



Troubadour

Mother Nature Provided a Beautiful Fall Day **Third Annual Pet Blessing**

It seems that every year the weather is better for our Pet Blessing, and the number of people and animals attending increases. The spirit is always lively, especially among the younger dogs who like to exercise their barking skills!

Fr. Scott Wallenfelsz, SDS, presided at the ceremony. Before the individual blessings took place, a shortened version of **The Blessing of the Beasts** by Ethel Pochoski (Paulist Press, Brewster, Mass.

2007) was read. This is a delightful story of a cockroach and a skunk that wend their way to the blessing of the animals at the

Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City. One of our donors from New York shared this book with us, and we recommend it highly for children and adults alike.

After the animals were blessed, they received a treat. And their owners received "people" treats.

See more photos from the event on the back page.



The Lesson of the Porcupine

Animals can teach us a lot, as you will see from the story of the porcupines.

The Lesson of the Porcupine

In the coldest winter, many animals die because of the cold. But porcupines, seeing the situation, were smart enough to group together. By doing so they covered themselves from the cold, although their quills wounded each other. After a while they started distancing themselves from one another and they began to freeze.

So they had to make a choice: accept the quills of their buddies or disappear from the face of this earth. Wisely, they decided to come back together. Living with the little wounds that were caused by the close relationship, they were able to survive the cold.

Moral of the story:

The best relationship is not the one that brings together perfect people, but is when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities.

Check out this web site for more on the porcupine:
www.buzzle.com/articles/porcupines-and-dilemmas.html



Source:
www.funnycoolstuff.com/2010/11/08/baby-porcupine-story/

If You Could Be Any Animal ...

what would you be?

Some of our sisters work at the Dominican Center for Women in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. One of their recent newsletters published some of the students' creative writing. One piece that ties in with the theme of this newsletter, "If you could be any animal, what would you be?" by Elizabeth McCullar, is reprinted here:

"I would be a singing bird because I like singing. I could fly all around and spread my wings. I could sit on houses and sing; I could sing in bushes, and sing in trees, over water and on a mountain. I could let my voice be heard. Maybe on your window sill on a summer day, I would sing you a song. Most of all I could see lots of the land that God prepared for us."

Why Bless Animals

Blessing animals dates back to the early church. This took place on January 17, the feast of St. Anthony of the Desert, a patron saint of animals. The blessing was imparted in order to give thanks for everything the animals do to help out human beings.

Today, the blessing often occurs around the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4. St. Francis is known for his love and care of all creation. The stories of his encounter with the wolf of Gubbio and his preaching to the birds provide a strong reason for associating him with animals.

Earlier in history, the animals that helped work the fields and provided transportation for people were the majority of the animals blest. Today, domestic pets are the majority at a blessing, especially in urban areas.

A Blessing Prayer

Gracious God,
bless these animals
for all the ways they help to provide us
with assistance and companionship.
We thank them for their loyalty to us
and pray that we may be caring and
protective of them.

PET MEDAL

Our 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 medal on our website: www.lakeosfs.org/giving/giving.asp

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.

Update on the Million Minute March

In the **Troubadour** last January, we announced that the 2011 Wellness Program, coordinated at the Motherhouse, would concentrate on logging minutes of exercise, and that the goal was to reach one million minutes. On November 14, 2011, the goal was achieved with team effort.

The program is open to all employees at the Motherhouse, Marian Center and St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care, as well as sisters, associates, and residents of Canticle and Juniper Courts. There were 98 people signed up, but, on average, only 70 reported in each week. It was not always the same 70, however.

A lot of the participants liked the fact that this exercise focus was non-competitive. It took pressure off of trying to be on the top team each week. After all, the real goal is to put more exercise into each day, so the challenge was for each individual to try to better her/his own record from the week before.

What is in store for next year's program is in the beginning discussion stage. Everyone is looking forward to a new challenge and an interesting twist on staying healthy.





Boomer

Cher - 18 years old

Charley Sunshine at age 17 in summer of 2007. Lived to be 18 years old.



Zoe - (RIGHT) 5 years, a mix, Brittany-Husky; and Molly (LEFT)- 2 years, Aussie.



Harley - Age 9

Rascal - Age 12



PHOTO GALLERY

We appreciate photos of the animal friends of our benefactors & use as many as possible in this publication.

Thanks for your contributions.

Sammy



Joy



Tiger - Age 5



Our golden retriever Ranger visits with his bird friends as St. Francis watches in our back yard.



Winter Safety Tips for Pets

If you live in a climate that gets below zero in the winter along with the accompanying snow, ice and bitter winds, your pet needs protection from these elements. A few easy actions can eliminate a dangerous situation for your four-footed friend.

When we go out in winter, we get bundled up from head to foot. If your pet has a heavy coat of fur, that may provide enough protection from the elements. If not, those cute dog/pet sweaters can keep the animal's body warm to minimize heat loss. Shivering is always a sign that it is time to go back indoors.

Once you are back inside, check your pet's paws for salt crystals. These crystals sting and are very uncomfortable. Make sure you are using and promoting the use of "pet-friendly" melting salt.

Depending on the weather and where your pet has walked, check to see if ice balls have formed in the pads of the dog's paws. One simple solution is to apply unflavored, nonstick, cooking spray on the paws.

A simple rule of thumb for pet owners is to be very mindful that extreme weather conditions, cold or hot, mean that pets need some extra special care to keep them safe.



This top photo from a reader shows a dog wearing a pet sweater for playing outdoors in the snow.



In this photo from another reader, Minny has clearly found a different way to keep warm!

St. Francis Leading the Animals into Paradise



Theresa Morgan's family has had many pets over the years, and this original artwork by her depicts many of those family pets.

More Photos from 3rd Annual Pet Blessing



For a photo clip of pet blessing photos, visit: www.youtube.com/lakeosfs

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.



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