

- 1 The first recorded Olympic Games took place in the year 776 BC, although they may have been held for a few hundred years before that time. The Games were held every four years at Olympus, the place where the father of the Greek gods, Zeus, was thought to live. Invitations went out to many cities throughout the Greek world, inviting them to send athletes. In the year 394 A.D. the Roman Emperor no longer allowed the Games to continue.
- 2 Just over 1500 years later, on this day in 1896, the first of the modern-day Olympic Games was opened. The Games were the idea of the French sportsman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who hoped they would encourage many to think of physical fitness, as well as helping to promote understanding and respect between nations. His ideal was that nations would compete on the playing field rather than on the battlefield.
- 3 In those first Olympics of modern days in 1896, 13 countries took part, with 285 athletes. In our own days about 11,000 athletes attend from 180 countries.
- 4 The Olympic Flag dates from 1913. The 5 connected rings are of different colours, representing the 5 continents. The flag of every country shares at least one colour with the Olympic rings.
- 5 Some words of Baron de Coubertin are often quoted at the Games:
"The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part. The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well."

6 *Let us pray:*

**Lord, inspire me to give of my best
and make good use
of the talents you have given me.
Show me how to be positive in attitude,
appreciating and valuing others,
always being ready to encourage
and give praise.**

**Sometimes I draw conclusions
about people
in terms of what I think
is meant by "success" and "failure",
but the "failure" of one person
might count as a great "success"
of someone with other talents.**

**Lead me never to judge people
but to accept others as they are,
knowing that it is together,
each with our differences,
that we build up your Kingdom.**

Amen.

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine
to research this topic further.

This material is part of
the prayer and education website
of the De La Salle Brothers
in Great Britain:

www.prayingeachday.org