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The Consumption of Animals and the Catholic Tradition

Historically, most if not all Catholics have abstained from eating animal flesh as an expression of their faith. Although most have abstained only for certain periods of time, others have abstained permanently. While Catholics have abstained for a variety of reasons, this essay focuses on distinctively theological reasons Catholics, especially in the early centuries of Catholicism, have chosen to abstain from consuming animal flesh. On the one hand, this essay will show how such abstinence has been an aspect of the spiritual practice of fasting and a response to the capital vice of gluttony. On the other hand, it will show how such abstinence has been predicated on Catholic doctrines concerning creation and nature, the Fall, and eschatology.

The history of Catholic thought on why a person should or should not consume animal flesh is complex, and yet no scholarly history of this subject is readily available. Furthermore, there is no overarching history of more general Christian attitudes toward animals.[1] This may partially account for the fact that most general commentators on the ethics of eating animals treat the Catholic tradition on

this question in a way that is simplistic at best, generally making no attempt to seriously analyze the depth or breadth of, for example, patristic teaching about abstaining from consuming animals as part of Christian *askesis* ("training"), or considering how such abstinence from animal flesh has been a central part of the Christian practice of fasting.

While relatively little serious overarching analysis has been done with regard to the consumption of animals and the Catholic tradition, at least two things are clear. First, despite what some zealous advocates assert, there is no reason to believe that Catholic (or Orthodox or most Protestant) Christianity has ever been a strictly "vegetarian" faith.[2] Second, contrary to what some recent advocates for animals are prone to proclaim, no even-handed assessment of the Catholic tradition as a whole can baldly assert that Catholicism has been averse to abstaining from animal flesh or that it has been inimical to concern for other animals.[3]

It will be impossible to address comprehensively the tradition; thus my treatment of the question will be necessarily selective. Because I will focus on types of reasoning about abstaining from animal flesh, historical contextualization will be limited. Furthermore, it will not be possible to adequately address the large question that runs through the entire tradition as to whether the Catholic ethic is properly seen as perfectionistic (with allowances made for the weak) or as more modest, expecting obedience to fundamental moral principles but considering the more rigorous aspects of the faith as counsels of perfection for those who enter "religious life."[4] I am aware that one could question whether the relatively few sources I draw on from Scripture, from patristic and medieval theologians, and from current magisterial teaching adequately represent the Catholic tradition. My modest goal is to show (even in the limited sources I present) that the Catholic tradition has a significantly more complex and diverse view regarding the consumption of animal flesh than typically is recognized.

I shall present three kinds of reasoning—medicinal, ascetical, and eschatological—for abstinence from animal flesh. These reasonings are not independent or mutually exclusive. Although all three are interconnected and build on one another, different authors and different periods in the tradition significantly diverge with regard to the emphasis placed on each.

Medicinal abstinence focuses on abstention from animal flesh for the sake of health. However, by "health" one should not think primarily of the contemporary understanding of physical health (e.g., lowering one's intake of cholesterol and saturated fats). For most of the Christian tradition, physical health cannot be neatly separated from spiritual health. Thus, when patristic authors advocate a simple, meatless diet in the interests of health, they have foremost in mind health as a kind of spiritual purity.

Many ancient Christian (and non-Christian) writers on eating practices thought that a diet free from animal flesh and other rich foods was a prerequisite for spiritual or philosophical (rather than athletic) ascetic practice.[5] Ironically (for my purposes), animal flesh was widely seen in the ancient world as medicinal for the physically sick, but the patristic authors are not entirely agreed on its appropriateness even for such purposes. In counseling their fellow ascetics, St. Jerome and his friend Paula at times seem to have discouraged the consumption of animals for the sick.[6] Their attitude, however, seems unusual. While early Christian monasticism generally disavows the consumption of animals, they seem to have made an exception for monks who were sick.[7] The general refusal of flesh foods is embodied in the various rules for monastic orders. In the most famous of all the monastic rules—the sixth-century Rule of St. Benedict—monks are instructed that "[a]ll must refrain entirely from eating the flesh of quadrupeds, except for the sick who are really weak."[8] Benedict's rule is on the liberal end of such rules, limiting its scope only to four-legged animals.

Ascetical abstinence may be thought of as ethical abstinence in the

etymological sense of ethics as matters pertaining to character. In her book on attitudes toward food in late antiquity, Veronika Grimm argues that early Christians and their Jewish forebears had their eating (and sexual) practices regulated much more than those of the surrounding pagan culture.[9] However, the central concern for ancient Christian reflection on consuming animals (in contrast to contemporary reflection on the moral status of animals themselves) was how such consumption fit with the demands of Christian discipline or asceticism.[10] Like the Judaism out of which early Christianity emerges, early Christians are concerned with what constitutes appropriate dietary and sexual practices, both as aspects of perfecting their human nature and as obedience to the laws of God. However, the lack of attention to the status of animals is perhaps only part of the more general lack of emphasis on moral status.[11] What is instead central for the early Christians is that all their practices are to be ordered to the love and service of God.

Questions regarding appropriate eating practices, including questions about consuming animal flesh, are found in the earliest Christian documents. In his epistles to the Christian communities in Corinth and Rome, St. Paul responds to such questions as how Christians are to celebrate the Eucharist[12] and whether Christians are to eat animal flesh,[13] especially that which has been sacrificed to idols.[14] In the community at Rome, there seems to have been a dispute between two factions (the "strong" and the "weak") over whether they should eat animal flesh or only vegetables.[15] Although St. Paul is often interpreted as siding with the strong at Rome but making concessions to the weak for the greater good of unity in the community, it has also been argued that St. Paul is entering a debate in which religious questions are inseparable from social questions of status, power, and privilege, and that the weak identify with the place and status of the poor, rejecting particular attitudes and practices of the dominant society.[16] In his letter to the Christian community at Rome, Paul at first appears to defend a laissez-faire

approach to eating animal flesh (14:2-6) but winds up giving priority in practice to the argument of the "weak" (14:23-15:2).[17] Regardless of how one may think these passages are to be interpreted in the light of contemporary historical scholarship, influential exegetes such as Augustine and Aquinas (and hence much of the Christian tradition) have understood St. Paul to be denying in principle objections to all consumption of animal flesh. However, ancient and medieval theologians (including Augustine and Aquinas) join the Church in commending fasting from animal flesh—at least during certain times or periods in the Christian year—as a universal part of the tradition.

From the beginnings of the Church, abstinence from animal flesh seems to be identified as part of the virtuous or ascetical life, largely as a key element in the Christian's response to the capital vice of gluttony. Gluttony—according to many of the Church Fathers—is the primal vice of the Christian faith.[18] Conversely, abstinence (fasting, for example) is a virtue by which one overcomes the vice of gluttony.[19] Early Christian references to fasting typically refer not to periods of total abstinence from food but to diets that restrict the amount of food eaten (certainly no more than necessary for nutrition) and to diets that avoid certain types of food (such as meat).[20]

Fasting, along with the Eucharist, are the most important religious food practices in the Catholic tradition.[21] In Scripture and Catholic tradition, fasting is often aligned with prayer and has a number of spiritual purposes. For Aquinas, fasting is a means not only of atoning for and preventing sins but also more generally of raising the mind to spiritual matters.[22] Where gluttony puts one to sleep, fasting draws one to prayer.

The consumption of animal flesh was closely aligned with gluttony (and hence inimical to the cultivation of the Spiritual life) because, according to the dominant medical and dietary viewpoints of the ancient and medieval world, animal flesh was thought to be excessively nutritive, leading to an increase in all kinds of bodily

secretions.[23] On the one hand, this was seen to produce excessive phlegm, vomiting, violent belching, as well as excess excrement, leading Chrysostom to proclaim, "The increase in luxury [in eating] is nothing other than the increase in excrement."[24] On the other hand, it was also thought to produce excessive semen, so restricting animal flesh was seen as a means of controlling lust.[25] Hence, abstaining from animal flesh as an aspect of abstinence was viewed as a means of controlling the two major sins of the flesh—gluttony and lust.

