

- 1 200 years ago smallpox killed many people. It was a terrible disease and highly contagious, killing 2,000 people every year in London alone.
- 2 Edward Jenner was aware that people who milked cows caught cowpox, a mild disease. He discovered that no-one who caught cowpox ever caught the deadly smallpox.
- 3 On this day in 1796 Jenner inoculated an 8-year old boy with cowpox, which is not a serious disease. 6 weeks later he injected the boy with smallpox, but the boy did not become ill. The much milder cowpox had made him immune - he couldn't be hurt by the deadly smallpox.
- 4 Eventually Jenner's work was appreciated. Giving a mild form of a virus in order to prevent a much worse illness, became known as "vaccination", after the Latin word for "cowpox", recognising that that disease provided the clue to making people immune - resistant - to some serious viral infections.
- 5 Edward Jenner's work helped save many lives. 100 years later, Louis Pasteur did a lot of work on producing vaccines to prevent other serious illnesses. We now know that an inoculation of a harmless form of a virus causes the human body to produce "antibodies" which stay in the bloodstream, ready to fight against the worst form of the virus if the person becomes infected.
- 6 Viruses are so tiny that about 40,000 of them, laid end-to-end, would measure a millimetre. Such tiny things can destroy life, just as small things each day - our actions, our attitude - can take life away from other people.

7 *Let us pray:*

Loving Lord,

**I often see on the TV news
examples of inhumanity to others
- people being tortured, abused,
injured or killed.**

I need to remind myself

**that the commandment "do not kill"
also refers to my attitude
and what I do each day,
because it is in smaller ways
that I can destroy people
if I ignore them
or cut them off
or do them down.**

**Loving Lord, inspire me
to take care**

**of the smaller things of life
as well as the bigger issues. 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