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# Pope's Astronomer Would Baptize Aliens

Published September 21, 2010 | FoxNews.com

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Will Smith delivered an alien baby in the [movie](#) "Men in Black." But would he baptize it?

One of the pope's astronomers would happily baptize an alien if asked -- "no matter how many tentacles it has."

Guy Consolmagno, a trained astronomer and planetary scientist at the Vatican's observatory, discussed a slew of topics at the British Science Festival in Birmingham last weekend, noting that the Vatican was more up to date with the latest scientific developments than most realized.

"You'd be surprised," he told the Guardian. An avid science-fiction reader, Consolmagno reproached the historical treatment of Galileo, the man who discovered that the Earth indeed [travels](#) around the sun.

He even complimented [Stephen Hawking](#) -- despite Hawking's recent comments asserting that physics effectively replaced the need for God. Consolmagno called Hawking a "brilliant physicist."

Intelligent design, he also noted, was a useless compromise that's another form of "the God of the gaps," calling it pseudoscience and "bad theology."

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Though he concedes the odds of finding and communicating with other intelligent life is essentially zero, Cosolmagno would welcome the event. "Any entity -- no matter how many tentacles it has -- has a [soul](#)," he said. Asked whether or not he'd baptize an alien, Cosolmagno replied: "Only if they asked."

Cosolmagno spoke at the science festival while the Pope was making his own visit to discuss science, which he called a complete coincidence.

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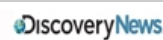
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