

# St John the Evangelist, Poulton

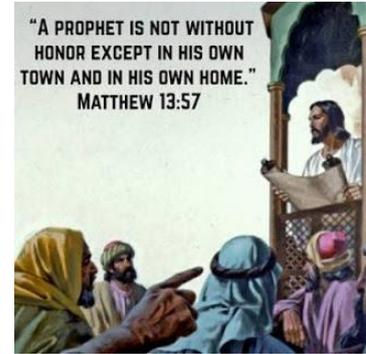
31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

Friday of the 17<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year

(Nineteenth Friday 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.

**Note from Fr Peter:**

Thanks to those who write in their responses to our scripture reflections – it makes it all worth while! Thanks for giving me the chance to continue my vocation to preach the Gospel!  
**We will need more stewards to have more Masses.** Please let me know if you are willing.  
Thanks to those who have volunteered – but we need more to move forward

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

**Jeremiah 26:1-9**

*At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word was addressed to Jeremiah by the Lord, 'The Lord says this: Stand in the court of the Temple of the Lord. To all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the Temple of the Lord you must speak all the words I have commanded you to tell them; do not omit one syllable. Perhaps they will listen and each turn from his evil way: if so, I shall relent and not bring the disaster on them which I intended for their misdeeds. Say to them, "The Lord says this: If you will not listen to me by following my Law which I put before you, by paying attention to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send so persistently to you, without your ever listening to them, I will treat this Temple as I treated Shiloh, and make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth."'*

*The priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah say these words in the Temple of the Lord. When Jeremiah had finished saying everything that the Lord had ordered him to say to all the people, the priests and prophets seized hold of him and said, 'You shall die! Why have you made this prophecy in the name of the Lord, "This Temple will be like Shiloh, and this city will be desolate, and uninhabited"?' And the people were all crowding round Jeremiah in the Temple of the Lord.*

**Matthew 13:54-58**

*Coming to his home town, Jesus taught the people in their synagogue in such a way that they were astonished and said, 'Where did the man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? This is the carpenter's son, surely? Is not his mother the woman called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? His sisters, too, are they not all here with us? So where did the man get it all?' And they would not accept him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only despised in his own country and in his own house', and he did not work many miracles there because of their lack of faith.*

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

We are just on the edge of finding Jeremiah to be easier to listen to than other prophets – and suddenly he runs into the wall all prophets discover if they are repeating God's word as he speaks! Trouble!!!

I remember when I was in my mid teens and showed an interest in being a priest. A number of things happened: 1. My parish priest turned up at the door with some forms for my parents to fill in for what was known as a 'junior seminary' – they included two outstanding questions: 'does he wet the bed?' and 'how much money could parents pay for this honour?' – I was only

a teenager but I said: 'No, No, No!! – and 'why would I want to leave my family?' (It reminded me of 'the Lion & Albert': 'and spend all our lives raising children.....!') Needless to say that was the last we heard of that idea! 2. This one took longer to dissipate! 'They' conjured up a plan based on the idea that I should learn Latin! – Two of us in school had special lessons with the head teacher each week! Joy!! Thankfully, after less than a year it sort of melted away and the two of us didn't mention it again! (For those who ask if priests all learn Latin the answer is No – as Greek, Hebrew, French and German would have been much more useful).

The final facing contained much more learning for me. I was involved with some others with the Diocesan Vocations Director – One Fr Ned Carey who will be known to many of you I expect. These were great gatherings, as you will imagine, and we talked about God and Jesus and the Gospels and people and parishes (Nothing in Latin!). But the facing came when it was suggested that we offered ourselves in our parishes to be readers at Mass. Heck! Do we have to do this? The answer was a wise one: 'If you are ever a priest you will have to speak out loud, won't you?' – the logic was seamless. If you are offering yourself to be a disciple it will cost something! (I did become a reader and learned a lot!)

The Gospel today has Jesus himself remind us that even he had difficulties in being a prophet:

*And they would not accept him.*

*But Jesus said to them,*

*'A prophet is only despised in his own country and in his own house'*

It is difficult to be accepted as a prophet in our home town – and amongst our own people. After all priests don't come from Poulton, the Fylde and Lancashire do they?! Yes they do – lots of them!

Like all the prophets Jeremiah has issues of being rejected too. Have a think what he should have done to help his cause – how could he have dressed up God's message? But he is taken away and threatened with death. (Notice how this will be similar in Jesus' situation) Speaking for God is somehow naturally dangerous – I wonder why this is? This is not the end of the story as we will see tomorrow!

Now let us return to our own reading of this prophet. If we are to, even, whisper that we are interested in becoming a disciple of Jesus, of taking on his life as a prophet to speak God's word – people's first response may not be impressed, or may be even be critical. Have a think of times people have had this sort of response to your faith in Jesus. But also notice the times people have honoured your goodness to such a degree that they have begun to ask honest questions about your faith and this Jesus you speak of (That's YOUR faith in Jesus, not what the Church teaches – people may have good reason for not being impressed with 'the Church', but they may well be impressed with the YOU they know).

Get ready for the people's response to the Prophet tomorrow.

## **PARISH NOTICES:**

- **Diocesan Virtual Lourdes Pilgrimage:** The Diocese of Lancaster Lourdes Pilgrimage Committee will present a virtual pilgrimage during the week of 24th July - 1st August 2020, when we would have been in Lourdes. The attached itinerary shows the Masses and Services planned for the week. Could I please ask you to promote this as best as you can within your parishes and on your websites. The virtual pilgrimage will primarily be accessed through the pilgrimage facebook page with prompts and reminders being posted before events:  
<https://www.facebook.com/LancastersLourdesPilgrimage> . Links will be posted on the pilgrimage website at [www.lancasterlourdes.co.uk](http://www.lancasterlourdes.co.uk) and the Diocesan website.

