

- 1 Today is the feastday of the patron saint of children, Saint Nicholas, whose name is altered to give us "Santa Claus". Today we might picture various situations of children and young people across the world.
- 2 During the football season and approaching Christmas, we can remind ourselves that there are children of 9 and 10 who spend the whole day sitting in a crowded room, stitching pieces of leather together to make footballs for a few pennies an hour.
- 3 There are reports in the newspapers of orphans from Romania being taken in groups to Berlin, and sent out every day by their minders to rob and steal. If they do not bring back the goods in the evening, they get beaten.
- 4 We know of towns in India where the street kids survive by getting up early in the morning to spend most of the day picking through the city's rubbish. If they can find something worthwhile, it is sold to get something to eat.
- 5 Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, is so big, and the rubbish dumps are so enormous, that whole families go and live on the tip to make sure they get a good spot to start picking. Children are born and brought up on the rubbish dump, with no chance of going to school unless someone is able to offer them some help.
- 6 It is thought that there are about 8 million street-children in Brazil. They were sleeping on the city streets at night, but many now have to sleep in hidden places like the sewers, because death-squads move around at night, shooting the children.
- 7 In contrast, we are going to listen to some words about how children and young people learn best. We can think about the way **we** treat others, whatever our age and theirs:
  - 8 *"A child living with criticism learns to condemn.*
  - 9 *A child living with hostility learns to fight.*
  - 10 *A child living with ridicule learns to be shy.*
  - 11 *A child living with shame learns to feel guilty.*
  - 12 *But*  
*A child living with encouragement learns confidence.*
  - 13 *A child living with praise learns to appreciate.*
  - 14 *A child living with fairness learns justice.*
  - 15 *A child living with security learns to have faith.*
  - 16 *A child living with approval learns love of self.*
  - 17 *A child*  
*living with acceptance and friendship*  
*learns to find love in the world."*

(Dorothy Law Holte

- adapted to inclusive language.)

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)