



# Troubadour

## *From dogs to hamsters to bees ...* **God Has a Plan for All His Creatures**

There are so many reasons for having a pet. Some reasons are connected to well being and safety. K-9 Kodee, the police dog (pictured at right) is a working dog on the job and a pet to Officer Larry off duty.

OSF Associate Midge Pinchar's seeing eye dog (pictured at left) guides her through all of her waking hours.

have statues of him, especially in bird baths. Why is this? Fr. Jack Wintz, OFM, writes that this may just be a popular way of saying, "This man had a special link with all God's creatures, and it's just like him to be standing there among them."

Today we hear so many people describe something as "awesome."



Some people have a pet for companionship and comfort. The people in care facilities appreciate the opportunity to interact with pets that may be residents or just visiting.

Pet owners and scores of other persons who love animals but may not own any can readily identify with St. Francis of Assisi. While St. Francis did not keep any pet, every animal, bird, and, even, bug, was

respected by him and considered a creature of God. There are so many images of Francis with birds circling overhead or animals at his feet. Many gardens and yards

**Fr. Jim Gannon, OFM, greeted Officer Larry and K-9 Kodee, the police dog who will retire soon.**



Sisters of  
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Francis didn't use that word but he knew what it meant to stand in awe of all creatures. "Where the modern cynic sees something 'buglike' in everything that exists," observed the German writer-philosopher Max Scheler, "St. Francis saw even in a bug the sacredness of life.



At the annual blessing of pets at Cardinal Stritch University\* last October, it was obvious that every pet is truly treasured by its owner. But more than that, there was a respectful atmosphere among the people and pets that was so peaceful. During the prayer that began the ceremony and during the blessing itself, the animals were quiet and attentive. They seemed to sense the specialness of this event.

Part of the prayer used at the Blessing was taken from Psalm 104. This is a Psalm that joins us with all of creation. Here are some excerpts:

**1** Bless the LORD, my soul! LORD, my God, you are great indeed! You are clothed with majesty and glory, robed in light as with a cloak. You spread out the heavens like a tent....

**10** You made springs flow into channels that wind among the mountains.

**11** They give drink to every beast of the field; here wild asses quench their thirst.

**12** Beside them the birds of heaven nest; among the branches they sing.

**14** You raise grass for the cattle and plants for our beasts of burden.

The trees of the LORD drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon, which you planted.

**17** There the birds build their nests; junipers are the home of the stork.

**18** The high mountains are for wild goats; the rocky cliffs, a refuge for badgers.

**20** You bring darkness and night falls, then all the beasts of the forest roam abroad.

**21** Young lions roar for prey; they seek their food from God.

**27** All of these look to you to give them food in due time.

**28** When you give to them, they gather; when you open your hand, they are well filled.

**Source:** <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/psalms/psalm104.htm>

At left, the new president of Cardinal Stritch University, Dr. Helen Sobehart, holds Moonshine, a guinea pig adopted from the Humane Society.

The Sobehart household had a total of 22 guinea pigs during the years their children were growing up. Now, after some time without one, Dr. Sobehart and her husband adopted Moonshine.

At right, Linda Steiner and her dog, Greta, came for the blessing. Linda is very active in the Humane Society which is how she met Greta. At the time of hurricane



Katrina, Linda was one of the volunteers that went to the Gulf area to help with the displaced pets.

Below, Maurice Grimes waits with his Golden Retriever for the blessing to begin. This retriever has an interesting name: Tupelo Honey Golden.

Tupelo honey is a top-rated honey with a golden color. Maurice's pet is golden in color and a top-rated pet, which explains the choice of her name.



Beekeepers form strong relationships with their hives. The unknown cause of so many bee hives dying out is of great concern to those in this field. Here is some information on Tupelo Honey found at [www.tupelohoney.org](http://www.tupelohoney.org).

Pure Tupelo honey is produced from the White Ogeechee Tupelo (*nyssa ogeche*). Its growing area ranges through the Ogeechee, Apalachicola, and Chattahoochee

River Basins of northwest Florida. These river valleys are the only place in the world where Tupelo Honey is produced commercially.

Beehives are placed along the river edges. The bees fan out through the surrounding swamps rich with Tupelo blossoms during April and May and return with nectar to produce their liquid treasure. The photo inserted here shows a honey bee with pollen-filled sacks.



**Sr. Margaret Kruse, OSF, Associate Director of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, did a reading during the Pet Blessing Ceremony.**

Pure Tupelo honey has a light amber golden color with a slight greenish cast. It is a choice table grade honey with a delicious flavor that is delicate but distinctive.

Honey produced from the White Tupelo is the only honey that will not granulate. Due to its high laevulose (44.3%), low dextrose (29.98%) ratio (average), doctors have been able to recommend that some diabetic patients consume Tupelo honey.

It is evident that pets and creatures of all kinds hold not only fascination for us, but elicit awe when we consider how many different species there are, what place each species plays in our lives, and the ways in which we are able to interact. Whether it is a pet or an insect, such as a bee, God has a plan for all His creatures.

**\* Cardinal Stritch University is a ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi.**

## **Please Remember...**

**the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi  
with your tax-deductible contribution.**

**Bequests and other planned gifts are greatly appreciated.**

# Our Readers Share Their Pet Photos:



Above: Sir Stafford Silver Spook, dubbed Spooky, is 4 1/2.

At right: Noelle, 10 years old, relaxes on a sofa.



At left: Victor has been missing since July 15, 2008

Right: Lexie (left) was born Sept. 23, 2005, and Bella was born Dec. 11, 2006.



Below: Coco, age 13, takes a snooze in the sun.



# MEET Sr. Marcia

This issue introduces a new author for *Troubadour*: Marcia Lunz, OSF. The career of Sr. Marcia has been a Franciscan journey through music and linguistics. A native of Milwaukee, her first encounter with the sisters was Sr. Aimee Haider in first grade. Her music teachers were Sr. Dorine Berg and later Sr. Romana Hertel. Upon graduation from Divine Savior High School, she joined the congregation.



Read about her life as a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi on the enclosure with this letter.

## NEW Pet Medallion

A newly designed pet medal is available for your donation of \$25 or more.

It is cast in pewter and we will engrave the name of your pet on the back free of charge if you so choose.

You can see an image of the new medal on our website [www.lakeosfs.org/giving](http://www.lakeosfs.org/giving).

Please indicate the name of the pet on the enclosed response form. And please note it may take 6-8 weeks to receive the engraved medal.

## 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.

As Franciscan women who have a commitment to caring for all of creation, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi use environmentally friendly or post-consumer paper and soy ink whenever possible.



*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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