

“Every part of the Universe is worthy of reverence, and no part may be exploited. Even nonhuman beings have rights of their own; their meaning is not exhausted by a description of how we can use or enjoy them.”

– **Beatrice Bruteau**

Now that the human has emerged as a planetary system in its own right, it has become apparent that our relationship with each other indeed has cosmic repercussions, for we only help shape Earth as a whole together.

What does that mean for the rest of the Earth community?

It means that the human now helps shape every creature on the planet, and in a much more powerful way than it could ever help shape a single creature. It means that when we exploit each other, we are inevitably exploiting all of Earth’s creatures. It means that when we fail to reverence each other, we are inevitably failing to reverence all of Earth’s creatures, and that in the worst of ways: we are depriving them of their right to be shaped by human love.

Christ, in breathing his last, uttered the perfect plea: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” We need to appreciate the fact that humanity relates as one with the Earth more deeply. But we not only need to know what we are doing; we also need to know how it is that we do it.

Our participation in the work of Providence is grounded in our relationship with the Earth (#307, Catechism of the Catholic Church), but it is our relationship with each other that helps move the single Providential hand that seeks to guide our planet and all its creatures into a future full of hope. Until we become aware of that — and own it — the wounds of the Passion will continue to mark the entire planet, and the rest of Earth’s creatures will join the poor, oppressed, and abandoned peoples of our world, who already bear those very same wounds.

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