

Guide to All God's Animals

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NB: This is intended to be an informal document. I will likely revise it as I become aware of typos and errors, along with places in need of clarification. Feel free to contact me with suggestions: cws@georgetown.edu. I plan to upload revisions as I make them, hopefully to the original Google

Drive link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15RJ6CQcShumo7uhZ9eZsWyZUVQMAkBxC/view?usp=sharing>.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The book *All God's Animals: A Catholic Theological Framework for Animal Ethics* (Georgetown University Press, November 2019) is a scholarly work intended chiefly for those who work in theology and/or Christian ethics.

The book, however, examines basic questions about animals that are of wide interest. Does God care about animals? Do they go to heaven? Do they matter to God as much as humans? Is it o.k. to use animals for our convenience and benefit (e.g., eating them or using them in experiments?) Can we pray for our sick dogs? Can we pray for them after they're gone?

I have written this guide for those interested in such questions but who might want some assistance in navigating the theoretical terms and debates that appear in *All God's Animals*. It is an informal guide in that it has not, by intent, been vetted or proofed with the same rigor as the book itself.

The guide provides the reader a background to the book's arguments but is not intended as a replacement of them. Though I occasionally provide summaries of the arguments, they are simplified version of the arguments and thus not always an adequate presentation of them.

Some sections can be skimmed or skipped without losing the overall argument of the book. I indicate as much in the text below.

Finally, each of the chapters' sections begins with a list of the technical terms that are encountered in that section (typically given in the order in which they appear in the section). Sometimes these terms are defined in the section itself, but their definitions can always be found in the "Glossary" at the end of this guide.

The book, *All God's Animals*, begins with an "Introduction" followed by five chapters—"Tradition," "Creation," "Redemption," "Sanctification," and "Ethics." The guide follows this order, proceeding section by section through each chapter. The "Introduction" is unique in that it is not divided into sections.

INTRODUCTION

Glossary Words: *kingdom of God; already/not yet (of the kingdom); Vatican II; Thomistic; eschaton; dominion mandate; imago Dei; fall (the); covenant; magis; Balthasar, Hans Urs von;*

theo-drama; Godhead; sanctification; soteriology; eschatology/eschatological; ecclesial; ecotheology/ecotheologians

The main arguments of the book can be summarized as follows. First, we can hope that some animals will go to heaven, especially those that have significant cognitive capabilities—for example, a memory of the past and an anticipation of the future; a distinctive personality; an ability to engage in rudimentary reasoning; a sense of self, subjectivity, and/or subjective awareness; some form of self-interest, etc. We find such qualities in animals like dogs, cats, elephants, bonobos, etc., and we don't find them (it seems) in cognitively primitive creatures like gnats.

The reason for our hope that such animals will join us in heaven is the testimony of the Bible, Christian theology, and recent Church teaching.

Second, because we can hope that these animals are loved by God and intended as part of his plan to bring all creation to its fulfillment, we need to treat them with respect and a loving care that reflects God's hope for these animals.

So, my argument connects two points: (a) some animals will go to heaven and (b) we should treat them with loving respect. So, how do I get from (a) to (b)? The answer: the kingdom of God.

The "kingdom of God" is an important biblical theme, though Christians are often not aware of the fact. References to the kingdom regularly occur in Jesus' preaching (think of the Our Father with its line, "thy kingdom come" or the Beatitudes with its line "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours"). But what exactly did Jesus mean by "the kingdom of God," and why does it matter for how we treat animals?

The kingdom refers to the world as it will be in the "eschaton" (a fancy word that means, more or less, heaven). It will be a world of harmony, where all creatures live in peace with God and with each other. It is the world as God desires that it ultimately become.

But here's the thing: this kingdom, as proclaimed by Jesus, is not *just* some future reality. It *is* that, but the Church *also* believes that the kingdom has already begun, in our present world, because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The kingdom's fulfillment will only occur at the end time when Jesus returns, but it has already started in the here and now. The task of the Christian community is to proclaim what God accomplished in Jesus Christ as it waits for his return.

There's one more step to take before we can connect all this with animals: the fact that the kingdom is both begun and not yet fulfilled has ethical implications. Christians are to live their lives—right now, before we die—in ways that witness to God's kingdom. So, if God's

kingdom is to be a world where people live in harmony with each other, a place that knows no violence, where need and deprivation have all been eliminated, where all goods are shared and celebrated among all people, etc., *then* Christians should live their lives—right now—in ways that embody those ideals. So, no violence, share all goods with others, see all humanity as brothers and sisters, etc.

“That’s not realistic,” you might say. Right, you are . . . sort of. The kingdom is not here in its fullness, and so, yes, sometimes, perhaps often, we will do things that do not fit its ideals—e.g., we will resort to violence (to protect an innocent person against an evildoer’s harm) and refuse to share all of our goods with other people (since they might take advantage of us). Nonetheless, Christians are called to strive to live out those ideals even when they don’t seem practical, to go the extra mile, as Jesus says.

Ethicists describe this complicated, “yes-and-no” pursuit of Jesus’ ideals as “living between the times.” That is, we are now living between the “already” of the kingdom (it has begun in Christ) and the “not yet” of the kingdom (its fullness is yet to come). Sometimes we will fall short of the kingdom’s ideals (Jesus’ ideals), but we are to strive toward them, as grace and circumstance permit.

O.k., so finally we get to animals: where do they come in? If my arguments have merit, then some animals will join us in the eschaton (or heaven, if you will), and thus they will also, like us, be part of the kingdom. Since the task of the Christian community is to work for the kingdom of God and since animals will share in that same kingdom with us, *then* (and here we come to the lynch pin of the argument) Christians must also strive to live in harmony with animals, *in the present age*, in ways that accord with the ideals of the kingdom. We won’t always be able to do that (since the kingdom is not here in its fullness), but we should strive to do so.

That’s the overall argument. Now I turn to indicate, briefly, the specific arguments of the book’s five chapters.

In chapter 1, I criticize the Catholic understanding of animals that dominated the era before Vatican II. This understanding was decidedly shaped by the enormously influential theologian, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274). Aquinas was brilliant and his theological teachings are still rightly influential. Nonetheless, I think his understanding of heaven is wrong on some counts, especially his belief that no plants or animals would be found in it.

Why did Aquinas reject the idea of plants and animals in heaven, especially when that view is contrary to so many passages in the Bible? The argument that was key for Aquinas, and much of the western tradition, is that animals and plants are *unable* to go to heaven since, unlike humans, they do not have immortal souls. I critique this argument and its influence in the Catholic tradition.

In the second part of chapter 1, I suggest that attitudes regarding animals in the modern period (i.e., the period beginning around the 17th century and leading up to the mid-20th century) evidence a tendency to ignore the full reality of animals (e.g., their capacity to suffer, to experience joy, and, perhaps we can add, their ultimate destiny with God). Self-deception, I further argue, is a regular feature of human sin.

Chapter 2 explores three themes centrally important for Christian views of creation: humanity as the *imago Dei*, the fall, and the covenant. The chapter argues that God’s labor in the world (what theologians call the “divine economy”) ultimately has as its goal the establishment of an everlasting covenant with *all* of creation—principally with humanity but also with nonhuman creatures.

Note for the reader:

Parts of chapter 3 are very technical and detailed and might not be of interest to a casual reader.

Readers can skip or skim the second part of chapter three and the first half (or more) of chapter four. In those parts, I appeal to a theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, to flesh out my argument (showing how the idea of animals in heaven is a possibility that “works” theologically), but the argument that God will restore animals does not depend on Balthasar or on the particular way I use him. There are other possible, theological ways of understanding animal redemption. And thus the reader need not become mired in the particular details of these sections.

Readers who decide to skip or skim sections of chapters three and four should return to chapter five where the ethical implications of my theology of animals are developed.

Chapter 3 argues that we can hope that at least some animals will be restored (i.e., they will go to heaven). I make this case for those animals that have a “continuity of personhood.” For example, a diverse array of animals like apes, elephants, dogs, and cats have something like a stable personality, one that endures over time. If God were to resurrect such animals, we would anticipate that they’d have a personality similar to what they had on earth and, moreover, that they would recognize themselves (sort of) as the same creatures that had existed before. That’s what I mean by a “continuity of personhood”: some animals are capable of having a distinctive personality and a sense of self that continues across time.

To make the case that such animals will be resurrected, I look at evidence in Scripture, in the teachings of early Christian theologians, and in the shifts in official Catholic teaching over the last half-century.

In the second half of chapter 3 I appeal to the theology of a Catholic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar in order to begin a case for the salvation of animals. It is a technical discussion that I'll save for below.

Chapter 4 examines the role that the Holy Spirit plays in saving humanity and, I argue, in saving animals. Like chapter 3, chapter 4 has some particularly dense sections. I argue that the Spirit has a distinctive role in God's work for creation (what theologians call "the divine economy"): the Spirit's role is to bind together God and his creatures.

The book's final chapter (5) explores the ethical implications of the theological approach developed in the preceding four chapters. In keeping with the idea that God's kingdom is both already and not yet (i.e., started by Christ but not yet here in its fullness), I suggest that the Christian community should strive to embody the ideals of the kingdom in their relationships with animals, while also recognizing that because the world is fallen, circumstance and need will require acts that cause suffering and death to animals.

Throughout the book I reject the idea that animals should be treated with the same ethical regard as humans. I argue instead that humanity has a special role in God's plan for creation and because of that divine choice, all who bear the human countenance have a distinctive dignity before God.

CHAPTER 1: TRADITION LEARNING TO SEE ANIMALS

Glossary: *eschatological; evangelical; liturgical*

AQUINAS AND THE IMMORTAL SOUL

Glossary: *Aquinas, Thomas; magisterial; heavenly spheres (or celestial bodies); hylomorphism/hylomorphic; incorruptible; eschaton; beatific vision; Rahner, Karl*

The traditional Catholic view has been that animals do *not* go to heaven; none of them. St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) was particularly influential in shaping the Catholic tradition on this point. Aquinas is an important theologian for the Catholic tradition—many would say the most important one. So, in order to begin to make a case *in favor of* animals going to

heaven, I first turn to critique Aquinas' rejection of that possibility. Fortunately, my case is made easier by the fact that some of Aquinas' arguments depend on an outdated science.

This is a fairly philosophical section. If the reader is not into philosophy, they could consider skimming the section.

Why does Aquinas believe animals won't go to heaven? To understand his answer we should start with his view of human persons and then return to his understanding of animals.

Aquinas, following the Greek philosopher Aristotle, held that the human person is a composite of body and soul. The soul is what animates (makes alive) the "matter" of our bodies and gives to that matter its form as a particular, living human person. Imagine "matter" here as some sort of cosmic tofu. The soul comes along and takes this formless, property-less matter and shapes it into a living human person. This soul/body combination is called "hylomorphism": the human person is one, living reality composed of a body (matter) and a soul (the form that "shapes" matter into a particular, living human person). All living creatures have a soul: a rational soul for humans, a sensitive soul for animals, and a vegetative soul for plants.

Aquinas' case begins with the fact that we humans can think abstractly, in ways that are independent of our bodies' perceptions. For example, we can understand basic mathematical principles (e.g., $a + b = b + a$) and geometric principles (e.g., the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180°) without needing to perceive a physical object. Since we can think (or "operate") without relying on our bodily senses, there must be something about us that is *not* material. Our minds are able to function in ways that do not—at least, not always—depend on physical things or on our perception of them. Since we can think without directly relying on what physical perception, there must be some dimension of us that is not material, something that can be described as spiritual.

Furthermore, since the spiritual "part" of ourselves (i.e., the soul) does not depend on matter, we can also believe that it is able to survive the death of our bodies. For this and other reasons, Aquinas argues that our souls are immortal. They do not die when our bodies die.

Animals, however, are not so lucky. Because they're not as smart as we are, they do not have the ability to think abstractly. Therefore, they are *entirely* dependent on their bodily existence to function. They can't think or do anything without their bodies. There is, therefore, nothing about them that is spiritual. So, once their bodies die, nothing of them remains. It's not just that God refuses to resurrect Fido, but rather, God *cannot* resurrect Fido, Aquinas believes, because after Fido dies, there's nothing left of him (i.e., no soul) for God to resurrect.

There are at least two other reasons that Aquinas believes animals will not join us in heaven. First, we're not going to need them. Since their job, according to Aquinas, is to serve us and since we won't need them in heaven, there's no reason for them to join us in heaven. Second, life in heaven will center on the beatific vision (i.e., a direct, spiritual contemplation of the divine life). Since animals are incapable of such a vision, it doesn't make a lot of sense for them to be there.

Against this view, I suggest a different way of understanding life in heaven. Instead of seeing heaven as a contemplative "knowing" of God, I emphasize the idea of heaven as a relationship with the risen Christ. The risen Christ is a spiritual *and* bodily reality. I believe animals can be in relationship with this bodily Christ, and thus they can, should God will it, join us in heaven. I develop a possible way of imaging animal life in heaven in chapters 3 and 4.

CATHOLIC ATTITUDES IN THE MODERN PERIOD

Glossary: *Vatican II; Thomistic; eschatological; neo-scholastic; manuals*

As I noted above, Aquinas' views on animals were enormously influential in Catholic thought before Vatican II (i.e., until the 1960s). I describe his legacy in terms of what I call the "Thomistic framework" for animal ethics.

Note: "Thomistic" in this book refers to ideas that are indebted those of Thomas Aquinas.

This framework is composed of three claims found in Aquinas' writings: (1) We have no duties toward animals; (2) animals have been created to serve us; and (3) it is immoral to treat animals cruelly, *not* because doing so is bad for the animals, but because it is bad for us.

This framework was taught in seminary textbooks on moral theology (called "manuals") during the pre-Vatican II period. As the animal rights movement took off in the 19th century, activists criticized Catholic views for encouraging, as they saw it, mistreatment of animals (or as not doing enough to speak out against such ill-treatment).

ANIMAL-FRIENDLY WITNESSES AMONG CATHOLICS IN THE POST-AQUINAS TRADITION

Glossary: *Catechism of the Catholic Church; manuals; kingdom of God; original sin (see also, the fall); sacramental tradition; Bonaventure*

In spite of these reigning assumptions, there were a number of Catholic voices in history that supported a more animal-friendly attitude. I list four of them. First, the animal devotion of the saints were deeply admired by Catholics. Second, several Church leaders condemned mistreatment of animals. Third, some seminary textbooks offered a more animal-friendly view; I offer one example—a 20th-century seminary text that, rather prophetically, lauded animal kindness. Finally, the Catholic sacramental tradition has held that all earthly creatures reflect the goodness and beauty of the God who created them.

