

Nature can sweep away what humans have built up

It has been horrifying and distressing watching the destruction being wrought by the earthquake and ensuing tsunami in Japan. One commentator I read put into words part of what I think we were all feeling: that nature can sweep away in a few hours what human beings have built up over years, decades, centuries even.

Watching the footage of the tsunami sweeping over the Japanese seashore was awesome, in the proper sense of the word: it filled me with awe at the tremendous power of nature. Large ships were swept along. Cars were washed through the streets by the torrents of water. We humans are pretty much powerless to resist the forces of nature in these terrible moments.

It's not hard to see, then, how people got into worshipping gods of nature: a god of thunder, a god of the sea, earth gods, rain gods. Though we are relatively protected from nature's wrath in modern built-up cities, even we realise in moments like these that we are at the mercy of natural forces far beyond our control, with a power to destroy everything we hold dear. So if the forces of nature might do us harm, perhaps it makes sense to try to appease them.

Of course, for that to work, the forces of nature must be controlled by beings not very different from us. Otherwise, how would we work out what might calm them down, rather than get them angry? And so if you look at the cultures which believe in gods, the gods they believe in tend to be humanity writ large. They have human characteristics, and not just the good ones. They're vengeful and quarrelsome. They're

MONEY MATTERS: Last Weekend's collections – Offertory Collection £1234.72; SVP £20.05; Friends of Holy Cross £19.00; Holy Souls £22.33; Grenada Church Restoration £38.36. The collection for Lenten Fast Day in aid of the St Barnabas Society came to £1000.99 for which a great many most sincere thanks.

This week there will be a special retiring collection for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The money will go to Caritas Japan which is a committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, and which cooperates with the activities of the worldwide Catholic Church in the field of relief, welfare and development. It is, in effect, the Japanese CAFOD, which normally supports projects outside Japan, but is now co-ordinating relief efforts within Japan.

Next week there is a retiring collection for Easter Flowers for the church.

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

Join the Diocesan Choir in preparing the music for this year's Chrism Mass at Nottingham Cathedral. There will be a 'Come and sing' morning at the Cathedral on Saturday 9 April from 10.30, led by Neil Page, the Director of Music. See noticeboard.

Maundy Thursday – Watching until Midnight at the Altar of Repose. Please sign the sheet to volunteer to guarantee to watch for a specific 30-minute 'slot'. We must have at least two people watching at all times. The sheet is on the table by the Wellington Street door.

Young people passionate about celibacy – would you like to help make an influential DVD? If you are between 13 and 25, and interested in working on this project, please see Fr Duncan or contact hello@celibrate.org.

Today's Gospel: Peter was still speaking when suddenly there was a bright cloud and from the cloud there came a voice: "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to Him."

Vacancy. Required for September 2011 at St John Fisher Primary School, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0PA. Tel 01332 572154. Core Subject Primary Teaching and Learning Leader (TLR 2.1). Permanent Contract. Seeking to appoint an enthusiastic, ambitious practitioner with a proven track record of outstanding and inspirational teaching and subject leadership, who is able to support the Catholic Ethos and make a significant contribution towards helping us to achieve the high goals we have set for ourselves in terms of pupil progress and attainment. For an application form and further details, please contact Mrs Harlow the school Business Manager. Closing Date: 25th March. See noticeboard.

Forthcoming events for your diary	
Sat 26 Mar	Parish cycle ride, following the 10am Mass, to Burton Overy. Contact Liz on 270 7953.
Sat 2 Apr	'Open-Mic' Mothers'-Day-Eve Extravaganza. Contact Jeff on 243 1289.

AROUND THE BIBLE IN 80 WEEKS. This is the title of a series on each Book of the Bible, written by one of the friars, and inserted into the Newsletter. We continue today with St Paul's Letter to the Galatians. The series also appears on the Parish website.

Saturday April 2