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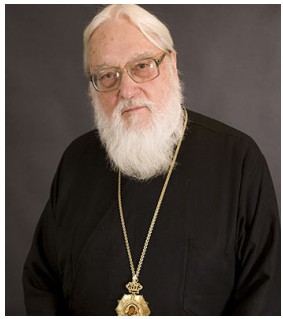
Compassion for Animals in the Orthodox Church

Abstract

In this article, His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos Ware deals with the question about the place of animals in the liturgical and theological world of the Orthodox Church. "The art of the icon is *par excellence* a liturgical art." Therefore, if we can find icons with animals and plants or stars and all nature, we might understand this as an eschatological view of the universe. "We humans are not saved from the world but with the world; and that means, with the animals." Another meaningful question of this article is: "Do animals have souls?" "Even if animals are not ensouled, yet they are undoubtedly sentient. They are responsive and vulnerable. (…) As living beings, sensitive and easily hurt, they are to be viewed as a



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'Thou', not an 'It', (…) not as objects to be exploited and manipulated but as subjects, capable of joy and sorrow, of happiness and affliction. They are to be approached with gentleness and tenderness; and, more than that, with respect and reverence, for they are precious in God's sight."

Keywords
Compassion, animals, Orthodox Church, worship, soul

> What is a merciful heart? It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humankind, for the birds, for the animals, for the demons, for all that exists.
>
> *St Isaac the Syrian* (7th century)

1 A place for animals in our worship?

As I sit writing at my table, I have before me a Russian icon of the martyrs St Florus and St Laurus. At the top of the icon is the Archangel Michael, and on either side of him the two saints. Then below them there is a concourse of horses, old and young: some have riders, others are riderless but with saddle and bridle, and others are running freely. I am not sure what is the connection between horses and these two stonemasons from Constantinople who suffered martyrdom in the early 4th century. But there the horses are, prominently depicted in the icon, and their presence gives me continuing pleasure.

Beside my bed I have another icon that shows the leading Russian saint of the 19th century, Seraphim of Sarov. He is seated on a log outside his wooden cabin in the forest, with his prayer-rope in one of his hands, and with the other hand he is offering a piece of bread to a huge brown bear. Great was the surprise and alarm of visitors to the saint's hermitage when they came upon him in the company of his four-footed friend Misha.

Now, for members of the Orthodox Church an icon is not to be regarded in isolation, simply as a picture on a religious subject, a decorative item designed to give aesthetic pleasure. Much more significant is the fact that an icon exists within a distinct and specific context. It is part of an act of prayer and worship, and divorced from that context of prayer and worship it ceases to be authentically an icon. The art of the icon is *par excellence* a liturgical art.[1] If, then, Orthodox icons depict not only humans but animals, does this not imply that the animals have an accepted place in our liturgical celebration and our dialogue with God? We do not forget that, when Jesus withdrew to pray for forty days in the wilderness, he had the animals as his companions: 'He was with the wild beasts' (Mark 1:13).

What the icon shows us - that the animals share in our prayer and worship - is confirmed by the prayer books used in the Orthodox Church.[2] It is true that, when we look at the main act of worship, the Service of the Eucharist, we are at first sight disappointed; for in its two chief forms - the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom and that of St Basil the Great - there are no direct references to the animal creation. Yet, when we pray at the beginning of the Liturgy 'for the peace of the whole world', this surely includes animals. As one commentator puts it, 'We pray for the peace of the universe, not only for mankind, but for

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1 See Philip Sherrard, *The Sacred in Life and Art* (Ipswich: Golgonooza, 1990), pp. 71-74.

