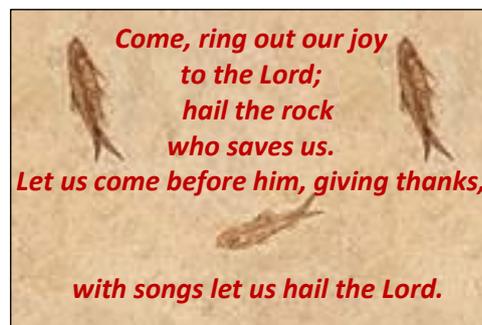


St John the Evangelist, Poulton

28th November 2020

Saturday of the Thirty-fourth Week of the Year
(Thirty-sixth Saturday 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: Being together to pray allows us the quiet to listen. Next Wednesday should allow us to return to the 'distanced Mass' settings we had before the recent lockdown (That's my understanding, anyway). So:

From next week:

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| Tuesday | Private Prayer from 9.30am to 10am at St John's |
| Wednesday | Morning Mass at 9.30am at Ss Martin & Hilda's |
| Thursday | Morning Mass at 9.30am at St John's |
| Friday | Private Morning Mass at 9.30am at St John's |
| Saturday | Vigil Mass at 6.00pm at St John's |

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

Revelation 22:1-7

The angel showed me, John, the river of life, rising from the throne of God and of the Lamb and flowing crystal-clear down the middle of the city street. On either side of the river were the trees of life, which bear twelve crops of fruit in a year, one in each month, and the leaves of which are the cure for the pagans.

The ban will be lifted. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in its place in the city; his servants will worship him, they will see him face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. It will never be night again and they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them. They will reign for ever and ever.

The angel said to me, 'All that you have written is sure and will come true: the Lord God who gives the spirit to the prophets has sent his angel to reveal to his servants what is soon to take place. Very soon now, I shall be with you again.' Happy are those who treasure the prophetic message of this book.

Luke 21:34-36

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

(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'**

I know a lot of people find Science Fiction difficult (Essentially it is another form of 'fairy story') but the end of this book does remind me of the good news that comes at the end of the terror and mess of a science fiction story – and a fairy story should end with '...happy ever after', shouldn't it?

Today's reading is a wonderful picture of the calm after the storm – we have this image in music and art, don't we? (Share your best examples? 'Pastoral Symphony', Turner etc?)

Perhaps the main reflection today is that this is not just God's victory alone – but the victory of all those who have been marked with God's name on their foreheads – there are a number of images which

remind us of Baptism here. It is a victory for us. But God involves his people so closely with him that it is our victory, too – not that we can do anything without God!

Today's group of Mass readings connects the two ends of the church's year – a sort of bridge or piece of sticky-tape to complete the circle! Firstly, in the intoxication of the Victory in the Book of Revelation we are sobered up by the Gospel where Jesus reminds us to "*watch yourselves*".

But the best connection between the difficulties of the last year and the promises and hope of the year to come is in today's Psalm. I'll leave you with this with thanks for all those who have thanked me for tackling the Book of Revelation – glad it has helped:

Psalm 94(95):1-7

Marana tha! Come, Lord Jesus!

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord.

Marana tha! Come, Lord Jesus!

A mighty God is the Lord,
a great king above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his.
To him belongs the sea, for he made it
and the dry land shaped by his hands.

Marana tha! Come, Lord Jesus!

Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us:
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand.

Marana tha! Come, Lord Jesus!

just remember: **'God is in charge; Jesus is Lord'**

(PS: 'Maranatha' never played for Argentina!)

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2020

"Taking risks... there is no faithfulness without risk. Fidelity to God means handing over our life, letting our carefully laid plans be disrupted by our need to serve. "But I have my plans, and if I have to serve..." Let your plans be upset, go and serve. It is sad when Christians play a defensive game, content only to observe rules and obey commandments. Those "moderate" Christians who never go beyond boundaries, never, because they are afraid of risk. And those, allow me this image, those who take care of themselves to avoid risk begin in their lives a process of mummification of their souls, and they end up as mummies. Following rules is not enough; fidelity to Jesus is not just about not making mistakes, this is quite wrong."

Pope Francis

HOMILY NOVEMBER 15, 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.)

Friday: Maybe we could still occasionally have a silent prayer meeting? I always fancied the Quaker meetings but never had the courage to find one to attend.

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:

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|--|--|
| Kath Wainman has died | Please pray for her and her family |
| Please pray for Kathleen Keohane who has died | You may have known her. Funeral Service: 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. |
| 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?

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|---|--|
| 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 | |