

The West Wagga Wag

Issue 120

February 2013

Coming Events

Rosary Group: Weds 10am
Senior Legion: Weds 7pm
St Vde Paul: Thurs 7pm
Lenten Group: Tues 7pm
Lenten Prayer Vigils for Peace:
Thurs 7pm
Feast Chair of St Peter: Fri 22
**Welcome BBQ for Diocesan
Seminarians:** Sun 24
CWL Coffee Morning: Mon 25
World Day of Prayer: Fri 1

***Congratulations: Danusia
Mickalak graduating with a
Bachelor's Degree in
Visual Arts.***



Wag Contacts

Email:
westwaggaparish@hotmail.com

Phone: 6931 3601

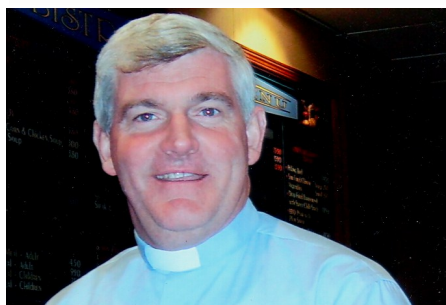
The due date for the next Wag is:
Sunday February 24th.

Come to Bethlehem ~ Ten Years On!

After ten years of blessed work 2012 saw the tenth anniversary of Come to Bethlehem. The collection of photos courtesy of Mr Jimmy Linsell displays just some of the fun. An addition for the anniversary was a display of nearly 100 Nativity scenes of all types. Well done to all works, participants and 30,000 visitors.



pastor's page



Lent is an extraordinary time of spiritual blessing. I suppose there are not so many who think so. Most people just don't worry; others are scrupulous in its observance according to the exact letter of the law. But the best way to view lent is in the context of the very first one. 'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil (Luke 4:1-2). In the first lent, Jesus was present. He is with us now in our penitence. He was the fullness of grace and through him we are called to live in sanctifying grace, habitually. If we have it – keep it! If we don't have it, get back to the Sacrament of Penance and be reconciled with God. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. We too must allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to lead us away from our worldly jungle of hyper activity and busyness into an oasis of peace which is usually only truly discovered with a wilderness experience; namely the absence from all sense preoccupation.

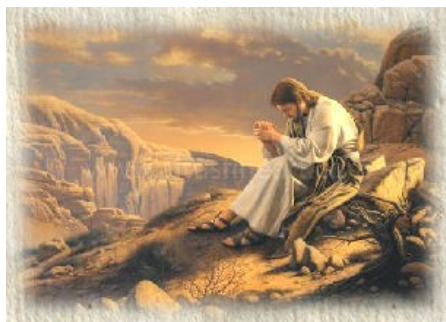
Authentic peace is only found in God. If we let him, God will lead us to himself. The penance, mortification or reparation we accept with love is only a means to God. They are not so important in themselves, no matter how difficult or easy, because they are only a means to grace and not our true destination which is God himself and his holiness; not our holiness! We need only think about the widow's penny (Mk 12:42). It is not how

much, but how lovingly whatever we do is done.

Nevertheless, penitential means are important even if love is more important. Each year Ash Wednesday is a Penitential Day. It begins the season of lent which is 45 days. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert under temptation and so do we. Just 40 days, there is no penitence on Sundays of Lent. These are holydays, penitence free. It also makes Monday morning more penitential and theoretically more spiritually meritorious because we resume our Lenten penitence.

Charity, prayer, fasting and abstinence are enshrined in the precepts of the Church. They guide us as to how to observe a necessary minimum, and thus the obligation imposed is one the faithful should be fulfilling already. The Catechism says of the fourth precept, regarding fasting and abstinence, that it 'ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart' (CCC 2043). Indeed, self-denial, or other forms of penance, are necessary for spiritual and human growth. The precepts do oblige in conscience.

Catholics between the ages of 18 and 60 are obliged to **fast** on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. To fast means having only one full meal for the day. Some food (not equaling another full meal) is permitted at breakfast and around midday or in the evening, depending on when a person chooses to eat the main or full meal.



