

West Wagga Wagga Catholic Parish
Ashmont, Collingullie, Glenfield, Lloyd, San Isidore

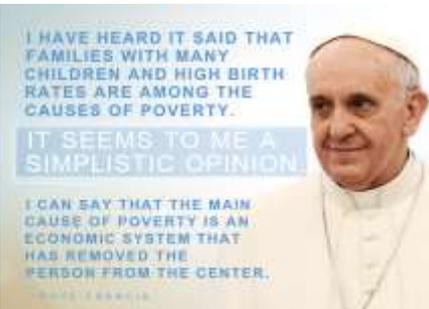
The West Wagga Wag

Issue 144

February 2015

Coming Events

Feast of St Patrick	Tues 17
Ash Wednesday	Wed 18
Feast of St Joseph Husband of Mary	Thurs 19
Free Forum on Domestic Violence and Family Violence	Wed 25
MINI-Young Political Activist Training, Albury	Sat 28



Pope and Wagga Parishioners in Sri Lanka!



Before speaking to a crowd of 6 million in Manila, Pope Francis visited Sri Lanka, a country with a smaller but very devoted Catholic community.

Last year, West Wagga parishioner, Angela Green, asked Fr Thomas if he knew somewhere she could go to help the poor.

In January she went to Sri Lanka along with Larissa, Erin and Clare, pictured here with good friend of the Confraternity of Christ the Priest, Shobi. Our Wagga pilgrims were able to help orphans, elderly, and poor school children. They also were able to visit ancient temples, drink coconut juice and watch Elephants bathing in the river not far from the world-famous tea fields.



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Wag Contacts

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The date for submissions for the next Wag is: Sunday February 22nd.



We hope that more young Catholics can also give their time to serve the poor and come back to share their experience and faith with us.

As well as making many new friends and being inspired by the fervent Sri Lankan Faith, they were able to be in that country during an historic election and attend the Canonization of St Joseph Vas.





pastor's page

mountain, the "source and summit" of our life as Catholic Christians. From the Mass we are energized and sent out to live our Faith and share it with others. It increases our love, our hope and our courage. It wins graces of inspiration. Back to the Mass we bring all that we are and do for the Lord. Please pray for us priests during each Mass.

But prayer is also meant to **fill our days**, to be as natural to us as breathing, because it means talking with God, our best Friend, and to the Saints, our spiritual family. I would especially appreciate a mention in your rosaries.

Why do we priests need prayers? Well, we are like Moses, who one day was praying on a hill overlooking a battle. When he raised his hands in prayer, Joshua and the Chosen People began to win; but when Moses became weary and his hands fell, the enemy gained the upper hand. So two men sat Moses on a rock and held his arms up, until the battle was won. Priests have a unique role in the church, to offer the powerful prayers of the Mass, and the other sacraments and Benediction and personal blessings

too. Without these "arm-outstretched" prayers, for many the spiritual battle will be lost! By your prayers, you help to hold up the priest so he can uphold you. Your prayers help me to share more effectively the work of our Compassionate High Priest, Jesus, who is always living to make intercession for us. (He is our real parish priest.)

Please pray that I will be like St John the Baptist, who said, "He must increase, and I must decrease". I want Jesus to increase more and more, in my thoughts, words and actions, and in us all. Through us, I want to see Jesus increase among all those Catholics in our parish who have not been fully experiencing the joy and grace of our Faith life.

Priests have long used a little Latin phrase, "Oremus pro invicem", which means, "Let's pray for each other." I would like my first message to everyone in the parish to be the same.

Thank you for your prayers!

*Fr Thomas Casanova
CCS*

"Pray for me"

Pope Francis began his new job as the Vicar of Christ with the words, "Pray for me". As I begin my new role of parish priest of West Wagga, I would like to ask for your prayers too.

Prayer is the soul of the apostolate, the heart of all that we do in the parish.

This is above all true of the greatest prayer that we have, **the Mass**. It is the river and

Prayers of the Mass "For the Priest himself", Catholic Missal, Special Needs and Occasions

Opening Prayer

Incline Your merciful ear to my prayers, O God of all compassion, and enlighten my heart by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that I may worthily celebrate Your mysteries, faithfully serve Your Church and love You with eternal charity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive, almighty God, these offerings we bring You in veneration and, as You look upon Your Christ, **Who is both Priest and Victim**, grant that I, who share in His priesthood, may always offer myself as a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to You. Through Christ our Lord.

