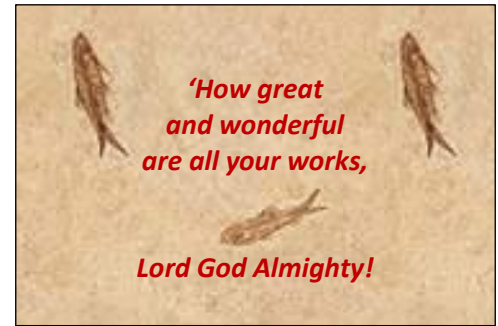


St John the Evangelist, Poulton

25th November 2020

Wednesday of the Thirty-fourth Week of the Year
(Thirty-sixth Wednesday 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:

Today is **RED WEDNESDAY**: when we remember people throughout the world who are persecuted for their faith – any faith, anywhere. You will notice many national and church buildings flooded in RED – including St John's!
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 15:1-4

What I, John, saw in heaven was a great and wonderful sign: seven angels were bringing the seven plagues that are the last of all, because they exhaust the anger of God. I seemed to see a glass lake suffused with fire, and standing by the lake of glass, those who had fought against the beast and won, and against his statue and the number which is his name. They all had harps from God, and they were singing the hymn of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb:

*'How great and wonderful are all your works,
Lord God Almighty;
just and true are all your ways,
King of nations.
Who would not revere and praise your name, O Lord?
You alone are holy,
and all the pagans will come and adore you
for the many acts of justice you have shown.'*

Luke 21:12-19

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name – and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives.'

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

- We said this book would be difficult – just remember: ***‘God is in charge; Jesus is Lord’***

The fear seems to be waning, but this is not a time to declare ourselves on the winning side; nor is the danger over! That is not a comment on the hope of a vaccine, or three, for COVID-19, but, instead, a comment on today’s reading from the book of Revelation!

We have signs – we need them, but we need to be able to be ‘lifted’ without reaching the final stage of this fear. There are messages of ‘wonder’ whilst still being encircled by confusion: *“a glass lake suffused with fire”!* We are given an image of *“those who had fought against the beast and won”*, but there are others who are remembered in this conflict – (we will hear of them later.)

Again, we are confronted with a question of how to read this passage.

As I read this, over and over again, at St Martin’s this morning one particular line struck me – this is a good sign that we should stay with it. It was:

“Who would not revere and praise your name, O Lord?”

It could be read as a rhetorical question – but read it as a real question: what is your answer?

Evidently this whole book is the result of many people not able to ‘revere and praise’ the Lord’s name. It is not in everyone’s gift to see where God is in the world – who can and who can’t see what is obvious to some people?

Some people can see that God’s ways are ‘just and true’. Some can recognise God as ‘King of the Nations’. Some can experience that God ‘alone is holy’. Some can shout out: *“How great and wonderful are all your works, Lord God Almighty”* – even though they are still going through a great persecution. All of us reading this would like to see ourselves on God’s side of the battle which has been going on – but, at this stage of recovery, it would be worth re-focusing our eyes on the reason for our hope. This passage is less about the fact that ‘things seem to be going our way’ and more about recognising ‘why’.

This passage contains the glory of the ‘Song of Moses’ (Deuteronomy 32). Before Moses dies he reflects on what God has done for him throughout his life. With his people he remembers the time spent in the Desert as they prepare to approach the ‘Land of Promise’. After this discussion Moses overflows with a song which glorifies the God who has made all this happen – and this reveals who God is and how great he is.

And so, we are not just people on God’s side to cheer when we win. We are not just the people who thank the God who is victorious on our behalf. But we ask ourselves: *‘are we the people who would revere and praise your name, O Lord?’*

It is interesting that, though much of this passage is from the Hebrew Scriptures, and most of this early Church would be convert Jews, the part played by the pagans has not been forgotten:

*“...and all the pagans will come and adore you
for the many acts of justice you have shown.”*

As we approach the end of the church year a couple of reflections may be helpful:

There are not ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in this book of Revelation but many shades in between. For most of us the place of doubt, loss, and even time of separation from God has been important in our eventual growth in knowledge of what it means to have Faith in the Lord. This was certainly true for Moses’ people in the desert – and it is part of his ‘Glory to God’. Have we recognised similar growth events to God in Glory and thanks?

At the end of the year, it is good to ask, simply, ‘what have I learned about God this year?’

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 25, 2020

"Without Jesus, our prayer risks being reduced to human effort, destined most of the time to failure. But He has taken on himself every cry, every groan, every jubilation, every supplication ... every human prayer. And let us not forget the Holy Spirit who prays in us; it is he who leads us to pray, he leads us to Jesus. He is the gift that the Father and the Son gave us to foster an encounter with God. And the Holy Spirit, when we pray, is the Holy Spirit who prays in our hearts."

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?*
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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.
 - **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

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Kath Wainman has died	Please pray for her and her family
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	