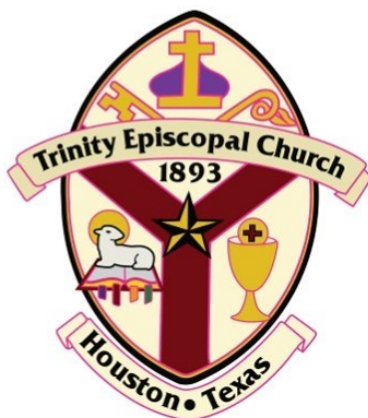
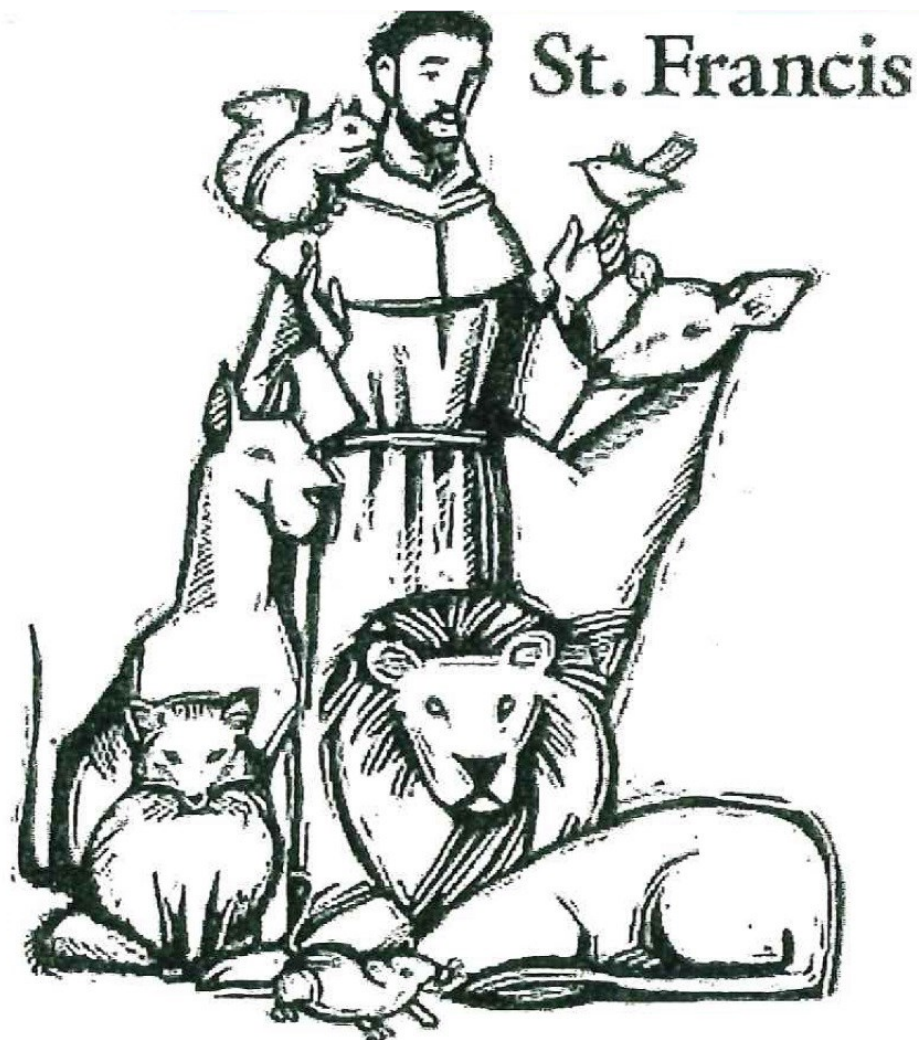


Blessing of the Animals
and
Commemoration of Saint Francis of Assisi



1015 Holman Street

Houston, Texas 77004

Phone: 713-528-4100

Email: www.TrinityMidtown.org



The Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 8, 2023

Please stand as able:

Celebrant: The Lord be with you

People: *And also with you*

Celebrant: Let us pray

Collect: 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 trust us to look after them. By doing this, we share in Your own love for all creation. We ask this in Jesus' name.

People: *Amen*

Please be seated

Prayer of Saint Francis

In unison: 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*

Reader: Today's lesson is from Ecclesiastes 3: 17-21

"I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for He has appointed a time for every matter and for every work. I said in my heart with regard to human beings that God is testing them, to show that they are but animals. For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows whether the human spirit goes upward and the spirit of animals goes toward to the earth?"

Please stand as able:

Celebrant: The Gospel for today's blessing is from the book of John: Chapter 10: verses 14-18

"I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one Shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me; because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

People : Praise to You, Lord Christ

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

People: We thank You, Lord.

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

People: We thank You, Lord.

Reader: For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women;

People: We thank You Lord.

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

People: We thank You Lord.

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

People: We thank You Lord.

Reader: For the trust You have shown in giving into our care these, our pets;

People: We thank You Lord.

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

People: We pray to You, Lord.

Reader: That we may love and honor all Your works, O God;

People: We pray to You, Lord.

Reader: That we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of Your abundant creation

People: To the honor and glory of Your name, now and forever, we pray to You, Lord. *Amen*

Individual Blessings

*Please follow the leader, with your pet, to receive its special blessing from
Celebrant One: "Saint Francis" (Rev. Bradley Sullivan)*

*Name this pet, _____ May you be blessed in the name of the Father, and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.*

*Name the human owner, sponsor, or caregiver: _____ May you and your pet
enjoy life together and find joy with the One who created you.*

Closing Prayer

*Almighty God, our great Creator, Yours are the praises, 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, always 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, and give you eternal praise for our blessing. *Amen**

Closing Blessing

*Celebrant: May the Lord bless and keep you, may the Lord show His face to you and have
compassion upon you. May God turn His face to you and give you peace. And the blessing of
God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. *Amen**



Pet Blessing Flowers

The flowers on the Baptismal are given to God in grateful praise, deep thanksgiving and loving memory for blessing us and the animals that are and have been, our beloved pets and companions. Note those which most closely connect you with your pet and your special relationship. These flowers and colors were chosen because of their association with Jesus Christ and His servant, Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals. One special person in Francis's life was Clare of Assisi so the flower associated with her is also present.

Red roses represent Christ's blood, as well as the stigmata later seen on Saint Francis prior to his death.

Lavender Roses are associated with peace which was exhibited between Saint Francis, the wolf and the townspeople that had been harassed by the wolf.

Yellow Roses represent the encouragement given to those who join Francis in following Christ's examples throughout their lives.

White Lilies remind us of Christ's Resurrection, pure thoughts, pure words, and pure deeds in Saint Francis, Saint Clare, and all who follow in Christ's steps.

Sunflowers are associated with Saint Clare of Assisi because of her optimism and happiness, dedication and love, lasting friendship, warmth, faith and strength with God and Saint Francis.

Our pets, like Christ, love and trust us unconditionally. Although they do not speak in human languages, their wagging tails, patting paws, sitting on and beside us, leave no questions about their feelings toward us. Let us always remember that God created them before He created us, and always treat them with the love and respect that they deserve.



The Rainbow Bridge



Just this side of Heaven is a place called The Rainbow Bridge. When each animal dies they arrive at The Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing: they each miss someone very special, someone who was left behind either in reality or the dreams of what should have been for those that never had a special bond, a special friend. Our friends that shared our lives comfort the friendless ones, promising them that their time will come.

Over the hill one by one come many people. They each stop and stare, hearts caught in throats by the majesty of the view. For many there are friends waiting, but more than a few have faced life's burdens alone and come to this haven expecting no one and falling to the ground in despair. As each huddles in his separate, silent misery a small silent form approaches. Soft muzzles are tentatively placed on clenched hands. Tender caresses from paws and fingers, gentle whispers of love pass back and forth. Loneliness meets loneliness and dissolves in joy. Friendless no more, the person and animal unite in joyous contemplation of their new-found special friendship.

God in His Wisdom has allowed another chance for those that had none on this earth.

As for the other animals, they all run and play together, but the day comes when they too suddenly stop and look into the distance. Their bright eyes are intent; their eager bodies begin to quiver. Suddenly, they break from the group, flying over the green grass, faster and faster. You have been spotted, and when you and your special friends finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress their beloved heads, and you look once more into those trusting eyes, so long gone from your life, but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together.



