

The Parish of ST. MARY & ST. JOHN BOSCO

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.....“We could no longer talk of laws of nature, when they were so regularly broken”

and suffering God had “allowed” to happen was that such a God was a contradiction. Either God permitted the suffering, in which case he was not all-loving; or he could not prevent it, in which case he was not all-powerful. For a while this was the idea whose time, around countless dinner tables and media discussions, had come once more.

But there is no need to answer this by convoluted and unconvincing arguments about how suffering is, “in some sense”, good for you; or generally the result of human free will or human sin; or a mystery too deep to ponder. Let us instead propose, as a thought experiment, that we will redesign God, and redesign the universe, to avoid this perverse interaction between the two of them. Let us, as it were, do what God ought to have done, and get the thing right this time.

So planes whose engines are loose would go on flying, and never crash. Cars whose brakes fail would never run head on into other cars on motorways. No rails would ever crack, no train wheels jump points at 90 mph. The flesh of which we are made would never turn cancerous. When great tectonic plates suddenly moved to ease the stress between them where they pressed together miles underground, no tremors would pass through rocks above to disturb the lives of those on the surface. And Lisbon would remain standing in 1755, Muzaffarabad in 2005.

All this is a result of divine intervention defeating the consequences of the laws of nature in countless daily instances. Indeed, we could no longer talk of laws of nature in such circumstances, when they were so regularly broken. We would have remade the world by ridding it of all possible causes of human suffering. Instead of the laws of nature dictating what happened next, God would do so, exercising immediate and universal jurisdiction over everything, moment by moment, to ensure none of us ever came to even a scintilla of harm. It would be a world of chaos, governed by miracles.

And God could be all-powerful and all-loving. The Voltaires of this world would no longer have their complaint against him. We could of course sack all rail or aircraft maintenance staff, and never again pay a garage bill, for the guarantee of impunity from harm would apply to all of us, for all time, in every circumstance. We would have no need of doctors. Poisonous snakes may bite us; our errors would be harmless. Causes would have no effects.

But nothing at all, henceforth, would be predictable. Rationality itself, which derives from the predictability of causes and effects, would evaporate. And without rationality and cause and effect, such a world would make no sense whatever. If we believe intelligent life was shaped by the need to understand the universe, intelligent beings would not have evolved, for there was no understanding to be had. So no Voltaire, nor Leibniz either. Indeed, such a world would be so different from the actual world we live in, it would be literally and utterly unimaginable.

Yet that is the world being demanded by those who insist that God must prevent evil, or thereby disprove his own existence. Leibniz was stretching it to say this was the best of all possible worlds, but it is indeed the only possible world, best or not. Our complaint against God is that the world exists at all, therefore, not that he made a mistake in the way he designed it. There is no possibility of a Lisbon or a Muzaffarabad, without the possibility of an earthquake destroying them.

Clifford Longley

NEWSLETTER : 17th January 2010 : 2nd Sunday of the Year

“We could no longer talk of laws of nature, when they were so regularly broken”

IT IS MY practice, whenever I find myself in a plane roaring down the runway, to bombard heaven with Hail Marys, thereby backing up the scientific theory of flight with theological reinforcement. What I am praying for, I suppose, is a divine guarantee that the last mechanic to check the fixing of the engines to the wings, say, tightened all his nuts properly.

In effect what I am asking for is a miracle to save me - me in particular - should the mechanic have had a moment of absent-mindedness. The miracle I am praying for will ensure that, though the laws of science decree that loose nuts will shake themselves undone, unsupported engines will fall off and aircraft with no engines will crash, somehow we will all carry on safely to our destination. I am asking for a universe in which the consequences of cause and effect are routinely interrupted in order to prevent bad things happening; but asking for the impossible.

This is a somewhat unspiritual, unsentimental and perhaps unsophisticated answer to the Problem of Evil. In the centuries since Voltaire refuted Leibniz by citing the Lisbon earthquake in 1755, Western intellectuals have chuckled at the absurdity of supposing that the way the universe is, is the way it has to be. But Leibniz was right after all - if that is what he meant. This is indeed the way it has to be.

At the time of the Asian tsunami disaster, there was a tidal wave of media comment to the effect that those who believed in an infinitely omnipotent and benign God had a lot of explaining to do, as the obvious conclusion to draw from the wholesale grief

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Eucharistic Prayer III

Entrance Ant.

May all the earth
give you worship and
praise, and break into
song to your name, O
God, Most High.

Resp. Psalm:

**Proclaim the wonders of the Lord
among all the peoples.**

Gospel Acclam.

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your words are
spirit, Lord, and they
are life: you have the
message of eternal
life.

Alleluia!

Comm. Ant:

The Lord has prepared a feast for me:
given wine in plenty
for me to drink.

Clergy: Rev. Stephan Foster
Rev. Vincent Kelly Deacon
Srs. Treasa, Margaret, Justine.
Pastoral Co-ordinator:
Parish Secretaries:
Parish Office :
St. John Bosco Hall Bookings:

Tel: 0116 2783 863
Tel: 0116 2719609
St. John Bosco Church : **Tel: 0116 278 6134**
Hilari Rushforth : **Tel. 077 346 906 11**
Margaret Shryane and Genny Hickey
Tel: 0116 278 3863 (Mon to Fri 10 -12 Noon)
Averil Dowds : **Tel. Mob: 07837849854**

MASS & SERVICE TIMES

	<i>St. John Bosco</i>	<i>St. Mary's</i>
Sat 16th January 2010 <i>Vigil Mass</i>	6.00 pm. Mass Jim Doyle's Intention	
Sunday 17th Second Sunday of the Year	11.15 am. Mass Kathleen Macken RIP & Rita McAtear RIP	9.30 am. Mass (Ordinary) 6.00 pm. Mass
Mon 18th <i>Feria</i>	9.30 am. Service of Word & H. Comm.	9.30 am. Service of Word & H. Comm
Tues 19th <i>St. Wulstan, Bishop</i>	9.30 am: Mass Service of Word & H. Comm.	9.30 am.
Wed 20th <i>Blessed Cyprian Tansi, Monk of Mount St. Bernard's Abbey</i>	9.30 am.	9.00 am: Mass
Thurs 21st <i>St. Agnes</i>	9.30 a.m. Service of Word & H. Comm	12.30 pm. Service of Word & H. Comm
Fri 22nd <i>St. Vincent</i>	9.30 am. Service of Word & H. Comm	
Sat 23rd <i>Vigil Mass</i>	6.00 pm. Mass	9.30 am: Mass (Glen Parva)
Sun 24th Third Sunday of the Year	11.15 am. Mass	9.30 am: Mass 6.00 pm: Mass (Folk Mass)

FINANCES	ST. JOHN BOSCO	ST. MARY'S
Envelopes	£177.00	£166.60
L/Plate	£105.72	£137.78
S/Orders		£330.00
Donations		
F/Raising	(£87.55)	
TOTAL	£282.72	£634.38



SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

St. John Bosco
Sat. 5.15 — 5.45 p.m.

St. Mary
***** Sat.11.30 a.m. — 12 noon *****

Please ensure all items for the Newsletter reach the Parish Office by 12 noon on a Thursday. Thank you.

"With hearts & Minds"
(exploring Liturgy and Preparing for the New Missal)
LEICESTER : St. Patrick's
Saturday 30th January 2010
10.00 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.
ALL WELCOME
Bring a Packed Lunch
(Contact St. Mary's Parish Office to be booked in. Names required by January 22nd. Thank You!)

Holy Hour in our Churches

St. Mary's:
Wednesday 27th January :
7.00 p.m.—8.00 p.m.

St. John Bosco:
Thursday 11th February
10.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: will meet this week on Tuesday 19th January. 8.00 p.m. in St. Mary's Hall.

EVANGELISATION GROUP will also meet this week, 20th January, 7.30 p.m. in St. Mary's Presbytery.

UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS: Annual General Meeting. Thursday 21st January at 2.00 p.m. Followed by New Year Party.

LITURGY MEETING: Postponed to January 27th, 7.30 p.m. in St. Mary's Presbytery. Any comments concerning the Liturgies at Christmas should be put in writing and handed in to the Presbytery. Many thanks.

ST. MARY'S CARAVAN AND CAMPING CLUB (SMCC)

Do you enjoy the countryside or seaside? Do you enjoy summer outdoor activities? Here in our parish we have a Caravan/Camping Club who meet on Bank Holidays throughout the summer. Want to know more, why not attend our Annual General Meeting on Saturday 20th February (*includes Skittles and Hot Supper*). For more information contact Ian Wesley 0116 2771235 or Brendan Johnson 0116 2751662.

BAPTISM CLASSES: Begin again on 21st February at St. John Bosco Presbytery, for 3 weeks, 4.00 p.m.—5.30 p.m. Enquiries to Parish Office on 0116 2783863 or see Fr. Stephan or Deacon Vince.

THANK YOU : I wish to thank all my friends for their prayers and cards during my illness and especially to those who have supported me by taking me to the hospital and visiting me. I appreciate the care shown me. *Love Sarah.*

GOD'S EXTRAVAGANT LOVE: You are warmly invited to a day celebrating 800 years of Franciscan life in the Church. **Saturday 27th February, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Leach Green Lane, Rednal. B45 9BQ. 10.00 — 4.00 p.m.** Bring Packed Lunch.

SPUC White Flower Appeal

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) will be holding its annual appeal next weekend **23rd/24th January**. The Society's work covers a wide spectrum of issues. It seeks to protect unborn children from abortion and defends the disabled, elderly and incapacitated from euthanasia and assisted suicide. SPUC also provides trained speakers for schools and offers pro-life support for teachers, parents and medical professionals. Please give generously to this very worthy cause.

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St. John Fisher Primary: Head Teacher — Mrs. Mary Hirst : Tel: 0116 2882203
Holy Cross Primary: Head Teacher — Miss Julia Christy : Tel: 0116 283 3135
St. Paul's Comprehensive: Head Teacher: Dr. F. Doherty : Tel: 0116 2414057
English Martyrs Comprehensive : Head Teacher: Mr. Marius Carney : Tel: 0116 242 8880