

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

29th April 2021

Fourth Thursday of Easter

Feast of St Catherine of Siena

Fifty-seventh Thursday of Isolation

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*I tell you most solemnly,
whoever welcomes the one I send
welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me welcomes the
one who sent me.'*

Mass during the week:

Saturday –	6.00pm	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	St John's

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

Acts 13:13-25

Paul and his friends went by sea from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia where John left them to go back to Jerusalem. The others carried on from Perga till they reached Antioch in Pisidia. Here they went to synagogue on the sabbath and took their seats. After the lessons from the Law and the Prophets had been read, the presidents of the synagogue sent them a message: 'Brothers, if you would like to address some words of encouragement to the congregation, please do so.' Paul stood up, held up a hand for silence and began to speak:

'Men of Israel, and fearers of God, listen! The God of our nation Israel chose our ancestors, and made our people great when they were living as foreigners in Egypt; then by divine power he led them out, and for about forty years took care of them in the wilderness. When he had destroyed seven nations in Canaan, he put them in possession of their land for about four hundred and fifty years. After this he gave them judges, down to the prophet Samuel. Then they demanded a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin. After forty years, he deposed him and made David their king, of whom he approved in these words, "I have selected David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will carry out my whole purpose." To keep his promise, God has raised up for Israel one of David's descendants, Jesus, as Saviour, whose coming was heralded by John when he proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the whole people of Israel. Before John ended his career he said, "I am not the one you imagine me to be; that one is coming after me and I am not fit to undo his sandal."'

John 13:16-20

After he had washed the feet of his disciples, Jesus said to them:

'I tell you most solemnly,

no servant is greater than his master,

no messenger is greater than the man who sent him.

'Now that you know this, happiness will be yours if you behave accordingly. I am not speaking about all of you: I know the ones I have chosen; but what scripture says must be fulfilled: Someone who shares my table rebels against me.

'I tell you this now, before it happens,

so that when it does happen

you may believe that I am He.

I tell you most solemnly,

whoever welcomes the one I send welcomes me,

and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.'

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

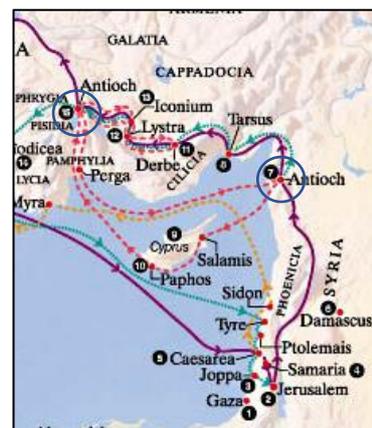
The Great Adventure continues – and at some pace!

'There seems to be a lot of Antiochs!'

Yes, this may be confusing if you are reading closely! The section of the map should help you to clarify this – I hope we may need further maps as Paul continues his travels, but this should do for now!

'People on the move'

People who move gain information, but also energy and ask questions about their own understanding of life – we may have noticed this as we have



been locked-down during COVID! Who needs a holiday? We can easily become inward-looking and tired - someone said they "needed to go to Lytham; but it's a long way!" (It didn't used to be, did it?)

This energy from our experience can also help our parish lives as people who 'come in' will have experiences of Parish life which we could do to consider for ourselves. However, the same gifts of 'incomers' can also be rejected by people who have not been anywhere recently and find their reality is very small.

There is also an important and strong lesson in sharing Faith with others contained in this passage of Acts: When invited to speak Paul does two things:

Firstly, he does not talk about himself only, but about the history of God and his people. He will work up to speaking about Jesus, but he insists on speaking about the whole story which leads up to Jesus.

Secondly, Paul starts speaking from where the audience is at the moment. He allows them to realise he is speaking of the same reality the Jews of Antioch had accepted – then he takes his message forward logically and chronologically.

This may help us when people approach us to ask what 'being a Catholic Christian is about'. Its amazing how many Catholics will begin with messages about Eucharist or Mary or Mass, or..... Imagine if we begin with what God has done with us in the Old Testament history of his people and worked forward. Those listeners who have no faith would get the foundational story – those who have some faith will recognise where they might have come from in the history we share (especially other Christians and even Faiths like Islam who honour Abraham, Mary and Jesus etc). Some Catholics speak of 'tradition' as something that goes back as far as their grandparents – when real 'Tradition' goes back through (not just to) two thousand years to Jesus and more than twice that in the Hebrew Tradition.

'Who's in charge of this mission?'