In addition, all Catholics 14 years

old and older must **abstain** from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On Ash Wed and Good Friday abstinence from meat is obligatory under pain of mortal sin; unless required for medical reasons. Abstinence does not include meat juices and liquid foods made from meat.

Moreover, on all Fridays of the year, especially Lent (with the exception of a Solemn feast day; e.g. Feasts of St Patrick or St Joseph) all the Fridays are days of fasting. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference established many years ago that in this country, instead of the previously compulsory abstinence from meat, the faithful can instead do any acts of self-denial, works of charity or exercises of piety. That is, it is left up to each individual to decide how they will live the Friday penance. But they should do something special so that Fridays are different from other days. We are free to choose what we do, but we are obliged to do something every Friday of the year, not just in Lent! So every day of Lent is a penitential day but Friday is significant because Jesus died on a Friday to save us.

There are many ways to participate fruitfully in Lent. Among the possible exercises of piety might be making the Stations of the Cross, saying the family Rosary, meditating on the Passion of Christ; so this Lent, I invite all to enter more powerfully into the spirit of Lent. I am suggesting a "daily double"; daily Mass and daily Reconciliation. There are two Masses in the parish every day, as well as elsewhere. There will be Reconciliation (Sacrament of Penance) before and after every one of those Masses. Imagine if once in your life you availed yourself of the ordinary means to holiness that Jesus provided. Hard? Yes, but holy? Absolutely!

Fr Gerard

February Jokes

A teenage boy had just gotten his driver's license and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car. His father said he'd make a deal with his son: 'You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car...'

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, 'Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't gotten your hair cut.'

The boy said, 'You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that , Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair...and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair.'

To this his father replied, 'Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went?'

.....

The paradox of our time in history is that we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families;

more conveniences, but less time;
more degrees, but less sense;
more knowledge, but less judgment;
more experts, but less solutions;
more medicine, but less wellness.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, not life to years.

.....

A priest visited the kindergarten class to meet the new children. One little lad of about three or four looked at him in his clerical clothes and asked, "Why do you dress

funny?"

He told him that he was a priest and this is the uniform priests wear. Then the boy pointed to the priest's collar tab and asked, 'What's that?'

So the priest took it out and handed it to the boy to show him. On the back of the tab are letters giving the name of the manufacturer.

The little guy felt the letters, and the priest asked, "Do you know what those words say?" "Yes, I do," said the lad who was not old enough to read.

Peering intently at the letters he said, "Kills ticks and fleas up to six months!"

Holiday fun

Visit the Dubbo ZOO



Try bush walking



Do a little fishing on the bay



Or just enjoy the seaside



Sky- diving too adventurous?



Take the kids to the aquarium



Or experience the fun of surfing



But please drive safely!



How do trees get onto the internet?
They log in.

Captain Emily quits the Army to follow a very different Order

"Some people have expressed surprise at my change in direction, though I am always comforted by the many soldier saints," says Captain Emily Wilson, who will soon leave her life as an Army officer to enter postulancy with the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia, whose headquarters is in Nashville in the US state of Tennessee.

"There is hope for me yet!"

Emily, 26, grew up in Wagga as the second eldest of five daughters.

"I lived in West Wagga Parish my entire childhood until I left home to join the Army," she says.

"I grew up in a very 'normal' Catholic family. Mum is a school teacher and Dad works at a local hospital.

"We attended the local Catholic schools and always went to Mass on Sundays. We would pray grace before meals and our parents always prayed a little prayer when putting us to bed at night.

"In a lot of ways, our family was not overtly pious but our faith definitely ran in the undercurrents of our life."

Although she did not yet feel called to the military – or religious life – someone suggested that Emily, then in Year 11, apply for a scholarship to the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA).

She went through months of selection, and was offered a position during her HSC year.

"Your degree at ADFA is paid for; however, you pay it back on a contract," she says.

"I thought this was a good deal and at the time had no particularly strong desires to pursue anything else in life and so I accepted the offer."

Emily graduated from high school at the end of 2003 and joined the Army a month later on a nine-year contract.

She spent three years pursuing a Bachelor of Arts at ADFA, followed by a year of Army officer training at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, before being commissioned to the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps.

"Since then I have worked at a military hospital, as a recruit instructor and most recently on the staff of a brigadier-general," she says.

