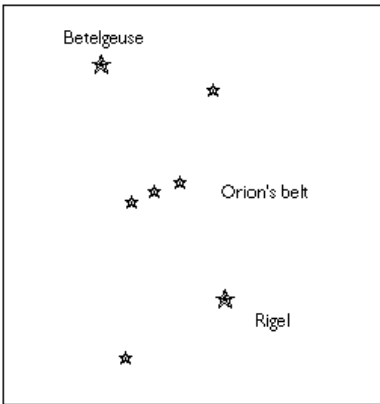


1 Abraham Lincoln was elected U.S. President in this month in 1860. In one of the biographies of Lincoln we can read that he and a friend were walking in the countryside one night. Lincoln turned his eyes to the clear night sky and named some of the stars. He said to his friend:

2 *"I feel that I am looking in the face of God. I can see how it might be possible for someone to look around on earth and not believe in God, but I cannot conceive how anyone could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."*

3 Throughout the winter months, we can see in the night sky the set of stars called "**Orion**". The Orion Constellation is easy to recognise as it is shaped like the letter "H".




4 **Rigel** is the star at "the bottom right" as we look at the constellation. It is 900 light-years away from us. In other words, it is so far away that it takes light 900 years to reach us, and light travels at 186,000 miles per second. So, when we look at Rigel, we are actually seeing it as it was 900 years ago - we are seeing it as it was at the time of William the Conqueror!


5 **Betelgeuse** is the star at the "top left" as we look at the constellation of Orion. This reddish star is so large that our own sun could "fit" into it 64 million times! If Betelgeuse was placed where our Sun is, it would extend beyond the orbit of Earth, to that of Mars - but we know of stars that are even 50 times bigger than that!


6 *Let us pray:*

**God our Father,
open our eyes
to the wonder
of all your creation
- from the beauty
of all that is close to us,
to the fascination
of far-away places
on our own planet and far beyond.
Heighten our awareness,
deepen our understanding,
and extend our horizons
that we may have respect
for all that is around us
and discover your kingdom
deep within us. Amen.**



 Abraham Lincoln was elected on 6/11/1860.

 "**Betelgeuse**" is pronounced "**beetle-jers**". From November to March, the Constellation of Orion can be seen in the night sky, looking in the following directions at about 9pm:
November: eastern horizon.
December: south-east.
January and February: south.
March: south-west.

 Colours of day; I watch the sunrise; O Lord my God, the Father of creation; O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder (*I see the stars*"); The light of Christ; Yahweh I know you are near (*"if I climb to the heavens"*)