Prayer after Communion

As You strengthen me with the Bread of heaven and gladden me with the chalice of the new covenant, bring me, holy Father, to serve You faithfully and to spend my life boldly and zealously for the salvation of all humanity. Through Christ our Lord.

February Funnies



'I will call her squishy and she shall be my squishy.'

What happens when it rains cats and dogs? (You might step in a puddle!)

Raining cats and dogs? (It's okay, as long as it doesn't rein-deer!)

What's worse than raining cats and dogs? (Hailing taxis!)

Hear about the dog that went to the flea circus? (He stole the show!)

What did one flea say to the other? (Should we walk or take a dog?)

What type of markets do dogs avoid? (Flea markets!)

How do fleas travel from place to place? (By itch-hiking?)

Why was the mother flea so unhappy? (All her children had gone to the dogs.)

A local business was looking for office help. They put a sign in the window, that read: "HELP WANTED. Must be able to type, must be good with a computer and must be bilingual. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer." A short time afterwards, a dog trotted up to the window, saw the sign and went inside. He looked at the receptionist and wagged his tail, then walked over to the sign, looked at it and whined.

Getting the idea, the receptionist got the office manager. The office manager looked at the dog and was surprised, to say the least. However, the dog looked determined, so he lead him into the office. Inside, the dog jumped up on the chair and

stared at the manager.

The manager said, "I can't hire you. The sign says you have to be able to type." The dog jumped down, went to the typewriter and proceeded to type out a perfect letter. He took out the page and trotted over to the manager and gave it to him, then jumped back on the chair. The manager was stunned, but then told the dog, "The sign says you have to be good with a computer."

The dog jumped down again and went to the computer. The dog proceeded to demonstrate his expertise with various programs and produced a sample spreadsheet and database and presented them to the manager. By this time the manager was totally dumb-founded! He looked at the dog and said, "I realize that you are a very intelligent dog and have some interesting abilities. However, I *still* can't give you the job."

The dog jumped down and went to a copy of the sign and put his paw on the sentences that told about being an Equal Opportunity Employer. The manager said, "Yes, but the sign *also* says that you have to be bilingual."

The dog looked at him straight in the face and said, "Meow."

What do you call a great dog detective? (Sherlock Bones!)

What did the dog say when he sat on sandpaper? (Ruff!)

What happened to the dog that ate nothing but garlic? (His bark was much worse than his bite!)

What do you get if you cross a dog and a lion? (A terrified postman!)

Why did the dachshund bite the woman's ankle? (Because he couldn't reach any higher!)

How did the little Scottish dog feel when he saw a monster? (Terrier-fied!)

A guy was driving around the back woods of Kentucky and he sees a sign in front of a broken down shanty-style house: 'Talking Dog for Sale'

He rings the bell and the owner appears and tells him the dog is in the backyard.

The guy goes into the back yard and sees a nice looking Beagle sitting there. 'You talk?' he asks. 'Yep,' the Beagle replies.

After the guy recovers from the shock of hearing a dog talk, he says 'So, what's your story?'

The Beagle looks up and says, 'Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government, so I told the CIA and they had me sworn into the toughest branch of the armed services... the United States Marines. You know one of their nicknames is 'The Devil Dogs.' In no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders; because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping. I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running, but the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger. So, I decided to settle down.

I retired from the Corps (8 dog years is 56 Corps years) and signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired.' The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

'Ten dollars,' the guy says.

'Ten dollars? This dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?'

'Because he's such a liar... He never did any of that stuff.

He was in the Navy!'



Atheist Neurosurgeon's Peek Into Eternity by K Schiffer

"I adored th[e] simplicity—the absolute honesty and cleanness of science. I respected that it left no room for fantasy or for sloppy thinking. If a fact could be established as tangible and trustworthy, it was accepted. If not, then it was rejected. This approach left very little room for the soul and the spirit, for the continuing existence of a personality after the brain that supported it stopped functioning. It left even less room for those words I'd heard in church again and again: "life everlasting."

Dr. Eben Alexander was an atheist. After 25 years as a respected academic neurosurgeon, Dr. Alexander could not reconcile his knowledge of neuroscience with any belief in heaven, God, or the soul. He had heard of near-death experiences, but they seemed implausible and, therefore, uninteresting.

