



A054

## Authorize Rites and Prayers for the Care of Beloved Animals

### **EXPLANATION**

These liturgical texts respond to resolution 2009-C078, which directed the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to develop liturgical resources to observe the loss of a companion animal.

### **RESOLUTION TEXT**

*Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, that the 77th General Convention make available the following liturgical materials, for use in a variety of settings to provide pastorally for people caring for animals.

# Service at the Loss of a Beloved Animal

*The opening anthem may be said or sung.*

## **Canticle 12: A Song of Creation**

### **Invocation**

Let the earth glorify the Lord,\*  
sing praise and give honor for ever.  
Glorify the Lord, O mountains  
and hills, and all that grows upon the earth,\*  
sing praise and give honor for ever.  
Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams,\*  
O whales and all that move in the waters.  
All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,\*  
sing praise and give honor for ever.  
Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,\*  
and all you flocks and herds [and all you cats and dogs].  
O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord,\*  
sing praise and give honor for ever.

### **Doxology**

*Officiant* God be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Officiant* Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, we remember before you today N.'s beloved companion A.  
We thank you for giving her to us to be a source of abundant love, affection, and joy.  
In your compassion, comfort us who grieve.  
Give us faith to commit this beloved creature of your own making to your care,  
for you live and reign for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **The Readings**

*One or more of the following passages may be read.*

Job 12:7-10; Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 148:7-14; Tobit 5:21-6:2a; Matthew 10:27-31;  
Mark 16:14-15; Romans 8:19-25; Revelation 4:1-2, 6b-7, 9-11.

### **Job 12:7-10**

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;  
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;  
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.  
Who among all these does not know  
that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
In his hand is the life of every living thing  
and the breath of every human being.

## **Isaiah 11:6-9**

The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

## **Psalms 148:7-14**

Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!  
Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!  
Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!  
Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!  
Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!  
Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.  
He has raised up a horn for his people,  
praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him.  
Praise the Lord!

## **Tobit 5:21-6:2a**

Tobit said to her, 'Do not worry; our child will leave in good health and return to us in good health. Your eyes will see him on the day when he returns to you in good health. Say no more! Do not fear for them, my sister. For a good angel will accompany him; his journey will be successful, and he will come back in good health.' So she stopped weeping. The young man went out and the angel went with him; and the dog came out with him and went along with them. So they both journeyed along, and when the first night overtook them they camped by the Tigris river.

## **Matthew 10:27-31**

What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light;  
and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.  
Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul;  
rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.  
Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?  
Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father.  
And even the hairs of your head are all counted.  
So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

## **Mark 16:14-15**

Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table;  
and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness,  
because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.  
And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.'

## **Romans 8:19-25**

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God;  
for the creation was subjected to futility,  
not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it,  
in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay  
and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.  
We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now;  
and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit,  
groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.  
For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope.  
For who hopes for what is seen?  
But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

## **Revelation 4:1-2, 6b-11**

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open!  
And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said,  
'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'  
At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne!  
and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.  
Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front  
and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox,  
the third living creature with a face like a human face,  
and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle.  
And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside.  
Day and night without ceasing they sing,  
'Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.'  
And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on  
the throne, who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on  
the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the  
throne, singing, 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power,  
for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'

## Psalm 104:24, 28b-30

O Lord, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
When you open your hand  
they are filled with good things.  
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;  
when you take away their breath,  
they die and return to their dust.  
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the ground.

## The Prayers of the People

*Officiant* God be with you.  
*People* And also with you.  
*Officiant* Let us pray.

### *Officiant and People*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.	Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.
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God, your blessed Son, Jesus, told us that not even one, tiny sparrow is forgotten in your sight.  
Strengthen our confidence in your love for all your creatures; in your goodness...

*Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.*

Loving God, you brought this beloved animal into the life of N. [and N.]  
to share kindness, joy, and faithful companionship:  
Receive our thanks and praise for the community between your animals and your people,  
and all the ways in which we bless each other's lives; in your goodness,

*Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.*

Gracious God, you have given us the blessing and responsibility of caring for animals:  
If in any way we have failed in that responsibility, we ask for your pardon and trust in your mercy;  
in your goodness,

*Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.*

***These biddings may be used when appropriate.***

Dear God, the source of all life, wisdom, and love,  
bring your peace to N., into whose hands was placed the decision to end A.'s suffering.  
Give her comfort in the knowledge of a loving decision well made; in your goodness,  
*Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.*

Holy God, we pray for N., for the loss of her companion, and for all pets and animal companions.  
Help us to care for their needs, to tend their injuries,  
to heal their illnesses, and to relieve their suffering.  
Grant us wisdom to care for all the creatures of the earth  
*and to respect their place in your Creation; in your goodness,*  
*Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.*

***A period of silence may be kept.***

***The burial, or scattering of ashes, may take place here, followed by this prayer.***

We return A.'s remains to the earth with gratitude for your care for us  
and for all that you have made.  
Your mercy is over all your works,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

***The following hymn may be said or sung***

All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voices, let us sing, Alleluia, Alleluia  
Bright burning sun with golden beams,  
Pale silver moon that gently gleams!  
O praise Him! O praise Him!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,  
And worship Him in humbleness,  
O praise Him! Alleluia!  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!  
O praise Him! O praise Him!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***Closing Prayer***

God of creation, through your great mercy you renew us:  
send us now back to the love and labor of this day  
with joy and compassion in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

Officiant     All life is interwoven.  
People        *All life is a gift from God.*  
*Then may be added*  
Officiant     Let us bless the Lord.  
People        *Thanks be to God.*

***Prayers Suitable for Use in Church or for Other Gatherings,  
at the Adoption, Illness, Loss, or Death of Companion,  
Service, or Other Beloved Animals***

***At the adoption of an animal***

God, whose nature and whose name is Love:

We thank you for this new relationship between N. [and N.] and this animal A.

Let their home be filled with kindness and care;

let them be the delight of one another's hearts; and watch over and keep them from this day forward in safety and peace; for your Name's sake. *Amen.*

***For a lost or missing animal***

Almighty God, you watch over every creature, every moment of every day:

Hear our prayers for N. as she worries for the safe return of A.

By the grace of your Holy Spirit, protect and keep them both, and bring A. quickly home. *Amen.*

***For a sick animal***

God, whose compassion and mercy are over all your works:

Hear our prayers for A., this creature of yours, in her illness.

Ease her suffering and help her not to be afraid.

Help her to rest and heal, and comfort us who worry, [especially N. and N.].

We pray through your beloved Son Jesus and by the power of your Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

***For one whose beloved animal has died***

God, the refuge and strength of all who mourn: Hear our prayers for N. [and N.], who grieves the death of her beloved A.

Bring comfort in loneliness, peace in distress, and joy in remembering;

and lift her heart in thanksgiving for the gift of companionship she has known.

This we pray in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

***At the euthanizing of an animal***

God, your wisdom and mercy are over all your works:

Be with us who have decided to end the suffering of A., this creature of yours entrusted to our care.

Our power to heal has reached its end, and we put our trust in your mercy.

Reassure and comfort us, that we make these decisions in compassion and kindness, as we pray through the kindness of Jesus Christ and the grace of your Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

***For the suffering of animals during warfare***

Eternal God, the comfort and peace of all your creatures:

Hear our prayers for all animals that suffer in times of war, especially for those that bear burdens, those that serve as food, those that detect mines, those that search for the missing and the dead, and for all creatures in the path of war's destruction.

May your divine assistance be with them according to their need;

and may our swords be beaten into plowshares

and our hearts be softened toward animals of every kind;

for they are yours, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

***For the loss of a farm animal***

Gracious Lord, we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand:  
We thank you for placing us among beasts of the field and for allowing us to care for them,  
and that through them, you provide us with food, clothing, and livelihood.  
We grieve this day the death of A., a creature of your own making,  
and a sign for us of your generosity and love;  
through Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd. *Amen.*

***At the death of a wild animal***

Almighty God, who make the beasts of the wild move in beauty  
and show forth the glory of your Name:  
We grieve the death of this creature, whose existence was a reminder to us  
of your creative presence in the world.  
We give you thanks for that which was never ours to claim,  
but only to behold with wonder;  
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

From the Diocese of Central New York website:  
<http://cnyepiscopal.org/LiturgicalResources.aspx>

Reformatted with complete Scripture texts  
By MMKeeler, January 28, 2015