

# St John the Evangelist, Poulton

13<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Tuesday of the Twenty-eighth Week of the Year

(Thirtieth Tuesday of Isolation)

Sign on at: [saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com](mailto:saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com)

Parish Website: [www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk](http://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](http://www.universalis.com))

**Galatians 5:1-6**

*When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. It is I, Paul, who tell you this: if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you at all. With all solemnity I repeat my warning: Everyone who accepts circumcision is obliged to keep the whole Law. But if you do look to the Law to make you justified, then you have separated yourselves from Christ, and have fallen from grace. Christians are told by the Spirit to look to faith for those rewards that righteousness hopes for, since in Christ Jesus whether you are circumcised or not makes no difference – what matters is faith that makes its power felt through love.*

**Luke 11:37-41**

*Jesus had just finished speaking when a Pharisee invited him to dine at his house. He went in and sat down at the table. The Pharisee saw this and was surprised that he had not first washed before the meal. But the Lord said to him, 'Oh, you Pharisees! You clean the outside of cup and plate, while inside yourselves you are filled with extortion and wickedness. Fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside too? Instead, give alms from what you have and then indeed everything will be clean for you.'*

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

As he comes to the end of his explosive letter to his friends in Galatia Paul insists that:

*“When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free”*

We could spend some time wondering what he, or I, or you, mean by 'free' – or 'free from what'? We could find a way of expressing this for ourselves from our own experience or our feelings of the opposite of freedom. Certainly Paul, as a Jew, is concerned that he is free to be at rights with God. But his total obsession with what God is done in Jesus has promised him freedom to trust what Jesus has achieved - beyond what is achieved by you first obeying the Law.

Religious practice, though, can often be the opposite of freedom for people whose god makes demands on them. Even for the Hebrew people, the God who creates them in love and is grateful for their response can be perceived as a god who demands sacrifices and holocausts

before he loves them! Paul is, clearly, amazed that God is offering so much as a 'free gift' (grace) through what God's Son has done in proving his love.

And so, in response to Paul, it is helpful to spend some time wondering if our faith is making us free – and makes us feel free – because, to many people, Christianity comes across as demanding and oppressive. How do I feel? I wonder if our minds are really big enough, and 'sanitised' enough, to appreciate the gift of freedom from God Paul is experiencing? (some of his hearers seem to think Paul's teaching is a soft option – but, as he said earlier, his beliefs have caused him hardship! – and they are now)

We have picked up three words in this letter which Paul insists we put at the centre of our faith: 'Christ', 'the Spirit' and 'freedom' : everything good is built on these; grows from these. More tomorrow. (I wonder if people can see that in us?)

TUESDAY OCTOBER 13, 2020

*"In the soul of those who pray, the sense of their own weakness is more precious than moments of exaltation, when it seems that life is a series of victories and successes. This always happens in prayer: moments of prayer that we feel lift us up, even of enthusiasm, and moments of prayer of pain, aridity, trial. This is what prayer is: letting ourselves be carried by God, and also letting ourselves be struck by unpleasant situations and even temptations. This is a reality found in many other biblical vocations, even in the New Testament; think, for example, of St Peter and St Paul. Their lives were like this too: moments of exultation and moments of low spirits, of suffering."*

*Pope Francis*

GENERAL AUDIENCE OCTOBER 7, 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](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. “

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

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

**Monday:** *Thank you Cath ....in your poem you mention Concern....Engagement...Action .*

*It made me think is there anything more we could do either individually or collectively as a Community of Faith for others less fortunate than ourselves ??*

*I wonder how the school In Blackpool (that was flagged up in the past) is fairing in this Crisis?*

*Does Fleetwood Food Bank have any particular advance requests before that great Festival in December?*

**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.*

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	