

Vatican newspaper rejects ID as science: Editorial lauds Dover decision

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The Vatican has moved to clarify its position in the intelligent-design debate, publishing an article in its newspaper that dismisses ID on scientific grounds and embraces a recent court ruling in Pennsylvania keeping the theory out of classrooms.

After months of mixed messages from Pope Benedict XVI and his aides, the Vatican directly addressed the issue in the January 17 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* by reaffirming Catholic support for the science behind Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

An editorial by Fiorenzo Facchini, a professor of evolutionary biology at the University of Bologna, Italy, said proponents of ID improperly blur the lines between science and faith.

"If the model proposed by Darwin is held to be inadequate, one should look for another model. But it is not correct methodology to stray from the field of science pretending to do science," Facchini wrote.

Views expressed in *L'Osservatore* are thought to reflect Vatican thinking because its content is published with official approval. Facchini also lauded a recent ruling by a federal judge in Pennsylvania that kept ID from being taught as science in public schools.

Pope Benedict XVI has at times appeared to favor ID, describing the natural world as an "intelligent project" one day after the Kansas Board of Education voted in November to adopt new standards that cast doubt on evolution. His ambivalence has opened a rift between some conservative prelates and members of the Vatican's scientific community, such as George Coyne, a priest-astronomer who heads the

Vatican Observatory.

Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, a close adviser of Benedict, wrote an op-ed piece last year in the *New York Times*, stating that Catholic teaching is “incompatible” with evolution. –*Religion News Service*