

“FOXES HAVE DENS” (MOST OF THE TIME!): THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S CREATION- PART II

Continuing our **nature theme** from last week’s bulletin, a new Scripture passage comes to mind: “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head.” (Luke 9:58) These words rang true in my ears this past week. For myriad reasons, I endeavor to keep an eye on our Cathedral campus, and I have become more interested in the **cycle of nature** affecting our trees, flowers, etc. But now, I must add **wildlife** to the mix. Approximately ten days ago, I noticed a **red fox** (a vixen in fact) roaming our backyard. That’s right– an urban fox. She was scurrying about, possibly in search of a tasty snack– **Hasenpfeffer** anyone? Sorry– poor taste! Oh, how wrong I was. In retrospect, it is likely she was frantically searching for her **pup!** When returning from a wedding reception, I heard cries emanating from the bushes. Given that it was late, I was not about to venture into the bush after dark.

The next evening, I heard the same thing, and concluded that the sound was **not** coming from the bushes, but from lower down. When peering over the fence down into the basement window well area near the sacristy, I had my answer. Somehow, a fox had made its way down there (a fifteen-foot drop) and clearly would not be able to get back up. Suffice it to say, I was concerned. Now what? My inner **St. Francis of Assisi** wanted to help, but I was not about to lower myself down into the vast pit and chase around a young fox. I would surely have lost that game of **tag!** I decided to call for help. The problem was it was **after hours** on a Friday evening, and it was extremely difficult to get hold of anyone. I must have tried six or seven numbers and left numerous messages. Finally, I received a return call from the **Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota**, located in Roseville. The non-profit provides quality medical care and rehabilitation for all injured, sick and orphaned wild animals. Deo gratias!

Initially founded in 1979 as a student club of the Veterinary College at the **University of Minnesota**, today they treat 15,000 animals annually in their rehab center. Room for one more, I wondered? Unfortunately, I was informed that they are **not a rescue** organization, and I was directed to make contact with a licensed rescue operation. While I understood the distinction, I was disappointed because **no one** was returning my calls. Following a google search “What do foxes eat?” I dropped some fruit into the window well, bananas, both dried and fresh, and upon return later, the bananas were gone, though the dates were still there. Picky eater, I surmised– no problem. But I **couldn’t let it go**, and still was receiving no call backs. So on to **Plan B**– setting up a **trap**. This I did with the help of my brother and we lowered it into the deep window well and then I waited and waited. **And waited.**

I surreptitiously checked back periodically, but that little fox spotted me each time and would not venture out from the window well. Now, I was increasingly concerned that its **activity** was rapidly **diminishing**. I poured some water over the edge, hoping to create a puddle enough for the animal to lap up, as well as a bucket filled with water into which it could potentially climb. I improvised a rope by using an electrical cord. But I feared the 48 hours plus (at least) were **taking its toll**. I called the rehab center again after Sunday 5:00 p.m. Mass, and after assurances that they would call the city first thing Monday morning, the call ended cordially. But I was disappointed. Then, not **ten minutes** later, they called me back. Change of plans. Someone **would** come over and quickly made preparations by enlisting Fr. Pavlak (Thank you!) to help lug a ladder from the garage and lowering it into the pit. Thankfully, thenceforth, our job was over!

When **Ashley** (certified Vet tech) and **Allison** (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) arrived, I knew that the **pros** were here. And they did not disappoint! This was analogous to the medical staff of a hospital coming to pick up the patient! She gently– yet confidently– coaxed the baby fox out from behind the chicken wire in the window well (still not sure how it got in there!) and I am delighted to report she successfully retrieved the scared and dehydrated pup and made a beeline for the car to bring it back to the Center. I am pleased to make a **donation** to their organization in honor of Ashley and Allison, for their excellent work. They took time on a Sunday evening and changed hats from Vets to rescue workers. Kudos to them!

Honestly, Scripture is a bit of a **mixed bag** with respect to wildlife. Read Judges 15 about Samson and the three hundred jackals set loose to exact revenge against the Philistines– **not** for the **faint** of heart! While I generally appreciate the **earthiness** of Old Testament accounts, I align much more with **Isaiah 40:11**, which reads: “Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, leading the ewes with care.” Years ago, I couldn’t watch a neighborhood kid burn insects with a magnifying glass in the summer sun. Just couldn’t do it! I close with the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “*Animals* are God’s creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him

and give him glory. Thus, men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals.” (CCC 2416) All creatures of our God and King!

- The reception of Holy Communion by Catholics (e.g., politicians) who actively undermine foundational Church teaching is again in the news. The USCCB will be **discussing** this topic at their summer meeting (virtual) next month. The act of receiving Holy Communion signals our unity of faith and belief. Let us pray for wisdom for our bishops as they articulate these principles.
- In preparation for a flurry of upcoming events here, a parish family volunteered an entire Saturday morning to help **weed the grounds** in front of the Church on John Ireland Blvd. I express my **deepest gratitude**. Any other families who might consider a Saturday morning volunteer opportunity, let me know. I actually enjoyed getting a little dirty! Pastries on me!
- The situation in Israel today is as complicated as it is heart wrenching. Complicating the already long-standing tensions, **Iran** is undoubtedly a major player, believed to be funneling arms to the Palestinians. Pope Francis has made a strong plea for peace, and even met with Iran’s foreign minister last week. “For the peace of Jerusalem pray” (Ps 122:6).
- Last Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court announced it would hear a case involving a **Mississippi** law banning abortions after 15 weeks with limited exceptions. A large part of the case centers upon the issue of **viability** related laws. Medical technology is **ever-changing**, and as a result, so too the age of viability. This will be a huge case and a decision is not expected until June 2022.
- Thanks to all who have contacted us this past week following a call for additional Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. I continue to invite lay **men and women** (age 18 and up) to consider this service to the parish. Training will be provided.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel,
Rector



Fox pup found in deep window well of the Cathedral.



Mission accomplished!
Thanks to workers from the Wildlife
Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota.