

## **"Is Evolution an Open Question for Catholics?"**

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Many Catholics assert that the Catholic Church regards evolution as an open question. They tend to say, "Evolution is acceptable as long as God was involved and Pius XII taught in his 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis* that evolution is an open question!" On the contrary, I submit that evolution per se - correctly defined - is no longer an open question scientifically. It is only the investigation into the possible origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter that has not yet been closed by Rome. The objective truth known from scientific evidence and theological arguments contradicts evolution.

### **Parallel Between Pius XII and Paul VI**

There is a limited parallel between Pius XII's 1950's treatment of evolution and Paul VI's 1960's treatment of Pill contraception. Both Popes confronted doctrinal dissenters and both sought research and discussion of the respective matters. The Catholic Church had of course long before then already permitted discussion of evolution but Pius XII gave a specific reason for allowing the investigation.

John XXIII appointed a Commission in March, 1963, to study the subject of birth control, but Paul VI continued its mandate and greatly increased its numbers. Birth control has never been an open question doctrinally, and yet Rome decided that the advice of experts was required concerning the then revolutionary Pill manner of contraception. Why? Because more detailed information was sought from a scientific perspective about the new development, and theological advice as to any impact on Church doctrine. Permission to research and debate Pill contraception was one thing, but this permission did not equate to the wider issue of birth control per se being regarded as an open question doctrinally for Catholics; the Church had already taught that Catholics are not free to indulge in birth control.

Discussions dragged on for five years, and during that time the dissenters were busy spreading the word that Rome would change the teaching on birth control. By the time *Humanae Vitae* was at last issued in 1968, tremendous damage had been done. Huge numbers embraced contraception over those five years and few had enough conviction of their beliefs as Catholics to again oppose it; they wanted the convenience of birth control and their Catholic consciousness had been changed.

In the final analysis, 64 out of 68 members of that Commission came down in favour of changing the Church's teaching on birth control; something which the Pope could never do. Sooner or later when the full picture is clearer about a controversial matter, the Pope of the day is bound to defend Tradition and to reject reasoning which is found to be in opposition to doctrine, and Paul VI reached the only decision open to him as the Vicar of Christ on Earth.

(Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, later to become Pope John Paul II, was a member of the Commission but was prevented from leaving Poland by the Communist government. He was thus unable to join up with the other four Commission members who urged Paul VI to uphold the Traditional teaching against birth control.)

The uncertainty concerning contraception in the years leading up to *Humanae Vitae* was documented in a very moving testimony by a German doctor of medicine, Dr. Alfred Haussler, who fought in vain to stop legalised abortion from being introduced into West Germany. Writing in *The Betrayal of the Theologians* (HLI, Oct 30, 1982) he stated that,

Paul VI had to deal with the problems of contraception, especially those precipitated by the Pill, under instructions from the Council. He conscientiously studied all the research results in the literature and consulted many specialists throughout the world. A commission of theologians appointed by the Pope could not reach an agreement and formulated a controversial “majority” opinion, since at the time the effects of the so-called ovulation inhibitor were not adequately known. The Pope’s medical advisers urged him to exercise the greatest caution and restraint and to reject the recommendation for the Pill.

#### Influence Of Evolution Beliefs Upon Birth Control Dissenters

It seems highly likely that the pro-evolutionary convictions of dissenters was a key factor in their determination to promote the contraceptive mindset. As Dr. Haussler also pointed out, the secular proponents of abortion,

“... skillfully exploited the disunity of the German Catholic intellectuals to bring their demands for the legalization of abortion to the legislature. ... Karl Rahner, who was in the forefront of the fight over [the loosening of] paragraph 218 [of the Constitution], wrote in *Naturwissenschaft und Theologie* (brochure 11, page 86, 1970): “I think that there are biological developments which are pre-human, but these developments are still aimed in the direction of man. Why cannot these developments be transferred from phylogeny to ontogeny?” It is undeniable that prominent Catholic professors of theology, including two well-known Jesuit priests, Rahner and Nell-Breuning, were prominent in the debate about paragraph 218. They supported and published opinions that were not only scientifically wrong but also diametrically opposed to the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church”.

