

# How the Catholic Church sold out to evolution

***Creation, Evolution, and Catholicism:  
a discussion for those who believe***

Thomas L. McFadden

Institute for Science and Catholicism, 2020

John Woodmorappe

In this book, the engineer author surveys the encounter of the Catholic Church with evolution. This book is a sequel to his *The Evolution of Catholic Unbelief* (2019), reviewed also in this journal.<sup>1</sup> Because most readers of this review are not Catholic, I try to focus on matters of broad interest.

The author has an unconventional style of writing. He uses a free-flowing narrative that injects references within the text itself, and which mixes literary sources with references to websites and YouTube presentations. But his message does get through loud and clear.

## Evolution leads to outright atheism

McFadden is especially concerned about Catholic youth rejecting the Faith, and doing so out of deference to evolution, which has long permeated the Church. He experienced this personally:

“Years ago, I became aware of the skepticism among Catholic teens while teaching CCD [Confraternity of Christian Doctrine] when they asked me ‘You don’t really believe in Adam and Eve, do you?’ I learned from them that their unbelief in supernatural doctrines derived from the Bible was because of their belief in evolution. They realized

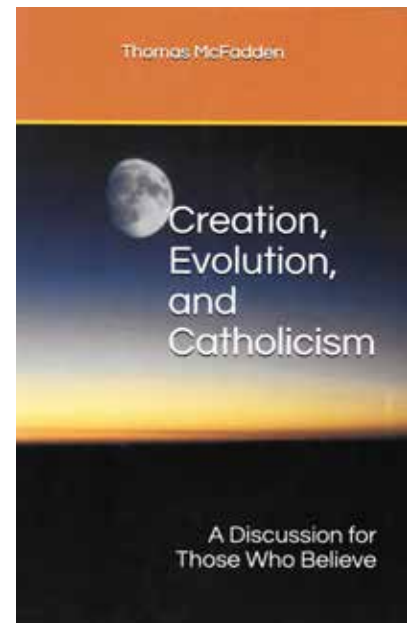
that there was a conflict between the Book of Genesis and the ‘science’ they were taught in school: their school teachers were more effective than their religious educators and had so much more of the students’ time to make their case” (p. 1).

This experience with American youth has parallels with other cultures. In once solidly Catholic Ireland, now only 37.5% of Irish university students believe in God (p. 195). The number in the general population is probably similar, because a referendum to repeal Ireland’s ban on abortion was passed 66.4% to 33.6%. In Australia, less than 50% of Generation Y youth (aka ‘millennials’, born between about 1981 and 1996) indicate a belief in God (pp. 172–173).

## Francisco Ayala and the Spanish experience

This stellar evolutionist (b. 1934) was once a Dominican priest in Spain, but only for one year, in 1961. He became so enamoured of evolution that he came to the USA and studied under Theodosius Dobzhansky (1900–1975). Ayala eventually became president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and was advisor to the Templeton foundation. McFadden sees Ayala’s experience as a harbinger of what happened to Spain’s once-formidable Catholic faith. Ayala became a bitter opponent of both scientific creation and biblical creation.

McFadden does not mention the fact that Ayala was terminated from his long-term faculty position at the University of California over substantiated allegations of sexual harassment. His



name was stripped from the university buildings named after him.

## Intimidating the church: misusing Galileo and Bruno

Common misconceptions about how the Church handled Galileo and Bruno were and are used to silence any potential criticism of evolution. After all, the Church was wrong to ‘touch’ science once, and had better never try that again. Pope John Paul II actually issued an apology for the Church’s ‘scientific incompetence’ in the Galileo affair. McFadden will have none of it.

He realizes that “The Vatican Congregation involved judged and acted entirely reasonably based on the facts of 1616. In fact, science wasn’t even the primary issue of the Case” (p. 208). He adds:

“Galileo, although he seemed to believe in the heliocentric model, taught the geocentric model at the University of Padua from 1592 to 1604 for fear of being ridiculed. Besides that, the Catholic Church never ‘held’ the geocentric model as a doctrine although it was the

scientific consensus until at least 1687” (p. 244).

That the Church was following the *best science of its time* was thoroughly documented by physicist Christopher Graney.<sup>2</sup>

Giordano Bruno, likewise, was not just some kind of scientific martyr that fell victim to the Church’s resistance to scientific enlightenment. McFadden writes:

“What the anti-Catholic, Darwinist writers ‘forgot’ to mention was that the Dominican priest Bruno was actually convicted as a denier of the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, Mary’s virginity, transubstantiation, and he was a pantheist. It had nothing to do with science” (p. 244).

Real scientists who supported the geokinetic model, such as Galileo and Kepler, had utter contempt for Bruno. Australian atheistic history writer Tim O’Neill described him as a “mystic” who “scorned empiricism and rejected mathematics as a way of understanding the world”.<sup>3</sup>

### Ernst Haeckel on the church’s sellout to evolution

In Darwin’s time, the Church quietly opposed evolution. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, and based partly on its memory of getting ‘burned’ by the Galileo affair, it ‘made peace’ with evolution.

Haeckel, a militant atheist, was probably a more capable promoter of evolution than Darwin himself, and is well known for his fake embryo drawings that convinced many of the ‘fact’ of evolution. In his 1906 book, *Last Word on Evolution*, he comments on the Church’s about-face on evolution:

“... the interesting efforts that the Church has lately made to enter into a peaceful compromise with its deadly enemy, Monistic science. It has decided to accept to a certain extent, and to accommodate to its creed (in a distorted and mutilated form) the doctrine of evolution, which it has vehemently opposed

for thirty years. This remarkable change of front on the part of the Church militant seemed to me so interesting and important, and at the same time so misleading and mischievous ... . Our science of evolution won its greatest triumph when, at the beginning of the twentieth century, its most powerful opponents, the Churches, became reconciled to it, and endeavored to bring their dogmas into line with it” (p. 260).

Haeckel’s statements are instructive. One can see from Haeckel’s quoted statements that evolutionists simultaneously praise and despise Christian compromise with evolution. We also see how unilateral appeasement of evolution by Christians leads to demands for more concessions. This is illustrated by Haeckel’s derogatory remarks (‘distorted’, ‘mutilated’, ‘misleading’, and ‘mischievous’). Evidently, leading humanists will not be satisfied with anything less than a complete capitulation to their worldview.

### Evolution drives modernism

Even though the Church hesitantly accepted evolution by the turn of the

20<sup>th</sup> century, it still recognized the toxicity of evolutionary thinking. McFadden comments:

“In 1884 Pope Leo XIII identified the attack on faith caused by naturalism and evolutionism. And in a 1907 encyclical, ‘On the Doctrine of the Modernists’ Pope St. Pius X described how evolution undergirded Modernism which he labeled ‘the synthesis of all heresies’” (p. 15).

Much the same theme is continued in the 1950 encyclical *Humani Generis*. The usually unmentioned context (the early part of the encyclical) partly alludes to modernism as it focuses on bad philosophy spreading through Catholic institutions. It also warns of the dangers of Communism, and how it has used evolution to promote atheism for its own ends.

### *Humani Generis* allows Catholics to skeptically accept some evolution

*Humani Generis* has commonly been misrepresented as a wholesale Catholic endorsement of evolution. It most certainly was not. One can see the caution and doubt toward evolution exhibited by *Humani Generis*, as quoted by McFadden:



**Figure 1.** Adam and Eve have long captured the public imagination. Attempts to combine Adam and Eve with evolution are futile.

“For these reasons the Teaching Authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions, on the part of men experienced in both fields, take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter—for the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God. However, this must be done in such a way that *the reasons for both opinions, that is, those favorable and unfavorable to evolution, be weighed and judged with the necessary seriousness, moderation, and measure ...* [emphasis added]” (p. 123).

#### Further unilateral Catholic concessions to evolution

Pope Pius XII made the binding theological statement that all humans are descended from one man—Adam (p. 129) (figure 1). This imposes an arbitrary dualism on the Bible: the Bible is factual about all humans descended from one man, Adam, but is not factual about just about anything else in Genesis 1. The Adam-is-real position also contradicts evolution, in which humans evolved from a population of pre-human hominids, and not from “the first man Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45).

So-called theistic evolution imposes another artificial dualism on the Bible—that between ‘factual information’ and ‘spiritual information’. Only the latter is inspired and inerrant.

Still another layer of contrived dualism was imposed by the document *Dei Verbum*. It is the dualism between ‘essential spiritual information’ and ‘nonessential spiritual information’, Promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965, *Dei Verbum* would have us believe that the Bible is inerrant only in the

spiritual information that specifically pertains to salvation.

The manipulative and self-serving character of *Dei Verbum* was exposed by Father Brian W. Harrison, who declared:

“For when faced with any seemingly erroneous statement of a biblical author, the apologist or Scripture scholar who follows the [proposed interpretation] teaching will inevitably be led to ask the obvious ‘why’ question: ‘Is this statement here *for the sake of our salvation, or not?* And if he can persuade himself that the problematic biblical affirmation is *not* salvific in purpose (as he almost certainly will when it is about history or the physical cosmos), then he will complacently dispense himself from the task of having to defend its truth [italics in original]” (p. 167).

#### Other papal giveaways to evolution

In 1996, Pope John Paul II revisited *Humani Generis*, and raised the profile of evolution. He said that, with the passage of half a century, we now realize that evolution is ‘more than a hypothesis’, and that there is ‘now a significant argument in favor of this theory’ (p. 266). The old tentativeness regarding evolution, in *Humani Generis*, has disappeared.

