

- 1 Early in the Second World War, in May and June 1940, the German Army made great advances and kept pushing the British Expeditionary Force towards the sea, as well as the French and the Belgians. For a while, Hitler halted his advance outside the French port of Dunkirk. The Allied soldiers presumed they would all soon be captured as prisoners of war, and they destroyed much of their fighting equipment, to prevent the Germans using it.
- 2 Ships, small fishing boats and pleasure craft set out from England to try to rescue some of the many soldiers trapped around Dunkirk. By June 4th 1940, almost by a miracle, over 330,000 British, French and Belgium troops had been evacuated from Dunkirk, under gunfire from the Germans. Would Hitler now invade Britain?
- 3 On that same day, Winston Churchill, Britain's Prime Minister, gave one of his most famous speeches in the House of Commons:
- 4 *"We shall not flag or fail.  
We shall fight in France,  
we shall fight on the seas and oceans,  
we shall fight with growing confidence  
and growing strength in the air.  
We shall defend our island,  
whatever the cost may be.  
We shall fight on the beaches,  
we shall fight on the landing grounds,  
we shall fight in the fields and in the streets,  
we shall fight in the hills;  
we shall never surrender."*
- 5 We'll use as our prayer some words of Saint Ignatius Loyola:

**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.**

- 6 Dunkirk was a terrible and humiliating defeat for Britain and her allies, but most of the men were rescued. Four years and two days afterwards, Britain and her allies would return on D-Day to start to liberate the occupied countries of Europe.

**Teach us, good Lord,  
to serve you as you deserve;  
to give and not to count the cost;**

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](http://www.prayingeachday.org)