In 2008 Emily attended a retreat hosted by the Sydney University



Catholic Chaplaincy.

"It was the first retreat I had ever been on and was my first encounter with the Dominican Sisters," she recalls.

"I found them to be very joyful and very faithful."

Her interest was sparked, but six more months would elapse before Emily began to seriously consider a religious vocation.

When she did, it was the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia, a teaching order known for its distinctive white and black habit, which drew her in.

"I was drawn to the Dominicans because of a combination of their charism and the example of the individual Sisters I met," she says.

"They were so happy and so holy and a lot of what I saw in them I desired in my life, too. They seemed so at peace in their relationship with Christ and their place in the world."

While the Dominicans' reputation for a youthful congregation "was not a specific factor" for Emily, the history

of the congregation was.

"It is 150 years old, which is testament to the fidelity of the Sisters to the Church and to their way of life.

"I found that to be very comforting and reassuring."

Emily says it was a long process of discernment, "not only if I was called to religious life, but then what community".

"Initially, we all have our preconceived ideas or our own personal criteria for what we think will make us happy, but I really found that I could not place my restrictions on my vocation, otherwise, I was not truly giving my life to God.

"I was not really fulfilling my vocation if I was saying to God: 'Okay I will give you my life Lord, but only if it is as a Carmelite, or only in the health care apostolate, or only if I can live where it snows.'

"It is a difficult thing to abandon our desires to the Lord, especially if they are good desires. But as wonderful as our ideas and plans for life might be, His will be infinitely greater. Realising this and coming to accept the will of God is the most freeing thing."

Emily admits a preconceived idea about her own life was that it would include marriage and children.

"While I was growing up, I always looked forward to getting married and having children," she says.

"In a way, marriage and family was a default setting for me; I never considered any other vocation.

"But as I learnt more about religious life and continued to feel drawn to that vocation, I came to realise that I could not get married with a clear conscience until I had fully explored the possibility of a religious life.

West Wagga Parishioner Joins Convent

(Courtesy Catholic Weekly)

"I felt like I would not have been honest with a guy if part of my heart was already devoted to Christ.

"Of course, I would have loved to have children and all the beauty of the vocation to married life, but I know that all of my desires in life will be fulfilled and magnified a hundredfold by God, who is love."

Emily is on leave from the Army to spend time with her family before being formally discharged.

She will then shift to the standby reserves before travelling to Nashville.

As she prepares to enter postulancy, the first formal stage of religious formation, she faces a "period of withdrawal" to fully discern God's will, which will include limited phone and internet access.

"We still call our families on the phone from time to time and, of course, families are also able to come and visit at different stages," she says.

"Our primary means of keeping in contact with our families is through the age old art of letter writing."

The Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia

have a community in Sydney following World Youth Day 2008, and "it would be wonderful to return to Australia and be able to serve the Church at home", Emily says.

"At the same time, by giving our lives to God, we have to be totally available for Him wherever we are needed.

"Sometimes if a Sister has a particular gift or qualification, she might be required elsewhere and so we have to be open to God's will and the needs of the community."

Some of Emily's gifts are those she discovered or strengthened in the Army.

"Many of the skills I learnt in the Army will be useful in my vocation to religious life and for that I am grateful for my training," she says.

"Things like public speaking, problem solving skills and personal discipline. Of course, there will still be a lot to learn. In a lot of ways there are similarities between the military and a vocation to religious life. Both are lives of service and in a sense your life is not your own as it is dedicated to something else."

Like all young people, Emily says she has encountered challenges to her faith.

"Sometimes, it is just a lack of understanding or knowledge by other people when they ask me why I would do this crazy thing with my life," she says.

While people are respectful, not all understand the value of religious life.

"Many of my friends and family, while unfamiliar with the nature of religious life, were very supportive and would ask all sorts of questions, which never bothered me at all.

"I often received kind words from people at the workplace or in other social circles who encouraged me or who said they really respected my decision to give my life to God."

"I think our beloved John Paul II said it all: 'Do not be afraid.'

"God will do something amazing with your life, He will give you everything you need and walk the journey with you, if only you let Him.

