

- 1 At the end of the Second World War, defeated Germany was occupied for several years by the armies of 4 countries - Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States - each temporarily supervising an area. Although Berlin, the German capital, was situated within the Soviet Zone in the east, it was also divided into 4 zones.
- 2 Within a very short time, relationships deteriorated between the Americans, British and French on one side, and the Soviets on the other.
- 3 In 1948, the Soviet Zone of Germany decided to become a separate country - Communist "East Germany" - leaving the larger part as "West Germany".
- 4 The united zones of Berlin became known as "West Berlin", initially protected by the troops of Britain, France and the USA. West Berlin was completely surrounded by Communist East Germany.
- 5 From 1949 onwards, nearly 3 million people left East Germany - most by simply walking into West Berlin. The Communist countries felt they could no longer allow this to continue, especially as they were losing many of their skilled and professional people - 2,000 each day by 1961.
- 6 As people woke up on this day in 1961, they discovered that road blocks and miles of barbed wire had been set up to stop people walking into West Berlin. Within the next few days a 4-metre high cement wall was built, and armed sentries occupied watchtowers. The Berlin Wall was 29 miles (47 km) in length, surrounding West Berlin. The Berlin Wall was a symbol of the divisions and mistrust between the countries of the West and the Communist Bloc.
- 7 As Communism started to collapse in Eastern Europe in 1989, ordinary people began to demolish parts of the Berlin Wall, and Germany became united in October 1990.
- 8 *Let us pray:*
**Lord, if I ever cut people off
or isolate myself
from the needs of others,
alert me to what I am doing.
Open my eyes
to see what unites people
rather than what divides us.
Show me
how to build bridges
between people
rather than putting up walls
that divide. 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