

- 1 *On this day in 1989, 96 Liverpool United football fans were crushed to death in Sheffield's Hillsborough Stadium. We're going to listen to a poem about the events of that day:*
- 2 To Sheffield we went, expectant and proud
With faces aglow, singing aloud,
Grandads and kids and ordinary blokes
Full of patter and Merseyside jokes,
That hide the pain of struggling for bread
To follow the feats of our boys in red.
- 3 Through turnstiles, gates and tunnel
The excited crowd began to funnel.
Though pressure grew, good nature prevailed
But some felt faint and others paled,
The small and weak were spared some pain
By strong protectors who took up the strain.
- 4 As the Reds appeared we swelled our song
Which carried outside to the waiting throng,
Whose frustration burst as the whistle blew
To start the match they'd paid to see, too,
As life started oozing from being pressed,
Gates were flung open to ease their distress.
- 5 The dam was breached, the flood swept in,
Increasing the pressure on those within,
Trapped like animals in an iron cage
Solidly built to contain the rage
Of hooligan, punk, thug and brute
Who have brought our nation into disrepute.
- 6 Distress changed to panic and then despair
As loved ones crushed, gasped for air
Spring-sweet, abundant just inches away
But denied by a cage on that terrible day.
We'd gone to count goals by our boys in red
But shed bitter tears as we counted our dead.
- 7 Now a city in shock
mourns those who have died
And nobody knows who should be tried
For the carnage, pain, grief and sorrows
That must be faced through endless tomorrows,
But of this I am certain, history will say
There were more saints than sinners
on that dreadful day.

- 8 *Let's pause in silence for a moment for all who suffer tragedies in their lives...*
(pause)



-  *Could use the prayer from 8 April.*
-  *The author of the poem has not been traced.*
-  *"bread" – money*
-  *"the Reds" – Liverpool United;*
-  *"denied by a cage" – security fencing around the perimeter of the pitch.*
-  *In the mid-1980s in Britain it became a custom, here and there, to leave some flowers at the place where someone had died tragically. More than a million people visited Liverpool's ground of Anfield in the days after the Hillsborough disaster, leaving flowers on the pitch. It is only since Hillsborough in 1989 that the practice of leaving flowers at the site of sudden death has become more widespread, and we now see bunches of flowers tied to lamp-posts to commemorate the death of someone in a traffic accident, and flowers are often renewed in those places at the anniversary of death. Most memorably, at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, in September 1997, many thousands of bouquets of flowers were laid in public places and thrown onto the road along which her coffin was being driven.*

 Abide with me; The Lord's my shepherd

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