

Genesis and the Theory of Evolution

Name: _____

Turn to page 90 of the Student Text and review the section entitled “Genesis and Science.” Then answer the following questions.

- 1. What does it mean to say that the Bible is a library?

- 2. In Genesis 1-2, the human author wrote about real events using poetry. What is one of these real events?

- 3. What is an example of poetry in Genesis 1-2?

- 4. Catholics believe that if Scripture is properly interpreted, it will never go against scientific truth. Why is this?

Genesis 1–2 uses poetry to teach us about real events. The “seven days” of creation is one example. We find another example in Genesis 2:7: “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

This passage from Genesis is filled with poetic language. Humans are not *literally* created from “dust.” God does not have lungs and so cannot *literally* “breathe” into man’s nostrils. The human author uses poetic language to teach us important truths. To say that humans are created “of dust from the ground” is a poetic way of saying that our bodies are part of the physical world and are created through a physical process. To say that our souls are “breathed” into us by God is a poetic way of saying the soul comes directly from God. Our soul is not created through a physical process.

What exact physical process led to the creation of the human body? The human author of Genesis does not say. He was not trying to write a scientific textbook and so did not get into these specifics. The theory of evolution does try to go into the specifics. This scientific theory holds that the human species arose through a long process of genetic mutation and natural selection.

As an explanation of how the *human body* came about, this theory does not conflict with Genesis. It explains how the human body was created “of dust from the ground.” A Catholic can accept the theory of evolution as long as she also believes the following:

- 1. The evolutionary process is part of God’s plan.
- 2. The human soul is directly created by God in his image, unlike other animals, and *not* through the evolutionary process.

The Church holds that there can be no real conflict between faith and science. All truth—whether from Scripture or science—comes from God. If there seems to be a conflict between Scripture and science, either we are misunderstanding Scripture or our current scientific understanding is inaccurate or incomplete.

Why do you think many people today believe there is a conflict between faith and science?

Write a paragraph responding to this question. Make sure you give specific examples or reasons.
