

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

30th May 2020

Saturday of the Seventh Week of Easter

(Tenth Saturday of Isolation)

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com



Thanks to those who replied to my last scripture reflection with your own thoughts – if you want to be taken off the email list, or know anyone who may appreciate the contact, please let me know – or print it for a neighbour. (If you have only just started to receive these daily reflections it is because I have only just found your address, sorry) Thanks. Fr Peter.

(Daily Scripture is available from www.universalis.com)

Acts 28:16-20. 30-31

On our arrival in Rome Paul was allowed to stay in lodgings of his own with the soldier who guarded him. After three days he called together the leading Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, 'Brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and would have set me free, since they found me guilty of nothing involving the death penalty; but the Jews lodged an objection, and I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation to make against my own nation. That is why I have asked to see you and talk to you, for it is on account of the hope of Israel that I wear this chain.'

Paul spent the whole of the two years in his own rented lodging. He welcomed all who came to visit him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete freedom and without hindrance from anyone.

John 21:20-25

Peter turned and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them – the one who had leaned on his breast at the supper and had said to him, 'Lord, who is it that will betray you?' Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, 'What about him, Lord?' Jesus answered, 'If I want him to stay behind till I come, what does it matter to you? You are to follow me.' The rumour then went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus had not said to Peter, 'He will not die', but, 'If I want him to stay behind till I come.'

This disciple is the one who vouches for these things and has written them down, and we know that his testimony is true.

There were many other things that Jesus did; if all were written down, the world itself, I suppose, would not hold all the books that would have to be written.

(What is God saying to you as you hear his Word here?)

DARE WE OPEN OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD?

Today we come to end of our reflections on the Acts of the Apostles, which includes Paul's story (Though we will, of course, hear from him again in his letters back to his churches). However it is worth remembering the very start of St Luke's Gospel where he shares with us why he is writing both his Gospel and the Acts. He says:

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.
Luke 1:1-4

The scriptures are not just teaching – there is an assumption that the reader has already been 'instructed' – but it is a picture of what life lived in the Spirit of Jesus looks like, both in the time of the ministry of Jesus and in the 'time of the Spirit'. Hold on to that thought as we approach Paul settling in Rome.

Again we have skipped a couple of chapters of Paul being taken as a prisoner, across the sea to Rome. It takes some time and involves some excitement due to bad weather and shipwreck. Again we see that the Spirit is in charge, that the whole event continues the image of the spiritual life being a journey, and that Paul's surety of faith has a strong effect on people – to the point where you are led to forget he is, in fact, a prisoner! (It is particularly interesting if you know about sailing and / or the Mediterranean islands!)

And so to Rome. Paul asks to see the leading Jews and tells them his story. As expected these "Jews away from home" have a much wider vision of their faith and the world around them and welcome him. Paul sums up his teaching in a way which would not upset the brothers: "for it is on account of the hope of Israel that I wear this chain."

The book ends with Paul under house arrest but free to see anyone – and he makes use of it. The end is significant, if a little underwhelming, perhaps?:

"He welcomed all who came to visit him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete freedom and without hindrance from anyone."

Don't be disappointed by the end. Because its not the end! The time of the Spirit continued after the Apostles, after Paul, after..... and it continues in exactly the same way in lockdown in a global pandemic in June (nearly) 2020. That is how St Luke wants us to read his work and see the same Jesus alive in his people – in us! And tomorrow we underline that with the celebration of Pentecost:

"so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed." (and others will, too)

You may be wondering about the death of Paul. It is not part of this writing (It could have been seen as 'the end'). We know little of this, but oral tradition has it that Paul was martyred by beheading (The ultimate 'playing your Roman Card'?) during the persecution of the Christians by Nero – (he blamed the Christians for the Great Fire of Rome.)

(As my Grandpa used to say to people who said: "why rush, Rome wasn't built in a day!" – he said: "No but it was fired in a day!" – he was lovely and tasted like Parsley!)

St John reminds us: to look to the deep meaning and signs in what we read in the scripture – not just the history and the philosophy and the nice story – so it doesn't actually matter that there is not more written. It also backs Luke's message that we are today's Gospel and it is being written in us!

DARE WE OPEN OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD?



Jesuit Invitation to a Pentecost Vigil:

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam

Please join this worldwide Pentecost vigil on Saturday 30th May at 8pm.

COVID-19 has affected the entire human community. What better response than to pray together, "Come, Holy Spirit, and renew the face of the earth!". As an initiative under the umbrella of the Secretary of Faith of the Society of Jesus, we invite **you to join a half-hour online Pentecost prayer vigil on Saturday, May 30** at <http://pentecost.jesuits.global/> It will bring together the Ignatian family and our Jesuit and Ignatian networks throughout the world in more than 100 countries from the 4 corners of the world.

