

- 1 Beside the River Thames in London are the buildings called the Houses of Parliament or the Palace of Westminster. The previous buildings had been destroyed by fire in 1834.
- 2 The tall clock tower is often called "Big Ben", even though the name actually is only that of the great bell that strikes, weighing nearly 14 tonnes. "Big Ben", the bell, was hung in the tower on this day in 1858. It strikes the musical note 'E', and is the most broadcast bell in the world. We can hear it at the start of 'News at Ten', and it is sometimes broadcast on the radio, here and to countries overseas. During the Second World War, when most of Europe was occupied by the Nazis, the broadcast of the ringing of the bell helped give people hope of freedom.
- 3 And so, when people across the world hear the ringing of 'Big Ben', or see pictures of the tower, they see it as a sign or symbol of many things - hope, freedom, what it means to be a Londoner or English or British, our political system of democracy with a parliament. Seeing or hearing "Big Ben" gives various messages to people.
- 4 I can ask what people might "see" and "hear" when they meet me. What are the "messages" that people pick up from me? What do people learn about me from the way I live, from the way I do things, and from my attitude?
- 5 Let's pause in silence for a moment, for each of us to think of the character-impression we make on others - what people might "see" and "hear" when they are with us...

(pause...)


6 *Let us pray:*


Loving Lord,


**we need the power of your Spirit
in our lives
to build on what is good,
and to help change
what needs to be changed.**


**We pray that we may be faithful
in responding to your call to grow
as the people you have called us to be,
that we may ring out your praises
through the way we live each day.
Amen.**



 *The 7 metre [23 foot] diameter clock faces were seen in the film 'The 39 Steps', as Robert Powell hung to one of the hands of the clock. "Big Ben" is probably named after Sir Benjamin Hall, a big and heavy man who was Parliament's Commissioner of Works. "St Stephen's Tower" - which we often call "Big Ben" - is the name of the tower in which the bell hangs.*

 *The four bells of Liverpool's RC Cathedral are called Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as a reminder that we, too, are called to live and "ring out"/broadcast the Good News of the Gospel.*

 *"If I speak without love, I am simply a gong booming" - 1 Cor 13¹*

 *God's Spirit is in my heart; Christ is our king, let the whole world rejoice; Colours of day; Follow me; Give me joy in my heart; If I am lacking love; I watch the sunrise*

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