

catholic acceptance of genesis

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 20 Apr 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3183>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

maa32 — 20 Apr 2002, 16:09

A few things I wanted to say that are probably already obvious. One of them is that the Severian's parallels with Christ are painfully painfully obvious, but the one miracle that can't be rationally explained by the power over time that the other miracles of Severian can be explained by (except in UoTNS) occurs when the water changes to wine at the beginning of Claw. What is going on here? Bringing people back to life can be seen as a reversal of time in a localized area, certainly a power that the hierodules might be able to grant their servant. However, that is so explicitly different it seems to be transmutation rather than transtemporality. Later in Urth, the return of the child's limb to normal seems to smack of transmutation as well, but I always assumed it was a return to life of the reproducing and developing cells that had failed to be completed. Or is he creating new matter? I think there is a big difference between creating matter and controlling time, and an imitator of Christ is not likely to have either of those capabilities (from my experience). Of course, since Gene says Severian is imitating Christ, well then, I guess that's the interpretation we have to go with.

Also, from a Catholic perspective, I don't think the presence of the rainbow is important to Urth of the New Sun's flood. It is merely a symbol - there is the idea that the first 11 chapters of Genesis or so are simply a story that helps justify the ways of God to man in a primitive fashion that primitive man could understand; its literal truth is not as important as its functional truth. I think this is pretty well accepted by Catholics, who insist that divinely inspired does not equal literal truth, but rather symbolic explanation, or something like that. I think the Pope's statement that "evolution might be more than a theory" certainly tends to undermine a strict Catholic adherence to the literal nature of scripture. (And I think a scientist who works with the textbook definition of "theory" might get an immense kick out of the Pope's statement).

Marc Aramini

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 22 Apr 2002, 16:31 · follows maa32

Marc: a few gentle semantic corrections ... You wrote:

Also, from a Catholic perspective, I don't think the presence of the rainbow is important to Urth of the New Sun's flood. It is merely a symbol - there is the idea that the first 11 chapters of Genesis or so are simply a story that helps justify the ways of God to man in a primitive fashion that primitive man could understand; its literal truth is not as important as its functional truth.

First, I would say that, for a Catholic, the entire Bible is literally true. However, it is not necessary factual. This is functionally equivalent to what I believe you are trying to say, but a more useful way of making the distinction.

Second, never say "merely a symbol" wrt Catholicism; the whole Catholic practice is based on symbols that actually implement the reality they symbolize, a/k/a "sacraments," symbols of grace which actually serve as vessels of the grace which they symbolize.

Symbols are not, to a Catholic, "mere."

Yours for semantic hygiene,