The STORY of the Society

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES (1567-1622) was Bishop of Geneva, with residence in Annecy (France). At that time, the validity of the experimental method and the autonomy of the natural sciences was not yet fully accepted within religious circles.

A young Barnabite scientist named JOHN ANTHONY (REDENTO) BARANZANO was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop de Sales and taught at the Chappusian College in Annecy. He was to become friends with famous scientists like Kepler and Bacon.

His lectures on astronomy were published by his students in a work called Uranoscopia, seu de coelo (1617). In those notes, Baranzano taught the Copernican theory and some ideas of Galileo. But the Copernican theory had been condemned by the Church the year before, so Baranzano was recalled to Italy by his religious superiors.

However, Francis de Sales intervened on his behalf, defended him in his scientific methodology, and gave approbation to a new edition of the book. As a contemporary Salesian scholar notes:

The approbation ... shows that (his) scientific writings, though at odds with a Church censure, did not contravene the faith in de Sales' view. From the position that the saint [Francis de Sales] took in this very delicate and potentially explosive issue, we can justifiably conclude that he maintains the right of the scholar and scientist to pursue the truth by refining his thought and by competently and responsibly handling the methodology of his particular discipline.

(ALEXANDER POCETTO, OSFS)

The Baranzano Society seeks to continue this tradition, to encourage this pursuit, and to form this character by bringing faith and reason together in responding to significant concerns in the field of bioethics.

www.desales.edu/salesian
(scroll to the Baranzano link)
**ORGANIZATION of the Society**

The work of the Society is funded through a grant from the Metanexus Institute on Science and Religion, matched by the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at DeSales University, which also provides administrative support to this project.

The **goals and objectives** of the Society are

- to form a **vibrant community** of scholars and professionals who participate in the interchange of religion and science
- to provide a **living witness** to the mutually beneficial work of scientists and theologians
- to establish an **organization of experts** whose work is available for public benefit
- to develop the Society into a **permanent initiative** of the Salesian Center for Faith & Culture at DeSales University

**MEMBERSHIP in the Society**

The Baranzano Society promotes dialogue among university scholars, healthcare practitioners, and corporate professionals.

Its initiatives are administered by two **officers**:

- The President is **PETER J. LEONARD**, P.H.D. - Associate Professor of Molecular Biology & Dean of Graduate Studies at DeSales University.
- The Secretary is **THOMAS F. DAILEY**, S.T.D. - Professor of Theology at DSU and Director of the Salesian Center for Faith & Culture.

Anyone interested in the work of the Baranzano Society may inquire about membership at the following levels:

- **Charter** members meet on a regularly scheduled basis to conduct the business of the Society. These include, among others:
  - MARGARET ALONSO, V.M.D. - Good Shepherd Rehabilitation
  - JONATHAN ANDREWS - B. Braun, Inc.
  - STEPHEN FALATYN, M.D. - OAA Orthopaedic Specialists
  - F.R. JOHN HILFERTY, M.A. - Sacred Heart Hospital
  - PAUL KALEJTA - Merck Research Labs
  - STEPHEN LAMMERS, Ph.D. - Lafayette College
  - JOHN LANZIOTTO, R.N. - Lehigh Valley Hospital
  - MARIAN MCDONALD, M.D. - St. Luke’s Hospital
  - THOMAS McGUIRE, Ph.D. - Penn State Univ., Abington
  - BRIAN MISANKO, Ph.D. - Cedar Crest College
  - ROBERT MOTLEY, M.D. - Catholic Medical Association
  - JOSEPH NAPOLITANO, Ph.D. - Rider Pool Health Care Trust
  - MICHAEL PADOVANI - Schering Plough Pharmaceuticals
  - MICHAEL RAPOSA, Ph.D. - Lehigh University

- **Continuing** members are students in the fields of science or religion.

- **Consulting** members are those experts in particular fields who are engaged in the work of the society on an ad hoc basis.

- **Contributing** members are those individuals or organizations that provide financial support for the work of the Society.

**ACTIVITIES of the Society**

- **Talking Circles** – a forum for the discussion of contemporary concerns and controversial issues in the world of bioethics, in which members and guest experts engage the audience in lively discussion and debate.

- **Web Forum** – online discussion of issues related to the public forums, including position papers, commentaries, and related news items.

- **Bioethics TV** - panel discussions broadcast live on the DSU campus television station and taped for archival use.