

SAINT FRANCIS AND THE ANIMALS

A MOTHER BIRD'S STORY

PHIL GALLERY

**ILLUSTRATED BY
SIBYL MACKENZIE**



San Damiano Books
PARACLETE PRESS

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BREWSTER, MASSACHUSETTS



With gratitude, this book is dedicated to Father Patrick Adams,
Father Gordian Vincent Ehrlacher, Father Bo McMillan, and Father Ray Bean.
All were members of the Order of Friars Minor, called Franciscans. I was
blessed to have them as guides as I moved from childhood to adulthood.
May they rest in peace.

– PHIL GALLERY

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Saint Francis and the Animals

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NOTE TO PARENTS, TEACHERS,
AND ADULTS WHO READ THIS BOOK
WITH CHILDREN



We live in a world cluttered with sights and sounds. Our eyes and ears are so bombarded, we can become blind and deaf to the natural sights and sounds of God's Creation.

Saint Francis was a man who paid close attention to Creation. As he walked through the woods, he talked to the animals, addressing them as his "brothers" and "sisters." Looking at a tree, he might say, "Thank you, Brother Tree, for the shade you give me in the summer and for the fruit you give me to eat. Thank you for your branches where my sister birds can build their homes, and for the wood we use to heat our homes and cook our food."

He called the sun his brother and the moon his sister. Francis used all his senses to help him appreciate God's world. The more he became involved with nature, the closer he felt to God. But because he talked to animals, many people thought Francis had lost his senses—that he had "gone crazy." Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Saint Francis could hear the voice of God, which told him that God loved him. Knowing he was loved by God filled Francis with gratitude and happiness.

This book is a look at how this gratitude and happiness led Francis to treat his brother and sister creatures with respect. It offers a vision for the many ways that all of us, humans and other animals and all of Creation, are connected parts of God's world. For the young children with whom you read this book, talking to animals and trees will probably make perfect sense. Here's hoping you will encourage them to do so.