



St. Francis of Assisi Ministry

Our mission is to promote compassion for all God's creatures and to encourage caretakers/pet owners with love and to support all who care about animals with prayer and action.

Our motto is Prayer and Action.

Regular meeting time for our ministry: Second Saturday of every month at 9 AM.

Message from Fr. Bob, cont.

before starting my ministry at the Holy Family Church.

There are two upcoming events of our ministry in the near future:

1. **St. Francis Ministry Retreat on April 24, 2021, 10 am- 2 pm** in the Rosary Garden on St. Paul's Campus
2. **Prayer Service and Fellowship with our Pets on May 8, 2021 at 9 am** in the Carrollwood Village Park, 4680 W. Village Drive, Shelter 6, Tampa, FL 33624

I encourage you to please take part in these events which would be my last activities with the ministry. I request you to be active in our ministry whose Mission is to promote Compassion for all God's people and creatures. I understand that the pandemic has kept our members apart. As and when you feel comfortable, please return to the ministry. The Lord needs you and we need you.

God bless you, your families and your Pets,

Fr. Bob



Our Regular Events

- ◆ *Weekly Eucharistic Adoration*
7:00PM to 8:00PM on Tuesday evening
- ◆ *Pet owner consolation and prayer*

Upcoming Calendar of Events

- ◆ April 24 – St. Francis Ministry Retreat – 9am – 2pm
- ◆ May 8 – Prayer Service & Fellowship – 9am
- ◆ July 9 – Annual Pet Owners Mass – 7:30pm, Rosary 7pm
- ◆ October 2 – Blessing of the Animals – 9am
- ◆ October 4 – St. Francis of Assisi Mass – 7:30pm, Rosary 7pm

Message from Fr. Bob

April 2021

My dear friends,

Greetings of Peace of the risen Lord. It is my hope and Prayer that you are all doing well.

At first, I would like to inform you that I am transferred to Holy Family parish in St. Petersburg effective **July 1, 2021**. However my last day at St. Paul's would be **May 23, 2021**. Then I go on Retreat and take vacation time

Pet Photos with Santa **December 12, 2020**

Even during a pandemic, the St. Francis of Assisi Ministry reached out to the community with a visit from Santa Claus. Held at the Carrollwood Village Park, ministry members, St. Paul parishioners and people walking by enjoyed a photo opportunity with our good friend St. Nick.

Taking pictures with pets and children and following COVID safety protocols was only a minor hindrance to our festive effort, but well worth it. Santa visited with over 40 families and provided great joy to those who stopped by. Many parents claimed we had the best set up with Santa compared to other Santa photo opportunities in the county. Great fun and fellowship was had by all! Thank you Jose and Pamela Puente for giving us a day of joy!



Featured Pet **– Aspen the** **Beagle**

By Fr. Len
Piotrowski

A lot of our parishioners and friends of Fr. Len had fallen in

love with Aspen over the years, both at Fr. Len's current parish, Espiritu Santo and his former parish, St. Paul's.

Fr. Len would like to share a little bit about her history.

She was an abused dog, one of the worst cases of abuse that the rescuers have



ever seen. She was rescued on August 10, 2007 and was estimated to be about two years old at that time and Fr. Len adopted her on November 16, 2007. However, prior to the adoption she needed extensive medical care. Once she was well, she began her ministry with the homeless at our diocesan shelter, Pinellas Hope where Fr. Len continued her Jesuit education.

After her adoption, Aspen needed major surgery to remove a bullet from her large intestine as she had been a victim of abuse and had been shot several times.

Her surgery was a big success and no cancer or other internal problems were found. After her surgery, she remained very healthy and



strong until about six months ago when old age began to take its toll. She died on Friday, October 30, 2020 at about 6:10 p.m. Her death was very peaceful and painless.

Fr. Len remains grateful to God for her long and good life and felt that euthanasia was the best alternative for her at the end. She was just over 15 years of age.

St. Francis of Assisi Ministry Easter Pet Costume Contest

The first annual Easter Pet Costume Contest was held March 20th at the Carrollwood Village Park.



Ministry members, St. Paul parishioners and park visitors participated in this festive Easter celebration and fellowship. Pets, pet owners and passersby were greeted with candy and a photo opportunity with the Easter bunny.



Going Back to Work after Shelter-in-Place? 3 Tips on How to Prep Your Pet – Animal Emergency & Referral Center of Minnesota

In Minnesota, while it may feel like we've been social distancing for 100 years, it's been closer to four weeks. Your pet, however, may feel as though it's always been this way and expect it to continue in this fashion, even after life has gone back to a more "normal"

state. After so much time with you, your pet could develop separation anxiety when you return to work.

Separation anxiety is distress that manifests in a pet when it's separated from its owner. Symptoms of this challenging-to-cure disorder include: urinating and defecating in the house, barking, and chewing on objects – even door frames, window sills, and drywall. In cats, vocalization is also common, as is inappropriate urination, destructive behavior, and excessive self-grooming often resulting in bald patches. In rabbits, signs of stress during your departure may signal separation anxiety. These may include lethargy or lack of interest in surroundings, being aggressive when handled, over-grooming, or showing repeated movements that are unusual for your pet or just don't make sense – like biting its cage and food bowl or circling.



No one knows what makes some pets more prone to developing separation anxiety than others. Veterinarians have seen, however, that it often develops in pets that are rarely left alone – presumably because these animals don't develop (or they lose over time) the skills and confidence to be home without support. If your pet is fairly new to your home (shelter-in-place adoptions, anyone?) then he or she is even more at risk for developing separation anxiety. So what do we do to help ensure our pets don't develop separation anxiety when we return to leaving home more frequently?

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1. PREP YOUR PET

If you and Fluffy have been inseparable until now, it's time to get some space! Even if you have nowhere to go, it's time to leave the house without your pet. You don't have to leave for eight hours. Take several short walks or bike rides around the block throughout the day. Have a cell phone conversation from your garage or surf Facebook from your yard. Your pet shouldn't be able to see or hear you, however. These short separations are like training wheels for the real thing. Over the period of a week, increase the length of the separations. If at any time you return to see evidence of stress or separation anxiety as described above, dial down the length of your absences and start again.

2. PROVIDE DIVERSION

Your pet doesn't have to go it alone, however. Puzzle toys, LickiMats, and even DIY games such as these **Boredom Busters** or the **muffin tin game** can help keep your pet's mind on something other than your absence. Automated toys can provide a ton of fun for cats. I give my dog a Kong that has soft cheese in it when I leave the house. She only gets this treat when I leave the house. Special treats will help any food-motivated pet to feel better about being alone.

Many people like to leave the TV or radio on to provide some ambient noise, too. Cats may enjoy some **cat TV** with squirrels or fish. If your pet enjoys a kennel, utilize that as a safe haven for your absences. If your pet is a puppy or a dog that is brand new to your house, consider **crate training** as it is definitely recommended to start things off on the right foot.



3. REMAIN CALM

Sometimes, we unwittingly worsen our pet's anxiety. If you're nervous about leaving your pet, therefore you say goodbye three times and keep reassuring him that you'll be back soon; your pet will pick up on your fear and also be fearful. Say one casual and brief goodbye, and then out the door you go. Similarly, make your return uneventful. He or she will still be happy to see you, but your body language and voice should show that it was "no big deal" that you were gone.



Our ministry was born from the love of God's creations. We need your prayerful support to provide comfort and aid to the sick, neglected, dying and in-need pets of our community.

St. Francis of Assisi Ministry
St. Paul Catholic Church

To contact the St. Francis of Assisi Ministry, please send an email to:
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