

Wednesday, February 17, 2010 at 7 pm

The Infinite Universe of Giordano Bruno

On February 17, 1600, the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno was burned alive at the stake by the Inquisition for his revolutionary and visionary ideas. We honor his life and great contributions to human progress this evening on the 410th anniversary of his death.

Many who know of Bruno's work see him as an Hermetic occult "magus." This view was promulgated by Frances A. Yates in her book *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. However, Bruno may be more correctly understood as a scientific thinker whose brilliant writings helped shape the "new science" of the late 1500s and early 1600s, at the beginning of the scientific tradition that dominates our era.

In 1584, Bruno wrote a brilliant book, *On the Infinite Worlds and Universe*, that is in many ways still ahead of the times. Before the invention of the telescope, Bruno knew that the stars were suns and that these suns had planets orbiting them. Further, he understood that many of these planets had life on them, including intelligent life.

Today, 425 years later, Western astronomers are just finding the planets around those stars. And they are still debating whether any of these planets harbor life. Astrophysicists and cosmologists are now trying to answer key questions that Giordano Bruno addressed four centuries ago, such as, Is the universe infinite or finite? Is it eternal? Is there but one or countless universes?

We hope you can join us for an examination of the work of a man whose courageous teachings about life shook the worldview of his day at its foundations and led to his ignominious death.