

- 1 On April 12th 1961, a Russian, Yuri Gagarin, became the first person to travel in space. His spacecraft, 'Vostok 1', made a journey of 1 hour 48 minutes, making a single orbit of earth. He was travelling at 17,000 miles per hour (27,400 km/hr).
- 2 When he returned to earth, he reported that he had not seen God in the heavens, referring to people who tend to look upwards when praying to God. Later, a Russian priest said: *"If you haven't seen God on earth, you will never see him in heaven."*
- 3 Some other astronauts since Yuri Gagarin have found the experience of being in space to lead them closer to God.
- 4 There are poems in the Bible that reflect on our place in the universe, and we use one of them as our prayer today. It is called 'Psalm 8', and a copy of this psalm was later left on the moon in a sealed capsule by American astronauts:


5 *Let us pray:*


**Lord, our God and King,  
your greatness is seen  
throughout the earth.**


- 6 **When I gaze at the heavens  
which your fingers have formed,  
and look at the moon and the stars  
which you have set there,  
I realise how small we are  
in the majesty of your creation.**
- 7 **Yet you treasure us  
above all that you have made,  
and you give us control  
over all the works of your hand  
- animals both wild and tame,  
birds in the air,  
and the creatures of the sea.**


## 8 **Lord, our God and King, your greatness is seen throughout the earth.**


*(Psalm 8, paraphrased)*


 *What might the Russian priest have meant when he said: "If you haven't seen God on earth, you will never see him in heaven" ?*

 *Why might some astronauts have felt that their experiences led them closer to God?*

 *James Weldon Johnson has an interesting poem, 'The Creation': "And God stepped out on space."*

 *Yuri Gagarin, once the most famous person in the world, died in 1968, aged 34, when testing a new aircraft.*

 *Psalm 139<sup>7-10</sup> - "If I climb the heavens you are there"*

 O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder; This day God gives me; Christ be beside me; Yahweh, I know you are near

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)