

- 1 When he was aged 14, William Wilberforce wrote a letter to a newspaper to say how evil it was to trade in slaves.
- 2 He became Member of Parliament for Hull in 1780, and he was determined to fight against slavery. Many people opposed him - especially those who made a profit from the slave trade, such as those involved in importing sugar from the West Indies. Eventually, in 1807, he convinced the British Parliament to ban the slave trade. Just before he died, a law was passed to free slaves throughout the British Empire.
- 3 William Wilberforce died on this day in 1833 and was given a public funeral and buried in Westminster Abbey.
- 4 *Let us pray:*

**Lord Jesus,
the Bible reminds us
of the dignity and equality
of all people,
and you call us to love our neighbours
as we love ourselves.**

**At the beginning of your ministry
you read out loud
in the synagogue of Nazareth
from the prophet, Isaiah,
saying:
"I have been sent to give liberty
to the captives."**

**Today we will meet people
who are held captive in different ways
by being treated unfairly,
or abused, taken for granted,
overworked, looked down upon.**

**Be with us, Lord,
that we may help
to bring freedom today
by giving respect and support
and encouragement. Amen.**



 *In 1781 a slave ship set sail from the west African coast, on the way to Jamaica. It had been packed with 440 slaves, chained together. On the journey a disease broke out and 60 of the slaves died. Their bodies were thrown into the sea. Others were ill, and the captain decided to throw the remaining slaves overboard whilst still alive, and then claim from the insurance company, alleging that the ship had run out of fresh water. Once in the water, one of the slaves managed to catch hold of a rope and struggled back on to the ship, where he hid.*

When the ship reached England the slave told his account of the murders. The insurance company would not pay the money that the slaves were "worth", and the matter went to court. The judge decreed that the slaves were the property of the owners, saying "It is only like throwing horses overboard."

This terrible incident and the underlying prejudice and disregard for human beings helped many to really see just how evil slavery was. A politician who was determined to defeat slavery was the M.P. for Hull, William Wilberforce.

 *Regarding slavery, see also 9 April and 24 July.*

 *Steven Spielberg's moving film 'Amistad' (1998) concerned slavery.*

 *Denmark had been the first European country to ban the slave trade - in 1792. Britain followed in 1807.*

 *Could also think of and pray for named hostages throughout the world, perhaps lighting a candle for them. Look up in the index the name of 'Terry Waite', the former hostage.*

 *Amazing grace; Christ is our king; God's Spirit is in my heart (He sent me to give); Moses I know you're the man*

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