

On the Divergent Conceptions on Human Origins from the Holy Fathers & Modern Scientific Theories: excerpt from The Theology of Illness - Jean-Claude Larchet, (p. 23, note 51):

<http://www.svspress.com/theology-of-illness-the/>

<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0881412392>

The Fathers have radically different conceptions of the origin of man than those held by modern science. The history of man as it is conceived by human paleontology, as compared with the point of view of Holy Tradition, refers only to the history of humanity outside of paradise. The Fathers would see *homo habilis* not as a representative of humanity as he emerged from the hands of God, but as already fallen from his original state, fallen to the lowest state of his involution, beginning to develop himself according to his new mode of existence. (It is important, therefore to avoid confusing the state of spiritual infancy attributed by the Fathers to Adam at the time of his creation with the historical infancy or a state of underdevelopment that characterized the earliest human beings.) The original condition of man as presented by Scripture and the Fathers is situated in another temporal order than that of historical knowledge: it does not belong to the time of sensible realities (*chronos*), but to the duration of spiritual realities (*aion*), which eludes historical science because it belongs to the sphere of spiritual history. Without being non-temporal (because it had a beginning in time and developed over time, which it in fact began), the existence of Adam in his primitive state is ante-historical, just as human existence following the parousia will be post-historical. Spiritual history, then, cannot be replaced by historical science. The teaching of Tradition about human origins is neither more nor less incompatible with our present knowledge of human paleontology than is the faith of the Church in the eucharistic transformation of bread and wine into Body and Blood of Christ with the findings of the science of chemistry, or faith in the Ascension of Christ with the finding of physics and astronomy. In each of these cases, we are dealing with two different modes of apprehension that cannot be reduced to each one to another. Each concerns different modes of being and of becoming. Faith and spiritual knowledge correspond to a domain in which the laws of nature are transcended and to a mode of existence that is, in the proper sense of the term, super-natural.