

- 1 The Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris was celebrating Mass with two priest-friends in the great Cathedral of Notre Dame in the French capital.
- 2 In his sermon, the Cardinal mentioned a true story. Three teenage lads agreed that, for a laugh, they would go into a church, and go to the priest for the Sacrament of Reconciliation ('Confession'). The three lads agreed that each would make up a list of sins to mention.
- 3 So the first lad went in, and said: "*Father, I've robbed a bank.*" The second lad went in and said: "*I've killed somebody.*" When it was the turn of the third lad, he tried not to laugh, and said: "*I've robbed a bank **and** killed somebody.*" The priest - knowing, of course, what was happening - said to the third lad: "*For your penance I want you to go and stand in front of the big crucifix in church, and I want you to say some words that I'll give you. Say them three times, and say them in a loud voice.*"
- 4 And so the lad came out of the confessional and laughed with his friends. He went to the front and stood before the large crucifix - they were still laughing at what had happened. And then the lad repeated - still for a laugh - the words that he'd been told to say: "*Jesus, you died for me, and I don't give a damn.*" The second time, he said the words a little more loudly. The third time he found himself saying the words more slowly, and something he couldn't explain happened within, and he discovered that the words became a question to himself: "*Jesus, you died for me, and I don't give a damn (?)*"
- 5 The Cardinal - telling this story in his sermon - continued. He said to the people in the cathedral: "*I told you that this*  
*was a true story. How do I know? Those two lads from years ago are sitting with me now - they are the two priests who are celebrating Mass with me. And I **also** know this is true because I am that third boy. I was the one who spoke before the crucifix.*"
- 6 *Let's spend a moment in silence, praying very honestly, as we say a few words to Jesus...*  
*(pause...)*

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)