

Blessing - of the - **ANIMALS**



**Blessing of Animals on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
Sunday, October 4th, 2020**

Land Acknowledgement

In this holy time and place,
we acknowledge with respect
that we gather on the
traditional, ancestral territories
of the Mohawk and Abanaki
first peoples.

**May the living Christ lead us
always on pathways of
reconciliation and peace.**



Refrain:

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.

1 Each radiant flower that opens,
each vibrant bird that sings,
God made their glowing colours,
God made their lively wings. [Refrain]

2 The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruit in the garden,
God made them every one. [Refrain]

3 The rocky mountain splendour,
the loon's wild, haunting call,
the great lakes and the prairies,
the forest in the fall. [Refrain]

4 God gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is the Creator,
who has made all things well. [Refrain]

ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL



The Gathering

Jesus Christ, we assemble with all your creatures in this circle of life.
We ask you to join our circle and celebrate with us.

Jesus Christ, as we join in celebration with you and all creation,
We ask for your blessing, your *shalom*, on the creatures present here whom we love; and on all creatures celebrating in the wild.

In the name of God, who creates all life,
In the name of Jesus Christ, who redeems all life, and in the name of the Spirit, who renews all life, we cry with all in the circle of life:
Shalom! Shalom! Shalom! May your blessing come!



Francis of Assisi *4 October Friar, 1226*

Francis grew up in a very wealthy family and seemed to have not a care in the world until he was twenty years old, when a chance encounter with a leper left him appalled by his own uselessness. Soon afterwards he heard Jesus speaking to him from a painting of the crucifixion over the altar of a local church. He threw away his wardrobe and renounced his father's wealth in order to care for the poor and the crippled. In 1208 he heard the commission which the risen Lord gave to his apostles, "Go, make all nations my disciples," and knew that it was also addressed to him. Francis began to train his followers for the task of making Jesus truly known and loved among the ordinary people of Italy. Out of this movement developed the Order of the Lesser Brethren, commonly called the Franciscans.

Francis believed that nature itself was the mirror of God. He called all creatures his "brothers" and "sisters", and even preached to the birds and supposedly persuaded a wolf in Gubbio to stop attacking some locals if they agreed to feed the wolf. In his Canticle of the Creatures ("Praises of Creatures" or "Canticle of the Sun"), he mentioned the "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon", the wind and water. His deep sense of brotherhood under God embraced others, and he declared that "he considered himself no friend of Christ if he did not cherish those for whom Christ died".



Psalm of Praise

All dogs and cats, large and small:

Praise the Lord!

All rabbits, hamsters, and guinea pigs:

Praise the Lord!

All goldfish, guppies, and swimming creatures:

Praise the Lord!

All robins, wrens, and singing birds:

Praise the Lord!

All bats, squirrels, and raccoons:

Praise the Lord!

All horses, cows, and sheep:

