

Imagine that all the cars in the world, lacked brakes. They could do all the things that cars could do but they have no brakes, so that the only way of stopping them was to switch off the engine and then to coast to a halt. If this were the case, drivers would have to drive very slowly indeed. The cars would have a capacity for greater speed than we would actually be able to use. Those drivers who tried to ignore the absence of brakes would find themselves in trouble. They would, sooner or later, crash. This idea might seem absurd because surely no-one would build a car without brakes. Suppose though, that cars were not made in factories but had to be bred, so that the only way that a car could be made was through the agency of other cars. This would make cars more like animals than machines, and since cars produce copies of themselves, the lack of brakes would be something about which, we could not do much. We might wish that cars had brakes, but we would just have to accept it.

The point about this analogy is that the problem with the car, would be something that was missing, not something which was part of the car as such. This is something like the doctrine of Original Sin as taught by the Church. It is easy to misunderstand theologians like St Augustine when they say that Original Sin is transmitted by the human being giving birth to children. Firstly the fact of procreation is not a cause of Original Sin as such, but is the cause of our not being able to change human nature in this world. I don't believe that science will ever be able to change that fact. However human beings come into the world, whether through cloning or any other technique, they will still be human beings. In fact since many of these techniques are illicit, they will hardly be able to remove Original Sin. A sin cannot remove a sin. Secondly what is transmitted is not a thing but an absence of a thing. Although theologians, talk about the stain of Original Sin, Original Sin is fundamentally an absence. What is missing is the relationship to God which human beings have somehow chosen to reject. At the beginning of the human race, human beings choose to live in this world, without God intervening directly and protecting us from death. What we are left with is a situation where human beings know that they are capable of much more than they will ever achieve in this world. The Utopian philosophies which take no account of Original Sin, are like people who want to drive a car without brakes at its full capacity, and who will inevitably crash. Christians are pessimistic about the perfect society because they know that human beings are not capable of living to the full in this world. Greed, selfishness, concupiscence, unrestrained emotion will undo our best efforts. This is why St Paul says, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Phillipians 2:12). The word Salvation really means safety. Safety might seem an ignoble thing to look for, but it is those who drive safely, who drive well, who are the ones who go places.

Fr Euan Marley O.P.

22nd Sunday of the Year

Year C

2nd September 2007

The Newsletter of
Holy Cross Priory Church, Leicester



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Sunday Masses	This week	Mass Intentions	Next week
7:30pm Vigil	Fr Isidore	Margaret O'Reilly, RIP	Fr Isidore
8:00am	Fr Euan	For the People	Fr Isidore
9:30am Family	Fr David	A sick parent	Fr Leon
11:00am Solemn	Fr Leon	Intentions in the Book of Prayer	Fr Leon
7:00pm	Fr Fabian	Special Intention	Fr Euan

Sunday Evening Services	1 September	Confessions	8 September
5:45 Rosary	Fr Leon	10:30-11:30am	Fr Tony
6:15 Sung Latin Compline	Fr Fabian	4:00-5:00pm	Fr Euan
6:40 Benediction	Fr Euan	7:00-7:20pm	Fr Leon

Entrance antiphon:	I call to you all day long, have mercy on me, O Lord. You are good and forgiving, full of love for all who call to you.
1st Reading:	Ecclesiasticus 3: 17-20. 28-29
Psalm Response:	In your goodness, O God, you prepared a home for the poor.
2nd Reading:	Hebrews 12: 18-19. 22-24
Gospel Acclamation:	Alleluia! Alleluia! If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him. Alleluia!
Gospel:	Luke 14: 1. 7-14
Communion Antiphon:	O Lord, how great is the depth of the kindness which you have shown to those who love you.

