

### Offered Title: Meteorite Man

My wife is way more gregarious than I and often bumps into friends and acquaintances, even in places where I should but do not.

So, I find out she was an elementary school classmate with a kid who grew up to be... really... a professional astronomer. But not just any old astronomer, he is director of an observatory and curator of its meteorite collection! He's a meteorite man and his name, Guy Consolmagno, Ph.D. Oh, by the way, he's a Jesuit priest and director of the Vatican Observatory.

Growing up in Michigan, Guy went to the University of Detroit Jesuit High School, then MIT, then the University of Arizona where he earned his Ph.D. in planetary science. Guy taught at Harvard and MIT before joining the US Peace Corps, serving in Kenya as a teacher of astronomy and physics. He also became an Assistant Professor and taught at Lafayette College in Easton, PA before taking vows as a brother. Guy has also been awarded the Carl Sagan Medal for his astronomy outreach programs. His curriculum vitae is beyond reproach.

I find an amalgam of faith and science an interesting but confusing relationship, but Guy has merged his belief in God and his need for knowledge of nature and perhaps has shown how opposites attract. This attraction is not without conflict however, as is any relationship, but Guy takes it in stride. His philosophy allows this relationship to exist as two parallel avenues of study and description of our universe. Guy says religion needs science to "keep it away from superstition" and keep it closer to reality. For me this is the confusing area because I'm not sure the study of nature can explain the supernatural. There are areas where science and religion can appear to be on parallel paths, for example, the big bang theory and its comparison with genesis. This relationship has been and will continue to be debated.

What about the meteorites?

The Vatican has a large collection of meteorites, many donated by the widow of the Marquis de Mauroy, an avid meteorite collector. Guy has gone on numerous meteorite collecting expeditions, including a trip to Antarctica. His primary interests in meteorites are their relationship with asteroids, and how small bodies form in our solar system. The International Astronomical Union has named an asteroid in his honor, 4597 Consolmagno.

Guy has also authored several popular books, including *Turn Right at Orion* (with Dan Davis) and *Would You Baptize an Extraterrestrial?* (with Father Paul Mueller, SJ).

### What's in the Sky?

We have another series of early morning shows: On September 10 Mercury, Regulus, and Mars form a pretty group in the early morning eastern sky. On September 12, a waxing gibbous Moon occults Aldebaran (in Taurus), covering it at 7:39 am CDT. On September 16, look to the east before sunrise and see Venus, Regulus, Mercury and Mars lined up vertically in that order.