

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

20th June 2021

Sunday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Sixty-fifth Saturday of Isolation

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"From the heart of the tempest the Lord gave Job his answer....."

Mass during the week:

Saturday – 12 th Sunday of Year	6.00pm - Sunday Vigil Mass St John's
Tuesday -	9.30am – Mass at St John's
Wednesday -	9.30am – Mass at St Martin's
Thursday -	9.30am – Mass at St John's
Friday –	9.30am – Mass at St John's
Saturday – 13 th Sunday of Year	6.00pm - Sunday Vigil Mass St John's

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

*From the heart of the tempest the Lord gave Job his answer. He said:
Who pent up the sea behind closed doors
when it leapt tumultuous out of the womb,
when I wrapped it in a robe of mist
and made black clouds its swaddling bands;
when I marked the bounds it was not to cross
and made it fast with a bolted gate?
Come thus far, I said, and no farther:
here your proud waves shall break.*

Job 38:1,8-11

With the coming of evening, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us cross over to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him. Then it began to blow a gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. They woke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are going down!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped, and all was calm again. Then he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?' They were filled with awe and said to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'

Mark 4:35-41

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

When I speak to children at school I often ask them: 'Who are the Gospel stories about?' Of course, children in a good Catholic school, faced with a priest, will always answer: 'Jesus'! But, I will go one, 'who else are the Gospel stories about'. The brave will put up their hands – but many will go into deep thinking. It's a bit the same with adults, really.

When you think about it we never hear anything about Jesus in the Gospels when he is not with other people. This is sensible as Jesus didn't have a Smart 'Phone with camera, 'selfie', text messaging or, actually, telephone! (I wonder if children know this?) The 'others' often question where he was as he went off on his own to pray 'and some could guess where'. But, then, Jesus is here for others – the disciples, the people he eat with, 'the crowds', the Roman soldiers, the religious leaders etc, etc.

It doesn't take a great leap to realise that what we read in the Gospels is Jesus teaching, training, these people – especially his disciples. Most of the Gospel is Jesus facing his followers with two challenges: the things that, as religious Jews, they had missed in their learning; and the things that Jesus is revealing about his Father which it is not surprising they would not know from their past.

The same is true, of course, for us as we read the Scriptures this morning. There will be things we, perhaps, should know about our faith, but we weren't listening to mum, gran, teacher, Father (Happy

Father's day, by the way!) and haven't bothered to look up since – and those realities of life which our faith brings to us as we develop and experience life: The adult faith feelings of the Spirit of God in us and our acceptance of our vocation at different stages of our lives.

It is not surprising that today's short Gospel story has two threatening (Ok, let's say 'challenging') pictures.

Firstly the phrase from Jesus to his friends:

'Let us cross over to the other side.'

Now, this comes after the detail that the evening is coming! (Lake Galilee is not a little lake like Lake Derwentwater! The 'other side' is a way off!) The 'other side' of the lake has the same meaning for them as it would for us: 'not our side'. For them it would mean where there are those who are not Jewish (remember the man with the demon looking after pigs!), not 'like us', a bit dangerous, maybe.

It is coming evening and I can imagine at least some of the group wanting to reply: 'No, lets stop here!' But it seems no one did. Its not a good start to a picnic is it? But isn't that often the feeling we get when we are encouraged to do something outside our comfort zone which we even know we will learn from? 'No, lets stop where we are!'

The second message is in the rest of the story when their hesitancy is confirmed! The darkness comes (we knew it would) and the storm begins (A number of these were fishermen on this lake and they knew this happened!).

'But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep'

'A cushion?' – the cushion is for the 'driver' at the tiller in the stern – Who was in charge of this boat and where was he? Well we will find out soon who is in charge of the boat!

That these people remembered this event very clearly and wrote it down is important. If we, like these people, are going to learn how to be the people Jesus wants us to be it is inevitable that our learning will cost us something. There will be times when we are asked to go beyond our comfort zones. This sounds uncomfortable and, maybe a bit dangerous?

But hidden, not very deeply, in the frightening parts of this story for us are the calm messages:

Jesus calms the storm and shows his power.

We discover that Jesus, asleep on the cushion, was the captain of the boat after all!

As we crawl out of COVID and the cosy lockdown we have been forced to maintain we are faced with the training manual of the Gospel given to us after it has been worked through by the friends of Jesus.

We are faced with the inevitable difficulties we will find in returning to being active disciples of Jesus, and the ease at which we may wish to say to the Lord: *'Let's stay where we are!'*

We have made the most of Lockdown, what will Jesus suggest next?

I remember years ago that there were cheap posters ('Argos posters') with deep and meaningful messages on them like: *'If the world gives you lemons – make lemonade'!!!!?* (Never got that!). But one had a lovely picture of a small Scottish fishing harbour with the print-over:

*'A boat in a harbour is safe –
But that is not what boats are for.'*

When God looks at us, I wonder what he thinks we are for? Jesus tells us in the Gospels!

SUNDAY, JUNE 20, 2021

"In the Church too, weeds of doubt can take root, especially when we witness the crisis of faith and the failure of different projects and initiatives. But let us never forget that the results of sowing do not depend on our abilities: they depend on the action of God. It is up to us to sow, and sow with love, with dedication and with patience."

Pope Francis

ANGELUS JUNE 13, 2021

PARISH NOTICES:

21st June COVID Changes:

the only real liturgical change is that wedding ceremonies can go beyond the 30 cap to match the present daily Mass and funeral limit based on social distancing. I presume there will be no further loosening until 19th July.

17th May Changes in Church service COVID Safety:

Mass: Not much change unless you miss bidding prayers and offertory processions – I think we will leave Mass as it is and see what the June day brings! (I hope the stewards can provide for us until then – their welcome ministry is great!)

Funerals: The number at funerals increases to the Guide number set by the size of the individual church (If you hear people speaking of this please let them know that the rule is NOT: 'you can have as many as you want!') Practically, here, I will demand that people get permission from the family (who I will speak to before as usual) otherwise we could have too many people arriving to be safe!

Baptisms: Have legal limit now of 30 people – one Baptism at a time and not within Mass. Please invite families to contact me if they wish to arrange a baptism date. Now that we can have 6 people in the house we can also provide Baptism preparation for parents again.

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.)

Saturday: Thank you.
I do try to like Paul, but never quite succeed,
I always feel that, if I were in his company,
I would heave a sigh of relief and relax when he left.

Friday: You mentioned "New Start with Jesus" this morning. I can't remember a lot of detail about it, but know that I was very impressed with what was happening. One memory is of going, as part of a group, into Cardinal Allen School and mingling in small groups with the students, who were very welcoming and open in their approach to discussion. It really felt as though something great was beginning and I was so hopeful. Then, after Bishop Brewer's untimely death, I think it was mainly scuppered by finance (and the "new broom" approach). I really grieved about that.
I seem to remember prayer cards being issued before any other action was taken and I feel that this was very important. The two articles from the Tablet are interesting and informative, and give me the same sense of anticipation which I had with "New Start". There is such a lot to pray for; how to get a truly representative group, who will proceed at the right pace, for one. Is this something that the housebound people could be involved in? There is such an untapped source there, and they could be such an important part of the foundation of "synodality" in our parish and diocese. Like an iceberg we will only see the part of the whole that goes on view at actual meetings, but there needs to be so much more unseen supporting mass.

Thursday: Funny you should mention mantillas - I found mine the other day, when turning a drawer out. I always carried it in my bag, just in case. I would offer to wear it as a demonstration, but couldn't cope with it along with a mask and hearing aids!

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Maureen Brown is in hospital	Please keep her in your prayers, thanks.
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>

As we seem to be moving out of lockdown, are there some things we have learned and must not forget?

How we missed people, our loved ones and their touch	
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