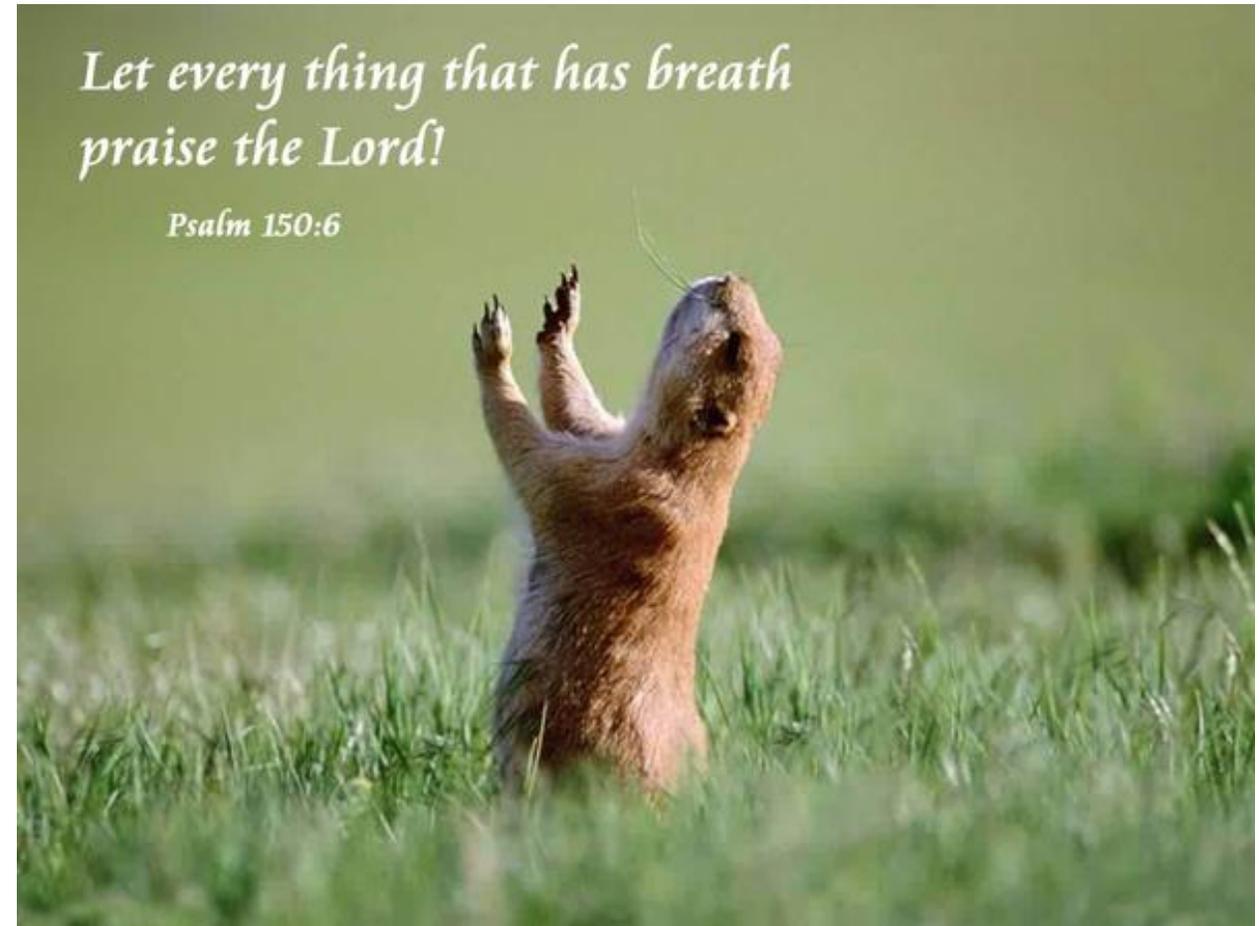
Praise the Lord!

All lizards, snakes and creeping things:

Praise the Lord!

Every animal in the sky, the sea, and the forest:

Praise the Lord!



A Reading from Pope Francis

Excerpted from Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care For Our Common Home*

I do not want to write this encyclical without turning to that attractive and compelling figure, whose name I took as my guide and inspiration when I was elected Bishop of Rome. I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature, and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.

[Francis'] response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister [or brother] united to him by bonds of affection. This is why he felt called to care for all that exists. His disciple Saint Bonaventure tells us that, "from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister.'" Such a conviction cannot be written off as naïve romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine our behavior. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, *if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously.* The poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: *a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled.*

What is more, Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. "Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wisdom 13:5); indeed, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world" (Romans 1:20).

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Refrain:

