

God made pre-humans into people, Vatican newspaper says

VATICAN CITY - While apes evolved naturally into pre-human creatures, it was the will and desire of God that turned them into humans, an article in the Vatican newspaper said.

"The formation of human beings necessitated a particular contribution by God, though it remains that their emergence was brought about by natural causes" of evolution, it said.

The article, published in the May 5-6 edition of L'Osservatore Romano, was written by Italian evolutionary biologist Fiorenzo Facchini.

The article said that, "when the biological conditions necessary for supporting a being capable of reflective thought were attained, the will of God, the creator, freely desired it, and man came to be."

The article posed the question: Does this mean that humans evolved from chimpanzees?

"No, it might be better to say that at some point God willed a spark of intelligence to light up in the mind of a nonhuman hominid and thus came into existence the human as a being, as a subject capable of thought and the ability to decide freely," it said.

So rather than picturing it as humans descending from the apes, it said, humans ascended or rose up from the animal kingdom to a higher level, thanks to the hand of God.

As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in 1968 when he was Father Joseph Ratzinger, God wanted to create a being that could know him and be able to turn to him, the article said.

The emergence of the human is neither a casual or accidental event, nor is it something that was "strictly necessary," demanded by God or the evolutionary

process, it said.

Evolution could have ended at the pre-human stage, it said, but thanks to “the free choice of God,” humans emerged from their pre-human ancestors.

This divine intervention “does not represent an unwarranted intrusion (of theology) in the field of science – as is the case with intelligent design – but is called for in order to explain the presence of man’s spirit” which cannot come from or evolve out of the material world, the article said.

The movement from being a creature of the animal and physical world to also the spiritual was a gift from God “even if it came at the end of a natural process of evolution,” it said.