

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

16th July 2021

Friday of the Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Sixty-eighth Friday of Isolation

Telephone: 01253 893184

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com

Parish Website: www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk

*This day is to be a day of remembrance for you,
and you must celebrate it as a feast
in the Lord's honour.*

*For all generations you are to
declare it a day of festival, for ever."*

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 11:10-12:14

Moses and Aaron worked many wonders in the presence of Pharaoh. But the Lord made Pharaoh's heart stubborn, and he did not let the sons of Israel leave his country.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:

'This month is to be the first of all the others for you, the first month of your year. Speak to the whole community of Israel and say, "On the tenth day of this month each man must take an animal from the flock, one for each family: one animal for each household. If the household is too small to eat the animal, a man must join with his neighbour, the nearest to his house, as the number of persons requires. You must take into account what each can eat in deciding the number for the animal. It must be an animal without blemish, a male one year old; you may take it from either sheep or goats. You must keep it till the fourteenth day of the month when the whole assembly of the community of Israel shall slaughter it between the two evenings. Some of the blood must then be taken and put on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where it is eaten. That night, the flesh is to be eaten, roasted over the fire; it must be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled, but roasted over the fire, head, feet and entrails. You must not leave any over till the morning: whatever is left till morning you are to burn. You shall eat it like this: with a girdle round your waist, sandals on your feet, a staff in your hand. You shall eat it hastily: it is a passover in honour of the Lord. That night, I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, man and beast alike, and I shall deal out punishment to all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord! The blood shall serve to mark the houses that you live in. When I see the blood I will pass over you and you shall escape the destroying plague when I strike the land of Egypt. This day is to be a day of remembrance for you, and you must celebrate it as a feast in the Lord's honour. For all generations you are to declare it a day of festival, for ever.'"

Matthew 12:1-8

Jesus took a walk one sabbath day through the cornfields. His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them. The Pharisees noticed it and said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing something that is forbidden on the sabbath.' But he said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry – how he went into the house of God and how they ate the loaves of offering which neither he nor his followers were allowed to eat, but which were for the priests alone? Or again, have you not read in the Law that on the sabbath day the Temple priests break the sabbath without being blamed for it? Now here, I tell you, is something greater than the Temple. And if you had understood the meaning of the words: What I want is mercy, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the blameless. For the Son of Man is master of the sabbath.'

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

"Moses and Aaron worked many wonders in the presence of Pharaoh" – some understatement that! Of course, we have skipped the "10 Plagues" which are amazements in themselves – but like many clever tricks they can actually back-fire on us with those in power:

*"But the Lord made Pharaoh's heart stubborn,
and he did not let the sons of Israel leave his country."*

The escape would have to involve the whole people as part of the event (as well as the 'death of the first born' plague). We have today the story of the Passover and the escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. We can read this passage in a number of connected but developing ways.

1.- The first reading is simply a preparation to move - tomorrow! Have a good meal the night before so that people are fed for the journey – don't leave some for breakfast! Most families would have a

sheep or goat to provide milk for the family (A sort of early fridge!) – they would be moving faster than a flock could be herded so they eat the whole animal – sharing with others as necessary. They are to eat it after they had packed and they would wear clothes ready for the journey. The blood of the butchered animal should mark the doors of the Israelites so that the ‘angel of death’ would pass over. (In many ways the meat eaten and the blood of the animal are different symbols of the same sacrifice – we will see this later)

This picture is not just a historical one but one full of meaning for each generation – and a reflection of what God does with his people. Each year God invites his people to mark this event and not forget the symbolism. To this year the Jewish people continue to remember what God has done for them (note the present tense) by eating a family meal with symbolic ingredients – they also ‘tell the story’.

2.- For us Christians, we cannot read this story of the lamb without being struck by the similarity between this and the passion and death of Jesus. From earliest days in the Church Jesus has been referred to as the ‘Lamb of God’, ‘Agnus Dei’, the sacrificial victim who has been butchered to feed his people. There is a prayerful period of reflection which can be had by reading this passage and thinking of the Crucifixion.



