

(See also 11 November)

- 1 Two years into the First World War, the allied leaders hoped that a battle against the Germans based around the River Somme would be decisive: *“the big push”*.
- 2 For the previous week the German lines had been heavily bombarded. The Allied soldiers were told that there would be so little opposition that many would simply be able to walk across *“no-man’s land”* to occupy the German trenches. On 1st July 1916 the Battle of the Somme was launched in bright sunlight at 7.30 in the morning, as thousands of British and Allied soldiers *“went over the top”* along an 18-mile front.
- 3 The worst casualties ever in a single day in the history of the British Army took place on the 1st July 1916 - over 57,000 British and Empire soldiers were killed on this day.
- 4 Severe fighting along the Somme took place from 1st July until 18th November, 1916. In that period of 18 weeks:
 - 420,000 British and Empire soldiers were killed;
 - 200,000 French soldiers;
 - and about 600,000 German soldiers lost their lives.
- 5 *Let us pray:*

**If countries disagree, Lord,
and if negotiations break down,
“going to war”
has sometimes been seen
as a way of “saving face”.**
**In the same way,
there are times
when matters get out of hand
as individuals disagree strongly,
and feel they need to “save face”.**

**In my own small part of the world
may I learn ways, Lord,
of being a peacemaker,
of helping people
to see that there are alternatives
to hostility,
and there are ways
of “saving face”
in a decent and human way,
without there being
a break-up of relationships.**
**Help me
to be a channel of your peace
this day. 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