

19 MARCH

- 1 Looking at a world map, we see that the islands of Hawaii are in the northern part of the Pacific Ocean. One of that island group is called Molokai. Over a hundred years ago the only people who lived there were lepers. No one was allowed to leave the island; once people arrived, they stayed and died there. No one visited, because it was thought that they would bring back leprosy to those who were well. The lepers' housing, sanitation and medical care were all very inadequate.
- 2 Father Damien was a priest from Belgium who arrived in Honolulu, the capital of the Hawaiian islands, on this day (the feast of Saint Joseph) in 1864. After a short time, Damien realised that the only thing he could do for the lepers was to go and live with them.
- 3 At first, the people of Molokai did not know how to take Damien, but eventually many realised that he wanted to be with them, and many felt that they wanted to live as Christians. 20 years after joining the lepers of Molokai, he started his sermon at Sunday Mass with the words: "*My fellow-lepers*". Wanting to be with the people had cost him his own health: he would die as a leper himself.
- 4 Let's pray
for those with the disease of leprosy.
Let's pray, too,
for all who are cut off from others,
for all who are isolated in life,
and for those whose commitment
costs them greatly.
Let's pray for AIDS victims,
and for all who experience prejudice.
- 5 **Father,**
help us to see and love in others
what you see and love in them.
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