Eschatological abstinence is an element of a broader perspective on the Christian life, a perspective that envisions a world that existed prior to the Fall and a world that will be restored at the end of the age (*eschaton*, literally, "last thing"). For Church Fathers such as Chrysostom, Jerome, and Cassian, one's diet is particularly relevant to the goal of embodying the Edenic state, because they consider the original sin of Adam and Eve to be gluttony.[26] Thus, dietary renunciation is seen to be a means of redressing this situation and returning to an Edenic state. Furthermore, Basil of Caesarea and Jerome note that fasting from flesh foods is an image of life as it was in the Garden of Eden because in paradise there was no sacrifice of animals or eating of animal flesh.[27] While neither rules out all consumption of animal flesh as inherently and necessarily sinful, Jerome notes that the allowance of flesh eating occurs only after the flood and is a concession to "the hardness of human hearts."[28]

References by Chrysostom, Basil, and Jerome to the ascetic hearkening after the Edenic state is a pursuit of what the Catholic tradition refers to as the state of "original justice."[29] In this prelapsarian world, humans live in friendship with God and in harmony with the other animals. One sign of this harmony is that neither humans nor animals eat animal flesh.[30] After the Fall, the state of original justice and peace was lost, and the world became fundamentally disordered. The sin of humans leads not only to their fall but also to the fall of all of creation.[31] Humans are no longer at peace with God, with each other, with other animals, or with the rest of creation. The

alienation between humans and animals is exemplified by the human consumption of animals.[32]

If a theological account of the world were to end with the doctrines of creation and fall, then the world of predation would be an existence to which humans and other animals have been abandoned. However, this is not where the Christian theological narrative ends. The world has been and is being redeemed in Christ. Far from being merely a part of the creative work of God, the work of redemption is the greater and more splendid work. This is because "[t]he first creation finds its meaning and its summit in the new creation in Christ, the splendor of which surpasses that of the first creation."[33] Christians live in a world where the Kingdom of God (or "new creation") has both come (in a "realized" eschatology) and yet is not consummated (in a yet unrealized eschatology). St. Paul provides a vision of a redeemed creation, one where all forms of alienation brought about by the Fall are overcome.

> For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:19-23)

Given this eschatological vision, we may thus understand that when Catholics (or other Christians) pray the Lord's Prayer, they pray that God's peaceable kingdom may come more fully in the world.

Thus, while human eating of animals (and other effects of the Fall) is a *description* of eating practices in a postlapsarian world (the way things are at present), it is not at all clear that it should be seen

as a *prescription* for human eating practices (*not* the way things *ought* to be or ideally are).[34] The renunciation of animal flesh by many of the early Christian ascetics looks back not only to the Edenic state, but also forward to the eschatological Kingdom of God (cf. Isa 11: 6-9).[35] As part of a broader program of renunciation, the fasting ascetic can be seen as doing at least two things: identifying with humanity as it was created in the *imago Dei* as well as with the humanity that once again will possess fully that image, and making recompense for the failure of Adam and Eve to live up to their original fast (in other words, refraining from eating the forbidden fruit in the garden). Observing monks and women ascetics who fast from consuming animals, Chrysostom compares them to Adam and Eve before the Fall, seeing them as having already partially recaptured the Edenic state.[36]

For many of the patristic authors, a re-creation of the Edenic state involves not only abstaining from eating animals, but also, as Basil notes, abstaining from sacrificing animals.[37] This brings us to the other important eating practice in Christianity. The Eucharist is the remembrance of the sacrificial death of Jesus, a remembrance of thanksgiving in which believers share in Christ's body (I Cor. 11). Through this practice, Christians are incorporated into Christ's body (Christ's body being understood both individually and corporately). In light of this, it is not surprising that some opponents accused the early Christians of cannibalism. Although there was significant diversity of food elements in early Christian eucharists and/or agape meals, or both, there is no evidence that animal flesh was ever a part of these celebrations of thanksgiving. What significance, if any, should be made of this?

