

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

24th November 2020

Tuesday of the Thirty-fourth Week of the Year
(Thirty-sixth Tuesday 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.

Notes from Fr Peter:

RED WEDNESDAY: Is tomorrow when we remember people throughout the world who are persecuted for their faith – any faith, anywhere. For more information please see the parish website or <https://acnuk.org/> Or (Click here)

Being together to pray allows us the quiet to listen. This is very special and opens up for us a new appreciation of 'being together as Church' – The short period at St John's is not a 'drop in' to pray alone, but a chance for private prayer together with all the support that brings. People were also appreciative of the chance to know others were OK afterwards. Come along.

From next week:

Tuesday Private Prayer from 9.30am to 10am at St John's
Wednesday Private Prayer from 10.00am to 11.30am At Ss Martin & Hilda's
Thursday Private Prayer from 9.30am to 10am at St John's
Friday Private Prayer from 9.30am to 10am at St John's
Sunday Private prayer from 11am to 12.00 at St Martin's
(There will be no Eucharist over the month)

(Daily Scripture is available from www.universalis.com)

Revelation 14:14-19

In my vision I, John, saw a white cloud and, sitting on it, one like a son of man with a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the sanctuary, and shouted aloud to the one sitting on the cloud, 'Put your sickle in and reap: harvest time has come and the harvest of the earth is ripe.' Then the one sitting on the cloud set his sickle to work on the earth, and the earth's harvest was reaped.

Another angel, who also carried a sharp sickle, came out of the temple in heaven, and the angel in charge of the fire left the altar and shouted aloud to the one with the sharp sickle, 'Put your sickle in and cut all the bunches off the vine of the earth; all its grapes are ripe.' So the angel set his sickle to work on the earth and harvested the whole vintage of the earth and put it into a huge winepress, the winepress of God's anger.

Luke 21:5-11

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, 'All these things you are staring at now – the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed.' And they put to him this question: 'Master,' they said 'when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that this is about to take place?'

'Take care not to be deceived,' he said 'because many will come using my name and saying, "I am he" and, "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.'

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

One of the things I have noticed throughout my ministry is how many people, when asked 'when have you felt the presence of God?' say 'when someone died'. They may have experienced lack of faith,

serious breakdown or anger towards God – but they were aware of the closeness of God. (Some, of course will simply reject God and we can understand that). The thing these people have in common is some form of faith understanding beyond themselves and beyond this life.

Keep this in mind, especially if you have had similar experiences, when we read the ‘Book of Revelation’ – it should continually invite us to ask: ‘What is the revelation?’ The people surrounding St John are going through serious terror and this is reflected in the images. But they are also people who have experienced a relatively short period of faith in Jesus as Lord. (The Temple was destroyed in 70AD!) Their faith, like that of all of us, will be of different strengths and experiences.

In a way there is nothing new about today’s message. The scriptures, and Jesus himself, have always foretold judgment. And so we have, today, two sickles: one bringing about the ‘Harvest’, the other bringing about ‘God’s anger’.

But it matters who is judging. If we are judged by someone who knows us well and we are aware of who we are it may be like ‘passing an exam we have prepared well for’. If we are judged by someone who we know to love us, it has another dimension – the funeral liturgy has many prayers to God that he may make a ‘Merciful Judgement’. We are considering, here, our faith in God, but, even more important, God’s faith in us – (This is not an exam we can pass by our own hard work!)

These early Christians who are witnessing persecution, even if they are not personally experiencing it, will be weighing up their strength of faith in Jesus and what he promised. They are, not doubt, weighing up their own living in faith – and belief in Jesus’ mercy as judge.

This image is not, of course, simply a prayer that they might, magically, avoid the dangers surrounding them. It is a serious reflection on their faith in what God has offered them in the future life – when ever and however that might come to face them.

We will soon be leaving this year behind (I’m sure we will be glad of that!!!). But as we approach the end of this liturgical year we could do worse than ponder on what we have learned about our God, about Jesus, about the Spirit, and about our own faith this year. (Can we name three things we have learned about God? Three things which have deepened our faith?)

Because, as we start a new year next Sunday, we can make some resolutions as to how we could strengthen our faith in the year to come. What faith actions we have been forced into this year, due to practical events, have been so important that we can build on them in the year ahead?

This Book is not ended yet – we have more encouragement to come.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2020

“Those who pray are never alone. Indeed, Jesus is not only a witness and teacher of prayer; He is more. He welcomes us in His prayer so that we might pray in Him and through Him. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit.”

Pope Francis

GENERAL AUDIENCE NOVEMBER 11, 2020

PARISH NOTICES:

COVID 19 Security - When you come to Church during the present Lockdown:

- ✓ 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. (if you have visited church for private prayer you will recognise these requests. Thanks)
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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 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.
- ✓ There is a basket at the back of church for your offertory donations – thank you.
- ✓ There are weekly bulletins at the back of church with other information. However please regard any paper you touch as your own to take away with you. Please do not leave it behind in case of contamination.
- ✓ Thanks to our small, but keen, band of stewards, without whom we could not open our church. Please speak to them if you would like to help with this.
- ✓ If you want to bring your own prayerbook or bible that is fine – but please do not leave it in church for others to touch.
- ✓ *Please pray for all people throughout the world who are prevented for celebrating the Eucharist regularly for all sorts of reasons. What do they do?*

- **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: www.wyre.gov.uk/coronavirus. 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: *What a Wonderful Arrangement of today's Psalm.
It's great that they share their God given talent with others.*

Friday; *"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the SIN of the world." (I have always been puzzled when we say at Mass "who takes away the sins of the world")*

I began to reflect more deeply on what the sin of the world actually is, and perhaps have come to the conclusion that the only sin, out of which all other sins derive, is selfish pride: putting myself in front of every other consideration and every other person. If, in our world view, we put humanity at the top of creation and exclude God the Creator from the equation, then the key issue for our life can easily become how to get to the top of the pile (no matter how little or large the pile is that we personally inhabit). If, however, we take away selfish pride then we live in service of others.

How did Jesus take this away? Paul challenges us, as we have read previously, to put on the mind of Christ who ..."emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave." (Philippians Ch 2) and John in his account of the Last Supper puts these words into Jesus mouth: "wash each other's feet ... I have given you an example" (John 13, 2-16)

The result: "And therefore ... God raised him high .. every knee should bend at the name of Jesus" (Phil Ch 2) and in the vision of heaven we see what this means: "The Lamb that was sacrificed is worthy to be given power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and power ... and the four animals said 'Amen'; and the elders prostrated themselves to worship".

The vision John gives us of heaven is one of the right order of things as you have in your reflections drawn attention to all the time: God is God and Jesus is Lord. We bow down in wonder and worship at the feet of the Lamb. Amen

Saturday: *Always good to follow the Reflection you give us from Melbourne (as well as your own! I've thanked Elaine for her recent thoughts on 2nd Vatican Councilit's good to be reminded about what it all should mean to us.*

Friday: *Wonderfulto be at our prayerful gathering this morning. Such a calm relaxing atmospherelovely to hear the Children's voices playing outside. Plenty of laughter afterwards.....a real tonic spiritually and emotionally!*

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Kath Wainman is in hospital poorly	Please pray for her.
Please pray for Kathleen Keohane who has died	You may have known her. Requiem Mass: Thursday 3 rd December at 3.00pm in St John's – invitations from the family.
Myra Murphy is sick – and asks for your prayers	Many of you will know Myra from St Martin's – Myra asked me to thank you all for your prayers and your thoughts of her – as you can imagine, if you know her, she really means that and feels your prayers.
Peter Brownwood	Who is worried about his health – but progressing well.
Pauline Devane has died	Pauline was from Nicholas Owen, but more recently joined us as St Martin's. She has been in a home for the last couple of years.
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.
Paul Sharrock (Not Covid-19) (and family: Kathryn, Mary & Rachael)	<i>Paul has managed to balance most of his issues after his operation – Paul has returned to his special unit – which has visiting for immediate family but with strict Lockdown II restrictions – Thank you, God. Thanks for your prayers so far - Please continue to pray for them. Fr Peter</i>

'Thank 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	<i>they have sung us through Covid; it's been a joy</i>
For all our Faith-filled Parishioners with whom we share our weekday Masses.	<i>It's so supportive to be in the presence of others.</i>
To scientists working on a COVID help	