St Mary is our second patron: Vatican Decree

A formal decree approving St Mary of the Cross MacKillop as second patron of Australia has been received by the president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Hart.

The Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, ... issued the decree on 15 January in response to a request from Archbishop Hart and the Bishops Conference.

While many Catholics in Australia already consider St Mary MacKillop as a patroness in this country, the formal process was initiated by the Australian bishops who expressed the wish of the

people of Australia for a further official recognition of Australia's



first saint.

Archbishop Hart expressed his delight that the process has led to the confirmation of Mary MacKillop's

great example.

"In many ways, the process of officially naming her as a second patron was simply confirming what Australian Catholics already see, that the example and vision of Mary MacKillop is our modus operandi as a Church, particularly in our service of the poor and marginalised, and our commitment to Catholic education. This confirmation from the Holy See is most welcome", he said.

The first patroness of Australia is Our Lady Help of Christians [whose] feast day is 24 May.

From Catholic Weekly, available Ho.T church entrance.

How does the Papal Election Happen?



More than 100 cardinals take a vow of secrecy inside the Sistine Chapel and, with the exception of a few workers at the Vatican, no one else is allowed in.

The doors are then locked to ensure secrecy and prevent influence from the outside world. Internet, radio and television communications are

also removed.

Until a new Pope is chosen, the cardinals live in a special residence in the grounds of the Vatican.

The cardinals are handed voting papers to write the name of the person they have selected. They take it to the altar where they leave it on a plate, pray and then place it in an urn.

The names are counted and if a name has received two-thirds of the votes, the pope has been elected.

If the first ballot does not produce a result, the process is repeated for three days, after which there is a day's rest for prayer, reflection and informal discussions.

The voting then begins again for a series of seven more ballots and then another break.

The process is repeated twice more and if there is still a stalemate, the chamberlain

will declare a result can come from an absolute majority or by a vote on the two names that received the largest number of votes in the last ballot.

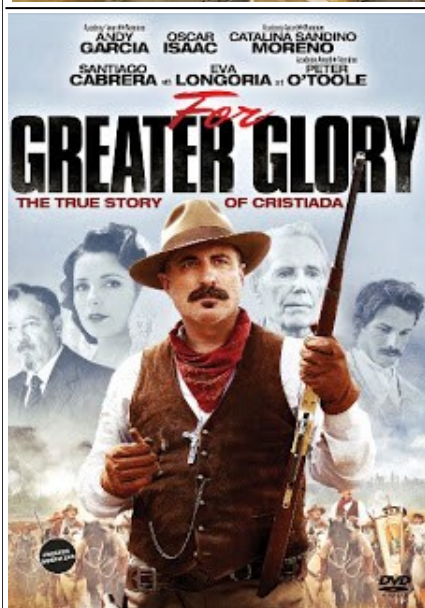


After voting, the ballots are burned with chemicals to make the smoke either white or black. White smoke from the chimney of the Sistine



Chapel signals the election of the pope and black smoke means the cardinals have not come to a decision.

In a more recent addition, bells are also rung when a new pope is selected.



Ho.T FILM NIGHT



Friday March 8th 7.30 pm - Join together to watch: □

Name of Movie PG

Bella is a powerful, moving, utterly unique story that will lift your spirits & capture your heart!

International soccer star "Eduardo Verastegui" is on his way to sign a multimillion dollar contract when a series of events unfold that brings his career to an abrupt end. Beautiful waitress "Tammy Blanchard", struggling to make it in New York City, discovers something about herself that she's unprepared for. In one irreversible moment, their lives are turned upside down ...until a simple gesture of kindness brings them both together, turning an ordinary day into an unforgettable experience

Tea and coffee provided. Come and enjoy a social evening!



Sticky Finger

I once had a student who got his finger stuck inside a test tube. It was really quite stuck. I knew something was up when I saw about 12 different shoulders around the room shaking as they heroically tried to conceal their laughter. This young man's finger continued to get whiter and whiter right before my eyes.

Remaining calm, I tried to dislodge the tube. Nothing. I suggested he carefully rotate it. It wouldn't budge. He tried soap and cold water. Still stuck. Meanwhile chaos is breaking out in my class, as my lesson becomes completely derailed. Finally, I sent this wily boy to the office. Our secretaries are miracle workers raising ten kids between the two of them. With them in charge, I was completely confident all would be ok.