In Memoriam

- Josephine Antiuk*
- Solomon Baylor*
- Trixie Baylor*
- Pashmina Bossalke*
- Pickles Bowen*
- Blackberry Caldwell*
- Lola Aucutt Christianson*
- Fred Cloud*
- KittyTwo Cloud*
- Bella Cooper*
- Champagne Cooper*
- Cole Cooper*
- Daisy Cooper*
- King Cooper*
- Spanky Cooper*
- B.D. Dykes*
- Munchkin Dykes*
- Pepper Dykes*
- Lady Avery Foxx*
- Nylo Garcia*
- Lance Goswick-Tubbs*
- Lilly Goswick-Tubbs*
- Louie Goswick-Tubbs*
- Pete Goza*
- Yolanda Goza*

Lucy Hensman

Crankee Jones

Fannee Jones

Jeffrey Jones

Martha Jones

Mink Jones

Seymour Jones

George Lee

Mercy Lee

Oscar Lee

Sandy Lee

Tino Lee

Pecas Legarda

Brunnhilde Mauk

Duffy Mauk

Ethel Mauk

Hilde Mauk

Lucy Mauk

Rocky Mauk

Daisy McClellan

Adam Merullo

Babycakes Merullo

Hyfyrdol Merullo-Zemanek

Lord Fennyson Merullo-Zemanek

Big Ears Miquon-Bradley

Spanky Miquon-Bradley

Alfie Rainman

Asia Rainman

Eli Rainman

Ethan Rainman

Evie Rainman

Jinx Rainman

Stella Rainman

William Rainman

Winkie Rainman

Wyndor Rainman

Buckwheat Roach

Honey Boy Roach

Rufe Roach

Jona Sager-Ward

Lulu Sager-Ward

Jona Sennewald-Frazier

Alphie Spencer

Cubbie Starbuck

Dominick Starbuck

Nick Starbuck

Ginger Treadwell

Bandit Tsubai

Chester Vallés

Crespo Vallés

Lala Vallés

Spike Walton-Brady

Buster Wilderman

Loki Wilderman

Daisy Willing

Jack Zemanek

Fifth Day: A Pet Blessing Tale

By Theresa D. McClellan

"On the day you were born God looked into your face, smiled, and left God's signature in your eyes."

This is the Creation story every animal has learned from its parent since the beginning of time.

According to Scripture, God created everything. The creatures of the water. The beasts of the land. The wild ones. The tame ones. Every crawling thing. Every creeping thing. Every flying thing. Every thing.

The seen and the unseen. God created it all. And it was good.

According to Scripture the creation of animal life occurred on the fifth day; before God created humans on the sixth day.

The animals felt special being the first living things and showed their appreciation of God's blessing by spreading across the land and sky, the sea and the earth filling the world with their songs and sounds, their howling and woofing, their purring and their snoring; displaying for God their many textures and temperaments.

And when God created human, God said, "take care of this great earth I have created. You have dominion over the animals."

Now one of the animals named Dog heard this and became filled with fear. What is this dominion? What does it mean? God went to all the animals, and no one knew.

Dog was brave and curious. So Dog decided to go straight to the Source. Dog decided to talk to God.

Dog started the journey to God and realized there were no words. What would Dog say? But as Dog got closer to God, Dog's fear vanished. Dog felt calm. Dog felt a sense of peace.

Dog realized that even though Dog could not communicate with words with God the way the human could, Dog had something special, yet another gift from God.

Dog stood before God and peered into the face of God. God smiled. Dog remembered the look in God's eye and recognized the gift from God. Dog knew that there needed to be a message that all would understand.

So Dog spread the following words to all who would hear: "On the day you were born, God looked into your face and smiled, and left God's signature in your eyes."

Dog did not have to fear humans who kept their eyes on God because God gave Dog and all the animals the gift of God's unconditional love as a reminder to humans that dominion was not power over all, but rather that we are all God's creations.

Love God. Love All.

But Dog still wanted to feel special. So Dog only told this to all the Dogs on the earth: "I peered into the face of God and saw my reflection. This is why when you see Dog backward in the mirror. You see God."

