**evolution is the key to understanding the mind of god and the key to understanding who we are and who we are called to be**

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Saint Augustine of Hippo lived in the fifth century, more than 1,500 years ago. He is known as one of the most extraordinary fathers of the Church and what he wrote influenced the life of the Church through the centuries even to the present day. He wrote a book – more like an encyclopedia – called *The City of God* and in this book Augustine explained what he saw as the story of the conflict between the City of Earth and the City of God. He saw the City of God as marked by people who put aside the things of this world to dedicate themselves to the things of the eternal and heavenly city. On the other hand, for Augustine the City of Earth consists of people who immerse themselves in the things of this passing world.

With all due respect to this giant in the story of the Church – in the story of the world – many of us have come to see that Augustine’s view of things was fundamentally wrong. In fact, terribly, terribly wrong, when we consider the consequences the Church and the world suffered and continue to suffer because of that view of things, because of this so-called conflict between the City of God and the City of Earth, that was offered century after century by so many other thinkers, writers and preachers.

We have finally reached a point in the Church’s story and in the human story, when we see that there are not two cities and there are not two stories going on. There is only one city and there is only one story, the city and the story in which there is no real conflict between the things of heaven and the things of Earth. There is only one creative spirit who is the source of all things. There is only on creation power that moves the story forward. There is only one meaning to it all. There is only one purpose in it all.

The world and the church have found it too often difficult to accept the new things that continue to appear in the story. New things upset the order of things. New things can be frightening. Some examples:

In the 16th and 17th centuries thinkers like Copernicus and Galileo discovered that this planet is not the center of the universe and isn’t even the center of our solar system. The sun does not go around the Earth. The Earth goes around the sun. Such discoveries shocked the world and the Church. Such discoveries were a revolution that changed how people understood this world and themselves and it began a fundamental change in how believers should understand their faith and themselves.

A couple of centuries later, Charles Darwin showed the world that living things developed over millions of years and that we human beings also are descended from a branch of ape-like creatures. That was a shock that continues to sound throughout the world, and this too continued to change how believers should understand their faith and themselves.

In the last century Albert Einstein and others offered an understanding of space and time which blew everything out of the water, as we say. Astronomy, physics, chemistry, things that had been believed for centuries had to change. These new things made us question what we saw with our own eyes, and all that spilled over into what we thought and understood about this universe of ours and about ourselves.

Through the centuries, all along the way in our story, there were loud cries of freedom and bursts after bursts of justice, justice for workers, justice for children, justice for women, justice for every race and color. The world gave birth to the United Nations. More new things and more new things.

The Church itself came to change its mind about making money on money; that interest was morally acceptable. The Church changed its mind about birth control, about marriage of the divorced, about the dignity and the role of women in the Church and in the world. New things and more new things. We have come to treasure our inherited relationship with our Jewish sisters and brothers. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists opening to each other, these days society and the Church are at last acknowledging the justice due to gay and lesbian and transgender men and women. New things and more new things.

The creative spirit of God continues to open our minds and hearts to make new things happen. For it is His will that creation continue – the world to continue – to more forward, to *evolve*, to move forward the new things of heaven and the new things of the Earth. It is His will that we perceive that the new things of heaven and the new things of the Earth are two sides, two parts, two halves of one and the same story. It is His will that the world and the Church open to all possibilities, to all God-given-potential. It is His will that we dare to open our minds and hearts to new things and to every challenge. God the creator has entrusted the story – ongoing creation – to us. To make His will real is in our hands.

Let’s understand that “evolution” which explains the development of living things should inspire us to understand that “evolution” is the key to understand the very mind of God the creator, that evolution, moving forward in the power of the spirit of God, the creative power since the beginning of time, calls us – dares us – to grow into what it means to be human, calls us to become everything we can be for ourselves, for the whole human family, for this planet, our island home, calls us to reach for the stars.

This has to be our message. Fear not. Walk courageously, open to all possibilities – to all the new things – to all the surprises. Sometimes we cannot see our way because the brightness of tomorrow is too dazzling. Do not be afraid of the new things. Do not be afraid of the light even when it may for a moment hurt our eyes.

From fear that shrinks from the truth, Good Lord, Deliver us. From satisfaction with half-truths, from arrogance of thinking we know all the answers, Good Lord, deliver us. Lord, grant us the grace to see the things of the Earth and the things of heaven, the new things no longer as we see them, but as You see them. Enlighten us and strengthen us to believe in the future of the world which is the coming of your kingdom.