



- 1 In 1889, the date of 1st May was settled upon as the day to celebrate across the world the achievements and hopes of workers. May Day became particularly significant in Communist countries, and a Parade was held to praise political leaders and display military tanks, missiles and planes.
- 2 Before the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Moscow - the capital of the then Soviet Union - held the greatest of all military parades. At the 1954 May Day Parade in Red Square in Moscow, American observers saw what they thought was a huge fleet of long-range nuclear bombers flying overhead, one by one.
- 3 In fact there were only 4 such bombers. Again and again each plane roared over Red Square and then flew over the horizon before travelling back round again, out of sight. Because the 4 planes were equally spaced, they gave the impression of a huge fleet of these nuclear bombers, flying over one by one. During the following 3 years, America spent millions of dollars building fighter planes that could intercept what they thought were many nuclear bombers. Then it was discovered that the Soviet nuclear threat actually lay in missiles, and so Western countries began to spend more and more, producing their own missiles. This was part of "the Arms Race", wasting more and more money and resources.
- 4 As it was Communism that focussed particularly on 1st May as the Workers' Day, Pope Pius XII (*the twelfth*) in 1955 declared the same day to be the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker. Joseph (a carpenter) is the patron saint of all working people.
- 5 *Let us pray:*

**On this day, Lord,  
we can celebrate  
many achievements of humanity**


**as a whole,  
but never let us forget  
that each and every individual  
needs to be held in respect.  
We pray today for the unemployed  
and for those unable to work,  
and we ask you to give success  
to the work of our hands. Amen.**



 *It was the 1889 International Socialist Congress in Paris that decided upon the date of 1st May.*


 *Pope John Paul II, on his Visit to Britain, spoke in Coventry [30/5/82], a city that had been very heavily bombed during the Second World War:*

*"The voices of Christians join with others in urging the leaders of the world to abandon confrontation and to turn their backs on policies which require the nations to spend vast sums of money for weapons of mass destruction... Mistrust and division between nations begin in the hearts of individuals. Work for peace starts when we listen to the urgent call of Christ: 'Repent and believe in the Gospel!'"*

 *Psalm 89<sup>17</sup>: Give success to the work of our hands, Lord.*

*Mt 25<sup>14-30</sup>: Good or poor use of people's talents.*

*2 Thess 3<sup>6-12,16</sup>: Some of you are living in idleness; anyone who refuses to work should not be given any food.*

 All that I am; Come let us go up to the Lord; I am with you for ever (*all who labour*); I give my hands; Lord, make me a means; Lord of all hopefulness (*verse 2 refers to labouring*); Make me a channel; Peace, perfect peace; Take my hands; Thank you for fathers

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)