

*I Will
See
You in
Heaven*

Friar Jack Wintz



PARACLETE PRESS
BREWSTER, MASSACHUSETTS

I Will See You in Heaven

2010 First Printing

Copyright © 2010 by Jack Wintz

ISBN: 978-1-55725-732-1

Unless otherwise noted all scriptural references are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptural references marked NAB are taken from the *New American Bible with Revised New Testament and Revised Psalms* © 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., and are used by permission. All Rights Reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Scriptural references marked NAB 1986 in this work are taken from the *New American Bible with Revised New Testament* © 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Scriptural references marked JB are taken from *The Jerusalem Bible* © 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wintz, Jack. *I will see you in heaven* / Jack Wintz.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-55725-732-1

1. Animals—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Pets—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Future life—Christianity. I. Title. BT746.W55 2010

231.7—dc22

2009053415

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in an electronic retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published by Paraclete Press

Brewster, Massachusetts

www.paracletepress.com

Printed in the United States of America

*This book is written for
the millions of people
who love their animal companions.
All may find inspiration here.*

I Will See You in Heaven is also designed to help those who have recently lost a pet by keeping it in loving remembrance. You may want to use the following Presentation Page.

Presented to

By _____

In Loving Remembrance of

On This Day



Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Three Prayers of Blessing</i>	7
FOR ANY ANIMAL, FISH, BIRD, OR OTHER CREATURE	
1 <i>And It Was Very Good</i>	13
2 <i>The Happiness Principle</i>	19
3 <i>Blessing the Animals</i>	25
4 <i>Noah, the Ark, and the Dove</i>	31
5 <i>Animals and God's Will</i>	37
6 <i>Jonah and the Whale</i>	43

7	<i>Creatures Praise Our Creator</i>	51
8	<i>The Song of St. Francis</i>	57
9	<i>St. Francis and the Creatures</i>	65
10	<i>Jesus and the World of Creation</i>	75
11	<i>Praying with Creatures</i>	79
12	<i>The Soul of a Dog</i>	83
13	<i>The Afterlife</i>	91
14	<i>Conclusion</i>	99



Introduction

We have a deep desire to know if we will see our pets again, and all the other lovely creatures alongside whom we now inhabit this planet. What will become of them after they die?

2 *I Will See You in Heaven*

A friend of mine once told me the following story:

Anne lives in Cincinnati, where a few years ago she faced the important questions of death and eternity as she was present at the death of her dearly loved dog, Miss Daisy. Anne had befriended Miss Daisy ten years earlier when the dog, of mixed Spaniel origin, was barely one year old. With the help of her adult son, Anne rescued Miss Daisy from Cincinnati's inner city.

"I would see her wandering around the neighborhood where I worked at an elementary school," Anne told me. "I came to realize that she was obviously a stray and lost—and she was adorable! I took cans of tuna to the area where Miss Daisy hung out, but she was very afraid of people and wouldn't approach the tuna till she was left alone. My rescue attempts went on for many months."

In time, Anne was successful in winning Miss Daisy's confidence and was able to take her to her home.

"Miss Daisy was still very shy," Anne told me, "but she eventually became a loyal and loving member of our family. Realizing that Miss Daisy needed a companion, I went to

the dog pound and came home with a dog named Andy. For ten years or so, Miss Daisy and Andy were very happy companions, and both became cherished members of the family. But I became especially attached to Miss Daisy.

“Eventually, Miss Daisy became ill, and we had to make the very difficult decision to have her ‘put down.’ My son and I took her to the veterinarian so he could put her to sleep. We wanted the vet to come out to our car so Miss Daisy would be in familiar surroundings and we could be holding her, but he refused our request. So we had to take her inside. We laid her on the vet’s table on her special blanket. We petted Miss Daisy gently and spoke softly to her as the vet got everything ready to give her the injection. Miss Daisy lay there quietly for a few seconds, and then, just before the injection took effect, she lifted her head and looked directly into my eyes. I can still see that look. It was as if she knew what was going on and she was saying good-bye.”

Anne recalls how her heart melted, and to this day tears come to her eyes when she remembers that scene. “I still miss

4 *I Will See You in Heaven*

the loving pet who had been my dear friend for so many years. *I know I will see Miss Daisy again!*"



I'm sure that most of us have our own memories of being profoundly grief-stricken at the death of a beloved pet. These are not childish concerns, but the mature reflections of loving Christians.

Many of us prefer to pose the question "Will I see my dog in heaven?" in broader spiritual terms. There is more involved in this question than simply wondering if we will ever be reunited with a loved animal. For instance, does God's plan of salvation include only humans, or does it include animals, too? In even broader terms, does God intend the *whole* created world to be saved?

As a Franciscan friar for over fifty years, I am familiar with the stories of St. Francis of Assisi and his close relationship with animals, and these stories have informed the way that I view these things. Perhaps you've heard the stories of this brown-robed friar preaching to the birds, releasing Brother

Rabbit from a trap, or letting Sister Raven serve as his “alarm clock” to awaken him for early morning prayer. I’ve known for a long time that historians have credited Francis with composing one of the first great poems in the Italian language—a poem, or hymn, usually entitled *The Canticle of the Creatures*. In this hymn, sometimes known as *The Canticle of Brother Sun*, Francis invites all his brother and sister creatures to praise their Creator—Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Fire and Sister Water, as well as Sister Earth, our mother, with all her various fruits and vividly colored flowers.

Some thirty years ago I came to the conclusion, which I’ve never abandoned, that St. Francis came to see that all creatures form one family of creation. Maybe that conclusion is obvious to you, but for me this idea dawned quite gradually. The conviction has grown stronger and stronger, and this book has grown out of that conviction, and explores the implications of it. What would it mean if all creatures were one family? How would it affect us? How would it change our understanding about God, and about how we relate to God and to each other?



Three Prayers of Blessing

FOR ANY ANIMAL, FISH, BIRD, OR OTHER CREATURE

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

*[Christ] is before all things,
and in him all things hold together. —Col. 1:17*

Gather your family and friends together for these blessings
—it is good to have as much of the family of God present as possible.
Insert the name of your animal companion into these prayers.

For Any of God's Creatures

Blessed are you, Lord God,
Maker of all living creatures.

On the fifth and sixth days of creation,
you called forth fish in the sea,
birds in the air, and animals on the land.

You inspired St. Francis to call all animals
his brothers and sisters.

We ask you to bless this animal (these animals)
gathered about us.

By the power of your love,
enable him or her (them) to live according to your plan.

May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures.

Amen.

For One or More Sick Creatures

Heavenly Creator,

you made all things for your glory

and made us caretakers of this creature

(these creatures) under our care.

Restore to health and strength this animal

(this pet) that you have entrusted to us.

Keep this animal (this pet)

always under your loving protection.

Blessed are you, Lord God,

And holy is your name for ever and ever. Amen.

*For an Animal That Has Died
or Is About to Die*

Loving God,

our beloved pet and companion, (name),
is on its final journey.

We will miss (name) dearly
because of the joy and affection
(name) has given to us.

Bless (name) and give him/her peace.

May your care for (name) never die.

We thank you for the gift
that (name) has been to us.

Give us hope that in your great kindness
you may restore (name) in your heavenly kingdom
according to your wisdom, which goes
beyond our human understanding. Amen.

