

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

24th October 2020

Saturday of the Twenty-ninth Week of the Year
(Thirty-first Saturday of Isolation)

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



EPHESIANS
GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST

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:

Thanks to Elaine and Cath who have shared some of their Diocesan Course learning with us. Their present module is on 'Second Vatican Council' – there is a piece at the back of this edition.

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 4:7-16

Each one of us has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it. It was said that he would: When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners, he gave gifts to men.

When it says, 'he ascended', what can it mean if not that he descended right down to the lower regions of the earth? The one who rose higher than all the heavens is none other than the one who descended. And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.

Then we shall not be children any longer, or tossed one way and another and carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practising deceit. If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love.

Luke 13:1-9

Some people arrived and told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices. At this he said to them, 'Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galileans? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not, I tell you. No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.'

He told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to the man who looked after the vineyard, "Look here, for three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied "leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it: it may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down.'"

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

In life we are used to being asked to take on a task for work, or society, or the family. If we are concerned that the task is beyond our experience or ability we ask for help – or 'training'

– so that we can do it well. With this in mind, after listening to Paul over the past few days calling us up and on, we may be worried about our ability to achieve what he expects of us.

Today Paul encourages us. There are a number of insights into what Jesus has done that we can dwell on to give us courage.

Firstly he says that, in the resurrection of Jesus, he has ‘captured us’. Not like the conquering army who took the Hebrews to Babylon – but like a chased child giggles when it is caught by a loved one! We are captured in love by the son of the God who created us!

Paul continues to point out that when we are captured we are given gifts – not plucked out of the sky or off the Christmas Tree but from Jesus’ very self:

“Each one of us has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it”

These gifts are not, then, unconnected to one another, but part of the whole who is Jesus so that together, we are a unity. Paul speaks of Christ going to the heights and the depths to find us and catch us and give us these gifts:

*“And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles;
to some, prophets;
to some, evangelists;
to some, pastors and teachers;
so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service,
building up the body of Christ.
In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith
and in our knowledge of the Son of God,
until we become the perfect Man,
fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.”*

Not only does this encourage us each in our own gifts, it also demands that we appreciate those who have other gifts which are not mine – but they are a vital, interlinked, parts of the whole project which is the resurrection of Jesus.

So what are my gifts? What are the gifts in others I don’t appreciate?

Part of our Christian vocation is to confirm others in their gifts – have I seen that gift grow?

Do I know people who have gifts but are afraid to believe it?

Perhaps we easily miss the connections between my gifts and those of others?

*“If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ,
who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together,
every joint adding its own strength,
for each separate part to work according to its function.
So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love.”*

SATURDAY OCTOBER 24, 2020

““The Lord listens”: sometimes in prayer it is enough to know this. Problems are not always solved. Those who pray are not deluded: they know that many questions of life down here remain unresolved, with no way out; suffering will accompany us and, after one battle, others will await us. But if we are listened to, everything becomes more bearable.”

Pope Francis

GENERAL AUDIENCE OCTOBER 14, 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.
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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.)

Wednesday: These (Virus) times have certainly made me value faith over religion. The hamster wheel of religion can blind us to what truly matters. It's an opportunity to deepen our faith. Thank you 🙏

Tuesday: Thanks to you Fr. for keeping us close together with the Virus Times. Also a big thank you to all the good kind people who have looked after us with their virus protection kit as we enter and leave church.

Sunday: The other day you asked for 'thank yous' - rather than 'pleases'
Clare and Pete Cobb's glorious music - they have sung us through Covid; it's been a joy

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.

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)	Maureen died this morning, at home with her three girls. Please remember them in your prayers.
Paul Sharrock (Not Covid-19) (and family: Kathryn, Mary & Rachael)	<i>Paul has had a setback last night whilst still in hospital – all the family were asked to visit which doesn't see good – but he is progressing today. Please pray for them. Fr Peter</i>

'Thanks You, God' - Do we have any news to thank God for - as well as other people we are praying for?

Clare and Pete Cobb's glorious music	they have sung us through Covid; it's been a joy

Reflection on the Second Vatican Council

Did you know?

The basilica of St Peter in Rome once hosted 2 coffee bars – not in the surrounding area or piazza but in the basilica itself! Pope John XXIII had two coffee bars installed as part of the seating plan for the second Vatican Council, to give the assembled bishops an area to relax, enjoy some refreshment and hold more informal discussions.

At the opening of the Council Pope John XXIII gave an opening address to the 2500 bishops from around the world – and then left them to it! He said to them: “The Church is in your hands”. (What an act of faith!) He described the task before them in the following way:

“The greatest concern of this council is that the sacred and central truths of our Christian faith should be guarded and taught more effectively. The substance of our central beliefs in one thing, the way in which it is presented is another. It is the presentation of the faith with which we are concerned and our approach will be a thoroughly pastoral one. The Church does not offer riches that will pass away, but a power in Jesus Christ to offer the world a way to walk in truth.

Anticipating that there would be different viewpoints and possibly some disagreements as to the way forward, he advised the bishops that what they needed for the task was serenity of mind, brotherly concord, dignity in discussion and wisdom of deliberation. If only all public debates followed these guidelines!

Elaine Brownwood

The full text of the address is available [Here](#)

Keep in mind that this was the first council not to have been called because of a Doctrinal or Heretical issue – but to a Pastoral approach for the times (as we see above)

The biggest sadness of the council was that the church and parishes did not have the ability to involve the whole people in what it was about – this is why we are still discovering what the Spirit was speaking to us.