

# St John the Evangelist, Poulton

17<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Sunday of Second Week of Ordinary Time

Forty-fourth Sunday of Isolation

Sign on at: [saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com](mailto:saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com)

Parish Website: [www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk](http://www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk)

Second Year of Publication – Third Lockdown

*'Go and lie down,  
and if someone calls say,  
"Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."*

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:

**Lockdown III:** If you have symptoms please do not come to church.

### Mass during the week:

Saturday	6.00pm	Vigil Mass at St John's
Tuesday	9.30am	St John's
Wednesday	9.30am	St Martin's
Thursday	9.30am	St John's
Friday	9.30am	St John's
Saturday	6.00pm	Vigil Mass at St John's

(Daily Scripture is available from [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com))

### **1 Samuel 3:3-10,19**

*Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord, where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am.' Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli said, 'I did not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' He replied, 'I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down.' Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'*

*Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.*

### **John 1:35-42**

*As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi,' – which means Teacher – 'where do you live?' 'Come and see' he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.*

*One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas' – meaning Rock.*

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



*I'm sorry to those many of you will know this story –  
but it is worth re-telling and, I think, helps us with today's scripture:*

*There was a stormy, rainy night. The area began to flood very fast.*

*As the water rose to the bottom of the house windows two policemen came in wellies and invited the man who lived there to climb on their shoulders and they would take him to higher land. The man thanked them but said 'God will save me'.*

*Some hours later the water has risen to the upstairs window ledge. A boat passed and the occupants invited the man in the house to get into their boat and they would take him to safety. The man thanked them but said: 'God will save me'.*

*As dawn appeared the man was on his roof, surrounded by water. A helicopter appeared and invited him to catch a rope ladder to be taken to safety. The man declined saying: 'God will save me.'*

*The water rose. The man drowned! (Ahhh!)*

*When he got to God he was not pleased and asked God why he had not saved him as he had expected.*

*God said: 'I sent you two policemen, a boat and a helicopter – what more did you want?'*

Now, I know many of you will know that story but keep an eye on it as we make our first step into the readings of Sundays of 'Ordinary Time' – after the excitement of Christmas.

Just to give you an idea of the liturgical picture, the church has disrobed itself of white festive gowns and replaced them with green – green reminds us of the life-giving growth which surrounds us and we await its appearance on the trees again. We have kept the remnants of the crib until the traditional closing of Christmas at the feast of the Presentation on 2<sup>nd</sup> February – that it is in front of the lectern and next to the Word of God reminds us of who Jesus is. (I'd better go and take a photo! – see above)

This year on Sundays we will concentrate on St Mark's Gospel, but this week we have been given a Gospel reading from St John, and the first reading, which gives us an important tool for our everyday ministry. The tool is summed up in words from the first reading: *'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'*

If we are to become even better disciples of Jesus during this year we have to be listening to God speaking to us – if we are not listening we will not hear! (That sounds obvious, but anyone with children will understand!)

Samuel, in the first reading, heard God but thought he was hearing someone else. Eli sounds like he was getting annoyed with Samuel until he remembered that this could be God speaking. He advises Samuel

*'Go and lie down,  
and if someone calls say,  
"Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."'*

In the Gospel something similar happens. John the Baptist, whom we have seen had difficulties imagining Jesus as the style of Messiah he had been prepared to expect, *"stared hard at Jesus"* – just spend some time with this phrase and remember times when you have changed your approach to something, or made a decision to act. John's two disciples changed what they saw and followed Jesus. Andrew was changed and had to speak to his brother about what they had found. *"Jesus looked hard at Simon"* – there it is again! Jesus decided to choose Simon – and Simon's name was changed to Peter (Cephas, 'Rock'). God can, and does, often speak through other people to us.

We are invited by the Word of God to see where and how God was speaking in the lives of these people – lest we become like the man in the flood on the roof. If we were expecting God's deep voice to come from heaven then we will have missed him speaking – and we would be waiting still!

As we begin another year in our faith journey we are simply reminded that we need to listen for what God is saying to us – and not to wait for him to bellow! As we live in the twenty-first century since the birth of the Saviour we should be aware that the way God speaks can change, and what he is asking of his people develops. It is true that the Church cannot dance to every passing social fad but it is vital that we are open to hear what

God is asking of us today and tomorrow. Sometimes we could feel better by not listening as change is sometimes difficult to deal with – the key is listening and hearing to God’s word and then responding.

The Gospel Acclamation for today’s Mass is:

*Alleluia, alleluia!*  
*Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:*  
*you have the message of eternal life.*  
*Alleluia!*

I sometimes wonder what God will say to us, as Church, when we meet him and say “Well, why didn’t you say you wanted us to do that?”

A good scripture message for the fridge door as we start a new year (?):

*“Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”*

SUNDAY JANUARY 17, 2021

*"We cannot let our weariness, our falls and our failings discourage us. Instead, by humbly acknowledging them, we should make them opportunities to progress towards the Lord Jesus. Life is not about showing off our abilities, but a journey towards the One who loves us. We are not to show off our virtues in every step of our life; rather, with humility we should journey towards the Lord. By keeping our gaze fixed on the Lord, we will find the strength needed to persevere with renewed joy."*

Pope Francis

HOMILY JANUARY 6, 2021

## **PARISH NOTICES:**

### **COVID 19 Security - When you come to Mass:**

***Now that we have been allowed to move from private prayer to being able to celebrate Mass together please remember to do so safely. 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 by being careful.***

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Please do greet other people outside church – but remember to distance yourself and do not meet in groups that are obviously more than six.

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.

- **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](http://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](mailto: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.)

**Saturday:** Thanks Fr. Re: Pope Francis' comments, I wonder if any parishioners over 50 could articulate how their worship is different to when they were 30? I would be interested to know !

**Thursday:** On Tuesday you wrote that *"the relief of ordinary time helps us put the richness of what we have learned over the Advent & Christmas scriptures into every day practice."*

I was struck when I read of the flight into Egypt that Joseph was told: "take the Child with you". Did he really need to be told this! ? Perhaps the evangelist was reminding us that as we leave the Christmas story we too must "take the Child" with us to remind ourselves that he was born of a woman; that he had to learn how to live in his world and understand it; how to deal with bereavement, challenge and fatigue; and especially how to pray in desperate times "take this chalice from me" and to cry out: " My God why have you deserted me?" Indeed, one like us in every way ...and hence compassionate.

### People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Peter Brownwood	Who is worried about his health – but progressing well.
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 ( <i>Not Covid-19</i> ) (and family: Kathryn, Mary & Rachael)	<i>Paul has arrived back at his unit from the general hospital. It is much easier to communicate with the special unit and they appreciate how important contact with family is for people in such situations. Kathryn was allowed to visit Paul yesterday – he was tired but good – though they had to sit 2 metres apart (Have you measured that?) Things are looking up, now – and he is has not got COVID – 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?

<b>Our School Staff</b>	<i>Who have broken up for a holiday – and other teachers.</i>
<b>Clare and Pete Cobb's glorious music</b>	<i>they have sung us through Covid; it's been a joy – and still is!</i>
<b>For all our Faith-filled Parishioners with whom we share our weekday Masses.</b>	<i>It's so supportive to be in the presence of others.</i>
<b>To scientists working on a COVID help</b>	<i>Well done for breakthroughs</i>