Space Scientists Praised By Pope

VATICAN City (NC) - A group of Italian and American space scientists engaged in a cooperative satellite program were praised by Pope Paul last week for providing "an example of international cooperation for the progress of science and the peaceful purposes of energy."

American physicists and engineers of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration are working with Italian counterparts from the research center of the University of Rome in final plans for a launching in the Italian-sponsored San Marco program which already fired one satellite into a polar orbit last year. The group hopes to achieve an equatorial orbit with its next satellite.

Pope Paul said that the scientists "are discovering the law which the Lord of Creation established and employing the forces He placed in nature."

"It is our prayer that your work may help you and all mankind to acknowledge the sovereign right of God over the whole universe and to observe His commandments of love and brotherhood."

Speaking first in English and then in Italian, the Pope referred to the San Marco program as a "peaceful undertaking directed solely at scientific progress (which) has been undertaken in close collaboration with experimental space pioneers from beyond the ocean."

He said collaboration in scientific ventures is a profound and significant event. "It has produced... mutual knowledge, rapport and mutual help based on reciprocal esteem and fraternal and sincere understanding."

"This intimate merging of minds and hearts in a common... scientific endeavor is new proof of the preeminence and sacred dignity of man... It is a guarantee of conscious and effective brotherhood. It gives promise of peace and progress in which faith in God and collaboration in the work of His creation confer the highest and most lasting value."

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A clipping from The Catholic Standard, the Diocesan newspaper in Washington.