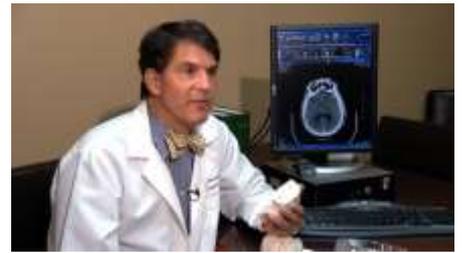
Then his own brain was attacked by an E. coli bacterial infection, a rare form of meningitis which is fatal in more than 90% of cases. For seven days, he lie comatose in Lynchburg General Hospital, brain activity reduced to pure physical impulses. The part of the brain which is the locus of higher functions such as memory and intentional decision-

making or logic was completely inactive.

Doctors, certain that his death was inevitable, wanted to discontinue treatment with antibiotics, and encouraged his wife to prepare for a final goodbye. But Eben Alexander didn't die; defying medical predictions and confounding his doctors, Dr. Alexander awoke. Even more surprising, his cognitive function returned rapidly. The doctors' dire predictions of serious brain injury were quickly disproven, as language and memory and emotion returned.

Before his illness, Dr. Alexander's rational approach had led him to believe that the universe had evolved by happenstance without the aid of a Creator. During his coma, though, he had seen for himself that heaven was real. He had entered a new realm, a spiritual realm, where music and light combined in unimaginable beauty.

"Something had appeared in the darkness. Turning slowly, it radiated fine filaments of white-gold light, and as it did so the darkness around me began to splinter and break apart. Then I heard a new sound, a living sound, like the richest, most complex, most beautiful piece of music you've ever heard. Growing in volume as a



pure white light descended, it obliterated the monotonous mechanical pounding that, seemingly for eons, had been my only company up until then. ...Then, at the very center of the light, something else appeared. I focused my awareness, hard, trying to figure out what it was. An opening. I was no longer looking at the slowly spinning light at all, but through it...."

I recall that Eben Alexander's dramatic story ***Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife*** elicited a small firestorm of television and radio interviews when it was released in 2012.

Myself, though, I stumbled across it in the airport bookstore. For the next five hours, I lived in its pages—smiling at Eben's memory of life in the afterworld, warmed by his recollections of vibrant colors and rich music, of beauty, and of the Creator...

Parish Retreat: Heal the Sick [CCC 1506]



February 20, 21 & 22, 2015

Come to all or part.

For more details phone the parish, 6931 3601

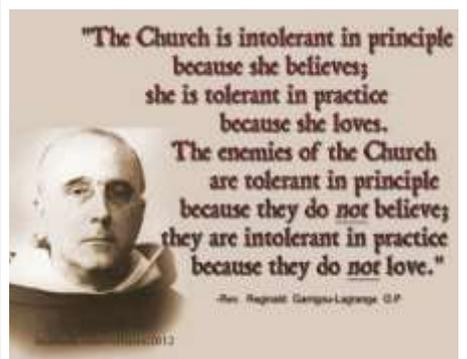
Talks include—

- The Commandments a Check List for Healing
- The Old Testament & Healing
- The Healing; Who, What, When, Where & Why
- Healing & the Saints
- The Sacraments, the Eucharist & Healing
- The Blessed Virgin Mary Heals

Allen Organ Recital

Friday 27 February 7.30pm at Ho. T Church.

This is a fundraiser for the WW&SI Refugee Committee. Includes a fine quillo raffle. Info: Peggy 6931 3059, Joan 6931 3048



I Confess: The Hero Movie Par Excellence

The boy and I stayed up late last night watching *I Confess*, long overdue and hands down one of the best movies I've ever seen. I had not watched the film sooner because I thought Hitchcock = Too Creepy for Me, but it was fine. Mature themes and violence, suspense in the many-plot-twists meaning of the term, but not a scary movie. ... Excellent film. Excellent. Have I mentioned, excellent?

It was timely viewing in light of the case in Louisiana, in which a priest is being asked to disclose what transpired during a confession.

More Important than Life Itself

In the film, Father Logan is suspected of and eventually tried for murder. He knows who the real murderer is because the killer comes to him, openly, to confess the crime — and then turns around and frames the priest.

