

1 On his return to Britain from the Far East at the end of the Second World War, Bishop Leonard Wilson spoke on the radio. Like many others, he had been tortured in the Japanese concentration camp that was called Changi Jail, in Singapore. The Japanese had taken it in turn to beat him, and some enjoyed their cruelty.

2 On the radio, Leonard Wilson said:

*“By the grace of God*

*I saw those men*

*- not as they were then,*

*but as they had been.*

*Once they were little children*

*with their brothers and sisters,*

*happy in their parents’ love,*

*in those far-off days*

*before they had been conditioned*

*by their false nationalist ideas.*

*And it is hard to hate little children.*

*So I saw them*

*- not as they were in the present -*

*but as they were capable of becoming,*

*redeemed by the power of Christ,*

*and I knew that I should say:*

*‘Father, forgive.’”*

3 *Let us pray:*

**Lord, in my *better* times**

**it is easy for me**

**to ask in prayer**

**that I may never allow**

**the negative actions of others**

**to dictate**

**that I should act in a negative way.**

**In the *difficult* times**

**that I may face in the future,**

**I ask that I may be true**

**to my inner convictions**

**and still look for the best in others,**

**remaining generous towards them.**

**Remind me, too,**


**that, as time moves on,**

**people can change**

**and their attitude can change  
for the better.**

**Amen.**



 *Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of San Recife in Brazil, has written the following prayer to Jesus (who had been a Child), asking to discover the “child” within others:*


*“Child, dear Child,*

*help me to discover*


*even in the most overpowering people*


*and in the most severe people,*


*the child asleep in their hearts.”*

 *“We should not pursue those who have done harm to us. To do that, would be a betrayal of God, who does not pursue us. We can only expect God’s mercy, if we ourselves show mercy to others.”*

*- Hildegard of Bingen*

 *“Nationalist ideas” refers to the Japanese propaganda that had so convinced (conditioned) the Japanese people to believe that their nation was superior to all others.*

 *In the 20 years before the Second World War, the British built up Singapore as its vital naval base in East Asia. It was considered an impregnable fortress but its mighty guns were only able to point out to the sea, as it was considered impossible for an army to travel through the jungle of Malaya, to the north. The consequent Japanese invasion led to the surrender of 70,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers.*

 *Amazing grace; Be still and know I am with you; Do not be afraid (“my child”); For to those; God forgave my sin; He who would valiant be; If God is for us; Oh the word of my Lord (“my child”, & calling); O Lord all the world (“loving enemies”)*

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)