In his extensive study of all the food elements that appear in early Christian ritual meals, Andrew McGowan notes that while bread and wine seem to have been the dominant elements from the beginning, the occasional choice of other elements is not insignificant. The appearance of oils, vegetables, and salt seem to be a means of emphasizing the rejection of meat and its association with bloody

sacrifice. Similarly, the appearance of milk (and sometimes cheese, or both), honey, and olives in some celebrations can be seen as celebratory elements of a restored paradise-like state, also distinguished from a society built on bloodshed.[38]

However, while eschatological abstinence is an encouragement or counsel to abstinence from animal flesh, it is not a command. For example, while St. Basil suggests that those who desire "to live their lives in imitation of the life of paradise" will want to exclude the consumption of animals from their diets he explicitly does not forbid the consumption of animals, even for monks. Why is this? "Because God has permitted it after the Fall."[39] This distinction between abstention from animals as part of an ascetic discipline versus a juridical requirement is embodied in the fourth-century canons of the Council of Gangra, which sharply criticize the perceived arrogance of some of those who abstain and who accuse those who consume animal flesh as being "without hope" (outside of the saved).[40]

Here, controversy over the requirements of abstention from animal flesh shows the historically recurring tensions between ascetic (or perfectionist) Catholic teachings, and teachings that the Church considers to be appropriately binding on all Christians at all times. It is a debate over the moral priority of what God originally intended for the world and what God intends for fallen humanity. These differences and tensions are of no small matter within the history of Catholicism, not only between ecclesiastical authorities (who may be seen to be guarding the moral probity of lay persons) and religious communities, but also among religious communities themselves. The question of general abstinence from animal flesh is one of many questions the resolution of which depends on the extent to which one has a realized (as opposed to a yet unrealized) eschatology and the extent to which one believes that one can embody the coming Kingdom of God in one's present life.[41]

In one of his writings on Christian hope, Pope John Paul II calls

our attention to the importance of a realized eschatology of the church and of the world as presented in the text of *Lumen Gentium*. He notes that such a vision was only faintly present in traditional preaching, and he argues that

> this truth which the gospel teaches about God requires a certain *change in focus with regard to eschatology*. First of all, eschatology is not what will take place in the future, something happening only after earthly life is finished. *Eschatology has already begun with the coming of Christ.* The ultimate eschatological event was His redemptive death and His resurrection. This is the beginning of "a new heaven and a new earth." (cf. Rev. 21:1)[42]

Similarly, in his encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, John Paul II calls on Catholics to have a more realized eschatology—a greater sense that no matter how small or symbolic one's steps may be, they contribute to the gospel of life, which "is growing and producing abundant fruit."[43]

In light of this analysis of three reasons Catholics have traditionally abstained from eating animals, I conclude that although Catholicism has never been a "vegetarian" religion, it has always concerned itself with appropriate eating practices, especially the significance of abstaining from animal flesh. Furthermore, Catholic theology is certainly compatible with, and arguably encouraging of a diet that perpetually abstains from animal flesh. The medicinal, ascetical, and eschatological forms of reasoning for abstaining from animal flesh move Catholics toward living excellently through the disciplined training of their bodies, the practice of virtue, and harmony—to the extent possible—with an eschatological vision of our God's world.

Although there is much to be gained from a historical perspective of Christian abstinence from animal flesh, it does not address some of the distinctly contemporary problems faced in late-modern capitalist societies at the beginning of the twenty-first century. For

example, the twentieth century has brought techniques of multiplying and sanitizing slaughter in a way that typically bureaucratizes and regularizes cruel treatment of animals and further alienates humans from this part of the created order.[44] It is a longstanding belief in the Catholic tradition that the virtues that Christians show or fail to show in relation to animals and the rest of creation influence one's ability to be virtuous in relation to other human beings.[45]

