



## Care for Creation

(Drawn from <http://www.hnp.org/justice-and-peace/our-initiatives/care-for-creation/>)

*Francis called all creatures, no matter how small, by the name of brother and sister; because he knew they had the same source as himself.*  
—Saint Bonaventure, Major Life, Omnibus

According to the creation narratives found in the book of Genesis, God’s original purpose for humankind included care for “the earth... the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.” (Gen. 1:28)

Jews, Christians, and all those who take this text to be authoritative affirm that guardianship of the goods of God’s creation is central to what it means to be “human.”

This passage has, however, tragically been misunderstood by some as a “dominion mandate” (that humankind was afforded the divine prerogative to do with creation is we saw fit) and this theological fallacy has led to dire consequences.



Contemporary theologians and religious leaders throughout the world, including Pope John II, have flatly rejected this misconception and have recaptured a more accurate view of our rightful relation to creation: stewardship.



But even the word stewardship is a bit too controlling for Franciscan sensibilities. Instead we use the term kinship with creation.

Like Francis, we see all parts of creation as brother or sister, just as we see all humans as siblings under our divine parent, the Creator.

The move to ‘kinship with creation’ is not to deny that humans may have more power to negatively or positively affect our brothers and sisters in creation. Rather it is to provide a better model for how we approach this relationship.

An example: in a familial setting, all members do not share the same role nor the same power to affect change. However, the goal of all members of the family is to do their part to bring harmony and good to the family.

Franciscans suggest a similar approach to be taken with creation. We are to live in relationships that will lead to the good of the entire family of creation, both human and non-human.

Catholic Christians affirm that God can be known and experienced through the beauty of creation, “for his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.” (Rom. 1:20)

Creation is therefore understood to be a vehicle for encountering God’s majesty, power, providential purpose, and grace. This affirmation of the goodness and integrity of God’s creation – especially as a vehicle to bridge the chasm between the sacred and the profane – is known as a “sacramental view” of creation.

For Francis, this was also a fundamental reality: that one could be in relationship with God the Creator through that very same creation; and in fact, we could gain an understanding of God through creation.

Based on these perspectives – the call to kinship and the “sacramental view” of creation – the Friars of Holy Name Province and their partners in ministry endeavor to encourage faithful stewardship of the earth’s goods by promoting environmental awareness, sustainable living, and communities of cultivated well being.

Contemporary Franciscans are being called upon to draw deeply from the Franciscan Tradition to provide leadership in efforts to address Climate Change.

To learn more, read the Holy Name Province Franciscan Statement on Climate Change available on the Holy Name Province website ([www.hnp.org](http://www.hnp.org)).

