

- 1 Apollo 13 was to have been the third manned landing on the Moon, and it blasted off from Cape Kennedy on this day in 1970. Two days into the journey, a major explosion took place in the oxygen tanks. Electrical power was lost in the main part of the ship (the Command Module), and the three astronauts had to move into the small cone. This was the Lunar Module which would have been the only part to land on the Moon, and would later have blasted off to re-join the Command Module for the return journey to Earth.
- 2 Because of the explosion, there was no question of landing on the Moon; the only hope was to return the three men safely.
- 3 The spacecraft travelled round the far side of the Moon, gaining speed from the Moon's gravity, propelling the craft back to Earth. With very little energy remaining for the essential powering of the computer, the heat had to be cut off. One of the men became very ill but, against all odds, the three astronauts were returned safely to Earth.
- 4 These events are recorded in the film, *"Apollo 13"*, starring Tom Hanks as Commander Lovell.
- 5 Once the craft had travelled round the Moon and then faced towards Earth, Commander Lovell looked out of the window, and held out his thumb to 'cover' the Earth. Reflecting later, he said: *"I could put everything I knew behind my thumb. It gives me a humble feeling of how insignificant we really are in our solar system."*

6 *Let us pray:*

**God our Father,  
 amidst the vastness of space  
 you treasure mankind  
 and you call each of us by name.  
 You so love our world  
 that, in the fullness of time,  
 you sent Jesus, your Son,  
 to live among us.  
 Inspire us each day  
 to live in wonder and appreciation  
 of all that is around us,  
 and may your love,  
 seen fully in Jesus, your Son,  
 surround us this day and for ever.  
 Amen.**

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in  
*'Praying Each Day of the Year'*,  
a 3-volume book  
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine  
to research this topic further.

This material is part of  
the prayer and education website  
of the De La Salle Brothers  
in Great Britain:

[www.prayingeachday.org](http://www.prayingeachday.org)