But, important as "instrumentalist" reasons may be for recognizing and advocating concern for all of God's creatures, they are not the last word. The Catholic tradition recognizes that other creatures have their own intrinsic worth that is not to be subsumed entirely to human desires and perfection. God's concern for other animals is not only instrumental to the welfare of human beings. God gives life to all creatures, and thus "life, especially human life, belongs only to God."[46] All creatures are created to celebrate God who gives life in a manner fitting to the form of life they have been apportioned by God.[47] While not the central theme of Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium vitae*, the intrinsic goodness of nonhuman life also clearly is affirmed.[48] In order to better acknowledge the God-given intrinsic worth of animals, Catholics do well to better recognize that ultimately animals exist neither for their own sake nor for the sake of human beings but for the glory of God.[49] This "truth of creation" is affirmed eschatologically because we share with other animals a common destiny of transformation and glorification in God.[50]

Notes

1. For understanding early and medieval Christian attitudes toward animals, four key texts are Sbordone, ed., *Physiologus*, trans. M. Curley (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); St. Basil of Caesarea's *Homiliae in Hexaemeron I-IX* [PG 29: 5 3-207], trans. A. C. Way, in *The Fathers of the Church,* vol. 46 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963); St. Isidore of Seville's *De animalibus*, Bk. XII of the *Etymoligiarum*; [PL 82:423–72]; and St. Albert the Great's *De animalibus*, trans. K. Kitchell and I. Resnick as *On Animals* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

The *Physiologus* is an anonymous Alexandrian text dating back to the second century A.D. that describes characteristics of various animals and birds along with allegorical interpretations of them and thus functions as what Diekstra calls the "great source-book of Christian nature symbolism" [F. N. M. Diekstra, "The *Physiologus*, the Bestiaries, and Medieval Animal Lore," *Neophilogus* 69:1 (1985), 142], especially because it is the original and primary source for the innumerable bestiaries of the ancient and medieval periods. The *Physiologus* was apparently distributed extremely widely, leading the nineteenth-century scholar E. P. Evans to claim that "no book except the bible has ever been so widely distributed among so many people and for so many centuries as the *Physiologus*" [E. P. Evans, *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Art* (New York: Henry Holt, 1896), 62].

2. Trying to speak of the Catholic tradition in relation to vegetarianism is difficult because "vegetarian" is a nineteenth-century term, and efforts to read this recent notion into a two-thousand-year tradition are inevitably anachronistic.
3. For historical accounts of human attitudes toward animals in early Christianity, see S. Follinger, "Biologie in der Spätantike," in Georg Wöhrle, ed., *Biologie. Geschichte der Mathematik und der Naturwissenschaften in der Antike, Band I.* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), and Robert Grant, *Early Christians and Animals* (London: Routledge, 1999); in the medieval period, see Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994), and David Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts* (Cambridge: D. S. Bremer, 2001); in the modern period, see Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (London: Allan Lane, 1983), Eric Baratay, *L'Eglise et l'animal: France, XVIIe-Xxe siêcle*, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996), and William French, "Beast-Machines and the Technocratic Reduction of Life," in Pinches and McDaniel, ed., *Good News for Animals?* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1992), 24–43.
4. Recent Catholic moral theology has witnessed a renewed interest in approaches to morality that make questions of character and the self methodologically prior to questions of moral norms. For most of the last four centuries, moral theology has been preoccupied with moral norms—with determining which acts should be "obligatory," "permitted," "necessary," and/or "justified." One of the difficulties facing a moral methodology that presumes the priority of moral norms is that it has a difficult time articulating the nature of the appropriate concern for nonhuman animals and the environment more generally. For further analysis of methodological options for Catholic moral theology, see John Berkman, "How Important Is the Doctrine of Double Effect? Contextualizing the Controversy," *Christian Bioethics* 3, no. 2 (1997).
5. See St. Jerome, *Contra Jovinianum* II:12 [PL 23.301C–302A]. In the ancient world, some occupations (for example, soldiering, manual labor, and athletic training) were thought to require meat eating. Thus, even the third-century Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry does not recommend abstinence from animal flesh for all persons but only those free from the demands of manual labor and who have plenty of leisure time for contemplation. See Porphyry, *De Abstinentia* 1:1–27.

