



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

**Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
4th October 2023**

Who is St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis of Assisi was born in the 12th century, lived in Italy, and founded the men's Order of Friars Minor, the women's Order of St. Clare, and the Third Order of Saint Francis for men and women not able to live the lives of itinerant preachers. Francis is one of the most venerated religious figures in history.

He is remembered for his generosity to the poor, his willingness to minister to the lepers, and for his love for animals and nature. He is the Catholic Church's patron saint of animals and the environment.

The Blessing of Animals

Many people bring their pets to the church to be blessed on St. Francis' feast day because of his love for animals as expressed in his Cantic of Creatures.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the book of Genesis: (1:1, 20-28)

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, God said, "Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky." And so it happened: God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw how good it was and God blessed them, saying, "Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth." Evening came, and morning followed--the fifth day.

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds." And so it happened: God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."

God created man in his image;
in the divine image he created him;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth."

The word of the Lord.

Or:

Genesis: 2:19-20a

Genesis 6:17-23

Isaiah 11:6-10

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 8

Response: O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!

O LORD, our Lord,
how glorious is your name over all the earth!
You have exalted your majesty above the heavens. R./

When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars which you set in place—
What is man that you should be mindful of him
or the son of man that you should care for him? R./

You have given him rule over the works of your hands,
putting all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
yes, and beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea,
and whatever swims the paths of the seas. R./

Or:

Psalm 104:1-2a, 10-12, 25, 27-28

Response: (v. 27) All look to you to give them their food in due season.

Psalm 147:5-6, 7-8, 9-11

Response: (v. 1a) O praise the Lord! How good to sing praise to our God.

Prayers of Intercession

Presider:

God created us and placed us on this earth to be the stewards of all living things and so to proclaim the glory of their Creator. Let us bring our prayers to Him:

Blessed are you, O Lord, who created the animals and gave us the ability to train them to help us in our work. **Lord, hear us.**

Blessed are you, O Lord, who gave us food from animals to replenish our energies. **Lord, hear us.**

Blessed are you, O Lord, who for the sake of our comfort give us domestic animals as companions. **Lord, hear us.**

Blessed are you, O Lord, who show us a sign of your providence, as your Son told us, by caring for the birds of the air. **Lord, hear us.**

Blessed are you, O Lord, who offered your Son to us as the paschal lamb and in him willed that we should be called and should truly be your children. **Lord, hear us.**

Blessed are you, O Lord, who through your lowliest creatures never cease to draw us toward your love. **Lord, hear us.**

Prayers of Blessing

O God,
the author and giver of every gift,
animals also are part of the way you provide help
for our needs and labours.
We pray through the intercession of Saint Francis
that you will make available for our use
the things we need to maintain a decent human life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or

O God,
you have done all things wisely;
in your goodness you have made us in your image
and given us care over other living things.
Reach out with your right hand
and grant that these animals may serve our needs
and that your bounty in the resources of this life
may move us to seek more confidently the goal of eternal life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Or

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures.
You called forth fish in the sea, birds in the air, and animals on the land.
You inspired St. Francis to call all of them his brothers and sisters.
We ask you to bless ✠ these pets.

By the power of your love, enable it to live according to your plan.
May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures!
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Further resources for the Season of Creation are available on the Diocesan website: <https://www.dioceseofmeath.ie/laudato-si>