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TRADITION

Glossary: *Vatican II*; *economy* (or *divine economy* or *salvific economy*); *eschaton*; *eschatology*; *body/soul dualism*; *patristic*; *post-conciliar*; *Parousia*; *neo-scholastic*; *soteriology*

The traditional belief that each person has an “immortal soul”—that is, some aspect of the person that naturally lives on apart from their body—has been criticized by many contemporary theologians. These critics argue instead that we will survive death only because of a new act by God to resurrect us, body and soul. Neither the Bible nor early Church writings, these critics argue, support the idea of an immortal soul that lives on “naturally,” apart from the body, due to humanity’s intellectual ability.

Official Church teaching, however, continues to support the idea of an immortal soul in order to explain the continuity of our existence across three states: *first state*: our lives in the here and now; *second state*: our lives as they will be during the interim period (i.e., the period after each of us dies but before the final coming of Jesus and the resurrection of our bodies); and *third state*: our final life in heaven after we have been rejoined with our bodies in the resurrection of the dead. The “soul,” then, is that aspect of me, Chris Steck, that continues, without disruption, across all three states (e.g., my life now, my post-death/pre-resurrection life, and my life in heaven, assuming I get there). There is never a moment where my soul simply ceases to exist, so there is never a moment in which *I*, Chris Steck, simply cease to exist.

But this understanding of the soul—as the continuation of my personhood after death—is a bit different from the traditional understanding. The “soul,” according to the emphasis of contemporary Church teaching, is simply that aspect of the person that God holds in existence after death so that that the person genuinely continues to exist. We continue to exist as persons because God preserves our distinct personhood, and the “soul” is simply a way of designating that fact. We survive the loss of our bodies not, as in the traditional understanding, because we are more intellectually sophisticated than animals, but because God has decided to preserve us.

Given this understanding of the soul, we can imagine that God could, if he so chooses, also preserve the distinct identity of each animal when it dies. We will consider this possibility in chapter 3. God's choice whether to resurrect an animal is not determined by whether or not an animal can do algebra.

SEEING ANIMALS: SEEING OUR SIN

Glossary: *Aquinas, Thomas; Holy Office; ecclesial; Magisterium; Rerum Novarum; Cartesians; theodicy; eschaton; eisegesis*

I look at the role of self-deception in sin. It's easier for us to sin if we can lie to ourselves about what we are doing. Doing so allows us to do the sinful act without the guilt that comes with it. We're good, we tell ourselves, even as we're doing something that some part of ourselves knows to be wrong. I suggest that during the last several centuries we can find a pattern of self-deception in how Christian and secular thought has treated animals.

CAUTIONARY WARNINGS: DISSONANCE IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Glossary: *Evangelium Vitae; epistemic; virtue ethics; heuristic; Rahner, Karl*

I believe there are warning signs that suggest there is something wrong with our culture's attitudes toward animals. That's a problem since we are all influenced by our culture's attitudes, whether we recognize it or not. Two warning signs that something is off about our culture's attitudes about animals are particularly important. First, there is a disconnect between our attitudes toward pets, on the one hand, and those toward the animals that supply our meat, on the other. Second, our meat-eating generally depends on an industry that has horrific effects on its workers. The issue is not so much whether Christians can ever eat meat (I believe they can), but rather whether the suffering endured by both factory-farmed animals and slaughterhouse workers alike is such that the factory farming industry requires condemnation by the Christian community (I believe it does).

The best way to overcome self-deception is to take a hard and brutally honest look at our reality. Doing so helps us undercover whatever self-serving deceptions might be at work in our lives.

The need to take a hard and honest "look" at reality applies to how we see animals. Instead of casually assuming that we already know animals, we can take time to genuinely think about them anew, to try to see them for what they are—all of them, not just the cute ones. We can probe how we think about animals that are pets and those that provide us meat; we can consider our thoughts and attitudes toward those animals we see rescued in heart-warming videos and those that are hidden in labs. This does not require we give animals the same respect we give to our (human) brothers and sisters. But it does require that we

treat them in accord with an honest and religiously faithful perception of the full reality of what they are, not just their “reality” as it is convenient to us.

CHAPTER 2: CREATION

THE *IMAGO DEI* AND A COVENANTAL ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Glossary: *fall (the); imago Dei (the); dominion*

In this chapter, I begin to construct a Christian “theology of animals,” that is, an understanding of animals as they are viewed within a Christian worldview. My argument continues to be that a proper *theological* understanding of animals should, in turn, shape our *ethics* about them.

This chapter looks at three Christian doctrines to explore their contributions to a Christian theology of animals: (1) the fall, (2) the *imago Dei*, and (3) the covenant.

THE FALL

Glossary: *Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre; theodicy; natural/moral evil; kenosis/kenotic; free will theodicy; economy (or economic labor or salvific economy); heuristic; Christology/Christological; Clough, David; Balthasar, Hans Urs von*

Note: this section has a few, rather abstract ideas in it. Two concepts are important. First, the idea of a fall: the world was once a paradise and then we sinned, messing everything up. And, second, “theodicy.” Theodicy tries to answer the question why a good, loving God would allow so much innocent suffering in our world. Before we knew about evolution, the two ideas were easily connected: the fall provided a theodicy—that is, it explained, sort of, innocent suffering. We sinned, causing the world to become warped, and that’s why good people suffer. God didn’t intend this messed up world; we messed it up. But with a recognition of evolution, the idea of a historical “fall” from a previously paradisaic world seems implausible. There’s no evidence of a time when the world was a paradise. So, what gives? This world, it seems, has always been messed up. Why did God create such a world, and why did God use evolution (with all the violence it entails) to fashion it? These questions hover in this section and I attempt to partially address them.

Traditionally understood, the Christian doctrine of the fall holds that the world started off as a paradise. At some point humanity sinned (Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit) and as a result the world became all messed up, distorted by disease, suffering, decay, and

death. Theologians use the term “natural evil” to refer to phenomena like disease, hurricanes, natural fires, etc.; these are bad things that are not directly caused by human acts. Natural evils like disease are in contrast to “moral evil” which are bad things that *are* caused by human acts (murder, theft, slander, etc.).

Evolution and the fossil record raise doubts about the traditional idea of a fall from paradise. There is no evidence that the world has ever been a paradise, and so, it would seem, there was no “fall.” And if there was no fall from paradise, it would seem that we can’t blame suffering and death on human sin. The world has always been messed up.

How then do we explain natural evil (disease, hurricanes, aging, etc.) in an evolutionary world? Why would God create a world like ours, one that from the beginning has had so many flaws and so much innocent suffering? The attempt to answer such questions is called “theodicy.” Theodicy tries to explain how it is that a God who is all-loving and all-powerful allows evil to exist.

Before trying to answer that question, it would help to make a distinction between a “human fall” and a “cosmic fall.” A “human fall” is a fall that only involves humanity. Some medieval theologians believed that today’s natural world (i.e., everything but human persons) is more or less like it was in paradise. Only humanity fell when Adam and Eve sinned; the rest of the world kept on going as it always was before human sin. Lions ate antelope in paradise, and they eat them now. Nothing’s changed on that front. What *has* changed is that humans now also share in violence and suffering with the rest of creation.

In contrast to a merely “human fall,” a “cosmic fall” holds that human sin messed up *both* humanity *and* the rest of world. Lions and antelope lived together peacefully in paradise; we lived together with them peacefully. Because of human sin, neither animals nor humans live in peace now.

So: human fall = only humanity was harmed by sin; cosmic fall = both humanity and the rest of the creation were harmed by sin.

In my mind, the main problem with a merely human fall is that it would mean God created the world, from the beginning, in such a way that he intended for there to be a significant amount of horrific animal suffering. We humans were happy in paradise; animals, not so much. However, that doesn’t seem at all consistent with the kind and loving God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Nonetheless, in an evolutionary standpoint, it is easier to imagine some version of a merely human fall. For example, we might say that when the first humans appeared in evolutionary history, things were initially o.k. (at least among the humans themselves). However, very soon after human persons appeared on earth, they sinned. Those sins in

turn caused ruptures and conflict in humanity's social existence, thus introducing problems that weren't there before. So, why do humans suffer? Because as we evolved, we sinned, and that sin destroyed our social existence. For animals, on the other hand, nothing changes in a merely human fall; they've always suffered. So, perhaps, the idea of a human fall could still make sense in an evolutionary world, even if it doesn't do anything to explain animal suffering.

If, however, we want to embrace, as I do, some version of a cosmic fall, we have a big problem: Since animals have *always* suffered, long before the evolutionary appearance of human beings, we can't blame animal suffering on human sin. Whatever "fall" happened to mess up the natural world, it cannot be attributed to human sin since humans were not around when animal suffering began. In an evolutionary world, there appears to be no causal connection between human sin and the fall since, in an evolutionary world, animal suffering predates humanity.

So how do we now explain the fact that the world seems pretty flawed, filled with innocent suffering, both human *and* animal suffering? Is the idea of a fall still possible?

Scholars have proposed several theories that try to explain the suffering of humans and animals in a way that does not rely on human sin or the idea of a fall. I describe three of these "theodicies" (i.e., explanations for how a loving God allows human and animal suffering). First, the world's goodness and beauty requires that bad things happen. It's a package deal; you can't separate one from the other. The good (e.g., the diverse grandeur and beauty of the animal kingdom) comes with the bad (animal suffering). Second, the world is not yet finished and the goodness of the future world will outweigh the suffering presently existing within it. Third (and rather abstractly), God wanted humans to be free, and in order for us to be free, God *also* had to allow the world itself to be "free." That is, God had to allow the world to develop on its own (through evolution), in a way not controlled by God. Only if the world process—its development—were itself "free" (i.e., not controlled by God), would it be able to give rise to beings who are, like ourselves, free. It's like God had to allow the world to be autonomous—guided by its own scientific laws—in order for free creatures to evolve. No autonomous world = no autonomous (free) humans; it's a package deal.

I'm not convinced that these explanations work, for reasons I explain in the book. Additionally, I raise another concern: some of the arguments that try to make sense of animal suffering go too far in linking together evolutionary dynamics and God's economic labor ("economic labor" is God's activity within the world to save that world). The arguments almost suggest that evolution and God's labor to save the world are virtually the same thing, as if God is simply using evolution to save us and bring us to fulfillment.

Though I believe that God *does* work through evolution, I also believe that the work of Christ—however we understand it—is an accomplishment that is beyond (outside of) anything that can be achieved by evolution. Evolution by itself cannot and will not bring us to the promise land of our salvation.

Any attempt to understand or even justify animal suffering will be inadequate. That's to be expected: for the Christian, the suffering of the world is never something that can be explained entirely. However, I propose a different way of understanding the fall that might help. In line with the approach of some early Christian theologians, I suggest that God foresaw the eventuality of human sin and created the world in light of that sin. Foreseeing that we were going to freely sin (as only God can do), God allowed the world, both human *and* nonhuman creatures, to be distorted and marred; it became marked by suffering and death in anticipation of this sin (something I call a “transhistorical” or an “ahistorical” fall).

I suggest this alternative way of understanding the fall as a way of harmonizing Christian doctrine with evolutionary theory. There was no fall in a historical sense—no earthly paradise in our distant past that was transformed into a world of suffering because of sin. The historical record of our world just does not support such a view. Instead, I suggest that we imagine the fall as a “transhistorical” or “ahistorical” transformation; that is, the fall is a development in God's plan for the world outside of time, one that reflects the consequences of the eventual choice by humanity to sin.

The whole world, human and nonhuman creation, became marred and distorted due to human sin. Because the two—human and nonhuman creation—are linked in the fall, I believe we can *also* hope that the entire creation, both human *and* nonhuman creation, will be saved through the work of Christ. This is one of the arguments of the book: the lot of nonhuman creation is tied, in solidarity, to human creation. Thus, creation suffers, *in solidarity with humanity*, because of sin, *and*, in turn, it will be saved, *in solidarity with humanity*, when God embraces sinful humanity.

THE *IMAGO DEI*

Glossary: *imago Dei (the); Barth, Karl; stewardship*

The first book of the bible, Genesis, states that humanity is made in the “image of God” (in Latin, the “*imago Dei*”). Church teaching has long taught that humanity is unique among all of the earth's creatures because we alone are made in God's image.

But what is it about us that makes us the “image” of God? Is it our brains? Our capacity to act morally? Is it the distinctive nature of the soul that God has endowed us with? Does being in God's image mean that we have a special task in the world? Since all other creatures are *not* made in God's image, are they radically inferior to us? Does it mean that

they are meant to serve us? Less loved by God? What about other humanoids like the Neanderthals? Why were they not images of God (or were they)?

Though the Church has been constant in its teaching that humanity (*homo sapiens*) is uniquely the *imago Dei*, there is no clear consensus in the tradition regarding exactly it is that distinguishes us from other creatures and makes us into God's image. The question has become newly important as concerns about the environment become increasingly alarming. Critics have accused Christianity of contributing to our environmental problems because of its supposed teaching that the rest of the world was created to serve humanity. We alone matter because we alone are images of God (or, so the argument goes). In this view, God gave us permission for us to do whatever we wanted to the earth and the creatures on it. This attitude, critics believe, has led to disastrous consequences for creation.

Contemporary Catholic thought rejects the idea that the world is ours to do with as we will, but it still affirms that humanity is distinctively the *imago Dei*. In recent decades, scholars have appealed to two qualities of the human person to explain why we are God's image. First, communion: we are uniquely able to have a relationship with God or, at least, a particular kind of free and loving relationship. Second, stewardship: we are meant to act as God's agents on the earth. In our role as the earth's stewards, we are to represent God's intentions and desires for the world. In addition to these two themes (relationship and stewardship), I note another that appears in Catholic writing about humanity as God's image: because we are the *imago Dei*, each human person has a unique dignity before God. We humans are not interchangeable beings; nor does the worth of any of us depend on something like annual salary, popularity, talents, health, or mental abilities. Each of us has a supreme worth *simply* because each of us is made in the image of God.

CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE AND ANIMALS

Glossary: *ontological*; *ethology/ethologists*; *utilitarianism* (philosophy); *ensoul/ensoulment*; *soteriology*

The section provides a brief overview of some of the startling scientific discoveries being made about animals. I suggest that these discoveries challenge the neat "binary" between humanity and other animals, even if they do not entirely eliminate it. By "binary," I refer the idea that "things" (humans, animals, bugs, etc.) can be placed neatly in one of two categories (humans and everything else). A binary outlook sees the world in terms of an either/or; all or nothing. For the sake of our discussion, it means that either a creature is the *imago Dei* (i.e., a human person) or it is not (everything else: flowers, bacteria, elephants, dogs, porpoises, etc.); there is no in-between. Contemporary science is challenging this tidy binary by demonstrating that animals are not as radically different from humanity as was previously thought. Indeed, many animals are closer to us than they

are to other animals. I believe there is *still*, nonetheless, a substantive difference between humanity and other creatures on the earth, but the difference is not so great as to justify treating animals merely as things for our benefit.

AN INITIAL THEOLOGICAL AND COVENANTAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANIMALS

Glossary: Aquinas, Thomas; ecocentric/biocentric; *imago Christi*; anthropocentrism; economy/economic labor/salvific economy; Christology/Christological; covenant; deutero-Pauline; Chalcedon (Council of); Rahner, Karl; incarnation; incarnationalism (deep); incarnationalism (Chalcedonian); kingdom of God

I turn to the question whether or how the doctrine that humanity is made in the image of God, the *imago Dei*, can tell us anything about animals (a “theology of animals,” if you will).

To pursue this question, I incorporate Christology (the doctrine of Christ) into the examination. The idea here is that we can use doctrines about Christ to instruct us about what it means for humanity to be the *imago Dei*. Christ, the Church believes, is the fulfilment and ideal form of the *imago Dei*, and thus a “Christological” perspective will help us understand what it means for humanity to be the *imago Dei*. Based on this, we can then ask how animals might share in this image, even if imperfectly.

Appealing to Christology, I make three points about God’s work of creation and redemption (again, what theologians call God’s “economic labor” or, more simply, the “economy”).

First, I argue that God’s ultimate goal is to bring humanity into a covenantal relationship with God. By “covenant,” I refer to the idea, found in both the Old and New Testaments, that God wishes to establish an agreement with humanity, so that we will be his people and he will be our God. But the covenant that God desires is not just a contract between two parties. God wants a particular type of relationship with humanity that is built upon a foundation of free, interpersonal love. Both the Old and New Testaments attest to the importance that this relationship has for God.

Second, I suggest that the ideal form of the *imago Dei*, and thus of humanity itself, is found in the person of Christ as he stands in relationship with the Father (which can refer to as the *imago Christi*).

With this second point, I affirm the view that humanity has a distinctive place in God’s plan for creation against those who believe that such a view fosters a perverse form of anthropocentrism (anthropocentrism = human centeredness; a perverse anthropocentrism would be a view that holds humanity as the only creatures that matter to God).

I affirm a type of anthropocentrism, in part, due to the doctrine of the incarnation. The Council of Chalcedon declared in 451 that Jesus is “true God and true man,” two natures in one person.

Note: The Council of Chalcedon was an early Christian council, the fourth of a series of gatherings of the entire Church, called “ecumenical councils.” The teachings of these councils are considered decisive for determining authentic Christian doctrine.

It is impossible in my mind that God could have become incarnate (made flesh) in any other creature than the human person, and because of that, I believe that humanity has a special place in the “economy.” God could not have become incarnate as an ostrich or a chimpanzee in such a way that we could say that this particular ostrich is “true God, true ostrich” or that this chimpanzee is “true God, true chimpanzee.” Only in the human person can the divine become wedded to the earthly. As such, the human person has a privileged standing in God’s economic labor (again, “economic labor” = God’s work for creation).

However, this does not mean that God cares only about the human. Indeed, I want to argue that God cares passionately about each and every life, human and nonhuman, but I want to argue this without also denying the special place of humanity in the divine economy.

Third, the person best “images” God when he or she practices Christ-like love. Such acts are self-giving and thus reflect Christ’s surrender to the Father and ultimately the triune life itself. Christ-like acts of love are affected by the wounds of the world (e.g., sometimes such acts, even though they are loving, will still cause suffering to others). I explain this by appealing to the “not yet” of the kingdom. Though Christ initiated the kingdom, its fullness will only come about when he returns at the end times. Until the kingdom comes into its fullness, our attempts to love will be hampered by sin and human finitude.

I make the case that animals can reflect, albeit imperfectly, the *imago Dei*, as they too can be invited to participate in a covenantal relationship with God. An example of a biblical passage expressing God’s desire to include animals can be found in the ninth chapter of Genesis; there God offers a covenant not only to humanity, but to *all* living creatures.

If God does indeed desire to embrace animals in a covenantal relationship, we can imagine that God will do so in ways appropriate to each animal. For example, God’s covenantal relationship with an orangutan would look different than God’s covenantal relationship with an earthworm. An orangutan differs from an earthworm not only in its size and shape, but in its intellectual abilities and capacity for relationship. The book’s argument focuses on the more intellectually developed animals (e.g., orangutans, apes, dogs, elephants, etc.) and tries to make the case that God can have a covenant relationship with each of them in a way that is broadly similar to the relationship that God has with us. I try to make sense of this claim in chapters three and four.

A BROKEN, COVENANTAL ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Glossary: *soteriology/soteriological; anthropocentrism; theocentrism; epistemic/epistemology; Baltimore Catechism*

Anthropocentrism takes different forms, but in a Christian context it most basically it refers to a belief that humans are special in God's eyes and in God's economic labor, and thus they have a distinctive dignity. But what are the implications of such a belief? Does anthropocentrism mean that God *only* cares about humanity? Does it mean that we are not only "special" in God's eyes but are at the center of everything that God does? Does it mean that all other creatures—dogs, cats, mice, etc.—matter only because they benefit us?

The book embraces what might called a minimalist anthropocentrism: humans are special, yes, but the lives of other animals also matter to God and not just because they are sometimes helpful to us. God loves them for their own sake (and, thus, so should we). I reject the idea that the value of other animals lies solely or even mainly in their ability to serve humanity.

Because the term anthropocentrism has often been used to justify callousness toward animals, some Christian writers reject it and argue instead for "theocentrism." A theocentric view of creation emphasizes, rightly, that we are all creatures before God and that God, not humanity, is the supreme good. A theocentric view challenges human arrogance and its presumption that we are the only creatures that matter.

There's an obvious sense in which theocentrism is correct. God is at the center of a Christian worldview, not humanity. Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have reminded us of this fact and that such a theocentric worldview must be the touchstone of our attitudes toward the natural world. However, my intent in supporting a form of anthropocentrism is not, of course, to elevate humanity to a godlike position. I only want to make a case for a form of anthropocentrism—e.g., humanity is a distinct focus of God's economic labor—without concluding that nonhuman life is irrelevant to God or marginal to his hope for creation.

Recognizing, however, that Christian thinkers have been guilty of an arrogant assertion of human preeminence to the neglect of the rest of creation, I refer to my version of anthropocentrism as "broken" in three ways. Anthropocentrism, as I understand it, must be humbled by the recognition of (1) Christianity's historical neglect in regard to its defense of creation; (2) our inability to fully grasp the wonder of animal life (an inability that we will never completely overcome); and (3) the fact that in this life we will never understand the mystery of what God ultimately has in store for us or for animals.

CHAPTER 3: REDEMPTION THE DIVINE *MAGIS* AND ANIMALS

Glossary: *magis; Exsultet; supralapsarian; infralapsarian*

Note: Some sections of this chapter and the next are the most technical parts of the book. I appeal to writings of Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar to describe what animal redemption could look like. However, the book's overarching argument—that animals will be saved along with humanity and, therefore, they should accordingly be treated with due respect—does not depend on my “Balthasian” construction of animal redemption. I use Balthasar to show how my claims about animals make sense—that is, to show that we *can* imagine animals in heaven. But the particular way I imagine animals in heaven—in a covenantal relationship with God interpreted in terms of the “theo-drama”—can be critiqued or rejected without undermining the overarching argument of the book. So, the reader can skim parts of chapters three and four (which I'll indicate) without losing the book's overall argument.

If the reader decides to skip or skim parts (or all!) of chapter 3 and 4, they will still be able to engage the arguments of chapter 5, where I lay out the ethical implications of my theology of animals.

NATURE AND GRACE

Glossary: *Aquinas, Thomas; nature/grace distinction; prelapsarian; supralapsarian; infralapsarian; eschatology/eschatological; paschal mystery; Catechism of the Catholic Church; magis*

Digression: Understanding the Catholic Distinction between Nature and Grace

In order to help the reader negotiate this first section, some theological background would help.

The Easter vigil is considered the most important Catholic liturgy of the entire year. Its prayers and readings provide a rich introduction to Catholic theology.

If the reader has ever been to an Easter vigil, they've probably heard the *Exsultet*. It is a beloved prayer, typically chanted, that occurs at the beginning of the liturgy, after the blessing of the fire and the preparation of the paschal candle.

I appeal to this hymn as a segue for developing a Catholic understanding of creation. Two of the themes found in the *Exsultet* are particularly relevant.

First, the Catholic tradition stresses that *creation endures*; its integrity is protected by God.

What does that mean? God created a world that is good and characterized by some fundamental traits: it is material, limited, diverse, and filled with individual creatures that have characteristic “natures”—e.g., the elephant has a nature, a way of being, that is different than that of a human person, or that of a dog, or that of a bee, etc. When I refer to a creature’s “nature,” this is what I mean: not nature in the sense of the great outdoors, but nature in the sense of those characteristic qualities or ways of being that we associate with a particular type of creature. Humans have their “nature,” but so do cheetahs, trees, flowers, roaches, etc.

God preserves these natures so that they endure, or continue, after the fall of Adam and Eve. The fall harms humanity, yes, but it does not destroy our fundamental nature. God ensures that our human “nature” endures (as does that of the elephant, of the mouse, of the lilac, etc.).

The same applies to human “nature” in the resurrected life: it endures; it doesn’t become something radically changed from what we are now. We will not become completely different creatures when we are resurrected (and so, for example, we will not become angels). Our natures will “raised” (more on that in the next point), but we will still be the “selves” we are now.

Traditionally the enduring integrity of creation in heaven has focused on humanity; I want to argue that something analogous holds for animals.

Second, not only does God save us from our sin (i.e., heals us), God goes one, amazing step further and grants us an additional blessing. Through Christ we are drawn into an intimate *friendship* with God. In the traditional Catholic interpretation, human nature will be different in heaven from what it was in the original paradise—not radically so, but it will undergo a transformation that makes us “better” than we were in paradise. Adam and Eve were not friends with God in paradise, but humanity will be friends with God in heaven. To use traditional language: Christ not only *heals* us, but he also *elevates* us, giving us a destiny superior to what we would have had in paradise.

For Thomas Aquinas and much of the Catholic tradition, this added gift (intimate friendship with God) came about *only* because God, basically, changed his mind about things after we sinned. The new gift of friendship in Christ would not have been offered had we not sinned. That is, it was not God's original intent when he created us to offer such friendship, but it became his intent *after* human sin. This is pretty amazing: after we sinned, God not only decided to *forgive* us and *heal* us, but God *also* decided to give us an added bonus, friendship. Who does that? Loving people who've sinned *more* than they were loved before they sinned? Well... God does that.

So, "nature" is basically the totality of those fundamental qualities that each of us shares as human persons, identifying us "human" and not something else (something similar is true for octopus "nature," and for oak tree "nature," etc.: in traditional thought, each species of creatures has its own nature). When God gives us grace, we are elevated to a new destiny, but whatever we will be in that future destiny, we will still be human—transformed through grace, but human nonetheless. Thus the Catholic distinction between nature and grace, or, perhaps more accurately, between plain ol' human nature and graced human nature: we do not cease being human because of the grace made possible in Christ; grace only makes us more fully human, more actualized, in a way we could never achieve on our own.

The other reason why Catholic thought has maintained that each creature has an integral "nature" is to underscore that there is something meaningful about us apart from grace. Human life would have made "sense" even if God had not given us the gift of Christ, because our human nature is such that our lives would have still "worked," somehow. So God was free to decide whether to give us grace or not; he was not *required* to give us grace.

In contrast, imagine if God had decided to create human persons, but he decided to leave out our brains and our hearts. That would have been absurd. God would have been *required* to give us brains and hearts if God really wanted to create human beings. That's not the case for the gift of grace that comes through Christ. God does not *have* to send the Son and give us grace in order to keep us from being absurd beings. It was God's free choice.

So, what's the upshot of the nature/grace distinction in Catholicism? First, God preserves our "nature"—through sin and grace, we remain fully human. Second, our nature is meaningful even apart from grace; God is not *required* to offer grace because of some defect in what God created. Third, we are transformed and elevated because of what Christ accomplished for us. Apart from Christ, we would

have remained a “natural” human person; with Christ, we are still human, but elevated to a new destiny.

In line with many contemporary theologians (and in contrast to Aquinas’ position) I take the view that God’s original intent, from the very beginning, was to send the Son and offer us God’s friendship. That is, unlike Aquinas, I believe that from the very beginning, God always had in mind that he would send the Son so that we could receive the grace that transforms us into friends with God. Christ was not some “plan B” that God reverted to because his “plan A” (a world without sin) did not work out. But in keeping with the traditional view, I want to emphasize the lavishness of what God has done: God loves what God has created—freely, passionately, and extravagantly—so much so that God wants creation to be brought into a friendship with God.

VOICES FOR ANIMAL REDEMPTION

Glossary: *Thomistic; kingdom of God; eschatology; Vatican II; Aquinas, Thomas; post-apostolic; doctor of the Church; deuterio-Pauline; Logos; logoi; patristic; Thomistic; conciliar/post-conciliar; theocentricism*

By “animal redemption,” I mean the idea that animals will be included in the work of Christ; they will be “saved.” What exactly it means for animals to be “redeemed” or “saved” will be developed later in this chapter and the next.

For Christianity, especially for the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, early church thinkers (i.e., those theologians, often called the “Church Fathers,” who wrote during the first six centuries of Christianity) provide a standard for deciding what constitutes authentic Christian teaching—not absolutely so, but their ideas and views merit particular consideration and respect. Many of them believed that the eschaton (heaven) *will* include nonhuman life (against the Thomistic tradition, which held that there would be no plants or animals in the world to come—a view I describe as “biotically sparse,” that is, sparsely populated with life). I refer to this inclusion of nonhuman life as an “eschatologically inclusive” approach to life in heaven.

In addition to the teachings of these early Church leaders, support for the idea that the world to come will include nonhuman creatures (i.e., animals and plants) can be found in the Old and New Testaments.

Finally, the teachings of the Church, beginning with Vatican II and leading up to the eve of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*, explicitly include creation in God’s salvific plans. Based on these formal teachings, God’s work in Christ includes more than just humans.

