
Lauda Anima!

**A sermon by the Very Rev. Sam Candler
The Feast of St. Francis**

It was twenty-five years ago, today. It was twenty-five years ago, today, Sargeant Pepper taught the band to play! Twenty-five years ago, on the first day of October, 1998, I began my ministry here, as dean at the Cathedral of St. Philip. Of course, I knew it was St. Francis Day that day; and I knew that all sorts of animals would be eager for blessing. I knew there would be barking and noise and chaos.

And there was!

I do not think that anyone heard my first sermon here at the Cathedral. Actually, I am not sure anyone wanted to hear it! A few years later, when things got a little tense for a while, I thought to myself: "Ah! That is why I have been able to stay here for several years; because no one has actually been able to hear what I have been talking about!"

What I was talking about that day was soul. Soul! Someone had asked me whether animals had a soul, and whether they would go to heaven. And I had replied, Yes, of course they have a soul! Of course, they go to heaven! They are heaven! In fact, the word for soul, in Latin, is the word, "anima!" It is the root, from which we get the very word, "animal." Anima means soul; animals have soul!

That is why we bring them to church on this day. Because we want soul in this place. We want things that show us soul!

Today, after twenty-five years, thank you. Thank you for bringing, and continuing to bring, soul into this place. Our soul has been beautiful and wonderful and holy together.

Sometimes the soul we have here is quiet, contemplative, even silent. There is a silent soul within these beautiful walls, and within each beautiful person here.

And there is also a loud soul here! In children, and music, and animals, and laughter, and freedom. In this holy place, the Cathedral of St. Philip, our soul meets God's soul. Our soul joins God's soul, and Holy Spirit happens.

So, let me mention another Latin phrase. It is the name of the musical tune of one of our favorite hymns. The hymn is "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven," and we sang it last week. We are going to sing it again today. It is right there in your service leaflet, right after the sermon, if this sermon ever ends.

Well, the title of the tune is written in italics, right in our bulletin. Can you find it? The title of this hymn is "*Lauda Anima*," See it? *Lauda anima*?

Some Latin scholars think that phrase means, "Praise my soul!" Like in, "Praise my soul the king of heaven." Praise my soul!

But I have it on good authority that it means something else. It certainly means something else today.

Today, "*Lauda Anima*" really means, "**Louder, Animals!**"

"**Louder, Animals!**" Louder! Sing it louder. We are all animals, we are all souls, and God wants our souls to be

brighter, louder, even more beautiful!

Yes, on this Saint Francis Day, we remember Soul. We remember the soul that Francis brought to life, and we remember the soul that God has for us everywhere.

The soul of God, the very soul of God, is in this place, in the Cathedral of St. Philip today. Praise my soul, the soul of God.

When we let our souls sing in this place, we are truly blessing God, and we are blessing each other. Hey, that's the other thing I have tried to bring to this place, over twenty-five years. Soul is one. Blessing is the other.

We are meant to be a people who bless, a people of blessing, blessing each other and the world, in the way that God has blessed us. Let us bless each other again, by singing this wonderful hymn together.

And, remember: Louder, Animals!

Let us stand and sing Hymn 410, "Praise my soul the king of heaven." Lauda anima!

The Very Reverend Sam Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip