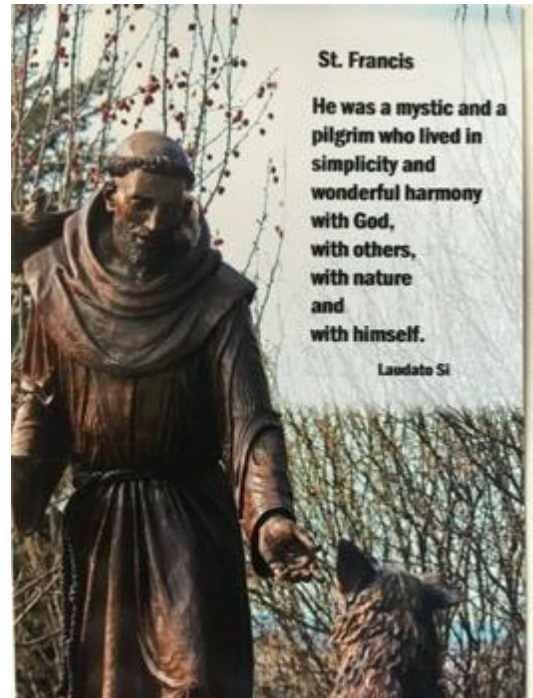


Fall and Winter 2021 - 2022

THIS SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER SAYS IT ALL ...

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in the most
Blessed Sacrament.
I love you above all things and I desire to
receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
Come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace you as if you were already there,
And unite myself wholly to you.
Never permit me to be separated from you,
Amen.

Pope Francis Says:



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CRIB

It was in a small village called Greccio on Christmas night in 1223 that St. Francis of Assisi made the first Christmas Crib when he re-created the scene of Jesus' birth. Brother Leo celebrated Mass with the brothers and the people of the village as Francis read the Gospel of the birth of Christ. When Francis brought a statue of baby Jesus to put in the manger a miracle happened! The people saw a tiny baby asleep on the hay. That night, Francis, with his words and his life had awoken faith in the hearts of the villagers of Greccio.

Since that time people all over the world have placed nativity scenes in their homes to commemorate the First Christmas when God became man as a tiny baby and came to dwell among us. Did you know that the Friars at Mount Saint Francis Friary, Cochrane, Alberta continue this tradition at the friary? Every year the friars invite the community to come and join them as they re-enact the First Nativity, complete with Mary and Joseph and a real baby! This year will be a "Virtual Event" on Sunday, December 12, 2021. The link will be posted on the web site: mtfrancis@shaw.ca

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS BLESSING

Lord Jesus,

Bless my family this Christmas.

May we celebrate traditions and customs
with delight.

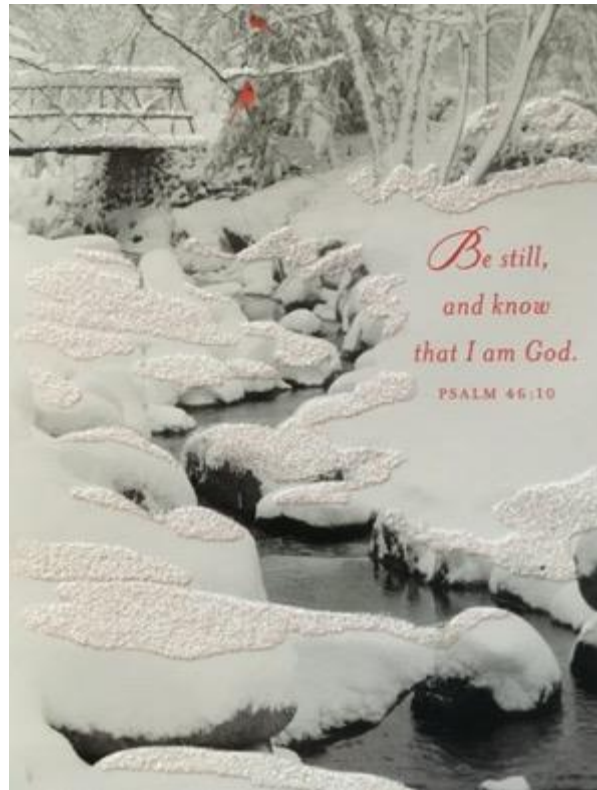
Fill us with gratitude as we give and receive
gifts from one another.

