

- 1 Many Christmas customs were lost in Britain when the feast of Christmas itself was abolished by Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans in the 17th Century. They said that Christmas was only to be a solemn time.
- 2 Many of the customs we have today were introduced to Britain in the 19th Century. For example, Prince Albert (the husband of Queen Victoria) brought from his own country of Germany the tradition of having a decorated Christmas Tree.
- 3 An edition of "*The Illustrated London News*" for 1848, stated that:

"The Christmas Tree is prepared annually by her Majesty's command for the Royal children... The tree employed for this festive purpose is a young fir about eight feet high. On each branch are arranged a dozen wax tapers... Fancy cakes and gingerbread are suspended by coloured ribbons from the branches. On the top of the tree stands the small figure of an angel with outstretched wings."
- 4 The custom of the Christmas Tree - brought to Britain by Prince Albert - soon spread throughout the country. Prince Albert died on this day in 1861, aged only 42.
- 5 One of the best-known Christmas Trees stands in Trafalgar Square in London. Each year a huge fir tree is shipped over from Norway - a present from the Norwegian people, in gratitude for Britain's help during the Second World War.
- 6 It is thought that 500 years ago, Martin Luther (the German church reformer) was the first to put candles on a Christmas tree. He said that the lights would

remind people of the stars that shone above Bethlehem on the night of the birth of Jesus.

7 *Let us pray:*

**God our Father,
at this time of year
we think of loved ones,
and remember with gratitude
what others have done for us.
As the stars shone over Bethlehem,
so may we shine in the world
like bright stars
as we share the Word of Life
- Jesus, your Son,
your Word amongst us.
Amen.**

Phil 2¹⁵

Jn 1¹⁴

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