



So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

— Genesis 1:27-31

God creates humankind in the last act of this creation story and charges them with stewardship of all the other animals. The whole creation is blessed and named “very good.” It’s not often noticed, but all the animals, including human beings, are here intended to be vegetarians.

Much of the biblical imagery of God’s reign has to do with food—not just a bare minimum, but enough food that hunger and hoarding end. The heavenly banquet is a repudiation of food scarcity. The divine intent in creation is about food security. Famines and wars over food and the means to produce food (land, water, labor, fuel and fertilizers) continue today. Food insecurity rules the lives of many, many people—a measure of how far we are from the reign of God’s abundance.

The biblical witness means loving whom and what God has made. Loving our neighbors means ensuring they have enough to eat. Our own choices make a difference.

Eating more simply—more vegetables, grains, fruits, less animal-based food—is not only better for our own health, but increases our ability to feed more people more adequately. For example: it takes about a hundred times more water to produce a pound of animal protein than a pound of plant protein.

Pray: “Your kingdom come, on earth...give us today our daily bread.”

Pray...and act!

— The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori