

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

9th April 2021

Easter Friday

Fifty-fourth Friday of Isolation

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com

Parish Website: www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk



*'This is the stone
rejected by you the builders,
but which has proved to be the keystone.'*

Mass during the week:

Easter Saturday –	6.00pm	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	St John's

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

Acts 4:1-12

While Peter and John were talking to the people the priests came up to them, accompanied by the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees. They were extremely annoyed at their teaching the people the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead by proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. They arrested them, but as it was already late, they held them till the next day. But many of those who had listened to their message became believers, the total number of whom had now risen to something like five thousand.

The next day the rulers, elders and scribes had a meeting in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, Jonathan, Alexander and all the members of the high-priestly families. They made the prisoners stand in the middle and began to interrogate them, 'By what power, and by whose name have you men done this?' Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

John 21:1-14

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias, and it happened like this: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.' They replied, 'We'll come with you.' They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night.

It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, 'Have you caught anything, friends?' And when they answered, 'No', he said, 'Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something.' So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' At these words 'It is the Lord', Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak round him and jumped into the water. The other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land.

As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?'; they knew quite well it was the Lord. Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after rising from the dead.

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

Keep a look-out for: I have added this connection for Easter week but think it helpful to include this reflection from a reader here, rather than in the usual 'readers'' bit. Thanks for this (and all readers') message:

"Mind the gap"

In reading the scriptures of Easter week we can easily forget the reverse 'gap' between the first and second readings. Meeting the risen Jesus, as the disciples did in the gospel accounts, filled them with awe, doubt, wonderings, joy...bewilderment even. What to do now? The answer: Do nothing! Soak up the experience, talk about it, wonder about it but do nothing. Why?

The experience of meeting the risen Jesus is not enough. There is a gap that had to be bridged for them and for each one of us. It is only truly bridged when we acknowledge that we are not fit for mission: that we need

this "power from on high" that will equip us, as it did Peter, for mission. If we feel inadequate in the light of Peter's "stand up and walk" response to the cripple, we might ponder and ask the risen Jesus 'what do we now need to do personally and as a community if we are truly to become "witnesses to this"'.

Anyway: today's Gospel includes some of the details we have already become familiar with in the resurrection accounts: the disciples didn't recognise Jesus at first; they react strangely (Peter puts his coat on to jump in the water!); there is a great deal of eating, to show Jesus' 'reality' and to remind them of Gospel events (Bread & fish!).

But an interesting development in today's Gospel is the re-mention that, when the disciples were faced with Jesus' death and burial they went 'back home'. Jesus tells Mary Magellan, we remember, to tell the disciples that he would meet them in Gallilee – where they are! In whatever state they were in!

We hear, today, that Peter can only do one thing in his confusion: return to where he had come from and what he knows! He says to the 'boys': "*I'm going fishing.*" (What would you do?). Having no better idea the others answer: "*We'll come with you*".

These were not 'simple fishermen', they were professional fishermen who had worked since their boyhood with a family fleet of boats on a lake they were expert in knowing. They had left this to follow Jesus – but after only a couple of years they seem to have 'failed'. They did what most people would do: they go back to what they knew they know! You can feel their anxiety – especially when, together, they even failed to catch fish!!! Their confidence must have been destroyed!

Then they see this character on the shore. It is a further measure of the disciples' despair that they obeyed a total stranger's suggestion that they 'try fishing over there'! (If you are a fisherman you will know how annoying this is!). The confusion of what happens next allows the disciples to put some thoughts and memories together and we see what happens next. They can't even catch fish without Jesus now!

We need to be aware that, when our faith weakens – or, even, when it just 'looks confusing' - we can simply run back to what we know (or even 'what we thought we knew!'). What is Jesus saying to us?

Firstly, Jesus calls us to deeper faith, to new ministry, as he is doing for these disciples. We can panic, ignore the call from the Lord, and go back to what we know – or what we thought we knew. 'I'm going fishing!' Jesus did not teach his Jewish disciples by building 'one brick upon the last', one idea linked to the previous. By now we have noticed that the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus had blown the disciple's expectations and understandings of what God was doing with the world completely out of the water – they were now experiencing the explosion come down to earth in a different way. We do acknowledge mentally that God does things that are bigger than our understanding and expectation – but, when it actually happen to us, we can panic and return to 'what we think we know'!

Secondly, we learn here that Jesus does not, actually, take us from where we have come from to demand we are different people. This group of disciples were chosen to be disciples **BECAUSE** they were fishermen! They were not told by Jesus to "forget all that fishing stuff because I want you to work with people and so I want you to do a course in Sociology and Theology". He had already invited them to become "Fishers of people". Today we might call this 'transferable skills'. When we have discovered our God-given skills; the gifts we have honed; the gifts which give us joy and energy – God will still use those gifts as he calls us to different ministries as his disciples. (As the acts of the Apostles opens up to us we will notice, also, that these disciples gained new gifts and skills, almost without noticing, as their faith increased!)

Notice that these disciples, like us, are learning to become "Church".

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021

"The risen Jesus is also hope for all those young people forced to go long periods without attending school or university, or spending time with their friends. Experiencing real human relationships, not just virtual relationships, is something that everyone needs, especially at an age when a person's character and personality is being formed... I express my closeness to young people throughout the world."

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 not 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 Thursday **Mind the gap**

In reading the scriptures of Easter week we can easily forget the reverse 'gap' between the first and second readings. Meeting the risen Jesus, as the disciples did in the gospel accounts, filled them with awe, doubt, wonderings, joy...bewilderment even. What to do now? The answer: Do nothing! Soak up the experience, talk about it, wonder about it but do nothing. Why?

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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>