

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

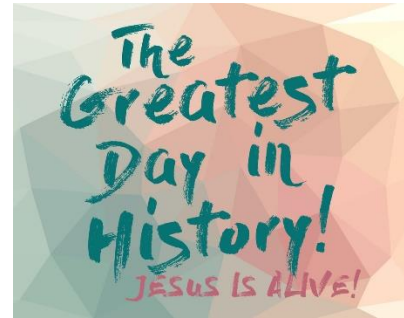
18th September 2020

Friday of the Twenty-fourth Week of the Year

(Twenty-sixth Friday of Isolation)

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com

Parish Website: www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk



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:

Please note John O'Hagan's Funeral is on 22nd Sept – see details in the prayer section below.

Thanks to Elaine for her series of quotes from Julian of Norwich (*See Parish Comments below*)

Please encourage those who are afraid of coming to large gatherings that our present Masses have small numbers of attenders and this is a good place to begin a return to Mass:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday at 9.30am at St John's

Wednesday at 9.30am at Ss Martin & Hilda's Chapel

Saturday at 6.00pm at St John's

We still celebrate the Resurrection on Sundays – **Which day is your 'Sunday Eucharist'?**

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

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Now if Christ raised from the dead is what has been preached, how can some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ himself cannot have been raised, and if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is useless and your believing it is useless; indeed, we are shown up as witnesses who have committed perjury before God, because we swore in evidence before God that he had raised Christ to life. For if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, you are still in your sins. And what is more serious, all who have died in Christ have perished. If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are the most unfortunate of all people.

But Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.

Luke 8:1-3

Jesus made his way through towns and villages preaching, and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God. With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and several others who provided for them out of their own resources.

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

Perhaps we need to feel with the Christian people of Corinth at this stage. Somehow, we think the Apostles and Saints of the early Church had it easy. Many of them had known Jesus during his ministry, certainly many knew those who had known Jesus – and some had experienced the appearance of the risen Lord. But why should we think they found it easy? We might think they had been given some 'saint' gene which we haven't had yet?

According to the Gospel of St Luke (24:41) the people who saw Jesus after the Resurrection were described as people who: "while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"". For those people the re-appearance of Jesus was a joy and real, but difficult. It was difficult because they had not

come across this before – but also because Jesus was different – he looked different, but they knew him when he spoke their names, or did something they recognised, or eat with them.

So we must not imagine these people had a special ‘holiness’ that we have not. But what they did have was a recognition that this was Jesus and he was alive. It was also a recognition that his Resurrection changed things!

This is why Paul is insistent that the Christians in Corinth could not fail to put the Resurrection at the top of their belief hierarchy – because if it was not there then there was nothing to be preached and to be hopeful about!

Now that we are at a distance in time from the Resurrection we do have an advantage over those members of the Church who met the Risen Lord. Gone before us are people of faith who have found ways to speak about the Resurrection of Jesus, to KNOW through their experience that he is alive (not ‘Jesus was’, but ‘Jesus is’!) and have found images and words which help them share this reality. It is easy for us to ask scientific questions – but sharing our faith allows us to use images to express our experiences of life and relationship with others. Don’t be afraid to share with other people of faith your experiences of Jesus alive in your life – but don’t do it without knowing the experience of those people who use their images in the Gospels.

Sorry, there will be no ‘Virus Times’ tomorrow as I am at a wedding out of the area. But tomorrow will be the last of our daily readings from 1Corinthians. Paul, here, tries to find words to say about the Resurrection – and words NOT to say. You can save it to tomorrow to pray through:

1 Corinthians 15:35-37,42-49

Someone may ask, ‘How are dead people raised, and what sort of body do they have when they come back?’ They are stupid questions. Whatever you sow in the ground has to die before it is given new life and the thing that you sow is not what is going to come; you sow a bare grain, say of wheat or something like that. It is the same with the resurrection of the dead: the thing that is sown is perishable but what is raised is imperishable; the thing that is sown is contemptible but what is raised is glorious; the thing that is sown is weak but what is raised is powerful; when it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is raised it embodies the spirit.

If the soul has its own embodiment, so does the spirit have its own embodiment. The first man, Adam, as scripture says, became a living soul; but the last Adam has become a life-giving spirit. That is, first the one with the soul, not the spirit, and after that, the one with the spirit. The first man, being from the earth, is earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven. As this earthly man was, so are we on earth; and as the heavenly man is, so are we in heaven. And we, who have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man.

Just a thought: Paul is obviously facing some people who find the Resurrection difficult. Remember that sharing our faith will help similar people in our own time. Sharing nothing will not help. Heck.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

"The Christian response to the pandemic and to the consequent socio-economic crisis is based on love, above all, love of God who always precedes us (cf. 1 Jn 4:19). He loves us first. He always precedes us in love and in solutions. He loves us unconditionally and when we welcome this divine love, then we can respond similarly. I love not only those who love me — my family, my friends, my group — but also those who do not love me, I also love those who do not know me and I also love those who are strangers, and even those who make me suffer or whom I consider enemies (cf. Mt 5:44). This is Christian wisdom, this is the attitude of Jesus. And the highest point of holiness, let's put it that way, is to love one's enemies, which is not easy."

Pope Francis

GENERAL AUDIENCE SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

PARISH NOTICES:

- **When you come to Mass:**

Despite getting used to physical distancing over the past three months returning to a familiar situation, like church, can make us forget we are still threatened by a virus that could kill vulnerable people. We have been asked to ensure Government and Church rules which might seem intrusive but they are designed to remind us to be careful and, above all, to keep distances. Please help us with this.

