

August 3, 2021: Blessing of Farm Animals Diocesan Day of Prayer

“Animals are our companions on Earth, be they house pets, domesticated livestock or wild creatures. We receive much from them: comfort, protection and wonder, as well as labor, food and clothing. So we ask God to help us remember our dependence on these creatures, great and small, and to make us wise enough to care properly for all animals: they too reveal God’s loving presence.” (catholicrurallife.org)

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph has established a day of prayer, based on Catholic traditions of Rogation days and rooted in biblical respect for all life given by our Creator. In spring our Diocesan Day of Prayer sought God’s blessing on the plants of the earth and those who nurture them. We blessed seeds, preparing for the growing season: “At Seedtime” (Feb. 4).

As summer moves towards fall and state fairs happen, we ask blessings for the animals of the earth ---especially those who provide nourishment for our tables and are part of human agriculture. On Tuesday, August 3, our Diocesan Day of Prayer: “Blessing of Farm Animals” will take place at Jerusalem Farm (520 Garfield, Kansas City) and at Immaculate Conception Church (606 Kansas Ave, Montrose MO). Both will begin at 7 pm.

On the reverse side is a prayer service for individuals and groups blessing animals, whether agricultural, domestic, or wild. People can bring animals, or plan to gather where the animals are: barn, field, pasture or yard. This service is taken from the following:

- Book of Blessings, ‘Order of Blessing for Animals’, ‘Order of Blessing for Fields & Flocks’
- Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, ‘St. Francis Blessing of Animals’
- Catholic Rural Life, (catholicrurallife.org) ‘October: Blessing of Animals’
- Laudato Si’ (Pope Francis), paragraphs 66-69

“If the farmer is blessed with a good harvest, the city dweller has plenty of good food; if the city dweller makes a living wage, he or she can buy the farmer’s food. It is this universal dependence of the members of Christ’s Body on one another that makes the blessing of the farmer a blessing also for the city dweller. It is faith that traces the origin of good food beyond the...grocery store to the shipper---beyond the shipper to the farmers whose job it is to produce food, and beyond the farmer to God the Creator.... So it is fitting for the man or woman in the city...as well as the farmer in the little rural church to pray together....” (Family Sacramentals: Walter Sullivan, O.S.B.)

Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends, the animals, your creatures.

We pray especially for all that are suffering in any way:

for the overworked and underfed, the hunted, lost or hungry;

for all in captivity or ill-treated, and for those that must be put to death.

**For those who deal with them we ask a heart of compassion,
gentle hands, and kindly words.**

Make us all true friends to animals and worthy followers of our merciful Savior,

Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers)



Blessing of Farm Animals

Introduction: The animals of God's creation inhabit the skies, the earth, and the sea. They share in the fortunes of human existence and have a part in human life. God, who confers his gifts on all living things, has often used the service of animals or made them symbolic reminders of the gifts of salvation.

Animals were saved from the flood and afterwards made a part of the covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:9-10). The paschal lamb brings to mind the Passover sacrifice and the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (Exodus 12:3-14); a giant fish saved Jonah (Jonah 2:1-11); ravens brought bread to Elijah (1 Kings 17:6); animals were included in the repentance enjoined on humans (Jonah 3:7).

Animals share in Christ's redemption of all of God's creation. We therefore invoke the divine blessing on these animals. As we do so, let us praise the Creator and thank him. Let us also ask that, remembering our human dignity, we may always walk in God's law.

Scripture Reading (suggestions)

Gen 1:1, 20-28 Deuteronomy 32: 10c-14 Gen 6:17-23 Gen 1:1, 11-12, 29-31a
Job 12:7-10 Isaiah 11:6-10 Daniel 3:57-88, 56 Matthew 6:25-34 Mark 4:26-29

Psalms Response (Ps 148:5-7, 9-13) **Response:** *Praise the Lord from the earth, all you creatures of God.*

- Let them praise the Lord's name, for he commanded, and they were created; assigned them their station forever, set an order that will never change. **R.**
- Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all the deeps of the sea; mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars; animals wild and tame, creatures that crawl and birds that fly. **R.**
- Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all who govern on earth; young men and women too, old and young alike. Let them all praise the Lord's name, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven. **R.**

Intercessions **Response:** Let us bless the Lord.

- Blessed are you, O Lord, who offered your Son to us as the paschal lamb and in him willed that we should be called and should truly be your children. **R.**
- Blessed are you, O Lord, through your lowliest creatures ceaselessly drawing us toward your love. **R.**
- Blessed are you, O Lord, who gave us food from animals to replenish our energies. **R.**
- Blessed are you, O Lord, who for the sake of comfort give us domestic animals as companions. **R.**
- Blessed are you, O Lord, who show us a sign of your providence by caring for the birds of the air. **R.**

Closing Blessing (All are invited to gather around the animals to be blessed.)

Blessed are you, Lord our God, for you have made all things well. You have given us innocent companions on our life journey, animals wild and tame. They are wonderful in all their variety of shapes, sizes and abilities. We marvel at their beauty, which draws us closer to You who make them.

Keep them thriving and able to carry out what Your law intends for them. Let us never see them as only for trade or profit, but always as creatures of Your wisdom. Bless these animals with us now and all the creatures throughout Your good earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song suggestions: *"All Creatures of our God and King"* (text by St. Francis of Assisi); *"All Things Bright and Beautiful"*; *"Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"*