

- 1 In 1933, 4 months after Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, bonfires were lit in many cities. The bonfires were not made of wood - but of books. Public libraries were looted of any books that some considered "non-German". About a million books were destroyed throughout the country.
- 2 10 months later, in February 1934, a new version of the Psalms was produced by the Nazis. The Book of Psalms from the Old Testament of the Bible was re-written, removing all references to the Jews. Yet the psalms were the prayers of the Jewish people in particular, and the Bible, of course, is written by people who were Jewish. This is the shortest psalm of the Bible:
 - 3 *Praise the Lord, all you nations.
Speak to him, all people of the earth,
because his love is great
and he is always faithful.*
(Psalm 117)
 - 4 Unlike the attitude of the Nazis, that psalm referred not to one nation only, but to all people.
 - 5 Since the time of Jesus, "anti-Semitism" - hatred for Jews - had become an ingrained attitude in many countries of Christian Europe. Hitler knew there was prejudice already there in Christian society, and so faced little opposition to his policies which eventually led to the murder of 6 million Jews.
 - 6 We'll finish with a prayer written about 1960 by Pope John XXIII (*the twenty-third*) who asks for forgiveness for the prejudice of Christians that gave rise to the murder of Jewish people down the ages:
 - 7 *Let us pray:*
**O God, we are conscious
that many centuries of blindness
have blinded our eyes
so that we no longer see the beauty
of your Chosen People.
Across the centuries
our Jewish brothers and sisters
have lain in the blood which we drew
or caused to be shed
by forgetting your love.
Forgive us for the curse
we falsely attached
to their name as Jews.
Forgive us
for crucifying you a second time
in their flesh.
For we knew not what we did. 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