2 Relatively little has been written on the theology of animals from an Orthodox viewpoint. Extensive material on saints and animals in both ancient and modern times can be found in the two books by Joanne Stefanatos, *Animals and Man: A State of Blessedness* (Minneapolis, MN: Light and Life, 1992), and *Animals Sanctified: A Spiritual Journey* (Minneapolis, MN: Light and Life, 2001). On the non-Orthodox side, compare the classic anthology by Helen Waddell, *Beasts and Saints* (London: Constable, 1934). There is not much from Eastern Christian sources in the two collections (in other respects, rich and representative) edited by Andrew Linzey, *Animal Rites: Liturgies of Animal Care* (London: SCM, 1999), and (with Paul Barry Clarke), *Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology* (New York: Columbia U. P., 2004).

every creature, for animals and plants, for the stars and all of nature.'[3]

Turning, however, to the daily office, we find not only implicit but explicit allusions to the animals. A notable example comes at the beginning of Vespers. On the Orthodox understanding of time, as in Judaism, the new day commences not at midnight or at dawn but at sunset; and so Vespers is the opening service in the twenty-four hour cycle of prayer. How, then, do we begin the new day? Throughout the year, except in the week after Easter Sunday, Vespers always starts in the same way: with the reading or singing of Psalm 103 (104). This is a hymn of praise to the Creator for all the wonders of his creation; and in this cosmic doxology we have much to say about the animals:

> You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
> they flow between the hills,
> They give drink to every beast of the field;
> the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
> Beside them the birds of the air have their habitation;
> they sing among the branches.

The psalm continues by speaking of cattle, storks, wild goats, badgers and young lions, and it concludes this catalogue of living creatures with a reference to Leviathan, who must surely be a whale:

> Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
> which teems with things innumerable,
> living things both small and great.
> There go the ships,
> and there is the great sea monster
> which you formed to sport in it.

In this way, embarking upon the new day, we offer the world back to God in thanksgiving. We bless him for the sun and

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[3] A Monk of the Eastern Church [Lev Gillet], *Serve the Lord with Gladness: Basic Reflections on the Eucharist and the Priesthood* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), p.16.

moon, for the clouds and wind, for the earth and the water; and not least we bless him for the living creatures, in all their diversity and abundance. with which he has peopled the globe. We rejoice in their beauty and their playfulness, whereby they enrich our lives:

> How marvellous are your works, O Lord!
> In wisdom have you made them all.

As we stand before God in prayer, the companionship of the animals fills our hearts with warmth and hope.

Nor is it only in the service of Vespers that the animals have their assured place. In the Orthodox book of blessings and intercessions known in Greek as the *Evchologion*, and in Slavonic as the *Trebnik* or Book of Needs, there are prayers for the good health of sheep, goats and cattle, of horses, donkeys and mules, and even of bees and silkworms; and also, on the negative side, there are prayers for protection from poisonous snakes and noxious insects. Up to the present day, the great majority of Eastern Christians dwell in an agricultural rather than an urban environment; and so it it only natural that their prayer - rooted in the concerns of this world as well as being otherworldly - should reflect the needs of a farming community. In daily prayer as in daily life, humans and animals belong to a single community.

As a typical example of a prayer for living creatures, let us take these phrases from a blessing on bees:

In ancient times you granted to the Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 3:8), and you were well-pleased to nourish your Baptist John with wild honey in the wilderness (Matt. 3:4). Now also, providing in your good pleasure for our sustenance, do you bless the beehives in this apiary. Greatly increase the multiplication of the bees within them, preserving

them by your grace and granting us an abundance of rich honey.[4]

A prayer for silkworms includes the words:

> All-good King, show us even now your lovingkindness; and as you blessed the well of Jacob (John 4:6), and the pool of Siloam (John 9:7), and the cup of your holy apostles (Matt. 26:27), so bless also these silkworms; and as you multiplied the stars in heaven and the sand beside the seashore, so multiply these silkworms, granting them health and strength: and may they feed without coming to any harm...so that they may produce shrouds of pure silk, to your glory and praise.[5]

Yet not all these prayers for animals are as genial as this, for there are also exorcisms directed against the creatures that, in this fallen world, inflict harm on humans and their produce:

> I adjure you, O creatures of many forms: worms, caterpillars, beetles and cockroaches, mice, grasshoppers and locusts, and insects of various kinds, flies and moles and ants, gadflies and wasps, and centipedes and millipedes, ... injure not the vineyard, field, garden, trees or vegetables of the servant of God [*name*], but be gone into the wild hills and into the barren trees that God has given you for sustenance.[6]

It will be noted here that the exorcism does not actually pray for the destruction of these baneful creatures, but only that they should depart to their proper home and cease to molest us.

