

Bishop Sees Two Revelations in Moon Trip: Faith, Nature

GENESIS AND THE MOON

The first message ever flashed across the ocean electronically was: "God has wrought" this wonder. The first message outside of instrument readings which flashed from outer space by our astronauts was the first few verses of the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The time was Christmas Eve; the space was 238,000 miles beyond the earth.

What relation does all this have to Christmas and to Christ? Does Christ the Lord fade into insignificance because we see Him in a time capsule of only 33 years in a space orbit of Palestine's 300 miles? What relation is there between a Babe in a crib and three astronauts in a rocket? Is not Herod inquiring directions of Wise Men dwarfed into triviality by communication between a burnt out clatter and the Houston Space Center?

We shall attempt to answer these questions by several reflections, the first of which is:

THE PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF GOD

The revelation of the Mystery of God, or the supernatural, has been progressive through the centuries. We see it unfold in the Bible through the chosen people, the prophetes concerning the Expected of the Nations, the enfleshment of God in Bethlehem and the growth in age, grace and wisdom in His Mystical Body the Church. But there is also a progressive revelation of the secrets of Nature.

For reasons best known to Him, God has kept locked the many secrets of the universe until our time. A thin veil hid our vast continent until it was pierced by the three ships of Columbus; and even now there is the opening of the vast continent of Africa. Philosophy, too, had a graduated, sequence running through Plato and Aristotle to our present highly developed systems including psychiatry. But most of all there has been a growth in science in our times which may be likened to a revelation.

For centuries and centuries we believed that the universe was made up of tiny little billiard balls called atoms. The ancient scientists asked themselves if a piece of matter could be divided until one came to a point where it could no longer be split. They answered in the affirmative and called it "that which cannot be cut", which in Greek is atom.

In these times this little thing which was thought to be unsplitable was split, fissioned and found to be a miniature solar system with a central core like the sun and around it were revolving little "planets". The atom was made up of negative and positive charges of electricity. The hydrogen atom, for example, contains one proton with a positive electric charge of energy and one electron with a negative charge of energy.

No one, of course, has ever seen an atom. If we laid 25 trillion of them alongside of one another they would equal only an inch. Take a ten inch ball and float it in a city ten miles in diameter and you have some idea of the density between the two: the center and the circumference of an atom. The old alchemists who believed that they could turn lead into gold were right. We can do it today. All we have to do is to remove from the



U.S. Moonmen: Jim Lovell, Frank Borman, Bill Anders.

lead three protons and three electrons and eight neutrons and lo, the dream of the alchemists comes true. Expensive it is, for an ounce would cost one million dollars, but it can be done.

TWO REVELATIONS

The point that we are making is that there are two revelations: one in the order of faith and grace, the other, less properly called, is in the realm of nature and science.

The first revelation, strictly so called, "made known to us God's hidden purpose — such as His Will and Pleasure determined beforehand in Christ — to be put into effect when the time was ripe; namely, that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, might be brought to unity in Christ". (Eph. 1/9-10) All history looks to Christ Who is the Lord of history, for He split Time in two the moment before His Coming and the moment awaiting His Second Coming.

But the lesser revelation of God is in the area of nature, in which it is given to our times to unlock the secrets of nature.

We must not think that we are smarter than the men of other ages; it has just been given to our times to enjoy the fullness of "revelation" as those who lived at the time of Christ enjoyed seeing the Godhead dwell corporally in Christ.

We who live in this century enjoy a far richer unfolding of the Body of Christ in His Church than those who lived in the third or the thirteenth century; so we who live today, when new power is released through the fission of the atom, enjoy a greater understanding of the cosmos than, for example, King Kai Kaus (1000 B.C.) who made a kite or "flying machine" to which were attached four eagles who flew to reach meat which was on the top of four spears.

How much deeper is our knowledge now than when Newton mused about gravitational pull after being bumped on the head with an apple, or at the time of Kepler who, in 1619, formulated three mathematical laws to describe the non-circular orbits of planets.

Science today is unwrapping secrets hidden in nature. And it is our Western Christian civilization which has done it, not the Orient. Alfred North Whitehead, the Harvard scientist, once explained this by saying that: a) The long mental discipline

of Christian philosophy and theology prepared the Western man for scientific analysis; b) Christianity's refusal to accept Pantheism or the identification of God and nature made it possible to study nature scientifically without becoming involved in myths.

