



IMMACULATE HEART^{OF}MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR JULY 14, 2019

Dear friends in the Risen Lord,

For me wonderful memories attach to the date July 20, 1969. I was 12 years old, and my excitement about Apollo 11 had been building all summer, especially as I realized that we would be spending July with my grandmother in Connecticut, who had a large color TV! (Not that it would really matter: in those days all the transmissions from space were in black and white.)

Bedtime rules were lax anyway during vacations at Nana's house; but in deference to my utter fascination with the space program, my brother and I were permitted to spend the entire weekend on the floor in front of the RCA. Watching archival footage now instantly brings back the sense of wonder that I felt 50 years ago as the Lunar Excursion Module settled onto the Sea of Tranquility and Neil Armstrong took that first step.

In later years, as I shed my childhood innocence, I would realize that the moon landing was not a purely scientific accomplishment, but was inextricably tied up with geopolitics and the cold war. And I would come to have two minds about the massive cost of the space program. But my sense of religious awe from that Sunday morning 50 years ago would never leave me. There was something unspeakably beautiful and majestic about God's creation and our role in it.

On Monday morning, July 21, 1969, the New York Times devoted a good bit of its front page to a poem by Archibald MacLeish called "Voyage to the Moon." It captures something of the mystical spirit that was awakened in my 12-year-old soul. It read in part:

From the first of time,
before the first of time, before the
first men tasted time, we thought of you.
You were a wonder to us, unattainable,
a longing past the reach of longing,
a light beyond our light, our lives—perhaps
a meaning to us . . .

Now
our hands have touched you in your depth of night.

Earlier this year I saw the wonderful documentary film, *Apollo 11*, by director Todd Douglas Miller, during its brief run in theaters. I decided then that I would purchase a copy for myself, and screen it here in the parish around the 50th anniversary of the moon landing.

I invite those who share similar memories from the summer of 1969, and any others who would be interested, to join me on Monday, July 22, 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the historic church, to enjoy this documentary and to give thanks for this transforming glimpse of God's grandeur and the nobility of the human spirit.

Your brother in Christ's word and work,