

*In
Thanksgiving
to God*

*for
'Smokey Joe'
much loved
pony*

St John's Alexandra, Saturday 3rd May 2008

Introduction and Greeting

Fr. Paul: The Lord be with you

All: And also with you

Fr Paul: Friends, the death of any companion animal is a sad event, but it is especially sad when a much loved horse dies. Horses, like us, are sensitive and easily frightened. They are much bigger than we are yet are eager to please us and are biddable. They allow themselves to be trained to a high degree for their and our pleasure. The nature of our relationship with horses challenges us and asks of us qualities that are not often brought out in other relationships.

When a loved horse companion, like Smokey Joe dies it is, then, a great loss. It is right that we bring our grief into the company of God and also right that we offer to God our thanks for the companionship and common life journey that we have shared

Sentence:

Jesus says 'Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my burden on you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and my burden is light.'

Opening Prayer

Our God and Father, Creator of the universe which You filled with the wonders of life: You have brought forth diverse living creatures and endowed us with the ability to love them, care for them, and be comforted by them. We thank you for the life of 'Smokey Joe' t, a constant and loyal companion who shared our home and love. At the same time we grieve his loss, we give You thanks for the miracle of life and the wonder of the love and companionship we shared. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Bible Reading: Numbers 21:22 - 33

Balaam, the Donkey, and the Angel

So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went... God's anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. The donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; so the donkey turned off the road, and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey, to turn it back on to the road. Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it scraped against the wall, and scraped Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck it again. Then the angel of the Lord went ahead, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he

struck the donkey with his staff. Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?' Balaam said to the donkey, 'Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!' But the donkey said to Balaam, 'Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you in this way?' And he said, 'No.'

Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down, falling on his face. The angel of the Lord said to him, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary, because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me, and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely I would by now have killed you and let it live.' Then Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, 'I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now therefore, if it is displeasing to you, I will return home.'

Psalm 104 26 - 32

**O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.**

**Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.**

**There go the ships,
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.**

**These all look to you
to give them their food in due season;**

**when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.**

**When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.**

**When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth.**

Speaking

Tamara has prepared a presentation.

Prayers

Fr Paul: In peace, let us pray to God.

O God our Maker, from the beginning you have permitted us, the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, to name our brother and sister creatures of earth, sea, and sky: We commend 'Smokey' to the arms of your everlasting love.

Amen.

O Christ our Savior, in your love you gave yourself to death that the whole world might have life: Console us who grieve, and in our time of sorrow help us to trust in your everlasting love.

Amen.

O Spirit and Giver of Life, you abandon no creature that the flame of your presence has enlivened: Abide with us in this world and sustain in us the hope that in life as in death nothing is lost, and all is enfolded by the flame of your love.

Amen.

The Leave-taking

Fr. Paul: Most merciful God, we return to you 'Smokey Joe', a creature of your own making and your gift into our lives. We praise you for his beauty and strength, for his grace and power; we thank you for his faithful companionship in our joys and sorrows; and we bless you for the time during which you entrusted him into our care. Receive now 'Smokey' back into the arms of your everlasting love, O Giver of life, through whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ all that is lost to death is restored to life, and in whose Name we pray. **Amen.**

The Blessing

Fr. Paul: The peace of God, which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and the +Blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Fr Paul: Go in the peace of God

All: In the name of Christ. **Amen.**