

St John the Evangelist, Poulton

30th April 2021

Fourth Friday of Easter

Fifty-seventh Friday of Isolation

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*'Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God still, and trust in 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 13:26-33

Paul stood up in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, held up a hand for silence and began to speak:

'My brothers, sons of Abraham's race, and all you who fear God, this message of salvation is meant for you. What the people of Jerusalem and their rulers did, though they did not realise it, was in fact to fulfil the prophecies read on every sabbath. Though they found nothing to justify his death, they condemned him and asked Pilate to have him executed. When they had carried out everything that scripture foretells about him they took him down from the tree and buried him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had accompanied him from Galilee to Jerusalem: and it is these same companions of his who are now his witnesses before our people.'

'We have come here to tell you the Good News. It was to our ancestors that God made the promise but it is to us, their children, that he has fulfilled it, by raising Jesus from the dead. As scripture says in the second psalm: You are my son: today I have become your father.'

John 14:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house;

if there were not, I should have told you.

I am going now to prepare a place for you,

and after I have gone and prepared you a place,

I shall return to take you with me;

so that where I am

you may be too.

You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said:

'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

No one can come to the Father except through me.'

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

Apparently, it has been tried that someone approached people in a town centre and tried to offer people a £10 note for free – and no one accepted it! I was certainly in a shop this very week when I was offered a loyalty card for that shop – but, before they finished the sentence, I had answered: "I'm Ok thanks". It could be that, when offered something worthwhile everyone would respond immediately with "how much is it?" Life is complicated, isn't it, and sometimes we are either suspicious or just a bit tired!

Today Paul continues his words to the people in the Synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. The one thing which becomes clear is that he is offering something which will be Good News for them. He uses these words later in the passage, but begins by offering "a message of Salvation". But even Good News seems difficult to 'sell'!

It may be that these Jews had not heard about this Carpenter who was executed in Jerusalem and was now alive – or the trouble which seems to be mounting due to the followers of this man? Paul is very clear in connecting his faith in Jesus

firstly with the life and work of God in the lives of the very people in this synagogue. Just as their God had created all things and held them in being, all for nothing – so Paul invites them to recognise the same free gift from God in this Jesus who has been raised from death by the same God. It is a continuation of the Graciousness for God – and the promise of ‘Messiah’.

Paul is not afraid to mention that their fellow Jews in Jerusalem were partly responsible for his friend’s death – but, because the outcome is connected with the scriptures read each week at the synagogue, this does not mean they are separated from the Good News which has been revealed and offered to them.

The resurrection of Jesus is the point to which the scriptures had been moving to. But it could be that, offered ‘Good News’, the people in the synagogue may have preferred to say: “I’m Ok thank you”. (We’ll see!)

There is a danger that, even when offered ‘great news’, we may prefer to stay where we are? “I’m Ok, thanks you”.

For ourselves and our evangelisation we need to constantly consider how we speak to others about our faith. Can we decide how to speak? How I actually picture my understanding of my faith in Jesus? Have I asked myself all the questions other people may wish to ask?

If we began to speak about our faith in this ‘Jesus who died and was raised to life’ is this where the other person is coming from – or will it encourage a: “I’m Ok thanks you” response?

The danger is, of course, that the more we take this development on, as Paul and his friends did, we may realise our own need to ask some questions which may lead me beyond where I feel comfortable? It is easier to say ‘I’m Ok thank you’ as well – or, as I’ve heard Catholics actually say (to a priest!): “Oh I don’t want to think about it because I’m Ok where I am”

And, ultimately, how can I convey to others that my faith is Good News and is free? Many people around us express a view that they do not want to go anywhere near ‘organised religion’ as it seems to demand so much of people – where do they get this view from? It can only be from us!

How can we, as Catholic Christians, look like people who are living Good News – and for free?

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021

“How beautiful and consoling it is to know that Jesus knows us one by one, that we are not unknown to Him, that our name is known to Him!... We are unique individuals, each with his or her own story, He knows us with our own story, each with his or her own value, both because they have been created and have been redeemed by Christ. Each of us can say: Jesus, knows me!... Only He knows what is in our hearts, our intentions, our most hidden feelings. Jesus knows our strengths and our defects, and is always ready to care for us, to heal the wounds of our errors with the abundance of His mercy.”

Pope Francis

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.)

Wednesday: Read recently: *"An American preacher, Eugene Walsh, once finished off his sermon with the remarkable words, "Jesus only promised two things: Your life has meaning and you're going to live forever. If you get a better offer, take it!"*

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>