

14 NOVEMBER

- 1 On the night of 14th November 1940, the city of Coventry in the Midlands suffered the longest air-raid of any British city during the Second World War. High explosive bombs were dropped by the German Air Force (the Luftwaffe). On other parts of the city, fire bombs fell, gutting many buildings, including the beautiful medieval cathedral.
- 2 The following day, some of the debris was cleared from the ruins of the cathedral. With only its stone walls left standing (and the stained glass destroyed) Coventry simply had an 'open-air' cathedral. From the ruins were taken two charred wooden beams that had held up the roof. These were bound with wire and made into a large cross, and set up in a bin of sand near the ruined high altar.
- 3 16 years after the cathedral's destruction, the first stone of a new cathedral was laid. It is linked to the old ruined church whose walls still stand.
- 4 Every day at midday a brief service of reconciliation is held. On Fridays the service is held at the high altar of the ruined cathedral. The cross of charred beams remains there, with the words "*Father, forgive*" inscribed on the altar.
- 5 If we think about "forgiveness", we may remember that there is only one condition in the prayer of Jesus that we call the "*Our Father*". The condition is that we are forgiven **as** we set out to forgive those who have hurt us.
- 6 On the cross, Jesus prayed, "*Father, forgive.*" There may be a time in my life when I find that I can't say those words because I wouldn't mean them. Perhaps, then, I can say:
"*Father, I **want** to forgive.*"
- 7 Maybe the hurt is so deeply felt that, at the moment, I can only **genuinely** say:
"*Father, I **want** to want to forgive.*"
- 8 Then, at a later date, I will be able to progress through those three stages and finally be able to say:
"*Father, forgive.*"
- 9 Let's pray in silence for a moment, simply repeating those two words:
"*Father, forgive.*"

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