

Why do good people suffer?

TODAY'S Gospel shows Jesus moved with pity by the leper's plea. "If you want to, you can heal me." "I want to", says Jesus, and heals him. God, when he came among us as a human being, healed those around him, even when he knew it would make it hard for him to continue his mission at the time, to preach the Kingdom of God. So why doesn't God heal everybody? Why doesn't he heal the people who are close to me?

The puzzle of why a good God should allow so much suffering is probably the main reason people give these days for not believing in God. At the time of the tsunami a few years ago which killed so many people, the papers even raised the problem explicitly. If there is a good God, why did he allow the deaths of so many? The implication in many articles of the time was clear: God (probably) doesn't exist.

So suffering leads some people not to believe, but let's face it, even for us believers, the dark mystery of suffering in our own lives, or maybe even harder to take, in the lives of those we love, sometimes makes our relationship with God difficult. Maybe we don't give up on our belief, but we find ourselves troubled, because we keep asking for something important from God, and He doesn't seem to hear. Sadly, it makes some of us stop asking altogether.

All kinds of answers get offered as to why we suffer, or why God doesn't answer our prayers. A lot of the suffering in the world is due to us, to the ways in which we treat each other. We cause other people to suffer, or they cause us suffer, and of course, we are inclined to play down the suffering we cause and exaggerate the suffering inflicted on us. Some suffering is perhaps God's punishment for sin, though a large part of the point of the Book of Job is to tell us that we mustn't assume that our suffering is because of God's displeasure. Certainly God does not usually rescue us from the consequences of our own actions, and that can feel like punishment sometimes, even if it is really self-inflicted.

Jesus responds to the faith of the leper. Some people argue that prayers are not answered because they are not made in faith, but that doesn't seem to be the whole answer either. My grandfather prayed for his failing sight to be restored. To show his faith, he made the prayer while driving his car at 70 mph down the motorway, and hurled his glasses out of the window ... and crashed the car. (Don't worry – no-one, including him, was injured.)

Scripture tells us that God is like the good father, who would never give his son a serpent when he asks for a fish. I do think that sometimes it's the other way around: we ask God for a serpent, and He gives us a fish, and we feel disappointed, we feel our prayer wasn't answered, because we didn't get what we wanted.

But in the end, that's too glib an answer. Sometimes we ask for something genuinely good, for the health of those we love, say, and God doesn't appear to answer. I remember when Sr Assumpta Kirwan OP, then head of one of the congregations of our sisters, was dying at what was a very young age. She was a wonderful, loveable, lively woman, and we were all praying hard for her recovery. And God didn't seem to answer us – Assumpta died.

Looking back, though, I'm struck by how much I and others benefited from those last weeks and months of Assumpta's life. She faced her death with great faith and courage and even humour. We had decided to ask for a miracle cure through the intercession of the man who had been her doctoral supervisor, fr. Lagrange OP. Her reply to being told about it was typical, "He didn't like my thesis." And when I think of her calmness and cheerfulness in those last days, one thing is obvious: God loved her very much.

Fr Peter, OP

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year B

15 February 2009

The Newsletter of HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH, LEICESTER

Serving Leicester's Catholics since AD 1247



Sunday Masses	This week	Mass Intentions	Next week
6:00pm Vigil	Fr Isidore	Anne Potterton (welfare)	Fr Duncan
8:00am	Fr Isidore	<i>Pro populo</i>	Fr Euan
9:30am Family	Fr Leon	Eva Champion, RIP	Fr Fabian
11:00am Solemn	Fr Euan	Martin Mannion, RIP	Fr Peter
4:00pm Old rite	Fr Duncan	Holy Souls	Fr Thomas
5:00pm Students	Fr Euan	(Mass for Students in the Lady Chapel)	Fr Peter
7:00pm	Fr Fabian	Patsy Lenihan, RIP	Fr Leon

OTHER SUNDAY SERVICES	6:00pm Rosary	14 February	Confessions	21 February
9:00am Lauds	6:20pm Compline	Fr Euan	10:30 - 11:30am	Fr Leon
5:45pm Vespers	6:40pm Benediction	Fr Leon	5:00 - 6:00pm	Fr Fabian

Refugees and Asylum Seekers - Leicester City of Sanctuary. The Red Cross remain desperate for food and personal goods and we would ask you to be as generous as you can. No clothing or alcohol please, but see the list overleaf or, for more information, please email rosi_leivas@o2.co.uk.

Entrance Antiphon:	Lord, be my rock and safety, the stronghold that saves me. For the honour of your name, lead me and guide me.
1st Reading:	Leviticus 13: 1-2. 45-46
Psalm Response:	You are a hiding place for me; you surround me with deliverance. (Ps 32)
2nd Reading:	1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1
Alleluia:	A great prophet has arisen among us, and God has visited his people. <u>At 11:00</u> - Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders.
Gospel:	Mark 1: 40-45
Communion Antiphon:	<u>Either</u> - They ate and were filled; the Lord gave them what they wanted: they were not deprived of their desire. <u>Or (but not at 11:00)</u> - God loved the world so much, he gave his only Son, that all who believed in him might not perish, but might have eternal life.

MONEY MATTERS: Last Weekend's collections: Offertory Collection £1041.92; SVP £3.72; Friends of Holy Cross £7.67; Holy Souls £5.15; Crib restoration £4.82.

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

Lourdes this summer: three opportunities to go. The Diocesan Pilgrimage will run from 19 to 26 July, and there will be a pilgrimage from St Mary's, South Wigston, and St John Bosco's, Eyres Monsell, (including Nevers and Paris) running from 31 July to 7 August. BUT there will also be a Dominican Pilgrimage too – details soon.