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Refrain

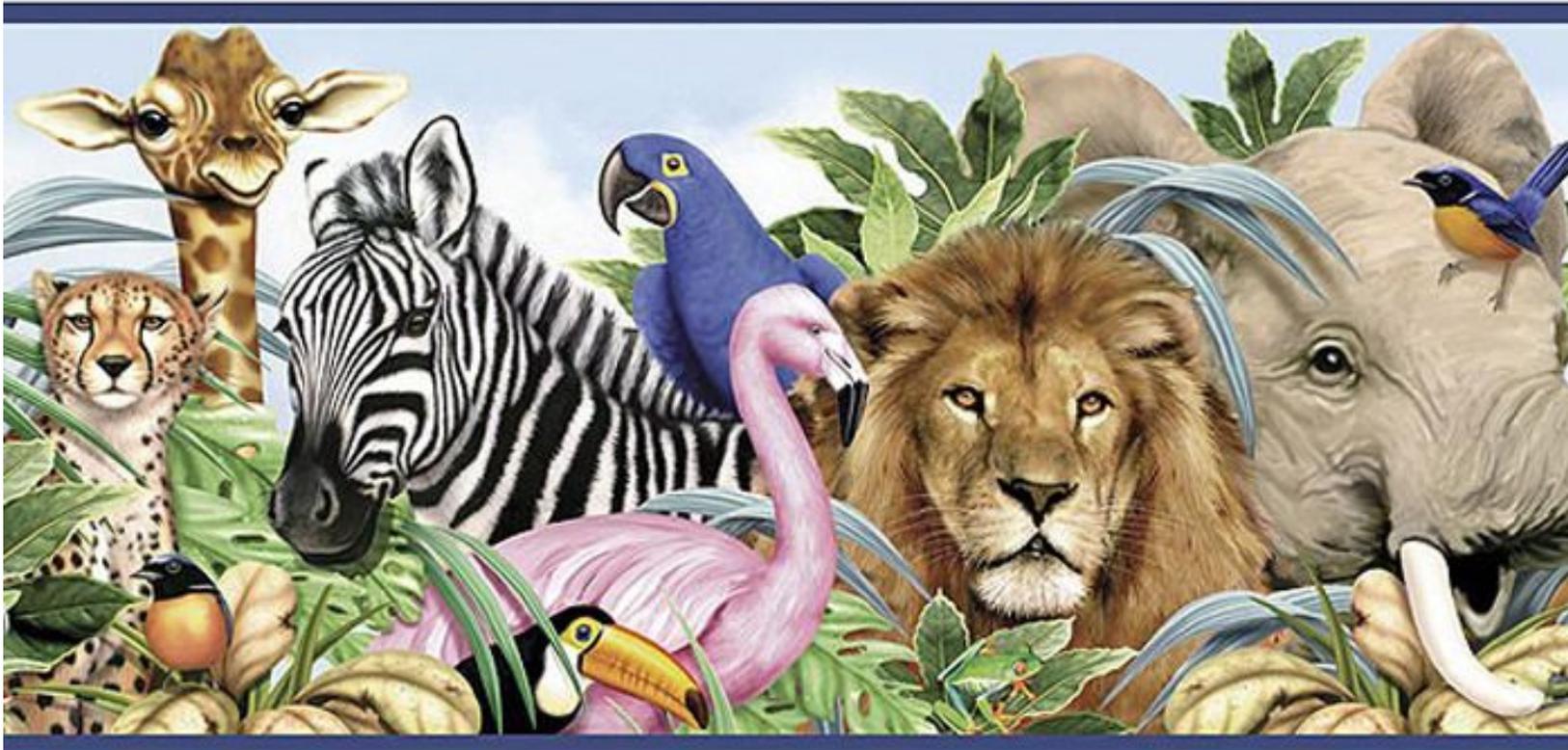
Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal
life.

Refrain



Reading from Genesis 1

Dieu dit, « Que les eaux grouillent de bestioles vivantes et que l’oiseau vole au-dessus de la terre face au firmament du ciel. » Dieu créa les grands monstres marins, tous les êtres vivants et remuants selon leur espèce, donc grouillèrent les eaux, et tout oiseau selon son espèce. Dieu vit que cela était bon.



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. And God
saw that it was good.

Then God said,
“Let us make humankind”.
And God blessed them.
God saw everything that
God had made, and indeed,
it was very good.

From The Song of the Three

“Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our ancestors,
and to be praised and highly exalted forever;
And blessed is your glorious, holy name,
and to be highly praised and highly exalted forever.

Bless the Lord, you whales and all that swim in the waters;
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

Bless the Lord, all birds of the air;
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

Bless the Lord, all wild animals and cattle;
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

Bless the Lord, all people on earth;
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

Bless the Lord, O Israel;
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.”



