, Rollo May, and [Carl] Rogers have spoken to how they stand on his shoulders: three very prominent humanistic psychologists. But here's what he wrote in 1930 -- 1930, he died in 1939 -- in his book, *Psychology And The Soul*.

Quote -- this is on page 140 of my book, *Meister Eckhart, Mystic Warrior For Our Times*.

I believe that we've entered a new phase of spiritual development, one that affects both physics and psychology.

Notice that, by spiritual development, he is bringing in the cosmology, the new cosmology, from Einstein. And he develops this idea and he says that "my work is a reflection of Einstein," -- bringing Einstein into the world of psychology, and a world that is less rational and more attuned to the irrational.

So he actually proposes that all of his work is another application of the relativity of the universe that Einstein named, in terms of psychology and cosmology, that he connects to as a psychologist, taking it into his domain, his profession as a psychologist.

So this is just an example of how every profession has to adapt to the postmodern consciousness that Einstein helped to name for us. So I think this is just a tremendous lesson. And it's a pity that Pope Benedict reverted to a crueller mechanism, renaming of old doctrines and forcing orthodoxy upon people and obedience to orthodoxy of old, instead of encouraging the creativity that we know is integral to the dynamics of the universe.

The universe is not static, it is not done. It is constantly giving birth and growing and expanding, and our religions or theologies have to join this invitation to creativity and to relativity and to relationship.

And this is exactly how Otto Rank tried to redefine the rigid orthodoxy of Freudianism, to which he belonged for a while; he was part of Freud's inner circle. But he brought Einstein in, to kind of break open that mindset.

Would that Cardinal Ratzinger had done the same.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.