(c) 2018



(Illustration by Calejdart)



In Honor

Of

Annie Antiuk

Sophia Baylor

Tom Baylor

Daisy Blair

Reese Bowen

Bella Christianson

Olive Christianson

Keysee Clark

F.J. Cloud

Andy Davis

Molly Galmon

Bailey Goza

Chelo Goza

Cece Graves

Flora Hensman

Gizmo Jones

Stryppe Jones

Buttercup Karakhanova-

Whitesell

Mia Karakhanova-Whitesell

Pumpkin Karakhanova-Whitesell

Fila Karakhanova-Whitesell

H.C. Lee

Popsicle Lee

Bella Longino

Bunny Longino

Daisy Longino

Sassy Longino

Sunny Longino

Hugo Marino

L.D. Mauk

Rhea Mauk

Curby McClellan

Little Guy Merullo

Paul Merullo-Zemanek

Pete Merullo-Zemanek

Ringo Merullo-Zemanek

Rufus Peterson

Teddy Peterson

Ace Rainman

Buster Rainman

Lucy Rainman

Walter Rainman

Gib Roach

Molly Roach

Shadow Roach

Paco Cipitio Romero Atkins

Roreaux Rayo del Sol Romero Atkins

Sage Saad

Foca Schuller-Sodders
Gringo Schuller-Sodders
Komo Schuller-Sodders
Mac Schuller-Sodders
Maggie Schuller-Sodders
Flora Sennewald-Frazier
Remi Skarich
Sonny Stewart
Daniel Tsubai
Kit Tsubai
Lulu Vallés
Barley Ward-Hopson
Bernie Ward-Hopson
Jan Ward-Hopson
Jack Ward-Hopson
Pearl Ward-Hopson
Paisley Wilderman
Esme Yap Bowen
Luna Yap Bowen



Forgiveness: The Wolf of Gubbio

Source: The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi, Chapter XXI

At the time, when Saint Francis was living in the city of Gubbio, a large wolf appeared in the neighborhood, so terrible and so fierce, that he not only devoured other animals, but he made a prey of men also; and since he often approached the town, all the people were in great alarm, and used to go about armed, as if going to battle.

Notwithstanding these precautions, if any of the inhabitants ever met him alone, he was sure to be devoured, as all defense was useless: and, through fear of the wolf, they dared not go beyond the city walls.

Saint Francis, feeling great compassion for the people of Gubbio, resolved to go and meet the wolf, though all advised him not to do so. Making the sign of the holy cross, and putting all his confidence in God, he went forth from the city, taking his brethren with him; but these fearing to go any further, Saint Francis bent his steps alone toward the spot where the wolf was known to be, while many people followed at a distance, and witnessed the miracle.

The wolf, seeing all this multitude, ran towards Saint Francis with his jaws wide open.

As he approached, the saint, making the sign of the cross, cried out: "Come hither, brother wolf; I command thee in the name of Christ, neither to harm me nor anybody else."

Marvellous to tell, no sooner had Saint Francis made the sign of the cross, than the terrible wolf, closing his jaws, stopped running, and coming up to Saint Francis, lay down at his feet as meekly as a lamb.

And the saint thus addressed him: "Brother wolf, thou hast done much evil in this land, destroying and killing the creatures of God without His permission; yea, not animals only hast thou destroyed, but thou hast even dared to devour men, made after the image of God; for which thing thou art worthy of being hanged like a robber and a murderer. All men cry out against thee, the dogs pursue thee, and all the inhabitants of this city are thine enemies; but I will make peace between them and thee, O brother wolf, it so be thou no more offend them, and they shall forgive thee all thy past offenses, and neither men nor dogs shall pursue thee anymore."

Having listened to these words, the wolf bowed his head, and, by the movements of his body, his tail, and his eyes, made signs that he agreed to what Saint Francis said.

On this Saint Francis added: "As thou art willing to make this peace, I promise thee that thou shalt be fed every day by the inhabitants of this land so long as thou shalt live among them; thou shalt no longer suffer hunger, as it is hunger which has made thee do so much evil; but if I obtain all this for thee, thou must promise, on thy side, never again to attack any animal or any human being; dost thou make this promise?"

Then the wolf, bowing his head, made a sign that he consented.

Said Saint Francis again: "Brother wolf, wilt thou pledge thy faith that I may trust to this thy promise?" and putting out his hand he received the pledge of the wolf; for the latter lifted up his paw and placed it familiarly into the hand of Saint Francis, giving him thereby the only pledge which was in his power.

