

Thought for the day - Tuesday 22nd November 2022

By Revd John Marshall

Jubilate Agno Christopher Smart

This poem about the poet's cat and their relationship in lockdown

For I will consider my Cat Jeffrey,
For he is the servant of the Living
God duly and daily serving him.
For at the first glance of the glory
Of God in the East he worships in his way.
For is this done by wreathing his
body seven times round with elegant quickness.
For then he leaps up to catch the musk,
which is the blessing of God upon his prayer.
For he rolls upon prank to work it in.
For having done duty and received blessing
he begins to consider himself.

For this he performs in ten degrees.
For first he looks upon his forepaws to see if they are clean.
For secondly he kicks up behind to clear away there.
For thirdly he works it upon stretch with the forepaws extended.
For fourthly he sharpens his paws by wood.
For fifthly he washes himself.
For sixthly he rolls upon wash.
For seventhly he fleas himself, that he may not be interrupted upon the beat.
For eighthly he rubs himself against a post.
For ninthly he looks up for his instructions.
For tenthly he goes in quest of food.
For if he meets another cat he will kiss her in kindness.
For when he takes his prey he plays with it to give it (a) chance.
For one mouse in seven escapes his dallying.
For when his day's work is done his business more properly begins.
For he keeps the Lord's watch in the night against the adversary.
For he counteracts the powers of darkness by his electrical skin and glaring
eyes.
For he counteracts the Devil, who is death, by brisking about the life.
For in his morning orisons he loves the sun and the sun loves him.

From Richard Harries (Hearing God in Poetry) writes

Kit Smart (1722 – 1771) was committed to a mental hospital, which in those days was called a 'bedlam' or lunatic asylum. His only companion was his cat Jeffrey. Like so many other human beings not least during the COVID pandemic, he found solace and consolation through a fellow creature. Kit Smart discovered that animals glorify God by being themselves.