

The need to enrich our knowledge

The filmed scenes of the massacre in Libya, starting to be seen, offend for their total absence of humanism and the crass lies that served as an excuse for invading and taking over the natural resources of that country.

With more than 25,000 combat missions, NATO air forces backed up the monstrous crime.

They stated that the Libyan government had funds abroad exceeding 200 billion dollars. At this time, nobody knows where the money is nor what has been done with it.

A fraudulent electoral process ensured the overthrowing of the presidency of the most powerful country on the side of George W. Bush, an alcoholic without medical treatment nor the most basic ethical principles, who ordered West Point graduates to be ready to attack without warning 60 or more dark corners of the world.

Such a deranged person, with the use of a small black briefcase, could decide on the use of thousands of nuclear weapons; with a minimal percentage of these, he could put an end to human life on the planet.

It is sad to remember that on the opposite side of the Yankee super-power, another deranged person, with three bottles of vodka in his stomach, declared the disintegration of the USSR and the dismantling of more than 400 nuclear bases in whose range were all the military bases threatening that country.

Those events did not constitute any surprise. Throughout many years of struggle, experience garnered, contact with events, ideas and historical processes did not come as a surprise.

Today the Russian leaders are trying to rebuild this powerful State which had been created with so much effort and sacrifice.

When Pope John Paul II visited our country in 1998, more than once before his arrival I talked about several subjects with one or another of his envoys. I especially remember the occasion when we sat down to dinner in a small room in the Palace of the Revolution with Joaquín Navarro Valls, Papal spokesman, sitting in front of me. To the right was a pleasant and intelligent priest who had come with the spokesman and assisted Pope John Paul II at the Masses.

Curious about the details, I asked Navarro Valls whether he thought that the immense sky with its millions of stars had been made to please the inhabitants of the earth whenever we deigned to look upwards on any given night. "Absolutely" —he replied. "It is the only inhabited planet in the universe".

I then turned to the priest and said: what do you think of that, Father? He replied: "In my opinion, there is a 99.9 percent possibility of intelligent life existing on some other planet". The answer did not violate any religious principle. Mentally I multiplied the figure, who knows how many times. It was the kind of answer that I deemed to be correct and serious.

Afterwards, that noble priest was always friendly with our country. Sharing a friendship does not mean you have to share beliefs.

Today, on Thursday, as it happens with increasing frequency, a European entity with well-known solvency in the subject, textually states:

"There could be billions of planets not much larger than the Earth orbiting around weak stars in our galaxy, according to an international team of astronomers.

"This estimated number of 'super-Earths' -planets with up to ten times Earth's mass - is based on detections already made and then extrapolated to include the population of the so-called 'dwarf stars' in the Milky Way."

"Our new observations with HARPS show that around 40% of the red dwarf stars have a 'super-Earth' orbiting around it in its habitable zone, where there may be water in a liquid state on the surface of the planet", stated Xavier Bonfils, team leader at the Sciences of the Universe Observatory in Grenoble, France.

"Due to the fact that the red dwarfs are so common - there are around 160 billion of them in the Milky Way - this brings us to the surprising results that there are tens of millions of those planets in our galaxy alone'."

"Their studies suggest that there are 'super-Earths' in habitable zones in 41% of the cases, with a range of 28 to 95%.

"40% of the red dwarf stars have a 'super-Earth' orbiting them in their habitable zone, where water in its liquid state may exist'."

"That leads to the obvious question about whether any of those planets may not only be habitable but may also have life."

"But these stars are prone to stellar eruptions, that can wash over the neighbouring planets with X-rays or ultra-violet radiation, making it less likely that life may exist there.

"We have an idea about how to find traces of life on those planets", stated Stephane Udry, researcher at the Observatory of Geneva."

"If we are able to see traces of elements related to life such as oxygen in that light, then we can obtain indications about whether there is life on that planet'."

Simply reading these news items shows the possibility and the necessity we have of enriching our knowledge which today is fragmented and scattered.

Perhaps it takes us to more critical positions on the superficiality with which we deal with cultural and material problems. I have not the slightest doubt that our world is changing much more quickly than we are capable of imagining.

Fidel Castro Ruz
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