
Pope: Creation vs. evolution an 'absurdity'

Benedict XVI also says humans must listen to 'the voice of the Earth'

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LORENZAGO DI CADORE, Italy - Pope Benedict XVI said the debate raging in some countries — particularly the United States and his native Germany — between creationism and evolution was an “absurdity,” saying that evolution can coexist with faith.

The pontiff, speaking as he was concluding his holiday in northern Italy, also said that while there is much scientific proof to support evolution, the theory could not exclude a role by God.

“They are presented as alternatives that exclude each other,” the pope said. “This clash is an absurdity because on one hand there is much scientific proof in favor of evolution, which appears as a reality that we must see and which enriches our understanding of life and being as such.”

He said evolution did not answer all the questions: “Above all it does not answer the great philosophical question, ‘Where does everything come from?’”

Benedict also said the human race must listen to “the voice of the Earth” or risk destroying its very existence.

The pope is wrapping up a three-week private holiday in the majestic mountains of northern Italy, where residents are alarmed by the prospect of climate change that can alter their way of life.

“We all see that today man can destroy the foundation of his existence, his Earth,” he said in a closed door meeting with 400 priests on Tuesday. A full transcript of the two-hour event was issued on Wednesday.

“We cannot simply do what we want with this Earth of ours, with what has been entrusted to us,” said the pope, who has been spending his time reading and walking in the scenic landscape bordering Austria.

Our Earth is talking to us

World religions have shown a growing interest in the environment, particularly the ramifications of climate change.

The pope, leader of some 1.1 billion Roman Catholics worldwide, said: “We must respect the interior laws of creation, of this Earth, to learn these laws and obey them if we want to survive.”

“This obedience to the voice of the Earth is more important for our future happiness ... than the desires of the moment. Our Earth is talking to us and we must listen to it and decipher its message if we want to survive,” he said.

Last April, the Vatican sponsored a scientific conference on climate change to underscore the role that religious leaders around the world could play in reminding people that willfully damaging the environment is sinful.

Reuters contributed to this story.

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