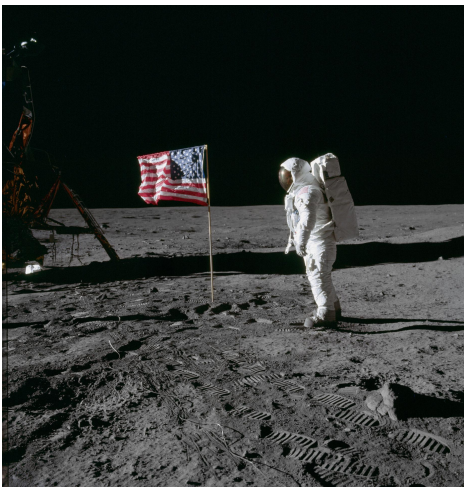


#547 Grind 'About the Moon'

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Where did the moon come from? The truth is, we don't know for sure, but one widely accepted theory is that, roughly 4 to 5 billion years ago, a giant protoplanet collided with earth, sending massive amounts of vaporized rock into orbit around earth. Eventually this rock coalesced (due to earth's gravity) to form the moon. The moon is roughly 238,855 miles from us. Each year it gets farther away from earth at a speed of 1.5 inches a year—about the same speed as your fingernails grow! Since the moon has no atmosphere, temperatures fluctuate widely from 260 degrees F to -243 degrees F. There are no breezes on the moon. The footprints Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin made on the moon in July 1969, are still visible. The flag they planted was designed to look like it was blowing in the wind. Otherwise it would have hung limp.



Apollo 11 Astronaut Buzz Aldrin with the American flag on the moon, 1969. That was the year our first son was born.

The moon orbits the earth every 27.3 days. At the same time, it is rotating on its axis. Consequently, it keeps nearly the same side

turned toward the earth all the time. So, 40% of the moon we humans had not seen before—until, in 1959, the Soviet unmanned Luna 3 probe sent back grainy photos of the dark side. The first humans to actually see the far side were the three Apollo 8 astronauts in 1968. The recent Artemis II astronauts saw even more of the dark side of the moon. One of the mystiques of the moon is the way its gravitational pull affects the earth. The moon's pull is largely responsible for the tides of the earth. And some people believe the moon's pull can cause strange behavior in animals—including *homo sapiens*. When the moon is full, some people say, "My kids and dog are acting strangely. It must be the full moon!"

Although there are several U.S. flags and the Soviet coat of arms on the moon, international treaties prevent any nation from claiming the moon. Instead, the moon is treated like international waters. The Outer Space Treaty further restricts the use of the moon to peaceful purposes, specifically banning any weapons of mass destruction. Ironically, it's safer to live on the moon than on earth!



(photo by Pedro Lastra – Pixabay)

I like some of the things people have said about the moon. Here are four:

- "When I admire the wonders of the sunset or the beauty of the moon, my

soul expands in worship of the Creator.” (Mahatma Gandhi)

- I think a future flight to the moon should include a poet, a priest, and a philosopher...so we might get a much better idea of what we saw.” (Michael Collins, Apollo 11 astronaut)
- “The beauty of the moon is hidden in her scars.” (Anonymous)
- “Be the moon and inspire people, even when you’re far from full.” (K. Tolnoe)

All these facts about the moon cannot compare with simply enjoying the moon. There is beauty and mystery in its different phases from thin crescent to round fullness. There is beauty in the different sizes of the moon from huge when it is close to the horizon, to merely ornamental when it is high in the sky. The moon’s changing colors are gorgeous too: pure white, bright yellow, harvest orange, blue, bluish gray, reddish, to name a few. And to think, no matter what color the moon appears to be, all of its light is borrowed from the sun.

Barbara Kingsolver has written a lovely poem entitled “Remember the Moon Survives.” In it she reminds us that despite the moon’s waxing and waning, the moon is always whole. Though the moon seems to slip away at times, it is always there. Even when it seems to disappear, it is always fully present. Some spiritual writers have compared the continuous presence of the moon to God’s presence in our lives—always whole, always fully there. They compare the moon’s gravitational pull, to the gravitational pull of God’s love.

Prayer: Creator of the moon, help me to surrender to your beauty, to your mystery, and to the gravitational pull of your love. Amen.



Artemis II photo of the “earthset” taken from the far side of the moon. (NASA)

For reflection:

Did anything in this reflection catch your attention? If so, what was it?

What role (if any) does the moon play in your everyday life? in your spiritual life?

Have you ever had a special experience involving the moon?

August 28 - FULL MOON - try to observe it and appreciate all of it’s beauty. If you personally know anyone who has, when they existed, worked at a mental hospital, then you are aware of how the new moon affects males and the full moon affects females. So goes!

If you want the Friday Grind and you have an email or Text number I would be happy to include you on my on-line ministry if you contact me at daileystory@gmail.com or 586-202-8644. KatieD+