

The West Wagga Wag

Issue 131

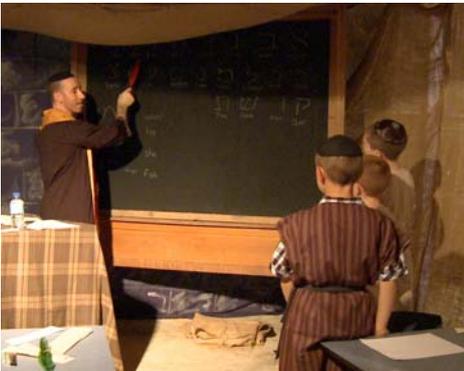
January 2014

Coming Events

Epiphany of the Lord: Sun 5
Baptism of the Lord: Sun 12
End of Christmas Tide
Ordinary Time: Week 1
Conversion of St Paul: Sat 25
Australia Day: Sun 26
Ho.T School Returns: Thurs 30
Presentation of the Lord: Sun 2



Come to BETHLEHEM!



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The due date for the next Wag is:

Sunday January 26th.

Bethlehem 2013 proved just as successful as previous years. Of considerable note was the assistance before the event of many youth assisting with the setup of the mini city of imagination and historical significance. They worked efficiently in the heat under the guidance of wise and veteran Bethlehemites to achieve another beautiful construction, decoration and production. All the favourite characters were back with even a few new treats.

As recorded in both the Leader and the Daily Advertiser, always it is the children who are the most excited and profit from the re-enactment of the life and times of the birth of Baby Jesus. Each of the mother's who provided baby Jesus for the night deserve high commendation. The Parish owes a debt of gratitude to the willing volunteers that make Bethlehem memorable. Even those who helped for a the briefest time shared the burden of this creative gift to many. May God bless all who made this parish initiative a blessed event.

pastor's page

A **New Year's resolution** is a secular tradition, most common in the Western Hemisphere but also found in the East, in which a person makes a promise to do an act of self-improvement or something slightly nice, such as helping other people. Don't get discouraged before you start but the time of resolutions has already passed. It began on New Year's Day.

Even though New Year's resolutions are a secular and positive attitude for good, they do have religious origins. The ancient Babylonians made promises to their gods at the start of each year that they would return borrowed objects and pay their debts. The Romans began each year by making promises to the god Janus, for whom the month of January is named. In the Medieval era, the knights took the "peacock vow" at the end of the Christmas season each year to re-affirm their commitment to chivalry. At Vigil services, many Christians prepare for the year ahead by praying and making these resolutions.

There are other religious parallels to this tradition. During Judaism's New Year, Rosh Hashanah, through the High Holidays and culminating in Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), one is to reflect upon one's wrongdoings over the year and both seek and offer forgiveness. Catholics act similarly during the fasting period of Lent, though the motive behind Easter is more of sacrifice than of responsibility, in fact the practice of New Year's resolutions partially came from the Lenten sacrifices. The concept, regardless of creed, is to reflect upon self-improvement annually.

At the start of the 21st century, about 40% of people are said to have made resolutions. Some examples include resolutions to donate to the poor more often, to become more assertive, or to become more environmentally responsible. Popular goals include

resolutions to: Improve physical well-being: eat healthy food, lose weight, exercise more, eat better, drink less alcohol, quit smoking, stop biting nails, get rid of old bad habits.

Improve mental well-being; think positive, laugh more often, enjoy life. Improve finances: get out of debt, save money, make small investments.

Improve career: perform better at current job, or get a better job, establish own business.

Improve education: improve grades, get a better education, learn something new (such as a foreign language or music), study often, read more books, improve talents. Improve self: become more organized, reduce stress, manage time, be less grumpy, be more independent, perhaps watch less television, play fewer sitting-down video games. Take a trip, Volunteer to help others, practice life skills, use civic virtue, give to charity, volunteer to work part-time in a charity organization. Get along better with people, improve social skills, and enhance social intelligence. Make new friends; Spend quality time with family

members; Settle down, get engaged or get married, have kids; Try foreign foods, discover new cultures; Pray more, be closer to God, be more spiritual.

Yet all of these can be summed up in the words of Jesus who said quite succinctly: *But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." [Mat 6:33-34]

The success rate of keeping one's resolutions is pretty poor. A 2007 study involving 3,000 people showed that 88% of those who set New Year resolutions failed, despite the fact that 52% of the study's participants were confident of success at the beginning. Again, Jesus is very practical. He simply stated, [John 15:5] *'I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing'*. God's grace is great for any resolution whether New Year's or anytime.

Fr Gerard

A RESOLVE For Every Morning of the New Year

I will this day try to live a simple & sincere and serene life & repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity and self-seeking & cultivating cheerfulness & magnanimity, charity, and the habit of holy silence & exercising economy in expenditure. carefulness in conversation diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust and a child-like trust in God

From a Calendar by Bishop John H. Vincent
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YOUR NEW YEAR'S

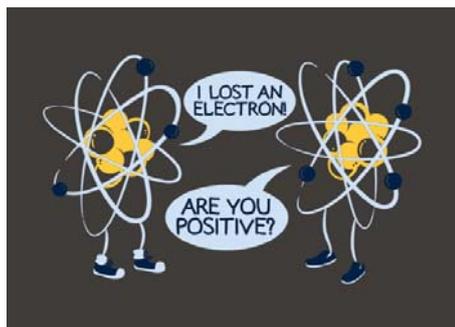
RESOLUTION

Resolve to renew
all your old resolves.
And add a few that
are new.

Resolve to keep them
as long as you can.

What more can a
poor man do.

January Jokes



Old chemistry teachers never die, they just fail to react.

Does a radioactive cat have 18 half-lives?

Q. Why do tigers have stripes? A. So they don't get spotted.

Q. What did the receiver say to the radio wave? A. Ouch! That megahertz.

Q. What did the volcano say to his wife? A. I lava you so much!

Q. What do you call two dinosaurs that have been in an accident? A. Tyrannosaurus wrecks

Q. What do you do with a dead chemist? A. Barium.

Q. Why do chemists prefer nitrates? A. Because they're cheaper than day rates.

Q. What's the first thing you should learn in chemistry? A. Never lick the spoon.

Q. What is the name of the first electricity detective? A. Sherlock Ohms.

Q. Want to hear a joke about sodium hypobromite? A. NaBrO!

Q. What did the thermometer say to the graduated cylinder? A. You may have graduated but I've got many degrees.

Q. What did the nuclear physicist have for lunch? A. Fission Chips.

Did you hear about the town's richest man who met with the priest after Sunday Mass?

"Why does everyone call me cheap and stingy?" complained the man. "I've told everyone I'm leaving half my money to the church when I die." The minister nodded. "It reminds me of the story about the pig and the cow. The cow was much loved by

the farmer and his neighbours, while the pig was not popular at all. The pig could not understand this and asked the cow about it.

'How come you are so well liked, cow? People say you're good because you give milk and butter and cream every day. But I give more than that. From me they get bacon and ham; they even pickle my feet. Yet I'm not popular and you are. Why do you think that is?'

The cow looked at the pig and answered, 'Perhaps it's because I give while I'm still alive.'

Q: Why do fish live in salt water?
A: Because pepper makes them sneeze!

Q: What starts with a P, ends with an E, and has a million letters in it?
A: Post Office!

Q: How many books can you put in an empty backpack? A: One! After that its not empty!

Two ninety year old men, Moe and Sam, have been friends all their lives. It seems that Sam is dying, so Moe comes to visit him. "Sam," says Moe, "You know how we have both loved cricket all our lives. Sam, you have do me one favour. When you go, somehow you've got to tell me if there's cricket in heaven." Sam looks up at Moe from his deathbed and says, "Moe, you've been my friend many years. This favour I'll do for you." And with that, Sam passes on. It is midnight a couple nights later. Moe is sound asleep when a distant voice calls out to him, "Moe.... Moe...." "Who is it?" says Moe sitting up suddenly. "Who is it?" "Moe, it's Sam." "Come on. You're not Sam. Sam died." "I'm telling you," insists the voice. "It's me, Sam!" "Sam? Is that you? Where are you?" "I'm in heaven," says Sam, "and I've got to tell you, I've got some good news and some great news." "Tell me the good news first," says Moe. "The good news," says Sam "is that there is cricket in heaven." "Really?" says Moe, "That's wonderful! What's the great news?" "You're bowling Tuesday!"

Q. Why is electricity so dangerous?
A. It doesn't conduct itself.

Q: Did you hear about the calendar thief? A: He got 12 months; but they say his days are numbered

Q: What's the difference between bird flu and swine flu? A: If you have bird flu, you need tweetment. If you have swine flu, you need oink-ment.

The local bar was so sure that its bartender was the strongest man around that they offered a standing \$1000 bet.

The bartender would squeeze a lemon until all the juice ran into a glass, and hand the lemon to a patron. Anyone who could squeeze one more drop of juice out would win the money.

Many people had tried over time (weightlifters, longshoremen, etc.), but nobody could do it.

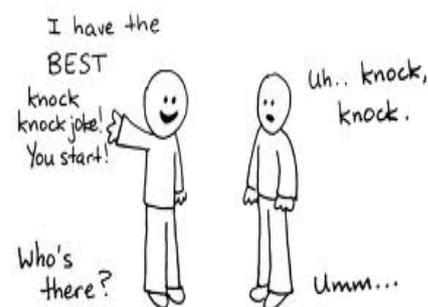
One day this scrawny little man came in, wearing thick glasses and a polyester suit, and said in a tiny, squeaky voice, "I'd like to try the bet."

After the laughter had died down, the bartender said OK, grabbed a lemon, and squeezed away. Then he handed the wrinkled remains of the rind to the little man.

But the crowd's laughter turned to total silence as the man clenched his fist around the lemon and six drops fell into the glass.

As the crowd cheered, the bartender paid the \$1000, and asked the little man, "What do you do for a living? Are you a lumberjack, a weightlifter, or what?"

The man replied, "I work for the ATO."



Study show complementarity of men and women's brains

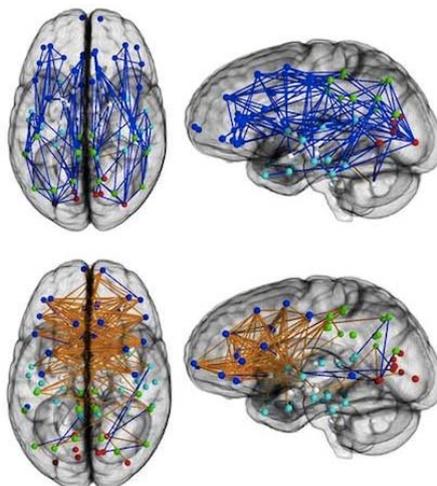
Shannon Roberts | 9 Dec 2013 |

A new brain connectivity study published last week has found that men and women's brains really are wired differently – surely something that is already clear to anyone who lives, works or generally associates with both men and women?

The study, published in the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences, found striking differences in the neural wiring of men & women giving credence to commonly-held beliefs about their different skills and behaviour. Ruben Gur, a co-author on the study, said in a statement that "it's quite striking how complementary the brains of women & men really are".

Ragini Verma, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, said the greatest surprise was how much the findings supported old stereotypes, with men's brains apparently wired more for perception and co-ordinated actions, and women's for social skills and memory, making them better equipped for multitasking.

The study also found that women are much more intuitive, better at listening, and more emotionally involved when people talk to them.



The study is one of the largest ever done looking at the “connectomes” of the sexes, and drew on nearly 1000 brain scans. Its aim was to better understand how men and women think, and use that information to help treat neurological disease. The finding showed greater neural connectivity from front to back and within one hemisphere in males, suggesting

their brains are structured to facilitate connectivity between perception and coordinated action. In contrast, in females, the wiring goes between the left and right hemispheres, suggesting that they facilitate communication between the analytical and intuition.