Last Sunday Pope Francis announced a year to reflect on "Laudato Si" after Covid-19

24th May 2020 – 24th May 2021

"Today is also the fifth anniversary of the Encyclical Laudato si', with which I sought to draw attention to the cry of the earth and of the poor. Thanks to the initiative of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the "Laudato si' Week" we have just celebrated will blossom into a special Year of the anniversary of Laudato si', a special year to reflect on the Encyclical, from 24 May this year until 24 May next year. I invite all people of good will to join in, to take care of our common home and our most fragile brothers and sisters. The prayer dedicated to this Year will be published on the site. It will be good to pray it."

"I wish you all a good Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and arrivederci."

Prayer for the special year of the anniversary of Laudato si'

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.
Be present to those in need in these difficult times,
especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity
as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing
the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent.
Enable us to succeed in listening and responding
to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs
of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord,
under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians,
Amen.



PARISH NOTICES:

- **Know any parishioners housebound or who may need contacting?** - At the start of this lockdown a number of parishioners offered to find a way of being help to those parishioners who are in need or just housebound. Many people are in contact with the parish through this email or the WhatsApp group, but you may think of some who are not getting parish contacts – but they may get family support and food. If you have suggestions please email their names and addresses to the parish address and we can get parishioners to drop a message in to them. Thanks.
- **Local COVID19 Helplines** *(Official message from our Parish Organisers)*
The Wyre Council have a dedicated helpline for COVID19 isolation support. If you are struggling to get essential items, or need help, please ring 01253 891000 and select OPTION 7 when prompted. Alternatively, if you have access to the internet, you can fill in the online request for help here: https://www.wyre.gov.uk/forms/form/257/en/coronavirus_isolation_support_form

There is also another local network being organised by the Methodist Church - called POULTONCAN. The helpline there is 01253 670800 between 8am and 10pm, 7 days a week.

We have a group of parish volunteers who are going to be working with the council to respond to requests. If anyone would like to offer help, please email Jenny at jennifer.hillman.sutcliffe@gmail.com or telephone on 07568502749.
- **Parish WhatsApp Group:** Emily Halliwell (as part of the above group) has set up a closed parish WhatsApp account. I have finally been beaten into joining but am a bit of a WhatsApp virgin as yet! Emily says: “My number is 07969643648 if you want to be added just reply with your mobile number or text me. “
- **Local Bakery Offer:** Jane and Andrew Neal, who are always so generous to us by offering bread and cakes at parish social events, are offering delivered bakery goods to those who are in isolation or ill. However they also offer a “click-and -collect” service (You can stop outside the shop in Cleveleys) for those who have transport. You can order on line at neals-familybakery.co.uk
- Lancashire and South Cumbria website for current details on Hospitals & Corana Virus
<https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/coronavirus>

Thoughts contributed by Virus Times' readers:

A few of anonymous responses from these Virus Times Reflections from our parishioners: Thanks to contributors. It helps.

It is five years this week since the Pope published “Laudato si’” – Here is a video from him:

[video message. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHlzOWp8ZQY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHlzOWp8ZQY&feature=youtu.be)

CAFOD Video about the message of “Laudato Si’” – very good for children – but I really liked it! (Ah well!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOf2Kgel6k>

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Various Older People we worry about	Whilst we are enjoying the promise of loosening lockdown we still have concerns for relations and friends who have signs of Covid-19 and who have been taken to Hospital. Please pray for these people – and for those we don't know as well.
Lyn Reynolds	Nana or mother-in-law to Jacinta and Michelle. In the Vic - Not diagnosed with Covid-19 but with similar breathing issues. Prayers please
Chris Taylor (<i>Not Covid-10</i>)	Chis has asked for your prayers as she had a fall and is in the Vic. Christ is not feeling well at all so prayers please.
John (and family)	Family friend of Emma who has died aged 49
Louie aged 13	The neighbour of a parishioner who has Leukaemia who is having a sudden set back. Prayer, please
From Jayne Clark	Could I please ask that our parishioners pray for all the staff in children's social care who are still working to safeguard children in our area and around the country. It never ceases to amaze me how hard they work generally, despite the abuse that they often are subjected to, but more so currently given the extra risk that they are putting themselves under to visit the vulnerable.
Maureen O'Connell & Family(<i>Not Covid-19</i>)	Mrs Donnelly's Mum
Paul Sharrock (<i>Not Covid-19</i>) (and family: Kathryn, Mary & Rachael)	Your prayer of healing for Paul is remarkable –Paul has been moved to a hospital nearer his family – we hope he can see them. <i>Fr Peter</i>
House-locked Parishioners	Who are worried and missing family
Parents home schooling AND home job-ing	Thank God for our parents
Our Teachers	Who are at school or preparing work for our children
Luke (<i>not Covid-19</i>) <i>Died Yesterday</i>	A young man recently married into a family I know in Australia, aged 30. (Fr Peter)
Hugh (Not Covid-19)	The brother of Emma, a friend of mine (Fr Peter), who has been found to have cancer only recently. He has three young children. Prayers Please