

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

23rd October 2020

Friday of the Twenty-ninth Week of the Year

(Thirty-first Friday of Isolation)

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com

Parish Website: www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk



Thanks to those who replied to my last scripture reflection with your own thoughts – if you want to be taken off the email list, or know anyone who may appreciate the contact, please let me know – or print it for a neighbour. (If you have only just started to receive these daily reflections it is because I have only just found your address, sorry) Thanks. Fr Peter.

Note from Fr Peter:

Please encourage those who are afraid of coming to large gatherings that our present Masses have small numbers of attenders and this is a good place to begin a return to Mass:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday at 9.30am at St John's

Wednesday at 9.30am at Ss Martin & Hilda's Chapel

Saturday at 6.00pm at St John's

We still celebrate the Resurrection on Sundays – **Which day is your 'Sunday Eucharist'?**

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

Ephesians 4:1-6

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

Luke 12:54-59

Jesus said to the crowds: 'When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. And when the wind is from the south you say it will be hot, and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the face of the earth and the sky. How is it you do not know how to interpret these times?

'Why not judge for yourselves what is right? For example: when you go to court with your opponent, try to settle with him on the way, or he may drag you before the judge and the judge hand you over to the bailiff and the bailiff have you thrown into prison. I tell you, you will not get out till you have paid the very last penny.'

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

Paul began this letter by trying to find words to explain the amazing reality of what God has achieved for us in his son, Jesus.

He went on to share with us a prayer which he offered to try to help his hearers share his understanding. This has been used in the Church from this time! The words we use in the liturgy, together with the actions, show us, and others what we believe – It is not a surprise, then, that Paul's words become not just the word of God, but our expression of our faith.

Today, though, Paul takes us a step further. For some people faith is a personal journey towards God and we hear people say: "my faith is private". Paul is challenging the idea of a "private" faith. At its base our faith in what God has done in Jesus affects the whole world – not just me -all of us together.

But then some people regard the Church as a sort of 'club' they belong to. There are rituals we have to adhere to, a structure which seems unchangeable, and, maybe, even a price to

pay for membership: 'Go to Mass; financially support your clergy and parish'. Some people are happy to be in a club – but increasingly, these days, clubs are not fashionable, are they?

The good news, certainly the 'Good News of the Gospel', is that being 'in the' Church is not being in a club – otherwise none-payment of membership would be immediate 'cancellation of membership'!

So, return to Paul's message today and be ready to be relieved and woken up to many realities. Being in the Church is not being part of a group of 'hangers on' who attach themselves to Jesus' teaching because they think the world would be a much better place if we all believed him. Paul is absolutely saying that we belong to the body which is Jesus. We are welcomed to be part of what Jesus is about since his resurrection – now!

On top of this reality Paul reminds us that we are a unity with Jesus – in the Spirit of God. How we respond to each other, how other's notice this, will reflect this reality.

*"Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit
by the peace that binds you together"*

We are not part of a club which advertises how important Jesus is to some of us. We are part of a unity which begins, not in us, but in God himself – If others do not choose it, then it does not affect the reality, and God is no the less for this – but we are offering this gift to others for their own sake.

Perhaps this is the time, not just to compare Paul's understanding to our own, but also to compare Paul's understanding to that of Jesus himself as Jesus acts and teaches in the Gospels?

We need each other as members of the Church so that we are able to stay faithful to the teaching of Jesus, and not wander off to our own personal understandings. We will see that this was important for the early Christians in the Acts of the Apostles:

*"The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching
and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and
the prayers."*

Acts 2:42

In this "Year of the Word" we can see why we need to return to our sources often, so that we become closer to the unity of the Spirit which we share.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 23, 2020

"The existence of each human being is but a breath, his or her story is fleeting, but the prayerful know that they are precious in the eyes of God, and so it makes sense to cry out. And this is important. When we pray, we do so because we know we are precious in God's eyes. It is the grace of the Holy Spirit that, from within, inspires in us this awareness: of being precious in the eyes of God. And this is why we are moved to pray."

Pope Francis

GENERAL AUDIENCE OCTOBER 14, 2020

PARISH NOTICES:

- **When you come to Mass:**

Despite getting used to physical distancing over the past three months returning to a familiar situation, like church, can make us forget we are still threatened by a virus that could kill vulnerable people. 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.

- 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.
- **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: https://www.wyre.gov.uk/forms/form/257/en/coronavirus_isolation_support_form
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.)

Wednesday: These (Virus) times have certainly made me value faith over religion. The hamster wheel of religion can blind us to what truly matters. It's an opportunity to deepen our faith. Thank you 🙏

Tuesday: Thanks to you Fr. for keeping us close together with the Virus Times. Also a big thank you to all the good kind people who have looked after us with their virus protection kit as we enter and leave church.

Sunday: The other day you asked for 'thank yous' - rather than 'pleases'
Clare and Pete Cobb's glorious music - they have sung us through Covid; it's been a joy

Friday: *"It is in Christ that we were claimed as God's own" reminded me to share with you a lovely moment on Friday morning when I was on the school run.
A lady walking back to her car with a little toddler (not school age) paused outside the church doors as the little girl asked if it was open. She said 'no, would you like to pray here, outside?' Looking up at the doors, the little girl made the sign of the cross and began to pray with her mother. Could there be a more fitting scene for faith in 2020?!?
Perhaps I'm over sensitive at the moment but it brought a tear to my eye!*

Tuesday: I suppose, in a way, it's a bit like keeping school rules after you have left school. I remember visiting the school a couple of years after I left. The nun who was seeing me out said, "Are you not going to pay a visit to the chapel"? My automatic response was "But, I've nothing to cover my head" (we were always made to wear our school hats when we were going in to chapel and always had our heads covered in our own church). I never expected it to be a nun who would be the first to tell me, in effect, that the ceiling would not fall down if I went in without a head covering.

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

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| Alan | Could we pray for Judith Reeves' dad She says: <i>I wanted to drop you a short email to let you know that my Dad has been diagnosed with liver cancer. I wanted to thank everyone for their prayers and ask for their continued prayers as we move forwards. Dad was taken into hospital on Monday and is quite weak. The hope is that if he gets stronger we will be able to bring him home. He is yet to start the appropriate treatment and we will know more in the coming days.</i> |
| Jacinta's Nana Lyn | Poorly and asks for your prayers |
| Various Older People we worry about | Whilst we are enjoying the promise of loosening lockdown we still have concerns for relations and friends who have signs of Covid-19 and who have been taken to Hospital. Please pray for these people – and for those we don't know as 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. |
| Maureen O'Connell & Family(Not Covid-19) | Maureen died this morning, at home with her three girls. Please remember them in your prayers. |
| Paul Sharrock (Not Covid-19) (and family: Kathryn, Mary & Rachael) | <i>Paul has had a setback last night whilst still in hospital – all the family were asked to visit which doesn't see good – but he is progressing today. Please pray for them. Fr Peter</i> |

'Thanks You, God' - Do we have any news to thank God for - as well as other people we are praying for?

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