

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

14th July 2021

Wednesday of the Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Sixty-eighth Wednesday of Isolation

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*After you have led the people out of Egypt,
you are to offer worship to God on this
mountain.'*

Mass during the week:

Saturday – 15 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 – 16 th Sunday of Year	6.00pm - Sunday Vigil Mass St John's

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

Exodus 3:1-6,9-12

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led his flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. 'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses said, 'and see why the bush is not burnt.'

Now the Lord saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am,' Moses answered. 'Come no nearer,' he said. 'Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your fathers,' he said, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God.

And the Lord said, 'The cry of the sons of Israel has come to me, and I have witnessed the way in which the Egyptians oppress them, so come, I send you to Pharaoh to bring the sons of Israel, my people, out of Egypt.'

Moses said to God, 'Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?' 'I shall be with you,' was the answer 'and this is the sign by which you shall know that it is I who have sent you... After you have led the people out of Egypt, you are to offer worship to God on this mountain.'

Matthew 11:25-27

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

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

'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses said, 'and see why the bush is not burnt.'

This is Moses' response to God trying to catch his attention. We are aware that Moses had learned a lot in his short life, and that he will learn more about God and about leadership over the year's head – especially the 40 years in the desert!

But we could ask ourselves what God was looking for in the person who was to represent him to his people and the Pharaoh's authorities?. Is it learning, or breeding, or sanctity, or natural leadership? None of these, it seems. What God seems to want is the ability to notice God working – especially in new and unexpected ways. You could, almost, hear Moses going back home today and announcing to everyone: "Guess what I came across today: a bush on fire that was not burning out!" Some hearers may have been so numb as to disbelieve him, others may have suggested good uses for such a permanent source of fuel. But Moses continues to say he has met God who called him by name!

Perhaps we could do to ponder this gift and foster it in our spiritual life. Are we open enough to notice when God is doing something unexpected or leading us in a direction which we hadn't noticed before?

In the last months many people have warned us not to expect to “return to normal” after all we have gone through with COVID – many have noticed that the past has not been as wonderful as others have wished to return to! If all we can look forward to is to return to “more of the same” then our experience has been wasted.

But if we are to be open to a “new normal” then we have to be ready to notice the opportunities. In “God terms” we have to be as inquisitive as Moses so that we notice in which direction God is leading us. If we are not noticing what God is doing and saying we may simply return to the past due to lack of imagination (The root of ‘Imagination’ is ‘image’ – we need to have a picture of what both we and God would like for the future)

Lockdown has given us time and space to revisit sacred scripture, and our own openness to God, so that we can be better at noticing God’s ‘burning bushes’ without walking passed unimpressed!

‘I must go and look at this strange sight,’ Moses said,

Moses is not afraid of asking God blunt questions, also, like a child who has seen something and has to ask questions! *“Who am I to God?” , he asks ‘.*

God doesn’t actually answer his question except that he is qualified to go to Pharoah simply because:

‘I shall be with you,’ was the answer

The qualification to be a disciple seems to be that ‘God will be with you’

The first choice of personal skill must be ‘to be inquisitive about God and his work – especially if it seems novel or exciting!

The Gospel Today: seems to back up Moses as Jesus suggests his Father has hidden things from the learned and the clever and revealed them to mere children! There is no keeping children down if they see something new!

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2021

“It often happens in life that we seek from our experiences and even from people only what conforms to our own ideas and ways of thinking so as never to have to make an effort to change. And this can even happen with God, and even to us believers, to us who think we know Jesus, that we already know so much about Him and that it is enough to repeat the same things as always. And this is not enough with God. But without openness to what is new and, above all – listen well – openness to God’s surprises, without amazement, faith becomes a tiring litany that slowly dies out and becomes a habit, a social habit.”

Pope Francis

GENERAL AUDIENCE JUNE 30, 2021

PARISH NOTICES:

19th July Changes – If you noticed the Government’s messages last night regarding 19th July you will be aware that we need to be careful in how we open up. Our bishops will be providing us with guidelines during the week but please keep in mind how we can encourage those who have been afraid of coming to parish events to participate more fully by our own practice. (This will not change before Next Monday.)

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 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.)

Sunday I wonder what today's spiritual equivalent of staff and sandals would be? Why did they have to be told to take them?

Thursday We know the story of Joseph from both sides, so to speak, but he only knew his side and Judah's words were the first time that he knew how his loss had affected his father, no wonder he broke down in tears.

Thursday I am glad that Abraham, at the end of his life, was caring for Isaac, or was he? He may have been more concerned about making God keep His promise.

Sunday: Faith Journey - The 'story' of Genesis is happening today .
I read a book, several years ago, by Brother Damian Lundy entitled: "Growing into Faith". It challenges the misplaced idea of faith as "something we have" and, moreover, "must keep if we are to get to heaven". Faith is not a thing or a set of things we believe as Catholics. It is faith in a person – the person of Jesus. To have faith in someone, an encounter must have first taken place. Abram encountered God and put his faith in the promise made to him. As he did so he was led on a journey and grew into faith in Yahweh, the Faithful One. For the Christian, the encounter with the person of Risen Jesus, a constant presence in our world is, and has to be, the starting point and the end point of the Christian life. He promises life to the full to those brave enough to commit their lives to him unreservedly. It is a journey – but one in and through which Jesus, the Faithful One, fulfils his promise here and now for me.

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Alan Clews, who asks for your prayers	Alan is in a nursing home across the water.
Maureen Brown is in hospital	I understand Maureen is progressing well (26.06.2021). Please keep her in your prayers, thanks.
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?

Peter Brownwood	<i>Peter has completed his treatment and has been given the "all clear". Thanks for your prayers and support</i>
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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