Dr Haussler also had this to say, back in October 1982:

“The hypothesis that man is gradually endowed with a living soul appears to me to be a disastrous mistake in logic. It is therefore incomprehensible for the leading and most influential theologian of the German-speaking world, Professor Karl Rahner SJ to endorse this viewpoint. (Rahner supported it in his essay “The Problem of

Hominization” published in *Quaestiones Disputata* 12/13, 1965, and again in *Naturwissenschaft and Theologie* 11, 1970.) German theologians who defend the Pill refer to Rahner’s incorrect theses; they believe that the human soul is not endowed at fertilization but at a later time-in any case, not before implantation. Fortunately, Romano Guardini saved the honor and reputation of German theology as early as 1947, six years before the discovery of the genetic code, writing in the *Frankfurter Hefte* (Frankfurt booklets): “It was said that in the early time period of the embryo, approximately up to day 100, the embryo did not yet have a soul of its own, but was a being which belongs completely to the maternal organism. ... [But] the cycle of his human transition begins with the uniting of parental cells, culminates in the morphologic completion, and continues until death. Therefore he is a human being from the moment of conception.” It is admirable that Romano Guardini could write these sentences before the work was done on the genetic code. That so many German theologians continue to believe in Rahner’s hypotheses, even after the discovery of the genetic code, is impossible to understand”.

Notice the reference to the genetic code. This refers to the famous 1953 Crick and Watson watershed announcement of the double helix spiral model of DNA. As well as being of crucial importance from a Special Creation perspective, this announcement was also most important from a pro-life perspective in helping to clarify man’s understanding of what happens at the Lilliputian level of cells and molecules.

But is the acceptance of Karl Rahner’s evolutionary views impossible to understand? His belief in evolution seems to have come to influence his theological beliefs; Catholic doctrine had to be turned on its head to accommodate the supposed fact of evolution. It seems fair to conclude that, for Rahner, objective truth had given way to questionable subjective truth known from natural science.

For those who are unaware of it, the idea referred to by Rahner - that “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”, otherwise known as “recapitulation theory” - is pure fiction which was invented by the German evolutionary zealot Ernest Haeckel, who was strongly peer-rebuked by fellow scientists in the 19th century for blatant forgery of pictorial evidence. Nevertheless those sympathetic to evolution beliefs readily embraced this fiction and, amazingly, it is probably still being published in some school textbooks. The very idea of recapitulation theory-that foetal embryonic development takes on the resemblance of one’s evolutionary animal-like ancestors-is quite insidious. It blurs the truth that a human being is fully human from the moment of conception, and gives rise instead to the idea that the newly formed embryo in the womb is only “becoming a human being”.

If this is what influential Catholic dissenters such as Karl Rahner really believed, then it shows how profound the confusion has been over what constitutes evolution, and the degree to which false evolutionary

consciousness had turned the minds of even highly educated theologians. I contend that an unquestioning belief in evolution-as-fact played a central role in ushering in the widespread dissenting contraceptive/ pro-abortion mindset within Catholicism.

### **What Is Evolution?**

The Origins debate is hampered by the fact that so few bother to define precisely what is meant by the term “evolution”. Instead of precise terminology arrived at by rigorous investigation, the term evolution remains confusing and ever-elastic in public perception. Almost any evidence can be given an evolutionary interpretation as supposed proof. For example, creatures that became extinct were by definition less suited for adaptation yet those who survived were obviously able to adapt. Both outcomes are explicable by evolution theory. The discovery of living Coelacanth fish off Madagascar in the 1930’s showed that they had not become extinct millions of years ago and were identical to the fossilized ones. Did this cause zealous evolutionists to question the credibility of evolution? Not at all, the still-living Coelacanths were simply labelled as “living fossils”; they had somehow survived unchanged for supposed millions of years! So the live presence or dead absence of the Coelacanths can both be explained in favour of evolution theory.

