

Iron and the power of God.

IN the Odyssey, Odysseus carries a sword made of iron. Since most of his contemporaries were still using bronze weapons, this is to show that Odysseus is a great hero, who is worthy to carry this new weapon. Iron in the ancient world never quite lost a magical quality. It was new, mysteriously powerful, and capable of becoming magnetic, something the ancients knew about but did not understand. Odysseus in fact shows that iron was seen as more than just an artifact, by the way that he uses his iron sword to ward off the spirits of the dead, when he visits the underworld. It is not so different in the modern world, where we invest technology with quasi magical powers, always promising more than can be delivered, and showing absurd confidence in what technology can do.

For the ancient Israelites, iron was not magical but it was a symbol of power, a power which was in some ways opposed to life. A famine is described in these terms, 'The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron' - Deuteronomy 28:32. Numbers specifies the type of murder committed with an iron weapon, as requiring capital punishment, Numbers 35:16. Egypt is significantly described as a maker of iron, 'The LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are' - Deuteronomy 4:20. Iron represents power, and some Jewish writings, such as the Book of Enoch, see the final victory of God in terms of the metals of the enemies of God melting back into the ground from which they came.

The Israelites still used iron, and Deuteronomy 8:9 praises the Holy Land as 'a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.' They are promised gates of iron and bronze, Deuteronomy 33:5. In Jerusalem too there is an iron gate, one of the gates into the city. The Israelites did not simply reject the technology of the ancient world, they were not Amish, but they were aware of its power to corrupt, and to arouse fantastic delusions in its users, delusions of autonomy and even immortality. Iron is the best symbol of this delusory power, and in the Book of Kings, Elijah shows the power of God over the material we use, when he causes an axe head to float, 2 Kings 6:6. This too may be the significance of the rescue of St Peter in the Acts of the Apostles, when the angel delivers him from the prison of Herod and opens the Iron gate of Jerusalem to let him in, Acts 12:10. The door opens by itself, it has no power to keep God or the servants of God from entering the city.

In recent weeks, we have heard extravagant claims about stem cell technology, so the meaning of Iron as a symbol of power is still relevant. Technology extends human capacity, but this means our capacity for good and evil. As such, technology cannot be good or evil in itself, but the evil lies in the user. Some methods no good human being would use, some we might, but all technology requires caution. At the end of time, God rules with an iron sceptre, as promised in Psalm 2 and the Book of Revelation. Then alone, may we safely use the works that we have made, for the good of all.

Fr Euan Marley O.P.

9th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A (Weekdays II)

1 June 2008

The Newsletter of

HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH, LEICESTER

Served by the Dominican Order: website www.torch.op.org



Holy Cross Priory, 45 Wellington Street, LEICESTER LE1 6HW
Priory phone: (0116) 255 3856 Fax/recorded times of services: 255 5552
Curate: Fr Euan Marley: 252 1513 For home visits: 255 3856

Sunday Masses	This week	Mass Intentions	Next week
7:30pm Vigil	Fr Isidore	Evelyn Dixon, RIP	Fr Isidore
8:00am	Fr Isidore	Ashberry family & friends, RIP	Fr David
9:30am Family	Fr Euan	Mary Crofts, RIP	Fr David
11:00am Solemn	Fr Tony	Elizabeth Joseph (birthday)	Fr Euan
7:00pm	Fr Euan	<i>Pro Populo</i>	?

The Novena to Our Lady begins on Saturday 14 June at 6:45pm. It will take place every week for nine Saturdays, leading up to the feast of the Assumption. Books for recording your petitions and thanksgiving are in the Lady chapel.

Sunday Evening Services	31 May	Confessions	7 June
5:45 Rosary	Fr Euan	10:30 - 11:30am	Fr Fabian
6:15 Sung Latin Compline	Fr Tony	4:00 - 5:00pm	Fr David
6:40 Benediction	Fr Leon	7:00 - 7:20pm	Fr Euan

Entrance Antiphon:	O look at me and be merciful, for I am wretched and alone. See my hardship and my poverty, and pardon all my sins.
1st Reading:	Deuteronomy 11: 18. 26-28
Psalm Response:	Be a rock and refuge for me, O Lord. (Ps 30)
2nd Reading:	Romans 3: 21-25. 28
Alleluia:	If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him. At 11:00 - God is a just judge slow to anger; but he threatens the wicked every day.
Gospel:	Matthew 7: 21-27
Communion Antiphon:	<i>Either</i> - I call upon you, God, for you will answer me; bend your ear and hear my prayer. <i>Or</i> - I tell you solemnly, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours, says the Lord.

MONEY MATTERS: Last Weekend: Sorry, no collection figures available at the time of going to press.

There will be a 2nd collection today as a gift from the parish to Fr Tony for his service and energies as parish priest. Because of the bank holiday last week and the decline in numbers, this collection is repeated this week to give an opportunity for more of you to express your thanks.

