

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

11th October 2020

Sunday of the Twenty-eighth Week of the Year

(Thirtieth Sunday 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 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)

Isaiah 25:6-10

*On this mountain,
the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples
a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines,
of food rich and juicy, of fine strained wines.
On this mountain he will remove
the mourning veil covering all peoples,
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,
he will destroy Death for ever.
The Lord will wipe away
the tears from every cheek;
he will take away his people's shame
everywhere on earth,
for the Lord has said so.
That day, it will be said: See, this is our God
in whom we hoped for salvation;
the Lord is the one in whom we hoped.
We exult and we rejoice
that he has saved us;
for the hand of the Lord
rests on this mountain.*

Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus began to speak to the chief priests and elders of the people in parables: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. Next he sent some more servants. "Tell those who have been invited" he said "that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding." But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. The king was furious. He despatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding." So these servants went out on to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests. When the king came in to look at the guests he noticed one man who was not wearing a wedding garment, and said to him, "How did you get in here, my friend, without a wedding garment?" And the man was silent. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

MONDAY: Galatians 4:22-24,26-27,31-5:1

The Law says, if you remember, that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave-girl, and one by his free-born wife. The child of the slave-girl was born in the ordinary way; the child of the free woman was born as the result of a promise. This can be regarded as an allegory: the women stand for the two covenants. The first who comes from Mount Sinai, and whose children are slaves, is Hagar. The Jerusalem above, however, is free and is our mother, since scripture says: Shout for joy, you barren women who bore no children! Break into shouts of joy and gladness, you who were never in labour. For there are more sons of the forsaken one than sons of the wedded wife. So, my brothers, we are the children, not of the slave-girl, but of the free-born wife.

When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.

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

In reading more about Paul's letter to the Galatians last week I learned something I had not thought of before – that's always good, isn't it? You know how the simplistic idea of what Christians believe is that 'when they die they go to heaven'. Well, apart from the simplistic nature of such a phrase, the Jews of Jesus' day did not think like this – and this can help us both understand what Paul is teaching, and understand what we Christians really believe.

The reality for the Jews of this time is that they didn't worry about what happened after death – except that God would look after them (They were buried in family crypts and eventually their bones were swept together 'to join the fathers'). There were two 'times' for these people: the present time (with difficulties and the 'Law' to guide them) – and the 'time to come' when God would reveal himself through the messiah. (The 'time to come' is not 'when you die' – it is about God's time)

I know it is Sunday and not a 'Galatians day' but I notice our Sunday readings make more sense with the revealing of Paul's teaching in Galatians (I have printed Monday's section of Galatians to help – I hope – technically, it needs a bit of Old Testament history but if you squint your eyes you get the idea!!!).

Paul continues to speak about being 'free' – but something more!

When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free.

Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.

Paul is teaching that Jesus' death and resurrection has changed our understanding of both our life, and God's life. The new reality is that the 'Time to come' is here, it began with the death and resurrection of Jesus – what the Jews were waiting for is here, now! (This is why he warns Christians not to go back to slavery to the Law and the sign of circumcision.)

And so to today's Word of God:

Isaiah relates God's promise of a wonderful banquet – on a mountain (where God often chose to reveal himself) with 'rich and juicy food'! It's all to happen in 'the time to come'. In 2020 we, like Paul in the middle of the first century, can see the messages in the prophet's words – because we, like Paul, live in the what was the 'time to come' or, as we call it today: "the time of the Spirit". (Just go down the first reading and notice how many words and images remind you of Gospel images of the mountain of Calvary!)

The image of God wanting to marry his people runs through the Hebrew Scriptures, together with the heavenly banquet. Jesus speaks to the chief priests and the elders again and delivers

an invitation from God to be ready to see the 'time to come' arriving very soon. The story presumes that they will not be able to take this invitation seriously (as they usually have 'better' things to do!). This passage from Matthew appears in chapter 22 and things are becoming frightening for Jesus as he is arrested in chapter 26:

*"The wedding is ready;
but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads
in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding"*

*"These servants went out on the roads and collected together everyone they
could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests."*

Finally, I officiated at a wedding recently which had been arranged over a year ago. The wedding feast sounded like it would reflect Isaiah's – in a huge barn in the Lakes. As it happened, I was not invited to the wedding feast – did I not have a wedding garment? I did. Neither was I *"Bound hand and foot and thrown out into the dark, where there was weeping and grinding of teeth"*! Just that the two immediate families accounted for the 30 people allowed to gather after the wedding! (Good job it wasn't two week's later!) Oh, do pray for Catherine and John who just wanted to get married – and they did send me an M&S parcel the week after!!! (with juicy cheese and fine, strained wine!)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 11, 2020

"What is true, noble, just, pure, lovable, honored; that which is virtue and deserves praise, may all this be the daily object of our commitment (cf. Phil 4,8). I repeat: what is true, noble, just, pure, lovable, honored; what is virtue and deserves praise, may all this be the daily object of our commitment... In this way we will become a Church more and more rich in fruits of holiness, we will give glory to the Father who loves us with infinite tenderness, to the Son who continues to give us salvation, to the Spirit who opens our hearts and pushes us towards the fullness of good."

Pope Francis

ANGELUS OCTOBER 4, 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.
- **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.)

Saturday: *"On the other hand, those who rely on the keeping of the Law are under a curse, since scripture says: Cursed be everyone who does not persevere in observing everything prescribed in the book of the Law."*

I was reflecting on the impact and the weightiness that this verse carried for the Jewish people. No one could keep all the restrictions placed on them and yet "cursed be everyone" who doesn't keep them. There were 613 Jewish laws apart from the ten commandments and the bits and pieces that the Pharisees added!

Is it any surprise that Paul tells the Galatians they are mad to want to go back to that oppressive regime.

It is a good job that we are not under the same cursed stricture - or do we feel we are?

What might Paul say to us! Perhaps Galatians has an answer: "What the Spirit brings is very different"

Friday: *Thank you, glad you mentioned Fratelli Tutti.*

Sunday: *Thanks Fr. LOTS to ponder. I have been feeling that so many of the things we would normally want to do to 'produce good fruit' are not possible at the moment, but today the readings reminded me to work harder at it.*

I hope you are well Fr. We really appreciate the virus times; it has become part of my evening routine and I would be lost without it !

Sunday: *"in October 2020 what does this good fruit look like?" – Short question but needs quite a lot of pondering.*

Wednesday: *Loved the thought that we can wrestle with God ...mentally, emotionally ,lovingly.*

The caption "When all you have left is God " on the image was very, very powerfulcould almost be used as a prayer card! I remember when someone said to me ..."Always remember to let others pray for you ,when you find it impossible to pray. I suppose that's the wonderful nature of living in a Faithful Community...you know and trust that others are indeed praying on your behalf .

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

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. Paul was going for an operation to put a plate in his head – but it has been postponed so he is returning to his special unit now until he can have the operation. As you can imagine, it's a blow for him and the family as they have been preparing. Fr Peter</i>
Our Teachers	