I don't think there has ever been much doubt that men and women are different. However, demographically speaking, there are some countries – such as India and China - who are becoming seriously imbalanced. This is already causing serious implications for society. There are also many who would have us believe that two women or two men can bring up a child just as well as a male and female can. Science like this seems to help to show that nature is pretty good at bringing its own balance to the world and to families through men and women's complementary skills. Long may the respective 'genius' that men and women bring to the world be equally recognised and appreciated.

The little boy and the waitress

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

“How much is an ice cream sundae?” he asked. “Fifty cents,” replied the waitress.

The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it.

“Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?” he inquired.

By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient.

“Thirty-five cents,” she brusquely replied. The little boy again counted his coins.

“I'll have the plain ice cream,” he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, was 15 cents.

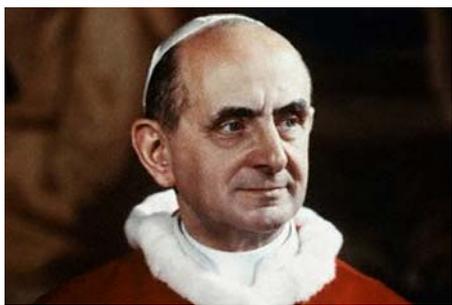
You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.

We often forget people around us,

those who help us or serve us. Sometimes, it just costs us a smile or a polite word to bring happiness into another person's life. Always remember those who serve us at restaurants, the cashiers at grocery stores, the newspaper boy and so on. A “Thank You” or a Smile can change our lives.

“For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Matthew 7:2. “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:39-41

Pope Paul VI Humane Vitae Miracle



The Medical Commission of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints chaired by Dr. Patrizio Polisca, Benedict XVI and Francis' personal doctor, has called a healing attributed to Giovanni Battista Montini, Pope Paul VI, "unexplainable". The alleged miracle will now have to be examined by theologians and cardinals before it receives the Pope's approval. But the toughest part is over and it is expected that Montini's beatification will take place in the next few months.

From the list of reported cases of healing which the postulator of Paul VI's cause, Antonio Marrazzo,

received, he chose one case which early clinical tests showed as "unexplainable". Marrazzo chose this healing case some time ago. A year ago, on 20 December 2012, Benedict XVI approved the heroic virtues of Paul VI, concluding the canonical process. Only one miracle is required for beatification.

The alleged miracle Marrazzo chose to present to the commission, was the healing of an unborn child witnessed in California in the early 90s. During a woman's pregnancy, doctors found a serious problem in the foetus which normally results in brain damage and advised the mother to abort. The woman refused and decided to go ahead with the pregnancy, trusting in the intercession of Paul V, the Pope who wrote the "Humanae Vitae" encyclical in 1968.

The child was born without any defects but only when the child reached puberty could doctors be certain of whether the child had made

a full recovery without any problem. A year ago Fr. Marrazzo told Vatican Radio that "a truly extraordinary and supernatural event had occurred thanks to the intercession of Paul VI." This healing was perfectly in line with the magisterium of Paul VI, who wrote the "Humanae Vitae" in defence of human life, but also in defence of the family because the document talks about conjugal love, not just about unborn life. This healing fits in with Montini's way of thinking."

The debate over the late Pope's cause has intensified over the past year, with doctors exchanging medical opinions until yesterday's final verdict. Speaking at a conference on Paul VI's visit to the Holy Land last November, the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Angelo Scola, said the former Pope's beatification "should be relatively imminent."

Confessions on the Rise

A recent survey carried out by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales shows a marked increase in the number of people making confessions.

A telephone & e-mail survey of revealed that 65% reported an increase in the number of confessions being heard. The reasons behind the change were reported as a combination of the impact of the papal visit by Benedict XVI and the influence of Pope Francis.

"This summer there has been a marked difference in demand compared to last summer," commented one of the respondents to the survey.

"I'm observing more interest in the Catholic Church. There has been more interest in people

wanting to become Catholics being brought by existing Catholics," another noted.

"There is definitely an increase in lapsed seeking confession since the election of Pope Francis," said one of the replies.