Note: an “encyclical” is the most authoritative document that a pope can write; I will discuss Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, in a later section below.

MOVING BEYOND AN “EPIC ESCHATOLOGY”

Glossary: *epic eschatology; supervival; Aquinas, Thomas; redemptive solidarity; Balthasar, Hans Urs von; creaturely bipolarity; Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre*

Christians can rightly hope that nonhuman creatures (animals and plants) will be included in the eschaton. We can imagine two ways to understand that inclusion. First, God could create a heaven filled with a bunch of new plants and animals, but *not* the particular animals that have lived on this earth—so dogs might be in heaven, but not any of the dogs we’ve known here on earth. Or, second option, God could restore creation such that the specific creatures that have lived on earth will be restored in heaven. Thus, for example, the particular dogs, horses, goats, etc. that we have encountered in the present world will join us in the world to come.

I refer to the first option (heaven filled with new animals, but not the ones we’ve known in the present world) as an “epic eschatology” and argue against it. In an “epic eschatology,” creation is *collectively* “saved” or “redeemed,” but the particular animals that are part of our present world are not. So, for example, some theologians argue that animals are “redeemed,” not by being resurrected but by being remembered by God and/or by human persons who share in God’s life. So, these animals live on, in a sense, but only as treasured memories. They will no longer exist as distinctive creatures that continue to live and to act in new ways.

Side note: my use of the word “epic” here follows that of the Catholic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar and not its usage found in popular culture. As used here, the word “epic” is meant to underscore the idea of a “story” that focuses on the grand movements or developments in history, but not on the individual characters who are affected by or even harmed within that history. So, a communist view of history can be called “epic” to the degree that it focuses on grand historical developments and not on the individual people who suffer or die because of those developments. Analogously, an “epic” view of the salvation of nonhumans (plants and animals) would emphasize the broad story of a God who saves creation, *in general terms or collectively*, without any concerns for the *individual* creature. Again, I argue against this view.

What is the argument *for* an epic eschatology in which creation is collectively restored (saved), but not the individual creatures within it?

Principally, it has been argued that animals and plants do not have what it takes to be restored or saved. I agree with that view when considering individual plants or intellectually primitive creatures like earthworms. What would it mean for God to resurrect a basil plant that I let die? How is it the *same* plant that I failed to water? Similarly, a resurrected earthworm wouldn't even recognize itself as the same earthworm. So, those creatures—lilacs, ladybugs, amoebas, pecan trees, etc.—could be restored collectively, but it is hard to imagine how it would matter to those creatures whether they are restored collectively or restored individually—i.e., as the same creature they are now. I'm not discounting that possibility, but I am suggesting that God's resurrection of a particular tiger is more meaningful to that tiger than God's resurrection of a basil plant would be to that plant.

I believe, furthermore, that an argument can be made that many animals (elephants, dolphins, cats, apes, etc.) have a sufficient foundation (cognitive abilities, personality, individuality, etc.) for us to believe it possible for God to “resurrect” them in a way meaningful to them. For example, unlike the case of a rose or a gnat, we can imagine that if God were to resurrect an orangutan, it would recognize itself as the same orangutan that existed on earth. For this case, there is the possibility of continuity between the animal that existed on earth and the one that is resurrected in heaven.

So, if I am right, it is imaginable that God can resurrect some animals just like God can resurrect us. But does God choose to do so? I give three reasons why I believe we can hope that God does.

First, I believe that the love revealed in Christ is oriented toward the individual creature, not just creation as a whole. Second, each individual animal displays a distinctive goodness that, we can hope, God cares about. That is, animals (at least those with some level of intellectual sophistication) are not just interchangeable members of a species. They have something like a personality that makes them unique (and uniquely loved). Third, because God (who is the God of the covenant) sought to fashion a world filled with creatures who relate to others, God also cares about creatures precisely because they are in relationship. Nonhuman creatures display all kinds of relationships (between themselves, with us, and, we can ultimately hope, with God). It seems appropriate to believe that the covenantal God would cherish all these diverse forms of relationships and the creatures that compose them.

I refer to this capacity to relate as “creaturely bipolarity.” It's a fancy term, but by it I mean simply to underscore that our identities are shaped by our relationships with others. We become who we are in and through our relationships; we are never simply singularities, if you will. We are always people who are what we are because of the deep bonds we have with others.

What is true for the human person is also true for animals (or, at least, some of them). An example of such identity-forming relationships is, of course, the bond between a person and his or her dog (or cat): the identities of both the pet (or “companion animal”) and the human person are shaped by their relationship with each other. So, when the text refers to “creaturely bipolarity,” the reader can substitute the word “relationality,” but with the added idea of a relationship that forms and shapes the individuals that are within it.

One argument that I do *not* make in support of the resurrection of animals: God will resurrect them because we need them to be happy. I do not make this argument for two reasons. First, it is the belief of Christianity that our ultimate happiness lies in our relationship with God; it is a relationship that will bring us joys exceeding anything we can imagine or have experienced in this life. In short, we will not need our pets to be happy. Second, I want to avoid suggesting that God decides to resurrect animals *because of us*, because of our needs. Animals have a goodness and dignity that, I believe, God loves for its own sake, not because (or, at least, not primarily because) they make us happy. When it comes to God’s care for animals, it’s not all about us.

POPE FRANCIS’S *LAUDATO SI’* AND ANIMAL REDEMPTION

Glossary: *encyclical; Laudato Si’; Edwards, Denis; Deane-Drummond, Celia; Thomistic; teleology; Catechism of the Catholic Church; eschatology; non-epic eschatology;*

As I noted above, *Laudato Si’* is an “encyclical,” and thus Catholics attribute to it the highest authority given to papal writings. Pope Francis released *Laudato Si’* in 2015; it is the first encyclical to have the environment as a central theme.

I note three key points found in the encyclical: (1) everything in creation is interconnected with everything else; (2) God’s care focuses on the *particular* creature, not only on creation in general; and (3) the ultimate purpose of nonhuman creatures is not to serve humanity—again, it’s not all about us.

Does the encyclical support a non-epic eschatology, that is, the idea that heaven will include the specific animals found in the present world? It does not clearly state as much, but there are passages that seem supportive of the idea (for example, the statement that “all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards ... God” [*Laudato Si’*, #83] and “each creature” will be “resplendently transfigured” [*Laudato Si’*, #243]).

I raise one concern about the encyclical: it does not adequately discuss the dark side of creation, the fact that animal creatures within it suffer enormously.

BALTHASAR AND CREATION

Glossary: *Barth, Karl; nature/grace distinction; object-other; subject-perceiver; creaturely bipolarity; theophany; ek-stasis; ontology; theo-drama; christomorphic; divine economy*

Note: in this section and several of the sections to follow, I develop a particular understanding of how animals will be redeemed based on Balthasar's theology. The book's overarching argument that we can hope that animals *will* be redeemed does not depend on this particular, Balthasarian construal. But I offer it in order to argue that we *can* imagine animals in heaven, thus showing that the idea of animal redemption is not nonsensical.

These sections which deal with the particular thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar can be skipped or skimmed by the reader.

At this point, we come to the chapter's most theoretical and technical discussion. My goal is to develop a way of understanding creation that aligns with the one developed by Pope Francis, while at the same time is more explicit in defending the view that God's covenant will include animals.

As a first step in that development, I expand the idea of "creaturely bipolarity" found in the writings of the Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. Admittedly, the language is pretty technical (e.g., "the object other," "the subject perceiver," "theophany," "ek-stasis," etc.), but the fundamental ideas are not too difficult. Balthasar wants to call our attention to some of the basic dynamics that characterize human existence. Simply put: we are beings that relate.

I describe three dynamics. First, every creature (humans, animals, plants, even rocks) has been given the capacity by God to *show* itself to the other. That might not seem like a big deal, but Balthasar wants us to recognize how remarkable or at least interesting that fact is. Each creature can show itself to others (not just visually, but in multiple ways). Such showing of "self" is fundamental to our being in the world; our experiences are unimaginable without that fundamental capacity to show my "self" to another.

Second, we are able to *perceive* the beauty and goodness of other creatures. Again, you might say, big deal. But Balthasar wants us to recognize a fundamental dynamic at work in every creature's life. We are creatures that perceive other creatures, and they perceive us. Perhaps God could have created a different type of world (who knows what that world might have looked like), but *our* world is one fundamentally shaped by a relational dynamic.

But not only do we perceive the other. A robot could do that. We also perceive the beauty and goodness of that other (yes, even mosquitoes). And because every creature has its own characteristic beauty and wonder, we are also *moved* by the other whom we perceive. This is what Balthasar calls "ek-stasis," being drawn beyond ourselves by the other's goodness.

Balthasar suggests that when we perceive the other (whether human or nonhuman) we are moved in some way. *If* we are faithful to that movement in an ethical sense, we will be moved to treat that other in accord with what it is, with its identity. That is, we will be moved to allow that creature to be itself, to be whatever it is that God wants it to be.

Think about persons who are suffering: if we see them for the beings they are, humans with a distinct dignity and goodness and beauty, we will be moved to treat them as they deserve. We will be moved to protect their goodness and beauty. Seeing the other—seeing the other fully, honestly, reverently—always shapes our ethical response. Thus for us to treat persons with disrespect or hatred always involves denying or ignoring something about them (their humanity, their goodness, their suffering, their dignity before God, etc.). I want to argue that something similar—not the same, but similar—should happen in our relationship with animals: to see them, really see them, requires that we respond to their goodness.

One additional note regarding this relational dynamic that marks all beings on earth: when we appreciate the beauty of the other, we will also begin to appreciate that this other creature is gift. The creature before us (human or nonhuman) does not *have* to be. Something, or Someone, fashioned the world in such a way that this creature—this person, this frog, this tree, this flower—stands before us. And thus the right attitude for us to have before all the world's creatures is that each of them is a gift, something that God has decided to share with us.

This leads to the third and perhaps most important step, what I call “creaturely bipolarity.” We are fundamentally shaped by the interpersonal dynamic of perceiving other creatures and being perceived by them. We become who we are within our relationships with other creatures.

So, a fundamental dynamic characterizes our world: we express ourselves, we perceive others, and we are shaped by our interchange with others. Now, why is this so important for our discussion? Because it shows that all creation already reflects the *triune* God who created it. For the Christian, God is triune life, an eternal movement of relationship among the triune Persons, i.e., between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And insofar as we humans (and other creatures) are always and fundamentally in relationship with other humans (and other creatures), we reflect, and ultimately participate in, God's triune life.

Note: This emphasis on God's triune life (the fact that God is not just a solitary or unitary being) has been an important theme in recent theology. Contemporary theologians have emphasized that relationality is fundamental to God's life; God is not just an absolute Oneness (that would be unitarian God). And because God is triune relationship, it is no surprise that when God created, God made a world that reflects his relational life.

I use these three ideas for a theology of creation (i.e., a Christian interpretation of the world around us and the animals within it).

First, creaturely bipolarity is the “nature” (broadly understood) upon which “grace” builds. Recall what we discussed above: God’s gift in Jesus Christ “elevates” us. When human persons are resurrected, they will still be human but elevated in a supernatural way. Here I try to broaden this idea to include nonhuman animals. God’s grace can also “elevate” the nature of animals. Grace will not turn animals into completely different creatures, but will make them, like grace makes us, able to participate in God’s triune life. Each creature has distinctive form of “creaturely bipolarity.” Even with the graced elevation effected in Christ, their particular form of creaturely bipolarity will remain—that is, their particular way of being creatures who express themselves and live in relationships with other creatures will continue. Their particular “natures” will not change as God’s grace elevates animals in the life to come.

Second, I appeal to Balthasar’s notion of “theo-drama” to imagine how grace can elevate an animal without making it into a completely different creature.

Digression: understanding the idea of theo-drama

Theo-drama” is a fairly technical term. Nonetheless, the theoretical idea that it tries to convey can be brought down to earth, a bit.

We can start with a basic idea: my identity. What is my identity? We might describe it in terms of my physical characteristics, my abilities, my hobbies and interests, my personality traits, etc.

All these are important for understanding who Chris Steck is. However, I could take a different approach and describe my identity not in terms of the qualities that define who I am at this moment, but in terms of the story of my life. My actions, my interrelationships with others, the dramas of joy and loss (and the ways I have responded to them), the goals I have pursued (whether achieved or not): all these are part of the story of who Chris Steck is, and thus they help us understand the identity of Chris Steck.

But any story must be interpreted. That is, I need to make sense of my life as it has unfolded across time. What holds together all the fragments of my life story and gives them meaning? What makes me, me?

This is where the story of God’s economic labor comes in (again: God’s economic labor = God’s work in salvation history, a labor that culminates in Christ and ultimately in his return at the end of history). The story of God’s interaction with

humanity is the story of God creating; of God calling Israel to a covenantal relationship; of Israel's sin; of God's sending the Son; of the Son's proclamation of the kingdom and the good news of salvation; of divine forgiveness and healing; and of the Son's redemptive death and resurrection. This story, God's story, interprets my story. In short: I look at the story of Christ and in that story I find a way to understand my sins and failures; my sorrows and struggles; my gifts and accomplishments; my joys and hopes; my remorse and conversion.

But we need to add one more step to understand Balthasar's idea of a "theo-drama." It is not just that God's story *interprets* my story, but also that God's story *empowers* my story, my *life*, in such a way that it brings it to a new and unmerited end: life with God. God takes all that is my life story and transforms it, so that I will become (I hope) a new creation, not a different creation, but one that is purged of all its sinfulness and woundedness, and that lifts up all of the distinctive goodness that makes me, me.

This is what Balthasar is getting at with the idea of a "theo-drama": it is the drama of God's work in human history (again, a drama which culminates in Christ) that becomes the standard for understanding our stories as they unfold now while also providing those stories with their supernatural end, the promise of what we will become on the last day.

We've listed two of the three ideas I'm going to use Balthasar to develop: (1) creaturely bipolarity is the foundation (or "nature") upon which God's gift of grace will build and (2) the "theo-drama" shows how this gift of grace can transform who I am, my story, by giving it a new end, without simply re-creating a new version of me.

The third idea is implied in the above: each of our lives can be thought of as a form, a whole. Each of our lives can be understood as a story with a distinctive shape and characteristic movements—or, at least, we hope to be able one day to understand it in that way. However, because of our sin and the sins of the world around us, our lives are more fragmented than they should be. This is where God's salvation comes in: God takes the fragments of our lives and gives them a new *unity* and a new destiny in Christ.

