

# The Greatest Story ever told!

Would you like to be a **Millionaire**? You'd be **very rich indeed!**

How would you like to make a **Million bucks** ... in one day?

How would you like to make a **Hundred Million bucks** ... in one day?

Well, **someone** just did that ... last Friday!

His name is **J.J. Abrams**

**He's the one** who wrote, directed and **produced the new movie:**

**"Star Wars: The Force Awakens"** that opened in theatres last Friday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>

**Ticket sales** on that day totaled ... **\$100 Million dollars!**

And **if you** count the **whole weekend**, that number rose to **\$ 238M in America** and **if you** count the whole weekend worldwide the number rose to **\$ 517 M!**

What did **J.J. Abrams** do to make **that kind of money**?

He made a movie of **a story** ... a science-fiction **story** ...

**a story** that never happened ...

**a story** that never will happen ...

And ... **millions of people** spent money to see it!

It's just one of several **other stories** that people go to see or get to read in this season.

There's, *The Night Before Christmas* ... it's **a story** ... a make-believe story!

There's, *A Christmas Carol*... it's **a story** ... a make -believe story!

And there's, *The Birth of Jesus* ... it's **a story** ... but it's a true story!

And **when you** come to contemplate **the scope** of this story ... you see what makes it  
... **The Greatest Story ever told!**

**It's the story** of **how the overpowering love of God** entered into our world of **space and time** so that **we wayward creatures** could be put back into **a right relationship with Him** and find our way to be with Him **forever in Heaven.**

**Today** marks the day He came **2015 years ago.**

**We call it Christmas Day** ... it's **a day** that changed **everything!**

**Isaiah** foretold this in our **First Reading** announcing,  
*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”*

**St. Paul** affirmed this in our **Second Reading**, declaring:  
*“The **grace of God** has appeared ... Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own.”*

**Could** there be **any better story** than this in the world?

Sadly, **many** don't know this story or have forgotten this story.

For **example**, last **Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>** ... the newspapers gloated:  
*“Can the eager First Day Viewers of the new Star Wars trailer ...  
who saw it 112 Million times on line be all wrong?”*

**they** went on:  
*What about “the true believers” who purchased \$50 Million  
and counting in advance tickets ...  
can they be mistaken about this film too?*

There's nothing like a good story ... **but** the question is ... is it **true**?

Several **Star Wars movies** have been made over the years ... none of them are **true**.

And **there will be more coming** as **Tribune Newsman**, Blake Hennon writes:  
*“Film's most venerable space opera is about to start bringing **new stories**  
to the Big Screen at the planned rate of one per year!”*

**So we** can look forward to more new stories ... about nothing ... nothing real.

**The question is** ... will our children believe these **make-believe stories** ...  
more than ... **the Greatest Story ever told?**

That's up to **us!** For **those of us** who believe it, **we** have to live it and share it.

The writer of **Psalm 96** that we prayed today wrote:  
*Announce his salvation, day after day.  
Tell his glory among the nations;  
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.”*

Yes, and this starts with **our children** and **our grandchildren** ...  
**do they** know the difference between **make-believe stories** and **real stories?**

At the **St. Henry Christmas play and party last Sunday**,  
**Santa Claus** came in and as **the kids** were lining up to visit him ...  
I asked one boy what was on his list.

Well, he quickly rattled off... “X box “1” and some other electronic stuff ...  
and then he said ...  
and **5 Star Wars Action Figures!** (Leia, Luke Skywalker, Chewbacca, and others.)

The thought crossed my mind of how we **Catholics** are often given a hard time  
for having statues of the Saints on display in our **Churches** and **our homes**  
implying that by having statues ... we’re worshipping idols.

But I guess it’s ok to go decorate your kid’s rooms ...  
with **statues of Action Figures** from movies!

Surely they’re not worshipping them ... just remembering them with fondness!

That’s **the very thing** we do with **statues of Saints** ...  
we remember them with fondness!

And **actually**, the **Saints** are the **Action Figures** that we should have on display in  
our **kid’s rooms** ... for they were real people ... who led real good lives!