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4 *The Great Book of Needs* (South Canaan, PA: St Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1999), vol. 4, pp. 382-3 (translation adapted).

5 *Evchologion to Mega*, ed. N. P. Papadopoulos (Athens: Saliveros, no date), p. 511.

6 Exorcism of the Holy Martyr Tryphon, in *The Great Book of Needs*, vol. 3, p.53 (translation adapted).

Even rats, hornets and spiders have their appointed place in God's dispensation![7]

Here, by way of contrast, is a prayer by St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (1748-1809) expressing tenderness and compassion for the animals:

> Lord Jesus Christ, moved by your tender mercy, take pity on the suffering animals... For if a righteous man takes pity on the souls of his cattle (Prov. 12: 10. LXX), how should you not take pity on them, for you created them and you provide for them? In your compassion you did not forget the animals in the ark (Gen. 9: 19-20)... Through the good health and the plentiful number of oxen and other four-footed beasts, the earth is cultivated and its fruits increase; and your servants, who call upon your name, enjoy in full abundance the produce of their farming.[8]

Many other examples of such prayers for the animals could be quoted, but these are enough to show that Orthodox intercessions are not exclusively anthropocentric, but encompass the entire created order. We humans are bound to God and to one another in a cosmic covenant that also includes all the other living creatures on the face of the earth: 'I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground' (Hos. 2:18; cf. Gen. 9:15).[9] We humans are not saved *from* the world but *with* the world; and that means, with the animals. Moreover, this cosmic covenant is not something that we humans have de-

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7 But, at a later point in this same exorcism, it is said that, if these creatures fail to obey the command to depart to their own place, 'May he [God] kill you with pigs... and birds also will be sent by my prayers to devour you' (*The Great Book of Needs*, vol. 3, p.54).

8 Prayer of St Modestos, in *Mikron Evchologion i Agiasmatarion* (Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia, 1984), p. 297.

9 See Robert Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical Themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992).

vised, but it has its source in the divine realm. It is conferred upon us as a gift by God.

A striking illustration of this covenant bond is to be seen in the custom that once prevailed in the Russian countryside; perhaps it still continues today. Returning from the Easter midnight service with their newly-kindled Holy Fire, the farmers used to go into the stables with the lighted candle or lantern, and they greeted the horses and cattle with the Paschal salutation 'Christ is Risen!' The victory of the risen Saviour over the forces of death and darkness has meaning not for us humans alone but for the animals as well. For them also Christ has died and risen again. 'Now *all things* are filled with light' (hymn at the Easter matins).

2 Do animals have souls?

St Nicodemus, in the prayer quoted above, cites the words of Proverbs 12:10: 'The righteous man shows pity for the souls of his cattle.'[10]Does this mean that animals have souls?[11]The answer depends upon what precisely we mean by the soul. The word *psyche* in the ancient world had a wider application than that which is customarily given in the present day to our word 'soul'. Aristotle, for example, distinguishes three levels of soul: the vegetable, the animal, and the human.[12]According to this Aristotelian scheme, the vegetable or nutritive soul has the capacity for growth, but not for movement or sensation. The animal soul has the capacity for movement and sensation, but

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10 I follow here the text of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament used at Orthodox church services.

11 See Kallistos Ware, 'The Soul in Greek Christianity', in M. James C. Crabbe (ed.), *From Soul to Self* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), especially pp.62-65. For other passages in the Septuagint that mention the 'souls' of animals, see for example Genesis 1:21 and 24, and Leviticus 17:14.

12 See Ware, 'The Soul in Greek Christianity', pp.55-56.

not for conscious thought or reason. Only the human soul is endowed with self-knowledge and the power of logical thinking. For Aristotle, then, *psyche* means in an inclusive fashion all expressions of life-force and vital energy, whereas in contemporary usage we limit the term 'soul' to the third level, the human or rational soul. If we today were to speak of potatoes or tomatoes as possessing souls, we should doubtless be considered facetious. But Aristotle was not trying to make a joke.