Forgetting about the lesson of the day, I masterfully got the students back in some degree of order by sharing my own story of getting my knee stuck between the rails of a balcony. Same kind of curiosity, I remembered wondering at the time how far I could thrust my knee between the rails. Inch by inch, I kept pushing and before I knew it, my knee was stuck and swelling right before my eyes and in front of lots of strangers at a popular hotel!

Back to School

Many of the students listening to my story of humiliation shot up their hands eager to tell their own stories of heads, arms, fingers stuck in places they shouldn't be.

The laughter was refreshing while we waited for finger tube boy to return. We returned to the science lesson on "total internal reflection" careful now to use the equipment properly.

Shortly after he left, the boy re-emerged with a grin ear to ear, test tube in tack and finger returning to a lovely shade of pink.

I just couldn't get mad at this kid. He's only twelve after all. I too got my knee unstuck, but not without a tremendous amount of embarrassment. The excuse for me however, was not youth but sheer stupidity. I was after all 51 years old when this happened.

by Teresa Oefinger

A Math Teacher's Story

Years ago, I was taking an algebra class over the summer, and had a teacher who liked to reminisce about his past with funny stories. He relates that he had been a math teacher in the Air Force, where it was his duty to force sleepy young recruits to stay awake for an hour of math at 8:00am in a large, warm, dimly-lit class room.

One day, he came into the auditorium and saw his class even sleepier and less attentive than usual. He realized that something drastic would have to be done. Now this class room was very old,

and the blackboards, which had been nailed on to the walls with old black iron nails, had become loose over the years. As a result, these nails jutted almost invisibly from the blackboard and this teacher kept hitting his hands on them while erasing the board. He decided to put them to good use.

With enough of a flourish to guarantee the class's attention, he went to the front of the room, near one edge of the board. Then, clearing his throat, he drew a coat hook right near one of the protruding nails. He proceeded to hang his coat and hat on the hook that he had drawn in chalk (really on the nail, of course). Then he went on to give the lecture.

He told us that the entire class had their eyes to the front of the room throughout the lecture. He didn't know if they'd heard a single word he'd said, but at least they looked attentive.

At the end of the class, the lecturer would usually leave by a small door near the blackboards, while the class would leave through the large doors at the back of the hall. When class was over, he took his coat and hat, erased the coat hook, and left through the small door; and was followed by the entire class, lining up to go past the blackboard to see how he'd done it.

By John C. George



The West Wagga Wag

West Wagga Parish



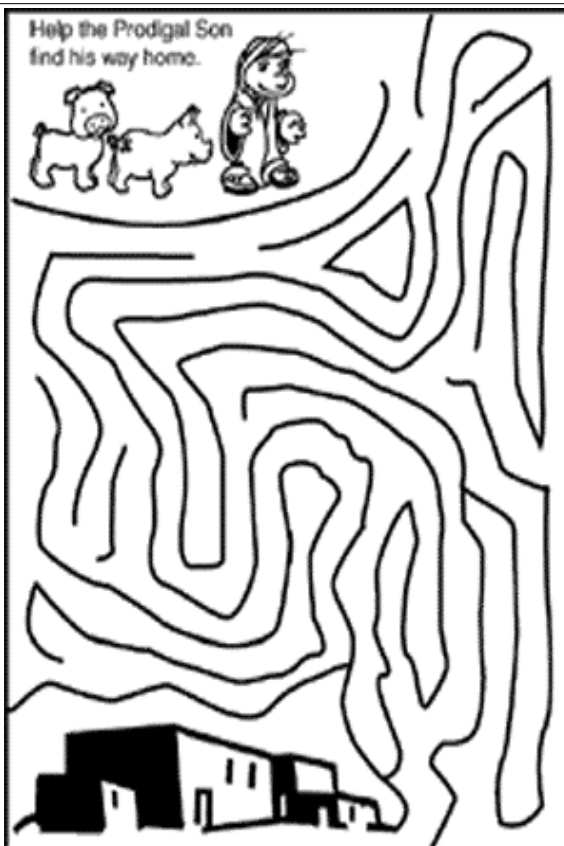
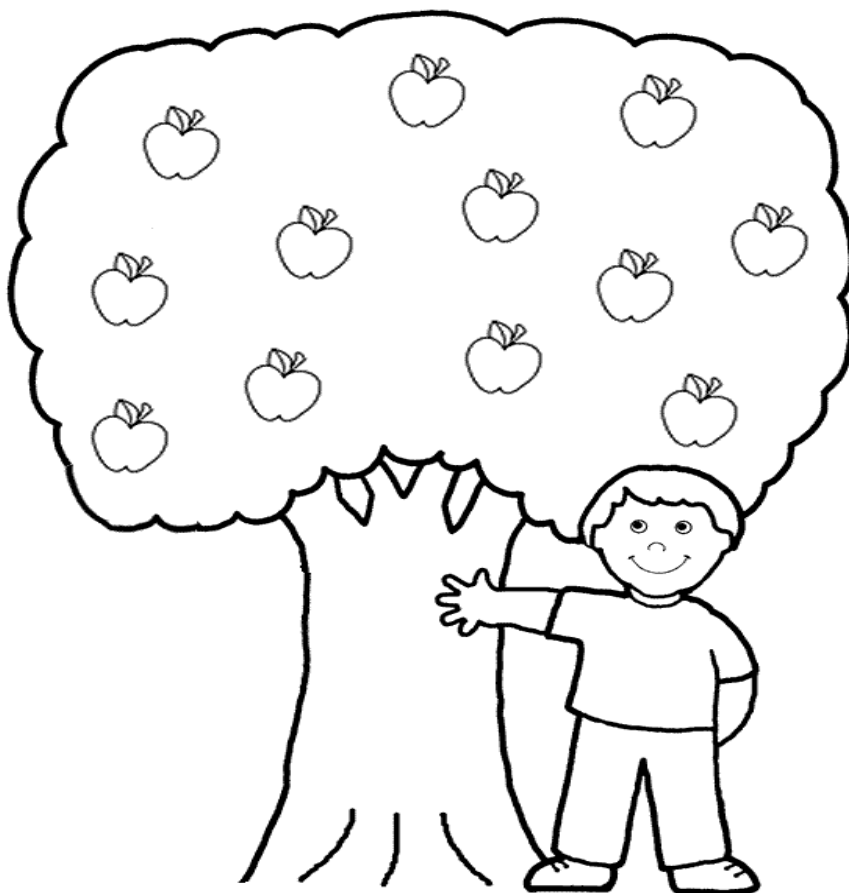
Serving: Ashmont,
Collingullie,
Glenfield, Lloyd,
and San Isidore



Resist the devil's
temptations

Have a fruitful Lent 2013!

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:5



The Temptation of Christ

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Luke 4:1-2 NIV

H	O	L	Y	C	T	W	J	Q	O	F	D	C	T	D
T	Y	C	E	L	R	Z	N	O	F	G	V	I	L	Y
E	E	O	M	W	S	W	E	Q	R	V	T	I	Y	F
M	V	M	Y	C	T	O	S	T	M	D	V	N	M	G
P	A	M	P	V	O	R	P	F	A	E	A	E	X	P
T	B	A	B	L	N	L	I	E	D	W	L	N	I	A
E	L	N	G	H	E	D	R	X	L	A	M	H	I	U
D	C	D	D	A	M	B	I	H	S	A	S	X	G	T
L	U	I	M	N	Z	K	T	U	R	L	N	E	H	
F	I	A	W	G	Z	J	R	B	O	N	U	Q	T	O
W	P	V	B	E	F	E	U	W	Y	X	G	R	H	R
G	C	L	E	L	J	D	C	W	H	Z	E	R	N	I
Q	X	I	A	S	U	T	A	H	X	S	X	G	Y	T
P	X	M	F	O	R	T	Y	Y	E	E	X	U	Q	Y
K	I	N	G	D	O	M	S	D	S	P	E	N	Z	Y

Spirit	devil	days	Jordan	stone
Holy	live	angels	authority	worship
desert	temple	command	bread	world
tempted	forty	kingdoms	Jerusalem	hungry