Make us mindful of those who have
little to share this Christmas,
and fill our hearts with generosity
And compassion.

Bring us greater awareness
of the sacred meaning of this season
as one celebrating your presence
in and among us.

In your holy and blessed name, I pray

Amen.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A FEW KIDS HAPPY ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD THIS CHRISTMAS?

DID YOU KNOW THAT CHALICE - A NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION - WILL SEND SOCCER BALLS TO NEEDY KIDS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD FOR \$10/BALL?



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CHALICE WILL ALSO SEND A "THANK YOU" CARD TO THE PERSON WHO DONATES THE SOCCER BALLS ...

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WHAT & WHEN IS ADVENT?

Advent – that time of joyful waiting – is a time of preparation for the celebration of Christ's arrival in Bethlehem as a tiny baby. Advent begins four Sundays before December 25 – the Sunday closest to November 30, which is the feast of Saint Andrew, one of Jesus' first disciples.

It's me – Ritz the Cat telling you about what life has been like at the friary lately. We did have a group of young people here at the end of August to learn about being “Servant Leaders.” Brother Michael kept them busy most of the time so I didn't see much of them outside but I did watch from under one of the SUV's every now and again. You never know, a couple of them may have been “cat” people and good for a rub behind my right ear, which I do like! It turns out that one of the guys, James did like to chat and knelt down to see if he could entice me out from under the vehicle and Adriana kept saying “here kitty, kitty, kitty” and I eventually did come out and get a couple of rubs, which was good.

The last evening the young people were at the Mount they all walked down the path to the fire pit and Friar Dan and one of “outdoorsy” young people got the campfire going at twilight. Someone passed around the big ice cream pails to use as drums and the singing and storytelling began. It was a lot of fun! I like to see people enjoying themselves and I felt part of the group even if I was over near the fence by the sunflowers and the big vegetable garden. Mount Saint Francis is an inclusive community. That means that all of us, even the animals matter. Saint Francis was like that too. Saint Francis is the patron saint of ecology and animals. Remember I mentioned last time that Friar Dan is my new “go to” person now that Brother Gerry is in Montreal? Well, it is going well except that I am anxious if he goes to pick me up because I was an “alley cat” a long time ago and had to fend for myself. I am nervous if anyone gets too close, especially if my back is turned, you know how that is. Brother Gerry used to invite me to come on his lap by patting his knees and then I would jump up and knead my paws and stretch out my claws and settle down right there on his lap. I was always careful not to claw Brother Gerry, he was such a gentle soul! I hear that Friar Dan's Mom and Dad have a kitten called Bella at their house. Bella sounds like a cool name for a cat. What do you think?

At Mount Saint Francis and all over the world it is a custom to have a “Blessing of the Animals” ceremony on October 4, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. That day we had a ceremony here like the friars have done for many years. Of course I was anxious about it. I never know what animals will show up and how well behaved they will be. One year someone brought an iguana, another time some snakes and budgies arrived so you never know what to expect. I have to remind myself that they too, are all God's creatures!



This year sixty dogs arrived in the parking lot. The dogs were excited, barking and sniffing around when they jumped out of their owner's cars, trucks or SUV's on a sunny, windy day on October 4, all eager to find out what was going to happen next. Fr. Bob said the animals settle down when they are at the friary because they know the friary is a peaceful place and he was right. It was quiet for the prayer ceremony and the dogs were engaged with the friars when it was their turn to be sprinkled with the holy water and receive the blessing. One dog did lean over and drink the holy water from Fr. Kevin's bowl during his blessing time but no one minded and the dog probably felt really good after that!



Friar Dan said I was up on the friary roof that day because that's where I usually go when the coyotes howl and I get worried but this time I found another hiding place to watch from and it all turned out ok. I have another 364 days to relax before October 4 comes around again next year. It is always a good idea to put our worries in God's hands - Fr. Bob says that too! The photo on the right shows me thinking about an escape plan in case one of the dogs wants to run after a cat like me. You know, when I think about it I remember that the Friars and St. Francis speak about people and animals being part of God's creation and how important it is that all of us live in harmony with each other and with Mother Earth.



Praise be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth

