

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

The West Wagga Wag

Issue 155

January 2016

Coming Events

Monthly Cuppa, after 9am Mass on last Sunday of the month

Adoration - 6 to 7am daily, all night Fridays starting 9pm

Epiphany Sun 3

Baptism of the Lord Sun 10

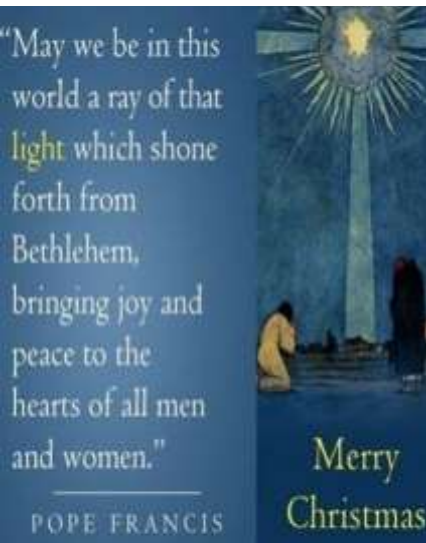
2016 Life & Family National Conference Albury Jan 21 – 24

Conversion of St Paul Mon 25

St Thomas Aquinas Thu 28

Sisterhood Conference

Sydney Feb 26 – 28



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Wag Contacts

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The date for submissions for the next Wag is: Wednesday Feb 3rd.

Happy New Year!



Welcome to Paul and Danistan (Danny), new members of the Confraternity of Christ the Priest and West Wagga parish.

Paul is from Vietnam and Danny from Sri Lanka.

We thank their families for the sacrifice they are making. We look forward to their sharing in the life of our parish.



Congratulations Amelia on making her first Holy Communion. We also congratulate Xavier Drum who made his first Confession this last month and is preparing for his first Holy Communion. I encourage all families to aim at receiving these Sacraments earlier, when the children are seven.

For those children who are not being brought to Mass regularly, a longer preparation may be needed, but for those who are faithful to Sunday Mass attendance, don't wait!

Every person who with faith and love receives God's mercy in Confession and the Body of Jesus in Holy Communion is a great blessing for the whole Church.

Every time a child receives first Holy Communion and First Confession he or she brings great graces into the world, so it is a blessing for all of us.

pastor's page

New Year of Mercy Resolutions

Happy New Year to everyone! This is the time for new year's resolutions. Remember them? We do them every year, and they can easily become a bit un-new, the same old resolutions every year.

But this year is different, its the year of Mercy. Let's focus on Mercy for a change, for a change in ourselves and in the world.

For starters, let's resolve to really pray those Mercy prayers which are part of every Mass, "Lord have Mercy, Christ have Mercy, Lord have Mercy"; or "Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison!" We should mean them from the bottom of our heart. Lord have mercy on me a sinner in need of your forgiveness. Forgive me every time I have been unfaithful to You. Give me all the graces I need to be faithful to You. Lord have mercy, on me and on all those I love; have mercy on Australia and on all the world!"

It wouldn't hurt to pray that simple prayer often each day. Pray it with confidence, knowing that Jesus wants to bless us even more than we want to be blessed.

Then there are the "Works of Mercy". Here is the traditional list, drawn from the Bible:

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Admonish the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

All of these should be done with kindness, understanding and love, as we would like them to be done for us.

Be creative! For example, how could I "bury the dead"? How about attending the funeral of someone you did not know that well, to support the family and pray for that person. This is so important when a person has few friends. How sad if no one turns up at his funeral. Or how about stopping your car as a funeral procession goes by? This is a good custom worth reviving.

How can I instruct the ignorant? Maybe I can take some of the good

(free) Catholic literature at the back of the Church and read it, instructing myself first. Then I can share it with someone else. Maybe I can take an extra bulletin each week and put it in the mailbox of a non-practicing Catholic.

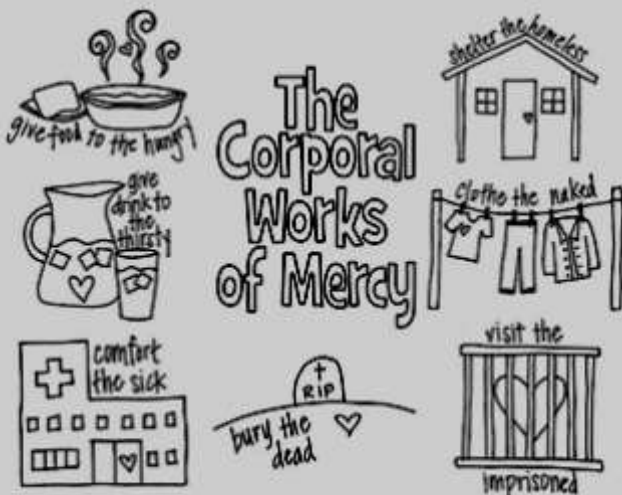
There are hundreds of ways to do these things, and a thousand ways to forget to do them. Why not write a list and put in on your fridge.

