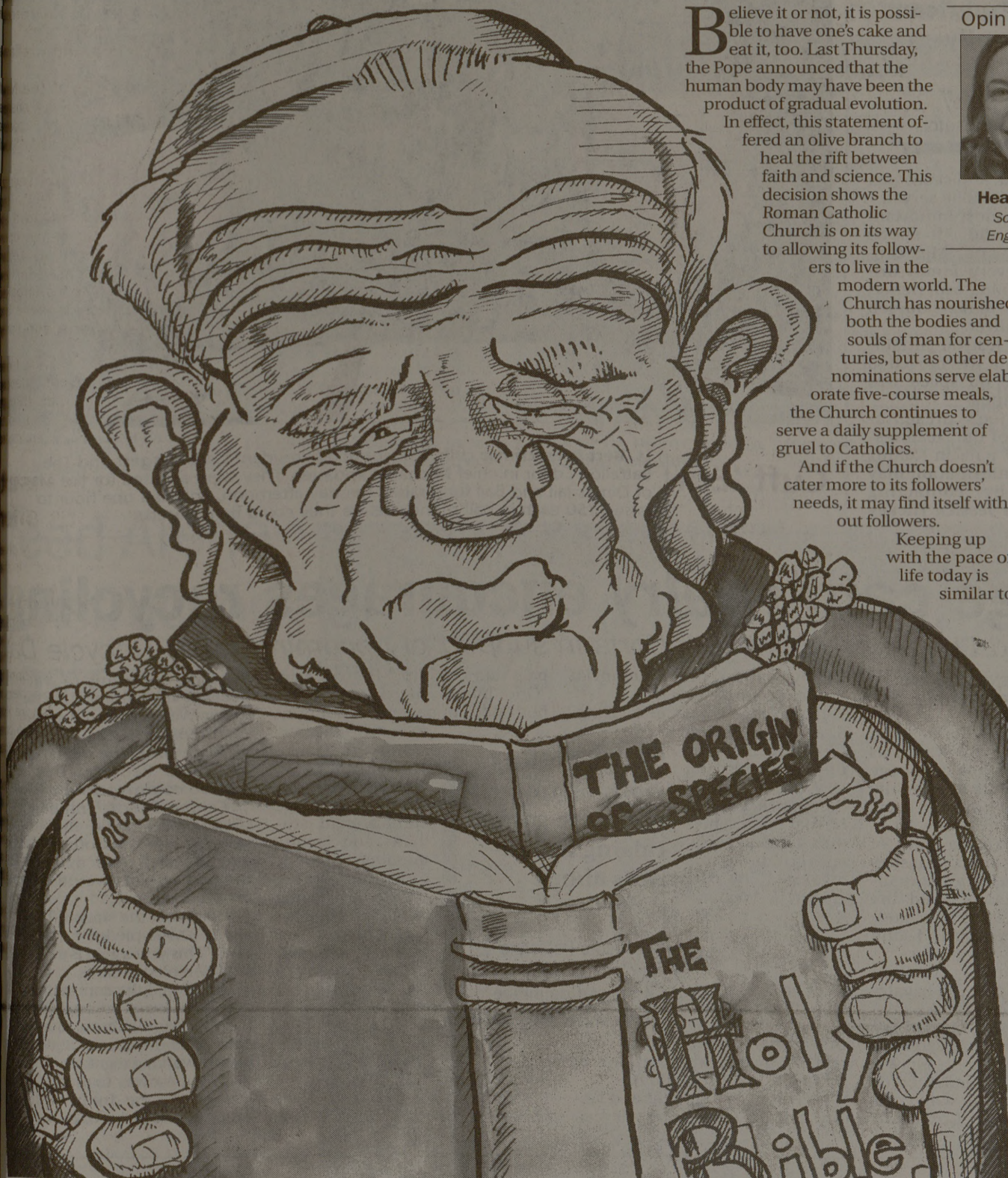


# THE BATTALION OPINION

## Catholic Church's policy evolves slowly to present day



**Opinion Editor**  
**Heather Pace**  
Sophomore  
English major

Believe it or not, it is possible to have one's cake and eat it, too. Last Thursday, the Pope announced that the human body may have been the product of gradual evolution. In effect, this statement offered an olive branch to heal the rift between faith and science. This decision shows the Roman Catholic Church is on its way to allowing its followers to live in the modern world. The Church has nourished both the bodies and souls of man for centuries, but as other denominations serve elaborate five-course meals, the Church continues to serve a daily supplement of gruel to Catholics.