Unless evolution is defined precisely, we can be at cross-purposes with each other. It is hardly surprising that evolution is kept ill-defined by those atheistic evolutionists who indulge in semantic games, but why is it not fully addressed and defined rigorously by Christians who propose alternative concepts to the idea of Special Creation? Divine interventionist concepts such as Theistic Evolution and Progressive Creation are also vague and elastic, as though all sorts of fanciful speculation are compatible with Tradition. Even some members of the Intelligent Design movement are vague about evolution definition and state that they have no trouble with evolution by common descent. So what exactly is the process commonly called “evolution”, over which so many heated arguments have taken place and which has produced deeply divided scientific and religious opinions?

Evolution is not natural selection, which at best only conserves the existing. Nor is it simply “change over time”. Each “kind” of life form has its own specific DNA coded structure and complementary protein molecules. Each has its own pre-programmed encoded specification which ensures that the various kinds remain unique; allowing great variety of change within kind but effectively preventing change beyond kind. Thus, reptiles cannot evolve into birds. The complex message specification which denotes a reptile allows for variety but this information content cannot naturally acquire the minimum number of instructions necessary to produce both the wings system and the unique lungs system possessed by birds.

The true definition of evolution discovered by science is this: Evolution is molecules-to-man, natural transformation in which new, “higher”, genetic information is gained which was not possessed by one's ancestors. If this is a

fair and reasonable definition, then we can be certain that evolution as commonly understood has never occurred because it cannot occur. Why? Because God has designed life forms so that only variety within kind is possible. The missing mechanism of evolution is doomed to remain missing because it never existed. That's why there are no intermediate stages found in the fossil record-they have never existed! This absence of intermediates was candidly admitted by the famous evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould.

Evolution per se-correctly defined-stands in contradiction to the reality of entropy, for the gaining of higher genetic information requires an increase in order and this clearly violates the second law of thermodynamics. The idea of the natural gaining of higher information is what the creation/evolution scientific debate is all about, despite the fact that zealous evolutionists don't want to concede the point and prefer to keep things vague.

Evolution should not be defined as "transformism" or other vague concepts which would introduce innumerable interventions by God. One can only wonder why God would override His own institution of Secondary Causes, especially within complex relationships of interdependent life forms. (Of course God is ever-active in keeping all life forms alive at the level of elementary particles but that is an entirely different matter from the innumerable interventions required for the countless supposed transitions involved in Theistic Evolution.)

The crucial aspect is whether or not truly new genetic information can be gained in the process of change. As Prof. Maciej Giertych pointed out in the foreword to *Creation Rediscovered*,

"Evolution means construction of new genes. It means increase in the amount of genetic information, and not a reduction of it".

This point about increase in information is of such crucial importance to the modern understanding of "evolution" that it cannot be emphasised enough, and it gets mentioned from time to time in creationist journals. For example, on page 29 of the *Answers In Genesis Technical Journal* (Vol. 15 (3), Dec 2001), John Woodmorappe and Jonathan Sarfati make the following point:

"... particles-to-people evolution requires changes that increase genetic information content. To date, not a single example of such a change has been observed, but such changes should be plentiful if evolution were true."

In his book *Not By Chance! Shattering The Modern Theory of Evolution* (p.138) the Jewish scientist Dr. Lee Spetner points out that,

"All point mutations that have been studied on the molecular level turn out to reduce the genetic information and not to increase it."

The idea of gaining information naturally is what the average person intuitively understands about “evolution”. Of course he doesn’t think only of tabby cats or black cats; most individuals think of “big” changes, such as would allow a reptile to give rise to a bird. In other words, he doesn’t simply think intuitively only about changes within kind but assumes that many changes beyond kind have occurred in the process commonly called “evolution”. Many individuals tend to accept the subtle message driven home relentlessly in books, articles and on TV: that everything has changed somehow from the first molecules leading up to higher levels of creatures. The harsh reality of profound conceptual problems within evolution theory is largely glossed over by evolutionary propagandists. We need investigative journalists to expose this peddling of disinformation in the public arena!