The current Pope, Francis, has a long history of supporting evolution and other heresies, and this has prompted some traditionalist Catholics to suspect that he is a heretic and false pope. When it comes to evolution, Pope Francis went beyond supporting it. He made some snide remarks about fiat creation—ones that would entirely be expected from an atheist. He said:

“God is not ... a magician, but the Creator who brought everything to life. Evolution in nature is not inconsistent with the notion of creation, because evolution requires

the creation of beings that evolve” (p. 266).

Note the doubletalk. And evolution does not ‘require’ anything. If and when conditions are right, it just (supposedly) happens, independent of the will or guidance of any external agency.

Was God a magician when He raised Lazarus from the dead? Is God a magician, at every Mass, when, according to Catholic belief, the bread and wine become transformed into the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? [In fact, ironically, the magical incantation, hocus pocus, is believed to derive from when the priest says *hoc est corpus meum*, which, in Latin, means “This is My Body”.]

#### An excellent riposte to theistic evolution and its censorship and thought control

McFadden cites Thaddeus Kozinski, the former Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Wyoming Catholic College. Kozinski shows how evolution flies in the face of both science and theology:

“I am speaking of the Catholic theistic evolutionists. They overstep *science’s* bounds when they claim that debatable theories, such as the theory of evolution, are ‘facts’—something that Pius XII condemned very unequivocally with regard to evolution in *Humani Generis*. They overstep science’s bounds again when they attempt to render certain non-verified, non-facts, such as common descent from mono-celled organisms, as verified, indisputable facts by recourse to, not actual indisputable evidence, but the social force of the so-called ‘scientific consensus’, that same force that fires and character-assassinates people who publish peer-reviewed scientific articles that conclude to, say, intelligent design of certain processes, and that excludes anyone but committed evolutionists to the Pontifical

Academy of Sciences ... . They overstep *theology's* bounds when they dismiss the very serious challenges, not just to evolutionary theory, but to the very fact of evolution itself, from not only the Catholic Magisterium and Fathers of the Church, but also from the latest scientific evidence, which has, it must be said, proved neither common descent of humans from primitive organisms, nor the generation of all life, in all its glorious complexity and design, from mindless natural selection conserving random genetic variation and mutation [*italics in original*]” (pp. 136–137).

### Evolution is not the foundation of biological science

It is often argued that all of modern science rests upon the correctness of evolution. This is very far from the truth. McFadden cites the following thoughtful words of Dr Marc Kirschner, the chair of the Department of Systems Biology at Harvard Medical School (the 25 Oct 2005 issue of the *Boston Globe*) as follows:

“In fact, over the last 100 years, almost all of biology has preceded independent of evolution, except evolutionary biology itself. Molecular biology, biochemistry, physiology, have not taken evolution into account at all” (pp. 108–109).

### A change in worldviews: not a change in evidence

McFadden stresses the fact that evolutionary thinking has not taken over the Magisterium, the Pope, or the Vatican congregations. It has taken over the clerical intellectuals. Even long-past Catholic thinkers have now—retroactively—become ‘evolutionized’. McFadden cites Fr Chaberek’s *Aquinas and Evolution*, in which Chaberek describes how the new evolutionary paradigm ‘overlays’ previous thinkers:

“As we have noted, it is not the understanding of Aquinas or evolution that has changed over the last century or so. It is rather the change in paradigms—from roughly speaking ‘Biblical’ or ‘creationist’ to ‘naturalistic’ or ‘evolutionary’. This change of paradigms explains why a great number of today’s Thomists greatly differ from those of a century ago ... we believe that not today’s, but the previous Thomists were closer to the truth regarding both—the interpretation of Aquinas’s metaphysics and the assessment of the evolutionary theory of origins” (p. 259).

### The remedy for apostasy

Business-as-usual will no longer do. McFadden makes this clear:

“Typically, they say it doesn’t matter how everything got here as long as one believes ‘God did it’. Nevertheless, the evidence that children are leaving in droves because instruction at school which credits evolution creates a perceived conflict with religion has been ‘stacked and catalogued’. Yet priests and parish Directors of Religious Education just keep doing the same things that have failed for the last 50 years. Catholic apologetics needs to embrace the 21<sup>st</sup> century natural science that refutes those bogus 19<sup>th</sup> Century theories instead of ‘interpreting’ the Bible to fit them. The creation doctrines that the spokesmen for the Church seem to have forgotten or misplaced must be taught again” (p. 18).

More power to him!

### Conclusions

As is the case with many Protestant Churches, the Catholic Church has been attempting, for over a century, to bend Scripture in various creative ways to make it fit evolution. It

has never worked. Late is the hour. With the widespread apostasy from the churches, it is high time that the Church return to an unequivocal and literal acceptance of the Book of Genesis, and teach this without apology.

### References

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