

All Things Vile and Vicious
By Jeffrey Allen Mays

Outline

1. Introduction video
2. Reflecting on existence of creatures we find hideous
 - a. What does it say about God? (Gen. 1:1, 1 Cor 8:6, Ps 19)
 - b. Is creation fit for children? (Ps 148:5,7, Ps 111:2,4)
 - c. Implications for the science classroom
3. God as artist
 - a. In the sense in which the Gospel says: *Unus est bonus, Deus [there is only one who is good, God]*, so we may say *Unus est artifex, Deus [there is only one artist, God]*." – Jacques Maritain
 - b. "God was the first Quilter of prairies, the primal Painter (night skies, ferns, thunderheads, snow on cedars), the archetypal metal Sculptor (mountain ranges, icebergs), the Composer who heard the whales' strange, sonorous clickings and songs in his head long before there were whales to sound them, the Playwright who plotted the sweeping drama of Creation, Incarnation, Redemption, the Poet whose Word said it all." – Lucy Shaw
 - c. Implications for education
4. Fecundity - The capacity of producing offspring, especially in great numbers
 - a. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* – Annie Dillard
5. Predation – One organism feeds on another organism
6. Parasitism – a subset of predation
 - a. "When predators eat their prey in units of less than one." E. O. Wilson
7. Is shocking animal behavior due to sin?
 - a. Animal death before the Fall
 - i. "...if all evil were prevented, much good would be absent from the universe. The lion would cease to live if there were no slaying of animals, and there would be no patience of martyrs if there were no tyrannical persecution" (ST I.22.2) – Thomas Aquinas
 - ii. Stanford PhD and Dominican Friar Thomas Davenport explains Aquinas' position: "Thomas rejects [the view that animals ate plants in the Garden of Eden], arguing that moral evil has many negative effects, including the corrupting of human nature, but it does not destroy our nature or the nature of other things. Sin is not powerful enough to change what an animal eats" (ST I.96.1; ST I-II.85.1) "When God willed to create lions as carnivores, he also had to permit their killing of antelopes."
 - b. God boasts of his creation of carnivorous animals (Job 38:39-41, 39:26,29-30)
 - c. God continues to feed the carnivores (Ps 147:9)
8. A possible way forward – a sacramental view
 - a. John 6:48-58