Following the “any moral means” rule of self-defense, the priest does try to acquit himself of the charges. He cannot, however, reveal the evidence that would clear his name because it is information acquired during a sacramental confession.

The clincher here, and there are a handful of equally terrifying situations which arise from time to time, is that self-preservation is not the highest good. We do have a right to defend ourselves, but not an absolute right.

This can confuse. Some legitimate means of self-defense, such as using lethal force to repel an attacker, resemble closely certain means strictly prohibited, such as using lethal force against an innocent person.

Here is my explanation of the principles of “double effect” vs. “doing evil that good may come of it”. The crux of the situation is that “doing the most good” is not the way we gauge the morality of an action. If *I Confess* were filmed today, there'd be sighing consolations about how Father really had no choice, breaking the seal is best for all, pat pat hug hug. No. The film is excellent because a

man finds himself called to act heroically, and he acts heroically from start to finish.

Why is the Seal of the Confessional So Important? We might just barely be able to understand why, for example, it is evil to kill an innocent person in order to save our own lives. Our modern sensibility rails against it, especially if that innocent is a marginal character compared to the beneficiary of the murder. Likewise, when murder is the apparent means to minimize suffering all-around, our cowardly culture demands death. If we stretch our minds, though, we can perhaps see in some situations why heroic suffering or death is better than murder.

But confession? Is it really worth dying for? Yes. The same principle that animates the prohibition against murder is at work here, too, in a yet more powerful way.

We don't commit evil that good might come of it because the good of our souls is more important than any earthly harm that might come to us. In the moral equivalent of rock-paper-scissors, soul always trumps body. The soul is what animates our bodies, here and in eternity. No sense attempting to enjoy the bodily resurrection if you haven't got a heaven-bound soul for that glorified body.

So where does confession fit in? Confession is the sacrament that makes souls ready for eternal life. Deny a man confession and absolution, and you may well be consigning him to Hell.

Free Water, Just Pay Me \$1 Million
Secrecy is the pledge that confession is safe.

Something *I Confess* does well is distinguish between secrecy and anonymity. Father Logan knows who the murderer is because the killer came to him openly, a personal friend asking for sacramental confession. To underscore the point, there's a later scene, fleeting, where a little boy enters the church, gets Father's attention, and the two go into the

confessional. As much as anonymity can be an aid to confession in many regards, the guarantee of secrecy in no way depends on the priest not knowing who made the confession.

Anonymity cannot be guaranteed. I might go to a strange city, get in line, and confess through the screen to a priest I've never met. There's a good chance my anonymity will be preserved. But as any lover of detective stories knows, there's always that chance that Father will figure out exactly who-said-it. If I depend on anonymity to preserve the privacy of my confession, I'm like the criminal trying to keep all trace of the crime hidden — sooner or later, a clue will emerge ...

Anonymity can encourage sacramental confession, but secrecy is what saves souls. The certainty that the confession will be kept sacredly secret is what makes it possible for people to come forward for the sacrament. No matter what I say, no matter that Father knows exactly who is confessing, I can set aside the fears of the flesh and take care of my soul.

When one priest, even one single priest, violates the seal of the confessional, the whole sacrament is damaged. The whole church is harmed. Every single person on earth suddenly has a deterrent to seeking sacramental absolution.

It's a serious matter. Deadly serious.



Science Increasingly Makes Case for God E Metaxas, Wall Street Journal

The odds of life existing on another planet grow ever longer. Intelligent design, anyone?

In 1966 Time magazine ran a cover story asking: Is God Dead? Many have accepted the cultural narrative that he's obsolete—that as science progresses, there is less need for a "God" to explain the universe. Yet it turns out that the rumors of God's death were premature. More amazing is that the relatively recent case for his existence comes from a surprising place—science itself.

Here's the story: The same year Time featured the now-famous headline, the astronomer Carl Sagan announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life: The right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Given the roughly octillion—1 followed by 27 zeros—planets in the universe, there should have been about septillion—1 followed by 24 zeros—planets capable of supporting life.

With such spectacular odds, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, a large, expensive collection of private and publicly funded projects launched in the 1960s, was sure to turn up something soon. Scientists listened with a vast radio telescopic network for signals that resembled coded intelligence and were not merely random. But as years passed, the silence from the rest of the universe was deafening. Congress defunded SETI in 1993, but the search continues with private funds. As of 2014, researchers have discovered



precisely bubkis—0 followed by nothing.

