

The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi With the Blessing of the Animals



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ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI

St. Francis was born in the hill country of central Italy in the town of Assisi around 1181. He was the only child of a prosperous cloth merchant, and grew up among the privileged sons of the town's wealthy families. His early youth was given over to a lively social life and dreams of knighthood to be won in the City's wars. He returned from his military service a changed man, and withdrew from his friends and former amusements in search of a new life.

While praying in the ruined church of San Damiano in the countryside, he heard the words: "Francis, rebuild my Church which you see falling down." Taking the word literally, he began to rebuild the little church with his own hands, begging in the streets for building supplies. This public humiliation led to a permanent break with his father. Francis gave away to the poor everything he had ever received from his family, even the clothes on his back. He embraced the poverty of the gospel, "sell what thou hast, give to the poor, and come and follow Me." Francis soon discovered that his calling was not to renew merely a church, but the Church. Others soon joined Francis, many from the elite sons of the city, and a community of brothers –friars– formed around him. In contrast to the comfort of the established monasteries and clergy, the first Franciscans lived in utter poverty among the poorest of the poor. Traveling through the towns and villages, Francis preached the gospel *pax et bonum* – "peace and good will with all people." His preaching was simple, but filled with an unaffected joy and excitement which cut across class and political divisions. Encountering him, people found their lives changed, feuds were healed, and a new spirit of devotion stirred in the churches of Italy. Soon stories of miracles, many involving his affection for animals, began to surround Francis.

In 1210, the great pope Innocent III recognized Francis' community Rule, consisting only of texts from the Gospels, and the Franciscan First Order, the "Friars Minor" or "little brothers." By the time of his death there were over 10,000 Franciscan brothers spread across Europe, apostles of a general renewal of the Church. The greater Franciscan community included a women's Second Order nicknamed the "Poor Clares" after St. Clare, the first Franciscan sister, and for the first time in history a Third Order with a simple Rule adapted for regular lay people committed to service, charity, and simplicity of life.

Francis spent his last years feeling that his Order had grown beyond him, and turned more and more to interior solitude. Two years before his death during a visionary encounter with the glorified Christ, he received the "stigmata", the five wounds of the crucified Lord, another first in Christian history. He was popularly acclaimed a saint in his own lifetime, and formally canonized only a year after his death in 1226. Today there are both Roman Catholic and Anglican Franciscans at work across the world.

Blessing of the Animals

September 29, 2024

PRELUDE

GATHERING HYMN *All creatures of our God and King*

HYMNAL 400

vs. 1, 2, 3, 6



1 All crea - tures of our God and King, lift up your voic - es, let us
*2 Great rush - ing winds and breez - es soft, you clouds that ride the heavens a -
*3 Swift flow - ing wa - ter, pure and clear, make mu - sic for your Lord to
4 Dear mo - ther earth, you day by day un - fold your bless - ings on our
5 All you with mer - cy in your heart, for - giv - ing o - thers, take your
*6 And ev - en you, most gen - tle death, wait - ing to hush our fi - nal



1 sing: Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Bright burn - ing
2 loft, O__ praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! Fair ris - ing
3 hear, Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Fire, so in -
4 way, O__ praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! All flowers and
5 part, O__ sing now: Al - le - lu - ia! All you that
6 breath, O__ praise him, Al - le - lu - ia! You lead back



1 sun with gold - en beams, pale sil - ver moon that gen - tly gleams,
2 morn, with praise re - joice, stars night - ly shin - ing, find a voice,
3 tense and fierce - ly bright, you give to us both warmth and light,
4 fruits that in you grow, let them his glo - ry al - so show:
5 pain and sor - row bear, praise God, and cast on him your care:
6 home the child of God, for Christ our Lord that way has trod:

Refrain



O praise him, O praise him, Al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

The refrain may be sung antiphonally, by phrase; all join in the final Alleluia.

OPENING ACCLAMATION

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People

**And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.
Amen.**

COLLECT FOR PURITY

The Celebrant may say

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SONG OF PRAISE

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Collect for St. Francis

Most high, omnipotent good Lord, grant your people grace to renounce gladly the vanities of this world; that, following the way of blessed Francis, we may for love of you delight in your whole creation with perfectness of joy. O God, you have made us and all living things. You are even more wonderful than what you have made. We thank you for giving us these pets who bring us joy. As you take care of us, so also we ask your help that we might take care of those who trust us to look after them. By doing this, we share in your own love for all creation. We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

The Lessons

FIRST READING: Genesis 1:1-34

The people sit.