Every month try to do at least one act of each "Work of Mercy", and tick it off. Do it as a prayer, as an act of love for Jesus. Do it humbly, without attracting unnecessary attention. Pay it forward, and encourage others to do so also.

This Year of Mercy is more than words, and so must be our love for Christ. May Mary, Mother of Mercy, share with us her compassionate heart, and lead us to be like her, who on hearing that Elizabeth was expecting, "went in haste" to help.

And may the Holy Spirit prompt us to many acts of mercy, remembering the words of Jesus, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall have mercy shown them."

Fr Thomas Casanova CCS



January Jokes



Santa and his reindeer need to be really quiet when they deliver presents so no one will know they are there.

One Christmas Eve when they landed on a roof top, there was a loud, "Snort, snort, sniff, honk, honk, sniff."

"Shhh," said Santa and he proceeded to get out of the sleigh. Once again, louder this time, there was a "Snort, snort, sniff, honk, honk, sniff."

Dogs began to bark in the neighborhood. "Shhh," Santa said again, "Stop doing that."

He started to lift his sack of toys out of the sleigh when he heard it again, even louder.

"SNORT, SNORT, SNIFF, HONK, HONK, SNIFF."

Lights came on all over the neighborhood. Some people opened their windows and stuck out their heads trying to see where the noise came from.

Horrified, Santa jumped back in the sled and flew off to the North Pole. When he got there, he lined up all the reindeer and said, "OK, we are not going to deliver any more presents until the reindeer who is trying to be funny by making those noises confesses and apologizes." He waited. No reindeer came forward.

"I know who it is," said Santa. He held up a piece of paper. "I've written your name here and I will read it. But I want to give you a chance to do the right thing." Still no reindeer came forward. So Santa did the only thing he could. He read off the rude-nosed reindeer.

Q. What do you get if you cross Santa with a detective?

A. Santa Clues!

Q: Why does Santa Claus go down the chimney on Christmas Eve?

A: Because it "soots" him!

Q: How come you never hear anything about the 10th reindeer "Olive"?

A: Yeah, you know, "Olive the other reindeer, used to laugh and call him names"

One Christmas eve, Pete and Jane were driving their Russian friend Rudolph back to his house. The weather outside was frightful. Jane asked Pete, "Do you think that's sleet or rain out there?"

"It's rain, Jane" said Pete.

"I think it's sleet, Pete," said Jane. Rudolph chimed in, "It's definitely rain, Jane."

"No, I really think it's sleet, Rudolph" said Jane.

"Don't argue with the expert, Jane," said Pete.

"What do you mean, Pete?" asked Jane.

Pete replied, "Rudolph the Red knows rain, Dear."

It was Christmas Eve in at the meat counter and a woman was anxiously picking over the last few remaining turkeys in the hope of finding a large one.

In desperation she called over a shop assistant and said, 'Excuse me. Do these turkeys get any bigger?'

'No, madam, 'he replied, 'they're all dead.'

Q: Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

A: Because he had low elf esteem.

Q: What nationality is Santa Claus?

A: North Polish.

It was Christmas Eve. Harry and Shirley had returned from midnight Mass at their local church. They arrived home and spent a short while relaxing by an open fire before retiring to bed.

Some time in the middle of the night they were awoken by heavy knocking on their front door. Harry was very unhappy about this. He went down stairs and noisily unlocked the door to be confronted by disheveled man who was obviously the worse for drink.

'Th'cuse me thur. Will you helpth me with a push."

"Help you with a push!" said Harry. "You drunken idiot! Get away from my house before I call the police! Irresponsible people like you should be banned from driving!" And slammed the door into the man's face.

He went back to bed and was astonished to find himself being reprimanded by his wife.

"How could you be so mean and uncharitable." she said. "Surely this evening's sermon must still be ringing in your ears. How the innkeeper turned Joseph and Mary away on Christmas Eve. Here you are presented with the same situation and you show yourself to be no better than that uncaring man. Shame on you."