Isaiah 11:6-9

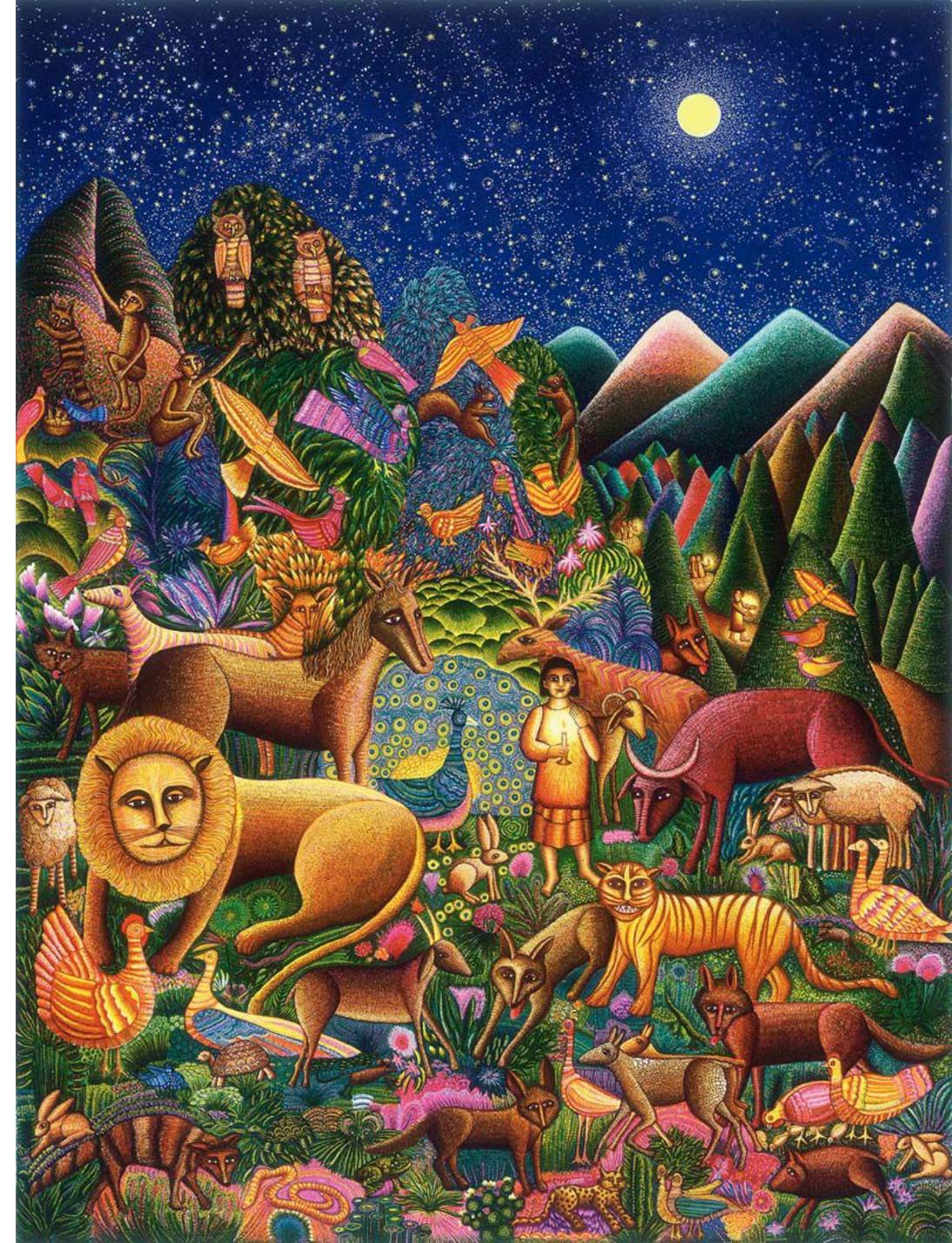
The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,

for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.



The New Creed (from the United Church of Canada)

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God: who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and in others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church: to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.



Reflection

‘Apprehend God in all things,
for God is in all things.