What I am going to suggest is that this understanding of grace's elevation of our lives can also be used to describe animal lives and God's redemption of them. A full explanation of that possibility will have to wait till chapter four.

BALTHASAR AND *HUMAN* REDEMPTION

Glossary: *Christological*

Note: this section continues the Balthasar-specific construction I started in the preceding section. *One can skim this section without losing the book's overarching argument.*

In order to better understand how we might be able to apply Balthasar's ideas about creation and grace to animal salvation, I look first at his understanding of how *humans* are saved.

Key to Balthasar's theory is the fact that God is *triune*, a trinity of divine Persons. Thus, before discussing his theory, it would be helpful to note some of Christianity's beliefs about the Trinity.

Digression: Understanding (sort of) the Trinity

The Trinity is a *mystery*; it is a fundamental Christian dogma but also something beyond our ability to comprehend fully. So, before attempting to examine the Trinity, a warning is necessary: we can never hope to explain the Trinity. Any attempt to describe with precision and clarity the nature of the Trinity is futile (and risks some form of heresy).

Christians believe God is *both* absolutely one *and* triune. That's a paradox. Trying to reconcile those two beliefs—unity and trinity—sometimes leads theologians to place emphasis on one aspect over the other (i.e., emphasizing either unity or trinity).

Balancing God's unity and trinity has to be done with care. If one were to emphasize God's absolute unity in a way that diminishes that God is "tri-personal," it'd be a problem. It could lead to "modalism," the idea that God the Father is only one way (or mode) that God expresses himself, that the Son is another way that God expresses himself, and the Spirit a third way. In this (heretical) view, God is absolutely one but expresses himself in three different modes.

Alternatively, if one were to emphasize the other side, i.e., the triune nature of God, it could threaten God's absolute unity, and thus lead to tri-theism, the idea that there are three gods in the Godhead.

Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar were two Catholic theologians particularly influential in the 20th century. Both of them developed a trinitarian theology that was orthodox (i.e., their views were not heretical), but they came down on different sides of the spectrum. At the risk of a misleading oversimplification, we can say that Rahner leaned more toward the modalism side of the spectrum and Balthasar more toward the tri-theism side; both did so, respectively, without slipping into heresy. The trinitarian theologies of both were orthodox. Both affirmed God's absolute

unity *and* God's triune nature, but they developed a different balance between the two norms of unity and trinity.

Balthasar's emphasis is on the fact that God is triune Persons. In his trinitarian theology, God the Father gives everything over to the Son (i.e., the Father gives his "Self" fully to the Son) and in turn, the Son gives everything back to the Father. This rhythm of self-surrender (in theological language called "kenosis") is fundamental to the life of the Godhead (i.e., to the inner life of God). What this means for Balthasar is that God is fundamentally self-giving and self-receiving; it is the nature of God to relate—that is, to give himself over to the "other" and to receive the "other" into himself.

Note: in the discussion of the Trinity below, I will appeal to spatial terms as *metaphors*, not literal descriptions. For example, when I say that there is "space" in God for humanity, I don't mean, obviously, a physical space.

What does this have to do with salvation? If God's ultimate plan is to bring humanity into a relationship with God, how might that "look"? For Balthasar, humanity is brought into the very dynamics of God's triune life in and through the Second Person of the Trinity (i.e., Christ). We are so intimately joined to the Son that, like the Son, we are turned to the Father in eternal love.

Or, at least, that's how it would have been before sin. Now, however, because of human sin, we have a problem. God cannot, it seems, welcome us into the divine life because we are sinful. That which is evil and sinful is antithetical to God's very nature; God can't embrace sinful humanity, it would seem. If God is to include humanity in God's very life (that is, if God is to relate intimately and deeply to humanity, becoming friends with human persons), then God must find some way to draw even sinful humanity into God's life. How to do that? The answer: the Father sends the Son to become Incarnate as a human person. In so doing the Son becomes fully identified with humanity, even in its sinfulness (though the Son himself is never sinful, of course). In Good Friday, we see what this entails for God. The suffering and death of Christ on the cross shows the "distance" that appears between God the Father and God the Son as the Son fully takes on the human condition in all its sinfulness. That "distance" reflects the wrath that God has toward human sin and the cost that God endures in order to embrace sinful humanity.

However, the "distance" between God and humanity as it appears in Good Friday is not the final act of the drama. The Father resurrects Jesus; Easter transforms Christ's suffering and death, so that the "distance" between the Father and Son (who represents sinful humanity) is bridged within the loving unity of the triune persons. In the bonding love of the Holy Spirit, the Father embraces Jesus fully, and in embracing Jesus, God embraces sinful humanity. With that embrace, God creates "space" for sinful humanity within God's very

life. At the risk of oversimplification, we could say that in Good Friday and Easter Sunday, God found a way to check off two boxes: wrath toward sin; love toward humanity. Good Friday allowed God to express his wrath toward sin, and, in Easter Sunday, God determines that his wrath is not ultimate, that God can and does embrace humanity.

Each person is now invited to share in God's triune life in the very "space" where God embraced the human condition, that is, in Christ. *In Christ* (I'm tempted to say, "literally," in Christ) every person participates in God's life; *in Christ*, each person becomes turned to the Father and, like Christ, is sent on a mission to continue the Son's work.

ANIMAL REDEMPTION

Glossary: *kenosis; soteriology; incarnationalism (Chalcedonian); incarnationalism (deep); recapitulation; Godhead*

Note: this section continues the Balthasar-specific construction I started in the preceding sections. *One can skim this section without losing the book's overarching argument.*

Balthasar states repeatedly his view that creation will be redeemed, but he doesn't tell us how it will happen (or what exactly that redemption will look like).

I briefly indicate in this section something about the direction I am going to pursue. Basically, I want to suggest three ideas. First, if God chooses to "save" animals, it will be based on what I have referred to as "creaturely bipolarity" (which can be understood as a creature's ability to relate to other creatures and, ultimately, to God, in a way that forms their identities). If God's ultimate goal is to establish a covenantal relationship with creation, then the creature's capacity to relate will be pivotal for its salvation. Second, the "space" that God has established within God's life is big enough to include more than just human life. Third, an animal's identity can, like that of the human person, be understood in terms of its "story"—one that will be transformed and completed through the work of the Holy Spirit (to be discussed in the next chapter).

NATURE/GRACE REVISITED

Glossary: *infralapsarian; supralapsarian; magis; Rahner, Karl; paschal mystery; theo-drama; heavenly bodies*

Note: this section continues the Balthasar-specific construction I started in the preceding sections. *One can skim this section without losing the book's overarching argument.*

I started the chapter with a discussion of the nature/grace distinction as it appears in Catholic thought. The transformation of our lives due to the grace effected in Christ will not make us into radically different creatures. Another way of stating that is to say that when God saves us, God doesn't wipe away everything we've been. We are raised up, yes. We are transformed, yes. But grace will always shape us to be our genuine selves. Even in heaven, we will still be, recognizably so, our own "selves."

How does the view that grace elevates us, not re-creates us, relate to the ideas of this chapter? I suggested above that creaturely bipolarity or relationality is the "nature" upon which grace builds. That is, our distinctive capacities to be and to be in relationship with others is the starting point of God's transformation—of ourselves and, I believe, of animals. God wants to be in a covenant relationship with us, and we are, by our very nature, disposed to relate to others. I want to expand on that idea by applying Balthasar's notion of the "theo-drama." Each of our life stories already has some kind of meaning associated with it, even apart from Christ. But, in Christ, we can and must re-interpret these stories. Our new identities are formed as Christ takes each of our stories and brings it to fulfillment in God's life. Grace transforms our stories; it does not simply replace them with new ones. I suggest that this graced transformation is a gift that God can also give to animals, albeit in ways that are appropriate to each animal.

CHAPTER 4: SANCTIFICATION THE SPIRIT'S COSMIC EMBRACE

Glossary: sanctification; appropriation; divine economy

In this chapter, I incorporate the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of animals. All of the divine economic labors are shared by all of the Persons of the Trinity. So, we want to be careful when saying something like, "Jesus is responsible for 'this' accomplishment, but the Holy Spirit is responsible for 'that' accomplishment." God is one and God's labor is also one (i.e., God is not three different persons doing three different things). However, the Christian tradition has associated certain roles with one or other of the Persons of the Trinity, a theory called "appropriation"—i.e., particular roles are "appropriated" to individual Persons of the Trinity. Thus, when in the last chapter I spoke of the work of Christ in terms of redemption, that is a matter of "appropriation." Ultimately, redemption is the work of all the Persons of the Trinity together, even if the act of redeeming humanity can be appropriated to Christ.

In this chapter, I will speak about the role of the Holy Spirit in terms of "sanctification." Sanctification can be broadly understood as the process of making holy, but I will use it to refer to the process where animals become included in the work of Christ, and thus

“sanctified.” To describe the Spirit as the One who sanctifies is a matter of appropriation. The work of salvation is always the work of the one God—Father, Son, and Spirit.

Theological reflection on the Spirit has undergone a renewal in recent decades. The critique among theologians was that the Spirit’s distinctive participation in the divine economy (God’s salvific work) had been marginalized—as if the Spirit was only a kind of “chunk” of grace that provided us moral energy, and not a dynamically personal presence of God in the life of the human person. In contrast, many theologians today emphasize that the Spirit’s labor in the world must, like that of the Father’s and the Son’s (to which it is always absolutely united), be imagined in more *personal* terms, as a divine Agent working in and through human—and, I would add, nonhuman—lives.

GROUNDING SOTERIOLOGY IN CHRIST AND THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

Glossary: *soteriology; appropriation; eco-theologian; atonement; pneumatology*

I underscore that the divine labor for redemption is one, even if we can appropriate distinctive roles to the Son and the Spirit. Because the roles of the Son and the Spirit are intimately tied and absolutely joined together, we must interpret each of those roles in terms of the other. Thus, the task of the Spirit cannot be seen as something unconnected to the particular achievement of Christ. For example, if I were to say that the role of the Spirit is to encourage creativity in human lives without also connecting that creativity to the work of Christ, I would threaten the unity of God’s work. It would be like the Son is doing one thing while the Spirit is doing something else—each divine Person doing his own thing separate from the other. That would violate a Christian understanding of the unity of God’s work as God labors in and for the world. Again, the works of God are always one; the Father, Son, and the Spirit as one God bring about the salvation of the world.

The particular form of this problem that I raise here is found in accounts of the divine economy (i.e., God’s work in history) that entail some version of two theses: (1) evolution is the means by which God will, ultimately, save the world; and (2) the Spirit is the engine of that salvation as it develops in evolutionary history (i.e., the Spirit guides evolution toward the end intended by God). My concern with some of these accounts is that the connection between the second thesis (the Spirit as evolutionary guide) and the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is left underdeveloped or unclear (or nonexistent!). We must instead be clear about how exactly it is that the work of the Spirit within evolutionary history is intimately tied to the work of Christ—i.e., to his life, death, and resurrection. For classic Christian theology, Christ accomplished something new in human history, and the Spirit is the One who now continues that new achievement. Thus, in order to understand the role of the Spirit in saving humanity, we have to first be clear about what exactly it is that Christ achieved by dying on the cross. I believe some theologians, rightly endeavoring to integrate evolutionary theory and Christian theology, are not clear as to how exactly the

achievement of the Spirit in evolutionary history is made possible by the achievement effected by Christ.

So, for a pneumatology (i.e., the doctrine of the Holy Spirit) to be Christian, it must be rooted in Christology (the doctrine of Christ). To show that connection, I begin to examine Balthasar's understanding of the work of Christ—i.e., his view of what exactly it is that Christ accomplished. Balthasar underscores that Christ's suffering effected the restoration of God's relationship with creation. The Spirit's role, I will show, is to draw each individual creature into this newly-established relation that Christ's work made possible. Thus, the integral connection between the work of the Spirit and that of Christ is preserved; God's labor is one.

THE TRINITARIAN FRAMEWORK FOR BALTHASAR'S SOTERIOLOGY

Glossary: *soteriology; Trinity (immanent)*

This section can be skipped by those not interested in the intra-Church debates about trinitarian theology.

Before exploring the Spirit's role in animal redemption, I turn to address some of the critiques raised against Balthasar's trinitarian theology.

Recall what I said in the last chapter: the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery; one God / three Persons. God is a paradox of simultaneous unity and plurality. Balthasar, I also noted, places significant weight on the *triune* nature of God and, in turn, on the personal qualities of the Son's and Spirit's activities. Balthasar appeals our experience of being "persons" as an analogy for understanding the activities of the Son and the Spirit. For example, as human persons, we act, we choose, we do things in time, etc. As applied to the Trinity, these ideas, again, are analogous, and thus when we use phrases like "God acts," "the Father chooses," "the Spirit labors," etc., we are not suggesting that these words describing the acts of the Godhead mean the same thing as they do when describing human activities. All of our descriptions of God (God is merciful, God loves, God rejoices, etc.) are analogous: they do not have the *same* meaning as they would when applied to human affairs; nor, however, do they have an utterly *different* one. God always exceeds earthly language, but it's all we have. We don't have adequate language, so we use what's available to us (i.e., human language applied analogously).

Balthasar pushes the language a bit further: he also attributes to God's triune life the qualities of "drama." God is a dramatic exchange of love within God's very being. Why does he suggest this? Because our experience of love includes things like newness, exchange, acts and counter-acts. And thus to preserve the depth and full reality of divine love, we

should also attribute, analogously, those same qualities to the exchanges among the Persons of the Trinity. Even “surprise,” Balthasar suggests, is not an inappropriate description of the inter-relationship of the Persons of the Trinity, as long as we use the word not as a precise description of divine love but as a way of enriching our (always inadequate) understanding of God’s vibrant life of love.

The problem for critics of Balthasar’s trinitarian theology is that Balthasar goes too far in such interpersonal descriptions to the point of introducing discord within the Godhead. As we saw in chapter three, Balthasar’s soteriology is grounded in an exchange between the Father and the Son (an exchange displayed on the Cross). The Son assumes human nature, and in so doing, embraces sinful humanity. On the Cross, we see the Father’s wrath toward human sin as it is directed toward the Son. The resurrection, in turn, reflects the embrace of sinful humanity within the love of the triune Persons.

What’s the problem with that? Traditionally, theology has avoided associating God with change or earthly suffering. God is perfect and cannot be affected (changed or harmed) by earthly realities. Balthasar seems to violate that norm by implying that Father’s relationship with the Son has been wounded somehow by human sin and that discord among the Persons of the Trinity is manifested in the events of the cross.

