

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

There's No Place Like Home Angela Addresses Homesickness

Dear Angela,

I hope that you can help me with a question that keeps coming into my head late at night. At the present time, I live across an ocean from many of the people, places, and things that mean the most to me.

I keep trying to feel comfortable in my new place, but the images, scents, and inner sights of my old place keep haunting me even though I know things always weren't so great there.

My question is this: How do you get over being homesick and grieving for a past (mostly the people) that mayor may not have been as you remember?

Gratefully,
Susan

Dear Susan,

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and for your question. Homesickness is a very hot topic with me these days because my family and I have recently moved.

My new living quarters are quite spiffy. I have my very own room

complete with private entrance, a couch for entertaining company, and even a washer and dryer. I have a lovely backyard filled with fresh scents that occupy my waking hours. Yet with all this, I too have a question that pops into my head late at night: Can we go home now?

I am told that this is homesickness and that there is no cure for it. I have spent several afternoons lying on my new comforter, trying to come up with words of solace that both of us can use.

First, I am assuming that in your case, when you left your old life for a new one, you were following the



intensified twitching of your nose. Your nose was twitching, wasn't it? If by following your nose you ended up across

(left) Tosha Cherokee is 7 years old

Angela, with Barbara Ackerman -- Originally published by Crossroads Publishing Co., copyright 1994. Permission for reproduction was obtained from Fellowship Prayer, Inc., which publishes the magazine with rights to reprint the series.



an ocean, be assured that you made the appropriate choice for you, even if at times it feels wrong or brings you pain. Knowing that you made the proper choice can be a great source of comfort to you in the painful moments. Feel free to use it.

With my own homesickness, I try to remember that we were not put here on earth to suffer. Our lives were not meant to be solely about getting a flea bath. We are here to discover what purpose our souls have, and to discover what will help the soul grow, flourish, and express itself. We have our hearts, our guts, and our noses to help us. By trusting and following the wisdom of each, we are able to navigate more smoothly and serenely toward our soul's fulfillment and the blessings that life offers us.

When homesickness strikes, I dig my way into a cozy crevice of my comforter and fluff up the sides around me. I have not yet figured out how to roll myself up *into* my comforter, but I'm working on it. In the past, I have discovered that sleeping with the covers up over my head can be a great source of safety and peace.

When I am safely settled, I will then pray. I pray for a visit from my friend Barbara, or the quick return of any family member. I pray for peace and most importantly, for the grace I need to carry on. Then I roll over.

I have found that praying is an excellent way to spend time. My prayer doesn't have to be an elaborate one, nor do I have to stop what I am doing. When I pray for grace, I notice very often that the feeling of grace flows through

Davy Crockett posed for this picture in 2005.



LeNoir and Dutch

me shortly afterwards and homesickness eases. Prayer certainly works wonders, especially when you notice that it has.

I have also found that homesickness eases when I go with it completely. I get into it. I give in. When I totally accept the way things are without judgment, I feel better and have more energy for bliss.

Let me point out to you that when you followed the intensified twitching of your nose, you knew exactly what you wanted and needed. I hope by now you realize you have received both. When you turn out the light, acknowledge that you have received and are still receiving all that you asked for. This is by no means a cure for feeling homesick, but fessing up to the truth always helps.

This 13-year-old cat is named Louie, but his owner affectionately entitled the picture "My Buddy."



I understand fully the pain you feel about leaving some friends behind for one best beloved friend. Choosing is painful, isn't it? I too have experienced this very same push and pull. There have been times on my walks with Barbara when I have felt homesick for my family after just ten minutes, and have led Barbara back to my own front door. In the days before I had my own room for entertaining, I was ruling out the possibility of spending more time with my friend. I hated to disappoint her, but I had to do what I had to do to make myself feel better. It is this way with all of us. We all have to do what we have to do to reach peace.



Sadie Brock seems a bit skeptical about being photographed, but cooperated none-the-less.

Guilt about hurting someone's feelings can trick us into thinking our choices are mistakes. Don't be fooled. Following your nose wherever it leads is the surest way to stay on the path that is right for you.

When I was out walking with Barbara and got homesick and she wouldn't follow me home fast enough, I would bolt from her, dash across the street, and bark at my front door. Yes, there have been times when, in a pinch, running away has done wonders for alleviating my homesickness. I do not suggest this particular solution to you in your situation.

Toby is 15 years old, and blind, deaf and somewhat crippled.

However, his owner states: "He loves everybody."



I hope I have been of some help to you and to all those wrestling with homesickness.

Faithfully,
Angela

Madison J. Munchkin is also called "My Angel with Paws" on the back of this photo.



Thank You!

Bequests were received in 2005-2006 from:

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The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi gratefully acknowledge these gifts totaling: \$347,877.27

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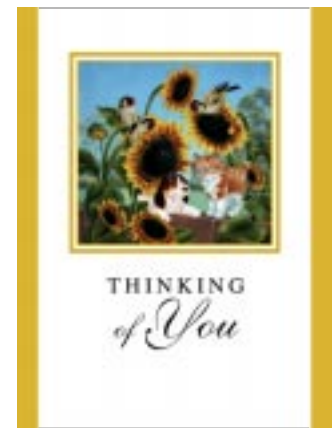
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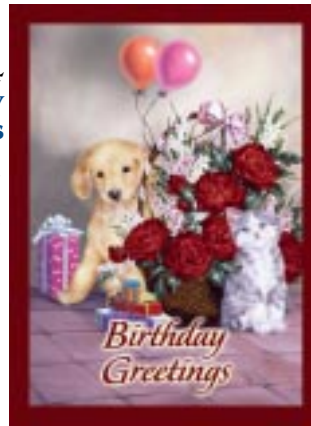


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Bradley Visits Sisters at Convent

The sisters at St. Francis Convent enjoy regular visits from Bradley, with his owner, Sr. Canise Kolbeck (center).

In this photo, Sr. Canise shows Sr. Teresita Schmit (right), age 103, how to get Bradley to ask for a treat.

Sr. Irene Marie Pouillie (back left) watches the process and awaits her turn to offer treats to the canine visitor.



PHOTO GALLERY

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

Thank you for your contributions.

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

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