

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

17th October 2020

Saturday of the Twenty-eighth Week of the Year
(Thirtieth Saturday of Isolation)

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com
Parish Website: www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk

I do not cease to
give thanks for you,
remembering you
in my prayers...

Ephesians 1:16 ESV

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 1:15-23

I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love that you show towards all the saints, have never failed to remember you in my prayers and to thank God for you. May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named not only in this age but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.

Luke 12:8-12

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I tell you, if anyone openly declares himself for me in the presence of men, the Son of Man will declare himself for him in the presence of the angels. But the man who disowns me in the presence of men will be disowned in the presence of God's angels.

'Everyone who says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

'When they take you before synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say, because when the time comes, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say.'

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

I'd like to start with Pope Francis' reflection at his recent 'Angelus' appearance, as it allows us to open up today's passage from the letter to the Ephesians (I think):

"Without grace we cannot take a step forward in Christian life. Everything is grace. It is not enough to accept the invitation to follow the Lord; one must be open to a journey of conversion, which changes the heart. The garment of mercy, which God offers us unceasingly, is the free gift of his love; it is precisely grace. And it demands to be welcomed with astonishment and joy: "Thank you, Lord, for having given me this gift.""

Pope Francis

ANGELUS OCTOBER 11, 2020

I must confess that, being brought up as a Catholic, this word 'grace' was used without any simple, understandable, translation for me. The word seem to be used as if it were something you could order from God in jugs or bottles and you paid for in various ways – like the milkman delivering to your door (Now, you may have to explain that image to some younger people – now I come to think about it I did see an electric milk cart yesterday – somewhere?)

Pope Francis speaks of 'grace' clearly: *"The garment of mercy, which God offers us unceasingly, is the free gift of his love; it is precisely grace"*. Grace is a free gift from God given to us 'gracefully'. And when we look about us, and in us, we discover what Francis says: *"Everything is grace"*. And that's it! Except God's free gifts open us up to a journey.

St Paul has already been on journeys and may be writing this letter in prison – the journey has a new picture now for him. However, as he reflects on God's gifts to him he remembers those people that God has given him who, through their faith, have allowed him to be the person God has invited him to be.

Some of the sections of Scripture we have reflected on during this COVID-19 time have needed historical or doctrinal background for us to appreciate what God is saying to us. This letter is more of a prayer. A examination of conscience to help us appreciate the gifts God has offered to us – some of them we may have missed the value of!

Paul is also keen to mention people who may not have names but he remembers them as part of the communities of Christians in different places – he calls them 'Assemblies', what came to be known as 'Churches'. Those people who we stand besides, or behind, as we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. Those who's voices we can hear in speech and song (Remember that?). Even those who seem to be in church as a private prayer and dash away without speaking to anyone after Mass. The feeling of Paul's final line today allows us to begin to imagine who we are as Church:

*"...made him (Jesus),
as the ruler of everything,
the head of the Church (us);
which is his body (the vital organs),
the fullness of him (God the Father)
who fills the whole creation."*

Paul invites us to pray in thanks for those who have made our faith what it is – not just those we can name, but all who have made up the Church which we are part of now, today. Name the gifts, the graces, God has given you freely, without pre-payment.

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.
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- **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.
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- **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.
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- **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.
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- 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.
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- **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: *"It is in Christ that we were claimed as God's own" reminded me to share with you a lovely moment on Friday morning when I was on the school run.*

A lady walking back to her car with a little toddler (not school age) paused outside the church doors as the little girl asked if it was open. She said 'no, would you like to pray here, outside?' Looking up at the doors, the little girl made the sign of the cross and began to pray with her mother. Could there be a more fitting scene for faith in 2020?!? Perhaps I'm over sensitive at the moment but it brought a tear to my eye!

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?

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 Good Facetime yesterday 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".
