

Then Job answered: "But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In God's hand is the life of every living thing." *Job 12:1a, 7-10b*

The Collect for St. Francis' Day

Officiant: May God be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Officiant: Let us pray. 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; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Leader: Let us give thanks to God our Creator for all good gifts so freely bestowed upon us, saying, we give you thanks, O God.

Leader: For the beauty and wonder of your creation, earth and sky and sea;

All: *We give you thanks, O God*

Leader: For the vast expanse of mountains and forests, plains and rivers; oceans and deserts,

All: *We give you thanks, O God.*

Leader: For all creatures that breathe, and move, and have life, with feathers, fur and fins;

All: *We give you thanks, O God*

Leader: For all wild animals, majestic and tiny, known and unknown, revealing your boundless creativity and freedom

All: *We give you thanks, O God.*

Leader: For the love, joy and comfort offered to us by our animal companions, and the trust given us by them, and you;

All: *We give you thanks, O God*

Leader: For those animals we have loved who have died, especially _____ we pray, with grief in loss and gratitude for their presence in our lives. We commend them to you, O God, knowing that no sparrow falls to the earth without your care, and trusting that you will do for them more than we can ask or imagine.

All: *We give you thanks, O God*

Leader: Grant, O God of all life, that each animal here may be cherished and protected, and that our love for them may deepen our commitment to care for your whole creation.

All: *Amen*

Animals, including those represented by photos, are introduced by their people and then blessed by one of the clergy.

When all have been blessed, all pray together the prayer attributed to St. Francis:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we 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.

Leader: Go in peace and honor all God's creatures.

People: *Thanks be to God.*