

# Creation Rediscovered

by  
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Our Lord took pains to emphasize that any evangelization accompanied by the fullness of his power must include ALL the Truths that He entrusted to the Apostles. One of those Truths is the doctrine of creation and the Fall which underlies the Church's teaching on Redemption and Sanctification. In recent decades faith in the original doctrine of creation has been shaken by the claims of evolutionary theory, but twenty-first century natural science has now answered and invalidated those claims.

## The Traditional Catholic Doctrine of Creation

Both the Council of Trent and Vatican Council I taught that no one is permitted to interpret Sacred Scripture "contrary to the unanimous agreement of the Fathers."<sup>1</sup> In the words of Fr. Victor Warkulwiz:

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church unanimously agreed that Genesis 1-11 is an inerrant literal historical account of the beginning of the world and the human species as related by the prophet Moses under divine inspiration. This does not mean that they agreed on every point in its interpretation, but their differences were accidental and not essential. Pope Leo XIII, following St. Augustine, affirmed the Catholic rule for interpreting Sacred Scripture, "not to depart from the literal and obvious sense, except only where reason makes it untenable or necessity requires."

For the first five centuries of the Church, all of the Fathers believed and proclaimed:

- that less than 6,000 years had passed from the creation of the world to the birth of Jesus.
- that the creation took place in six 24 hour days or in an instant of time
- that God created the different kinds of living things instantly and immediately
- That Adam was created from the dust of the earth and Eve from his side
- that God ceased to create new kinds of creatures after the creation of Adam
- that the Original Sin of Adam shattered the perfect harmony of the first-created world and brought human death, deformity, and disease into the world.

This patristic teaching on creation was implicit in the words of the Nicene Creed, "I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible." Not until the Middle Ages when the Albigensian heresy denied the divine creation of the material universe did an Ecumenical Council elaborate on the first article of the creed in the following words:

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<sup>1</sup> Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution concerning the Catholic Faith, Chapter 2 (DS, 1788).

*God...creator of all visible and invisible things of the spiritual and of the corporal who by his own omnipotent power at once from the beginning of time created each creature from nothing, spiritual and corporal namely angelic and mundane and finally the human, constituted as it were, alike of the spirit and the body.*

For 600 years, according to the foremost Catholic Doctors and commentators on this dogmatic decree, the words “at once from the beginning” signified that God created all of the different kinds of corporeal creatures and angels “simul” (“at once”). This could be reconciled with the six days of creation (the view of the overwhelming majority of the Fathers) or with the instantaneous creation envisioned by St. Augustine—but it could not be reconciled with a longer creation period. Among the commentators who taught that Lateran IV had defined the relative simultaneity of the creation of all things, perhaps the most authoritative was St. Lawrence of Brindisi (1559-1619), Doctor of the Church. In his commentary on Genesis, St. Lawrence wrote:

the Holy Roman Church determined in the Fourth Lateran Council that the angels along with the creatures of the world were at once created *ex nihilo* from the beginning of time.

This precise meaning of the words of Lateran IV was also affirmed by the most authoritative catechism in the history of the Catholic Church—the *Roman Catechism*—which taught that God created ALL things by his Fiat instantaneously “in the beginning” without any natural process:

[T]he Divinity created all things in the beginning. He spoke and they were made: He commanded and they were created.

The Catechism of Trent also affirmed the constant teaching of the Fathers, Doctors, Popes, and Councils that God created the first man, Adam, by an act of special creation, and Eve from his side. Moreover, it affirmed the teaching of Lateran IV that the creation of new kinds of creatures ceased with Adam and Eve, thus making a radical distinction between the period of creation when God spoke all of the different kinds of creatures into existence, and the period of providence which began after the creation of Adam and Eve.

Although the Fathers and Doctors understood that natural science could only investigate the realm of providence, St. Peter foretold the future rise of a uniformitarian way of thinking within the Church:

Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, *all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation.*” They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished

St. Peter foresaw that the scoffers would predicate their denials of creation and the Flood on the stability of the natural order—on the grounds that “all things have continued as they were.” In modern times this principle became known as “uniformitarianism,” or “the present is the key to the past.” “Uniformitarianism” became the guiding principle of Charles Lyell, Charles Darwin, and other intellectuals who argued that natural scientists could extrapolate from present-day processes in the order of providence all the way back to the beginning of creation. St. Peter foresaw that to champion their evolutionary theory they would have to “deliberately ignore” the fact of the Flood, and, indeed, Darwin wrote in an unpublished manuscript of 1873: “Lyell is most firmly convinced that he has shaken the faith in the Deluge far more efficiently [in his writings on geology] by never having said a word against the Bible than if he had acted otherwise.”<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century a number of natural scientists claimed to have discovered “irrefutable evidence” that contradicted the traditional Catholic doctrine of creation. The most important of these evidences included variations within populations of plants and animals and the discovery of layers of fossils in sedimentary rock formations in various places. The discovery of fossils in layers all over the earth inspired various interpretations. Lyell’s disciples speculated that the fossils had been laid down over millions of years and that they contained a record of the evolution of many different kinds of living things from common ancestors. This interpretation provided the framework for another creative interpretation of a different body of evidence.

