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FRIDAY, JULY 08, 2005

## Catholic Church: Earth Center of Universe, 6000 Years Old, And Probably Flat

by Michael in New York on [7/08/2005 02:19:00 PM](#)

Now we get to see the fallout of electing the sweet and modest Cardinal Ratzinger as Pope Benedict. The Catholic Archbishop of Vienna tells us to back off on that wacky, scientific approach to science and evolution in particular. Never mind that the entire world has taken at face value Pope John Paul II's statement in 1996 that evolution is "more than just a hypothesis." Never mind that the subtlest change in wording by a Pope is carefully weighed -- Romanita is the term for the highly subtle and intellectual underpinnings of the verbal swordplay that serves as political debate at the Vatican -- and that JP II knew perfectly well what he was doing. Never mind that if he DIDN'T mean to embrace the idea of evolution (or at least say, leave science to the scientists) that he had a decade to correct it since that's exactly what the entire world understood him to be doing.

No, the archbishop of Vienna says Tut, tut, JP II didn't even **define** evolution in that statement and we got it all wrong. **His op-ed marks a major step back for the Church**, which has spent the last 30 years leaving the Dark Ages behind, making clear that science is science and God gave us a mind to use it. Keep in mind that JP II was the Pope who FINALLY had the Church admit it was wrong for calling Galileo a heretic. I guess the archbishop will tell us we are mistaken in believing that means good Catholics can accept that the Earth revolves around the sun?

The archbishop's disingenuous tone is truly unnerving. He writes:

Consider the **real** teaching of our beloved John Paul. While **his rather vague and unimportant 1996 letter about evolution** is always and everywhere cited, we see no one discussing these comments from a 1985 general audience that represents his robust teaching on nature....

Now, I'm not a theologian, but I and most Catholics know perfectly well that written documents by the Pope are vetted and vetted again by teams of Church leaders and weighed extremely carefully; any printed statement by the Pope typically has far more weight than a verbal statement made at a general audience.

And need I point out the obvious? Archbishop Schonborn is pretending that a statement made in 1985 SUPERSEDES a statement made more than a decade *later*. Yes, we're too understand that when the Pope made a bold new statement in 1996 that was heralded and acclaimed around the world as a new step forward, it meant nothing because a decade *earlier* he hadn't been prepared to take that step. This is truly twisted logic.

He ends by saying the Catholic Church is "in the odd position of standing firm in defense of reason." That would be odd, since the

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