

# Troubadour

Some years ago a small ecumenical magazine on spirituality and prayer published a series of articles written from the viewpoint of a much loved pet. Subsequently they were compiled in a small book, *Ask Angela*, by Barbara Ackerman. That book is now out of print, but we were fortunate in obtaining permission to reprint the articles. We hope you will enjoy them and appreciate the wisdom of "Angela."

From the "Ask Angela" series

## On Being Fully Alive- Angela's Parables

**N**ow is great.

**L**ife goes better with someone to play with.

**Y**ou may find bliss if you forget the past and don't worry about the future, but focus on the moment you're in.

**F**orgive unceasingly.

**L**ive and let live. Be and let be.

**T**ake time to sniff.

**T**here really isn't any special place that we're going to, like a destination. It's all in the walking. So lighten up and enjoy the trip and sniffs.

**A**ny place is a fine place to be. Paradise can be a parking lot, a garbage pail, or a mound of dirt.

**L**ife rolls along more smoothly when you let go of your resentments. Harboring resentments makes you miss things like the weather and squirrels.

**B**e easily pleased.

**I**t is okay to be needy. It does not have to stop you from being in the world or making a contribution to it. By sharing your neediness with others, you

actually serve them. You provide others with an opportunity to recognize their own needs and to exercise their compassion and generosity. Everyone involved gets "in shape" and gets healthier.

**S**ometimes it is fun to be a little selfish, and sometimes it isn't. At times, it is simply *more* fun when *everyone* is having fun. It is like more general bliss for all, or communal bliss. *If everyone is having fun, there is more fun available for everyone.*

**I**f you are feeling guilty, it is always wise to check it out. If you are in joy, then enjoy, for guilt is useless. Perhaps, though, you are doing something that's not so nice, or you are hurting someone's feelings or forgetting them, or you are being more selfish than you need to be. Guilt can be a sign to you that you are

*continued on next page*



Playful Angel Kitty provides companionship to owner after loss of grandmother.

**Angela, with  
Barbara Ackerman --**  
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Sisters of  
St. Francis  
of Assisi

## Angela's Parables *(continued from Pg 1)*

not acting out of your best self. Then you can simply fix it and forgive yourself quickly and completely.

**W**hen you feel affection for another or do something nice for them, you don't really need to be thanked. This is because the good deed you have done for another is a deed done for yourself, and the warmth you have given out is the feeling you are left with there, in your own heart.

**I** believe that there is a God. Who else could make the sky so beautiful or this tree so shady? Who else could have come up with all these incredible views and sensational smells?

**D**ogs are guardian angels whose wings are under their fur.

**I**f you want to find out what plan God has for you and what work He wants you to do in the world, you need to do two things. First, you need to be willing to stop trying to figure it out for yourself and admit that you don't have a clue. Be silent in your mind and heart, and stop believing that you're smart enough to figure it out. Give up trying to be intelligent on this issue. Secondly, you must be willing to accept the job God asks you to do, no matter what it is—even if it sounds disgusting or hard or terrifying. You must accept

I am incapable of doing anything else except what I was put here to do. I am here to be in bliss as much as possible, to love, need, forgive, and demand attention from humans, which keeps their hearts open and soft. Sort of like a healer, I guess.

**P**erhaps in the long run, your job in life may not be so very different from mine—it *may* be what God would want you to do. Perhaps, too, if you begin living as I do—in a very simple, direct way—you may get closer to God's plan for you than you first imagined.

**Y**ou are often concerned about whether God is there personally looking out for you or whether He will answer your prayers. For years in your heart of hearts, you have been yearning for a dog. A dog in need of love, attention, reassurance, and affection—and **HERE I AM!** I may be borrowed or loaned, but remember you were never specific about that. But I do fit the bill perfectly, don't I? Am I not the answer to a prayer? Do you need more proof that God knows and supplies all that we truly need? Don't you get it? There are no exceptions.