For amateur naturalist Charles Darwin, the “fact” that various species of plants and animals changed over time seemed to support Lyell’s theory of organic evolution. According to Darwin, given Lyell’s long ages of geologic time, the small changes that he had observed on the Galapagos Islands might accumulate, resulting in the transformation of species. He theorized that natural selection—the survival of the fittest, or better adapted, members of each species—could even account for the transformation of reptiles into birds, land mammals into whales, and apes into men.

What followed vividly recalls Iago’s devilish discovery of “irrefutable evidence” of Desdemona’s infidelity—only in this case the victim was the spotless Lamb “who cannot deceive or be deceived.” From the end of the nineteenth century, an increasing number of Catholic intellectuals came to believe the facts of biology and geology had “proven” the theory that all living things evolved from a primordial blob by small changes. In reality, the proof of macroevolution—or particles to people evolution—was never provided. Instead, like Iago, (but, in some cases, without a deliberate desire to deceive) the theory’s promoters presented pieces of evidence that **could** be interpreted as favoring their theory, while promising to deliver the definitive “proof”—fossil evidence of transitional forms between diverse kinds of living things—in the near future.

As, on the pretext of a false “proof,” noble Othello lost faith in his bride, so, many Catholic professors, priests, and even bishops lost their faith in the traditional doctrine of creation and the literal historical truth of Genesis wherever they seemed to contradict the tenets of “evolutionary science.” Providentially, to this day no official magisterial

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<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution* (London: Chatto Windus, 1959), p.320.

pronouncement has ever endorsed particles to people evolution and its attendant ideas. Indeed, the 1993 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* does not even mention the word “evolution” as a scientific theory. But unofficial statements in favor of the theory have proliferated. Today, it almost seems as if “particles to people evolution” has become the conventional wisdom of the Catholic Church. But the tide is about to turn.

### **The End of Evolution**

In spite of all their confident claims, the greatest non-event of the twentieth century was the evolutionists’ promised “proof” for particles to people evolution. At the same time, a growing number of Christian theologians and philosophers have realized that creation, as understood by the Fathers, is a completed divine action, and hence not susceptible to empirical study. Indeed, although the media has made much of his non-authoritative statements in favor of theistic evolution, Pope John Paul II’s authoritative writings underscored the necessity of grasping the authentic meaning of the metaphysical language employed by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

In his encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, Pope John Paul II noted that Vatican Council I “pronounced solemnly on the relationship between reason and faith. The teaching contained in this document strongly and positively marked the philosophical research of many believers and remains today a standard reference-point for correct and coherent Christian thinking in this regard.”<sup>3</sup> Like Vatican I, *Fides et Ratio* clearly identified Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition as the sources of truths that cannot be known through the senses or through the light of the unaided intellect. With regard to the Sacred Scriptures, the Council insisted that they be interpreted as the inerrant Word of God, under the guidance of the *Magisterium*, and in accord with the unanimous interpretation of the Church Fathers. With regard to the teachings of ecumenical Councils, Vatican I mandated that they be retained in the same sense in which they were written and that the terminology of the Council Fathers be retained.

In the meantime, many Catholic natural scientists have discovered that there is no solid evidence for particles to people evolution. No transitional fossils have been found. No examples of upward evolution—through the formation of new organs or functions—have been observed. Until recently, the failure to find these “proofs” has been glossed over with assurances that they will be found eventually. In the light of scientific advances in many disciplines during the last quarter century, evolution no longer suffers from a mere absence of proof. It has been definitively and fatally contradicted.

In geology, the work of sedimentologists like Guy Berthault has demonstrated that the sedimentary layers of the earth are far more likely to have been formed by flowing water in sideways sloping strata than by having been deposited one on top of the other. Thus, the strata cannot be used to date rocks or the fossils contained in them. Moreover, studies of the aftermath of the Mt. St. Helens volcanic eruption have confirmed Berthault’s

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<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 52.

findings and demonstrated that rock formations thought to have been formed over millions of years can be formed by rapidly moving water in a matter of days.

