

1 Tomorrow, 19th March, is the anniversary of the sentencing of six English farmworkers to seven years' transportation in Australia. They are called 'The Tolpuddle Martyrs', after the name of their village in Dorset. Their sentence in 1834 could have resulted in their deaths because of the harsh conditions in the place to which they had been sent. They were sentenced because at that time it was illegal to organise trade union activities in the countryside. Such was the outrage throughout the country that their sentences were cancelled after two years, and they returned to the country as heroes.

2 In 1996, over 150 years later, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales produced a document called 'The Common Good'. In it, they wrote:

*"Work is more than a way of making a living: it is a vocation, a participation in God's creative activity..."*

3 *"Workers have rights which... include the right to decent work, to just wages, to security of employment, to adequate rest and holidays, to limitation of hours of work, to health and safety protection, to non-discrimination, to form and join trade unions, and, as a last resort, to go on strike."*

4 *Let us pray:*

**Lord Jesus,**

**lead us to grow in your image  
and become more fully human.**


**Lead us to respect and value**

**all other people  
that we may work together**

**for justice for all**

**and the building of your kingdom.**

**Amen.**

 *The quote is from 'The Common Good' (90,91).*

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)