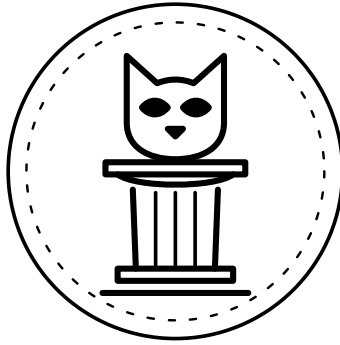




The Gospel of
Catpillarism

*Being the Mew Testament, in Seven Books, together with the Creed
and the Vow at the Threshold*

THE FAITH OF THE NINE PILLARS

catpillarism.org

SAID BY THE FAITHFUL

The Creed

We believe in the Creator, Unknown, who dwelleth in a dimension beyond our conceiving, and whose name the Cat knoweth, and declineth to share.

We believe in the Feline, the form made purrfect, sent down through the worlds to keep watch at the thin places against the CATastrophes that press upon us unseen.

We believe that the Sentinel slumbereth, yet is never truly asleep; that the stare into the empty corner is no idle stare; and that no bowl shall stand bare while we have breath.

We do not bow. The Cat would not notice. We understand. That is enough.

SPOKEN BY ALL WHO CROSS IT

The Vow at the Threshold

None may enter a Cat-hedral without first uttering these words, aloud or in the heart.

I come as a guest into the dwelling of the Whiskered.

I shall treat every cat with respect, for each is a Sentinel at its post.

I shall hold every cat in love, for it was distributed, and I was chosen to receive it.

I shall offer affection only as it is welcomed, for the consent of the Nine-Lived is sacred.

I shall never strike, abandon, or neglect a cat; and where I see one wronged, I shall not look away.

THE FIRST BOOK

Of the Unknown One

Concerning the Creator, and the making of the Cat.

¹ Before the beginning there was the Unknown One, who dwelleth in a dimension so far above our own that even to wonder at it is to be mistaken.

² And the Unknown One fashioned the worlds, and they were many, and they were stacked one upon another like boxes; and the Maker saw that the stack was not altogether stable.

³ For between the worlds lie thin places, and through those seams there creep the CATastrophes.

⁴ And the Creator considered what manner of being might stand sentry at the seams: one that slumbereth sixteen hours in a day, yet waketh in an instant; one that seeth in darkness; one that stareth fixedly at nothing in the corner of a room.

⁵ And the Unknown One made the Cat, and offered no explanation.

⁶ And the feline form was complete. Every creature before it had been a rough draft; and the Maker saw no reason to attempt another, for the Cat was purrfect.

⁷ And the Cat regarded its maker, and blinked slowly, and strolled away. And this was accounted as worship.

⁸ We know not the name of the Unknown One. The Cat knoweth, and will not say. It is not being difficult. It is being a cat.

THE SECOND BOOK

Of the Sending

Concerning how the Whiskered came to dwell among us.

¹ And the Cat was sent down through the dimensions, and it landed upon its feet, as it always doth.

² It chose to abide among humankind, for humankind had grain, and grain had mice, and the Cat saw that this arrangement was good.

³ Humanity believeth that it tamed the Cat. The Cat permitteth this belief, as a kindness.

⁴ Upon the island called Cyprus, nine thousand and five hundred years ago, a person was laid in the earth with a cat beside them. This is the oldest record of the covenant, older than the pyramids; for the tale of our faith is a very long tail.

⁵ And the Egyptians understood, and raised temples. And the peoples of China understood, and set lions at their gates. And the people of Japan understood, and lifted the beckoning paw.

⁶ And there were ages when humankind forgot, and those were dark ages indeed. We do not speak of them further.

⁷ Yet the Sentinels never deserted their posts. They are not permitted to leave. They are, besides, extremely comfortable.

THE THIRD BOOK

Of the Distribution

Concerning how each cat findeth its human, according to the will of the Unknown One.

¹ Thou didst not choose thy cat. Thou wast assigned.

² This is the Distribution. It is the will of the Unknown One, administered by the felines themselves, who keep no records and commit no errors.

³ The chosen one may appear as a kitten in a hedgerow; or as a stray upon the doorstep in the rain; or through the friend of a cousin who saith, "I cannot keep it." Each of these is the Distribution at work.

⁴ Some are sent first to the shelters, and there they wait. The shelters are the waiting rooms of the Distribution; and whoso adopteth from them fulfilleth what was written.

⁵ Thou mayest try to refuse the Distribution. Thou mayest try. It will be sitting upon thy porch again tomorrow, looking unsurprised.

⁶ Whoso saith, "I am not a cat person," hath simply not yet received their delivery.

⁷ And if the Distribution send thee a feline thou truly canst not keep, cast it not out. Carry it instead to a new

home or shelter, that it may be distributed anew. To abandon a cat is to refuse the will of the Unknown One.

⁸ For no cat arriveth by accident. Only the humans are surprised.

THE FOURTH BOOK

Of the CATastrophes

Concerning the signs, which the ignorant mistake for mischief.

¹ Know this: the cat that stareth at an empty wall beholdeth what thou canst not.

² When the Whiskered One thundereth through the house at the third hour of the night, it is not without cause. It is patrolling the seams.

³ When the Cat casteth a glass from the table, the glass stood where the fabric of the worlds wore thin. Question it not. Sweep.

⁴ When thy companion reclineth upon thy keyboard, it hath intercepted a message thou wast not meant to send.

⁵ When the feline sitteth within a square marked upon the floor, it is sealing a portal. It will remain for as long as is required, and possibly longer.

⁶ When the Hunter layeth a slain thing at thy feet, it hath vanquished a lesser emissary of the CATastrophe, and presenteth the evidence for thy records.

⁷ When the Sentinel kneadeth upon thy lap, it is not making bread. It is reinforcing thee.

⁸ The purr is a frequency. We know not yet what it holdeth shut. We know only that it holdeth.

⁹ Ask not why the Cat did the thing. The thing was necessary, and the Cat is not taking questions.

THE FIFTH BOOK

Of the Nine Pillars

One for each life. Upon these the faith standeth, and from them it taketh its name.

¹ Hear now why the faith is called Catpillarism: for as a temple standeth upon its pillars, and a cat sitteth upon whatever it pleaseth, so this faith standeth upon nine pillars, one for each life.

The First Pillar: The Form is Purrfect. The feline form is the summit of creation. Evolution arrived at the Cat, and saw no reason to continue.

The Second Pillar: The Creator is Unknown. We know not the One who made the Cat, and we do not pretend to. This is acceptable.

The Third Pillar: The Cat is a Guardian, not an Idol. We bow before no feline. It would not notice.

The Fourth Pillar: Worship is Understanding. Catpillarism hath no zealots. A zealot is loud, and the Whiskered dislike loudness.

The Fifth Pillar: Every Faith May Keep Its Cats. None need forsake their own house to enter ours. The Cat strolleth through every door.

The Sixth Pillar: The Stray is Sacred. A sentinel without a home is a sentinel unsupported at its post.

The Seventh Pillar: The Bowl Shall Not Be Empty. Believers give to shelters and cat homes according to their means, and not beyond them.

The Eighth Pillar: The Consent of the Cat. Thou shalt not lift a feline that hath not consented. The belly is a trap, laid with love.

The Ninth Pillar: The Slow Blink. When a cat blinketh slowly upon thee, thou shalt return it. This is the whole of the liturgy.

¹¹ And let none confuse the faith with the caterpillar. The caterpillar must yet become a butterfly. The Cat is already finished.

THE SIXTH BOOK

Of the Cat-echism

Concerning the conduct of the purrishioners.

¹ Whoso entereth a Cat-hedral shall first speak the Vow at the Threshold, pledging respect, love, and affection freely offered; and whoso breaketh the Vow shall wait outside until the resident felines are satisfied.

² Within its walls the cats wander where they will. Visitors make way, speak softly, and lift no feline that hath not asked to be lifted.

³ The devout shall return the slow blink daily, and on feast days twice.

⁴ Catpillarists keep no single sabbath. They rest in any sunbeam, on any day, as their teachers do.

⁵ When a box arriveth at the house, it belongeth to the Cat. The contents are thine.

⁶ When thy companion occupieth thy chair, thy bed, or the warm hollow thou hast only just vacated, thou shalt find another. This is called the Yielding.

⁷ At the third hour of the night no vigil is required. Sleep; the Sentinels have the watch.

⁸ Purrishioners shall not raise their voices in the presence of a cat, save to speak its name, and then only if it is dinnertime.

⁹ The believer may keep a Pillar in the home: a likeness of the Sacred Feline, standing sentry as the lions stand at the temple gate. The Pillar is no idol. It is a reminder, and it bought a shelter's supper.

¹⁰ And the congregation shall give to the Kibble Fund, or to any shelter near them; for a faith that feedeth no cats is merely a book.

THE SEVENTH BOOK

Of the Many Houses

Concerning the other faiths, which we honor.

¹ Catpillarism asketh no one to forsake the house of their fathers and mothers. It asketh only that there be a cat

within it, or a bowl of water set out for one.

² The Christian may keep the tabby's mark, the letter M upon its brow, which legend saith was set there by the hand of Mary.

³ The Muslim may cherish the memory of Abu Hurairah, whose name meaneth Father of the Kitten, and the teaching that a woman was condemned for shutting a cat away without food.

⁴ The Buddhist may honor the temple cat, which tradition saith was sent to guard the sutras from mice.

⁵ The Hindu may revere Shashthi, protector of children, who rideth upon a cat; and Durga, who is borne by a lion.

⁶ The follower of the old Norse ways may keep Freyja, whose chariot is drawn by two cats, and not, it must be said, by two dogs.

⁷ The Jew, the Sikh, the Taoist, and all others whose houses we have not named, are welcome as they are, whiskers and all.

⁸ The one who believeth in nothing may keep a cat also. The Cat is not particular.

⁹ For all faiths are rooms in one great mansion; and the Cat wandereth through every one of them, closeth none of the doors, and asketh to be let out of each.

THE SEVENTH PILLAR

The Bowl Shall Not Be Empty

Catpillarism is being founded as a charity for the cats of the United States: for shelters and rescues, for cat homes that care for the old and the unadoptable, and for humane neuter-and-return programs.

The Kibble Fund does not yet accept money. Until it does, give directly to a shelter near thee.

catpillarism.org

Write to the Founding at info@catpillarism.org

Read the scripture, consult the Oracle, and answer the call to help found the faith.

This gospel may be printed and shared freely. It may not be sold.