Employing the term 'soul' in a restricted sense, as denoting specifically the self-reflective rational soul, most thinkers in the West – and, on the whole, in the Christian East as well – have denied that animals are ensouled. Descartes held that they are simply intricate machines or automata. On such a view, there is a clear demarcation between human beings and the animal world. Humans alone, it is said, are created in God's image, and they alone possess immortality, in contrast to 'the beasts that perish' (Ps.48 [49]: 12, 20). In modern Greek the horse is called *alogon*, 'lacking *logos* or reason'. Animals, so it is maintained, cannot form abstract concepts, and so they are unable to construct logical arguments; they lack personal freedom and the faculty of moral choice, for they cannot discern between good and evil, but act solely from instinct.

Yet are we in fact justified in making such an emphatic division between ourselves and the other animals? (I say 'other', because we humans are also animals; we have the same origin as those whom we call 'beasts'.) Many of the characteristics that we tend to regard as distinctively human are also to be found, to a varying extent, in the animals as well. This certainly was the view of early Christian writers. 'The instinct (*physis*) that exists in hunting dogs and war horses', observes Origen (*c.* 185-*c.* 254), 'comes near, if I may say so, to reason itself.'[13]We may think of the behaviour of a monkey, confronted by a cage with a complicated latch, and with a banana inside. Seeking to open

13 *On First Principles* 3:1:3.

the cage, twisting the latch first in one direction and then in another, the monkey is evidently engaged in something closely similar to the process of thinking that a human being would employ in a similar situation. Animals as well as humans try to solve problems.

Origen has in view domesticated animals, but Theophilus of Antioch (late 2nd century) goes further, noting how the instinct in all animals, wild as well as domestic, leads them to mate and to care for their offspring: this indicates that they possess 'understanding'.[14] Other Patristic authors point out that animals share with humans not only a certain degree of reason and understanding, but also memory and a wide range of emotions and affections. They display feelings of joy and grief, asserts St Basil of Caesarea (*c.* 330-79), and they recognize those whom they have met previously.[15] St John Climacus (*c.* 570- *c.* 649) adds that they express love for each other, for 'they often bewail the loss of their companions'.[16] Indeed, some animals are faithfully monogamous, in a way that all too many humans conspicuously are not.

It is often argued that animals lack the power to articulate speech. Yet, as we can see from dolphins, they have other subtle ways of communicating with one another. Ants and bees are capable of social co-operation on an elaborate scale. Animals may not use tools; yet they do not simply exist within the world, but actively adapt the environment to their own needs. Birds build nests, beavers construct dams.

Nor is this all. If we are to accept the testimony of Scripture, it would seem that animals can sometimes display visionary awareness, perceiving things to which we humans are blind. In the story of Balaam's ass (Num. 22: 21-33), the donkey sees the angel of the Lord, blocking the pathway with a drawn sword, whereas Balaam himself is unaware of the angel's presence. As

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14 *To Antolycus* 1:6.

15 *Hexaemeron* 8:1 (*PG* 29: 165AB).

16 *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* 26 (*PG* 88: 1028A).

investigators of the paranormal have often discovered, animals react to unseen 'presences' in places reputed to be haunted. May it not be claimed that animals possess, at least in a rudimentary form, psychic insight and a capacity for spiritual intuition?

Instead of making a sharp separation between animals and human beings, would it not be wiser to keep in view the kinship that links us together? Nemesius of Emesa (late 4th century) is surely correct to insist upon the unity of all living things. Sharing as they do the same life-force, plants, animals and humankind belong to the single integrated structure of creation.[17] We and the animals are interdependent, 'members one of another' (Eph. 4:25). The world is variegated yet everywhere interconnected. As my history master at school used to say, 'It all ties up, you see; it all ties up.'

Can we in fact be sure that animals do not enjoy immortality? At any rate there is good reason to believe that animals will exist in the future Age, after the Second Coming of Christ and the general resurrection of the dead. As Isaiah affirms, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion together, and a little child shall lead them' (Isa. 11:6). When Martin Luther, distressed by the death of his pet dog, was asked whether there would be animals in heaven, he relpied: 'There will be little dogs with golden hair, shining like precious stones.'[18]

It is not clear, however, whether these animals in the Age to come will be the *same* animals as we have known in this present life. Yet that is at least a possibility; we do not have good grounds for asserting that it could not conceivably be so. Let us leave the question open. Friendship and mutual love contain within themselves an element of eternity. For us to say to another human person, with all our heart. 'I love you', is to say by

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17 *On the Nature of Man* 1 (ed. Morani, 2:13-14; 3: 3-25).

