

Lunacy

Moon rocks are big business again. After a period of decline NASA's 2,200 chunks of the lunar surface are in big demand once more, largely owing to President Bush's call for the establishment of a base on the south pole of the little satellite. Dr. Carlton C. Allen, who doles out bits of the moon to researchers, describes the scientific community as "really jazzed" about that possibility.

One struggles to imagine how "really jazzed" scientists behave: maybe drink Champaign from their plastic pocket-protectors and boogie to Lawrence Welk?

Anyway, Dr. Allen explains that one great value of moon rocks is as a kind of geological time-capsule of the solar system. The Moon's surface—much like Cher—no longer ages, so that it sets benchmarks for how old everything else is. He explains that "it's hard to wrap your mind around a place where nothing ever happens, but the Moon is that place."

"Hard to wrap your mind around;" an interesting phrase.

An earlier era easily grasped the idea of an unchanging heaven. The ancient and medieval worlds saw creation as a series of descending spheres. Earth hunkered at the bottom, its inferiority gauged by its mutability. The higher you went, expanding and ascending, the less the change and thus the greater the perfection. Finally, you reached the *Primum Moblie*, the first thing that moved at all. Beyond that was God, who in his utter perfection remained immobile because, if you're perfect, any change is by definition a decline. Indeed, God did not even move the *Primum Mobile*: it was moved by its love for God, and that loving movement set everything else humming along.

The ancients could handle – and even adore – this "place where nothing happens" precisely because they did not try to "wrap their minds around it." They were content to wrap it around their minds. "The poet," says G. K. Chesterton, "only asks to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits."

Theologians, like scientists, occasionally find themselves "really jazzed" about some new way of understanding God. Both disciplines, however, do well to remember the epistemology of the Nineteenth Psalm: "The heavens are telling the glory of God," and "The law of the Lord is perfect." My mind will never master either means of revelation. Indeed, my mind's purpose is not to master but to love (Mk 12.30), and it is enough for me that, in Christ, I can get my head into the heavens.

Moonstruck,
Doug