Harry was shocked by the relevance of what he had done and was full of remorse. He ran down the stairs and opened the front door, but the man was no longer there. So, he ran down the path to his front gate to see if the man or his car was along the road; but there was no traffic or people at all. On the off-chance that the man might still be around somewhere he shouted loudly. "Hey mister, needing a push, where are you? The unmistakable drunken voice replied immediately. "Over here thur, on the thwing."

One Christmas, a mother decided she was no longer going to remind her kids to send thank you notes. Consequently, the kids' grandmother never received any thanks for the Christmas checks she sent to the kids.

The very next Christmas, all the kids stopped by in person to thank their grandmother for their checks. When asked by a friend what caused this change in behaviour, the grandmother replied, "Simple. This year I didn't sign the checks."



Lessons of Mary and the Infant Jesus by Katie Warner

Mary: Trust and Obedience

Whenever I hear the story of the Annunciation read at Mass or I read it in my Bible at home, I am stunned—over and over again—by what it must have been like to be Mary, in the presence of an angel, being asked consent by God to carry Jesus into the world. I often reflect on the tremendous amount of trust she must have had in that moment that fuelled her “yes” to God and paved way for the incarnation.

And that’s the first lesson for living from Mary: **trust**.

At the Annunciation, Mary was called to exercise a great deal of trust. Then, at Christ’s birth in a manger in a foreign land...more trust. As Jesus grew, got lost in the Temple, went off to preach and to heal...trust. And then, when Jesus was condemned to die and was crucified as she wept at her only Son’s feet...more, painful trust.

Her whole life, God called Mary to radically trust in His plan for her and for her Son. We, too, are called to have that same radical trust in God. We need to trust Him when our kids wander from the faith, when we or someone in our family are diagnosed with serious illness, when our career status turns from employed to unemployed, when money is scarce, when our marriage is hurting, when our future seems uncertain or when we feel abandoned by God. In those moments, we need to trust that God is there.

Our Mother waits for you to hold her hand in your moments of brokenness, rejection, fear, abuse, betrayal, sickness, and shame. She longs to hold you, and remind you, as she does so beautifully by her own example: trust. Trust that God is nearer to you than ever before. Trust that He has conquered death and wants you to rely more completely on Him.

Mary’s second lesson for living that we will explore is:

obedience.

The Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen has such a beautiful way of illustrating this lesson of Mary that I will simply refer to his words:

“In what does your life consist except two things: (1) Active duties; and (2) passive circumstances. The first is under your control; do these in God’s name. The second is outside your control; these submit to in God’s name. Consider only the present; leave the past to God’s justice, the future to his Providence. Perfection of personality does not consist in knowing God’s plan, but in submitting to it as it reveals itself in the circumstances of life.

“There is really one shortcut to sanctity—the one Mary chose in the Visitation, the one Our Lord chose in Gethsemane—abandonment to the Divine Will.”

The Infant Jesus: The Blessedness of Littleness and Joy

God could have entered our world in any way He wanted to. But He chose to come in the form of a newborn child. No one could have guessed that the Lord of the whole universe would be introduced to us in a physical way in a crib, rather than on a throne.

And so we learn from the Infant Jesus this first lesson: the **blessedness of littleness**.

Chapter 4 in the Book of Wisdom says, “For old age is not honoured for length of time, or measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age...Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years; for their souls were pleasing to the Lord...” (Wisdom 4:8-9, 13)

I’ll quote Venerable Fulton Sheen again, who writes, “when Wisdom [here meaning Wisdom personified in Jesus] came to earth he was a child, and when Wise Men came to Wisdom they were told to be like children. Christmas, then, is the coronation of childhood, the glorification of the young whose hearts are simple, the proclamation to aging hearts that the world need

not despair and die, because the Fountain of Youth has come into it...turn time backward, make old things young again.”

Being a young mother, I am very often reminded of this lesson of the blessedness of littleness. The way my toddler son so beautifully and simply talks to Jesus throughout the day, the way he is enraptured by icons and stories about Christ, the way he loves “Mama Mary” so dearly...reminds me to think about how important it is for me to approach Jesus, as the Gospels tell us to approach him, with the innocence and purity of a child’s faith. “Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). As we age, our faith can have periods of stagnancy and ‘oldness.’ Advent is a crucial moment in time to “turn backward,” making our faith in Christ young again.

One more lesson we will explore from the Infant Jesus: **Joy**.

Lest we forget, JESUS IS the Joy to the world. Why do we possess such joy at Christ’s coming? Precisely because He came to make us sharers in His divine nature. The Son of God became man so that we children of men can learn to become sons and daughters of God. Jesus comes as a baby with a mission to save the world. To save each and every one of us. To save you. Christmas is all about joy, the joy that the Infant Jesus brings into each and every one of our hearts by way of his redeeming, personal, intense love for me and for you.



Christmas is for Love



Christmas is for love. It is for joy, for giving and sharing, for laughter, for reuniting with family and friends, for tinsel and brightly covered packages. But, mostly

Christmas is for love. I had not believed this until a small elfin like pupil with wide innocent eyes and soft rosy cheeks gave me a wondrous gift one Christmas.

Matthew was a 10 year old orphan who lived with his aunt, a bitter, middle aged woman greatly annoyed with the burden of caring for her dead sister's son. She never failed to remind young Matthew, if it hadn't been for her generosity, he would be a vagrant, homeless waif. Still, with all the scolding and chilliness at home, he was a sweet and gentle child.

I had not noticed Matthew particularly until he began staying after class each day [at the risk of arousing his aunt's anger so I learned later] to help me

straighten up the room. We did this quietly and comfortably, not speaking much, but enjoying the solitude of that hour of the day. When we did talk, Matthew spoke mostly of his mother. Though he was quite young when she died, he remembered a kind, gentle, loving woman who always spent time with him.

As Christmas drew near however, Matthew failed to stay after school each day. I looked forward to his coming, and when the days passed and he continued to scamper hurriedly from the room after class, I stopped him one afternoon and asked him why he no longer helped me in the room. I told him how I had missed him, and his large brown eyes lit up eagerly as he replied, 'Did you really miss me?' I explained how he had been my best helper, 'I was making you a surprise,' he whispered confidentially. 'It's for Christmas.' With that, he became embarrassed and dashed from the room. He didn't stay after school any more after that.

Finally came the last school day before Christmas. Matthew crept slowly into the room late that afternoon with his hands concealing something behind his back. 'I have your present,' he said timidly when I looked up. 'I hope you

like it.' He held out his hands, and there lying in his small palms was a tiny wooden box.

'It's beautiful, Matthew. Is there something in it?' I asked opening the top to look inside. 'Oh you can't see what's in it,' he replied, 'and you can't touch it, or taste it or feel it, but mother always said it makes you feel good all the time, warm on cold nights and safe when you're all alone.'

I gazed into the empty box. 'What is it, Matthew' I asked gently, 'that will make me feel so good?'

'It's love,' he whispered softly, 'and mother always said it's best when you give it away.' He turned and quietly left the room.

So now I keep a small box crudely made of scraps of wood on the piano in my living room and only smile when inquiring friends raise quizzical eyebrows when I explain to them there is love in it.

Yes, Christmas is for gaiety, mirth, song, and for good and wondrous gifts. But mostly, Christmas is for love.



Puppies' Christmas ~ Anon

It's the day before
Christmas
And all through the
house
The puppies are
squeaking
An old rubber mouse.

The wreath which had
merrily
Hung on the door
Is scattered in pieces
All over the floor.

The stockings that hung
In a neat little row
Now boast a hole in
Each one of the toes.

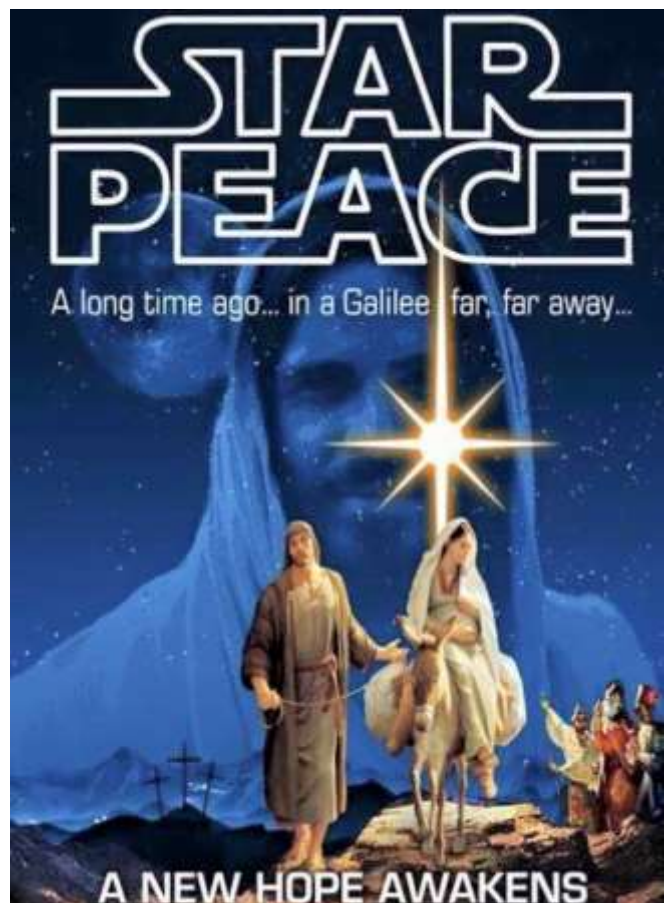
The tree was subjected
To bright-eyed whims,
And now, although
splendid,
It's missing some limbs.
I catch them and hold
them.

