STRIFE IN THE CITY

I am writing this on Wednesday afternoon; so it is too early yet to tell whether the street rioting of the past few days will have increased or subsided by the time you read it. But however things work out, we all want to understand, as far as we can, why this is happening: why there are these outbreaks of violence, destruction and looting, with injury and sometimes deaths. Can we make any sense of it all?

There is no shortage of explanations given by the newspapers and the media generally. Some of them are simplistic ('these people are just greedy brutal thugs who have to be contained'); some are more thoughtful, and put the blame on the inequalities of our society and its political structures. However much truth there is in this, it seems clear that our street riots are very different from the uprisings in Egypt, Libya and Syria in the past few months, which are clear protests against oppressive regimes.

If we take the widest view, however, the root problem is that we humans, wherever we are, are sinners; we all have the tendency to self-centredness and want to protect ourselves and our well-being, if necessary by force. So sinful people will inevitably create divided societies, in which those who are disadvantaged will rebel against those who are affluent.

This is not new. You can see it in the Old Testament, nearly 3,000 years ago. The prophet Amos speaks of the judgement of God against the rich who lounge around on their couches drinking the best wines, and have no concern for the poverty of their own people. Archaeology has illustrated this dramatically. Excavations in one ancient Israelite city show that at one period the city had an even spread of simple houses, all of much the same quality. But a hundred years later there were a few large and splendid mansions for the rich, while the majority of people lived in mean slum dwellings, hidden out of sight behind a massive wall. One of the Old Testament Psalms says: 'I can see nothing but violence and strife in the city … it is full of wickedness and evil, it is full of sin' (Psalm 54).

We need also to take the near view. What is my reaction (and yours) to the people who have been rioting and destroying property in our own streets of Leicester? This afternoon I talked to a group of young people who were demonstrating by the Town Clock — 'Young People for Peace'. I am sure they were typical of the great majority, who want peace and harmony, not just in Leicester but everywhere. Maybe if the thousands of us who want peace were all to go out and fill the streets, singing and laughing and exuding good will, it would completely turn the tide. And at least some of the troublemakers could hardly fail to be affected by it.

But this provokes another thought. We are all involved one way or another in creating our society. But if we are honest we know we are all sinners before God. And sinful people create a divided society. We are all responsible for this, the influential and wealthy just as much as the rioters and looters. We all need to ask God's forgiveness for our failure to create a just and peaceful society. We all need to pray and work practically to bring this about.

Fr Fabian OP

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary *Year A* **14 August 2011**

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Entrance Antiphon:	*Vigil*: All honour to you, Mary! Today you were raised above the choirs of angels to lasting glory with Christ. *Day*: Either — A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. Or — Let us rejoice in the Lord and celebrate this feast in honour of the Virgin Mary, at whose assumption the angels rejoice, giving praise to the Son of God.
At 11am — page nos in *Missale*:	• Mass Ordinary, p 13; Mass Proper, p 186 • Sung setting: Mass IX *Cum Jubilo*, p 208; Credo III, p 216 • Communion motet: Magnificat *Nanini* • Sortie: Prelude and Fugue in E minor *Bach*
1st Reading:	*Vigil*: 1 Chronicles 15:3-4,15-16; 16:1-2. *Day*: Revelations 11:19a; 12:1-6a; 10
Psalm R:	*Vigil*: **Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.** (Ps 132) *Day*: **At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.** (Ps 45)
2nd Reading:	*Vigil*: 1 Corinthians 15: 54b-57. *Day*: 1 Corinthians 15: 20-27
Alleluia:	*Vigil*: Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. *Day*: Mary has been taken up into heaven; the host of angels rejoices.
Gospel:	*Vigil*: Luke 11: 27-28. *Day*: Luke 1: 39-56
Communion Antiphon:	*Vigil*: Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary; she carried the Son of the eternal Father. *Day*: All generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me.

WEEKDAY MASS IN LATIN. In addition to the Masses listed in the schedule on p 3, Holy Mass will be offered in the Dominican rite from **Monday to Saturday at 8am.**

Fr Leon will be returning to Holy Cross for the 12.30pm Mass on Saturday 3 September, after which we will make a presentation of the money collected for him. It will be an opportunity to thank him for all that he did in his time here.

Thank you to all who have sponsored Blackfriars' Market - including our new, main sponsor, Cummins' Solicitors. We have now raised close to £1000 for equipment, prizes, etc. If you would like to become a sponsor, please take an envelope from the tables and return it to any of the friars as soon as possible.

In particular we are looking for an individual or business to sponsor our 'mega-raffle' by providing either a first prize of around £150 or £150 in cash. Raffle tickets will be on sale from 1 September. Please contact Jeff on 0116 243 1289 or talk to Fr Fabian.