6. St. Jerome, *Contra Jovinianum* II:12 [PL 23.290–312]. This attitude is not limited to patristic asceticism. Caroline Walker Bynum notes that in the Middle Ages the Carthusian order came to see perpetual abstinence from animal flesh as so crucial to their identity that a violation of this prohibition (even by the sick) meant expulsion from the order. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 42.
7. See, for example, "Augustine's rule," 3.5 in *The Rule of St. Augustine*, trans. Raymond Canning (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1984); St. Pachomius, *Praecepta* 40 in *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol 2., trans. Armand Veilleux (Kalamzoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1981), 151; *Regula Orientalis* 25 in *Early Monastic Rules*, translated by Carmela Vircillo Franklin, Ivan Havener, and J. Alcuin Francis (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1981), 75. See also Teresa Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1998), 13.
8. St. Benedict, *The Rule of St. Benedict* (Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 1990), rule XXXIX.
9. Veronika Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting: The Evolution of a Sin* (London: Routledge, 1996), 59.
10. Early Christian asceticism is generally understood to have involved acts of physical self-discipline for the purpose of training the bodily appetites to the demands of reason and the law of God. Fasting is a central aspect of early Christian asceticism. While all Christians engaged in asceticism to some degree, there was significant variation among early Christians, and some scholars refer only to those who practiced *askesis* to a high degree to be considered ascetics. See Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 5–10.
11. For an example of the difficulties faced by a contemporary scholar who studies a medieval scholar (such as Aquinas), and expects her understanding of the ontological status of other animals and human treatment of other animals to be closely aligned, see Judith Barad, *Aquinas on the Nature and Treatment of Animals* (San Francisco: International Scholars, 1995).
12. I Cor. 11:17-34. Scripture references are to the New American Bible unless otherwise noted.
13. Rom. 14:13-23.
14. I Cor. 8:1-13, 10:14-33.
15. The discussion of the "weak" with St. Paul should not be confused with the previous reference to St. Benedict's "weak." Whereas the rule of St. Benedict is referring to those who are physically weak, the "weak" in the letters to the Romans and Corinthians likely refer to a spiritual or socioeconomic condition, rather than any physical status. For a detailed discussion of the context of Romans 14 in which Paul discusses the consumption of meat and becoming a "stumbling block" to a fellow believer, see Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 6 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 402–23.
16. See Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 221–31.

17. Ibid., 229–30.
18. On gluttony as a vice, see, for example, Tertullian, *De ieiunio* I:1–2; Evagrius of Pontus, *De vitiis quae opposita sunt virtutibus* 2 [PG 79.1141A–B]; St. John Chrysostom, *Homilia I in Genesim* 2 [PG 53.23]; St. John Cassian, *Inst.* 5.3 [SC 109:192], *Con.* 5.10 [SC 42:197–99]; and Basil of Caesarea, "On the Renunciation of the World," in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 9 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1950), 25.
19. Although fasting in early Christianity is sometimes associated particularly with ascetic individuals, Church Fathers such as Basil of Caesarea encouraged Christians young and old to fast regularly. St. Basil of Caesarea *De ieiunio homiliae* 2:2. [PG 31.188A–B]; cf: Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh,* 223n.7.
20. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 7.
21. Bynum notes that fasting and the Eucharist are the major food practices of medieval Christians, and this seems true of the tradition more generally. Bynum, *Holy Feast*, 5.
22. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (New York: Benziger, 1947), II-II, 147a.3.
23. Galen (c. 129–200), physician to emperor Marcus Aurelius and one of the most eminent physicians of the ancient world, writes extensively on how diet affects one's personality and character. Galen, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* 5:23 [Kühn 9:776–77]; cf: Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 53–64.
24. St. John Chrysostom, *Homilia XIII in epistolam I ad Timotheum* 4 [PG 62.569–70]; cf: Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 133.
25. In addition to numerous patristic authors, this also can be found in medieval authors, for example, Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, 147a.8.
26. St. John Chrysostom, *Homilia XIII in Matthaeum* 1 [PG 57.209]. For a contrary position on gluttony as the original sin, see Aquinas, *Summa theologia*e II-IIae q. 148a.3.
27. St. Basil of Caesarea, *De ieiunio homiliae* 1:5 [PG 31.169B]; St. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.18 [PL 23.247B–248A].
28. St. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.18 [PL 23.247B–248A]; Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 163–219. As an accommodation to human weakness and hardness of heart, Jerome likens the consumption of animal flesh to the Mosaic allowance of divorce (177).

