

- 1 Comets travel in long stretched-out orbits from near the sun to far out in our solar system of planets, and then back round again towards the sun, gathering speed as the sun's gravity attracts them. One of the most famous comets is called Halley's Comet, which returns every 76 years, last appearing in 1986.
- 2 Comets are like "dirty snowballs" - they are made of rock, ice and other frozen materials. As a comet approaches the sun, the heat of the sun causes some of it to become vapour and dust that then form frozen particles, stretching millions of miles into the deep cold of space - forming what is called the "tail" of the comet.
- 3 One of the brightest comets of the last 500 years is named after the two men who discovered it in 1995 - Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp. The Hale-Bopp Comet is 25 miles (40 km) in diameter. It was seen from Earth in spring, 1997. Some cities decided to turn down the brightness of their street lights on certain nights, so that the comet could be seen better.
- 4 The closest the Hale-Bopp Comet ever comes to Earth is 122 million miles. Being so far away, the comet - when viewed from Earth in 1997 - didn't appear to move. When nearest the sun, the comet travels at 98,000 miles per hour. It is now hurtling away from the sun, back into deep space. The tail of the Hale-Bopp Comet varies between 20-60 million miles in length!
- 5 *Let us pray:*

**God our Father,
 may all that we see and experience
 lead us to grow
 in wonder and respect,**

**that we may value and be thankful
 for everything in our lives each day.
 Inspire us to choose wisely
 and live positively,
 and make good use
 of our knowledge and talents,
 both for ourselves
 and for the benefit of others.
 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