After Jesus' revelation to Saul on the road to Damascus Saul regained his sight, was Baptised and then spent some years recovering from this experience and preparing for what would be his mission. It seems natural that the Christian community would train him by allowing him to share his preaching with others. I expect they would also be 'keeping an eye on his teaching, but also we can only imagine the fear in the minds of those who met Saul as they would have been very aware of his past treatment of Christians!

We find that Barnabas (Well respected and regarded, as we have seen, as a man 'of the Spirit') was twinned with Paul and these two, and others, were set aside (By the Holy Spirit) to go off to be where they are in today's passage (From Antioch to Antioch! – is it a song?). I don't think we are surprised that Paul was the sort of man who could act as 'second man' for long and so it is here in this Antioch that, when the visitors are invited to speak to the local Synagogue, it is Paul who stands up!!! He also holds his hand up for silence!!!

*"Paul stood up,
held up a hand for silence
and began to speak:"*

Was there fear or doubt in the gathered group on seeing Paul?

Did the others push him to speak: 'they had better hear from you!?'

Or was it Paul's 'Baptism of fire'? Or he could not resist? (We all have had to take our first step sometimes, haven't we?)

This would have been a great event to experience, wouldn't it?

Paul is not only new to the Jewish people but also to the new Christian community! But his presence and his gifts made a difference to these people. I am always concerned when I meet people who introduce themselves as 'I'm just a convert to Catholicism, Father'! Apart from the reality of them being as much a Catholic as any of us; and the good manners of encouraging them and their story; we need, also, to remember that they will have something extra and new to bring to our local Church – even their hesitancy is attractive. The questions they may still have, what they see and experience in our local Church will help us to grow so we must thank and encourage them. But, also, they must be encouraged to bring with them their past life faith experience which will help us to grow.

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

"Jesus, the true shepherd, defends us always and saves us from so many difficult situations, dangerous situations through the light of His word and the strength of His presence that we always experience if we want to listen, every day."

***Pope Francis
2021***

***APRIL 25,
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.)

Sunday: So much to ponder! We refer to family as “our own flesh and blood” and so they are. They have our genes, we have given them life, we have shared our lives with them and we hope our values. You may also remember the TV programme entitled “You are what you eat”.

St Augustine commenting on John Ch. 6 writes: ***“If you receive the Eucharist well, you are what you eat. Since you are the Body of Christ and his members, it is your mystery which you receive. As you come to communion, you hear the words ‘The Body of Christ’ and you answer ‘Amen’. Be, therefore, members of Christ that your ‘Amen’ may be true. Be what you see. Receive what you already are.”***

For the first thousand years of the Church, the baptised were called the True Body and the consecrated bread and wine was called the Mystical Body. How did this become flipped? As you write: The ‘off top of the head’ answer goes nowhere near the whole answer.

Saturday: **Understanding the signs: Food for thought:**

I had a friend who used to do a lot of serious thinking. In speaking of him I would say that “he chews things over.” We also speak of someone “munching” an apple meaning that the person eats steadily and often audibly. When Jesus is responding to the question: “How can this fellow give us his flesh to eat?” John, writing in Greek, uses a very physical word which is best translated as “munch” or “chew”. And so, in this accurate translation, Jesus’ words are: “The one who chews (munches) my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”.

When we share in the Eucharist and “eat this bread and drink this cup” we are indicating our readiness to ponder deeply (“chew on”) the meaning and significance of this act of communion which makes us one, not only with the one we claim as Lord, but also one with each other, his true body called to his mission: “My food, he said, is to do the will of the one who sent me”.

Is our food to be anything less?

Saturday: Three disjointed thoughts
“Even with his eyes wide open he could see nothing at all” was the sentence which stood out to me - I so often feel like that.

The picture of St Paul having fallen from a horse had come into my mind too. Do you ever wish you could have read the book before you saw the pictures?

Did your mother ever send you for a loaf of bread and you bit the corners off on the way home, or was that just my generation?

(Just “Yes” to all three – Fr Peter)

People being prayed for by our parish groups:

Len Rawcliffe RIP	Len’s Requiem Mass will be at St John’s on 14 th May. <i>COVID restriction: For an invitation please speak to the family.</i>
Maroulla RIP	Maroulla’s family thanks you for your prayer. The Requiem Mass will be at St Martin’s Chapel on Wednesday 5 th May at 2.30pm <i>(admittance by invitation of the family)</i>
Peter Brownwood	Who is worried about his health – but progressing 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.

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

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>