

Feast of St. Francis

Blessing of animals ... and animals as blessings

Congregations throughout The Episcopal Church mark October 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, by blessing animals that are companions of their parishioners.

Episcopalians can also give an animal that will be a blessing to a family in an impoverished community through Episcopal Relief and Development's "Gifts for Life" catalog.

Donors can provide animals — ranging from bees and chickens to goats, pigs and cows — to families, who receive not only the animal, but training in its care.

For instance, a beehive, which can produce honey and beeswax for use and sale, is available for \$55. A flock of chickens to begin a family egg business is \$135: shares may be purchased for \$25. At \$80, a goat provides milk that can help feed a family; surplus milk may be sold or made into cheese.

These animals can make the difference between poverty and self-sufficiency for families all over the world.

Donations can fund shares in larger animals, such as a cow or pig. In addition, groups or congregations may get together to provide an entire farm's worth of animals — a cow and goat for milk products, and an ox and plow for farming.

Other options are also available, such as providing drought-resistant seedlings in areas where water is in short supply; or a community garden, including land, training,

seeds and the basic tools needed to establish a reliable food supply for an entire village.

Gifts may also pay for a clean-water system for a village, or micro-credit loans that help entrepreneurs open new businesses that benefit them and serve their communities.

Episcopal Relief and Development, a ministry of The Episcopal Church, works to bring assistance to people and communities throughout the world in the wake of crisis and in the face of long-term need.



Episcopal Relief & Development

Healing a hurting world

For more about Episcopal Relief and Development and the Gifts for Life program, visit

www.er-d.org/GiftsForLife

Gifts for Life catalogs are available without charge from Episcopal Books and Resources

www.episcopalbookstore.org

(click on "parish resources".)

