Evolution as work of God acceptable dogma, pope says

By Frances D'emilio ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

VATICAN CITY - In his most comprehensive statement yet on evolution, Pope John Paul II insisted that faith and science can coexist, telling scientists that Darwin's theories are sound as long as they take into account that creation was the work of God.

The pope's message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, a lay organization meeting in Rome this week, recalled how Pope Pius XII proclaimed in 1950 that evolutionary doctrine was a "serious hypoth-

In the statement released Wednesday, the pope said new

knowledge has confirmed that Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is "more than a hypothesis."

Darwin's theory - that humankind was the product of a slow, evolutionary process from early forms of life - conflicts with the literal Biblical account of creation, that the world, including humans, was created in six days.

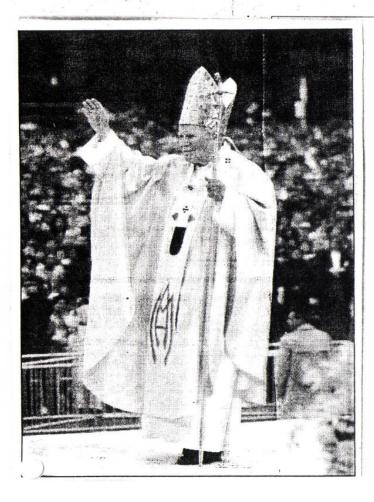
Although the pope has in the past made references to the growing scientific consensus behind evolution, his latest comments were the clearest and most comprehensive in support of Darwin's conclusions.

The fact that he issued the statement to a group of lay scienthe Vatican's position that evolution

and faith in God can co-exist.

supporting evolution, the Vatican Church and the faithful must replaces the Roman Catholic view- main firm on two points: Creation point in stark contrast to that of 'itself is the work of God, and husome fundamentalist Christians, who believe the Biblical account of

By not challenging the evidence - John Paul cautioned that the man beings have another dimension



Pope John Paul II criticizes "Bible-only" thinking in his latest encyclical letter, "Faith and Reason" (Fides et Ratio). The pope, a onetime philosophy professor, warns against "fideism," the idea that rational knowledge has little value for faith. He condemns "biblicism" as "one currently widespread" symptom of the problem. John Paul defines biblicism as the tendency "to make the reading and exegesis of Scripture the sole criterion of truth." A pretty good synonym for biblicism would be traditional Protestantism, according to Christian News (11/23/98). The rule of Christian faith, the pope claims, is unity among three sources of truth: "Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium [teaching authority] of the Church."