

REMARKS FOR BLESSING THE ANIMALS 2013

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The Bible doesn't tell us about the souls of animals or if they go to heaven when they die, but it does have words of comfort for those who love animals. The Bible tells us that animals are important to God who created every living thing including fish of the sea, the birds in the air and every creature that moves on the earth & called them good.

In the story of Noah and the great flood, God chose to save the animals as well as the people, we are told that God makes covenants with the creatures of the earth and gives instruction for their care in the laws of Moses. God even allows the law to be broken to save an animal in trouble. God entrusted the care of animals to people, but God still owns and cares for them. We are to take responsibility for all creatures, to serve their needs, and to work to preserve them.

When I was pondering the assignment, I wondered why we bring our animal companions here to worship today. I know that around this date a service honors St. Francis: particularly the Christian practice of love and care for creation that he embodied in his own life and ministry. We are all glad to remember and celebrate a saint but this liturgy is not primarily about him. I would argue that this "Blessing of the Animals" witnesses to a powerful divine truth that goes far beyond the life of one man.

What this service is really about, is who GOD is, who we are and what the whole concept of creation really means

We find our existence interwoven and intertwined with—not apart from—the whole physical creation, especially our animal brothers and sisters. It is not only relationships with other people that matters, it is also in these relationships with our pets and other animals where we experience the presence of GOD.

And so, we, gathered here together, are the gospel proclamation today—all of us here: two legged, four legged, and no legged; standing before GOD side by side, praying, praising, blessing and receiving blessing. In this brief moment in time, the kingdom of GOD comes near and we find ourselves standing on holy ground—standing not isolated, not by ourselves, but together, ALL OF US.

Amen