I defend Balthasar on this count by underscoring that the language here is not meant literally; again, any language describing God is inadequate. But I also appeal to a contrast between God’s perspective (God stands outside of time) and ours (we stand within time; we only know the world as a series of moments, one following after the other). I suggest that what from our perspective (as creatures living within time) looks like a moment in which the Son is genuinely alienated from the Father is from God’s vantage just a partial aspect of the loving exchange between the Father and the Son. God’s love for the Son “transmutes,” to use Balthasar’s language, the alienation caused by sin. That is, the event of the Cross is transformed and made part of the loving exchange between the Father and the Son. The alienation between the Father and the Son that appears as Jesus suffers forsakenness on the cross is real but not ultimately so. Jesus’ suffering death on the cross cannot be understood apart from his resurrection. In our temporal way of experiencing the world, Good Friday appears as a discrete moment, one that is apart from Easter. However, in God’s perspective (and that of Christian theology) Good Friday can only be understood in the context of Easter.

Balthasar’s use of novel metaphors to characterize God (e.g., an “acting space” within God; the “distance” between the Father and the Son) helps us imagine how God can truly embrace each of us without altering God’s fundamental nature. In God’s immanent life—in the interchanges among the Father, Son, and Spirit—we see that there is “space” in God, that God is already open to the “Other.” Thus, because the divine life is already an eternal giving and receiving among the triune Persons, God does not change when God decides to

welcome humanity into God's interior life. God is already receptive to the other, and continues to be so as he embraces the "other" of the human person.

BALTHASAR AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Glossary: *pneumatology; economic labor; Trinity (immanent; economic)*

This section can be skipped by those not interested in Balthasar's pneumatology.

When Christians imagine the Father and the Son acting, they generally attribute to them some kind of personal agency. That is, in their thinking about the Father and the Son, Christians will regularly speak about them *doing* things—e.g., speaking and acting. In that sense, the Father and the Son are "agents," individual subjects of intentionally activity. The Christian tradition has supported this understanding but with the important caveat that, again, we have to understand these images analogously. The respective personhoods of the Father and the Son are not that of a human person (for example, it would be wrong to attribute to the Father a distinct, individual consciousness, one separated from that of the Son). Interpreting the distinct personhoods of the Father and the Son in a literal manner would lead to tri-theism or three separate gods.

Nonetheless, Scripture encourages us to imagine the triune Persons in ways analogous to that of discrete human persons; the Father speaks, the Son acts.

What about the Holy Spirit? Theology has not, generally, emphasized the Spirit's distinct personal agency as readily or clearly as it has that of the Father and the Son. Indeed, the Spirit is sometimes portrayed as something akin to a universal, ethical booster charge than as a divine Person. Balthasar's theology is novel in how forcefully it counters this tendency by encouraging us to imagine the Holy Spirit as a personal agent of God's presence in the world. In short, the Spirit—like the Son and the Father—*does* things. Now at this point, we have to remind ourselves, once again, that this is imperfect language. The Holy Spirit is not some divine agent doing "his" own thing. God's actions in the world are always one: Father, Son, and Spirit. However, as we also saw, the tradition allows us to appropriate certain forms of economic activities to each of the Persons of the Trinity and the same is true for the work of the Spirit.

Balthasar understands the *economic work* of the Holy Spirit as continuous with the form that the Spirit's activity takes within the *inner life* of the Trinity. So, how the Spirit "acts" within the Trinity is similar to how the Spirit "acts" in the world.

In traditional Catholic understanding, the Holy Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son but also the Person who "proceeds" (flows forth) from them both. Thus the Spirit is both loving bond and the Person who expresses the love between the Father and

the Son. This two-fold aspect of the Spirit is key to Balthasar's pneumatology (i.e., his theology of the Holy Spirit). The Spirit is both the *objective* bond binding together absolutely the Father and the Son and also the *subjective* (or, personal) expression of that love. So, the Spirit is both object and subject—object-bond and subject-agent of that bond.

That's the form of the Spirit's activity within the Trinity, and so, therefore, that is the form of the Spirit's activity in the world. The dual role of object-bond and subject-agent continues in the Spirit's economic life (i.e., the Spirit's activity in the world). The Spirit continues to be personal agent expressing divine love and the bond of that love, only now the Spirit does so within creation itself. The Spirit acts within and through each of us (i.e., the Spirit as subject-agent) and the Spirit embraces us (i.e., the Spirit as object-bond). Thus, the Spirit acts with graced human persons, helping them to act in Christ-like ways; in this sense the Spirit is co-agent with the person. But, the Spirit also acts to join those persons to God, and in this sense the Spirit is the bond between God and the world.

Recall, however, the caution I noted above: the works of God are always one—the Father, Son, and the Spirit act in absolute unity. In Balthasar's approach, this unity between the Spirit's work and that of the Son lies in the fact that the particular task of the Spirit is to bring about the "Christ form" within the world; the Spirit labors to make the world "look" more like Christ. When we reflect upon Christ's life, we see this "form": a life of self-giving love, of healing and reconciliation, of surrender to the Father's will, of sacrifice, of companionship, etc. These are all aspects of Christ's life, or, to use Balthasar's term, of the "Christ form"—and that form now appears, through the work of the Spirit, within the lives of his followers.

Balthasar understands the Spirit's task as a creative project. The Spirit draws humanity to embody Christ in ever new ways. The Spirit stirs up our creativity energies so that each person can come to embody Christ to a manner aligned with that person's talents and gifts, and as creatively adapted to new needs and circumstances.

I will suggest in the sections ahead that the Spirit's labor to fashion a world more reflective of Christ can also include nonhuman creatures.

THE SPIRIT: GOD'S OPENNESS TO CREATION

In this brief, transitional section, I underscore the role of the Spirit as the ultimate unity between God and the world, suggesting that because all creatures are relational and can express themselves (they can speak a "word," if you will), they can be made, by the work of the Spirit, into expressions of Christ (or of the "Christ form"). I will try to substantiate this claim in the sections that follow.

THE SPIRIT AND ANIMAL SANCTIFICATION

Glossary: *sanctification; metaphysics; kenosis/kenotic*

The goal of chapter 4 has been to help us imagine how animals can be “sanctified,” or incorporated into Christ’s salvific achievement. For human persons, at least in the Catholic tradition, this process of sanctification entails participation in the sacraments (e.g., Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation) and, with the assistance of grace offered therein, living a life in accord with God’s calling. But what can “sanctification” mean for an animal?

I offer two ways of thinking about how animals can be included in Christ’s redemptive work and thus be drawn into the life of the Trinity—that is, two ways that we can imagine animals being “sanctified.” The first focuses on the individual animal and how its life (and its story) can be embraced by the triune life of God.

The second way explores an approach that has deep roots in the Christian tradition: all creation will be saved in and through the human person. The argument depends on a particular “metaphysics”—i.e., an understanding of the ultimate nature of reality—in which all of created things are fundamentally connected to humanity. Humanity is, if you will, the “metaphysical glue” for all creation, and, therefore, whatever happens to humanity also happens to all other creatures. So, when human existence became deformed because sin, animals were also tragically affected (i.e., they began to suffer violence, disease, pain, etc.). Correlatively, when humanity is saved and transformed in the eschaton, animals will also be saved and transformed.

I see the two as complementary—the salvation of the individual animal and the salvation of creation in its collective entirety. I examine each of these in turn.

Animal Salvation: Theo-Drama and Individual Creatures

Glossary: *theo-drama; kenosis/kenotic*

Recall above what I said about Balthasar’s idea of the theo-drama: it is Balthasar’s way of imagining how Christ takes our lives and incorporates them into God’s life. In Christ, God has made his “story”—who God is—into one that now has “space” for sinful humanity. In the Father’s welcoming of Christ, God has made “room” to welcome all of us. The Spirit takes the divine story and joins it to our own. Through the Holy Spirit, each of our personal stories—e.g., whatever it is that makes me, me—is transformed so that those stories are fulfilled within their new life with God.

I take this idea and apply it to animals. The problem, however, is that animals do not seem to have the capacity to embrace Christ through living lives that conform to his story, his

“form.” Animals, as far as we know, are not able to make the free choice to say “yes” to God, and so their stories cannot look like Christ’s story.

I suggest three elements in Balthasar’s thought that help us overcome this challenge. First, we saw that for Balthasar, every creature expresses itself—its identity—just in being what it is. So, even though a dog is not a free moral agent, it does tell us who/what it is through its actions. At some fundamental level, animals are not just inert things, but living, expressive beings that reveal themselves in their movements and actions. This expressiveness is their way of being active and their distinctive way of “responding” to God (e.g., by giving Him praise in all that they do).

So, first, animals are *active* agents, even if they are not moral agents. Second, just as the Holy Spirit acts as “co-subject” with the human person, so also can the Spirit act as co-agent in the lives of animals. That is, the Spirit acts in and through the graced human person’s life, binding their actions to the divine life. We can expand this idea to include nonhuman creatures. The Spirit is God’s active and intimate presence to all creatures and to each and every creature. Through the Spirit’s presence, the lives of animals can also be made co-agent with the Spirit and thus become tied to the divine life and embraced by God.

Third, and finally, Balthasar’s focus is on the entire story of a creature, and not just a discrete moment in its life. The creature’s entire life-drama must become conformed to Christ, not some aspect of that creature or some discrete action it has performed. If we can imagine how the entire story of this creature’s life can be transformed so that it expresses, however imperfectly, Christ’s life, then perhaps we can be allowed to believe that such a creature’s life can and will be included in God’s own life. Why? Because if the drama of the animal and God’s own dramatic life can be aligned or harmonized, then perhaps the animal’s dramatic life story can be included within the drama of triune life of God.

What would such an inclusion of animal life look like? In order to make some sense of this, I consider predation. All animals are caught in the drama of predation and prey; even top-order predators (e.g., lions and bears) are brought down by bacteria and other parasitic organisms. How can the Spirit transform these dramas and the lives of the creatures within them so that they reflect—that their life stories reflect—Christ’s own story?

My response is to appeal to the “kenotic” quality of Christ’s love; Christ gives of himself, surrenders, for others, even to death on the cross. His surrender, however, is not the final act. The Father resurrects the Son, and draws him, in the Spirit, into an absolute embrace. So, that’s Christ’s story; how do animals reflect it? One way is to understand the drama of predation and prey as a distorted form of kenosis; one animal “surrenders” itself for the other (i.e., one animal becomes food for the other). This kenotic act is distorted, made perverse, because the world is fallen (due to human sin), and thus does not reflect God’s original intent for creaturely life. Like Christ’s death on the cross, however, God can take

the life, struggle, and deaths of animals and give them a new ending: unending life. The dramatic struggle of animal existence can thus reflect Christ's life because it shares both in Christ's rhythm of self-giving (i.e., their providing food for another creature) and in the restoration to new life (i.e., a type of restoration that God effects in order to bring their stories to a new end).

My point is not that all animal lives are food for other animals; each animal's story is different. My point is to give one example of how God might embrace animals and transform their lives so that they too can share in the rhythm of God's own life. In a multitude of ways, the life of each and every animal life has the necessary pieces so that God can transform it into a story that aligns with the story of Christ.

Animal Salvation: Redemptive Solidarity

Glossary: sanctification; metaphysics; microcosm; cosmic salvation; epic eschatology; CDF; people of God

So, one way of understanding how God might save animals is to see in their life stories the potential for their being made into a reflection of Christ—that is, their life form can “image” Christ (again, however imperfectly). A second way of understanding animal salvation is to focus on creation *collectively* and suggest that the entirety of creation is in solidarity with humanity. This solidarity is such that creation is affected by whatever affects humanity. Creation is, like humanity, wounded when humanity sins, and, importantly for us, it is liberated, with humanity, when God saves humanity.

The view that all nonhuman creation is fundamentally (or “metaphysically”) tied to humanity was an important theme in classical Greek thought and in early Christian theology. It typically saw humanity as a “microcosm” of all reality. In the human person could be found all levels of creation (i.e., matter, biological life, sentience, and rationality). Because the human person encapsulates all types of reality, whatever happens to the human person also affects, on a fundamental level, all levels of reality. What happens to us happens to all other creatures. Though the idea of “microcosm” does not play a significant role in contemporary thought, Catholicism is increasingly committed to the view that all creation exists in fundamental communion with the human person, and thus God's work in Christ saves not only human creatures but also nonhuman ones.

The theme of a “cosmic” salvation, one that embraces all creatures, appears repeatedly in the Old Testament (e.g., in the idea found in the prophetic texts of a “common fate” that is shared by humans and creation), in the New Testament's idea of the “cosmic Christ” and in the important passage of Romans 8: 18-23.

This salvific interconnection (i.e., nonhuman creatures being saved with, in, and through humanity) has found increasing support in recent theological reflections. Many of these focus on the role of the Eucharist in bringing about the salvation of nonhuman creatures. That is, the Eucharist effects and celebrates the connection between humanity's salvation and the salvation of creation itself. As John Paul II stated in his *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: the Eucharist has a "cosmic character ... because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated *on the altar of the world*. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation" (emphasis in original, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, #8). In the Eucharist, we lift up our gifts, ourselves, and all of creation, and God, in response, *sanctifies* those gifts. All of creation, then, is given over to God for its sanctification (i.e., its salvation) in the prayers of the Mass.

Support for this connection between humanity's destiny and that of nonhuman creation can be found in two of the most important Catholic theologians of the twentieth century—Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. I criticize Rahner, however, because his understanding of the salvation of creation reflects more of an "epic eschatology" (nonhuman creation is saved collectively, not in terms of individual creatures). In contrast, Balthasar's approach allows the possibility of the salvation of the individual creature.

The fact that nonhuman salvation is linked to (and even depends on) human salvation raises an additional possibility: that humanity has been given a role in the salvation of all creation. Catholic teaching has increasingly held that the Church's mission includes the work of a cosmic salvation. Through prayer and deed, the people of God are to labor for the kingdom and to act as ministers in the divine economy, so that all things may be summed up in Christ (e.g., the Church's mission is "to gather together all people and all things into Christ ... so as to be for all an '*inseparable sacrament of unity*,'" CDF, "The Church Understood as Communion," #4).

CONCLUSION: AN INDIVIDUAL AND COSMIC SALVATION

Thus we can understand the sanctification of nonhuman life in terms of two different, though complementary, approaches. In the first, the Holy Spirit acts as co-agent with nonhuman life in order to weave that creature's life into God's dramatic life. In the second, the solidarity of all creation means that God's work for human salvation is also directed to that of nonhuman creatures; the Eucharist celebrates God's inclusive and salvific embrace of all creation.