What happened? As our knowledge of the universe increased, it became clear that there were far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two parameters grew to 10 and then 20 and then 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets decreased accordingly. The number dropped to a few thousand planets and kept on plummeting.

Even SETI proponents acknowledged the problem. Peter Schenkel wrote in a 2006 piece for Skeptical Inquirer magazine: "In light of new findings and insights, it seems appropriate to put excessive euphoria to rest . . . We should quietly admit that the early estimates . . . may no longer be tenable."

As factors continued to be discovered, the number of possible planets hit zero, and kept going. In other words, the odds turned against any planet in the universe supporting life, including this one. Probability said that even we shouldn't be here.

Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life—every single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart. Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit Earth's surface. The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.

Yet here we are, not only existing, but talking about existing. What can account for it? Can every one of those many parameters have been perfect by accident? At what point is it fair to admit that science suggests that we cannot be the result of random forces? Doesn't assuming that an intelligence created these perfect conditions require far less faith than believing that a life-sustaining Earth just happened to beat the inconceivable odds to come into being?

There's more. The fine-tuning

necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the "strong" and "weak" nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction—by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000—then no stars could have ever formed at all. Feel free to gulp.

Multiply that single parameter by all the other necessary conditions, and the odds against the universe existing are so heart-stoppingly astronomical that the notion that it all "just happened" defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row. Really?

Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term "big bang," said that his atheism was "greatly shaken" at these developments. He later wrote that "a common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology . . . The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question."

Theoretical physicist Paul Davies has said that "the appearance of design is overwhelming" and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox has said "the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator . . . gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here."

The greatest miracle of all time, without any close seconds, is the universe. It is the miracle of all miracles, one that ineluctably points with the combined brightness of every star to something—or Someone—beyond itself.

Just Checking In ...



A priest passing through his church in the middle of the day, decided to pause by the altar to see who came to pray.

Just then the back door opened, and a man came down the aisle, The priest frowned as he saw the man Hadn't shaved in a while.

His shirt was torn and shabby, And his coat was worn and frayed, The man knelt down and bowed his head, Then rose and walked away.

In the days that followed at precisely noon, The preacher saw this chap, Each time he knelt just for a moment, A lunch pail in his lap.

Well, the priest's suspicions grew, With robbery a main fear, He decided to stop and ask the man, 'What are you doing here?'

The old man said he was a factory worker And lunch was half an hour Lunchtime was his prayer time, For finding strength and power.

I stay only a moment Because the factory's far away; As I kneel here talking to the Lord, This is kinda what I say: 'I Just Came By To Tell You, Lord,

How Happy I Have Been,
Since We Found Each Other's
Friendship
And You Took Away My Sin.

Don't Know Much Of How To
Pray,
But I Think About You Every
day. So, Jesus, This Is Ben,
Just Checking In Today.'

The priest feeling foolish,
Told Ben that it was fine.
He told the man that he was
welcome
To pray there anytime.

It's time to go, and thanks,' Ben
said
As he hurried to the door.
Then the priest knelt there at the
altar,
Which he'd never done before.

His cold heart melted, warmed
with love,
As he met with Jesus there.
As the tears flowed down his
cheeks,
He repeated old Ben's prayer:

'I Just Came By To Tell You,
Lord,
How Happy I've Been, Since We
Found Each Other's Friendship
And You Took Away My Sin.

I Don't Know Much Of How To
Pray,
But I Think About You Every
day. So, Jesus, This Is Me,
Just Checking In Today.'

Past noon one day, the priest
noticed
That old Ben hadn't come.
As more days passed and still no
Ben,
He began to worry some.

At the factory, he asked about
him,
Learning he was ill.
The hospital staff was worried,

But he'd given them a thrill.
The week that Ben was with
them,
Brought changes in the ward.
His smiles and joy contagious.
Changed people were his reward.

The head nurse couldn't
understand
Why Ben could be so glad,
When no flowers, calls or cards
came,
Not a visitor he had.

The priest stayed by his bed,
He voiced the nurse's concern:
No friends had come to show
they cared.
He had nowhere to turn.

