creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves.’”

P84: “Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose.”

P69: “…The Catechism clearly and forcefully criticizes a distorted anthropocentrism: ‘Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection… Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things.’”

P130: “…The Catechism firmly states that human power has limits and that ‘it is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly.’ All such use and experimentation ‘requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.’”

P208: “We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their truth worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings…”

**The Inherent Value of All God’s Creatures**

P33: “It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential ‘resources’ to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves…”

P35: “In assessing the environmental impact of any project, concern is usually shown for its effects on soil, water and air, yet few careful studies are made of its impact on biodiversity, as if the loss of species or animals and plant groups were of little importance…”

P76: “In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word ‘creation’ has a broader meaning than ‘nature,’ for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father

of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion.

P140: “Ongoing research should also give us a better understanding of how different creatures relate to one another in making up the larger units which today we term ‘ecosystems.’ We take these systems into account not only to determine how best to use them, but also because they have an intrinsic value independent of their usefulness.”

**The Question of “Dominion”**

P67: “…Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God’s image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures…”

P68: “’If you chance to come upon a bird’s nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting upon the young or upon the eggs; you shall not take the mother with the young’ (Dt 22:4, 6). Along these same lines, rest on the seventh day is meant not only for human beings, but also so “that your ox and your donkey may have rest” (Ex 23:12). Clearly, the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures.”

P83: “The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things. Here we can add yet another argument for rejecting every tyrannical and irresponsible domination of human beings over other creatures…”

P86: “As the Catechism teaches: ‘God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other…”

**Our Interconnectedness with All of God’s Creatures**

P5: “…Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the

world around us and take ‘into account the nature of each being and its mutual connection in an ordered system.’”

P11: “…That is why he felt called to care for all that exists. His disciple Saint Bonaventure tells us that, ‘from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of ‘brother’ or ‘sister.’”

P34: “It may well disturb us to learn of the extinction of mammals or birds, since they are more visible. But the good functioning of ecosystems also requires fungi, algae, worms, insects, reptiles and an innumerable variety of microorganisms. Some less numerous species, although generally unseen, nonetheless play a critical role in maintaining the equilibrium of a particular place…”

P42: “…Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another…”

P92: “…It follows that our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings. We have only one heart, and the same wretchedness which leads us to mistreat an animal will not be long in showing itself in our relationships with other people. Every act of cruelty is ‘contrary to human dignity.’”

**Questions for Reflection**

What can we learn from animals about our Creator?

Reflecting on P42, how are we called to treat animals?

Do we consider how our daily actions impact the rest of creation, including non-human creatures?

Reflecting on P92, how does our treatment of animals impact other human beings?

Reflecting on P67, what does “dominion” mean in terms of our relationships with animals?

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**A Pocket Guide for Exploring Our Relationship with Other Creatures in Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si***

The following are selected passages, excerpted to fit within the space of this pocket guide. You are encouraged to read the encyclical in its entirety.

**The Existence of Other Creatures as a Reflection of God’s Love**

P77: “Every creature is thus the object of the Father’s tenderness, who give it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection…”

P88: “The bishops of Brazil have pointed out that nature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of his presence. 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.’”

P221: “…We read in the Gospel that Jesus says of the birds of the air that ‘not one of them is forgotten before God’ (Lk 12:6). How then can we possibly mistreat them or cause them harm? I ask all Christians to recognize and to live fully this dimension of their conversion. May the power and the light of the grace we have received also be evident in our relationship to other creatures and to the world around us.”

**A Godly Relationship with Other Creatures**

P6: “…with paternal concern, Benedict urged us to realize that creation is harmed ‘where we ourselves have the final word, where everything is simply our property and we use it for ourselves alone. The misuse of