

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

6th April 2021

Easter Tuesday

Fifty-fourth Tuesday of Isolation

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com

Parish Website: www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk



Jesus said, 'Mary!'

She knew him then

Mass during the week:

Saturday Easter Vigil	8.00pm	St John's
Easter Tuesday	9.30am	St John's
Easter Wednesday	9.30am	St Martin's
Easter Thursday -	9.30am	St John's
Easter Friday -	9.30am	St John's
Easter Saturday -	6.00pm	St John's

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

Acts 2:36-41

On the day of Pentecost, Peter spoke to the Jews: 'The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' 'You must repent,' Peter answered 'and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.' He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.' They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.

John 20:11-18

Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. They said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' 'They have taken my Lord away' she replied 'and I don't know where they have put him.' As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him. Jesus said, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him.' Jesus said, 'Mary!' She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!' – which means Master. Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

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

For the next couple of weeks the Gospels at Mass will tell the story of what happened to the community at the resurrection of Jesus. But Easter is a long season and the celebration moves from 'what happened' to 'what does it mean'.

Another useful thing to keep an eye on is that the characters in the first stages of the resurrection are clearly not expecting what was happening – and they found the details difficult to understand the meaning of. But keep an eye on the same characters some time later described in the Acts of the Apostles – they are firm in their belief and can easily speak of what the resurrection of Jesus means to them. It is worth asking ourselves what has happened to these men and women that they have such surety after being so surprised? What do we have to do to increase our faith, surety and confidence in speaking to others? (How do we speak of 'what the resurrection means to us?')

A message we will see again and again in the resurrection stories is how the Jesus who re-appears to the disciples is both 'the same Jesus', but also 'different from before'. If you have studied any of the great master's pictures of Jesus rising from the death it is hard to see how Mary Magdalen manages to mistake him for the Gardener! Jesus, unlike Lazarus, does not come back from death – he goes through

death and this, somehow, makes changes to the same Jesus. He also tells Mary she must not touch him, because he has to go to his Father. This ‘through death to risen life’ will appear on other Gospel passages – and the difficulty of recognising Jesus will become important.

Finally keep an eye on the continued relationship Jesus has with the disciples, despite the fact that they may not recognise him initially. Mary Magdalen clearly has a special relationship with Jesus and is special to us because she is the first to witness the resurrection. But Jesus also manages to indicate his relationship by using his friends’ names. It seems that half the women in the New Testament are called: ‘Mary’! But, though the Magdalen is weeping for the death of her friend the connection is made by her recognising Jesus calling her by her name – and presumably in a manner which he has done before: ‘Mary’. She has no doubt this is the same Jesus she has known – she obviously goes to hug him but he puts her off for now as he needs to complete his resurrection process.

In the inability to touch Jesus Mary chooses to do the next best thing, hinted at by Jesus himself: She goes to tell her story to the disciples, and repeats what he has said. This is, of course, every disciple’s response to the resurrection of Jesus – even ours.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021

“The Easter message does not offer us a mirage or reveal a magic formula. It does not point to an escape from the difficult situation we are experiencing. The pandemic is still spreading, while the social and economic crisis remains severe, especially for the poor... In the face of, or better, in the midst of this complex reality, the Easter message speaks concisely of the event that gives us the hope that does not disappoint: “Jesus who was crucified has risen.””

Pope Francis

Easter 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. 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.)

- Easter Sunday** Reading the virus times today, it occurred to me that I had never thought about the 'disciple Jesus loved' as BOTH a real, living companion of Jesus and a symbol - rather than one or the other.
 As you say in the virus times, 'one of the most telling explanations is that this figure, who 'sees and believes' alongside Peter, even in a simplistic beginning way, is YOU (or me, or your child, your mother, your next door neighbour..... – the person Jesus loves and draws forward in faith to appreciate the resurrection).'
 So, I've been thinking about the fact that whoever the disciple was - (John?) - it is their friendship and closeness to Jesus 'the man' which means they believe first, even if they feel hesitant. For me, your commentary points out that calling them 'the one Jesus loved' was deliberately ambiguous. There's probably a lot more to this ambiguity which I don't know enough about the context of the Gospels to 'get,' but - for me-it also serves the purpose of situating 'us', now in 2021, in that scene. As you say, there's a timelessness to it which connects our own narratives as Catholic Christians in 2021 to that moment at the tomb.
 I've also realised I now need to go back and read the beloved disciple's place - 'here is your mother' at the crucifixion in a new way too.

Wednesday

The Meaning of the Cross

Thank you for your powerful reflection on today's (*Wednesday's*) scriptures. You wrote:

"He (Jesus) is handing control to the one who he knows can see clearly: His Father"

I have always had difficulty in accepting the idea of a God who demands the sacrifice of his only Son to atone, as we have seen it, for all the sins of the world. The God who corrected Abraham from the mistaken idea of sacrificing his only Isaac now demands the death of his Son. Surely not!

In Mark's Gospel, we see the gradual abandonment of Jesus by everyone until he stands alone before Pilate where he declares his divinity and says you would have no power over me if it were not given to you by my Father.

The life and death of Jesus challenges us to look at what power means in my life and how it is exercised by ourselves and others. "You know that those regarded as rulers of the pagans ...lord it over them ... it shall not be this way with you" (Mk Ch 10)

If we want to see what God is like, the God revealed by Jesus, we need to look and see his Son hanging helplessly from the cross. The ones in control jeered: "If you are the Son of God – come down". Exercise your power for your own ends!

The only power Jesus understands is the power of love, of service, which comes from his Father. To remain was the only possible response he could make. It is this power that can bring us freedom, the freedom of the Spirit; the freedom from the need to be always in control; freedom from the sin of pride - the 'sin of the world', forever defeated in the death of Jesus. It is no wonder that Pilate was disturbed.

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Andrew McIvor RIP	A tortured young man I know – also for his parents, wife and teenage son, please.
Keith Milton-Barker	Has died more quickly than the family had expected. Funeral will be at St John's on Easter Saturday, 10 th April at 11am (limited COVID numbers – invitations by family only)
Alan Clews has gone into hospital	Prayers, please.
Maroulla	Many of you will know her from morning Mass. She is having a serious operation and has asked for your prayers.
Peter Brownwood	Who is worried about his health – but progressing 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.

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

Our School Staff	
Clare and Pete Cobb's glorious music	<i>they have sung us through Covid; it's been a joy – and still is!</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	<i>Well done for breakthroughs</i>