

ALTAR BOOK - October 04, 2020

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS (11:30 Zoom)

GATHERING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

On October 4 every year (or the nearest Sunday), we remember Francis of Assisi. Born into a family of wealthy merchants, Francis gave up his inheritance to serve the poor. He formed the order of friars now known as Franciscans who took on poverty and an obligation to teach the word of God. Francis had a spirit of gratitude for all of God's creation.

Francis of Assisi wrote the following: "All things of creation are children of the Father and thus brothers and sisters of humankind. God wants us to help animals, if they need help. Every creature in distress has the same right to be protected. God requires that we assist the animals, when they need our help."

READING: Genesis 1:24-28

A reading from the book of Genesis.

²⁴And 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. ²⁵God 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.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, 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."

²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God 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."

PRAYER

Let us pray.

God, the source and sustainer of all life, we cherish all you have made. Water, earth, and sky are yours, as are all their inhabitants, wild and tame. We thank you for animals that nourish and serve us, befriend, enrich and protect us. May we, who are made in your image, care for them well. And may your wondrous creation rally and thrive, revealing to all who come after us your wise, redemptive, transfiguring love.

Amen.

BLESSING

Gracious God, in your love you created us in your image and made us stewards of the animals that live in the skies, the earth, and the sea. Bless us in our care for our pets and animals. Hear our prayer for all that suffer overwork, hunger, and ill-treatment. Protect your creatures and guard them from all evil, now and forever.

Amen.

The leader may ask all who have brought pets or animals to the celebration to come forward for individual blessings.

Gracious God, bless _____, whom you have created. Give *him/her* good health, love and faithful companionship. In the name of Jesus.

Amen.

BLESSING

God who gives us life, bless us.

Christ who shows us love, bless us.

The Holy Spirit, who sustains the world, ✝ bless us and our pets,
now and forever.

Amen.