

1 The Chinese New Year falls between mid-January and late-February. The celebrations last for two weeks. On houses during this time will be seen coloured lanterns, brightly coloured banners with new year greetings, and arrangements of flowers. Fireworks, a Chinese invention, are let off on the Chinese New Year's Eve. New clothes are worn to mark the end of the old year, casting aside whatever misfortunes there were in the old year.

2 In public, lines of people dance with a long dragon's costume over their heads. The dragon's dance, performed to the accompaniment of drums and gongs, is believed to ward off evil spirits for the year ahead. The New Year celebrations end when children parade through the streets carrying coloured lanterns that they have lit.

3 *For our prayer today we will use words that are based on an ancient Chinese blessing:*

4 **May God guard us and keep us
in safety and comfort
and in health and strength,
sending us nothing but good.
May God send down
so many blessings
that the day is not long enough
for them all.
Amen.**



 *The date of the Chinese New Year varies in the solar year that we use because it is based on the lunar calendar. In the Chinese communities in Britain, many at this time will use the Cantonese greeting, "Kung hay fat choy", which means, "May you prosper". Each year in the Chinese Calendar is associated with one of twelve animals. With New Year starting in the corresponding months of January/February, the years are named as follows:*

- 1998 - Tiger
- 1999 - Rabbit
- 2000 - Dragon
- 2001 - Snake
- 2002 - Horse
- 2003 - Goat or sheep
- 2004 - Monkey
- 2005 - Chicken or rooster
- 2006 - Dog
- 2007 - Pig
- 2008 - Rat
- 2009 - Ox

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