

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

10th January 2021

Sunday of the Baptism of the Lord

Forty-third Sunday 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)

Isaiah 12

*Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name.
With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
Sing a psalm to the Lord
for he has done glorious deeds;
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*

Mark 1:7-11

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said:

'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

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

Happy Christmas –

There are some moments of our lives when we just want to be told we are loved, aren't there? As we prepare to leave Christmas behind we take with us what we have learned. Jesus is about to be given his launch into his real ministry – and when you reflect on it he has been at home for a lot of years since he was 'grounded' after 'that incident in the Temple!' (I wonder how often that was mentioned in his household?). Today's feast of the 'Baptism of the Lord' is certainly when he would need to be

told he was loved. (Ponder the days you left home and your needs then! – what were the action signs? What were the words?)

Jesus needed to hear something. What he heard was epic:

*“a voice came from heaven,
‘You are my Son,
the Beloved;
my favour rests on you.’”*

Translate these into words you would like to hear: “You belong to me, I love you, I will always be there for you”. Words like these keep us going, don’t they?

So Jesus, hearing the voice of God backing him, takes up his short ministry. We remember that this was not the only time Jesus needed to hear these words. As he recognised he absolutely had to ‘take the road to Jerusalem’, and all that this was likely to mean, he hears the promise again on the mountain of Tabor with Peter, James and John at the Transfiguration. It allowed Jesus to say to his friends: “let us go down the mountain” when then would have preferred to have stayed, looked at the view and built a memorial!

It is important to visit times when the words of others have buoyed us up. And, also, to learn from these situations when we need to provide honest words to others.

I must confess that this has, for most of my years, been my favourite feast – it’s good to have a favourite feast, isn’t it? What’s yours? Share it with others – but share ‘why’, also.

We see in this scriptural passage (available in all the first three Gospels and hinted at in John’s) the human and fragile Jesus who needs to lean on his heavenly Father – we will return to this particularly on the approach to his passion and crucifixion.

And simple follow-up of this is that, knowing our humanity and fragility, Jesus baptises us and instructs us to baptise each other. At time of our worry, change of direction, insecurity, whatever it may be, it is vital to remember that, at our baptism, God said to us:

*“You belong to me,
I love you,
I will always be there for you”*

As we begin what the Church calls ‘ordinary time’ we will return to the Gospel stories of Jesus’ ministry. As we take with us what we have learned of the ‘Incarnate God’ amongst us we can look for the times Jesus probably remembered his Father’s promise in his ministry and remember that the same Father supports us with his love in our own development, difficulties and worries.

That’s why this is my most favouritist feast. (You can share it with me if you want!)

SUNDAY JANUARY 10, 2021

"The salvation wrought by Christ knows no boundaries; it is for everyone... Viewed, however, from the dimension of light: the light that illumines every man and woman, the light to be welcomed in faith and the light to be brought to others in charity, through witness, in the proclamation of the Gospel."

Pope Francis

ANGELUS JANUARY 6, 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>