

# St John the Evangelist, Poulton

31<sup>st</sup> May 2020

Pentecost Sunday

*(Eleventh Sunday of Isolation)*

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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.

**Messages from Fr Peter:** Please pray for Chris Taylor – she is very poorly

Please do send in some notes to share about how you celebrated Pentecost.

*(Daily Scripture is available from [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com))*

**Acts 2:1-11**

When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome – Jews and proselytes alike – Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.'

**1Cor 12:3-7. 12-13**

No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

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

## **DARE WE OPEN OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD?**

I think that, in normal years, Pentecost Sunday creeps up on us and, in the midst of all that happens in our lives, the Spirit says "BOO!" And then the celebration, the liturgy, the homily have been a sudden "all we know about the Holy Spirit" in one day. This year I certainly feel that, because of a closer following of God speaking to us in the daily Mass readings, the coming of the promised Spirit is not as great a surprise – we are ready! (I don't know about you but my childhood understanding of the Spirit was that department of God you prayed to the day before your exams – despite the fact that you hadn't done the revision! This picture of the Spirit of God did not fit my life experience! You may have had a better scriptural Catholic schooling: but lets ponder)

After we have seen, since Easter, Jesus' promise of sharing his Spirit with his people. Perhaps what we need to do on this feast is to reflect on whether we believe this promise, experience the Spirit amongst us, and just be actively grateful. (I hope some of you watched the Jesuit's

global prayer last night which was wonderful! It was a great support in these isolation days to be reminded of all the people throughout the world, with many languages, who share our faith – and many who said ordinary faith things in a way I could not. Please send your reflections here to share if you watched it)

At this distance I'm not sure whether it was done on purpose, but at the end of Christmas day, when everyone is ready to go to bed and it is that time to say "Thanks you for a great Christmas day", and we asked Dad if he'd liked his presents he always replied: "yes, thank you. But I thought I'd have got a hammer" (or something). Everyone shouted: "WELL WHY DIDN'T YOU ASK US?!"

Asking is an interesting thing. I always think it's a dangerous thing to invite children to write a list of presents to send to Father Christmas – but they don't seem to remember by Christmas day? (This maybe not everyone's experience). As adults, however we are more cautious: "what would you like for your birthday?" – "Oh, I don't need anything!" (Scream!). "You can have anything you like for your birthday dinner" – "Well you decide". There are two things happening it seems: Does the other person not know us at all? What could I reasonably ask this person for? (The easiest outcome is not to ask: it might be perceived as good manners, but it doesn't help relationships, does it?)

A friend of mine who was a Deacon came to me once with what he saw as a possibly worrying discovery: that the prayers of the Mass, and other sacraments, seem to be very demanding of God. At that time his children were older teenagers (This may be the weight of his concern?) and I asked him whether he would rather his children didn't ask for things, advise, money (?) – it was a great insight into God. Spend some time pondering your own joy when people come to you for understanding you have pleasure in sharing.

Jesus continually invited his disciples to "ask" – I don't think we need to be reminded of these phrases by reference - we know them. But maybe on Pentecost Sunday we need to be reminded to do it! "Ask".

I hear people say: "well, God has more needy cases than me, hasn't he"; "God's Spirit knows what I need"; "If I can do it myself I will, and then ask him if its beyond me". This is what some call the "vending machine God".

Our ordinary life usage of 'asking' is part of our relationship building. We do it, sort of naturally, in all points of our lives, its not reserved for emergencies. (Though, its just dawned on me that lots of people have found this lockdown period a time when social asking has become more "normal" – that's interesting?)

So today, after following the realities of the early Church asking the Spirit became more and more natural, perhaps we could ask ourselves how good we are at having the Spirit about us to ask for everyday things – not just saving up for big things? "Dare we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit" is not a new faith question, but is a learning for all times in the Church. It is part of the communities "growing up" in relationship, like our family asking has been.

At Dinner time today what will your family ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your life today?

Those from an Irish heritage may find that they have experience of family blessings – if not look up blessings on the internet. A traditional home blessing for Jewish families on the night before the Sabbath is from the Book of Numbers, and is this request from God (We could use it on the night before our Sabbath?):

*May God bless you and keep you.  
May God shine light on you and be gracious to you.  
May God turn toward you and grant you peace.*

**Today's Psalm (103) is a great prayer for us:**

*Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.*

Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are,  
How many are your works, O Lord!  
The earth is full of your riches.

*Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.*

You take back your spirit, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth.

*Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.*

May the glory of the Lord last for ever!  
May the Lord rejoice in his works!  
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.  
I find my joy in the Lord.

The Prophet Joel (Lovely Prophet!) Joel 3:1

Thus says the Lord:  
'I will pour out my spirit on all mankind.  
Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,  
your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men see visions.  
Even on the slaves, men and women,  
will I pour out my spirit in those days.

**DARE WE OPEN OURSELVES TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD?**

## Pope Francis announced a year to reflect on “Laudato Si” after Covid-19

24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – 24<sup>th</sup> 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](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](mailto: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](https://www.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.)

#### **From Last Night’s Jesuit “Welcome the Spirit” from reader:**

*In these times of Covid and a new normal - it was Another opportunity for us to be creative in our liturgy, in our prayer Holy Spirit was centre of the liturgy - not (institutional) church.*

*It was gentle, compassionate, kind, allowed others to speak, share, participate - not all clerical*

*Allowed all to be equal participants*

*Showed ‘universal church’*

*Showed how the pandemic affects all corners of the world; shows how the message of Jesus has already been in those places*

*Music was good*

Just been Spirit Filled : through following our Pentecost Sunday Mass .

I was struck (Holy Spirit ?) by a phrase the priest used in his homily “the Acts Don’t end :they stop in order that we carry on the Discipleship for our time”

Happy Pentecost to us all!

### **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	Chris’ son, David has asked for your prayers for her at this time as she is very poorly
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(Not Covid-19)	Mrs Donnelly’s Mum
Paul Sharrock (Not Covid-19) (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. Fr Peter
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 (not Covid-19) Died Yesterday	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