Then said Saint Francis, addressing him again: "Brother wolf, I command thee, in the name of Christ, to follow me immediately, without hesitation or doubting, that we may go together to ratify this peace which we have concluded in the name of God;" and the wolf, obeying him, walked by his side as meekly as a lamb, to the great astonishment of all the people.

Now, the news of this most wonderful miracle spreading quickly through the town, all the inhabitants, both men and women, small and great, young and old, flocked to the marketplace to see Saint Francis and the wolf.

All the people being assembled, the saint got up to preach, saying, amongst other things, how for our sins God permits such calamities, and how much greater and more dangerous are the flames of hell, which last forever, than the rage of a wolf, which can kill the body only; and how much we ought to dread the jaws of hell, if the jaws of so small an animal as a wolf can make a whole city tremble through fear.

The sermon being ended, Saint Francis added these words: "Listen my brethren: the wolf who is here before you has promised and pledged his faith that he consents to make peace with you all, and no more to offend you in aught, and you must promise to give him each day his necessary food; to which, if you consent, I promise in his name that he will most faithfully observe the compact."

Then all the people promised with one voice to feed the wolf to the end of his days; and Saint Francis, addressing the latter, said again: "And thou, brother wolf, dost thou promise to keep the compact, and never again to offend either man or beast, or any other creature?" And the wolf knelt down, bowing his head, and, by the motions of his tail and of his ears, endeavoured to show that he was willing, so far as was in his power, to hold to the compact.

Then Saint Francis continued: "Brother wolf, as thou gavest me a pledge of this thy promise when we were outside the town, so now I will that thou renew it in the sight of all this people. And assure me that I have done well to promise in thy name:" and the wolf lifting up his paw placed it in the hand of Saint Francis.

Now this event caused great joy in all the people, and a great devotion towards Saint Francis, both because of the novelty of the miracle, and because of the peace which had been concluded with the wolf; and they lifted up their voices to heaven, praising and blessing God, who had sent them Saint Francis, through whose merits they had been delivered from such a savage beast.

The wolf lived two years at Gubbio; he went familiarly from door to door without harming anyone, and all the people received him courteously, feeding him with great pleasure, and no dog barked at him as he went about.

At last, after two years, he died of old age, and the people of Gubbio mourned his loss greatly; for when they saw him going about so gently amongst them all, he reminded them of the virtue and sanctity of Saint Francis.



Saint Clare of Assisi

(Santa Chiara d'Assisi in Italian)

On July 16, 1194, Chiara Offreduccio deFavrone, later known as "*Saint Clare of Assisi*," was born into a noble family of Assisi, Spoleto, Italy. She became an early, and devout follower of Saint Francis, also of Assisi. Like other young women of her class and wealth, she was prepared by her mother to live a life of generosity and service. Her education included being taught to read, write, spin yarn and do needlework. Clare's mother was deeply religious and Clare also became absorbed in her devotion.

The normal path for a young woman of her social and economic class led to an elite social and economic marriage. This is what her father wanted for his beautiful, deeply religious daughter, and he chose a man that met his requirements for this daughter. Clare, however, chose a different path for herself, and at age eighteen, she fled from her palatial home for refuge to the Porziuncola Chapel which was near Assisi.

She heard Francis preach in the *San Giorgio Church*, and was so heavily influenced by Francis that she became one of his earliest and most devoted followers. She asked him to help her dedicate her life to God. He agreed and St. Francis and Clare were good friends from that day on. Their goal was to live lives of Gospel poverty. They are often considered to be counterparts of each other.

On March 18, 1212, Francis received Clare's vows and began the "*Second Order of St. Francis*." Later that year, Clare founded a religious order of women that first was named, "*Poor Ladies*." The name soon changed to become "*The Poor Clares*." Many women, including her mother and sister (Agnes) joined Clare. They were housed in the church and convent of San Damiano, near Assisi and in 1216, Clare became its Abbess. These women were admired and devoted themselves to prayer, penance, contemplation and manual work. They practiced severe fasts, lived in cloisters, and thereby removed themselves from the outside world. Time passed and many women across Europe adopted this way of life and ultimately joined the order.

Clare's rule for life, originally based on the Benedictine rule, was the "*privilege of perfect poverty*," which forbade the ownership of property by individuals and by the community as well. She considered this rule of penitential prayer life to be "*a vitalizing force for church and society*." The order increased in number and area.

