

O God, you have made us and all living things. You are even more wonderful than what you have made. We thank you for giving us pets who bring us joy. As you take care of us, so also we ask your help that we might take care of those who trust us to look after them. By doing this, we share in your own love for all creation. We ask this in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

—Adapted from a “Collect for Saint Francis”



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25

My approach to work is to be doggedly determined. I believe in what I do. I believe it deserves my best. And I believe it matters. I believe it deserves my full attention.

Eight years ago I started taking my Labrador Retriever Annie to the office with me when our older dog died. I was concerned that Annie would be lonely. I was, though, afraid Annie would distract me from work. She did. That turned out to be the best part about Annie at the office. She was as doggedly distracting as I was doggedly determined. She would periodically nudge my hand from the keyboard to stroke her back or scratch her tummy. When she sensed I was losing my cool, all seventy-five pounds of her would crawl in my lap. And, of course, she had to be regularly walked.

Each and every Annie distraction reminded me I was loved unconditionally, as only dogs can do. That in turn reminded me of God. Annie was God's way of doggedly distracting me to come out and play and to know I am loved.

I commend dogged distraction to you. You can find your own distraction. I recommend the four-legged kind.

—Stacy F. Sauls