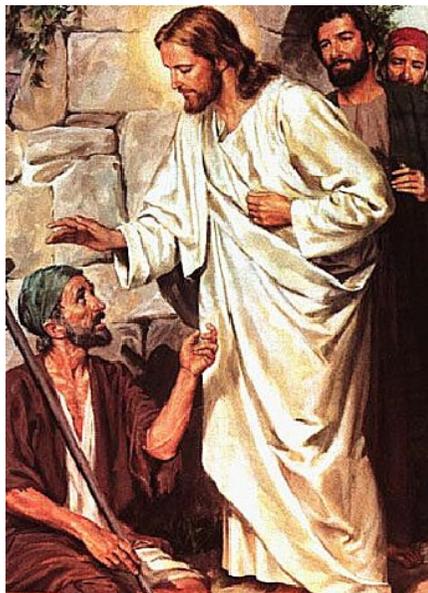
Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Albert Nottingham** who has died. He attended weekday Masses at Holy Cross.

If you have a mobile phone you no longer require, then there is someone who can take it to send to Zimbabwe, where it is much needed. Please telephone 0116 210 0532 or Mob. 0782 892 3157 to arrange collection.

A few parishioners are considering a pilgrimage to Fatima this October and we might even be lucky enough to have one of the Dominican community join us. If you would be interested in taking part please email Sica (sica.martinez@yahoo.co.uk) or Rosi (rosita@netcourrier.com) or call on 0775 88 44 918. Or talk to us after the 11am Mass on Sundays!

We would like to collect the memories of the church and priory, especially before these memories are lost! Many of you remember what the church and priory were like before the church was extended in 1953. Having said that, the project is to get glimpses of various eras and epochs in our history. If you have memories of coming to Mass here, what it looked like, and if you have photographs or pictures of this priory and church, or other memorabilia such as service sheets or newsletters – or remember things you were told as a child about the OLD Holy Cross or St Michael's – please do let us have these.

What is your teenager thinking? Care for the Family, a charity supporting and encouraging families in the UK, is having a presentation on Tuesday 3 March from 7:30 to 10:00pm at the All Nations Centre, Frog Island. For more information, see the noticeboard and take a handbill.



Today's Gospel: Jesus heals the leper.

Year 1	The week ahead...	Psalter Week 2
Monday:	Feria	
Tuesday:	The Seven Holy Founders of the Order of Servites, religious	
Wednesday:	Bl John of Fiesole (Fra Angelico), friar, priest	
Thursday:	Feria	
Friday:	Feria	
Saturday:	St Peter Damian, bishop, doctor or Saturday Mass of Our Lady - both optional	
WEEKDAY MASS IN LATIN. This week, Fr Thomas will say Mass in the older form on days and at times to be announced. All welcome - especially a server. If you would like to learn to serve this Mass, please contact Fr Thomas. The 4pm Sunday Mass will move to 12:30pm from the First Sunday of Lent.		
Next Sunday - Seventh Sunday <i>per annum</i> - a day of prayer for unemployed people. Readings:		
Isaiah 43: 18-19. 21-22. 24-25	2 Corinthians 1: 18-22	Mark 2: 1-12

VACANCY: The Diocese's Justice and Peace Commission is looking to employ a fieldworker. The work is based in Derby. See the noticeboard.

Red Cross Appeal for Refugees & Asylum Seekers. The Red Cross list of items needed to support these destitute and vulnerable people is:

- ◆ Dried items: rice (this is urgently needed), pasta, cous-cous, maize meal-meal, sugar, salt, porridge, cooking oil, flour (self-raising), spices, palenta, mashed potato (Smash), tea, coffee, powdered milk, water, fruit juice, semolina;
- ◆ Tins: fish, meat and pulses; 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.

Please join us in the Parish Hall after the 9:30am and 11:00am Sunday Masses for tea, coffee, fruit-juice etc. The Hall is in Wellington Street. There is the opportunity for a chat with members of the Dominican Community and with parishioners. We particularly welcome newly-arrived people and other visitors to our Parish.

REGULAR SERVICE TIMES
MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS 8.00 Lauds 10.00 Mass 12.30 Mass 17.45 Vespers Old Rite Masses as announced. The church is open from 8.00 to 15.30 (winter) / 16.00 (summer)
WEDNESDAYS 10.30 Exposition until 12.30 11.45 Divine Mercy Chaplet, Rosary & Benediction
SATURDAYS 9.00 Lauds 10.00 Mass 10.30 Novena to Our Lady 10.30 Confessions until 11.30 12.30 Mass 17.00 Confessions until 18.00 17.45 Vespers 18.00 Vigil Mass for Sunday Old Rite Masses as announced.
HOLYDAYS 18.00 (previous day) Vigil Mass 8.00 Lauds 10.00 Mass 12.30 Mass 17.45 Vespers 19.00 Mass
BANK HOLIDAYS 8.00 Lauds 10.00 Mass, after which the church is closed
SUNDAYS 8.00 Mass 9.00 Lauds 9.30 Mass (Family) 11.00 Mass (Solemn: Latin on 2 nd , 4 th and 5 th Sundays) 16.00 Mass (Old rite in Latin) 17.00 Mass (for Students, term time only) 17.45 Vespers 18.00 Rosary 18.20 Sung Latin Compline 18.40 Benediction 19.00 Mass
Leicester Royal Infirmary Catholic Chaplaincy: For urgent visits, ask ward staff to bleep the Roman Catholic Chaplain. For non-urgent visits leave message at the Priory or the LRI Chaplains' Office. Messages may not be picked up until the end of the day.
Website for past Newsletters: holycrosschoirleicester.co.uk
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