18 William Hazlitt (ed.), *The Table Talk of Martin Luther* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1857), p. 322.

implication, 'You will never die.' If this is true of our love for our fellow humans, may it not be true of our love for animals? Although we are not to love animals in the same way as we love our fellow humans, yet those of us who have experienced the deeply therapeutic effect of a companion animal will certainly recognize that our reciprocal relationship contains within itself intimations of immortality.

Even if animals are not ensouled, yet they are undoubtedly sentient. They are responsive and vulnerable. As Andrew Linzey rightly says, 'Animals are not machines or commodities but beings with their own God-given life (*nephesh*), individuality and personality... Animals are more like gifts than something owned, giving us more than we expect and thus obliging us to return their gifts. Far from decrying these relationships as "sentimental", "unbalanced", or "obsessive" (as frequently happens today), churches could point us to their underlying theological significance - as living examples of divine grace.'[19]

'Cruelty is atheism', said Humphrey Primatt (18th century). 'Cruelty is the worst of heresies.'[20] Indeed, not only should we refrain from cruelty to animals, but in a positive way we should seek to do them good, enhancing their pleasure and their unselfconscious happiness. In the words of Starets Zosima in Dostoevsky's master-work *The Brothers Karamazov*: 'Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and an untroubled joy. Do not trouble it, do not torment them, do not go against God's purpose. Man, do not exalt yourself above the animals; they are sinless, and you, you with all your grandeur, defile the earth through your appearance upon it, and leave traces of your defilement behind you - alas, this is true of almost every one of us!'[21]

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19 Linzey, *Animal Rites*, p. 58.

20 Quoted in Linzey, *Animal Rites*, p.151.

21 Fyordor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, tr. Richard Pervear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Classics, 1991), p. 319 (translation adapted).

Unfortunately it has to be said that, while there can be found within Orthodoxy a rich theology of the animal creation, there exists a sad gap between theory and practice. It cannot be claimed that, in traditional Orthodox countries such as Greece, Cyprus or Romania, animals are better treated than in the non-Orthodox West; indeed, the contrary is regrettably true. We Orthodox need to kneel down before the animals and to ask their forgiveness for the evils that we inflict upon them. I have concentrated here upon the positive elements in the Orthodox teaching about animals; but we should not ignore the many ways in which we fall short of our pastoral responsibility towards the living creatures, domestic and wild, that God has given us to be our companions.

3 Dominion or domination?

'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?' says Jesus. 'Yet mot one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will' (Matt. 10:29). 'Not one of them': God's care for his creation, his love for all the things that he has made, is not merely an abstract and generalized love. He cares for each particular creature, for every individual sparrow. But Jesus then goes on to say, 'You are of more value than many sparrows' (Matt. 10:31). Every living thing has its unique value in God's sight, but at the same time we dwell in a hierarchical universe, and some living things have a greater value than others.

The significance of this hierarchy is expressed in a more specific way in God's creative utterance in the opening chapter of Genesis: 'Then God said, "Let us make the human being in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" ' (Gen. 1:26). Humans, then, are entrusted by the Creator with authority over the animals. Yet this God-given 'dominion' does not signify an arbitrary and tyrannical domina-

tion. We must not overlook the explicit reason that is given for this dominion: it is because we are fashioned in the image and likeness of God. That is to say, in the exercise of our dominion over the animals, we are to show the same gentleness and loving compassion that God himself shows towards the whole of his creation. Our dominion is to be God-reflective and Christ-like.

How far does this dominion extend? Certainly it includes the right to use domestic animals for our service: to employ horses and oxen for ploughing, to keep cows for their milk, to breed sheep for their wool. Yet there are definite limits to what we can legitimately do. We should not adopt a narrowly instrumentalist attitude towards the animals. We are to respect their characteristic 'life-style', allowing them to be themselves. This is scarcely what happens with battery hens! We are not to inflict upon them excessive burdens that cause them exhaustion and suffering. We are to ensure that they are kept warm, clean, healthy and properly fed. Only so will our dominion be according to the image of divine compassion.