A number of the replies observed that there was a return to confession by those who had been away from the sacrament for a long period of time. In some cases people who had not confessed for twenty or thirty years were coming along.

An increased number of younger adults have also been coming to confession. As well, attendance at Mass has increased.

At Westminster Cathedral confessions are available for a total of 45 hours a week. This, however, is turning out to be insufficient to

meet the demand.

Promoting in pubs

On September 10 Michael Campbell, Bishop of Lancaster, issued a statement regarding the experience of his diocese in promoting confession during Advent and Lent.

The Light is ON for YOU campaign involved every parish church being open for an hour on a Wednesday evening for confessions.

The initiative also involved widespread promotion of the availability of confessions in shopping centers and pubs. Many priests reported significant numbers of people returning to confession after many years of absence.

“The Day I Died...”

BY PETER BAKLINSKI

Midnight contraction pains signalled to Melanie Pritchard that labour was beginning. If all went well, her baby would have a birth date on July 28th, 2010. Melanie phoned her mother to say that her husband Doug was taking her to the hospital.

That phone call was the last event that Melanie remembers, the beginning of a 3-day dramatic ordeal that nearly took her life and the life of her unborn child.

Pritchard, aged 34, is a nationally renowned Catholic defender of the unborn & a speaker on modesty & chastity. Her work with Arizona's pro-life & pro-family organizations has been described as “legendary.”

She and her husband Doug reached the hospital in the dark early hours of the morning. Labour was progressing steadily and normally. She requested an epidural to help cope with the pain. As the sun rose, contractions began to increase and the doctor broke her waters.

Then the unthinkable happened.

Melanie indicated to her husband that she felt like something was

wrong. She told Doug that she felt like passing out. The nurses repositioned her in an attempt to determine the cause of her lightheadedness even though her vital signs did not indicate that anything was amiss.

Suddenly, Melanie slumped to her side convulsing mildly. Her heart rate and blood pressure flatlined. To Doug's horror he also saw his unborn child's heart rate plummet precipitously. As Melanie's face and skin turned blue, Doug realized that her heart had stopped beating.

A team of doctors and nurses rushed Melanie to the operating room in an attempt to save the baby's life with a cesarean section.

Doug hastily made some anguished phone calls to family and friends beseeching them for prayers for Melanie and the baby. A friend of the Pritchard family, Mark Henry from Catholic Online, heard of Melanie's plight and sent out the word to Catholic media groups that a young mother needed divine assistance in the battle for her life.

Immaculate Heart Radio, St. Joseph Communications,



LifeSiteNews, and many other media outlets responded to the plea, immediately sending out the prayer request through internet or radio.

“Very quickly news of Melanie's critical condition spread like a digital wildfire with ‘prayer for Melanie’ requests now going viral online. The pray-it-forward juggernaut to save Melanie had begun in earnest,” said Henry.

“People were literally coming out of the woodwork to pray for her, even if they didn't know her,” said Kari Holt, Melanie's sister.

People who had not entered a church for years found themselves compelled to go in and pray for the young mother in need.

A man was walking down a deserted Mexican beach at sunset...

A man was walking down a deserted Mexican beach at sunset. As he walked along he began to see another man in the distance. As he grew nearer he noticed the local native kept leaning down, picking something up, & throwing it out into the water. Time & again he kept hurling things into the ocean.

As our friend approached even closer he noticed that the man was picking up starfish that had washed up onto the beach, & 1 at a time, he was throwing them back. The first man was puzzled. He approached the man and said, "Good Evening Friend, I was wondering what are you doing?"

And he replied, "I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, it's low tide right now and all these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don't throw them back into the sea, they will die from the lack of oxygen."

"I understand," my friend replied "but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach and you couldn't possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many and don't you realize that this is happening on hundreds of beaches up and down this coast ... can't you see that that you can't possibly make a difference?"

The local native smiled, bent

down, picked up yet another starfish ... and as he threw it back out into the sea, he replied, "It made a difference to that one!" You may feel like you cannot make a difference in the world today, but you CAN make a difference in one life at a time.