Throughout the years, St. Francis and Clare remained close friends and she was with him when he died in 1226. She had been exposed to leprosy during her work with the poor, and is suspected of being a victim of this disease herself until her own death in 1253.

Today, "*The Poor Clares of Saint Colette*" are located mostly in France, but there are more than 20,000 nuns of this order in more than 70 countries throughout the world.

On August 11, 1253, Clare died in Assisi. In 1255, after being credited with more than two life saving miracles, Clare was canonized and made a Saint by Pope Alexander IV.

Other Resources

Liturgy and Blessing of the Animals

St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals and Other Resources from Episcopal Relief and Development

<http://www.er-d.org/children>

Liturgy for St. Francis Day in English and Spanish from the Diocese of Texas

<http://www.epicenter.org/curriculum-resources-for-congregations/>

Blessing of the Animals Service

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/sr-bless-animal.php>

Story Books

Francis: The Poor Man of Assisi by Tommie di Paola

The Song of Francis by Tomie de Paola

Saint Francis by Brian Wildsmith

Stories of St. Francis Online

God's Troubadour, The Story of St. Francis of Assisi by Sophie Jewett

<http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php3?author=jewett&book=troubadour&story=contents>

Stories about St. Francis and the Animals from American Catholic:

Stories abound of how St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) could communicate with animals and felt at one with all creation. Many of these stories were first recorded by Thomas of Celano during the 13th Century.

Versions of them, retold by John Bookser Feister, can be found at:
www.americancatholic.org/features/stories.asp



WEAPONS POLICY:

PURSUANT TO SECTION 30.05, PENAL CODE (CRIMINAL TRESPASS), A PERSON MAY NOT ENTER THIS PROPERTY WITH A FIREARM.

PURSUANT TO SECTION 30.06, PENAL CODE (TRESPASS BY LICENSE HOLDER WITH A CONCEALED HANDGUN), A PERSON LICENSED UNDER SUBCHAPTER H, CHAPTER 411, GOVERNMENT CODE (HANDGUN LICENSING LAW), MAY NOT ENTER THIS PROPERTY WITH A CONCEALED HANDGUN.

PURSUANT TO SECTION 30.07, PENAL CODE (TRESPASS BY LICENSE HOLDER WITH AN OPENLY CARRIED HANDGUN), A PERSON LICENSED UNDER SUBCHAPTER H, CHAPTER 411, GOVERNMENT CODE (HANDGUN LICENSING LAW), MAY NOT ENTER THIS PROPERTY WITH A HANDGUN THAT IS CARRIED OPENLY.

Prayer for My Pet

In your infinite wisdom, Lord God, when you created the universe, you blessed us with all living creatures. We especially thank you for giving us our pets, who are our friends and who bring us so much joy in life. Their presence very often helps us get through trying times. Kindly bless my pet. May my pet continue giving me joy and remind me of your power.

May we realize that as our pets trust us to take care of them, so we should trust you to take care of us, and in taking care of them we share in your love for all your creatures. Enlighten our minds to preserve all endangered species so that we may continue to appreciate all of your creations. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please share your event photos with us!

Email them to frontoffice@trinitymidtown.org or use #trinitypetblessing.

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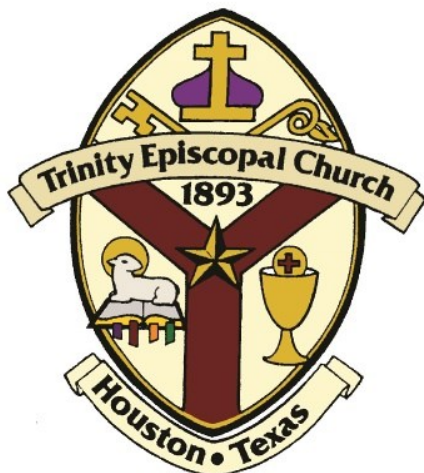
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JOIN US EACH SUNDAY AT TRINITY CHURCH

8:00 a.m. Rite I Service
10:30 a.m. Rite I or II Main Service
12:30 p.m. Rite III Jazz Service

OTHER WEEKLY SERVICES

6:00 p.m. Wednesday Healing Service