

# PARISH NEWSLETTER

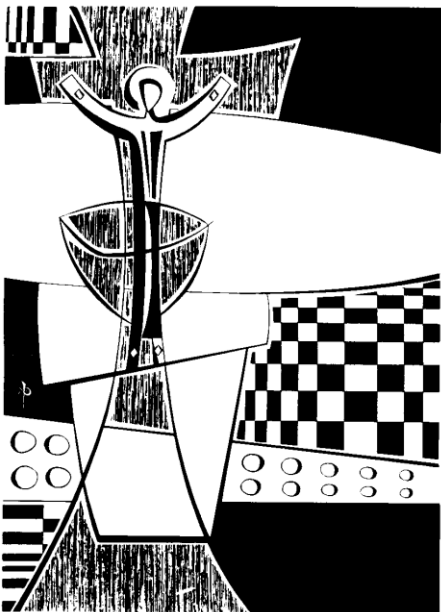
St Arvans with Penterry, Itton, Devauden & Kilgwrrwg

Welcome to the Newsletter for our group of parishes during the period when, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, our churches are closed.

Sunday readings are included so that we may join spiritually in the Church's offering of the Eucharist, which will now take place in private.

Please help to keep us informed of anyone who is in need or is isolated over the next weeks and months, and anyone in need of our prayer and support  
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26<sup>th</sup> April 2020  
The Third Sunday  
of Easter



## The Collect

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

## A reading from the Acts of the Apostles [2; 414, 22-28]

But Peter, standing with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know - this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

*Reader/* This is the Word of the Lord  
*Response /* **Thanks be to God**

## Psalm 116 1-3, 10-17

**R Gracious is the Lord and righteous;**

I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

**R Gracious is the Lord and righteous;**

The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; I came to grief and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, I pray you, save my life.'

**R Gracious is the Lord and righteous;**

How shall I repay the Lord for all the good things he has done for me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.

**R Gracious is the Lord and righteous;**

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his servants. O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.

**R Gracious is the Lord and righteous;**

I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Alleluia!

**R Gracious is the Lord and righteous;**

**A reading from the first letter of St Peter** [1; 17-23]

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

*Reader/ This is the Word of the Lord*  
*Response / Thanks be to God*

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Lord Jesus,  
explain the scriptures to us.  
Make our hearts burn within us  
as you talk to us. **Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you:  
**And also with you**

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Luke**

*R/ Glory to you, O Lord.*

**O**n that same day, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking

sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' Jesus asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Jesus.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and

how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

*[St Luke 24.13-35]*

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**R/ Praise to you, O Christ.**

**For Your Prayers**

That our spiritual communions this Eastertide will give us the grace to serve Christ more fully. Those throughout the world suffering from the Coronavirus Doctors, nurses and all medical staff, medical scientists and researchers. All who are isolated and alone, those anxious for their health and well being and those of their loved ones. For those in government throughout the world, that they may make informed, wise and compassionate decisions for the good of all The life of our own communities, and those who live and work in them

**For the Church:**

For the bishops of the Church: John, Archbishop of Wales; Cherry, Bishop of Monmouth, Philip, Episcopal Visitor of the Society of the Holy Cross in Wales, Jonathan, Bishop of Ebbsfleet; Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury. & for all who hold and teach the Catholic faith that comes to us from the Apostles. All bishops, priests and deacons and all baptised Christians For the reunion of all Christians: for Pope Francis, for Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, & for the leaders of the Reformed traditions

**For the Sick & those in need:**

Roy Staples, Ralph Hamilton, Patricia Hamilton; Sylvia; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Amanda Morgan; Naomi; Kim; Elisabeth; Kerrie; Trevor; Helen; Cliff Edwards; Kate Lewis; Dave; John Gillard

**For the Departed:**

The recently departed: David; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time:

**Thought for the Week**

"God loves each of us  
as if there were only one of us."  
- St. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430)

## This Week

On the Third Sunday of Easter, St Luke's Gospel brings the Resurrection story about the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. We are prepared to encounter a familiar pattern with his followers: they don't recognize Jesus, but he opens their eyes with the breaking of the bread.

In the first weekday readings from the Acts of the Apostles, we read of Stephen, one of the earliest martyrs, and of Philip converting an Ethiopian slave along the road. Next is the story of Saul, persecutor of the early Christian community being blinded and then healed by Ananias in the name of Jesus. The week ends with Peter travelling the region and healing.

The Gospels this week come from Chapter 6 of St John's Gospel on Jesus as the "Bread of Life." Like so many stories in this Gospel, Jesus teaches from one layer of understanding to another, taking us deeper into understanding his gift of himself to us in the Eucharist. Jesus says, "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life." "The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world." "Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood remains in me and I in him." The dialogue ends with this exchange with his disciples: "Jesus then said to the Twelve, 'Do you also want to leave?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.'"