   In succeeding centuries, the dominant way in which ascetics and saints witness the eschatological vision of the kingdom in relation to their treatment of animals seems to change. The emphasis seems to evolve from a witness that focuses on ascetic practices in relation to consuming animal flesh to one that emphasizes the taming of wild animals in medieval hagiographies of saints. The medieval stories of St. Jerome and the (tamed) lion and St. Francis and the (tamed) wolf of Gubbio serve (among other things) to reveal the power of the saints, whose extraordinary sanctity and holiness allows them to restore to these creatures of the postlapsarian world to the harmonious condition that existed before the Fall. For a discussion of the significance of the stories of St. Jerome and St. Francis, see Salter, *Holy and Noble Beasts*. See also Maureen Tilley, "Martyrs, Monks, Insects, and Animals," in Joyce Salisbury, ed., *The*

Medieval World of Nature (New York: Garland, 1993), 93–107. For a fourteenth-century account of the state of harmony that existed before the Fall, see Sarah Horrall, et al., *The Southern Version of the Cursor Mundi* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1978), ln. 677–700.

29. See, for example, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, §376.
30. In Genesis, God gives humans "seed-bearing plant[s] and seed-bearing fruit" to eat and gives the animals and birds "green plants" for food. (Gen 1:29-30). Considering that the description of the "vegetarian" state of Eden in the Genesis narrative immediately follows the reference to human dominion over fish, birds, and land animals (Gen 1:28), it would seem that the meaning of human "dominion" over other creatures in Genesis 1 does not include eating them.

    The view that humans did not eat animals prior to the Fall is also held by Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* I 96.1.r.3), though Aquinas does not believe that all animals were also "vegetarian" prior to the Fall (*Summa theologiae* I 96.1.r.2).
31. Hence St. Paul's reference to the situation of the creation as in "slavery to corruption" (Rom. 8:21). See also *CCC*, §1046.
32. See Gen. 9:3 for the Priestly tradition's account of the postlapsarian enmity between humans and other animals. The Yahwist's account of postlapsarian alienation between humans and other animals center on humans being given "garments of skin" (Gen 3:21) by God after the Fall, though elements of the tradition (especially in the Orthodox Church) interpret "garments of skin" as referring to human flesh, as God enfleshing humanity. More generally, the new enmity between humans and animals is only one aspect of the Yahwist's broader narrative of postlapsarian alienation. For example, the alienation between God and humans is exemplified by their expulsion from the garden (Gen 3: 23); the alienation between men and women is exemplified by Eve's subjugation (Gen 3:16); the alienation between parents and children is exemplified in the pain of bringing forth children (Gen 3:16); the alienation between humans is exemplified by the murder of Abel (Gen 4:8); and the alienation between humans and the vegetative creation is exemplified by the fact that humans must till the earth (Gen 3: 17-19).

    In terms of twentieth-century historical-critical scholarship of the Old Testament, most popular is Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis. For a general discussion of Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis and Pentateuch scholarship in the twentieth century, see Roland Murphy, "Introduction to the Pentateuch," *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 3–7. According to this theory, Genesis 1:1-2:4a (the first creation narrative) and Genesis 9 are considered to be authored by the Priestly tradition and date to the seventh or sixth century B.C. On the other hand, Genesis 2:4b-3:24 are attributed to the circa-tenth-century B.C. Yahwist tradition. Both the Priestly and Yahwist traditions have something approximating a prelapsarian and postlapsarian vision of the world. For the Priestly tradition, the Edenic state is vegetarian (Gen 1:29-30), with humans becoming carnivorous after the flood (Gen 9:3). For the Yahwist tradition, the

Edenic state is also vegetarian, with God giving humans "garments of skin" after the fall at Genesis 3:21. Vawter notes three oddities concerning 3:21, all of which point to an unusual significance given to the clothing of Adam and Eve with "garments of skin." First, the verse on the surface seems superfluous, since humans already clothed themselves with fig leaves at 3:7. Second, according to 3:21, God "makes" these garments for the humans, and here the Yahwist uses "make" which is otherwise reserved for the great creations of God. It is rather odd that this term would, as Vawter puts it, "be reduced to the paltry fashioning of breechcloths out of the skins of animals." Third, this verse also violates an inflexible rule for the Yahwist, to attribute to humans rather than to God the successive developments in human progress. See Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis*, (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 87.

33. CCC, §349.
34. A similar picture can be seen in a 1995 encyclical of Pope John Paul II. "Murderous violence profoundly changes man's environment. From being the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15), a place of plenty, of harmonious interpersonal relationships and of friendship with God, the earth becomes the land of Nod (Gen. 4:16), a place of scarcity, loneliness and separation from God." (Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, §9).
35. This eschatological fasting is referred to as striving for the "angelic life." See St. John Chrysostom, *Homilia LXX in Matthaeum* 4 [PG 58.660]; St. Basil of Caesarea, *De ieiunio homiliae* 2.6 [PG 31.193A]; cf. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 163, 181, 193.
36. St. John Chrysostom, *Homilia XIII in Matthaeum* 1 [PG 57.209]; St. John Chrysostom, *Homilia LXVIII in Matthaeum* 3 [PG 58.643–44]; St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate* 12:4 [SC 119, 416–18]. See Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, 163, 176, 179. For Maximus of Turin, the faster participates in the redemptive work of Christ. Maximus writes, "What the first man lost by eating, the second Adam recovered by fasting. And he kept in the desert the law of abstinence given in paradise." St. Maximus of Turin, *Sermon* 50a, 3 [CCSL 23:203]. See Bynum, *Holy Feast*, 35.
37. St. Basil of Caesarea, *De ieiunio homiliae* I:5 [PG 31.169B].
38. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharist*, 89–142, 238, esp. 106, 114, 140–42.
39. St. Basil of Caesarea, *Homiliae de humanis structura* 2:7 [SC 160:244].
40. Synod of Gangra, canon 2 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 14.
41. For recent Catholic examinations of eschatology, see, for example, Karl Rahner, *On the Theology of Death*, trans. C. H. Henkey (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961); H. U. von Balthasar, *Man in History*, trans. W. Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968); Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, trans. M. Waldstein, ed. A. Nichols (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988).
42. Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994), 184–85.
43. *Evangelium vitae*, §100.
44. For a first-hand account of techniques of animal slaughter in the United States at the end of the twentieth century, see Gail Eisnitz, *Slaughterhouse* (New York: Prometheus, 1997) and Matthew Scully, *Dominion* (New York: St. Martin's, 2002).

45. This is not a new viewpoint. Such attitudes can be found in, for example, Proverbs 12:10: "The just man takes care of his beast, but the heart of the wicked is merciless"; and Aquinas, "the Lord wished to withdraw them from cruelty even in regard to irrational animals, so as to be less inclined to be cruel to other men, through being used to be kind to beasts." Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* Io-II. 102. 1.r.2.
46. *Evangelium vitae*, §9.
47. "We must celebrate Eternal Life, from which every other life proceeds. From this, in proportion to its capacities, every being which in any way participates in life, receives life" (*Evangelium vitae*, §84).
48. *Evangelium vitae*, §42. To avoid misunderstanding, it must be noted that the primary purpose of *Evangelium vitae* is a vigorous defense of human life, especially those without voices. For a fuller analysis of recent Papal reflection on a prophetic witness on behalf of nonhuman animals, see John Berkman, "Prophetically Pro-Life: John Paul II's Gospel of Life and Evangelical Concern for Animals," *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, 6, no. 1 (1999): 43–59.
49. This claim should not be understood as ruling out any use of animals by humans, but rather the temptation to see the ultimate end of animals (and indeed, the entire created order) as being for the service of human beings.
50. *CCC*, §1043, 1047, cf. §1042–1050. Thanks to T. Friedrichsen for helpful comments and to R. Alspaugh for comments and assistance on an earlier draft of this paper.