

# St John the Evangelist, Poulton

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

Tuesday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Ss John Fisher & Thomas More

Sixty-fifth Tuesday of Isolation

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*The Lord said to Abram,  
'Leave your country, your family and  
your father's house,  
for the land I will show you.  
I will make you a great nation;  
I will bless you and make your name so  
famous that it will be used as a blessing.*

## Mass during the week:

Saturday – 12 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year	6.00pm - Sunday Vigil Mass St John's

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

### Monday's Reading

Genesis 12:1-9

*The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your family and your father's house, for the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name so famous that it will be used as a blessing.*

*'I will bless those who bless you:*

*I will curse those who slight you.*

*All the tribes of the earth*

*shall bless themselves by you.'*

*So Abram went as the Lord told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had amassed and the people they had acquired in Haran. They set off for the land of Canaan, and arrived there.*

*Abram passed through the land as far as Shechem's holy place, the Oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'It is to your descendants that I will give this land.' So Abram built there an altar for the Lord who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the mountainous district east of Bethel, where he pitched his tent, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. Then Abram made his way stage by stage to the Negeb.*

### Today's Reading

Genesis 13:2,5-18

*Abram was a very rich man, with livestock, silver and gold. Lot, who was travelling with Abram, had flocks and cattle of his own, and tents too. The land was not sufficient to accommodate them both at once, for they had too many possessions to be able to live together. Dispute broke out between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and those of Lot's. (The Canaanites and the Perizzites were then living in the land.) Accordingly Abram said to Lot, 'Let there be no dispute between me and you, nor between my herdsmen and yours, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land open before you? Part company with me: if you take the left, I will go right; if you take the right, I will go left.'*

*Looking round, Lot saw all the Jordan plain, irrigated everywhere – this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah – like the garden of the Lord or the land of Egypt, as far as Zoar. So Lot chose all the Jordan plain for himself and moved off eastwards. Thus they parted company: Abram settled in the land of Canaan; Lot settled among the towns of the plain, pitching his tents on the outskirts of Sodom. Now the people of Sodom were vicious men, great sinners against the Lord.*

*The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted company with him, 'Look all round from where you are towards the north and the south, towards the east and the west. All the land within sight I will give to you and your descendants for ever. I will make your descendants like the dust on the ground: when men succeed in counting the specks of dust on the ground, then they will be able to count your descendants! Come, travel through the length and breadth of the land, for I mean to give it to you.'*  
*So Abram went with his tents to settle at the Oak of Mamre, at Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord.*

Matthew 7:6,12-14

*Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces.*

*'So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets.*

*'Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.'*

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

As you will see, we have moved to the Book of Genesis in our first readings. But we have not started with Creation and Adam and Eve, but with particular people who were the first to respond to the call of God – especially Abram (Chapter 12)

Genesis means the 'birth or coming into being' of something. Here we are pondering the coming into being of God's people – from the beginning, but also through the development of his people on the way. Sometimes the people involved are great people (Like Abram) or less than great people. Sometime things go well, at other times they do not go well at all! But these 'ups and downs' are part of the story as they are part of God's story! They are also important for the memory.

Abram and his wife are travelling with his nephew, Lot. The travelling, even though he is doing as God asks, still involves a great deal of hesitancy and some decisions which have to be made by the people involved in the task. This is all part of the story and will be remembered to some degree or another.

So we see that the land will not support this many people and their flocks which makes Abram decide to split the family so that they both have a chance to flourish. It is good that Abram gives Lot the choice – do you want the land on the left or the right? Lot seems to choose the better-irrigated plain, though there seems to be a difficult mixture of people living there. We will have the outcomes opened to us as the week moves on.

However, our reflection could be one about our own faith and family Genesis. Just as the development of Abram and Lot continues into the future, so our Genesis continues. But we can also look back to wonder: 'what is my family about?' If we look back through our remembered past we slowly enter a hazy mixture of memory and stories we have been told – these are very real, though they may be a mixture of fact and mythology! And you may have done some Family-Tree work and uncovered more nuggets of facts without clothes. Names are important and certain ones belong to your family line – whilst others suggest a doubt.

Amongst all these gatherings we will find good things and sad (In the mid eighteenth century one of my relatives hanged themselves, we found!). There may be serious moves from one town to another, or from poor to rich jobs. They may have come from other parts of the world like Abram and Sarai. You may have pieces of information from the Census documentation which illuminates new facts. Whatever all this amounts to it is part of who we are.

But if we had to sit the children down to tell them the story of what our family is about, what is important, why we should be happy to build our part in this family development, what would we say? What picture of 'my family' can we paint?

This is a good way to learn how the scriptural story of Abram has been painted over the centuries. It is not just a sewn together list of factual events, but a picture of who Abram and his family are. It is particularly important that we see that these people recognised that God was part of their family story – and, perhaps more importantly, that their family is part of God's family story!

It is not surprising that all three great world faiths acknowledge Abram as their 'Father in Faith'! This also means that when we see ourselves, the Jews and Islam we see people who have a shared Faith heritage. Sometimes how we tell our family story can affect whether we recognise other people we meet along the way as members of our family, too.

TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

**"A prayer that alienates itself from life is not healthy. A prayer that alienates us from the concreteness of life becomes spiritualism, or worse, ritualism... The time dedicated to being with God revives faith, which helps us in the practicalities of living, and faith, in turn, nurtures prayer, without interruption. In this circularity between faith, life and prayer, one keeps alight that flame of Christian love that God expects of us."**

*Pope Francis*

GENERAL AUDIENCE JUNE 9, 2021

## **PARISH NOTICES:**

### **21<sup>st</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> July.

### **17<sup>th</sup> 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](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: 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?

<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>

**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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