A Reading from the book of Genesis

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and a great dimness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. On the first day, God created light and darkness. On the second day, God created the sky above and the waters below. On the third day, God formed the land and called it Earth, and gathered the water and called it Sea. God blessed the earth with vegetation and food. On the fourth day, God separated the day from the night, creating the sun, the moon, and the stars. On the fifth day, God brought forth swarms of living creatures in the air, in the water, and on the land, and God bid them to be fruitful and multiply. On the sixth day, God created humankind in God's image, giving them dominion over the animals. God blessed them and bid them to be fruitful and multiply. On the seventh day, God saw that everything that God had made was very good and God rested and blessed the seventh day and made it sacred.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Prayer of St. Francis (to be said in unison or sung)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light; and
where there is sadness, joy.

O, God, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

SEQUENCE HYMN *I want to walk as a child of the light*

HYMNAL 490

All stand.

1 I want to walk as a child of the light.
2 I want to see the bright - ness of God.
3 I'm look - ing for the com - ing of Christ.

I want to fol - low Je - sus.
I want to look at Je - sus.
I want to be with Je - sus.

God set the stars to give light to the world. The
 Clear sun of right-cous-ness, shine on my path, and
 When we have run with pa-tience the race, we

star of my life is Je - sus.
 show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain

In him there is no dark-ness at all. The

night and the day are both a-like. The

Lamb is the light of the ci - ty of God.

Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:25-30

All stand.

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, God of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, God, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Creator; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal God. ‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.

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

THE HOMILY

The Rev. Allison Burns-LaGreca

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

All stand.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God our Creator for all the gifts so freely bestowed upon us and for the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea;

All: We thank you, Lord.

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

All: We thank you, Lord.

Leader: For all that is gracious in the lives of men, women and all people;

All: We thank you, Lord.

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

All: We thank you, Lord.

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

All: We thank you, Lord.

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

All: We thank you, Lord.

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

All: We pray to you, Lord.

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

All: We pray to you, Lord.

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

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

Amen.

Silence

THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

May you be blessed in the Name God, the Creator, Redeemer and of the Sustainer. May you and your animals enjoy life together and find joy with the God who created you. **Amen.**

VOLUNTARY *Talk to the animals*

THE PEACE

All stand.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Announcements

The Holy Communion

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

The Celebrant says

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

VOLUNTARY *All things bright and beautiful*

The Great Thanksgiving

SURSUM CORDA

The People stand.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Lift up your hearts
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

Facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

For the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all your saints, who have been the chosen vessels of your grace, and the lights of the world in their generations. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

SANCTUS S 125 *Holy, Holy, Holy*

Celebrant and People

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;**

EPICLESIS

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Mary, Joseph and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. *AMEN.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

People and Celebrant

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

FRACTION ANTHEM S 154 *Christ our Passover*

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

INVITATION

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*(We come to the table not just as individuals but as a community. By sharing in the bread, Christ makes us one with him and with each other.
All are welcome to the Table of our Lord.)*

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [Amen.]

THE CLOSING PRAYER *(said together)*

Almighty God, our great Creator, yours are the praise, the glory, the honor and all blessings! To you alone do all things belong. Be praised for giving us the animals, birds and fish which fill your world. May we think of you and thank you when we play with and care for our pets. Be praised for making us so happy to have our pets and to have them to play with. We ask you, Lord, that we may be good to our pets always, so that they may be happy also. Help us always to take care of them so that they will be healthy. O God, your world is wonderful. May we all come into your even greater world of the kingdom of heaven where we shall see even more wonderful things and where we shall live and love forever. This we ask to your eternal praise, and to our blessing. Amen.

THE BLESSING

Life is short and we have too little time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind....and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you now and always. **Amen.**

A Place in the Choir (Bill Staines)



All God's crea-tures got a place in the choir, some sing low and some sing high-er, some sing out loud on the
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te - le- phone wire, and some just clap their hands, or paws, or an - y- thing they've got now.

Chorus:

All God's creatures got a place in the choir,
Some sing low and some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire,
And some just clap their hands, or paws, or anything they've got. (repeat)

Listen to the bass, it's one on the bottom,
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus
Moans and groans with a big to-do,
And the old cow just goes moo.

The dogs and the cats they take up the middle
While the honeybee hums and the cricket fiddles
And the donkey brays and the pony neighs,
And the old grey badger sighs.

Chorus

Listen to the top with the little bird singing
On the melodies and the high notes ringing
And the hoot owl cries over everything,
And the blackbird disagrees.

Singing in the night-time, singing in the day,
The little duck quacks and he's on his way
And the otter hasn't got much to say
And the porcupine talks to himself.

Chorus

It's a simple song, a living song everywhere
By the ox and the fox and the grizzly bear
The grumpy alligator and the hawk above,
The sly old weasel and the turtledove.

Chorus