Looking surprised, old Ben
spoke up
And with a winsome smile;
'The nurse is wrong, she couldn't
know,
He's been here all the while.

' Every day at noon He comes
here,
A dear friend of mine, you see,
He sits right down and takes my
hand,
Leans over and says to me:
'I Just Came By To Tell You,
Ben,
How Happy I Have Been, Since
We Found This Friendship,
And I Took Away Your Sin.

I Think About You Always
And I Love To Hear You Pray,
And So Ben, This Is Jesus,
Just Checking In Today.'

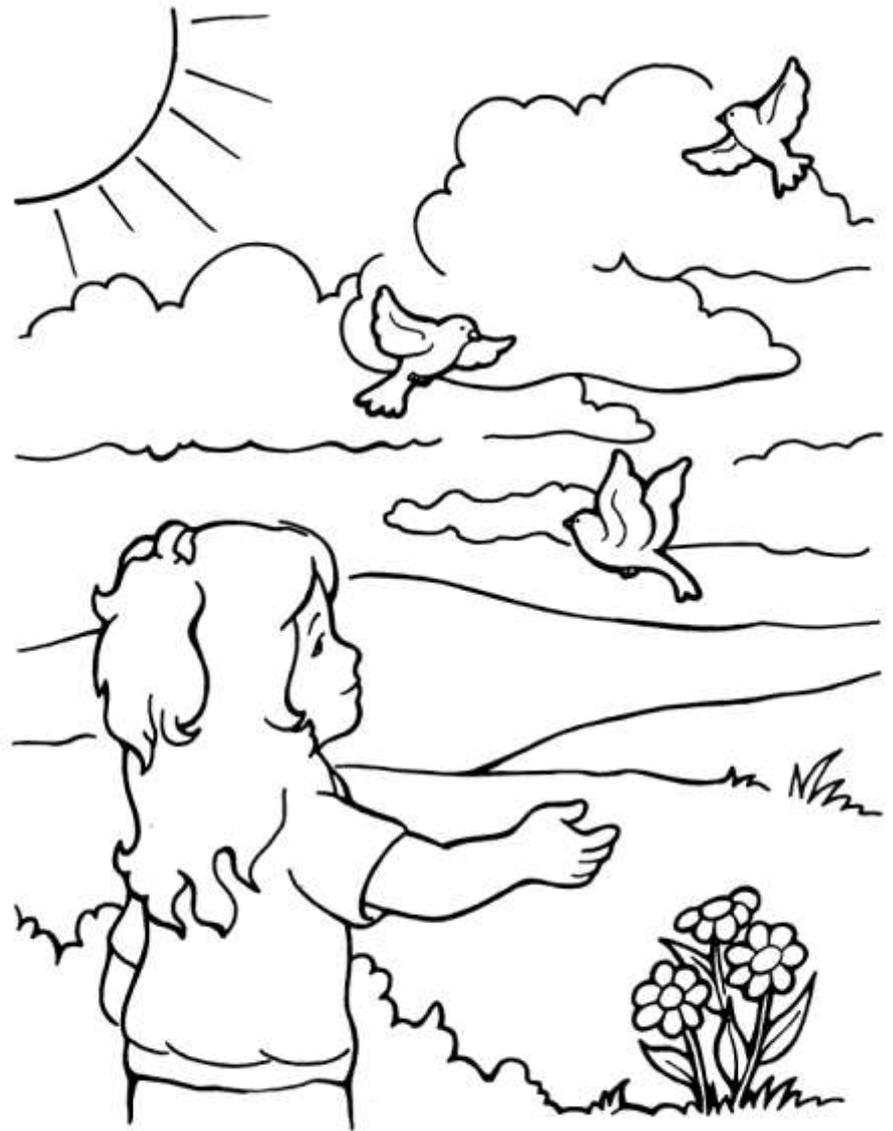


The West Wagga Wag

West Wagga Parish



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



Jesus is more powerful than anything!



Jesus Drives Out an Unclean Spirit

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey Him.” Mark 1:27

OBEY	SABBATH	AMAZED
IMPURE	DESTROY	PEOPLE
QUIET	JESUS	NEWS
SHOOK	AUTHORITY	
SPREAD	SPIRIT	
COME	TEACH	

J N D Z J F M M Q R D H Q X G
 F L A U T H O R I T Y I G L B
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