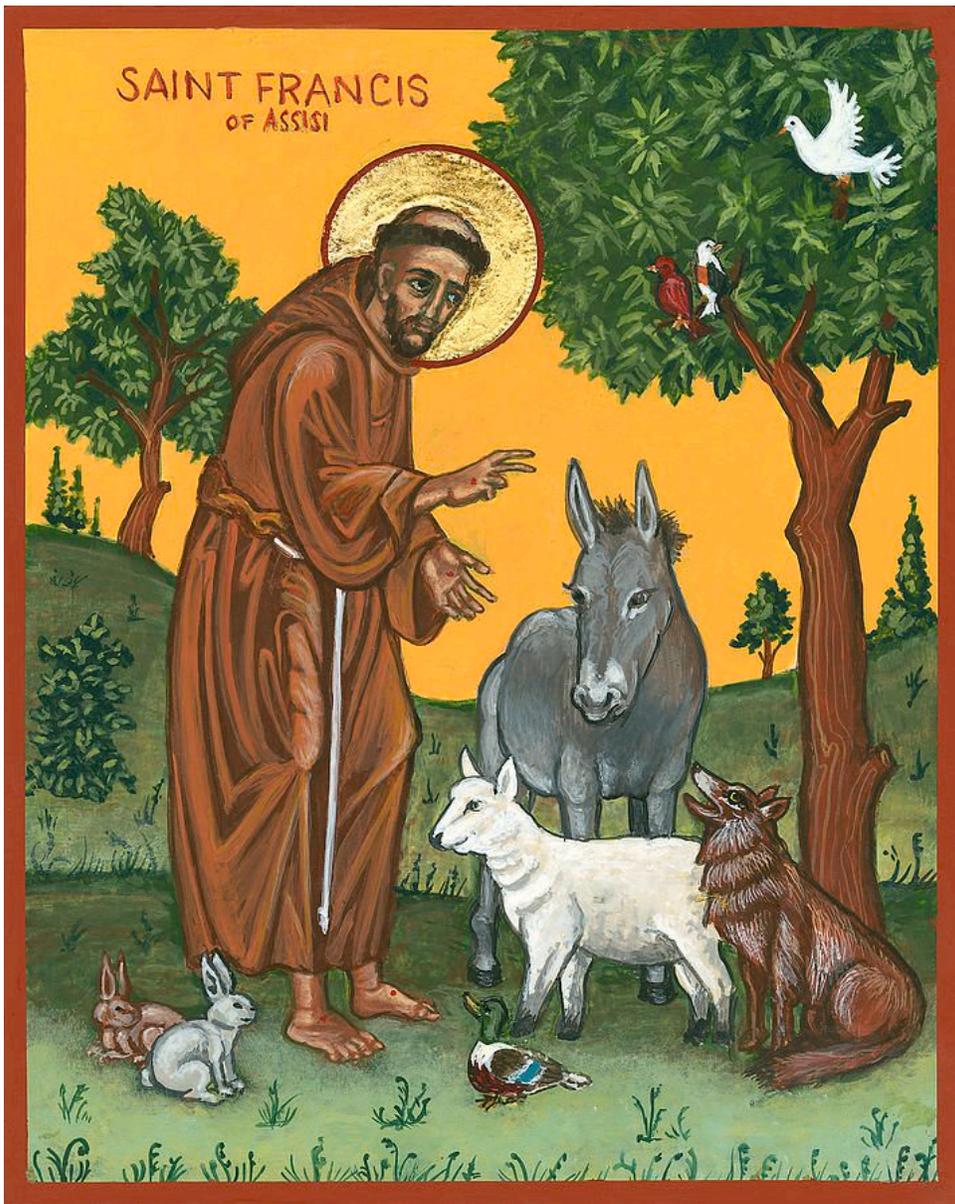
Every single creature is full of God, and is a book about God.

Every creature is a word of God.

If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature - even a caterpillar -
I would never have to prepare a sermon
so full of God
is every creature’

(Meister Eckhart, a 13th century Christian mystic)





BLESSING OF ANIMALS

Almighty and everlasting God, Creator of all things and giver of all life, let your blessing be upon all these animals. May our relationships with them mirror your love, and our care for them be an example of your bountiful mercy. Grant our pets health and peace. Strengthen us to love and care for them as we strive to imitate the love of Jesus Christ our Lord and God's servant, Francis of Assisi. Amen.