And if the Church doesn't cater more to its followers' needs, it may find itself without followers. Keeping up with the pace of life today is similar to watching a movie in fast-forward. With the transient attention spans of up-and-coming generations and the number of competing interests for those attention spans, it is necessary for the Church to cater to the changing needs of who are, in effect, its customers.

Because the Church must battle not only the many distractions that take people away from religion, but also other denominations and forms of enlightenment that cater more to people's needs, the Church has definitely taken a step in the right direction in its recent decision to recognize evolution. Advocating a modern idea such as evolution shows that the Church is ready to deal with the problems of modern-day society. By accepting evolution, the Church wants to heal the deep schism, a problem between science and faith that must be dealt with if the Church hopes to help man's soul understand and deal with today's world. Technology is here to stay, and the Church must take the initiative in offering a solution to the vast differences separating two different, but essential, areas to life.

Remarkably enough, the Church has managed to remain fundamentally the same for time immemorial. But in an ever-changing world, Catholics in the United States don't struggle with the same issues that their Third World counterparts face. They want answers to their personal struggles, but the Church is determined to recite the same answers.

The Church should not alter its basic message, but it must be willing to admit its mistakes in non-fundamental areas, such as the question of female priests. After Bob Dole said smoking wasn't dangerous, he looked like an idiot when he didn't just admit he had made a mistake. Likewise, the Church

has a long history of abiding by its beliefs, even in the face of contrary evidence. It took the Church until 1992 to admit it may have made a mistake in persecuting Galileo for his assertion that the earth moved around the sun.

The Pope said the decision concerning evolution came in the face of new evidence. But the decision isn't anything new — just official — because in 1950, Pope Pius XII accepted the theory of evolution as long as it wasn't taught as fact. His only concern was that atheists would use it to remove God from man's creation. Evolution has been taught for years in parochial school classrooms — it is only in public schools that evolution remains a heated source of debate.

Moreover, the Church won't even consider allowing women to become priests. Heaven knows what would happen if women were admitted to the priesthood. God knows Catholic priests have gotten in some hot water for their licentious actions.

However, any change is a big change in a Church that praises women who stay home and take care of the kids. In a world ruled by political correctness, it is amazing that the Church can retain its female members with such outrageous statements. And why is it the Church adamantly refuses to promote birth control? With the majority of Catholics residing in Third World countries, large families don't do much to reduce poverty.

The Church has always been stubborn, sticking to its guns in an ever-changing world, but it is about time it emerged from the Middle Ages. This is imperative if the Church hopes to retain both filled pews and coffers. And it must change to survive in America, where religion is big business. Today, religion

comes directly to homes across America, whether it is wanted or not. Bored students may be familiar with Channel 38, which offers varied programs featuring Christian body-builders and reformed rock stars. Much of modern-day religion caters to the whims of its devoted flock, but Catholics must overlook major fallacies in what the Church deems appropriate and fitting for the modern world. The Church's acceptance of the theory of evolution is only the first step; now, the Church should allow its policies to evolve right along with its theories.

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### EDITORIAL

**THE BATTALION**  
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### LIFE INSURANCE

#### The University should ensure the safety of students on Wellborn Road.

Last May, Go Shibata died attempting to cross the railroad tracks next to Wellborn Road. Even as plans get under way to award a scholarship in Shibata's name, nothing is being done to ensure the safety of the thousands of students who must journey across Wellborn Road every day. For years, the University has considered various solutions, yet nothing has come of its suggestions. The time has come, though, for the University to stop talking and start acting on solutions that would ensure the safety of students. Right now, students must cross Wellborn Road via the rainbow to avoid traffic completely, requiring students to go well out of their way. Most importantly, the rainbow is inadequate for the many bike riders and rollerbladers who cross Wellborn. Because they are not allowed to use the rainbow, they must put themselves at danger as cars come barreling around corners. One proposal made was to treat Wellborn Road as a school zone. This proposal failed, though, because the school zones are available only for K-12 schools; moreover, the road is a state highway, providing yet another obstacle.

With the University's connections and paid lobbyists, there is no reason for a simple issue such as this which has at its heart concern for safety, not to be accepted. Instead of giving up on the proposal, the University should have pushed for a change that would have saved lives. Other possible solutions include constructing an underground tunnel or hiring crossing guards. Relocating the train tracks altogether, although obviously expensive, would benefit both pedestrians and drivers, who are often late to class because of frequent trains. In the past, College Station and Bryan took a serious look at moving the train tracks, and there is no reason that this could not be explored again. Although these solutions may seem expensive and illogical, the lives that will be saved over the long run will justify the cost. Operation Lifesaver, sponsored by the Texas Transportation Institute, will be making presentations concerning common sense safety practices to various student organizations. Hopefully, this will enable students to make intelligent decisions concerning their safety since such decisions are not being made by the University.

### Mean-spirited rivalries block understanding

It's 3 a.m. at the polo fields and the love between Aggies is clearly evident. Ahh, the beautiful sounds of Bonfire. "Give me a log, you nonreg piece of #\*\*%@," "Blow me, @##%hole. Why don't you get your bald @##% off my stack, Corps turd?" Why are these people so mad? Do they really hate each other? Nah, it's all good bull. Friendly rivalries exist all over the world. But Texas A&M has an overabundance of them. At a school where most people have a common bond, some members of the Aggie family seem to be having family feuds. The Corps calls the Aggie Band a bunch of fat nerds. The band retaliates whenever we touch its precious practice field. The nonregs call the Corps a bunch of bald-headed mili-

**Columnist**  
**David Boldt**  
Senior marketing and management major



tant freaks. The Corps calls the nonregs a bunch of lazy, long-haired couch potatoes. And, of course, anyone who's not Greek calls the frat guys and sorority girls a bunch of snobs who buy their friends. The sad thing is that there are people on campus who buy into these stereotypes and think that everyone different from them is an idiot. Usually they are freshmen or sophomores who have been brainwashed by upperclassmen, but sometimes they just have had a bad experience with another group. Maybe they're nonregs who quit the Corps because of some injustice. Maybe they didn't get a bid from their favorite fraternity. Maybe some long-haired nonreg told them they looked dorky in that uniform. On the other hand, there are students who justify the stereo-

types. There are some nonregs who are couch potatoes, Greeks who are snobs, band members who are geeks, and Corps members who are fanatical about being cadets. These stereotypes, which fuel the rivalries, didn't just come out of someone's imagination. But do the majority of these groups really hate each other? Are these rivalries anything but friendly? For the most part, the answer is no. These are just different groups of Aggies having fun fighting each other off. It's not personal. It's like they're making fun of their brothers. These groups may harass each other, but see what happens if some t-sip messes with a guy wearing an Aggie ring in front of other Aggies. Whether the person is wearing a uniform, a Dixie Chicken hat or Greek letters, it suddenly doesn't matter. You don't see many Aggies ask-

ing people if they are cadets, Greeks or nonregs before deciding whether or not to say howdy to them. Our various Student Government organizations aren't split into Corps, nonregs and Greeks sections. And at yell practice and the games, there aren't three separate groups locking arms to saw varsity's horns off. Having pride in an organization is a perfectly natural emotion. There is no doubt that outsiders can't completely understand different lifestyles. But looking down on someone because they don't have the same experiences is ignorant. When we leave this place our memories may be different, but our rings will all look the same. Ask yourself what would happen next Tuesday night if you died today. People would show up in front of Sully in complete silence to pay their respects to you. Not cadets, not Greeks, not nonregs ... just Aggies.



### MAIL CALL

**Trainspotting fails to glamorize heroin**  
Regarding Jeremy Valdez's Oct. 29 column, "Hollywood glamorizes heroin use": Instead of accusing Hollywood for the "glamorization" of drugs maybe we could look instead to the real root of the drug problem in America: personal choice. When I saw *Trainspotting*, I didn't see any glamorization of heroin. The addicts sleepwalk through life, experiencing phases of over-

dosing, rehab and flashbacks, all in a very gruesome perspective. The addicts live in slums, neglect themselves mentally, physically and emotionally and turn to lives of crime so they can maintain heroin homeostasis. Valdez fails to recognize the real message of *Trainspotting*: People use drugs to escape problems. Yes, you may have a happy-go-lucky time while doing it, but if a movie shows more why people do drugs than just the action itself, it serves as an educational

and effective purpose more than a fifth grade DARE program.  
Kate Shropshire  
Class of '00

**Heinroth should focus on real issue**  
Regarding Michael Heinroth's Oct. 28 column, "Media's biased coverage commits moral sins": Unfortunately (but not to my surprise), Heinroth has written about yet another non-existent media issue: religion bashing in the media. He certainly did not research the topic to any degree. This may come as a surprise, but everyone in this country is not of the same religion. Although he would have us believe we are all becoming atheists, this is not the case.

There is no evidence of a media attack on religion. If there is, it is unfortunate he did not cite any specific examples.  
Anthony Raymundo  
Class of '99

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