You know it’s in coming to Church that we get to hear the Greatest Story ever told  
over and over again.

That’s why it’s **so important** to be sure to attend Church every week!

It’s **here** that we get reminded of God’s **plan** and **promise** for our eternal happiness.

And yet ... **so many** don’t go.

Wednesday night, after **Fr. Jim Booth** and I heard **Confessions** at Church for 2 hours  
from 5–7 PM we went to Jim ‘N Nick’s for a little something to eat.

I asked **our Waiter** what he was doing for Christmas and he immediately told me of  
how he & his wife were going to **her parent’s home** in **the morning** to have breakfast  
and then he was going to **BBQ ribs** that **afternoon** for his side of the family ...  
and then **on Christmas night** he said, ... with big eyes and a bright smile ...  
we’re going to see “*Star Wars*”!

He never mentioned anything about going to Church or celebrating the Birthday of  
**Jesus!** His excitement on Christmas Day would come from watching  
a make-believe story ... that had nothing to do with ...  
**the real reason for the Holiday ... the birth of the Savior of the World.**

He wasn't planning on celebrating the true story ... the Story of Christmas ...  
**the Greatest Story ever told.**

Maybe that's because not too many newspapers are billing it as a must see story.  
No, right now it's all about **Star Wars!**

The entertainment section of the **Birmingham News** last Friday  
had a **full page ad** on its cover promoting "Star Wars" with the picture of ...  
**a woman with a fierce look on her face ... carrying a weapon.**

Guys, isn't that **the kind of woman** you're looking for ... **a battle-ready beauty ...**  
**an armed warrior?** So much for the **God –designed roles** of:  
**man as provider and defender** of the family, and ...  
**woman as life-giver and nurturer** of the family.

Let's make up a story about a woman with a deadly weapon in her hands ...  
for **her part** in *Star Wars!*

Well, you know, **God** actually beat **J.J. Abrams** to the punch on that one ...  
**because 2015 years ago ... he gave us a true story ...**  
about **a woman with a weapon in her hands ...**  
her name was **Mary ... and she was holding Baby Jesus.**  
**a lovely woman holding not a Light Sword but the Light of the World!**  
Yes, there she was ... **Madonna and Child ... life bearer and life giver**  
**with her role was played out ... not in Star Wars ... but in Star Love.**

And I think that **J.J. Abrams** actually stole his **sub-title** from **God's story ...**  
in naming his movie, "*The Force Awakens*"

for **the true force of all** is **Jesus** who awakened to us as a Babe in **Bethlehem!**

The great **St. Augustine** uses **this very verb ... awaken ...** in a 4<sup>th</sup> century homily ...  
*"Awake, mankind! For your sake God has become man.*  
*Awake, you who sleep, rise up from the dead and Christ will enlighten you."*  
*You would have suffered eternal death, had he not been born in time."*

**How marvelous ... that God, who is pure spirit ...**  
would take on the lowly flesh of us His creatures ...  
**so that He could be with us in a more complete and loving way.**

**That's what Christmas celebrates!**                      **The coming of God to us.**

**That's why** we're here today ... to celebrate that festive day  
**The day when God ... became man!**

**So extraordinary is this action of God ... that when we recite our Creed tonight we will express heightened reverence for the Incarnation by genuflecting.  
“And by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”**

And **why did Jesus do this?**      **Why did he become man?**

**Augustine explains:**

*“For what greater grace could God have made to dawn on us than to make His only Son become son of man, so that a son of man might in his turn become son of God?”*

It's **because of today** that we have the **God's holy spirit** in the world & within us  
It's **because of today** that we have the **birthright to heaven** as beloved sons and daughters of the Father.

Let us joyfully celebrate **the Birth of Jesus!**

This is not a **made-up** story.

It's a true story.

It's a true **love story**.

It's...**The Greatest Story ever told.**

**If you believe this story ... and live this story ... and share this story ...**

you'll one day be richer than a **Millionaire** ...

**for you'll be living in ... the Kingdom of Heaven!**