**Y**ou, by the way, are the answer to my prayer. Do you see how it works? God is really neat about Things like prayer. Yes, dogs pray too, and their prayers do get answered. You just have to really, really want it in your heart of hearts and be sincere and happy with your prayer, and then be silent, still, patient, and wait with faith. God always



Annie watches over the family campsite.

the job with joy, even if you feel you'll have to wake up one morning and be a totally different person in order to do it.

**B**efore God tells you anything, He has to know you've given up your "I Know Best" attitude, and that you're in a receptive frame of mind and heart to hear and receive His words. He must know that you are willing to "get with the program" and are not making up one of your own and calling it His.

**B**eing a dog, my life is pretty simple and satisfying. It is this way because

Tigger sits in her Christmas box, guarding her "stuff," in her home in Kingsport, Tennessee.



answers our most ardent, needful prayers in the best possible way, sometimes beyond anything we might imagine for ourselves. Can you imagine the

*(continued in next column)*



Balto, a 6-year-old husky in Indiana, takes a nap.

# St. Francis Pewter Pet Medallion



Here's a beautiful reminder that St. Francis loves and protects pets, and is with them wherever they go. Our St. Francis pet medallion features a lovely image of St. Francis and animals, with the words, "St. Francis of Assisi, Protector of Animals." Cast in classic pewter, we will even engrave it on the back with the name of a pet free of charge. This medallion makes a charming gift for a fellow pet owner, or for your own pet. Please accept it with our compliments for your donation of \$25 or more.

Thank you for your generosity.

## Angela's Parables

*(conclusion)*

two of us being this much in love if we put our names in a computer dating service? God's perfection is amazing. If ever you lose sight of this, think about us.

**T**rust and affection may come as gifts, but are most often earned through patience and with an open heart. This is called faith.

**L**ife becomes happier and more meaningful the more you are yourself.

**T**o be fully alive means to be fully yourself, without apology. This is called grace.

# Blessing of Pets



Stella DeVenuta, OSF, (above right), helps to organize a pet blessing on St. Francis Day at the college where she works.

## Franciscan Blessing of the Animals

Blessed are you, Lord God,  
maker of all living creatures.  
You inspired St. Francis to call all animals  
his brothers and sisters.  
We ask you to bless this animal.  
By the power of your love,  
enable it 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.

# Cards Available All Occasion Cards



**P-12**  
**For a Wonderful Vet**

Thanks for all the kindness and TLC you've shown, you care for others' pets as if they were your own.



**P-8**  
**While we were away...**

It meant so much to have you watch our pet! Thanks!

**P-6**  
**Happy Birthday**



Hope your special day is filled with laughter, fun and lots of good times!

**P-11** **Thinking of you**  
Blank inside



**P-9**  
**May cherished memories of special times bring you comfort in your sorrow**

... and peaceful solace to your heart.  
Sincere condolences.



The remembrance & all occasion cards are in full color.

To request cards, call 414-744-1160 ext. 3033 or e-mail [sguinta@lakeosfs.org](mailto:sguinta@lakeosfs.org)

Your donations are appreciated!

## Remembrance Cards

Inside is the enrollment panel & a brief sympathy message

When someone loses a beloved animal companion, the grief is real. Pets can be such an important part of a person's life.

These remembrance cards are intended to help express your sympathy to someone who has lost a pet. They carry with them the prayers of our sisters for your grieving friend...or for you.

By offering your financial support to the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi through this card program, you help us to bring food to hungry children and medicine to the sick... hope and comfort to ailing seniors, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged minorities ...compassion to the imprisoned...and so much more.

Thank you!

**T1827**

General



Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Your name and the name of your beloved pet,

\_\_\_\_\_ will be inscribed in the *Book of Beloved Companions* at the motherhouse of the *Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi* and will be remembered in the prayers of all of our sisters to bring you comfort in your time of loss.



**T3353**

Loss of dog



**T9871**

Loss of cat



**T0450**

General

**Troubadour** is a publication of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis, Wisconsin. Please send your comments and suggestions to: Editor-**Troubadour**

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**PHOTO GALLERY**  
We appreciate receiving photos of the animal friends of our benefactors and try to use as many as possible throughout this publication.