### **Truth Declared In Apostolic Tradition**

The whole point of the 19th Century push to justify evolution was to enable a naturalistic explanation of Origins without the need for a transcendent Creator. Unfortunately, the compromise concept known as Theistic Evolution is of little use in the struggle against materialistic Evolutionism. But the Catholic Church has not been silent in declarations in encyclicals and Councils about Creation and evolution.

Leo XIII taught in his 1880 encyclical *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* that Adam was made from the slime of the Earth and that Eve was specially created from a portion of Adam’s body. The four conditions which Vatican Council II would later recognize in *Lumen Gentium* (para. 25) in order for a doctrine to be proposed infallibly by the ordinary Magisterium had been fulfilled by the year 1880 with respect to the origin of Eve as taught by Leo XIII. The Church has thus declared that the first female human being was specially created; her body did not come via evolution. Thus, the origin of Eve’s body is not an open question for Catholics.

Leo XIII also implicitly ruled out polygenism (i.e., “many first parents”) by insisting on monogenism in the same encyclical. Polygenism was also strongly condemned by Pius XII in *Humani Generis*. He declared that Catholics,

“cannot embrace that opinion which maintains either that after Adam there existed on this earth true men who did not take their origin through natural generation from him as from the first parent of all, or that Adam represents a certain number of first parents.”

It is noteworthy that Fr. J. Franklin Ewing, SJ, a paleontologist and theistic evolutionist, wrote in the 1956 publication *Human Evolution* of his own conviction that Pius XII had taught that polygenism is irreconcilable with the doctrine of Original Sin. Further, polygenism was also ruled out in the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church (see para. 360, footnote 226 reference to the Book of Tobit 8:6:

“Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth and gave him  
Eve for a helper. From them the race of mankind has sprung.  
...”

The “one ancestor” mentioned in the CCC could only be the first male human being, namely Adam). Therefore, polygenism is not an open question for Catholics.

Leo XIII effectively pulled the rug out from under human evolution with his 1880 teaching on the special creation of Eve. With polygenism ruled out, the only possibility left is that of evolution-of-the-male-only (i.e., rapid special transformism within monogenism) but what evidence is there for such a concept? Yet another possibility - that God inserted a rational soul into an adult male member of a race of “almost human beings” - is much too convenient and devoid of supportive evidence. And the implausible idea that God intervened directly to change an apelike creature into that of a human being (i.e., Adam) makes no pretence at qualifying as “evolution” as most evolutionists understand the term.

The idea that Adam’s body arose by the intervention of God acting upon two apelike parents so that they gave rise to a new “kind” is untenable. Consider the result: A baby boy born of an animal who must fend for himself among animals until he reaches maturity maybe 25 years later when God would create Eve from a portion of his body! This contradicts the Genesis revelation that both Adam and Eve were created on the same day, not 25 years apart. Why even call this concept “evolution” when the natural process of evolution has had to be abandoned in favour of divine intervention. This scenario requires that Adam’s body and rational soul would also have been carried within the female animal for a period of months. Given their rejection of ancient evolutionary, anti-Creation concepts, it is hard to see how the Church Fathers would have accepted such a scenario.

Other interventionist speculation involves the possibility of “almost human beings” whom God acted upon when he brought Adam into being. If such creatures ever existed, where did they come from anyway-by natural evolution or by some form of interventionist creation, which only begs the question further? And what became of them all after Adam arrived? Are we to believe they all died out long before the global Flood could show evidence of their fossils and thus they left no trace that they ever existed? One can only wonder why God would not simply insert a rational soul into an adult female “almost human being” instead of ignoring these females and creating Eve’s body directly from matter taken from Adam. Multitudes of these “almost human beings” and other supposed ancestral creatures would have died in the slow journey leading up to the arrival of Adam, but Romans 5:12 declares that death only began to occur after Adam’s sin of disobedience. So when is a human being a human being? The 1994 Catechism declares that we are human beings precisely because we are animated by a spiritual soul! (364) The idea of “almost human beings” does not qualify as credible speculation. The first male human being, on whom the awesome choice of obedience would be placed on behalf of all future mankind, is much more likely to have been

specially created as an adult human being. (If one holds that this reference to death applies only to human beings, then why do fossils of supposed apelike transitional forms show evidence of the disease of rickets? Are we to believe that Adam and Eve were created upon a vast museum of death and that it was not a good, tranquil Creation after all? The buried fossils in reality resulted from the global Flood of Noah, many years after Adam and Eve.)

