

# *Solidarity not Dominion*

Week 5 of the Season of Creation



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This week, which honors St. Francis, let us consider our kinship with all creatures: God said to us: “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth*” (Gen. 1:28). We have honored God’s suggestion, however we now need to become aware of the impact of our species, because God did not mean for us to crowd out the rights of other creatures. In developed countries, we have become like an infestation—taking over land and destroying habitats and devouring species and infiltrating homes and migratory routes of so many other animals—and we need to learn our limits and exercise restraint.

God created us humans with a special responsibility—to exercise dominion (Gen. 1:28). This does not suggest we exercise domination over other creatures or to exploit them for human miss-use. Rather, we are to delight in other creatures, as God does, and respect and care for them. We are to do this not with a sense of superiority but in solidarity and interdependence with all other creatures.

We were created to thrive together, to be companions to one another. Jesus was born and lived in solidarity with all of life. By His actions, Jesus showed us how to care about all who were oppressed and made vulnerable and marginalized by society; and right now that includes most creatures, not just humans. Jesus died in order that God might reconcile to God’s self *all things* in creation (Col. 1:20)

In response to God’s love, we are freed to behave in ways that enable all of life to thrive together. We can set limits on ourselves. We can simplify our lifestyle so that others may survive. We can become aware of the impact our actions have on other creatures and curtail our activity. We can act to establish and restore safe homes and habitats for those plants and animals that are endangered.