

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

16th October 2020

Friday of the Twenty-eighth Week of the Year

(Thirtieth 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 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)

Ephesians 1:11-14

*It is in Christ that we were claimed as God's own,
chosen from the beginning,
under the predetermined plan of the one who guides all things
as he decides by his own will;
chosen to be,
for his greater glory,
the people who would put their hopes in Christ before he came.
Now you too, in him,
have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your salvation,
and have believed it;
and you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise,
the pledge of our inheritance
which brings freedom for those whom God has taken for his own, to make his glory praised.*

Luke 12:1-7

The people had gathered in their thousands so that they were treading on one another. And Jesus began to speak, first of all to his disciples. 'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees – that is, their hypocrisy. Everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. For this reason, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in hidden places will be proclaimed on the housetops.

'To you my friends I say: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. I will tell you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has the power to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Can you not buy five sparrows for two pennies? And yet not one is forgotten in God's sight. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. There is no need to be afraid: you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.'

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

Just a quick reflection on the Gospel today from what we have learned from St Paul recently.

*'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees – that is, their **hypocrisy**. Everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear.'*

The word 'hypocrisy', we learned from Paul, comes from the Greek interest in Theatre. It is the word that expresses what actors do – they put on an image, clothes, even a mask, so that they can act like someone else. This is fine if we all know these people are acting – but here Jesus accuses the Pharisees of wearing a mask when they are 'pretending' to speak for God. But Jesus also promises that all will be uncovered and made clear. Just a 'notice'!

So to St Paul today, who continues the longest sentence in the New Testament!

Here we are in another COVID-19 day of changes to the government's 'Covid-19 rules'. I don't know if you have noticed, but people are likely to say 'I don't know which are the rules now!' – but increasingly, they are knowing how to behave to keep healthy. We are moving to understand how to live safely with Covid-19 rather than expect someone to give us rules we don't understand.

I think there is a similar challenge for us today when we read Paul's words – and read them prayerfully. The world may think we are Catholic Christians because we like a hierarchical, colourful church with lots of rules so that we can say: 'you know where you are with our rules and practices'. And, we even meet fellow Catholics who seem to only see this side of our Church. If we are not careful we can remain with the superficial colourful side of our Church without finding the deeper realities of what God is offering us.

This deeper reality is what Paul is sharing with us today. He is not sharing this out of an 'RE text book' from his day – but from his experience of meeting Jesus and his experience of God in his life. Each of his half sentences is a day's reflection for our own faith:

"It is in Christ that we were claimed as God's own"

Take this statement and stick it on your fridge – ponder it every time you make a cup of tea and put the milk back! Memorise it and speak the words to the person you have made the tea for: "Do you know that.....". Speak the words when someone asks you 'why are you a Catholic Christian in this day and age?'

As I mentioned yesterday it is thought that many of these phrases are from liturgical passages used at Mass or prayer in the time of Paul. They are not so much texts of doctrine which focus in on exact belief, but they lead us outwards to learn how Paul's (the early Church's, or our) understanding is – but they lead us outwards to the glory of what God has done in Jesus, what the Spirit is doing in us, who we are as Church – its mind-blowing! The phrases encompass us in God's life – in the same way as celebrating Mass brings us together as one people, rather than being separate people in front of God.

It is worth taking Paul's words a few at a time and challenging ourselves to imagine what God has done for me (us). Lets look again:

"It is in Christ that we were claimed as God's own"

'I am God's own' – how do you feel now?

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2020

"Even those on the margins, even those who are rejected and scorned by society, are considered by God to be worthy of his love. He prepares his banquet for everyone: the just and sinners, good and bad, intelligent and uneducated."

Pope Francis

ANGELUS OCTOBER 11, 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.)

Tuesday: I suppose, in a way, it's a bit like keeping school rules after you have left school. I remember visiting the school a couple of years after I left. The nun who was seeing me out said, "Are you not going to pay a visit to the chapel"? My automatic response was "But, I've nothing to cover my head" (we were always made to wear our school hats when we were going in to chapel and always had our heads covered in our own church). I never expected it to be a nun who would be the first to tell me, in effect, that the ceiling would not fall down if I went in without a head covering.

Monday: Thank you Cathin 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"

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
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 had his operation and the physio that has been dealing with him at both hospitals has seen him today and says he is looking very well! He was smiling a lot last evening. His family hope to Facetime this evening. Please pray for them. Fr Peter</i>
Our Teachers	

Wednesday Suggestion: Do we have any news of the other people we have been praying for? It would be nice to send up a "Thankyou" instead of a "Please".
