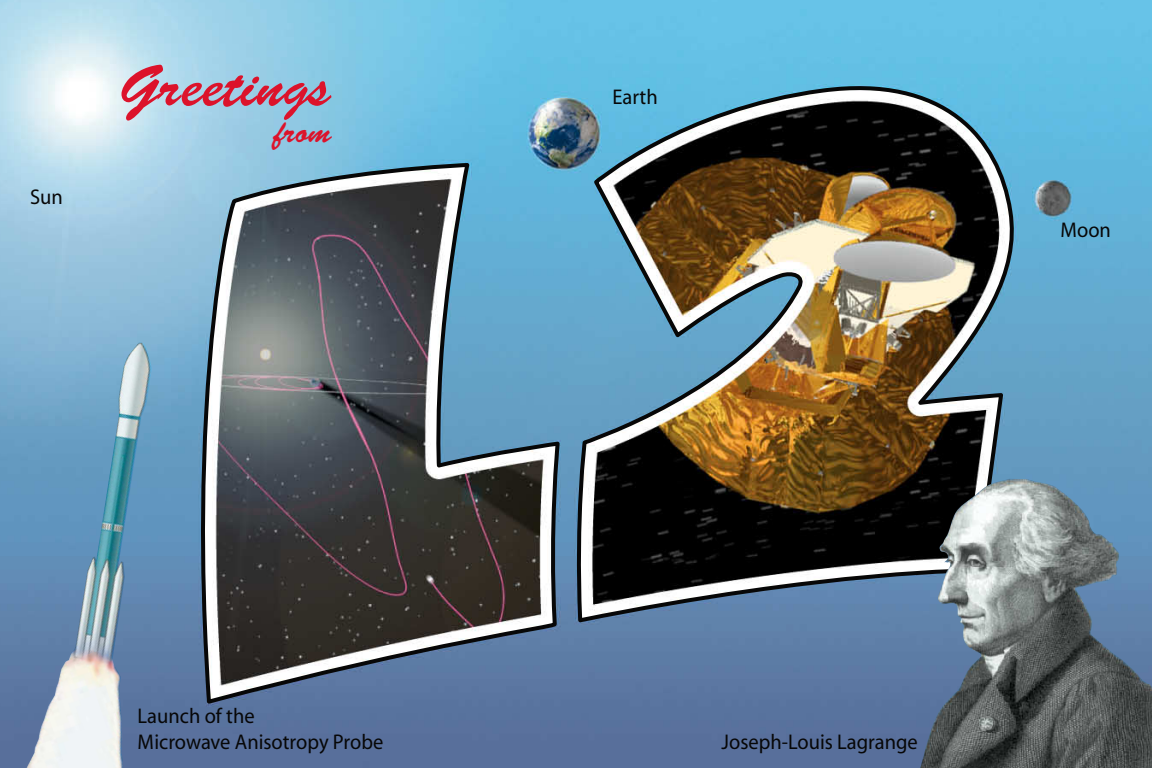
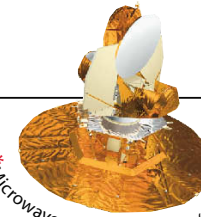
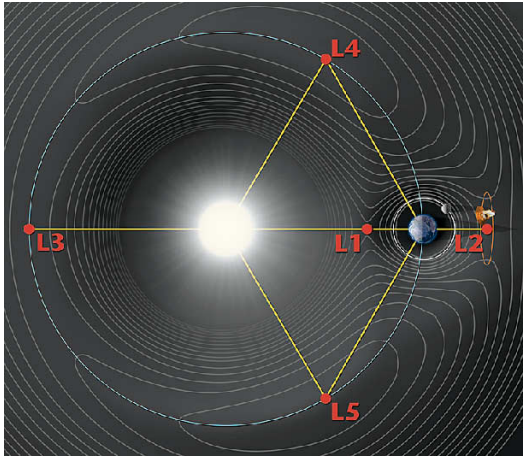

Greetings
from
L2
Sun
Earth
Moon
Launch of the
Microwave Anisotropy Probe
Joseph-Louis Lagrange

Why is the MAP* Spacecraft at L2?



*Microwave Anisotropy Probe (MAP)

MAP is gathering data to make a picture of the microwave radiation originating from the beginings of the universe.



(picture is not to scale)

The Italian-French mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange discovered five special points in the vicinity of the Sun and Earth where a third, smaller mass can orbit at a fixed distance from each of the larger masses. The second of these points, L2, offers an exceptionally stable environment: an unobstructed view of deep space, with the Sun, Earth, and Moon always behind MAP's protective shield. MAP's large distance from Earth protects it from Earth radiation and other disturbances. At L2, MAP observes a large fraction of the sky every day while maintaining a fixed angle to the Sun for nearly constant temperature. For more information on the Lagrange points and the MAP mission: http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov