



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

Prot. N.125.122

From the Vatican, 12 October 2009

Your Eminence,

On the occasion of the International Year of Astronomy, the Holy Father was gratified to learn of the events to be held at the *Sixth International Conference on the Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena*. Through Your Eminence, he sends to all the participants his greetings.

His Holiness trusts that the Conference, which also celebrates the four hundredth anniversary of Galileo Galilei's first use of the telescope to study the heavens, may advance an appreciation of the interplay between faith and reason, science and religion. For this reason, he is pleased that the Conference will treat the relationship of astronomy to art, culture, history, literature, music, religion and inspiration. As the power of modern technology brings the knowledge of the stars ever closer to man, we are led to consider our humble place in the universe and are inspired to ask the most fundamental questions about who we are and why we are here. Indeed, the stars themselves bear witness to the fact that there exists a recognizable rationality which is expressed in Christian cosmology as a personal will, the Spirit of God himself (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 5).

With sentiments of encouragement on this important occasion, His Holiness cordially invokes upon all the participants abundant divine blessings.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone
Secretary of State

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