Meanwhile, in molecular biology, recent discoveries have revealed the staggering complexity of even the simplest cell. According to molecular biologist Michael Denton:

A functional protein or gene is complex beyond our own creative capacities . . . .  
Alongside the level of ingenuity and complexity exhibited by the molecular machinery of life, even our most advanced artifacts appear clumsy.<sup>4</sup>

Information theory has now shown that this staggering complexity cannot have arisen from within material things. It had to have been programmed *into* them by an intelligent agent. In the words of Dr. Walt Brown:

Based on modern advances in the field of information theory, the only known way to decrease the entropy [tendency to disorder (author's note)] of an isolated system is by having intelligence *in* that system (emphasis in original).<sup>5</sup>

In his book *Genetic Entropy* world-famous geneticist Dr. John Sanford has demonstrated that twenty-first century genetics not only contradicts the primary axiom of the Neo-Darwinian Theory that is taught in virtually all mainstream schools and universities (i.e. mutations + natural selection = evolution). He actually shows that most so-called “neutral” mutations are actually slightly harmful and that these slightly-harmful mutations accumulate in the genome of every kind of organism fast enough so that those organisms are *devolving*. In fact, Sanford shows that, in light of current research, the human genome likely cannot be more than thousands of years old, because if it had been accumulating mutations at the current rate for more than 10,000 years man would be extinct!<sup>6</sup>

Contemplating these facts in the light of *Fides et Ratio*, is there any reason for Catholics to reject the plain sense of Lateran IV or of the first eleven chapters of Genesis? The answer is a resounding “No!” On the contrary, since creation is a metaphysical reality and there is no compelling scientific evidence in favor of macroevolution or long ages of geological time, Catholics should hold fast to the traditional doctrine.

### **The New Evangelization**

According to the traditional understanding of creation, there is nothing in the entire world that does not exist for man. Man has always been at centre stage. Moreover, in the beginning, God and man lived in such intimacy that there was perfect communication between them. Adam's every thought, word, and deed, unfolded under the inspiration of

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Michael Denton, quoted in *Refuting Evolution* by Dr. Jonathan Sarfati (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1999), p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Walt Brown, *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood* (Phoenix, AZ: Center for Scientific Creation, sixth edition, 1995), p. 43).

<sup>6</sup> Dr. John Sanford, *Genetic Entropy and the Mystery of the Genome* (Waterloo: FMS Publications, 2005).

the Holy Spirit. Adam saw God in all things, and all things in God. From this perspective, it is easy to believe that *every human life is worth more than the entire material universe, and that the whole purpose of the universe is to provide a place for intimate union between God and his human children*. From this perspective, the most harmful effect of Original Sin was the alienation from God that it produced, and all of the evils of human life—death, disease, mutations, violence, and selfishness—stem from the original loss of intimacy between God and his children.

In contrast to this traditional doctrine of creation, theistic evolutionism denies that man has had any special place in the history of the universe. According to the evolutionary time scale, for most of the world's alleged 15 billion year history, man was nowhere to be found. Having evolved from the apes during the last 1 % of cosmic history, man is only a blip on the screen. Even then, he evolves into a state of nature characterized by violence, disease, mutations, natural disasters, and a relentless struggle for existence, all of it intended by God from the beginning to be part of man's experience. Instead of a beautiful, perfectly harmonious universe, the first human beings awoke to—or evolved into—a world of bloodshed and misery. Moreover, God willed that man endure hundreds of thousands of years of violence, disease, crippling mutations, natural disasters, and a relentless struggle for existence, in the darkness of false beliefs, until God saw fit to reveal the rudiments of the natural and divine law to the Hebrews a few thousand years ago. According to this view, God preserved no accurate record of the vast bulk of human history, but simply inspired the Hebrews to re-fashion various pagan myths and legends into morally uplifting myths about 600 years before the Incarnation of Jesus.

Theistic evolutionism has spawned a host of novel interpretations of Genesis, most of which clash violently with the unanimous interpretations of Genesis made by the Church Fathers. Perhaps the most popular of these novel theories is known as progressive creationism. According to its proponents, the absence of transitional fossils in the fossil record indicates that God created the prototypes of the various kinds of creatures by an act of creation at various points in geological history. However, through their unwillingness to challenge the evolutionist chronology of billions of years, the progressive creationists end by accepting all of the anomalies mentioned in the preceding paragraph—except that they believe that God shone a light in the darkness of geological ages by creating new kinds of creatures from time to time. According to progressive creationism, however, God did not perform these creative acts for the sake of man, who was not created until somewhere between 50,000 and 1,000,000 years ago, but for His own inscrutable purposes, which had nothing to do with creating a harmonious and welcoming home for his first human children. Needless to say, such attempts to “reform” or “save” theistic evolutionism and to reconcile it with the Catholic Faith bear little if any resemblance to the Faith of the Apostles, Fathers, and Doctors of the Church.

During his pontificate, Pope John Paul II asked the Church to devote all of her energies to a new evangelization. Moreover, he often voiced his conviction that the Church is about to enter into a “new springtime” which he identified with the “Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary” and a “new holiness” which will “make Christ the heart of the world.” But it would seem that before the Church can respond to this prophetic call to devote *all of her energies to proclaiming the Gospel*, she must first resolve to teach *all that Jesus has commanded*, especially in regard to the fundamental truths of creation

and the early history of man.

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