**Next Sunday's readings:** On the Fourth Sunday of Easter we reflect on the Paschal Mystery more deeply. Psalm 118 says, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Peter quotes this psalm in preaching that the crippled man was healed, "in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead." In St John's Gospel, Jesus tells us, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

## A Meditation for the Third Sunday of Easter

+ A Meditation for the Third Sunday of Easter 2020

+ We might think that today's Gospel about the disciples on the road to Emmaus is more than a little puzzling. How on earth did the two disciples fail to recognise Jesus, someone clearly they had met and heard speak and teach time after time? Why wasn't it immediately obvious to them who it was who was walking along the road with them.? On the one hand, if we are looking for natural explanations, perhaps we could say that psychologically it wasn't at all surprising that they didn't know him. He was dead - he would be the very last person they would be expecting to join them on their journey to Emmaus. They were in shock and grief - their world had been utterly changed, all their hopes had been taken away from them. Before they set out - this was only a half day's journey of about seven miles or so - they had clearly heard the stories about the tomb having been discovered empty, but no more than that. Perhaps, too, this stranger who was walking with them may have been muffled up against the cold wind or the sun's heat or whatever. But there is also the feeling here, and the other accounts of Our Lord's resurrection appearances seem to bear this out, that Jesus didn't intend them to recognise him, his presence is somehow veiled, kept deliberately mysterious while he speaks to them and explains the Scriptures. Whatever the reasons, the two disciples fail to understand what they are seeing and hearing. The risen Jesus is at their side, but their minds remain closed to him and they will need Jesus himself to lead them step by step until they understand who he is, and why the events of the last few days had to happen. But again, Jesus also takes them to task for not having understood the meaning of his words to them before his arrest and crucifixion - "O foolish men and slow to understand" he says to them - you should have understood, he goes on, that the prophets all pointed to the necessity of the Messiah's suffering and death before his mission could be fulfilled. Throughout his

time with them he has prepared them to understand the teachings of the prophets that 'the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory', and so once again he patiently explains to them that scriptures are pointing to precisely what has happened recently in Jerusalem. Even after all this careful explanation of the scriptures, the two disciples still don't recognise Jesus; they still can't make the necessary connection. Their minds are so weighed down with the violence of the crucifixion that they can't begin to imagine how God can bring new life from death. So at the end of their journey, Jesus gives them a sign, familiar but new, a mysterious sign and an immediately recognisable one, 'He took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them.' It is in that moment that we are told that 'their eyes were opened and they recognised him.' The sign was his gift to them, just as it is his gift to all of us so that we see the reality of what lies in front of our eyes. He then vanishes, his work is done - they get the message. Here at Emmaus - at the end of the story - by performing the characteristic action of breaking the bread he shows himself, but only by vanishing does he become fully recognisable - again the paradoxical teaching continues, something that becomes apparent at Pentecost with the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church - only by going from us can he remain with us for ever... 'at all times and in places' ....

So, then, what is the Story of the Emmaus Road saying to us? There are so many different layers here that we have perhaps to take just a few brief points away with us.

\* Jesus is with us - even at the times of the deepest crisis and despair he is walking alongside us long before we realise who he is.

\* The glory of the resurrection is only possible because of his suffering and death - he has to share all that it is to be human - even the reality of an unjust death - before he can heal and restore our human nature.

For us, too, the cross isn't an optional extra - just a grisly interlude - before normal service is resumed. We unite ourselves to his cross and passion so as to share in the glory of the Resurrection: The old expression is 'No cross, no glory' - the road to Easter lies through the events

of Good Friday, and we take up our crosses, our personal sacrifices, our hurts and disasters and vulnerabilities - whatever they may be - and follow him along the way that leads to new life.

\* And that way leads us to Emmaus - to the altar of the Eucharist, where the crucified and Risen Lord himself is made present - where he reveals himself fully to us so that we can be led ever more deeply into the mystery of his life which he shares with us.

\* This whole story is profoundly and deliberately 'liturgical' and 'Eucharistic' in that here the Risen Christ himself is helping us to understand the whole point of Christian worship and its relationship with the Christian life itself, and also that the Eucharist - which at the moment we can only see and experience at a distance - has the mysterious ability to help us make sense of things, to supply the missing pieces of our understanding, and enable us to live lives as a community united to Christ the Risen Lord, and as people committed to following his way of love and compassion. +

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### **A Prayer of Spiritual Communion**

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you in my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you.

Never permit me to be separated from you.

O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen..