

Blessing of the Animals
Wicker Park Lutheran Church
Rev. Jason S. Glombicki
October 7, 2018

Read *The Old Woman Who Named Things* by Cynthia Rylant

There is power in being called by name.

Names carry a deep sense of knowing, of belonging. Names connect us. In today's first reading, we hear God giving humanity the gift of naming the animals:

“So out of the ground the Lord GOD formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them” (Genesis 2:19)

How cool is that?! God brought the animals to the first people and eagerly watched and waited to learn what they would be called.

For man to name the animals meant that humanity would need to be in relationship with the creatures. God entrusts humanity with this task to care for and tend God's creation, and to give humanity the gift of knowing God's good creation deeply, to know it by name. And as the old woman taught us, that's a vulnerable thing: knowing and calling another creature by name. It

means we see our own limitations as finite creatures, and we see the finitude of the other. It can be easier to keep creation—to keep others at an arms distance. We're safe from the hurt and pain and loss that relationship brings.

But here's the invitation we remember and celebrate this St. Francis Day. God abides with the birds and the fish, with the dogs and the cats, with the goats and the slugs. God abides—God knows the goodness of the creatures they created, and God invites us to know this, too.

Because the birds and the fish, the dogs and the cats, the goats and the slugs aren't the only creatures to be named and claimed.

You and I are named and known, called and claimed “Beloved, Child of God” in the waters of baptism. You are deeply known, cherished, valued. You belong to God, and each of us belong to one another.

Soon, you'll be invited up with your pets to receive a blessing. Share their names with us, tell us what you love about them. Surely, God loves and cares for the creatures gathered here in this place today.

How lucky we are to be entrusted with knowing God's good creation, calling it by name.