

- 1 On this day in 1981 Pope John Paul II was being driven round in his open-topped 'Popemobile', in St Peter's Square in Rome, where about 10,000 people were gathered to see him. He was blessing the crowd when a gunman opened fire and hit the Pope with four bullets, also wounding two other people.
- 2 Cardinal Hume spoke in London: "*He is now at one with the countless victims of violence of our day. He, like them, has now followed in the footsteps of a Master who was himself so cruelly and callously tortured and killed. He, like his Master, refuses to condemn, and is ready to forgive.*"
- 3 Two years later the Pope had a private meeting in prison with his would-be murderer, Mehmet Ali Agca. Pope John Paul later said: "*I spoke to him as a brother whom I have pardoned.*"
- 4 *Let us pray:*

**Lord, we pray  
for justice and peace in our world.  
We pray, too, that those  
who use violence as a weapon  
may be touched  
by the reaction of people  
who have been hurt by violence.  
Influence each of us, Lord,  
to bring justice and peace  
to our own part of the world this day.  
Amen.**



 *After the sudden death of John Paul I, who was Pope for only 33 days, Polish-born Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope on 16/10/1978. During the Second World War, whilst his country was occupied by the Nazis, he trained secretly to become a priest.*

 *It was on 27th December 1985 that Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turk, was visited in prison by the Pope. They spoke together for 20 minutes, and the Pope was quizzed by reporters outside, but he said: "What we talked about will have to remain a secret. I spoke to him as a brother whom I have forgiven, and he has my complete trust."*

 *Italian Police investigations after the assassination attempt concluded that this was a Communist plot to kill the Polish Pope who, at that time, was of help and inspiration to the people of Poland who would shortly become the first of the Communist-bloc countries to become free. Once Communism fell in Poland, other countries of Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union itself rapidly gained their freedom in the late 1980s and early 1990s.*

 He said, freely, freely; Lord make me a means; Make me a channel; O Lord all the world; The Lord's my shepherd

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)