Consider some things known about the trustworthy Creator. The Second Person of the Divine Trinity was not only present at Creation but actually carried out the work of Creation—"through whom all things were made." He later took on human form and carried out the work of Redemption in perfect obedience to the Father. He must have been intimately involved in the truth revealed to Moses. God can neither deceive nor be deceived, so how can we ignore Christ's various comments regarding the genuine historicity of Genesis, including the global Flood and the concrete reality of Adam and Eve.

Let us not forget that the Second Person did some extraordinary things by human standards, such as calmly walking across the rough sea to Peter and the other frightened disciples in the boat (Matt. 14:25). We know that he created space, time and matter rapidly at the beginning of Creation, changed water into wine rapidly, brought the dead Lazarus back to life rapidly, created a coin inside the mouth of a fish rapidly (Matt. 17:26) or at least directed Peter to a fish that had a coin in its mouth, multiplied five loaves and two fishes rapidly to feed 5,000 men plus women and children (Matt. 14:19), and he cured blindness and diseases rapidly, so why balk at the idea of his rapid creation of Adam and Eve in keeping with the Genesis text? Why not also believe that he rapidly "stretched out of the heavens" (i.e., the Universe), a term used various times in the Old Testament, during the Creation days? The implausibility of divine interventionist concepts comes into sharp focus when one considers that, in contrast to acceptance of the rapid adult creation of Adam, theistic evolutionists are driven to invoke innumerable rapid divine interventions over eons of years. So whom do we believe about the truth of Creation—the trustworthy divine Second Person who was present at Creation, or fallible modern human beings who were not there?

### **Papal Permission To Investigate Evolution**

Many Catholics argue that Adam and Eve were not real, concrete, human beings and that the Genesis account is poetry and nothing more than early man's attempt to comprehend the cosmos around him, but Pius XII taught quite the opposite. He declared in the 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis* that Genesis does contain real history, though not recorded in the way of modern historians, and that Adam and Eve were the first parents of all human beings and not symbolic representations of mankind. Their rational souls were divinely implanted in acts of Special Creation, and Catholics are bound to believe this. He reaffirmed that Original Sin is

“sin actually committed by an individual Adam and which through generation is passed on to all and is in everyone as his own.”

In fact he wrote against dissenters, such as Teilhard de Chardin, who were obviously intent on overturning the doctrine of Original Sin. He warned that Catholics must not take for granted that

“the origin of the human body from pre-existing and living matter were already completely certain and proved by facts which have been discovered up to now, and by reasoning on those facts, and as if there were nothing in the sources of divine revelation which demands the greatest moderation and caution in this question.”

And he insisted that the pros and cons of evolution must be considered, and that no one should rush to support evolution and presume to impose their own views upon the Church, but instead should submit to the Magisterium ruling as regards doctrine concerning the origin of the human body

Having permitted investigation of human evolution in 1950, Pius XII subsequently indicated that evolution per se seemed highly debatable to him, when he addressed the First International Congress of Medical Genetics on Sept 7, 1953:

In recent works on genetics one reads that the connection between living things cannot be explained better than by supposing a common genealogical tree. It is, however, necessary to remark that what we have here is only an image, a hypothesis, not a demonstrated fact ... If most research workers speak of genealogical descent as a fact, they are premature in doing so. One could very well formulate other alternative hypotheses ... scientists of repute have emphasised in the clearest possible manner that in their opinion one cannot as yet say what is the real and exact meaning of terms such as “evolution”, “descent” and “transmission”; that we are as yet totally ignorant of a natural process by which one being can beget another of a different kind; that the process by which one being can beget another is altogether unintelligible, no matter how many intermediate stages be supposed; that no experimental method for producing one species from another has been found; and finally that we would not have any idea at what stage in the evolutionary process the hominoid suddenly crossed the threshold of humanity ... [In conclusion] one is forced to say that the study of human origins is only at its beginnings; there is nothing definitive about present-day theory.”

(The address, given in French, was published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. Emphasis added.)

The original text of *Humani Generis* given in the Denzinger-Schonmetzer Latin version, para. 3896 (2327 in Denz) shows that the actual words “open question” were not used by Pius XII. The English translations published by The Wanderer (1969) and later by the McGrath Publishing Co. in *The Papal*

Encyclicals 1939-1958 (1981) have virtually the same wording and the words “open question” are not there. Let us look again at the key reason Pius XII gave in *Humani Generis* for allowing the investigation:

It remains for us now to speak about these questions which, although they pertain to the positive sciences, are nevertheless more or less connected with the truths of Christian faith. In fact, not a few insistently demand that the Catholic religion take these sciences into account as much as possible. This certainly would be praiseworthy in case of clearly proved facts; but caution must be used when there is rather a question of hypotheses having some sort of scientific foundation in which doctrine contained in Sacred Scripture or in Tradition is involved. If such conjectural opinions are directly or indirectly opposed to the doctrine revealed by God, then the demand that they be recognized can in no way be admitted. For these reasons, the teaching authority does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology [i.e. in 1950], research and discussions on the part of men experienced in both fields take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution insofar as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter - for Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God.

Doctrine is not dependent upon scientific arguments but Pius XII himself saw that false scientific arguments could impact adversely on Origins doctrine and he saw the need to obtain a good understanding of what constitutes “evolution” scientifically and pertinent theological comments regarding any possible effect on doctrine. Just as Paul VI later also wanted a good understanding of what constitutes Pill contraception scientifically and pertinent theological comments regarding any possible effect on doctrine.

Nowadays, over fifty years later, it is easy to overlook the fact that Pius XII’s 1950 encyclical was issued three years before Crick and Watson’s 1953 announcement of the genetic code. Pius XII in 1950 did not fully understand terms like “macroevolution” and “microevolution”. How could he, when the best scientists of the day did not fully understand the terms themselves? A great deal of imprecision regarding the concept of “evolution” must have prevailed among scientists and Church scholars long before 1953 and for many years afterwards.

Given the then seemingly doctrinally united state of the Catholic Church prior to the 1960’s, there would have been no need for Pius XII to hurry and certainly no need to concede the status of “open question” to evolutionists intent on overturning doctrine. However, it is also true that prior to 1953 it may have seemed credible that matter might contain inherent evolutionary properties which would allow life forms to unfold naturally, imperceptibly, with minute small changes gradually giving way to large scale changes, with no need for divine intervention. This micro to macro speculation suffers profoundly from the complete lack of fossilized transitional evidence buried in the rocks, but who could have known with certainty prior to the 1953 watershed whether matter did or did not contain such properties? Many years later, in 1975, Prof. Jerome Lejeune showed that no accumulation of micro

changes can amount to macroevolution, but this finding was not available until 25 years after *Humani Generis* was issued. (Lejeune showed, for example, that there can be no such thing as an indiscernible gorillization.)

As scientific research progressed in the second half of the 20th Century it became increasingly clear to objective researchers that macro-evolutionary changes are impossible. And it is almost impossible to postulate an earlier precursor to incredibly complex molecules. The possibility for evolution to occur is not affected by eons of time but rather is determined by the specific information designed into life forms. The evidence all points to Special Creation by a transcendent Designer. Since 1953, the obvious conclusion has stood out with ever-greater clarity-the Creator must have designed life forms so that only micro changes within kind are possible. This is because the discovery of DNA made it possible to understand the way that genetic information is coded and the way that changes in the code produce mutations. At last, it gradually became possible to correctly define the term “evolution”. Of necessity evolution requires the natural gaining of higher genetic information not possessed by one’s ancestors, and this possibility is ruled out on the basis that “nothing can give what it does not have”.