"Be good", I insist.
They lick me, then run
off
To see what they've
missed.

And now as I watch them
The thought comes to me,
That their's is the spirit
That Christmas should
be.

Should children and
puppies
Yet show us the way,
And teach us the joy
That should come with
this day?

Could they bring the
message
That's written above,
And tell us that, most of
all
Christmas is love.



Two Shepherds



*Original story told by: God
Adapted by: S.C. Mathisen*

“Jacob, how long are you going to lie there and stare at the night sky?”
“As long as I need to Zebedee. I’ve been watching this star every night for the last several months, and it seems to be getting closer and closer every night. I can’t figure it out.”

“We need to get back to the flock; I’m worried that those Roman soldiers will decide to help themselves to a couple of our sheep while we are away from them.”

“All right, all right, I’m ready to go back now. I made a few notes on the position tonight. It looks like it is straight above that little village of Bethlehem. Maybe we’ll go in there in the morning and look around.”

“Help me gather up our things here, Jacob. You know, after this season is over, I’m going to head back up to Galilee and take my uncle up on his offer to teach me fishing and to set me up with a fishing boat. I am getting really tired of sleeping outside on the hard ground every night, watching a bunch of smelly sheep.”

“That sounds pretty good, Zebedee, but I like being out here. I especially like it at night when I can watch the stars. Ok, I’ve got the food; let’s get back to the sheep.”
The two shepherds head back over several small hills to the small field where they had left their herd. Jacob looks back over his shoulder at the star that has captured his imagination, and Zebedee scans the horizon for any signs of Roman patrols.

“Jacob, why does that star fascinate you so much? After all, the night sky is full of stars. What is so special about that one?”

“I don’t really know Zebedee, for some reason it reminds me of the Lord’s promise to send the Messiah. You know, I heard from a passing caravan yesterday that there was a strange caravan of royal astrologers in the area from some country far away to the east. I heard they were here because they had been following a star all the way from their country. I wonder if it’s the same star. I’d like to run into them and ask them a few questions.”

“Sounds kind of crazy to me. No one believes any of that Messiah stuff anymore.”

“But don’t you remember all the prophecies from synagogue school? One of them talked about a star!”

“Jacob, come on! All of that stuff is just old, tired stories to tell the kiddies at bedtime. If God was going to send a messiah, he wouldn’t have let us get conquered by the Romans. If He exists, He’s off doing other things and has cut us loose to take care of ourselves. Come on, we need to get back to the sheep.”

“I don’t care what most people think, Zebedee. I believe the stories, and I think that star has something to do with them. I have a feeling about it.”

“Great! Wonderful for you. Me, I just want to get back to the sheep and get some sleep. All this stargazing is depriving me of some well-deserved sleep.”

The two shepherds arrived back where they had left the sheep and begin laying out their sleeping gear and soon settle down for some sleep.

“Here we are, Zebedee. The sheep are right down there in that field all nestled in for the night, and we are here with them. Let’s call it a night. I sure wish that caravan from the east would come by here. I’d like to talk to those men.”

Christmas Religious Stories: Two Shepherds Part 2

A couple of hours later:
Zebedee awakes. He hears something that sounds like singing. Then, his eyes are almost blinded by a bright light.

“Jacob, what’s that in the sky? It

can’t be morning already.”

“What? What do you want?” He cups his hand over his eyes. “Wow! That is really bright!”

“I’m scared,” said Zebedee.