- Government guidelines demand that all the congregation (except those with exemption certificates) wear mouth and nose masks in church
 - Please maintain a 2m distance as you approach and enter church and be guided by the stewards.
 - Please note there is a 'one way' system – entering church by the left hand door.
 - Please sanitise your hands as you enter church
 - You will be invited to leave your name and contact detail for 'Track & Tracing' in case of need.
 - If you wish to wear a face mask you may do this – but please bring your own.
 - To minimise movement in church Stewards will direct you to fill the benches from the front. You will probably not be able to go in your 'usual' bench but that will give you a new perspective!
 - Please remove your mask just before approaching for Holy Communion and then replace afterwards.
 - You will receive instructions for coming forward for Holy Communion. But please respect distancing (don't bunch), move for Communion using the one-way system, please stretch out your arms fully as you request Holy Communion, you will not be invited to speak "Amen" before receiving Holy Communion. These will need to be kept in mind at first and we do need to remember they, though not the best liturgy, are about distancing and staying well.
 - Holy Communion must be received only on the hand. (No gloves, please)
 - Please sanitise your hands as you leave church by the other door than the one you entered.
 - As you leave church please move away from the door and remember to distance yourselves if you speak to other people.
- **10.09.2020 News from Victoria Hospital :** Yesterday Dr Jim Gardner provided the staff of the trust with his latest weekly update. He noted that there was only one patient in the hospital who had had a positive test result in the last 14 days, and that this was good news. However, the trust had reported 2 further deaths over the last week, and these were **not** due to statistical adjustments. Locally, the rate of infection is 17 per 100,000, which is above the national average, and represents a significant increase on the previous week's rate of 9 per 100,000. Mirroring the national picture, younger people in the population represent a major part of the increase in infections. Dr Gardner's concern is that in other countries where a similar pattern has been observed (e.g. France and Germany) this is followed by an increase in hospitalisations in 3-4 weeks' time. Please continue to keep all healthcare staff and volunteers in your prayers. *Fr Andrew Dawson, Catholic Chaplain*
- **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
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. "

Thoughts contributed by Virus Times' readers:

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

Friday: Thank you. Good "readers thoughts' today for me.

Thursday: After the various Readings, your Commentaries and Parishioner's thoughts during these last few days (in particular re God's profound Love for us ALL...no matter who or where we are) a passage from my current read struck me in a big way.. deep inside self

'Jesus tells us in the Gospels, "Don't be afraid." He's saying it is radically okay. You can trust yourself because God trusts you, using your journey, your experience. Nothing will be wasted; all has been forgiven; nothing will be used against you. In fact, God will even use your sins to transform you! God is a lover (not an account manager, not a dictator) who receives and forgives everything.'

Wednesday: Thanks Fr & thanks Elaine for the Julian of Norwich readings.

This passage struck a chord with me. A mother [...] will never allow any real harm to come to the child because of her love. When we fall, our mother holds us lovingly and graciously and swiftly raises us.

Can we also remember and pray for mothers, especially new mothers, who are looking after babies in a global pandemic - often without the support they would normally have? It can be a very lonely and anxious time. I know that the care some new mums are getting after birth has been compromised by COVID - even if the babies are (thankfully) thriving.

Tuesday: Your piece on the family and us all being one body made me rethink my position in life. Sometimes we go around thinking "Gosh I'm very glad I don't have his life or her life" or "thank goodness I'm not addicted to drugs and all that goes with it " etc. when we see folk out on the streets of our towns and cities (which we still do even in these COVID times). It's difficult when we think of some people we really would not want to share the one body with in Christ and to accept that God loves us all the same - whatever our background. Food for thought.

Elaine Brownwood has been reading this prayerful work and she has offered to share some revelations with us:

“These extracts are taken from “Enfolded in Love” Daily Readings with Julian of Norwich, Published by Darton, Longman & Todd (1980). Translation by Members of the Julian Shrine, Norwich. Original thought to have been written in the late 14th century England.”

DAY 6 - SOME THOUGHTS ON PRAYER

The way we often pray came into my mind and how, through lack of knowing and understanding of the ways of love, we pester him with petitions. Then I saw truly that it gives more praise to God and more delight if we pray steadfast in love, trusting his goodness, clinging to him by grace, than if we ask for everything our thoughts can name. All our petitions fall short – for his goodness encompasses all that we can think to ask. The best prayer is to rest in the goodness of God, knowing that that goodness can reach down to our lowest depths of need.

Prayer is a deliberate and persevering action – it is full of grace. Prayer fastens the soul to God and makes it one with his will through the deep inward working of the Holy Spirit. God is the ground of our praying.

Pray inwardly, even though you find no joy in it. For it does good, though you feel nothing and think you cannot pray. When you are empty, sick or weak, your prayers please me – though there be little enough to please you. All believing prayer is precious to me.

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

John O’Hagan who has died	John’s requiem will be on the 22 nd September at St John’s. COVID19 restrictions mean that only invited family and friends can attend – but others can join us at the grave after the Mass – the family suggest 12.00. The 9.30am Mass will be for John – others are welcome.
Alan	Could we pray for Judith Reeves’ dad She says: <i>I wanted to drop you a short email to let you know that my Dad has been diagnosed with liver cancer. I wanted to thank everyone for their prayers and ask for their continued prayers as we move forwards. Dad was taken into hospital on Monday and is quite weak. The hope is that if he gets stronger we will be able to bring him home. He is yet to start the appropriate treatment and we will know more in the coming days.</i>
Jacinta’s Nana Lyn	Poorly and asks for your prayers
A Lady in Intensive Care	The Parish WhatsApp Group ask for your prayers
The People of Beirut	
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(Not Covid-19)	Mrs Donnelly’s Mum
Paul Sharrock (Not Covid-19) (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>
Our Teachers	