Thus, the pertinent information sought by Pius XII was finally available, long after his death. Detailed research and discussions have since been carried out by enough scientists and theologians, and the objective conclusion is that Adam’s body must have been derived from previously existent-but non-living-matter. (On Day 6 God rapidly created Adam body and soul. In so doing he instantly transformed the use of sufficient elementary particles already created on Day 1 within the inorganic soil into that of the functioning adult body of Adam, the first adult male human being, and simultaneously created his rational soul.)

If Pius XII had known in 1950 what is now known in the 21st Century, there would have been no need for an investigation since the Pope would have known that God has designed life forms so that evolution cannot occur and that pro-evolution arguments lead inevitably to conflict with doctrine. Evolution would only have been an open question scientifically for the time being after 1950 but that time has passed many years ago. And enough arguments have by now been assembled to show that pro-evolution arguments are unable to dislodge the integrity of the Genesis account plus they contradict the encyclical teachings of Leo XIII and Pius XII. So the idea of evolution possibly being an open question both scientifically and doctrinally has lapsed from relevance.

Unfortunately, the 80 member Pontifical Academy of Sciences-which contains members who are not Catholics and at least one atheist, the famous UK cosmologist Stephen Hawking-are passing incorrect information in support of evolution to Pope John Paul II. This Academy has no authority in matters of faith and doctrine and expresses only the views of its own members. If any members are not evolutionists, they must be very muted in their opposition; when do we ever hear publicly about any dissenting minority reports?

Given Rome's historical preference for caution in matters doctrinal, permission to investigate evolution was not in contradiction with the fact that strong doctrinal beliefs already existed against evolution, just as Paul VI's later permission to investigate contraception was not in contradiction with already declared doctrine against birth control. Permission to speculate on doctrinal matters must remain within the constraints of conforming to already declared doctrine.

All that really matters now is that a good understanding of what constitutes evolution became known in the decades after 1953. The natural gaining of higher genetic information was found to be impossible and what is objectively impossible cannot also be possible at the same time. Since evolution correctly defined is impossible, it cannot be an open question scientifically and, in keeping with Pius XII's concern expressed in *Humani Generis*, it should not be allowed to impact upon Catholic doctrine.

By way of analogy, if some scholars had suggested in the 1500's that spontaneous generation was how all life forms had always arisen, including human beings, this would have been a challenge to Church doctrine. So if a Pope of the time had declared that the Church "does not forbid research and discussion of the possibility of spontaneous generation and any relevant theological implications concerning the origin of the first human being", one would think that the Pope's concern would have been fully answered when the later scientific findings of Louis Pasteur were fully known. Once spontaneous generation was found to be impossible, any previous permission to investigate it would have lost any possible status of being an open question scientifically and would have lapsed from being a threat doctrinally. The fact that such hypothetical papal permission may not have been closed by Rome for many years afterwards would not have changed the strength of this argument. Such delay could have been influenced by all sorts of other factors at work, such as war or the outbreak of terrible diseases. One can argue that Rome's not having closed the modern evolution discussion has been greatly affected by a variety of distracting factors, such as the strong pro-evolution bias of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the catastrophic collapse of belief within Catholicism.

Unfortunately, some Catholics oppose Special Creation on the mistaken ground that its proponents overstate the case; they fear that private opinions may be imposed and portrayed as though Church doctrine. But the objective truth is quite the opposite; for too long the actual Church teachings have been greatly understated and not imparted rigorously to enough Catholic students. Given the continuing falling away from the practice of Catholicism and the ongoing need for conversion of an increasingly pagan society, there is a pressing need for the full truth of Special Creation to be taught in Catholic schools and preached far and wide. The investigation recognized by Pius XII is of course still open until Rome declares otherwise. All that remains is for the Magisterium to close the final chapter on an outmoded, un lamented, mistaken belief called evolution.