

Letter: John Paul accepted theory of evolution

by John L. Frank | Chelsea

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Brendon Quilter asserts (Letters, May 15) that Pope John Paul II accepted the validity of only micro-evolution (changes within species) and not macro-evolution (development of new species). With all due respect, this is incorrect.

In a major statement to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on Oct. 22, 1996, on the Roman Catholic Church's position on the theory of evolution, the pope acknowledged the broad reality of evolution without making any distinction between micro- and macro-evolution. The full text of his address can be found at www.newadvent.org/library.

In his address the pope stated that although "Revelation teaches us that (man) was created in the image and likeness of God, ... new knowledge has led to the recognition of the theory of evolution as more than a hypothesis." The pope's message accepted the theory of evolution as a valid explanation of the development of life on Earth, with one major exception: the human soul. He further posited that evolution is compatible with Christian faith.

Some evolution deniers have proposed that what he really meant was that only micro-evolution was valid science. Perhaps the pope was too optimistic in stating, in the same address, that he was "certain that we will be able to profit from the fruitfulness of a trustful dialogue between the Church and science." I guess for some of us, the thought that we share an ancestor with other primates is unbearable.

http://www.mlive.com/opinion/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2009/06/letter_john_paul_accepted_theo.html