

- 1 No-one likes rain during their summer holidays, but torrential rain was the experience of people on this day in 1952 in Lynmouth, a very picturesque small holiday resort on the north coast of Devon.
- 2 On the 15th August it had rained very heavily for hour after hour. The soil of the huge area of the moor called Exmoor could soak up only so much water - the rest had to flow downhill. Although vast amounts of water had already fallen, at about 8.30 in the evening there was a cloudburst. Down came more torrential rain.
- 3 23 centimetres (9 inches) of rain fell in 24 hours, whereas the area normally received about 83 centimetres (33 inches) in a whole year! And so the river that, in a normal summertime, flowed from the moor over rocks and big boulders, now became a killer. Suddenly giant waves of water swept off the moor and picked up huge boulders and rocks as though they were tiny pebbles. The water and boulders and soil swept through the village of Lynmouth, destroying 28 bridges as though they were twigs. As electricity had been cut off, the people could not even see the tragedy that was upon them. Many buildings were destroyed or badly damaged. More importantly, 31 people were killed, and some of the bodies were never recovered. They were either lost under thick mud, or were washed out to sea. In the daylight of the morning of the 16th of August, the emergency services discovered how severe the tragedy was.
- 4 Lynmouth was a severe “natural disaster” in a country that doesn’t normally have such experiences. Documentary TV programmes on natural disasters often

include scenes of Lynmouth. Camera shots of the great size of the boulders of rock and the distance they were moved by the onrush of water, illustrate how powerful and destructive water can be.

5 *Let us pray:*

God our Father,

**we have been reminded
of the destruction and even death
that water can bring,
and we can reflect
that we are called
to die to selfishness and sin
- living, instead,
in the fullness of life
that Jesus promises.**

In a country that is blessed

**with an abundance of water,
perhaps we don't fully appreciate
how vital water is for all life.**

Water is used as a sign in Baptism

**- a symbol of dying
to selfishness and sin,
and living the new life
that Jesus brings.**

When Jesus was baptised

**in the River Jordan,
he was placing himself beside
all who had sinned
and needed to make a new start
and live in a better way.**

At that time, Father,

**you were heard to say
that Jesus was your well-loved Son,
and the Holy Spirit rested upon him.**

Fill us with your Spirit

**that we may grow
in the realisation and faith
that we, too,
are your sons and daughters
whom you love greatly.**

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