

1 Philip Lawrence was headteacher of St George's Comprehensive School in Maida Vale, in west London. He always made a point of saying goodbye to his students at the school gates each evening. He had been headteacher for two years when, on this day in 1995, standing outside the school gates, he saw a student being attacked by a group of teenagers on the street. Going to protect that student, Philip Lawrence was stabbed to death.

2 300 years earlier, the patron saint of teachers - John Baptist De La Salle - had written:

*"As someone chosen by God
to proclaim the gospel to others,
your commitment and enthusiasm
must go so far
that you are ready to give your very life,
so dear to you
are the young people entrusted to you."*

3 The tragedy for Philip Lawrence's family and the school and his friends, provoked discussion nationally about violence and the availability of knives.

4 Mrs Lawrence remarked that when young people felt unloved and undervalued, they tended to search in the darkness for something to fill the emptiness. A minority develop aggressive behaviour, violence and complete disregard for human life.

5 It was said of Philip Lawrence that he understood education as offering options to young people that they might appreciate all beauty, so that there is no room inside them for ugliness.

6 *Let us pray:*

**Teach us, good Lord,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and to ask for no reward,
save that of knowing
that we do your will.
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