

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

9th January 2021

Saturday after the Epiphany of the Lord

Forty-second Saturday of Isolation

Sign on at: saintjohnpoulton@gmail.com

Parish Website: www.stjohnspoulton.org.uk

Second Year of Publication – Third Lockdown



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.

Notes from Fr Peter:

Lockdown III: In England Religious Worship can continue under COVID safe rules – though we are not allowed to meet outside in groups of more than two. If you have symptoms please do not come to church.

Mass during the week:

Saturday	6.00pm	Vigil Mass at St John's
Tuesday	9.30am	St John's
Wednesday	9.30am	St Martin's
Thursday	9.30am	St John's
Friday	9.30am	St John's
Saturday	6.00pm	Vigil Mass at St John's

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

1 John 4:11-18

*My dear people,
since God has loved us so much,
we too should love one another.
No one has ever seen God;
but as long as we love one another
God will live in us
and his love will be complete in us.
We can know that we are living in him
and he is living in us
because he lets us share his Spirit.
We ourselves saw and we testify
that the Father sent his Son
as saviour of the world.
If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God,
God lives in him, and he in God.
We ourselves have known and put our faith in
God's love towards ourselves.
God is love
and anyone who lives in love lives in God,
and God lives in him.
Love will come to its perfection in us
when we can face the day of Judgement without fear;
because even in this world
we have become as he is.
In love there can be no fear,
but fear is driven out by perfect love:
because to fear is to expect punishment,
and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love.*

Mark 6:45-52

After the five thousand had eaten and were filled, Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to Bethsaida, while he himself sent the crowd away. After saying goodbye to them he went off into the hills to pray. When evening came, the boat was far out on the lake, and he was alone on the land. He could see they were worn out with rowing, for the wind was against them; and about the fourth watch of the night he came towards them, walking on the lake. He was going to pass them by, but when they saw him walking on the lake they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they had all seen him and were terrified. But he at once spoke to them, and said, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' Then he got into the boat with them, and the wind dropped. They were utterly and completely dumbfounded, because they had not seen what the miracle of the loaves meant; their minds were closed.

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

Happy Christmas –

We continue the Gospel from the feeding of the five thousand of yesterday.

We also continue to flag up the situations which the Incarnate Son of God shares with us as he lives out being human.

People often say “I’m only human” as a way of forgiving their own failure. But, faced with this Jesus, we realise that our efforts at being human are poor when compared with the humanity of Jesus. Ultimately it is only Jesus who can show us how to be properly human – and we can see glimpses of this model of humanity in the Gospel Jesus.

It is by seeing and knowing the Gospel Jesus that we can learn to be more truly human – Jesus wears his humanity with grace and natural flair. So what is important in this passage to Jesus to live out his life ‘like us in all things but sin’?

- He seems to recognise the disciple’s tiredness and sends them off.
- He, himself, ‘sends the people on their way’ (Its nice to be waved off, isn’t it?)
- Jesus has created the space to be alone to pray. This is something which happens again and again to Jesus in the Gospels – it is vital to him to spend time with his Father. This is very soon revealed to be a necessary part of the person of Jesus and he obviously wishes it to be part of our humanity, also.
- Jesus has to re-join his friends but the darkness and the weather get in the way. The story opens up some difficulties for us as we see Jesus walking on the water. It would be easy for us to place this ability in the fact of Jesus’ divinity – because this is not an ability which we usually find in human beings. This may be right – but are there some abilities Jesus would have simply because he is a human being with faith to a degree which we might think ‘I’ do not have?

If the Incarnation means anything to us at all we must be open to what our creation, with faith in the Father of Jesus, could mean. Ponder the Gospel messages Jesus gives to us about prayer and faith in the Gospels.

That, when Jesus got into the boat the wind dropped, they stopped being afraid we may have experienced the effects of human beings who’s presence has calmed us in life. We know the presence of people of faith, and its strength.

The question which leads us from Christmas to the life of a disciple in the Gospel is ‘what am I to learn from this Jesus which will change my life?’

This whole experience from the interest of the people in Jesus and their feeding, to the storm on the lake, was churning up the disciples. We are left with an interesting phrase which gives us the impression it took them a while to begin to understand what was happening to them (Not just ‘what was happening to Jesus’ but ‘what was happening to them’!)

*“They were utterly and completely dumbfounded,
because they had not seen what the miracle of the loaves meant;
their minds were closed.”*

As we move on to a new ‘ordinary time of the year’ from Christmas it may be good to discover what areas of our minds might be closed to following Jesus – and it won’t be obvious, will it?

Jesus was known as Rabbi – its not surprising that, as teachers help us to be better humans so Jesus shares his humanity with us as his Disciples.

SATURDAY JANUARY 9, 2021

"I like to think that when the Lord prays to the Father for us, He does not merely speak: He shows him the wounds of the flesh, He shows him the wounds He suffered for us. This is Jesus: with His flesh He is the intercessor... Indeed, the Gospel says that He came to dwell among us. He did not come to visit us, and then leave; He came to dwell with us, to stay with us. What, then, does He desire from us? He desires a great intimacy. He wants us to share with Him our joys and sufferings, desires and fears, hopes and sorrows, people and situations. Let us do this, with confidence: let us open our hearts to Him, let us tell Him everything... And without fear, let us invite Him among us, into our homes, into our families... Let us invite Him, so that he may see our wounds. He will come and life will change."

Pope Francis

ANGELUS JANUARY 3, 2021

PARISH NOTICES:

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.)

Wednesday: *I think that gifts say something about both the giver and the recipient. In a way it shows how the giver values the recipient, and it also shows the recipient how the giver sees him, and whether much thought has gone into the gift. When the Magi found the baby in lowly surroundings, they could easily have held back the expensive gifts as being "unsuitable" - but they knew that the gifts were eminently suitable. The East does seem to value wisdom more than property, where we in the West seem to reverse that view. It is good that both aspects of Christmas have been joined, but if I could only have one, I would plump for the Eastern view.*

Wednesday: *Two things came to me in my reflection. The first is one that you highlight - "they went back by different way" and you invite us to ask how has my encounter with Jesus changed me. We might make it more challenging - "If I haven't changed, why not and what must I do? God has put his living Spirit in me to give me the power to be changed, so what is preventing me from going forward in a different way? Perhaps 'us grownups' need to kneel at the feet of the infant, adore Mary's child and invite him to change me.*

The second point is a small point but "The star halted over the place where the child was ... and going into the house they saw the child." It would appear perhaps that Mary and Joseph had by this time settled in Bethlehem (hence the massacre of the two-year old's) and it was from there that they had to flee to Egypt. How can one read scripture year after year and not see things? Is this why the child is not in the manger?

Friday: *Thankfully "God's love for us does not, and never will, depend upon us. It is completely free love." Pope Francis*

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Peter Brownwood	Who is worried about his health – but progressing well.
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.
Paul Sharrock (Not Covid-19) (and family: Kathryn, Mary & Rachael)	<i>Paul has arrived back at his unit from the general hospital. It is much easier to communicate with the special unit and they appreciate how important contact with family is for people in such situations. Sadly Paul has not had even video contact with his wife since a face to face meeting on Christmas day. Things are looking up, now – and he is has not got COVID – Thank you, God. Thanks for your prayers so far - Please continue to pray for them. Fr Peter</i>

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

Our School Staff	<i>Who have broken up for a holiday – and other teachers.</i>
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>