



For immediate release
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U.S. Congressmen will Escort Homeless Dogs during Cathedral's Blessing of the Animals— a Cathedral "First"

**Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-KY) Befriend Dogs
from Washington Animal Rescue League**

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The Cathedral's Annual Blessing of the Animals takes on a new dimension during its Centennial Celebration by having two members of the U.S. House of Representatives escort homeless dogs during the service on Thursday, October 4.

Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Rep. Tom Lantos and House Committee on Energy and Commerce member Rep. Ed Whitfield will accompany rescued dogs from Washington Animal Rescue League, one of the largest and most innovative animal rehabilitation facilities in the nation.

Christine Gutleben, director of the Humane Society of the United States' Animal and Religion Program, will also serve as an escort.

"On this day we will remember the exemplary life of St. Francis and his great love for the most vulnerable of creatures," commented Carol Wade, Cathedral Canon Precentor. "As Gandhi said, 'The moral progress of a nation can be judged by the way it treats its animals.'"

Lantos, who represents California's Twelfth Congressional District, co-chairs the Congressional Friends of the Animal Caucus, a bi-partisan group dedicated to the advancement of animal protection legislation. Whitfield, who represents Kentucky's First Congressional District, is also a member and owns two companion dogs.

The Humane Society of the United States' Animals and Religion Program engages religious people and institutions in critical animal protections issues.

Beginning at 5 pm, homeless and rescued dogs from Washington Animal Rescue League (WARL) and the Washington Humane Society (WHS) will be on Cathedral grounds along with representatives of the two organizations.

A brief prayer service and individual blessings begin at 6:15 pm. Included in the service will be remarks by WARL Executive Director Scotlund Haisley.

The public and their companion animals (pets) are welcome.

For more information on Washington National Cathedral please link to www.nationalcathedral.org.

To learn more about Rep. Lantos please link to www.lantos.house.gov.

To learn more about Rep. Whitfield please link to www.whitfield.house.gov.

Information about the Humane Society of the United States can be found at www.hsus.org.

To view available animals and learn more about Washington Animal Rescue League and the Washington Humane Society, please link to www.warl.org and www.washhumane.org.

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