



A PRAYER OF ST. BASIL

Blessed God, Creator of All:

*Enlarge within us the sense of fellowship
with all living things,
our brothers the animals to whom you gave the earth
as their home in common with us.*

*We remember with shame that in the past
we have exercised the high dominion of humans
with ruthless cruelty,
so that the voice of the earth
which should have gone up to you in song
has been a groan of travail.*

*May we realize that they live, not for us alone,
but for themselves, and for you,
and that they love the sweetness of life.
We pray through our Savior Jesus Christ
who lifts up and redeems us all. Amen.*

The Blessing of the Animals



Camden County Humane Society

THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Sponsored by the Humane Society of Camden County

Officiant: Bless the Lord, all you creatures of the Lord.

People: **And forget not all God's benefits.**

Officiant: Almighty God, creator of all things, remembering this day the example of the blessed Francis of Assisi, grant that we, for love of you, may delight in your whole creation and develop true compassion toward all that you have made and have committed into our safe-keeping, especially our pets, who as members of our family bring us so much love and joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LESSONS

Reader: A reading from the Book of Genesis

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

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. (Genesis 1:24-29)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**



Why is Saint Francis connected with praying for our pets?

Throughout his ministry, Francis was connected closely with creation, but this is best illustrated by one of Francis's most famous sermons, which he gave to a flock of birds. One day while Francis and some friars were traveling along the road, Francis looked up and saw the trees full of birds. Francis "left his companions in the road and ran eagerly toward the birds" and "humbly begged them to listen to the word of God." One of the friars recorded the sermon, which overflows with Francis's love for creation and its Creator:

"My brothers, birds, you should praise your Creator very much and always love him; he gave you feathers to clothe you, wings so that you can fly, and whatever else was necessary for you. God made you noble among his creatures, and he gave you a home in the purity of the air; though you neither sow nor reap, he nevertheless protects and governs you without any solicitude on your part."

Thomas of Celano records that the birds stretched their necks and extended their wings as Francis walked among them touching and blessing them. This event was a turning point of sorts for Francis. "He began to blame himself for negligence in not having preached to the birds before" and "from that day on, he solicitously admonished the birds, all animals and reptiles, and even creatures that have no feeling, to praise and love their Creator."

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

The officiants will come around to offer your pet a blessing, please give the officiant the pet's name:

May (N) be a sign of God's love and place joy in the hearts of those who care for *him/her*. And the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you today and remain with you always.

After all the animals have been blessed

FINAL BLESSING

Officiant: God of manifold blessings,
source of all that is good and true and holy:
raise us up to see the world through your eyes
so that we may treasure each blessed creature
alive with your Spirit and touched
by your creative hand;
and may the blessing of this wonderful God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be upon you now and for ever. **Amen.**

Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**



PSALM 104:17-25

The leader reads the lines in plain type, while the people respond with the words in bold.

The trees of the LORD are full of sap,
The cedars of Lebanon which he planted,

**In which the birds build their nests,
And in whose tops the stork makes his dwelling**

The high hills are a refuge for the mountain goats,
And the stony cliffs for the rock badgers.

**You appointed the moon to mark the seasons,
And the sun knows the time of its setting.**

You make darkness that it may be night,
In which all the beasts of the forests prowl.

**The lions roar after their prey
And seek their food from God.**

The sun rises, and they slip away
And lay themselves down in their dens.

**Man goes forth to work
and to his labor until the evening.**

O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
The earth is full of your creatures.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as
it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

Officiant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to St. Matthew

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:25-33)

Officiant: The Gospel of our Lord

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**



THE PRAYERS

Officiant:

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us....

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea;

People: **We thank you, Lord.**

Officiant: For the richness of the mountains, plains and rivers;

People: **We thank you, Lord.**

Officiant: For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women;

People: **We thank you, Lord.**

Officiant: For all creatures that breathe, and move, and have life;

People: **We thank you, Lord.**

Officiant: For the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers and trees;

People: **We thank you, Lord.**

Officiant: For the trust you have shown in giving into our care these, our pets;

People: **We thank you, Lord.**

Officiant: That each pet here may be treasured with care;

People: **We pray to you, Lord.**

Officiant: That we may love and honor all your works, O God;

People: **We pray to you, Lord.**

Officiant: That we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation;

People: **To the honor and glory of your name, now and forever, we pray to you, Lord.**

Officiant: Holy God: not a sparrow falls without your attention; nothing dies that is lost to your remembrance; nothing exists that comes to being without your love. Give us just and compassionate hearts that we may serve your will for creation, holding the vision of your peaceable reign in which all shall live with you eternally, through the risen One, Christ our Savior. **Amen.**