“I am too,” replied Jacob.

A third voice speaks. The voice seems to come from everywhere.

“Don’t be afraid!”

“Who said that?” asked Zebedee.

“Is that you, Simon?” asked Jacob, in a shaky voice.

“Don’t be afraid!” the voice repeated. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize Him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds just looked at each other.

“Jacob,” said Zebedee, “remember all that stuff about not believing all those old stories?”

Jacob looked at his friend, smiled, and said, “Yes?”

“I’ve changed my mind. I do believe them now. ALL of them. Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

They hurried to the village and arrived just as the sun was coming up. After asking all around, they found Mary and Joseph in a stable with their baby boy, lying in the manger.

When they saw Him, they both went weak in the knees, knelt, and worshiped Him. They told Mary and Joseph what had happened to them, and they both were amazed.

Afterwards, they told everyone they met what had happened and what the angel had said about this child and where to find Him.

All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished. Many came to worship Him as well.

Christmas Eve 1968: How Apollo 8 Made History By Reading the Bible

by ChurchPOP Editor



You may know about Apollo 11, the 1969 mission when humans landed on the moon for the first time. And there's a good chance you've seen the movie Apollo 13 with Tom Hanks.

Apollo 8 gets a lot less attention. And yet it was an extraordinary mission – one that not only made scientific history, but Church history.

The First Moonshot

Apollo 8 was launched on December 21st, 1968 and headed toward the moon. The crew was tasked with flying to the moon for the first time in history, orbiting it (without landing), and returning to earth.

The mission accomplished several amazing feats:

- * It was the first time humans had ever gone beyond low Earth orbit
- * It was of course the closest humans had ever gotten to the moon
- * It was the first time humans had ever seen the Earth as a whole planet, as well as seen an "Earthrise"



* And it was the first time humans had seen with their own eyes the far side of the moon. But it was during one of their live broadcasts

back to earth during their mission that they made Church history: they read from the book of Genesis on live television while orbiting the moon.

Reading God's Word on Christmas Eve

It was Christmas Eve 1968, and the crew was orbiting the moon. They did a live broadcast from their spaceship, garnering the largest TV audience ever at the time. The astronaut crew introduced themselves and described what it was like to see the moon so close. Then one of the astronauts said, "We are now approaching lunar sunrise, and for all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you." (Listen to the full recording with the video at the end of this article!)



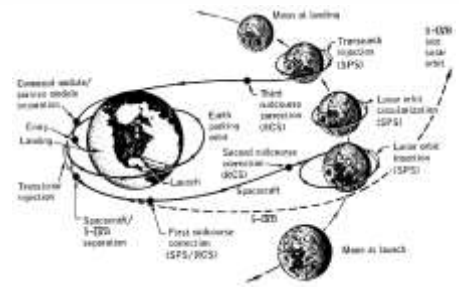
The three astronauts then took turns reading the first 10 verses of the first chapter of Genesis, which describes creation. They read it from the King James Version of the Bible.

When the finished, the last astronaut concluded, "And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas – and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth."

The Lawsuit

Unfortunately, the Scripture reading – which appears to have been done entirely at the initiative of the astronauts – landed NASA a lawsuit.

Atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, famous for the 1963 Supreme Court case with her name that banned Bible reading in public schools, sued NASA arguing that the fact the



astronauts were public employees made the public Bible reading unconstitutional.

The case was dismissed by the Supreme Court in 1970 on a technicality, but the ordeal left NASA skittish about anything relating to religion, leading them to simply self-censor (so basically O'Hair still won). For example, during the Apollo 11 mission, Presbyterian Buzz Aldrin took communion after having landed on the moon, but he didn't mention it in public for years for fear of another lawsuit.

The Commemorative Stamp

The reading from Genesis was so iconic that in 1969 the US Postal Service released a commemorative stamp for the Apollo 8 mission that featured the famous "Earthrise" photo taken from lunar orbit as well as the first words from Genesis.



The West Wagga Wag

West Wagga Parish



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



Blessed is she who
believed that the Lord
would fulfill His promises
to her!" Luke 1:45

ELIZABETH	CHILD
BLESSED	JOY
ZECHARIAH	FILLED
FULFILL	BABY
PROMISE	HOME
GREETING	JUDEA
BELIEVE	MARY
LEAPED	

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit
rejoices in God my Saviour...for the Mighty
One has done great things for me -- holy
is His name." Luke 1:46, 49



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