CHAPTER 5: ETHICS

MINISTERS OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL COVENANT

If animals will share the eschaton with us, then they will also share in the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed (though doing so in ways appropriate to each animal). If, furthermore, Christian action is to be guided by the values of the kingdom—harmony, reconciliation, interpersonal love, sharing, etc., *then* Christians must consider how their treatment of animals does or does not embody the values of the kingdom. In suggesting this, I add two caveats. First, the belief that animals will be co-participants with us in the kingdom does not mean that we have the same obligations to them that we do to our fellow human person. As I've repeatedly stated: recognizing our moral obligations to animal wellbeing need not, and, I think, does not, prevent us from privileging human needs and wellbeing. Second, though the Christian is called to live in accord with the values of the kingdom, the fact that the kingdom is not yet here in its fullness means that sometimes we will be required to do types of action that are counter to the kingdom (e.g., violent defense against the evil-doer).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Glossary: *kingdom of God; already / not yet*

In this section, I amplify the points that I have been suggesting throughout the book: (1) proclamation of the kingdom of God is a key part of Jesus' teaching; (2) the kingdom was inaugurated in and through Christ's life but its fullness is yet to come; (3) the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed is universal in scope (i.e., it includes nonhuman creation).

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Glossary: *Vatican II*

The view that the task of the Church (and thus Christians themselves) is to labor for the kingdom was explicitly endorsed at Vatican II. Given the fact that the kingdom includes nonhuman creatures, the work of the Church for the kingdom must also include a labor for nonhuman creation. This work includes a dimension of prayer (e.g., liturgical prayer) and practical work (e.g., the labor to stop animal abuse).

I believe it appropriate to describe humanity's labor for creation as a form of stewardship—that is, God has given humanity a task to care for creation and protect it. The language of stewardship, however, has become controversial in recent decades. Why? The idea that we humans are in charge can foster arrogant attitudes and presumption—precisely the kind of attitudes that led to our present environmental crisis. Instead, critics of the term prefer to describe our relationship with other creatures in terms of “community” or “kinship.” Doing so, reminds us that we humans are, like animals, creatures, and we are, moreover, creatures of the same God.

I am sympathetic to the idea of creation as a community of creatures and, indeed, I believe it to be an appropriate image of what our lives will be like in the eschaton. However, we are not in the eschaton, and in the present age, there often exists, unavoidably, enmity between us and other creatures. I believe that some version of “stewardship” is an appropriate descriptor of our relationship with creation and thus defend the idea against some of the important criticisms that have been leveled against it.

THREE MUDDLING TENSIONS IN ANIMAL ETHICS

Framing animal ethics in terms of the “already / not yet” of the kingdom introduces complications that need to be clarified. I address three of these in turn.

The Tension between an Eschatological Care for Animals and the “Not Yet” of the Kingdom

Glossary: *kingdom of God; eschatology*

I understand our moral actions as a response to what we perceive. We see a child hurting; we act to do something. We believe someone is lying to us; we act to protect ourselves from the consequences of their lie. We perceive the world, and then we respond to it—and we do so in what are, we hope, morally appropriate ways.

So, to act morally, we must first understand our world well. For the Christian, understanding the world well means that we must interpret it in the light of the Gospel and Christ’s teachings. The Christian looks out onto a world in which God’s kingdom has already begun in Christ and where the Spirit labors to make that kingdom present and real.

Figuring out how to witness to the kingdom in a world broken by sin is hard enough when considering actions toward our human neighbors. When should we resort to violence in order to protect the innocent? What proportion of our goods and blessings should be shared with the needy (and in what form)? How do we turn the other cheek without turning into a doormat for other people’s misuse of our generosity? Hard questions—which explains why Christian ethicists often disagree on their answers.

I suggest in this section that the question of care for animals within a Christian framework faces an additional challenge: we do not know exactly what animals will be like in the kingdom that is to come. How can we “witness” to the kingdom in our treatment of animals when we’re not even sure of what animals will be like in the kingdom? And how can or should our acts toward animals in our broken age anticipate that future, unknown kingdom of humans and nonhumans living together? We *do*, I believe, know that animal life in the

age to come will be free of violence. But does that mean we should try to intervene in animal predation? Or even try to rid the natural world of its dependency on predation?

The case of how to treat domestic animals (dogs, cows, pigs, chickens, etc.) is easier than that of animals in the wild. These creatures do not need predation to survive. We pretty much control everything about their lives, and thus we have a distinct opportunity to create an environment for their flourishing. That won't always be possible, of course. Many communities depend on these animals for their survival and often rely on sacrifices from these animals. I believe such sacrifices are often legitimate. Nonetheless, it is uncontroversial, I believe, to suggest that in matters related to domestic animals, we often fail to achieve an appropriate balance between the needs of animals and those of human persons, especially in light of the kingdom's higher standard.

What about animals in the wilderness? Even if we were convinced that we should reduce the violence that takes place among creatures, we could not do so without causing more disruption. We do not have that kind of wisdom or power. For now, the best we can do is to protect the habitats which enable the creatures within them to continue their species, and possibly even flourish as individual creatures.

The two main points made in this section then are: (1) the concrete implications of caring for animals in accord with the values of the kingdom are not easily determined; and, (2) in contrast to treatment of animals in the wild, the manner in which we treat domestic animals can be more readily shaped by the values of the kingdom.

The Tension between the Values of the Kingdom and Conventional Norms

Glossary: *creatures; values*

Christians are to look upon—and respond to—a world illuminated by the Gospel and the values of the kingdom. It is a Catholic belief that the values that color such a view will be truly human values—e.g., empathy for the suffering of others; human liberation; relationships and community; generosity and self-sacrifice, etc.

These are not uniquely Christian values, and thus, non-Christians will often share with Christians aspirations for the ethical treatment of animals. This commonality, however, is complicated by the fact that the Christian community has not always understood or acted on its own responsibilities to care for creation; indeed, its theology of “dominion” was interpreted at times to support environmental disregard.

Nonetheless, the Church's worldview can help enrich our collective understanding of creation's goodness and inspire our compassionate response to it. I note three forms that this contribution takes. First, we humans are *creatures*, and thus we are, like every other

creature, *dependent* on others and, ultimately, on God. Second, creation radiates a sacred beauty that for Christians reflects the goodness of the God who created it. Third, the Church's worldview encourages human response by providing hope for a different future that is in-breaking within the present. The Church's hope is that even during our present age, we can become less driven by violence and abuse and more supportive of life-giving relationships.

The Tension between the Universal Vocation of All Christians and a Personal Calling

Glossary: *kingdom of God; kingdom as "already / not yet"*

Does Christ call me merely to the same tasks that he calls every other Christian? Or is it possible that Christians are called "personally"? For example, might God call one Christian to become involved in advocacy for immigrants and another to become involved in local outreach to the poor?

I argue that Christ does indeed call Christians to distinctive tasks, and thus we are not all required to do the same thing. In contrast, the more traditional Catholic view distinguished between two fundamental types of calling: the ordinary life (e.g., marriage) and the life of perfection (e.g., the priesthood and religious life). Instead, I emphasize that all are called to serve the kingdom of God, and each is called to do so in a particular way. Moreover, I suggest that the personal calling addressed to the individual person *obligates* that individual; that is, it is an ethical requirement, *for that person*, akin to that of "do not lie" or "do not steal." The difference is that while obligations like that of "do not steal" are binding upon all Christians, the personal call is binding only for those to whom it is addressed.

We can assume that such a personal calling will sometimes involve one's treatment of animals. It seems likely then that some Christians will be called to a more radical, animal-friendly witness to the ideals of the kingdom than other Christians. All are called to treat animals well, but God will call some individuals to a distinctive witness in how they treat animals.

Why do I present this idea (i.e., that Christ's call bestows on each of us a particular vocation that goes beyond universal moral norms) as a "tension"? I believe that Christian attitudes about animals and normative care for them are changing. This flux in our views of animals blurs the boundary between what is strictly required for all in regard to animal care and what is binding only for those called to a more radical care for animals. The line is "blurred" because we do not agree on what is universally binding. What one Christian believes to be a universal norm for animal care (binding on all Christians), another may hold as a special calling that binds only a few. To give a concrete example: some Christians believe that curtailing meat consumption is a requirement for all Christians, while others may see that norm as obligating only those individuals called to such a life by God. Such

disagreements are to be expected at a time of shifting views about animals. And given the unsettled character of our views regarding animal treatment, it is particularly important to recognize the possibility of a distinctive calling, in order to allow the possibility that the Spirit will raise up diverse forms of witness regarding animals. These diverse witnesses can inspire our collective imagination about animals, and, perhaps, provoke changes in how we understand our responsibilities to them.

PRINCIPLES FOR ANIMAL ETHICS

In the next two sections I summarize my claims about animals and our care for them. The book has approached ethics in terms of a response to what we perceive. In keeping with that emphasis, I cluster my summary principles in two categories. The first category deals with our perception of animals: how should we understand them in a Christian worldview; how do they relate God; how do they share in God's plan to establish the kingdom, etc. Drawing on this Christian perception of animals, the second category develops norms for our treatment of animals.

TWO ILLUSTRATIVE CASES: EATING MEAT FROM FACTORY FARMS AND USING ANIMALS FOR EXPERIMENTS

In order to show how these principles guide us in our treatment of animals, I look at two cases: eating meat from factory farming operations and using animals in experiments. Because of the brevity of my analysis, I do not draw specific conclusions but only highlight some of the issues at stake given the framework I've developed.

Eating Meat from Factory Farms

Glossary: *cooperation (formal/material); CAFO; factory farms*

The treatment of animals in factory farming operations is horrific. A Christian desiring to embody the values of the kingdom would, it seems, want to avoid meat produced in such operations. Yet it is also the case that because the kingdom is not yet here in its fullness, Christians could find themselves forced to choose between animal wellbeing and other important values (e.g., the needs of human persons).

Must the Christian *always* forgo eating meat from factory farms in order to witness to the harmonious relationships of the kingdom? Or, are there circumstances that could justify using such meat? For example, is it possible that conflicts between values (i.e., between animal and human needs) can arise that permit the Christian to act against the wellbeing of animals in factory farms (by eating their meat) in order to preserve other critically important goods (i.e., human wellbeing)?

In order to assess this possibility, I examine the issue through the distinction between formal and material cooperation. Material cooperation occurs when we do something that supports an evil act (e.g., we help a criminal escape from a bank robbery) but we do so because our choices are limited and/or our support of the evil deed is indirect and unintended (e.g., the criminal is pointing a gun at us and telling us to drive). Such acts are not considered sinful (or not fully so). Formal cooperation occurs when we intentionally support a grave evil and/or do so in such a way that the evil follows directly or closely upon our action. Such actions are considered sinful.

So, within a framework that emphasizes the need to embody the values of the kingdom, can eating meat from factory farming operations be considered a regrettable but permitted act (i.e., a matter of “material” cooperation with evil) or is the act so fundamentally antithetical to Christian commitments to the kingdom that only grave and vital values could justify it? And if the latter, what would examples of such values be?

Because the abuses of factory farming occur *precisely* in order to produce cheap meat, one could argue that our buying choices *intend* the cheapness of the meat and thus tacitly support the practices that make such cheapness possible. Against this view, however, one could note occasions when important goods are at stake that justify our buying choices. An obvious case would be a poor family confronted with food insecurity; the critically important goods of adequate nutrition and family well-being adequately justify, one could argue, the choice to eat factory farmed animals.

So, exceptional circumstances might justify using factory farmed meat. However, are there other, more common values that could warrant a choice to purchase such meat? One author argues, yes, and points to the typical American family as an example. Parents struggling to meet multiple demands (hospitality, contentment of children, social programming, etc.) do not have the luxury of a vegetarian lifestyle or costly shopping at the few places that offer meat from humanely-raised animals (or what is purported to be so).

Regardless, the values characteristic of factory farming operations are hostile to those of kingdom. Supporting such industrial practices must be avoided by Christians seeking to witness to God’s hope for all the creatures of our world and embody its values of peaceable relations.

Using Animals in Experiments

Glossary: *3R's; postlapsarian*

There is no clear consensus within the scientific community regarding the degree to which experiments on animals are helpful or necessary. Nonetheless, many would argue that at least some experiments on animals are necessary for advancing human medicine, even

while *also* calling for further ethical safeguards in the treatment of laboratory animals (e.g., greater institutional conformity to the 3R's of animal research).

Within a Christian framework, laboratory animals must be understood first and foremost as creatures loved into existence by God and intended, by God, for an end (or purpose) that cannot be reduced to human need. Even lab mice do not exist *simply* for us.

However, most of us are not involved in animal experiments. Moreover, even should we want to disassociate ourselves from such experiments, we have no real recourse to do so. Most of the drugs and medical procedures that we rely on are entangled in past and present medical experiments. Unless we choose to forgo all medical treatments, we will, inevitably, receive medical care that in small or significant ways depends on the suffering of animals.

However, there is another alternative form of Christian witness besides that of the individual Christian. The Church, the people of God, can emphatically and clearly articulate its vision of animals: not only that they are lovingly created by God and reflect his beauty and goodness, but that they too are creatures and subjects of hopes for happiness and fear of pain. The goodness bestowed on these animals by God and their status as creatures who share with us fundamental passions of subjectivity can be the basis for a way of valuing animals that resonates across ideological perspectives. My hope is that such widely shared values about animals will in turn recalibrate our culture's moral instincts about using animals in experiments. Justifications for use of animals in experiments are possible, but they would be developed in a way more attuned to issues of animal harm and suffering.

CONCLUSION: RESPONDING TO THE WORLD "HIS HUMAN EYES CONTEMPLATED AND ADMIRER"

The final section returns to the main arguments of the book: (1) Christians are called to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God and to witness to its values; (2) animals will be part of that kingdom; (3) our treatment of animals should reflect the ideals of the kingdom; (4) such treatment, however, will not always be possible since the kingdom has not yet arrived in its fullness.

Following Christ requires an ongoing conversion in all aspects of our lives. This is all the more true regarding our treatment of animals. Since our dominant cultural instincts do little to cultivate a concern for animal wellbeing (beyond that tied to our treatments of pets), no other aspect of the Christian life is so in need of careful scrutiny than its moral instincts about animals.

The moral framework for animals developed in this book is not some new creation of an animal-loving ethicist, but rather builds on the commitments and exhortations found in the documents of Vatican II and those of popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis. The trajectory since Vatican II, and continued with succeeding popes, has been a renewed emphasis on the cosmic dimension of Christ's work. That work includes nonhuman creation. And thus those who follow Christ must share in that dimension of God's redemptive work.

Glossary

3R's: a set of ethical principles for humane use of animals in experiments: replacement (replace animals with other research forms [e.g., computer modeling]); reduction (minimize the number of animals used in experiments); and refinement (refine experiments with the goal of reducing animal suffering and invasive operations on them).

already/not yet: a phrase meant to convey the idea that God's kingdom has already begun in Christ, but its fullness is not yet here

anthropocentrism: a point of view that makes the human person the center or norm

appropriation: is the act of attributing certain acts or forms of labor to one of the Persons of the Trinity. For example, God the Father is associated with the act of creating, and the Son is called the redeemer. But ultimately all the Persons of the Trinity participate in such acts (e.g., creating, redeeming).

Aquinas, Thomas: Catholic theologian (d. 1274); very influential in Catholic tradition

atonement: a theory of salvation that explains how Christ achieved reconciliation between God and humanity/creation; Christ reestablishes unity (oneness) between God and creation (literally, "at one-ment")

Balthasar, Hans Urs von: an important 20th century Catholic theologian, sometimes compared to and/or contrasted with Karl Rahner (another important 20th century Catholic theologian; some would argue the most important)

Baltimore Catechism: a catechism that was very influential in American Catholic life from the late 19th century until Vatican II (a catechism is a document that summarizes church teaching)

beatific vision: for much of the Christian tradition, life in heaven has been understood in terms of an unending, contemplative vision of God

body/soul dualism: most basically, this view holds that there is something more to the human person than mere matter—for example, a soul, or a spiritual consciousness, or a nonmaterial psyche, etc.

Barth, Karl: a 20th century Protestant theologian, very influential in the Reformed tradition and in evangelical Christianity

Bonaventure: an important Franciscan theologian and contemporary of Thomas Aquinas (like Aquinas, Bonaventure died in 1274)

CAFO: Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation; a federal category for large factory farming operations that confine animals significantly.

Cartesians: philosophers who followed the view of René Descartes, the 17th century philosopher noted for his view that animals are not truly conscious but more akin to sophisticated machines

Catechism of the Catholic Church: the summary of official Catholic Church teaching, originally published in 1992. Also: **CCC**.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: the Vatican office that provides formal guidance in matters related to Catholic belief. Also: **CDF**.

Chalcedon (Council of): a gathering of bishops of the entire Catholic Church in 451 CE; established the dogma that Jesus Christ is true God/true man.

Christology/Christological: the study of, or related to, Christian beliefs about Christ

Christomorphic: in the form of Christ (e.g., the Christian life should be “christomorphic”)

Clough, David: a contemporary Christian (Methodist) scholar and key figure in animal ethics

conciliar/post-conciliar: unless otherwise indicated by the context, “conciliar” refers to Vatican II and its teachings and post-conciliar refers to the era after Vatican II

cooperation (formal/material): we cooperate with evil when we do something that “helps” cause an evil result. That cooperation can be formal (and thus sinful) when one or more of the following is true: we knowingly intend to support the evil result; there exist alternate ways to achieve the desired good besides one that results in evil; the evil is grave; the evil result is directly proximately caused by our action. The cooperation is material (and thus not sinful) when our action does not involve any of the above factors (or when it does so in a way that can be justified by some greater good that is achieved by our action).

cosmic salvation: Christ’s salvific achievement includes all of creation, not just humanity.

covenant: a type of relationship between God and humanity; in the Old Testament, the focus is on the relationship between the Jewish people and God; in the New Testament, this relationship is expanded to embrace all people

creatures: anything not God is a creature—humans, rocks, lobsters, etc.

creaturely bipolarity: the relational quality that characterizes all creatures (human and nonhuman); all creatures are disposed to relate to others

Deane-Drummond, Celia: a contemporary Catholic scholar and key figure in animal and environmental ethics

deutero-Pauline: Many scholars believe that some books in the Bible purportedly written

by St. Paul are likely penned by close companions of St. Paul; 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are in this category.

doctor of the Church: a title given by the Catholic Church to saints who have made significant contribution to theology.

dominion; dominion mandate: In Genesis 1:26, God gives humanity “dominion” over living creatures. Across history, some Christians have interpreted this as a “mandate” that gives humanity permission to use other creatures and/or to forcefully impose order on creation in general. This view (especially in its most extreme forms) is rejected by most contemporary thinkers.

ecclesial: related to or having to do with the Church

eco-theology or eco-theologians: theological writings on or scholars doing work in areas related to the natural world (e.g., the environment, animals, creation, evolution, etc.).

ecocentric/biocentric: a philosophical view for whom the primary value of life is the whole of the ecosystem or life as a whole; it rejects the idea that humanity has a special status.

economy (or economic labor; divine economy; salvific economy): God’s labor within the world to save it; God’s economic life is in contrast to God’s immanent life (i.e., God as God is in himself)

ek-stasis: going beyond oneself; the state of being drawn beyond oneself

Edwards, Denis: a contemporary Catholic scholar and key figure in animal and environmental ethics (d. March 2019)

eisegesis: imposing an interpretation on a text (e.g., a passage in the Bible); reading into the text an idea or view that is not supported by the text

encyclical: the most authoritative document written by a pope

ensoul/ensoulment: the act of giving a living creature a soul

epic eschatology: my own term; I use it to refer to theories that believe all creation—i.e., not just humanity—will be renewed (so there will be animals and plants in “heaven”) but it will be a collective renewal and will not include the specific creatures that have lived and died on earth (so dogs, yes, but not your particular dog)

epistemology/epistemic: philosophical terms. Epistemology: the study of or theory of knowledge; epistemic: having to do with knowledge

eschaton: literally, the “end”, but in Christian context means the age that follows upon Christ’s return; also referred to as the new creation, heaven, the new age, the resurrected life, etc.

eschatology/eschatological: Christian theology about the end times (eschatology) or related to beliefs about the end times (eschatological)

ethology/ethologists: the study of animals, with a particular focus on their behavior and psychology; ethologists are those who study animals in such a way

evangelical: in popular culture, this term is often associated with a form of Christianity (typically Protestant) that emphasizes a relationship with Christ and the need to live

in accord with his life; for this book, however, I use it as an adjective for themes or views related to the Gospel. Something is “evangelical” if it reflects the teaching of the Gospels and the witness of Christ.

Evangelium Vitae: an encyclical on moral theology written by Pope John Paul II in 1995.

Exsultet: the prayer, typical sung, that occurs at the beginning of the Easter vigil.

factory farms: generally viewed as a negative term; large scale meat-producing operations that are characterized by a brutal, cost-cutting efficiency and a disdain for animal wellbeing.

fall (the): the Christian doctrine that the sin of the first humans, Adam and Eve, led to a “fall” that introduced suffering and death into the world.

free will theodicy: one answer to the question of why a good and loving God allows evil to occur: because God wanted us to be free and therefore *had* to allow us to do acts that will hurt others.

Godhead: generally this refers to God, but with an emphasis on God’s inner life.

heuristic: something that assisting us in our understanding or in gaining some knowledge.

Holy Office (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith): the “Holy Office” was the watchdog for the Catholic Church (providing an overview of publications and the teachings of individual scholars to ensure fidelity to Church teaching). The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is its successor.

imago Dei (the): the image of God; the idea, presented in Genesis 1, that humanity images God

imago Christi (the): the image of Christ: understood by Christians as the fulfillment of the *imago Dei*

incarnation: the Christian doctrine that God became human (literally “in-fleshed”) in Jesus Christ

incarnationalism (deep): the idea that in the incarnation (the act of God taking on human flesh), God embraces all of creation (not just human nature) and thus all of creation is lifted up with Christ.

incarnationalism (Chalcedonian): This is my own term. In keeping with what I understand to be the teaching of Chalcedon (that God became human), I want to emphasize (perhaps against the views of some proponents of deep incarnationalism) the significance of Jesus becoming *human* and not any other creature.

incorruptible: to say that something is “incorruptible,” in Greek and later Thomistic philosophy means, basically, that an object cannot be fundamentally destroyed by natural forces or causes.

infralapsarian: for the purposes of this book, the view that Jesus Christ came *only* on account of human sin, and would not have come otherwise; in contrast, see *supralapsarian*.

heavenly spheres (also: celestial bodies): Greek philosophy believed that animals life, and to an extent, human life was controlled by the movement of the heavenly bodies—i.e., the sun, moon, planets, and stars. For Aquinas, they would continue to exist in the eschaton, though their movement would cease.

hylomorphism/hylomorphic: The theory, proposed by Aristotle and then later adopted by Aquinas, that the human person is a composite of body and soul.

kenosis/kenotic: a theological term referring a fundamental surrender of oneself for the other, as reflected in the act by the Second Person of the Trinity in which Jesus surrenders his divinity to become human.

kingdom of God: an important image or metaphor for life in heaven: a world of harmony in obedience to God. Jesus inaugurated the kingdom in his preaching and its fulness will come when he returns.

Laudato Si': Pope Francis encyclical on the environment.

liturgical: associated with formal rituals and forms of worship. E.g.: "The liturgical calendar begins with the first Sunday of Advent."

Logos: Literally, the "Word," a title used to describe the Second Person of the Trinity (e.g., Jesus as the Word of God).

logoi: "words": a term used by Maximus the Confessor to refer to his idea that each and every creature expresses a "word" that will be integrated into the one "Word" Jesus Christ.

magis: Latin for "more" or "greater," used in this book to describe the lavishness of divine love.

magisterium; magisterial: Magisterium: the formal teaching office of the Catholic Church; magisterial: the teachings and documents that are expressions of this office.

manuals: for Catholic theology, this refers to those books that during the modern period conveyed the moral teaching of the Catholic

Church. The teachings were presented in a systematic and detailed form which was later criticized for being rationalistic and insufficiently biblical.

metaphysics: the branch of philosophy that deals with what traditionally are called "first principles" (e.g., being, knowing, time) but more broadly addresses questions about the ultimate nature of reality

microcosm: the view, common in the classical world, that all levels of reality (spirit, matter, life, rationality, etc.) come together in the human person, and thus the human person can be described as a "microcosm" of the entire universe. In Christian thought, this view was tied to notions of redemption: since the human person is a "microcosm" of reality, all reality is saved with and through the human person.

natural/moral evil: "natural" evils are bad things that occur naturally (disease, aging, hurricanes, etc.) while "moral" evils are those bad things that result from human action (theft, lying, murder, etc.).

neo-scholastic: "Scholastic" theology refers to the teachings that appeared during the medieval period, while "neo-scholastic" (for this book) refers to the scholastic theology as it was presented during the modern period.

object-other: that which is perceived; it could be another human person, or a living thing, or even an object.

ontology/ontological: this is a philosophical term. For the sake of the book's discussion, we can understand "ontology" as a theory about what is the fundamental nature of reality; "ontological" is some claim or quality associated with that fundamental nature.

original sin; see also, fall (the): the Christian doctrine that the sin of Adam and Eve has affected all subsequent human persons, so that we all have inherited a tendency toward sinning.

Parousia: the second coming of Jesus; Jesus came once, and Christians believe he will return at the end of time.

paschal mystery: the passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

patristic: related to the Church Fathers (the theologians writing during the first six centuries).

People of God: an alternate name for the Church; the Christian community

pneumatology: the doctrine or theory of the Holy Spirit

post-apostolic: a reference to the time period in Christian history after the death of the apostles.

post-conciliar: for the sake of this book, a reference to the time period after Vatican II

postlapsarian: the time after the fall (i.e., after the sin of Adam and Eve)

prelapsarian: the time before the first human sin

Rahner, Karl: a twentieth-century Catholic theologian; some would say the most important Catholic theologian of his time.

recapitulation: the idea that all things will, in the eschaton, be gathered together under Christ.

redemptive solidarity: for this book, the idea that all creatures are in solidarity with

humanity, so that not only do they suffer when humanity sins, but also they are redeemed (saved) when humanity is saved.

Rerum Novarum: the encyclical by Pope Leo XIII (1891) that is seen as key in the development of the Catholic tradition on social justice.

sacramental tradition: the emphasis in Catholicism that all creatures reflect divine goodness, beauty, and glory; they can “mediate” the divine.

sanctification: for the purposes of this book, sanctification refers to the process by which the creature is embraced by the divine life and thus “sanctified” and made holy.

soteriology: Christian study of, or theory about, salvation and how Christ effects it.

stewardship: the task given to humanity by God to care for creation; some criticize this idea for encouraging human arrogance.

subject-perceiver: the one who perceives an object; the subject perceiver could be any living thing (one can say that plants “perceive” the world in that they respond to rain, sun, the changes of the seasons, etc.).

supervival: the survival of the whole (regardless of whether all of its component parts survive).

supralapsarian: for the purposes of this book, the view that the Father always intended to send the Son (Jesus Christ); even apart from human sin, Jesus would have come into the world; in contrast, see *infralapsarian*.

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre: a Jesuit paleontologist (d. 1955) who was important in helping the Catholic Church engage

evolution and its implications for Christian belief.

teleology: a theory about the end of something, what its end is or in what its ultimate lies. So, one could say that a teleology of the human person lies in its orientation toward life with God.

theo-drama: a technical term developed by the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. He used it describe God's dramatic involvement in human history and how that "drama" changes how we understand the human person. See the guide notes—"Balthasar and Creation" in chapter 3—for a more detailed explanation.

theocentrism: a view that underscores that God is the center and norm.

theodicy: the question of why an all-good, all-loving, and all-powerful God allows evil to exist.

theophany: the appearance of God or some image or reflection of God within the world.

Thomistic: related to or having to do with the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

Trinity: Christian belief that God is triune Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) while remaining absolutely one. **Immanent**

Trinity: God as God is in God's very Self; the internal life of God. **Economic Trinity:** God insofar as God labors in the world.

utilitarianism (philosophy): the philosophical view that the good act is that would achieves the overall greatest net good; a theory which focuses (solely) on consequences to determine what one ought to do.

values: goods that are morally worthy (i.e., things that we consider "good"). Values take any number of forms (some more abstract and others more concrete): promise-keeping, charity, human health, socializing with friends; generosity, etc.

Vatican II: the Catholic Church council that was convened between 1962 and 1965. Formally called "the Second Vatican Council."

virtue ethics: an ethical theory that understands good action in terms of how it affects the human person's character. Good actions encourage us to grow in our virtuous character; bad actions cause us to become less virtuous.

