

Remembering St Francis of Assisi. Q Blessing of Pets

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We have a statue of St. Francis in our backyard, where I often say my prayers. It was given to me after I helped organise an interfaith conference on peace. The birds on Francis remind us of his loving sermon to the birds of Assisi.

Giotto captured this in his beautiful painting. In this homily, St. Francis spoke to the birds about how God had made them so they are free to fly wherever they choose; had reserved the realm of the air for them; given them songs to sing; streams to drink from, and tall trees in which to build their nests. According to the accounts, Francis therefore invited the birds to continue singing their thanks to God. After listening carefully, the birds flew away, forming the shape of a cross.

With this background as to Francis' joyous love of God in all creation, it's evident why a Service to bless our pets is often linked to his Feast Day in early October.

As we give thanks for the love we are given by our pets, we also offer prayers for the wellbeing of all living beings. A particular contemporary concern is how human behaviour is causing the extinction of some species, including



<https://interfaithliaisoncommittee.carrd.co/>



**PRAYERS & MEDITATION
FOR COP28**

*AN ENCOURAGEMENT FROM
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OUR INVITATION TO YOU

We encourage people of all faiths to offer their prayers and meditations towards a beneficial COP 28.

Our prayer and meditation around the world has helped the previous COPs. This was the feedback we have received. The picture above is of Prayer and Meditation at COP26 in Glasgow. Not pictured are those who offered their spiritual practice at that time from many other places in the world. Our invitation is that we continue what we have begun with a renewed sincerity of commitment. The need now, as we all know, is urgent.

COP28 will aim to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees and provide climate justice. These are high aims, in problematic international circumstances. Our prayers and meditations are much needed.

We already are seeing the consequences of climate change. The experts urge us to act swiftly to avert a worsening climate emergency.

As people of faith, we offer the unique contribution of our spiritual practice. We know how our prayers and meditations can change the atmosphere and help with inspiration.

We all know the difference between a holy place of cordial relationships and a place fraught with human discord.

From now to the time of the Talanoa Dialogue and Interfaith Service on 30 November in Christ Church Dubai and to the end of the COP, please meditate and pray. We hope all who gather for this COP will feel they are on holy ground and act accordingly, for the sake of all creation.

Relatedly, dear friends of the Elijah Interfaith Institute have a wonderful Assisi project pertaining to interfaith cooperation on matters of peace and planetary care.

https://www.parishoftheparks.com.au/uploads/4/7/9/8/47985323/7-_global_house_of_friendship_and_hope_brochure_summer_2022.pdf

One other reflection:

We once had a Labrador called Snoopy. We found Snoopy in the Grafton Dog Pound. All the family loved Snoopy very much, even when our shoes went missing and came back rather chewed! But we quickly learned that Snoopy must have been badly beaten before coming to our home.. Just the way Snoopy shrank back when someone came with a lifted hand to give a friendly pat.

I was thinking of Snoopy this week in relation to the 'Crumpled Heart' exercise I brought back from the Chicago Parliament of World Religions.

The one where we:

- * take a paper heart and say mean things to it as we crumple it up;
- * say sorry to the heart as we smooth it out;
- * then notice, as we smooth it out, that the crumpled lines still remain..

The poignant message of the exercise being that, even if we apologise for unkind words and actions, the heart of the one hurt may never really be the same. The scars from mean words and actions can last a long time. We saw this with Snoopy, and we know it, don't we, from our human lives..

Hence, how much better it is if all our words and actions are simply kind! Aware of such realities, no wonder St. Francis wrote his beautiful and inclusive peace prayer.

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

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;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, 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.



Painting for the 'Seasons of Creation'

<https://www.mail.laudatosimovement.org/view.html?x=a62e&m=AM&mc=s&s=zzeg&u=z&z=B0t6nTU&>