Does our dominion over the animals entitle us to kill and eat them? In the Orthodox Church, as in other Christian communities, there are many who on serious grounds of conscience refrain from eating animals. But the Orthodox Church as such is not in principle vegetarian. The normal teaching is that animals may indeed be killed and used for food, so long as this killing is done humanely and not wantonly. It is true that in traditional Orthodox monasteries meat is not eaten in the refectory; fish, however, is allowed. It is also true that in Lent and at certain other seasons of the year all Orthodox Christians, whether monastics or those in the 'world', are required to abstain from animal products. But this is not because the eating of animal products is in itself sinful, but because such fasting has disciplinary value, assisting us in our prayer and our spiritual growth. In the Gospels it is stated that Christ ate fish: 'They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate before them' (Luke 24:41-42). Since he observed the Passover, presumably he also ate meat.

4 Beasts and Saints

In the lives of Eastern Christian Saints – as among the saints of the West, especially in the Celtic tradition – there are numerous stories, often well authenticated, of close fellowship between the animals and holy men and women. Such accounts are not to be dismissed as sentimental fairy tales, for they have a definite theological significance. The mutual understanding between animals and humans recalls the situation before the Fall, when the two lived at peace in Paradise; and it points forward to the transfiguration of the cosmos at the end time. In the words of St Isaac the Syrian (7th century), 'The humble person approaches the wild animals, and the moment they catch sight of him their ferocity is tamed. They come up and cling to him as to their master, wagging their tails and licking his hands and feet. For they smell on him the same smell that came from Adam before the transgression.'[22]

Not that mutual understanding between holy men and wild animals has always been complete! There is, for example, a story in the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* about an unsociable lion: 'There was a certain old man, a solitary, who lived near the river Jordan; and going into a cave because of the heat, he found there a lion. The lion began to gnash his teeth and to roar. The old man said to him, "What is annoying you? There is plenty of room here for both of us. And if you don't like it, get up and go away." But the lion, not taking it well, left and went outside.'[23]

Many of the 20th-century stories about humans and animals come from the Holy Mountain of Athos, the chief centre of Orthodox monasticism. I recall one such story, told to me many years ago. The monks in a small hermitage, as they prayed in the early morning, were much disturbed by the croaking of

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22 *Homily* 82, in *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, tr. A. J. Wensinck (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1923), p. 386 (translation adapted).

23 Helen Waddell, *Beasts and Saints*, p. 24 (translation adapted).

frogs in the cistern outside their chapel. The spiritual father of the community went out and addressed them: 'Frogs! We've just finished the Midnight Office and are about to start Matins. Would you mind keeping quiet until we've finished!' To which the frogs replied, 'We've just finished Matins and are about to begin the First Hour. Would *you* mind keeping quiet until *we've* finished!'

Compassion for animals is vividly expressed in the writings of a recent Athonite Saint, the Russian monk Silouan (1866-1938).

> 'The Lord', he says, 'bestows such rich grace on his chosen ones that they embrace the whole earth, the whole world within their love. ... One day I saw a dead snake on my path which had been chopped into pieces, and each piece writhed convulsively, and I was filled with pity for every living creature, every suffering thing in creation, and I wept bitterly before God.'[24]

Such is in truth the compassionate love that we are called to express towards the animals. All too often they are innocent sufferers, and we should view this undeserved suffering with compunction and sympathy. What harm have they done to us, that we should inflict pain and distress upon them? As living beings, sensitive and easily hurt, they are to be viewed as a 'Thou', not an 'It', to use Martin Buber's terminology: not as objects to be exploited and manipulated but as subjects, capable of joy and sorrow, of happiness and affliction. They are to be approached with gentleness and tenderness; and, more than that, with respect and reverence, for they are precious in God's sight. As William Blake affirmed, 'Every things that lives is holy.'[25]

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[24] Archimandrite Sofrony (Sakharov), *Saint Silouan the Athonite* (Tolleshunt Knights: Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, 1991), pp. 267, 469. But Silouan also warned against showing excessive affection towards animals (pp. 95-96).

[25] 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell', in Geoffrey Keynes (ed.), *Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (London: Nonesuch Press, 1948), p. 193.