

# Online Resource - Lenten Reflections

# The Grace of Animal Life

GOD REVEALING, GOD INSPIRING, GOD CHALLENGING

*"Our Earth is talking to us and we must listen to it and decipher its message if we want to survive"* Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, 2007

## Week 6 - Animal Life

*"Take and eat; this is my body."  
Matt 26:26b*

### God Revealing.....

#### Getting to know Animals

Scientists have no clear idea of how many species - from algae to blue whales - live on earth. Estimates are up to 100 million of which only about 1.8 million have been named so far. Humans are but one of those species. Though the exact number is impossible to determine, an unprecedented mass extinction of life on Earth is occurring. Scientists estimate that between 150 and 200 species of life become extinct every 24 hours.

There have always been periods of extinction in the planet's history, but this episode is greater than anything the world has experienced for the past 65 million years – the greatest rate of extinction since the vanishing of the dinosaurs. *From Death to Life, Fr Sean McDonagh.*

*If the science tells us we come from the same source, the extinction of species is the extinction of another mode of divine presence*  
*John Feehan and Thomas Berry*

#### Reflection

*O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all; the earth  
is full of your creatures. Ps 104:24*

What is the human relationship with others of the animal species?" Australian theologian, Fr Denis Edwards says that human beings, created in the image of God, can relate personally with God. Jesus, the Word made flesh entered into the

world, revealing to us the love God has for all life, all creatures. The divine Trinitarian relationship of God, Christ and Spirit in the created world fills us with wonder at this love. Jesus shows us the way to relate to all creatures, even the microscopic ones – with respect for their lives and their integrity. *Jesus and the Natural World, Fr Denis Edwards.*

*But ask the animals, and they will teach you;  
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
Job 12: 7*

#### How do you relate to animal life?

### God Inspiring.....



*Image source: flickr by EpochCatcher*

#### Meditation

**Reflect** on the words of Pope Francis, "The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature and calls us to enter into relationship with him. Discovering this presence leads us to cultivate the 'ecological virtues'." *Laudato Si' #88*

Hold a "choose life" ceremony. Praise God, "Blessed are you Lord God of all creation".

#### Name some animal life - large and small.

We pray in gratitude for the diversity of animal life from bugs to elephants, from krill to whales, from to eagle to wren. Help us to be more considerate of our fellow animal species.

#### Use your Creation Mandala.



*Image source: flickr by EpochCatcher*

### God Challenging.....

We are part of the web of life. Many strands have already been broken. Help people encounter fellow creatures and through them experience God's creatures in a new way.

#### Responding to God's call

Many conservation groups are engaging people as citizen scientists to observe and monitor animal life.

1. Find out how you can get involved, even by using your own backyard.

Eg: [www.gondwanalink.org](http://www.gondwanalink.org)  
[www.npsnw.org.au](http://www.npsnw.org.au)



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Columban Mission Centre  
PO Box 752  
Niddrie VIC 3042

Ph: +61 3 9375 9475 E: [info@columban.org.au](mailto:info@columban.org.au)

*Donation for resource 'The Grace of Earth', gratefully received.  
Donations can be made on the Creation Mandala order form.*