

# St John the Evangelist, Poulton

8<sup>th</sup> May 2021

*Fifth Saturday of Easter*

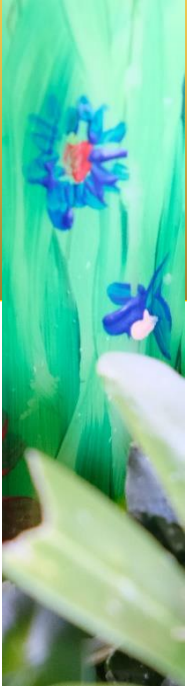
*Fifty-eighth Saturday of Isolation*

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*If you belonged to the world,  
the world would love you as its own;*



## **Mass during the week:**

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](http://www.universalis.com))

## **Acts 16:1-10**

*From Cilicia Paul went to Derbe, and then on to Lystra. Here there was a disciple called Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess who had become a believer; but his father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy, and Paul, who wanted to have him as a travelling companion, had him circumcised. This was on account of the Jews in the locality where everyone knew his father was a Greek.*

*As they visited one town after another, they passed on the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, with instructions to respect them.*

*So the churches grew strong in the faith, as well as growing daily in numbers.*

*They travelled through Phrygia and the Galatian country, having been told by the Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia. When they reached the frontier of Mysia they thought to cross it into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them, they went through Mysia and came down to Troas.*

*One night Paul had a vision: a Macedonian appeared and appealed to him in these words, 'Come across to Macedonia and help us.' Once he had seen this vision we lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the Good News.*

## **John 15:18-21**

*Jesus said to his disciples:*

*'If the world hates you,  
remember that it hated me before you.*

*If you belonged to the world,  
the world would love you as its own;  
but because you do not belong to the world,  
because my choice withdrew you from the world,  
therefore the world hates you.*

*Remember the words I said to you: A servant is not greater than his master.*

*If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too;  
if they kept my word, they will keep yours as well.*

*But it will be on my account that they will do all this,  
because they do not know the one who sent me.'*

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

We find that Paul moves forward - and today's short passage covers a good deal of time. Some issues become clear:

Paul continues to train people alongside him – this time Timothy, whom we will hear of in the future. But he is also training local people to lead the Churches locally when he moves on.

Despite the effort made in agreeing that Gentile converts did not need to go through a process of becoming Jews in preparation we see that practical issues are involved. We find that Paul has Timothy circumcised for him to be his travelling companion – though how do the people they meet know this, I wonder?! There is a message, here, that we cannot just make rules or declarations for people to accept development – or, perhaps some will never have heard? There are a number of times Paul is very gentle with people as he encourages them to move forward in their understanding of what

Jesus is leading them to. This is, of course, still true in our present day when our communications are supposedly stronger - It is decades since the Second Vatican Council but many Catholics have little appreciation of its real message.

We are faced, again, with the ease at which Paul speaks of being told to 'go here' or 'not to go there' by the Holy Spirit. This practice of discernment is, perhaps, the main area which we need to revisit in the Church in every age – even our own. If we do not learn how to listen to God and be aware of the Spirit we will be reduced to simply using our own minds and logic – and we see from the scriptures that much of the work of the Church does not rely simply on obvious logic! The only 'logical' alternative is to return to saying 'I just don't like it'.

Finally we must notice that whatever the disciples were doing for the Lord they were keen to ensure it was Good News to the people they were approaching.

It is worth reading the Gospel passages from John in parallel with the lives of the disciples in Acts. They were expecting rejection and could see it as, simply, the reflection of what happened to Jesus before them:

*Remember the words I said to you: A servant is not greater than his master.  
If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too;  
if they kept my word, they will keep yours as well.*

That they see themselves as walking beside Jesus gives them joy and the ability to accept anything!

**SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2021**

***"In the month of May, the month of Mary, 8 May, I look towards Luján. May memory be your guide... because strong memory guarantees a sure future. Remember all that the Virgin has accomplished in your homeland. Let yourselves be accompanied by Her, and accompany her in her journey. May God bless you all and may the Virgin keep you. And please, do not forget to pray for me."***

***Pope Francis***

## **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.)

#### **Wednesday:**

*"The place of 'Peter' in the Church (or we might say 'the Pope')  
is not to magically come up with the answer from God – or from any other place"*

Sometimes we may feel that the power of the Spirit found in the early church has somehow faded. Yet in our own lifetime we have witnessed an astonishing intervention of the Holy Spirit that is as equally life changing for the church. Pope John XXIII prayed in 1962 for a New Pentecost. Vatican II was the result. It dealt with very contentious issues as some very conservative Cardinals and Curia, based in Rome, sought to impose its will on the rest of the Church. John XXIII, listening to wise, pastoral voices that were open to the Spirit and in contact with the realities of people's lives, rejected the legalistic and dead approach advocated by powerful voices in Rome and set the church in a new direction equally as profound as that brought about by the first council in Jerusalem. All God's people are invited by this Council to live *Life in the Spirit* to the full. What does this mean?

#### **Sunday:**

Thank you.

I like the idea that, once Paul had gone, the churches heaved a sigh of relief that they were now left in peace!

And I suppose, in a way, the bishops are leaving us in peace - but that's not exactly their job description, is it? (What is their job description)

We have had a few deaths at English Martyrs' recently. Ken Binks, who died yesterday could very well have been nicknamed Barnabas as, in spite of advanced age, he made every effort to encourage and support wherever and whenever he could. Many of us are quite confident that, if at all possible, he will be there to give us a helping hand into Heaven, when the time comes.

#### **Wednesday:**

Read recently: *"An American preacher, Eugene Walsh, once finished off his sermon with the remarkable words, "Jesus only promised two things: Your life has meaning and you're going to live forever. If you get a better offer, take it!"*

#### **Sunday:**

So much to ponder! We refer to family as "our own flesh and blood" and so they are. They have our genes, we have given them life, we have shared our lives with them and we hope our values. You may also remember the TV programme entitled "You are what you eat".

St Augustine commenting on John Ch. 6 writes: ***"If you receive the Eucharist well, you are what you eat. Since you are the Body of Christ and his members, it is your mystery which you receive. As you come to communion, you hear the words 'The Body of Christ' and you answer 'Amen'. Be, therefore, members of Christ that your 'Amen' may be true. Be what you see. Receive what you already are."***

For the first thousand years of the Church, the baptised were called the True Body and the consecrated bread and wine was called the Mystical Body. How did this become flipped? As you write: The 'off top of the head' answer goes nowhere near the whole answer.

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

Len Rawcliffe RIP	Len's Requiem Mass will be at St John's on 14 <sup>th</sup> May. <i>COVID restriction: For an invitation please speak to the family.</i>
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?

<b>Our School Staff</b>	
<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>