LIGHT — THE COMMON BOND

Our day has seen a kind of conjuncture of these two unveilings: the Mystery of Christ and the Mystery of Nature and the common denominator between the two is Light. God has always been thought of as Light. "God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all". (1 John 1/5) Light is the great revealer. Spots and flaws which could not be seen in shadows become obvious in the light. As Whittier wrote: "Our secret sins are in the light of Thy pure countenance."

Light became the symbol of wisdom and knowledge: "In Thy light we see the light". (Ps. 36/9) It also took on a moral connotation: "The children of light". (Luke 16/8; John 12/36; Eph. 5/8) Coming to nature there was light of the sun and of the stars. Mankind always knew how necessary light was to plants and animals, but to our times has come the knowledge that the material, chemical universe or the atom is light. It was this that prompted the English astronomer, Sir James Jeans, to say that the most scientific explanation of the universe is to be found in Genesis: "In the beginning God said let there be light."

The two revelations are about light: one from above, the other from below. One is the unveiling of the mystery of God's Light; the other is tearing apart the infinitesimally little atom and seeing it in light. In between the two, the Light of God in Heaven and the light of the atom in space-time, is Christ: "I am the Light of the World. No follower of Mine shall wander in the dark". (John 8/12)

Christ is the Logos, the Intelligence that planned the cosmos and that gives to every Communist and Hindu, every scientist and teacher, the light of reason and to those who will accept it the light of faith.

"All that came to be was alive With His Life,
And that Life was the light of men . . .
The real light which enlightens every man".

ASTRONAUTS

The more one thinks about it, the more fittingly seems the quotation the astronauts chose for their telecast from the moon: There they were, about 70 miles above a pocked-marked cinder that has no light of its own except that which comes from the sun. Revolving round about it, alternating between light and darkness, they read from the highest pulpit in the universe to the largest audience.

"And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.
And God saw the light, that it was good:
And God divided the light from darkness.
And God called the light Day,
And the darkness He called Night."

While some theologians on earth were saying: "God is Dead", astronauts were saying: "God is Light".

CHRIST THE COSMIC CENTER

The Light from above, light of the atom from below, and in the middle combining Spirit, matter, Divinity and humanity, is Christ, the Light of the World. He is not only its Human Center uniting all mankind. He is also the Cosmic Center, for "in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth, everything visible and everything invisible (atoms, moons, planets, stars — the universe). All things were created through Him and for Him". (Col. 1/15-20) He is the Light Who gives us faith; He is the Light Who made the atom.

He waited centuries to unfold Himself in the flesh; He waited centuries to unravel the electronic center of nature. He is the Personal Center of the universe, for both its natural and supernatural order.

The conquest of space, thanks to the unleashing of new energy found in the atom and to the rapid calculation of our computers, has given us a deeper understanding of Christ. We have too often separated Creation and Redemption and thought of Christ as appearing only relatively late in the evolution of the universe. No! He presided at Creation; He presided in the flesh or the Re-creation.

This great theme of the Cosmic Christ we will develop in a later article.

For the present, it is sufficient to know that there is a double revelation: one, that of the cosmos which draws the bolt of Nature's secrets, telling us more and more of the Wisdom and Love God put into Creation. The other revelation is that of Christ Who, like the sun shooting through a prism, breaks up into the seven rays of the spectrum, telling us more and more about His Truth and even His continued crucifixion in the Church. A double faith is required: a natural faith in the forward and gradual mastery of man over nature: "Rule over the earth and conquer it". The other is the supernatural faith or the upward movement of the Christianization of mankind through His Body the Church. Then will come the final crowning of Creation and Salvation when: "Everything belongs to you. Yet you belong to Christ and Christ to God". (1 Cor. 3/22)

I believe that every advance in science and every fulfillment of the Creative command for man to exercise regency over nature gives glory to God. That is why I have pleaded in vain for years for a "Science Sunday" to thank God for allowing us to share His secrets. Whenever we know anything we spiritualize it because we get it into our mind. In this space age, we have gotten the heavens into our heads. That leaves us the more important task still: to get our head into the heavens.

Edward Sheen

(NEXT WEEK BISHOP SHEEN WILL DISCUSS THE QUESTION: WHY OUT OF ALL THE PLANETS SHOULD THIS INSIGNIFICANT ONE OF EARTH BE CHOSEN AS THE THEATRE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN)

Formula of Commitment for Day of Peace

(Issued by the Vatican for the observance of the World Day of Peace on Jan. 5, 1969, proclaimed by Pope Paul VI.)

Lord—You are the life.

I recognize God as the source of all life. Every man, my fellowman, has the right to live freely and to insure his means of livelihood in a dignified manner.

I deplore that the lives of millions of men are threatened by war, by genocide, by inhuman treatments generated by murderous rivalries, and I feel that I have a share of responsibility in the burden of the socio-economic injustices that oppress my fellowmen.

I commit myself to do everything, even at the cost of my life, in order

to help and protect my brothers, and particularly those among them who are exposed to danger, and to the insecurity of life: the poor, the needy, the forsaken, the hungry, the exiled, the sick.

Lord—you are the Father.

I recognize that you are the Father of all men, peoples or nations, and the benefactor of all mankind. In your sight, all men are equal in dignity.

In view of this I refute all discrimination that might be exercised against my brothers because of difference of race, color, nationality or ethnic or social origin.

I confess to having sometimes given way to sentiments of pride or of

jealousy in respect to my close or distant fellowman.

I commit myself to fight vigorously all forms of intolerance that rend the fraternal bonds between men and are contrary to the building of a united and universal community, in line with the very desire for unity that you, Father, instilled in our hearts.

Lord—you are the wisdom.

I recognize and wish that all should realize that the greatest wisdom of man is the free adoration of God, his Creator. I am aware of the insatiable thirst for truth that you instilled in the intelligence, in the will, and in the hearts of men, who were saved

and regenerated by the sacrifice of love of your Son.

I deplore that I have not adequately placed at the service of my brothers the knowledge I have received from others. I also deplore the fact that so many millions of men are deprived of essential means, such as speaking, reading, and of the assurance of being able to make known, with complete dignity and freedom, their unquestionable rights.

I commit myself to a greater respect for the personal and social rights of my fellowmen, to facilitate dialogue between them by refusing in my life and in their attitudes of violence, of oppression, of alienation, of partiality which prevent the peaceful search for truth.

Word for Sunday

Variety, Fullness, Stability

By Father Albert Shamon

The new year brings new changes again in the Liturgy. My first reaction to the announcement of changes was to admire the tireless energy with which the Church is seeking to become relevant to modern man. My second reaction, was how our people will be disturbed, perhaps confused, unless they are told the reasons for the new change.

To put it simply, the present changes consist in offering three alternative eucharistic prayers. In addition to the present Roman Canon read at Mass, plus eight new prefaces, with about sixty more to come. Why?

One reason for the additional eucharistic prayers is that variety is the spice of life. Our God is a God of beauty because in the unity of his being there is a trinity of Persons. Beauty is a wedding between unity and distinction. In an orchestra, for instance, unity alone — everybody playing the same instrument — might create monotony. Variety alone, like musicians tuning up, would beget cacophony. But unity in a variety of instruments could produce symphony.

Liturgy to be beautiful to stir up the minds and hearts of men, must have neither unity alone nor variety alone, but both. Because every Mass re-enacts the sacrifice of the Cross, the Eucharist has unity. Variety can come only from the texts enshrining the re-enactment.

If we were nailed to but one text, then the unity would be so overwhelming as to become mechanistic,

routine, monotonous. By offering three other eucharistic prayers, the Church is injecting the variety necessary for the beautiful and joyful celebration of the Eucharist.

("The greater the variety to which congregations are exposed, the likelier it is the Eucharist will have vitality and meaning and authenticity as it is celebrated.")

A second reason for these changes is to unfold more fully the mystery, which the Eucharist is. A mystery is not a truth about which we can know nothing; it is truth about which we cannot know everything.

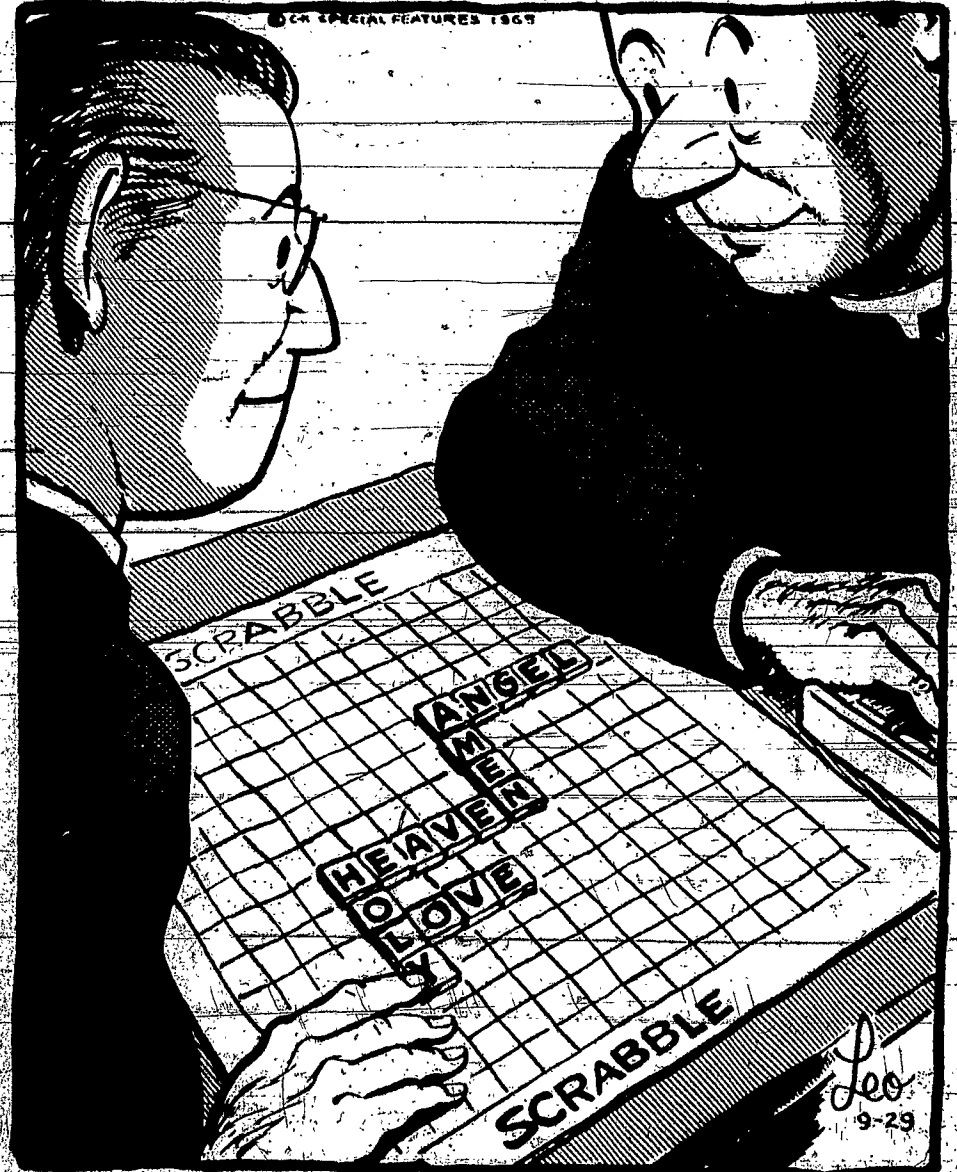
As the glorious beauty of the white light of the sun is often missed until it is filtered through cloud-prisms in gorgeous peacock and rainbow colors, so the many-splendored beauty of the mystery of faith, which is the Eucharist, can begin to be more deeply appreciated only through the medium of a variety of texts.

("Regardless how beautiful, how technically excellent a particular canon may be, no one eucharistic prayer can exhaust the mystery of the Eucharist or totally express its meaning.")

How many books are needed in the Bible to unfold the word of God!

How wonderful is our Church — ever old and ever new! Some would "jump the gun"; others won't jump at all. But the true children of the Church — these will just go along, mindful that to think with the Church is to think with Christ.

CHURCH HUMOR



Letters to the Editor

Editor:
When can Monsignor Roche's plan for the Metropolitan School Board be implemented? (Courier-Journal 12/20/68). Obviously, the solution to the financial crises of the parish schools can be solved on a diocesan level. No doubt there will be problems, but none that cannot be overcome.

Since "United we stand, divided we fall," we cannot afford to let this opportunity pass. Nor can we afford the luxury of delaying longer for other possible solutions.

We owe it to our children to do everything humanly possible to preserve this heritage. Monsignor Roche has offered a solution; it must be followed-up.

—Jerome Moriarty
44 Northgate Road, Rochester

Editor:
Thank you sincerely for cooperating with Catholic Family Center in bringing the needs of the poor to the attention of the community. Your interest and your suggestions have helped us to realize \$1,500 more this year than in any previous year.

As a result, we were able to do a much better job in providing food, toys and other material assistance to the people needing our help. Any money left over will be spent during the year for the benefit of our Inner-City residents who come to our Inner-City offices.

May we also ask that you express in the Courier-Journal our sincerest gratitude to all who contributed to the Catholic Charities Christmas Fund. Without their help, this whole undertaking would have been impossible.

—(REV) William G. Charbonneau
Director, Diocesan Family Center

Editor:
I have been a Sacristan in various churches for some 15 years. I find it necessary to comment on the article, "A Pastor's Sad Farewell to Sister Sacristans", Friday, Dec. 6, 1968. His letter failed to "strike a sympathetic note." Rather, I have become concerned for any lay women reading the article, who only recently have been allowed to volunteer to do a job that only "Black-robed Angels" used to do.

God help our communities, if vocations decline because we are no longer seen rushing breathlessly across the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve, or the Easter Vigil.

All Sister Sacristans, I'm sure, felt this work a privilege, as well as a duty. However, with the added responsibilities of our Professional life, we WELCOME and are HONORED to have our lay women attend the Throne-Rome of Our King.

—Sister Kathleen Flaherty
(a retired sacristan)
64 Main Lane, Rochester

COURIER-JOURNAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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We P

Among "new" choirs in area, that at Immaculate Conception Church has attracted widespread attention. Its is told here by one of its members.

By RICHARD ALBRECHT

The family that sings, and prays together has something good going for it. The Immaculate Conception choir just sort of got together without making a big thing of it.

Father Robert Kreckel was a guitar. Mass for the school 1967 graduation, and parishioner Tim Sullivan, music teacher at Nazareth (lego) and guitar-playin' de Dave Kunz (new Father I assistant pastor at Hosenah if they could put something together).

They rounded up a few boys in the neighborhood who played guitars, and they sang a few Mass tunes.

Subsequently Father Kreckel encouraged use of the hymns at the 10 o'clock. Tim Sullivan continued to a couple of folk tunes each while Judy Boyd played tional music on the organ. Announcements from the pit brought up several more

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NEWSPAPER OF

World The B

From another point of view—and yet controls 40%

4. Peace would be verity Christianity. In the 11 tury were about Godless sire for bringing peace to

Alesky Kohmayakof, would possess Russia, also in the future: "Our spirit are not for Russia's sake; holds many treasures for all nations."

5. Peace will never be As Gandhi put it: "Non-violence convert his opponent by tions, like individuals, of Christian violence is not tism of our heart."

6. There is a world is incapable of taking vedge that he is strong, supernatural love to acqu

The Christian doctrine times. Most of us are too overcome it.

7. Finally, and most inward to the hearts of Nations. It is our souls th

(Bishop Sheen has parishes this Sunday.)

Wor

Celebrant: Create we are not our brother

All: Lord, hear o

Cel: That we may Son.

All: Lord, hear o

Cel: That we may in your image and lik

All: Lord, hear o

Cel: That we may planet with us are tru

All: Lord, hear o

Cel: That we may as aliens and enemies

All: Lord, hear o

Cel: That if we men-as-your-sons—

All: Lord, hear o

Activi At Sel

Regular activities sches sume Monday at Genes House, 10 Dake St., follow rary half this week for damages caused by a t early Christmas morning.

Investigators said the severely damaged the rea building, may have been been forced open, and fo round by it.

The fire started in a se fice, spreading to the fir the attic and roof of frame building. Others see smoke, heat and water d

The blaze was discov after midnight, and fire