

- 1 On this day in 1986 the United States' Space Shuttle "Challenger" roared into the sky from Cape Canaveral in Florida. The world's TV cameras were focused on the rocket as it carried five men and two women. One of the women, Christa McAuliffe (a high school teacher), had won a contest to be the first "ordinary person" in space.
- 2 Millions of people watched live on television as, suddenly, a minute after blast-off, "Challenger" exploded.
- 3 In a speech to the people of the United States, President Ronald Reagan quoted a few lines from a poem written by a 19-year old British Second World War pilot, John Magee, who was killed in an air-collision in 1941 just three months after writing the poem. John Magee captures something of the spirit and adventure of flying, and talks of having put out his hand and touched the face of God. We'll use his poem to reflect and pray today:
- 4 *Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies
on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed,
and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred
things
You have not dreamed of
- wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along,
and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights
with easy grace,
Where never lark, or even eagle flew -
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.*

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