St. Francis of Assisi, October 4

Celebrate God's creation!

CONNIE CLARK

Have you ever seen dogs and cats at church? At this time of year, you might — along with hamsters, tortoises, and maybe even a chicken or two! What are they doing there?

They're receiving a blessing! The blessing of pets is one way we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, who saw God's love in everything God has created.

Francis was born into a wealthy family in Assisi, Italy, sometime around 1181. One day, while Francis prayed in an old church, he heard God speaking to him: "Francis, repair my church." Francis set out to fix the building, using some of his dad's money. That made his father angry, and he dragged Francis to the bishop, saying Francis was stealing. But Francis was inspired by God to begin a new life. He realized he didn't need money or worldly goods. He took off his clothes and handed them to his dad. (The shocked bishop quickly gave Francis an old brown robe to wear!) Francis now understood that it wasn't a church building that needed repairing. God's Church was his people, and they needed help.

Francis began preaching about the joy of God's love. He cared for the sick and suffering. He owned nothing, joyfully trusting that God would provide everything he needed. Others joined him, and they became known as Franciscans. Today, Franciscan friars, brothers, sisters, and laypeople still care for God's people and creation, just as Francis did.

We are all called to bless and care for God's creation. That doesn't mean just animals. In springtime, many farmers ask God's blessings on their seeds. At harvest time, we often thank God for the blessings of our food. And every day, we bless and care for people. Look around you, at the people, places, and things that God has made.

How will you bless and care for these amazing gifts today?

CONNIE CLARK is editor of *Living Faith Kids,* a magazine of daily Catholic devotions for children. To learn more, visit *LivingFaithKids.com.*

Canticle of Creation Clues

St. Francis of Assisi wrote a prayer-song called the "Canticle of Creation." Below are some verses from the canticle. Each contains clues about a part of God's creation: the earth, water, fire, the sun, or the moon. Use the clues to finish each sentence. Then unscramble the letters in the boxes and place them below to see a "kingly" gift God has in store for you!

Praised be my Lord God with all creatures, especially our brother the ___ ___ ☐, which brings us the day, and the light. When we see him shine, Lord, we think of you!

Praised be my Lord for our sister the ___ ☐ ___ ___, and for the stars, which God has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the ☐ ___ ___ ___, and for air and clouds, and all weather ...

Praised be my Lord for our sister ___ ___ ___ ___ ___, which is very useful and cleansing.

Praised be my Lord for our brother ___ ___ ☐ ___, through which you give us light in the darkness ...

Praised be my Lord for our mother the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___, which gives us fruits, and flowers of many colors ...

Praised be my Lord for all those who forgive one another for God's love's sake ... You, O most High, shall give them a **C** ___ ___ ___ ___!

ANSWER: SUN, MOON, WIND, WATER, FIRE, EARTH, CROWN

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