



## **St James's Piccadilly Animal Blessing Service**

**Sunday 28 August 2016 at 3pm**

### **Introduction & Welcome**

Welcome to our inaugural Animal Blessing service. We are a church community who takes seriously our commitment not just to one another and humankind but to all God's creation. This is evident in our concern for the environment, our ongoing progress as an Eco-Church, our membership of the Anglican Society of the Welfare of Animals and not least the number of dogs who are among our regular Sunday morning congregation. We are particularly delighted today to extend our welcome to other pets and companion animals into our midst as we give thanks for the riches they bring to our lives and ask God to bless them. Obviously, there are some companion animals who for a variety of reasons are unable to physically be with us today, but we bring them in our hearts.

This is a short and informal service, and obviously, it's impossible to predict the ratio of barks, snarls, purrs and hisses, but I hope you will all feel equally welcome. I hope too, that you can all see an order of service and will join in the parts in bold text.

The animals of God's creation inhabit the skies, the earth, and the sea. They share in the ways of human beings. They have a part in our lives. St Francis of Assisi recognized this when he called the animals, wild and tame, his brothers and sisters. The bond between human and animal is not a mere coincidence, but a deep connection that stretches back to Creation and forward to a time when we may find our relationships free of predation and domination.

### **Opening prayer**

Today we thank God for the gifts of companionship and beauty which animals and pets bring to our lives and homes and ask God's blessing on them. So let us pray:

Holy God,  
you who created them and called them good:  
bless again these creatures  
who come to us as a blessing  
fashioned of fur or feather or fin,  
formed of flesh that breathes with your own breath,  
that you have made from sheer delight,  
that you have given in dazzling variety.

Bless them  
who curl themselves around our hearts  
who twine themselves through our days  
who companion us in our labour  
who call us to come and play.

Bless them  
who will never be entirely tamed  
and so remind us that you love what is wild,  
that you rejoice in what lives close to the earth,  
that your heart beats in the heart of these creatures  
you have entrusted to our care. **Amen.**

## **Song**

We're now going to sing a hymn based on a canticle by St Francis.

All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voice and with us sing  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
thou silver moon with softer gleam:

*Refrain: O praise God, O praise God,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,  
Ye clouds that sail in heaven along,  
O praise God, alleluia!  
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
ye lights of evening, find a voice:

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,  
make music for thy Lord to hear,  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Thou fire so masterful and bright,  
that givest us both warmth and light:

Dear mother earth, who day by day  
unfoldest blessings on our way,  
O praise God, alleluia!  
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,  
let them God's glory also show:

And all ye folk of tender heart,  
forgiving others, take your part,  
O sing ye alleluia!  
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,  
praise God and on God cast your care:

And thou, most kind and gentle death,  
waiting to hush our latest breath,  
O praise God, alleluia!  
Thou leadest home the child of God,

and Christ our Lord the way hath trod:

Let all things their Creator bless,  
and worship God in humbleness;  
O praise God, alleluia!  
Praise, the Creator, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:

### **First Reading**

From the Book of Genesis:

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

*Genesis 1:24-31*

### **Responsorial**

Lord God, through your Word you created all that is. In all Creation, your word resonates, so that even the stones proclaim you as Lord. The whales and all that move in the waters, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the wild, you call all creation to praise and glorify you. But our lips are often silent, our praise unspoken, and our thankfulness forgotten.

**O God, our creator, touch our lips that we may give you thanks.**

You made the earth a home for all creatures, and made it holy by your presence among us, teaching us to learn of your kingdom by loving and caring for the creatures of the earth. But we often pass by and turn away from those creatures weaker and poorer than ourselves, and from those we fear.

**Come among us, Lord Jesus, and reveal your kingdom in our midst.**

In you all creatures find the wellspring of life and You give us water from the earth to sustain us. You give your creatures eyes to see and ears to hear but we are often blind and deaf to their pain because of our indifference, greed and carelessness.

**Come Holy Spirit, and kindle in us the fire of your love.  
Come Holy Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**

## **Reading**

Psalm 104:10-25

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;  
they flow between the hills,  
giving drink to every wild animal;  
the wild asses quench their thirst.  
By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;  
they sing among the branches.  
From your lofty abode you water the mountains;  
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,  
and plants for people to use,  
to bring forth food from the earth,  
and wine to gladden the human heart,  
oil to make the face shine,  
and bread to strengthen the human heart.  
The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly,  
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.  
In them the birds build their nests;  
the stork has its home in the fir trees.  
The high mountains are for the wild goats;  
the rocks are a refuge for the coney.  
You have made the moon to mark the seasons;  
the sun knows its time for setting.  
You make darkness, and it is night,  
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.  
The young lions roar for their prey,  
seeking their food from God.  
When the sun rises, they withdraw  
and lie down in their dens.  
People go out to their work  
and to their labour until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,  
creeping things innumerable are there,  
living things both small and great.

## **Roll call of remembrance**

We now to come to our roll call of remembrance - a special time in our service where we remember the animals that are no longer with us. I will read all the names on our roll call and at the end, please feel free to add names of your own.

**Cats:**  
Amber  
Bella  
Boris  
Dennis  
Henry  
Malty  
Mitten  
Murphy

Oscar  
Scarlet  
Teddy  
Tibi  
Tiger

**Dogs:**  
Boris  
Honey

Pluto  
Rocky  
Smithers  
Star

**Others:**  
Ciccio (quail)  
Cippolino (greenfinch)

Holy God, we give you thanks for the love, loyalty and companionship given by these creatures. We remember them now, giving thanks for many precious memories, and trusting them to your everlasting love. Amen.

### Prayers

With confidence and trust let us pray to God:

For all animals and creatures, their habitats and environment, their health and well-being, that they may continue to teach us of your wisdom and grace: **Loving Creator, hear us.**

For the care and respect of all animals, especially those used for food and for experimentation: **Loving Creator, hear us.**

For those who support and care for bird, animal, wildlife and marine sanctuaries: **Loving Creator, hear us.**  
For vets, for the RSPCA for animal charities and all who work to ensure the health and wellbeing of animals: **Loving Creator, hear us.**

For growing awareness of our own responsibility for the care and nurture of all animal life: **Loving Creator, hear us.**

For the invaluable love, support and dedication of assistance animals: **Loving Creator, hear us.**

For animal companions everywhere, for the goodness and love they freely offer: **Loving Creator, hear us.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are Yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

## **Blessing of animals**

I'm now going to bless all the animals here today. I'll begin with a prayer of blessing and then come round and bless each one individually.

Blessed are you, Lord God,  
maker of all living creatures.

On the fifth and sixth days of creation,  
you called forth fish in the sea,  
birds in the air and animals on the land.

You inspired St. Francis to call all animals  
his brothers and sisters.

We ask you to bless these animals here today.

By the power of your love,  
enable them 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! Amen.

***Name of pet, may God bless and protect you and may you and your human enjoy life together and find joy in the love of God who created you. Amen.***

## **Song (x 3)**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God above you Heavenly Host  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.

## **Closing Prayer & blessing**

Go your own ways and be good stewards of all creation –  
seeking peace, sharing love and giving comfort as you go,  
knowing that we are all connected;  
and the blessing of God,  
Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit  
be upon you and remain with you, this days and always.  
Amen.