

Praying with that old cat

Any given day I pray at least a dozen times. Most of my prayers are brief and spoken silently within my old brain. But twice nearly every day, once in the darkness of early morning and once in the darkness of early evening, I pray more comprehensively, making sure to cover those whom I know to need a little extra dose of God's good attention.

For the last decade or so, a pretty much wild cat joined the cast of characters at forage in my back yard. She is, or at least she was, fearless and dispatched raccoons and other territorial challengers with zest and overly ample attitude. At some point she adopted me. Only occasionally being unable to constrain her need to scratch and bite, she apparently convinced herself to tolerate being held and petted. Slowly and reluctantly she concluded I was not very likely to kill her.

In recent times, for my pre-dawn and post-dusk prayers, my wont is to go outside, sit and cuddle with that old cat, who now is nearly as impaired and physically diminished as I. As I cuddle with that old cat, I pray softly aloud. That old cat thinks I am speaking to her, of course, which is just fine with me. God put her in my arms, after all.

This twice-daily ritual has become a gift for both that old cat and the old man, and that is excellent and fair. If there is joy, simple joy, I know it may be found in the darkness of my back yard, in the cuddle of that old cat, in the prayers of an old man to a loving and gracious God, or to that old cat, depending on who is listening.