‘Agnus Dei’
ZURBARÁN, FRANCISCO DE
Museo del Prado, Madrid

3.- Like the Jews with their Passover, human beings generally match our regular cultural celebrations with a meal containing significant signs: Birthdays have cakes with candles; Christmas dinner has family specific details etc.

It is not surprising, then that we Christians have built our faith celebrations around a meal containing symbols: The Eucharist. We also cannot miss that the meaning and shape Eucharist we celebrate comes directly for Jesus celebrating the Passover with his friends as a Jewish group. The action of the Mass we celebrate has, at it’s centre the celebration of the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God (We notice this phrase used often).

However, like the Passover action, the central celebration action of us Christians does not end with the death of the Lamb. This action leads the people of Israel forward to FREEDOM from slavery – this is a long journey, of course. So with the Mass, it is not just the memory of the sacrifice of Jesus, the son of God, the Lamb of God, but it is the offer of feeding off his body and blood (His life and power) so that we can appreciate being SET FREE from our weaknesses to be his people. Our second reflection today is, then, one which allows today’s Exodus (‘Being set free) reading to help us reflect on the meaning of the Mass – especially when we celebrate (When we can) on the Christian Sabbath: the day of the Resurrection of this Lamb of God.

FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2021

“Plans for peace and not for woe. As Christians, today we wish to renew our commitment to building a future together. For our future will be peaceful only if it is shared. Human relationships cannot be based on the pursuit of partisan interests, privileges and advantages. No, the Christian vision of society arises from the Beatitudes; it is born of meekness and mercy, and it inspires us to imitate in this world God’s own way of acting, for he is a father who desires his children to live in peace. We Christians are called to be sowers of peace and builders of fraternity, not nursing past grudges and regrets, not shirking the responsibilities of the present, but looking instead with hope to the future. We believe that God has shown us but one way: the way of peace.”

Pope Francis

Saint Peter’s Basilica - July 1, 2021

PARISH NOTICES:

Message from our Hospital Chaplains: [Coronavirus Update - Dr Jim Gardner, Medical Director - YouTube](#) and I would encourage you to watch it, because I was struck by some of the words he used: ‘Rapid’, ‘Alarming’ and ‘strikingly rapid’ are not words he bands around easily. *(This You Tube message is worth watching!)*

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 release details of guidelines today and I will make our parish details available tomorrow, I hope.

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 them – 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.)

Thursday

The story of Moses and the Burning Bush included in this week's reading reminded me of a passage in one of Gerry Hughes' books. He reminded his readers of trying to see God in all things from the seemingly insignificant to the most profound. He includes the phrase "Every bush is burningif only we have eyes to see"

Wednesday

(Updated) Here we are again. It seems that the scriptures keep hammering it home - Abraham, Jacob/Israel and now Moses. To become disciple depends on two things: an encounter in some form with the living God; and secondly, the preparedness to respond: "Here I am Lord". This encounter is there for all to experience and it can come in many forms and at different times in our lives. We need to be attentive to these moments of grace. (Look at the successful and the unsuccessful invitations that Jesus is seen to make to people in the gospels). The call can appear to be a daunting prospect. But the commitment is always followed by the reassuring words: "I will be with you". This promise is from a faithful God who never takes back his word. In Paul's words - "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me". Why then do I find it so difficult to respond wholeheartedly and without reservation to the invitation of Jesus to "Come follow me"?

Tuesday

I thought the last sentence from Pope Francis was so apposite to almost everything we experience in our so called enlightened world. The clarity of those few words is outstanding. The whole paragraph seems incredibly relevant to many of the prejudices and social attitudes as witnessed this week... flag waving, nationalism running wild and old rigid racism, yes Francis, although not talking directly about the English condition shows yet again that our core beliefs are perhaps the only way to assuage moments of hysteria. His insight, and that of his advisors, ought to be compulsive reading for our leading secular lights.

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.

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 poorly	Maureen is at home and progressing well (15.07.2021). 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	
--	--