



“THEOLOGY & THE EARTH: Human Beings in the Community of Creation”

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Johnson was the featured speaker at a special event to launch a new endowed fund at Fordham University to advance the inter-disciplinary study of our relationship with earth; she spoke, along with two panelists, on March 21, 2023.

Here are some excerpts from her presentation and a link to the audio track of her whole talk <https://vimeo.com/818886458?share=copy>

“The time is now for the study of theology and earth **We humans need to re-think our relationship with nature and all its creatures**, change that we are masters of the universe to realize that we are siblings and kin to all creatures in a community of creation loved by God.”

1) the community of creation: “Evolution can explain how species came to be, but there’s more to it; the world is gift of a generous creator But **creation is ongoing; the living God continuously creates.**”

“We humans are an intrinsic part of the evolutionary network of this planet. Why is our blood red, like the blood of other mammals? Because of iron. There is but one biosphere, one community of life, of creation — **everything is connected to everything else and we flourish and wither together.**”

2) a powerful obstacle for grasping that we’re part of it: “The ‘**hierarchy of being**’ has been toxic for us. Greek philosophy saw the world composed of matter and spirit, with divinity as pure spirit, and philosophy used this schema to create the hierarchy of being. **This model structures the world as a pyramid with humans at the pinnacle.** Theology grew on this framework. Today feminist thinkers see the hierarchy as turned in on itself — men have more spirit than women so women by nature are subordinate to men. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Europeans began explorations and saw themselves as having the right to exploit, assign to people of color souls of lesser qualities, closer to animals than to humans. Europeans thought they had the right to transport these people — [we have] racism and slavery to this day. How deeply the hierarchy has made its way into Christian thought and spirituality; unbridled exploitation of natural world can be traced to ongoing influence of the hierarchy of being.”

3) remedies to remove the obstacle: “We need to be converted to the earth as one, beloved community of creation **All creatures are moving forward with us toward a common point of arrival which is God.** [In *Laudato Si*’ we read that] God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we should feel the soil drying out into desert the loss of a species should strike us as if our own body is dying eternal life will be a shared experience of wonder in which each creature resplendently transfigured will take its place.”