

A Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for Companion Animals

Hymn 405

Officiant: May God, who is wonderful in all his works, be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Officiant: The animals of God's creation inhabit the skies, the earth and the sea. They share in the fortunes of human existence and have a part in human life. God, who confers gifts on all living things, has often used the service of animals or made them symbolic reminders of the gifts of salvation. Animals were saved from the flood and afterwards made a part of the covenant with Noah. The paschal lamb brings to mind the Passover sacrifice and the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, a giant fish saved Jonah, and ravens brought bread to Elijah. Animals share in Christ's redemption of all God's creation. We therefore ask God's blessing on all animals, especially those who live as our companions. As we do so, let us praise the Creator and give thanks for the stewardship of animals who have been given into our care.
Amen.

A Reading from *The Book of Job*

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind..."Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, or lie in wait in their covert? Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for the lack of food? Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer?...Who has let the wild ass go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift ass, to which I have given the steppe for its home, the salt land for its dwelling place?...Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will it spend the night at your crib? Can you tie it in the furrow with ropes, or will it harrow the valleys after you?...Do you give the horse its might? Do you clothe its neck with mane? Do you make it leap like the locust? Its majestic snorting is terrible. It paws violently, exults mightily; it goes out to meet the weapons. It laughs at fear, and is not dismayed; it does not turn back from the sword...Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and spreads its wings towards the south? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes its nest on high?...Look at Behemoth, which I made just as I made you...It is the first of the great acts of God – only its Maker can approach it with the sword. For the mountains yield food for it where all the wild animals play...Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook, or press down its tongue with a cord?...No one is so fierce as to dare to stir it up. Who can stand before it? Who can confront it and be safe? – under the whole heaven, who?"... Then Job answered the Lord, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Canticle 12 – A Song of Creation (*unison*)

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord,*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Let the earth glorify the Lord,*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills,
and all that grows upon the earth,*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas and streams,*
O whales and all that move in the water.

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,*
and all you flocks and herds.

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord,*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

Let us glorify the Lord: Father, Son and Holy Spirit;*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

In the firmament of his power, glorify the Lord,*
praise him and highly exalt him forever.

A Reading from the *Letter of Paul to the Romans*

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God, For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was

subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now: and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption...

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Hymn 388

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, "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...Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul...Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father..."

The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily

Prayers for God's Creation

We praise you for the creation of the world and all the living creatures in the earth, sky and sea.

People: *We are thankful O God.*

For the gentle eyes of the deer, for the friendship of dogs, the purr of cats, the strength of horses, the humor of chimps, the intelligence of gorillas, the grace of dolphins, and the magnificence of whales. Help us to keep them safe.

People: *We are thankful O God.*

For the bond of all living creatures created by the same author and for the memory of our kinship to the animal world kindled each time a rainbow appears.

People: *We are thankful O God.*

Keep us mindful of the vision of the peaceable kingdom in which all living creatures dwell in harmony.

People: *This we pray, O God.*

Give us a voice to speak in protest when your beloved creatures are treated cruelly. Help us to be advocates for those innocents who cannot speak for themselves.

People: *Give us speech, O God.*

Give us eyes to see our responsibilities, not just to the human community, but to the community of all living creatures. Let us be mindful of the rabbinic injunction that, "The way a person treats an animal is an index to their soul."

People: *Help us to see, O God.*

In this world so full of violence and unkindness, let us act in a gentle way towards all your creatures. A simple stroke on a dog's head, a scratch on a cat's chin, food for the birds in winter and hunting with cameras only.

People: *Help us to be gentle, O God.*

Help us to lessen the suffering of your creatures, O God. Hasten the coming of your kingdom when the sun will shine on all your creation living in peace and love.

People: *We pray this, O Lord.*

Help us to be kind and gentle like our Lord Jesus. And may we remember St. Francis' love for animals whenever we see one of your creatures hurt, suffering and in need of help.

The Blessing of the Animals

The Peace and Announcements

The Offertory
Hymn 304

Eucharistic Prayer

The Spirit of the Lord is with us

People: *And with all creation.*

Let us praise our Creator.

People: *And give thanks for the wonderful earth.*

Let us sing a song of praise with the whole creation.

People: *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*

Lord and heavenly Father, in your hands you hold heaven and earth; all things proceed from your creative will, for you have made each creature perfect in itself

as a sign of your eternal grace; and yet humankind has corrupted your purpose turning from light to darkness and releasing evil in the world.

What you once gave us has lost its innocence through our sin and been marred by our selfishness; even so you have not despaired of us but sent your Son to rescue us and all creation from the abyss of suffering and death; yet still we resist your saving work and frustrate your Spirit within us. And so we pray that this same Spirit will today renew us and set us right with ourselves and all creatures.

Holy Father, accept these gifts of bread and wine, symbols of creation lost and found in your Son and send your Holy Spirit upon them so that they may be to us the body and blood of your Son who transforms each and every particle of creation with your love.

Filled with this hope and grace we offer you, Holy Creator, Lord of all, Savior of the Universe, our song of thanksgiving and join all creatures in these words of eternal praise.

**All: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.***

We remember when Jesus took bread and said, "This is my body" and gave the cup of wine and said, "This is my blood." May this food be for us a foretaste of your heavenly kingdom in which all creation shall be redeemed by your grace and our selfish wills transformed by your holy will.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**All: *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.***

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: We are one bread, one body

People: *We will love one another as Christ loves us.*

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Distribution of Communion

Post Communion Prayer

All: *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.*

The Blessing

The Dismissal

Hymn 376