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

The week ahead...		
Monday:	SS Marcellinus, priest, and Peter, exorcist, martyrs - <i>optional</i>	
Tuesday:	SS Charles Lwanga, layman, catechist, and Companions, martyrs of Uganda	
Wednesday:	St Peter of Verona, friar, priest, martyr	
Thursday:	St Boniface, bishop, martyr	
Friday:	St Norbert, bishop - <i>optional</i>	
Saturday:	Saturday Mass of Our Lady - <i>optional</i>	
Next Sunday:	Tenth Sunday <i>per annum</i> . Readings:	
	Hosea 6: 3-6	Romans 4: 18-25
		Matthew 9: 9-13

Churches Together in Leicester City Centre will meet on Thursday 5 June at 12:30pm at the Cathedral. All are welcome.

Pilgrimage to Mount St Bernard in honour of Blessed Cyprian Iwene Tansi - Saturday 28 June at 1:45pm. See noticeboard for details.

Holy Cross Parish 2008 Assembly and AGM of the Parish Pastoral Council. Friday 20th June in the Church Hall. See the Notice for the Agenda; and please consider joining the Parish Council. You'll need a nomination form.

First Friday Coffee Morning: This coming Friday, at 10:30am in the Church Hall. Tea & scones or coffee & cake, a chance to chat with other weekday Mass-goers and members of the Community; and, of course, a raffle. Money raised goes towards the care and maintenance of the church fabric.

Organ Recital at Holy Cross. Our Organist and Choir Director, David Cowen, will give an organ recital here of music by Bach and Mendelssohn at 8pm on Monday 16 June. Proceeds will go to the upkeep of the church. More details next week, but please put the date in your diary now!

Parish Evening of Music at the Holy Cross Centre, Saturday June 14th - 7 till late - featuring groups and individuals from the parish; Holy Cross Gospel Choir and anyone else who would like to perform. Plenty of sing-along opportunities for those who wish to join in! Bar open. Please bring snack finger-food to share. If you'd like to perform or need further details, please call Jeff Henry 0116 243 1289.

Dates of Parish Council Committee Meetings, and next Parish Council meeting. Those on Parish Council committees please note the dates of the next meetings:

- ◆ Finance & Fabric, and Fundraising Committees - to be arranged;
- ◆ Liturgy & Music Committee - Tuesday 3 June;
- ◆ Deanery Pastoral Council - Wednesday 4 June;
- ◆ Next Parish Council meeting (the AGM) on Friday 20 June at 7:30pm in the church hall. **Everyone is welcome;**
- ◆ Handing on the Faith - Tuesday 24 June at 7:30pm (for catechists).

Red Cross Appeal for Refugees & Asylum Seekers. The Red Cross has issued a revised list of items needed to support these destitute vulnerable people:

- ◆ Dried items: rice, pasta, cous-cous, maize mealie-meal, sugar, salt, porridge, cooking oil, flour (self-raising), spices, palenta, mashed potato (Smash), tea, coffee, powdered milk, water, fruit juice, semolina;
- ◆ Tins: baked beans, soup, fruit, rice pudding, sauces, vegetables;
- ◆ Pre-prepared food: cereal bars, chocolate, biscuits, nuts, crisps, pot noodles;
- ◆ Baby items: nappies (sizes 2-4), baby wipes, food, milk, lotion, talc, clothing, equipment;
- ◆ Toiletries: toothpaste, tooth brush, soap, moisturiser, shampoo, conditioner, toilet paper.

Please leave these items at any Mass. We thank you for your continued support.

The Choir has a number of vacancies for sopranos to sing at the 11am Mass. If you enjoy singing and can read music, please see David Cowen, Organist and Director, after the 11 o'clock Mass. You can also contact us via our website www.holycrosschoirleicester.co.uk.

Treasures of the English Church: Sacred Gold and Silver 800-2000. The Goldsmiths' Company are mounting a major exhibition of English Church silver. They say of it: "...Steeped in history, the exhibition will vividly evoke the tradition, symbolism and unbroken ritual of the Church in England through the ages ... approximately 300 works from the pre-medieval period to the present day will form a breath-taking array..." Of particular interest to us is that one of the exhibits will be a chalice from Holy Cross. It was in normal use by the university chaplain until 1970, when it was spotted by an expert as Fr Bede Bailey set it up one evening in readiness for Mass in Digby Hall the following day. On examination of its hallmark it was found to date from 1489, and was, at the time (and may well still be) the second oldest known piece of hallmarked English church plate. Usually it is kept in the Treasury at Lincoln Cathedral. It is thought that the chalice may have belonged to the Nevill family at Nevill Holt. Does anyone know any more than this? The exhibition is free and runs from 30 May to 12 July, Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm, at Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, London EC2, between Barbican and St Paul's stations.

 Services at Holy Cross during the week:
Mass: Monday to Saturday, at 10:00am (with sermon) & 12:40pm.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: Wednesday 10:30am - 12:30pm
with Rosary and simple Benediction at 12:15pm.
 On Mondays to Fridays (except Bank Holidays) the church is open from 8am until 4pm.
