

Christmas Eve in Space and Communion on the Moon

Eric Metaxis writes in the [Guideposts](#) magazine the following year:

“In the radio blackout, I opened the little plastic packages which contained the bread and the wine. I poured the wine into the chalice our church had given me. In the one-sixth gravity of the moon the wine curled slowly and gracefully up the side of the cup.”

Then Mr. Aldrin read Jesus’ words from the Gospel of John: “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whosoever abides in me will bring forth much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing.” He explained that he had wanted to read this over the radio back to Earth, but at the last minute NASA asked him not to because the agency was in a legal battle with the outspoken atheist Madalyn Murray O’Hair. As it happened, she was suing over the Apollo 8 crew reading from Genesis on Christmas Eve. And that of course is why so few people have heard of this amazing story.

I sometimes wonder what’s more amazing, this story—or the fact that so few people know about it. When I first heard it I almost couldn’t believe it was true, but about 10 years ago I had the honor and privilege of meeting Buzz Aldrin in person and asking him about it.

Mr. Aldrin said that he agreed not to read the words over the radio, but only “reluctantly.” I find his own words of the event very moving: “I ate the tiny Host and swallowed the wine. I gave thanks for the intelligence and spirit that had brought two young pilots to the Sea of Tranquility. It was interesting for me to think: the very first liquid ever poured on the moon, and the very first food eaten there, were the

communion elements.”

And of course right now, as Christians around the world are celebrating the birth of Jesus, it’s fascinating to think that some of the first words spoken on the moon were his words, the powerless newborn in the dirty manger who came to Earth from heaven, and who made the Earth and the moon and all of us, in His own image. And who, in the immortal words of Dante, is himself the “Love that moves the Sun and other stars.”

Merry Christmas.