

1 We are going to listen to a letter written by a teenager to Brother John, a friend whom she had come to know:

2 *Dear Brother John,*

If you like, you can tear this letter up and never read it. I just needed to put my feelings down.

I learned today that someone I went to junior school with has died. Just like that! He was only fifteen, with nothing apparently wrong with him. He had a brain haemorrhage. I just couldn't believe it. Why, oh why, did he die? He was only 15 - his life was just beginning. He always used to talk about the future - now he has no future. I remember a happy boy, always smiling, very rarely crying! Then I think of him cold and lifeless, and it hurts. How much more it must hurt his family - God forgive me for being so selfish!

But why did God take him away? Why take such a youthful person? Why not take someone who is in great pain or suffers in other ways? Not him. I shall never even begin to understand God. People say he always acts for the best - yet how can my friend's death be for the best? I know I can pray for him, and though I believe he's in Heaven, how can I ever be sure?

Oh God, this sounds rather as though I don't believe in you. I'm sorry, but I still feel rather shocked.

Dear John, if you read this, please pray for my friend. If not, never mind, just writing it helped a little.

Love,

Susan.

3 Let's pray in silence for a moment for those who, today, will suffer the death of someone they love dearly...

(pause...)

4 Let's pray in silence for a moment that, as others will help us in **our** times of difficulty, we, too, will be ready to stand with others in **their** difficulties....

(pause...)

5 *Let us pray:*

Loving Father,

**to you the dead do not die
and, in death, our life is changed
- not ended.**

We believe

**that all that binds us together
in love and friendship
does not end with death.**

**Hear our prayers for those close to us
who have died.**

**As you have made each of them
in your image and likeness
and have called them by name,
hold them safe in your love
in your kingdom
of light, happiness and peace.**

Your Son told us

**that those who mourn are "blessed",
because only those
who love greatly can mourn.**

Bless us this day

**with the warmth of your love
as we mourn those we have lost.**

Amen.



 *The letter was written to Brother John, who was then a member of the community of De La Salle Brothers working in St Cassian's Retreat Centre, Kintbury, Berkshire.)*

 *Particular sensitivity may be required if a relative or friend of someone present has died recently.*

 Do not be afraid; Abide with me; Christ be beside me; There is a world; Make me a channel of your peace

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