The dramatic 'death' and recovery of pro-life activist Melanie Pritchard

Within a 15-hour period, an estimated 150,000 people were praying for Melanie. Melanie was the number one Googled person in Arizona, her home state, that day. She was top 10 on Twitter worldwide.

The caesarean brought into the world a healthy girl with blonde hair and blue eyes. Doug named her Gabriella, or Ella for short. Melanie had now been clinically dead for 10 minutes. She was given CPR & shocked 4 times with a defibrillator before the medical team managed to resuscitate her.

The doctors told Doug that Melanie had suffered an amniotic fluid embolism. Amniotic fluid had escaped from her womb into her bloodstream, and caused a cardiac arrest when it reached her heart. She also suffered massive internal bleeding from the caesarean operation, losing 5 litres of blood. The doctors also worried about neurologic injury because she had been without oxygen for so long.

With her catastrophic haemorrhaging, three back-to-back emergency major surgeries, heart and lung failure, and possible brain damage, the odds were overwhelmingly stacked against Melanie. The doctors gave her a zero percent chance of survival. Doug was told to say "goodbye" to the love of his life.

Meanwhile, from around the world



believers in the power of prayer stormed heaven for a miracle.

Doctors say that what happened in the next 24 hours defies medical explanation. Melanie suddenly began to breathe on her own. She was weaned off all medications except those for pain. To the amazement of all, she began to talk. Melanie cried when Doug helped her to hold newborn Ella for the first time, just 48 hours after the cesarean birth. And to the wonder of all, Melanie was discharged from the hospital just 6 days after the ordeal had begun.

The greatest miracle of all

Though there was still a long road of recovery before her, leaving the hospital alive was an astonishing accomplishment for the woman for whom doctors had said there was no hope.

For Melanie, however, her survival is not even the most astonishing part of the story. "When I woke up from death I thought to myself that the miracle of my survival was huge, but when I heard about the amount of people who prayed for me, I

thought 'that was the greatest miracle,'" Melanie told LifeSiteNew.com in an interview.

"It is one thing for this miracle to happen to myself, but then to hear how it affected so many people, that is the greatest miracle."

Working in a ministry that helps to lead wandering hearts back to God, Melanie found it ironic that the time when she turned the most hearts to God—inspiring thousands to lift a prayer to heaven—she did not speak a single word; she was silent and completely unconscious.

"When I was young, I used to have this little wish with the Lord. I would say 'Lord, can you make me like St. Peter?' Can you give me a little of what you gave to him on Pentecost so that what I say or do might convert 3000 people a day?"

Melanie believes that God answered her "little wish" in his own way with the incredible drama of her untimely death and medically inexplicable revival.

"I honestly think that this moment wasn't for me. I have always said, 'use me Lord, in whatever way you want, anytime you want.'"

"That 24-hour period was for family, for friends, for people who were exposed to this story. The Lord used me to open their eyes, to help them to understand that they need to rely and trust in him, and him alone."

"It was for God to show how mighty he is."

New Year's resolutions from Pope Francis

1. Don't gossip—When we gossip, we "tear the other person to pieces."
2. Finish your meals—"throwing food away is like stealing from the tables of the poor, the hungry!"
3. Make time for others
4. Choose the 'more humble' purchase—"Think of how many children die of hunger and dedicate the savings to them."

5. Meet the poor 'in the flesh.'
6. Make it a habit to 'ask the Lord.'—"some of you may not yet know what you will do with your lives. Ask the Lord, and he will show you the way."
7. Be happy—keeping joy to ourselves "will make us sick."
8. Make commitments—Don't be afraid to say "forever."

"Today, there are those who say that marriage is out of fashion... They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment."
 "I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries, to swim against the tide; yes, I am asking you to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes that you are ... incapable of true love."

The West Wagga Wag

West Wagga Parish



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



The Gift That Keeps On Giving

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12 (NIV)



CHILDREN
GRACE
GLORY
TRUTH
WORD

BELIEVE
BLESSING
CHRIST
WORLD
RECEIVE

DWELLING
JESUS
FLESH
GOD
NAME

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

