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aliens and contact with aliens I t'sbeen a very common theme in popular culture. So could you tell us a bit more about how discovering other forms of life, other forms of consciousness would in fact pull us up short, despite all the attention that sbeen paid to it so far?

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The discovery of intelligent life could displace how we-human beings-understand our place in the cosmos in the history of the universe, and even in Christianity. Since its beginning in its ongoing longing for knowledge and discovery, humankind experienced at least three major displacements. We could say that we were pulled up short in three major ways

For centuries we thought that we were the center of the universe. This gave us security. Such a physical preeminence was associated with pride. We were proud of our place in the cosmos. With our rationality, we thought we were the best creatures at the summit of any earthly hierarchy.

However, the study of stars and planets challenged our assumptions of grandeur. The Prussian Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) – a Renaissance polymath, active as a mathematician and astronomer – formulated a model of the universe that placed the Sun rather than Earth at the center of the Solar system (heliocentric model). Hence, the Copernican revolution was the paradigm shift from the previous Ptolemaic model, proposed by Claudius Ptolemy (or Ptolemaeus), who lived in Egypt the second century of the Christian era. For freen centuries, the Ptolemaic model described the cosmos as having the Earth stationary at the center of the universe, but Copernicus displaced such centrality. While many resisted such displacement, othersembraced it. Our value did not depend on our place in the universe.

But the displacements were not nished. After the rst displacement-i.e., the Copernican revolution-ascond displacement occurred. In the nineteenth century, the English naturalist, geologist, and biologist Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882) studied multiple biological species in their own habitats and **Streplose it that sall species of Iffed Eccended** over time from common ancestors. Hur **transf** kind was displaced again. This time regarding its own origin and identity. As in the case of the Copernican revolution, the Darwinian evolution encountered strenuous resistance and rejection. How they r, it is now widely accepted and on vs. Sevolo o mole eracese ac s the **Triv** m

Whether were ect on the beginning of life in the universe or we wonder whether intelligent life might exist somewhere in space, human beings and believers could experience a third displacement, when the discovery of biological life and contact with intelligent beings will challenge our cosmos consciousness and our place in the universe.

7:25

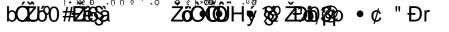
That's a very useful analogy to help methink this through with Copernicus and Darwin. It's dear that at both of those moments, ultimately, people all around the world had to confront the fact that we weren't ascentral as we thought that we were. We weren't the center of the universe, not even the center of the solar system, and we weren't the pinnade of creation, but we had evolved from other creatures. At the time, as you say, it's alittle hard for us to imagine now but those were dramatic reorientations of how humanshad to think of themselves. So that's useful to imagine that the discovery of intelligent life discubere in the universe would force us to have a similar sort of decentering, a similar sort of disorientation. As I think about that, I'm trying to wrap my head around what the consequences would be C an you tell us abit more about the implications of such a discovery of extraterrestrial intelligence? How would we react to that one?

826

I agreewith you that we have a hard time imagining the sense of loss of place and importance that our ancestors experienced in the rst and second displacement, dealing with the Copernican revolution and with D arvinian evolution. They felt discarded and deprived. If I can use a couple of images, they felt lost, like when one loss one's bearings and does not know anymore where one is and where to go. With Copernicus, humankind lost a sense of its home as central. With D arvin, we lost our identity at the summit of all the species. But in each case now we can say that both the Copernican revolution and the D arvinian evolution gave us an evolution and experienced an evolved in a better understanding of our reality and our being. In both cases humankind experienced anewfreedom: the freedom of a newhome and of a new identity. Something similar could happen to believers. We would discover that maybe we have sisters and brothers we were not avare of. In his most recent document- the 2020 encyclical letter called Fratelli T utti on fratemity and social friendship, Pope Francis invites the whole discover our fratemity, our sisterhood and brotherhood. A cosmic fratemity could be available to predisc a provide the provided in a better understanding of negative bibles of burnerskind to rediscover our fratemity, our sisterhood and brotherhood. A cosmic fratemity could be available to rediscover our fratemity of pepulles the short provide the available to rediscover our fratemity or sisterhood and brotherhood. A cosmic fratemity could be available to rediscover our fratemity or sisterhood and brotherhood. A cosmic fratemity could a may be we have sister and we come to be pepulles to be available to rediscover our fratemity or sisterhood and brotherhood. A cosmic fratemity could are not provide to rediscover our fratemity or provide the provide to rediscover our fratemity or provide to pepulles and the period of th

Regarding the search for biological life in the universe, recently scientists discovered a Neptune-like exoplanet located 90 light-years from Earth (called TOI-1231 b) with an intriguing atmosphere that could contain water douds Exoplanets are planets located outside of our solar system. The discovery otist

A recent cou



showhow these encounters could change how humankind perceives itself here and now, and how we live together.

If we consider our past history, sadly we realize that humankind engaged in very problematic ways in encounters with those who were considered dierent. Most were interested in colonizing conquering and oppressing violently. Together with the ordeal of colonization, racism tragically created incredible suering Learning from our past, encountering who is dierent should not lead us to recreate the social forms of life (e.g., racism, violence, and oppression) that we experience now on Earth. We should be able to consider all living beings- on Earth and elsewhere in the universe-as members of a relational cosmic community. According to this relational approach, contact could be congenial rather than confrontational. Being pulled up short, we could become more human.

Note: Note:

2025

That's helpful. I wanted to note that when we rst spoke about this, you mentioned those novels to me - the Mary Doria Russell novels - and I'm half way threas the never the never the As arigorous scholar of Christian ethics, socioecological ethicist, and enquiring scholar-activist, John Hart relieson personal experiences as well as on the critical analysis and assessment of credible and tested witness accounts. In his most recent book, herevisits the insightful contributions and approaches of signic cant authors and scholars of our past: from Maximus Confessor (580-662) to Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) and Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) as well as more recent theologians and scientists to examine "concrete data from scientists, social scientists and other credible witnesses" (11) integrated by important contrils

They further develop their emphasison recognition, highlighting how vulnerability is the outcome There is an increased vulnerability when we recognize or we are not recognized, and somehow the **Encounter vulnerability for the Christian Patholic Constitution** where we experience of each vulnerability. For the Christian Patholic Constitution, this increased vulnerability is not a negative ull the soft or outcome, but of each vulnerability for a greater solidarity, for mercy, for compassion, for care, and for love. Somehow, we can work to de escoe of our output anee

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that we will be able to indivays to visit without colonizing and being visited without being attacked. So that if there is a future in which there will be more explicit encounters, that would be to the bene t of both the extraterestrial forms of intelligence and life and humankind.

39.11

Well, thank you very much. This was very engaging. So thanks to Father Andrea Vicini. Thanks to Professor Kristina Wirtz. We really appreciate you being