Remembrance of those pets who have died

We remember our animal companions who are no longer with us physically. We give thanks for the gifts they gave us and the variety of ways they enriched and blessed our lives.

We are confident that our Creator continues to care for them.

Amen



God of the Sparrow # 414

1. God of the sparrow, God of the whale, God of the swirling stars
How does the creature say Awe, how does the creature say Praise?
2. God of the earthquake, God of the storm, God of the trumpet blast
How does the creature cry woe, how does the creature cry Save?
3. God of the rainbow, God of the cross, God of the empty grave
How does the creature say grace, how does the creature say thanks?
4. God of the hungry, God of the sick, God of the prodigal,
How does the creature say care, How does the creature say Life?
5. God of the neighbour, God of the foe, God of the pruning hook,
How does the creature say love, how does the creature say Peace?
6. God of the ages, God near at hand, God of the loving heart,
How do your children say joy, how do your children say Home?



Prayers of Intercession

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;

All We thank you, Lord.

For the richness of the mountains, plains and rivers;

All We thank you, Lord.

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

All We thank you, Lord.

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

All We thank you, Lord.

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

All We thank you, Lord.

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

All We thank you, Lord.

That each pet here may be treasured with care;

All We pray to you, Lord.

That we may love and honour all your works, O God;

All We pray to you, Lord.

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

All To the honour and glory of your name, now and forever, we pray to you, Lord.



“The
contemplative
gaze renders the
whole world
sacramental.”

- Elizabeth
Johnson, CSJ

We pray also for our human friends and family:
Help and comfort the lonely, the bereaved and the oppressed.

Lord, have mercy.

Keep in safety those who travel, and all who are in danger.

Lord, have mercy.

Heal the sick in body and mind, and provide for the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

Lord, have mercy.

Show your pity on prisoners and refugees, and all who are in trouble.

Lord, have mercy.

Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the peace of Christ,
both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone,
and grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, have mercy.

Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker,
Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all.
Loving God, in whom is heaven.
The hallowing of your name echoes
through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the
peoples of the earth!
Your heavenly will be done
by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another,
forgive us.
In times of temptation and test,
spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory
of the power that is love,
now and forever.
Amen.

Prayer: New Zealand Prayer Book
Photo: Stained glass Jesus on the Water
St Faith's Catholic Church Rotorua New Zealand



Closing Prayers

God, our Creator, help us to love
all creatures as kin,
all animals as partners on Earth,
all birds as messengers of praise,
all minute beings as expressions of your mysterious design,
and all frogs as voices of hope.

Amen

Go out into the world, love one another.
Cherish your animal family,
protest against abuse and neglect of our animals;
exercise stewardship of ALL creation,
so that All may experience God's Shalom.

Go out into the world, my brothers and sisters in Christ.
In the name of the Creator, the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit.
Amen



All creatures of our God and King,

lift up your voices, let us sing:

alleluia, alleluia!

Bright burning sun and golden beams,

pale silver moon that gently gleams,

alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

alleluia, alleluia!

2 Great rushing winds and breezes soft,

you clouds that ride the heavens aloft,

O sing now, alleluia!

Fair rising morn, with praise rejoice,

stars nightly shining, find a voice:

alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

alleluia, alleluia!

3 Swift flowing water, pure and clear,

make music for your Lord to hear,

alleluia, alleluia!

Fire, so intense and fiercely bright,

you give to us both warmth and light,

alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

alleluia, alleluia!



4 Earth ever fertile, day by day
unfold your blessings on our way,
O sing now, alleluia!
All flowers and fruits that in you grow,
God's glory let them also show:
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia!

5 Let all things their creator bless,
and worship God in humbleness,
alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise God the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three-in-One:
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia!



All Creatures Great and Small

All Things Bright & Beautiful



All Things Wise & Wonderful

The Lord God made Them All

RUFF 93