- **Working towards opening church for Mass**

You will have heard that the government has given permission for places of worship to open – but with strict guidance and under the supervision of the Bishop and the Parish Priest. The two most important messages are that vulnerable people must stay safe at home, and that distancing will affect numbers and how we celebrate the Eucharist. This is not easy – and we need everyone’s cooperation.

Before we look at a way forward for our parish could I mention that we need to have two trained, and not vulnerable, stewards to be present at each celebration. This our starting point to move forward. We have to start with the same practices we have had at the “private prayer” opening demands which you may be familiar with. If you feel you could help us to extend our availability for Mass please come this week to see what being a steward entails.

I have met with our existing six stewards who volunteered to run the ‘private prayer’ openings and we agreed that we have to move forwards slowly so that we stay healthy and friendly. One of the difficulties will be that our church can only hold 30 people from different households in the congregation within the safety guidelines – though, of course, people from the same household can sit together. This will mean that if we have the allotted number of congregation the stewards will have to, gently, turn others away – this is counter cultural for us, but is for health reasons so please do not take this personally!

Many vulnerable people, those living with people who are vulnerable and families have already suggested that they feel this is a little soon for them to feel safe with a larger mixed group in church – and this is understandable. (It is to give our understanding to such people that I am happy to take our time in opening) We are not beginning with Sunday Masses to ensure people do not mistake ‘opening for Mass’ as ‘back to normal’!

As we already have the stewards who are willing to be present we will celebrate Mass this week on Tuesday and Thursday morning at 9.30am at St John’s.

For the sake of those who work we would like to move towards Mass the following week on Wednesday evening at 7pm – but this will depend on having volunteers to steward.

*Please remember: The bishops are keen to remind us that “the obligation to celebrate Mass on Sunday remains suspended”. (It is easy for us to have become accustomed to distancing in the outside world – but fall into what life was in inside church – be careful!)*

Finally please remember that the Bishops can suspend the Sunday Obligation as this is a ‘law of the Church’ – they cannot suspend “keep Holy the Sabbath Day’ as this is God’s law. Please ensure you continue to celebrate the Resurrection as you have been doing: by praying the scriptures, streaming etc

(‘Virus Times Scripture Reflections will continue to help us gather around the Word of God)

**Tuesday            Mass at 9.30am at St John’s**

**Wednesday        Mass at 7.00pm at St John’s**

**Thursday            Mass at 9.30am at St John’s**

**Friday                Mass at 9.30am at St John’s**

- **St Martin & Hilda’s open for private prayer**

Our chapel will be open for private prayer on Wednesdays from **9.30am to 12.30pm.**

Great thanks to Joan Swan for organising this under the safeguarding guidelines of the Church of England and the responsibility of the Vicar of St Chad's. St Chad's are celebrating the Eucharist in St Hilda's on Wednesday at 11am – you are invited to drop in.

If you wish to offer any help please contact Joan on 07887 880497

*We could celebrate the Eucharist on Wednesdays if there was a call and some stewards.*

- **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.
- **Fleetwood Food Bank:** If you know of anyone you think has need of a parcel of food from the Food Bank please telephone 01253 774313 – they will need an address to have it delivered to.
- **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. They 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](http://neals-familybakery.co.uk)

### **Thoughts contributed by Virus Times' readers:**

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

**Thursday:** *I liked your Mary and Martha story yesterday and I decided that I am probably a Martha eg at Christmas my sister and I will be making the meal together but she will then disappear and return in her Christmas outfit ready to greet the guests and pop the Champagne. I meantime remain sweating over the roast potatoes and Brussel Sprouts!! (she does bring me glass ) but I know someone has to be the hostess!! I will try and stop being a martyr!!  
I also appreciate the stories you tell about your family and your Mum and Dad (they sounded lovely) as I then think of my parents RIP. It's great you can remember your first day at school I have a school photo but that's it. My two daughters attended St John's primary school and I know they have lovely memories of their time there.*

**Thursday:** *Thanks Fr. Peter for the Virus Times. You have linked the Old and New Testament well to give us a clearer understanding of them. Your thoughts for meditating have been inspirational. Today's readings takes me back to my pottery time when my clay objects never turned out the way I hoped!! Thanks also to the kind folk who provided the appropriate music and songs for us over the last few weeks. Much appreciated.*

**Friday:** *Knock Shrine is hosting 'Jesuit Week' 26 July-2nd August it might be of interest.*

<https://www.knockshrine.ie/jesuit-week-online-26-july-2-august/?v=79cba1185463>

*It was good to be back at Mass this week - thanks.*

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Bernard Hargreaves RIP	Funeral Service at St Martin's on Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> August & Crematorium
Anne Connelly RIP	Died in Stella Matutina. Graveside service at Carleton 29 <sup>th</sup> July
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.
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)	<i>Is showing continued, but slow, progress. He is eating a proper diet and having a lot of physiotherapy – which he's not enjoying! Fr Peter</i>
Parents home schooling AND home job-ing	Thank God for our parents – but, after so long, finding it difficult to fulfil their work responsibilities and 'entertain' their children under lockdown.
Our Teachers	Who are resting!!!