

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

God Is Close *More Parables from Angela*

Make a big fuss over friends you see. Greet them as if it's been years since the last time you met. Jump up. Lick their faces. Yelp. Make excited noises in the back of your throat. Bark. Really share your glee because everyone deserves to be treated like a celebrity once in a while.

There is more to good health than exercise and adding oat bran to your diet. Get a good, accurate estimate of how many times a day you need to have your head patted and how many hugs you need to feel your best.

If you aren't getting your adequate daily allowance of hugs and head pats, start giving hugs, or be more like "El Exigente," the demanding one.

When giving a hug, be polite and ask first. Notice that in a hug there is no difference between the hugger and the hugged. Hugging is an equal-opportunity way of giving what you need to get, and getting what you need to give.

Being a dog, I personally prefer head pats over hugs as a sign of support and endearment. I'm sure

that people, too, can feel better by receiving or giving a head pat. Do not be ashamed to ask for this if you need it.

Even when you adore someone, keep in mind that everyone needs some room for their body. Everybody takes up space and needs some free air around them to breathe. It is a real act of love to not crowd or smother with love the one you love.

When you give the one you love some space, chances are, on their own, they will run over to you, lick your face, and place one paw on your arm.

Everyone loves to hear kind words like "Sweetie." Speak kind words often. This exercise enhances your vocabulary and is healthy for your heart.

All living creatures thrive on kind words—the ones spoken as well as the ones heard. When you use kind words, you become a gardener, a doctor, and a magician all at the same time.

When you are with another, try to find the perfection that's there, but

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Sisters of
St. Francis
of Assisi

which sometimes gets hidden beneath what they say or do or the way they behave. When you look expectantly for the perfect-ness in another, you very often find it. This also gives you practice in feeling your own perfect-ness.

There is nothing like the comfort and reassurance of an old familiar smell at the base of an old familiar tree. When you are in need of comfort, take the old familiar route and name every aroma.

For thrills and excitement, take the road less traveled. There is nothing like a few new views and fresh fragrances to add bounce to your step.

The highlight of any outing is returning to your waiting family. Run to each member of your family as if it's been a week since you've seen them. Wag everything to show them how glad you are for this reunion. Raise your head so they can stroke you there more easily. When you have gone to each member of your family with glad tidings, it is then time to eat and drink.

Do not let others lead you where you don't want to go. People feel uncomfortable if they know they can lead you around by the nose. Be the engineer of your own train and the guardian of your own soul.

Sometimes it is better to wear our hearts right out there on our paws. Being stoic and



Turning 9 years old was a big event for "Cindy Grace"

over-guarded makes romping more difficult and diminishes the pleasure of a powerful scent. Do not be ashamed to wear your needs on your paw from time to time. You will be surprised at how happy and even honored people are to help and respond to you with their best. People like knowing that their kindness and gentleness are of use to you; they welcome the opportunity to be kind. Do not be afraid to give others the opportunity to give you their best.

Periods of grace come and go, ebb and flow. When you are in a state of grace, soak it up. Don't just run. Romp. Bounce. Wag. Roll on your back in the grass. When you feel that you are not in a state of grace, find a sacred space like one end of the couch. Circle your sacred space three times and plop yourself down. Sleep on a special pillow. Eat crackers in bed. Be assured that grace will return to you. Clap your paws if you need more faith.

These "Three Best Friends" were brought together by the owner of Petee (dog on right) -- Paulee (left) was a stray and Tommy the cat lost his owner to a nursing home





“Oreo” (left) seems very comfortable having her picture taken on a piece of satin cloth



“Chiquita” (right) poses with a “friend” on the kitchen counter



These collies seem to take posing for photos in stride!

Notice everything that makes you pant.

Follow the quickened beating of your heart. This quickened heartbeat is the passionate pulse running through your veins. This is your ecstasy.

Follow the quickened itchings and twitchings of your nose. Follow your nose wherever it leads and go there with courage.

Let your nose stay on the scent of your ecstasy. This keeps your life interesting, refreshing, and worth living.

“Cody” is a search-and-(luckily) rescued dog from Texas who was adopted by a donor in Pennsylvania



If you need to feel God's presence in the world but have your doubts, sit beside the one you love and share a sunset. If you feel moved by the view, if you feel peaceful and connected to the one you love, be assured you have just discovered God's whereabouts.

If you want or need to feel that God is personally close to you, but have your doubts, notice how you feel when you see the one you love coming toward you down the street. Does your tail wag? Do your ears perk up? If the approaching figure of the one you love fills you with awe, wonder, and glee, then rest easy—

God is close.

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.



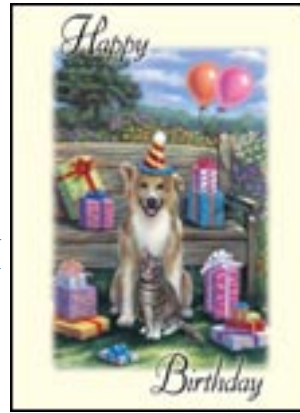
NEW All Occasion Cards Available

NOTE: These cards will be mailed to our previous donors in early March.



V7183
Now That's
Gratitude

Thank you so much for looking after my pet.



V8082
Happy
Birthday

Best Wishes for a wonderful day!

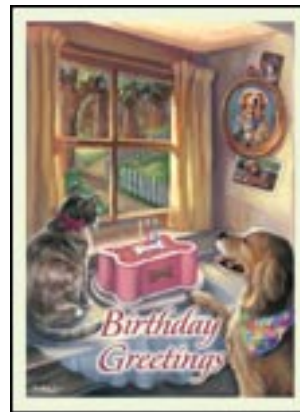


V8741
Birthday
Greetings

With warmest thoughts
and best wishes
for happiness on your
birthday and always.

V1609 With Sympathy

Saying good-bye to a dear friend is never easy,
but take comfort in knowing that memories last forever.



V8466

Prayer on back



Prayer to St. Francis for All Living Things

St. Francis, you loved
all created things, calling them
your brothers and sisters.
You have been named the patron
of the environment.
Help me follow your example
of respecting and caring
for all of creation,
for our air, water, forests,
and all creatures,
particularly for our pets.
Watch over our world, St. Francis,
and help me to care for
all living things. Amen.

Pet Blessing at Cardinal Stritch

The university, which is a ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi and located in Milwaukee, held its annual St. Francis Day pet blessing on Sunday, October 2.



All the cards are in full color.

To request cards,
call 414-744-1160 ext. 3033
or e-mail
sguinta@lakeosfs.org

Your donations
are appreciated!

PHOTO GALLERY

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

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