



The words of this children's song from a Summer Bible School fifteen years ago echoed in my ears this afternoon as we held the annual Blessing of Pets/Animals at St. Mary's. The lawn by the parking lot quickly filled up by 2pm with dogs and cats and even a couple of frogs, not to mention their owners and family members. The pets had a chance to mingle and meet before we began our prayer and blessing. Acknowledging all the gifts of creation coming from the loving hands of our God, we blessed each pet by name, saying " (Name)... may you be blessed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May you and your owner continue to enjoy life together with God."



We held the blessing today, October 4, which is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of pets. St. Francis had a great love for all of creation which was revealed in the words from his "Canticle of the Creatures": "All praise to you, O Lord, for all these brother and sister creatures." Pope Francis named his recent encyclical on the environment *Laudato Si'* (Praised be..) which comes from St. Francis' Canticle. The words of Pope Francis call us to our responsibility to care for creation which is our "common home". But even more he points to the interconnectedness of all creation. Care for the environment leads us to care

for all creatures and animals which leads us to the ultimate care and concern for our fellow human beings. All of creation is connected in wonderful beauty. *Laudato Si'* calls us to reflect seriously on how we are living in communion, not only with God, others and ourselves, but also with all creatures and with nature as a whole.



May today's simple blessing of our pets lead us to a greater awareness of our connection and responsibility for our fellow human beings and all the created world.

God Bless.

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You can view more photos from today's Blessing of the Animals on the [parish website](#).