

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
Parish Priest (Vicar / Rector):
Fr Michael Gollop,
The Vicarage, St Arvans
01291 622064;
mobile 07867803479

26th July 2020

The Seventh Sunday
after Trinity

Proper 12



The Collect

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; 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 first book of Kings [3. 5-12]

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, 'Ask what I should give you.' And Solomon said, 'You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart towards you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, 'Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.'

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

Psalm 119 129–136

R/ Lord, how I love your law.

Your decrees are wonderful; therefore I obey them with all my heart. When your word goes forth it gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

R/ Lord, how I love your law.

I open my mouth and pant;
I long for your commandments.
Turn to me in mercy, as you always do to those who love your name.

R/ Lord, how I love your law.

Steady my footsteps in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion over me. Rescue me from those who oppress me, and I will keep your commandments.

R/ Lord, how I love your law.

Let your countenance shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes. My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.

R/ Lord, how I love your law.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [8. 26-39]

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's

elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!

I call you friends, says the Lord,
Because I have made known to you
everything I have learned from my
Father. **Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus put before the crowd another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.' He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had

and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

[St Matthew 14. 22-33]

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

Thought for the Week

"Now the Greeks leave home and traverse the sea in order to gain an education, but there is no need to go abroad on account of the Kingdom of Heaven, nor to cross the sea for virtue. For the Lord has told us before, the kingdom of God is within you."

- St Anthony of Egypt -

For Your Prayers

That we may always seek the kingdom of God

All pilgrims

That our spiritual communions will give us the grace to serve Christ more fully.

Those throughout the world suffering from the Coronavirus

Doctors, nurses and all medical staff, all carers, 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

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; Helen Herbert; Cliff Edwards; Kate Lewis; Dave

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Jane Zorab; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Phyllis Irene Clay



A Prayer of Spiritual Communion

for these times when we are unable physically to receive Holy Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

(The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament)

This Week

In today's readings we see how God approves of Solomon because he asked for wisdom rather than riches. Jesus is the source of God's wisdom and teaches us more about the Kingdom of Heaven. In the Gospel we are invited to imagine the passion of one discovering a treasure buried in a field or finding a pearl of great value, sacrificing everything to buy what is so deeply desired. A dragnet hauls in fish that can nourish others as well as what is not useful for others. Today Jesus invites us into deeper reflection on what we value most and prepares us for our mission as his disciples.

Wednesday is the feast day of Saint Martha with its own special readings. On Friday, we celebrate Saint Ignatius of Loyola and on Saturday, Saint Alphonsus Liguori.

The first readings this week continue from the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah delivers God's messages about the laxity of the rulers. It is a powerful call to conversion for all of us today.

St Matthew's Gospel continues this week, with the sayings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. God's reign is like mustard seeds and it is like yeast. It's coming and growth is small and slow, but it is assured. The Kingdom is like a buried treasure or a merchant's search for a really fine pearl. It is worth investing all we

have in it. The Kingdom is like the dragnet used for fishing which gathers everything in it. It is at the end of time when God will gather all to separate the good from the evil. We hear that Jesus could not work miracles in his home town, because of their lack of faith in him. They thought they knew him and therefore took him for granted. Herod arrested John the Baptist because John's preaching was bothering his conscience. In a sobering account we learn how he had John beheaded to honour a drunken promise to his niece and an oath to impress his guests.

Next Sunday we hear how Jesus fed the crowds by making it possible for the disciples to give the people what they had. It was not enough, but became enough because of the compassion Jesus had for the people.

A Meditation for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity

+ Perhaps one of the reasons for our society's great preoccupation with the lives and personalities of celebrities is a fundamental crisis of meaning. So many people today seem to want to be famous, they want to be on television, they want to be seen to be a public success, sometimes in fact the more public their lives the better. The lives of "celebrities" - people who are well known for being well known - seem so much more glamorous, exciting and somehow more real in comparison with the everyday lives we poor, ordinary mortals tend to live. So the solution to the problem of the perceived humdrum nature of our lives is to become famous, to join the ranks of the so-called celebrities who crowd our television screens, the Sunday supplements and the magazines we - in normal times - used to be presented with in dentist's waiting rooms and doctor's surgeries. That way we can prove to ourselves that we are real, that life has both value and meaning. And, I think, the more our lives are lacking in what we might call the eternal dimension, the more we are tempted to take refuge in purely material answers to what is at heart essentially a spiritual question.

I suppose we could say that most of the teaching that Jesus gives in the Gospels is about getting our priorities right. It's a function of our faith to give us a measure of assurance - that what we hope for is a reality. But it's also a function of authentic teaching to challenge us, to call us to a change of heart and mind, and to make us uncomfortable. Someone has said that religion can bring comfort but it doesn't bring solutions. I think the reverse is very often the case. There is nothing very comforting in the last few verses of today's Gospel - only a direct challenge to us to get our act together.

And in the Gospel today, in giving us these parables about the kingdom of God, Jesus is saying to each one of us, Get on with it and don't let anything hold you back. Tomorrow may be too late, commit yourself wholeheartedly now! He says choose for God, because God is the only one who gives reliable meaning and substance to our lives and he is our eternal future.

One of the truly remarkable things about the Christian Gospel, and one of the most wonderful, is the way God calls people to spiritual greatness without any outward evidence at all that they may be capable of it. The apostles, of course, are perfect illustrations of this. But despite being in worldly terms a fairly unimpressive group, they heard the call and they responded to it. One of the great temptations in the Christian life is the idea that religion is all about doing things - working towards salvation, or achieving the heights of spiritual wisdom or whatever, the kind of religious equivalent of striving for celebrity status for fame and fortune.

But as we all should know, spiritual adventures, religious highs, however exciting we may happen to find them, can often degenerate into the most dangerous forms of self-indulgent illusion - ultimately, it can all too easily turn into a matter of wanting to suit ourselves, rather than trying to discover God's will and then submitting ourselves to it. And nothing is more alien to the thought that it is by grace we are saved, than trying to fix it all up for ourselves, the sort of religious vanity which ends up with us telling ourselves how much we are doing for God, for our salvation, for our holiness and our own perfection. We end up creating a God after our image, rather than allowing ourselves to be moulded into his.

As we know from the news at the moment, the world can be a very murky place, and those who rise to the top are often the least suited to it, and we ourselves move in it ourselves as those who have to negotiate among various imperfect choices rather than being presented with clear cut solutions. But that's the way the world is. And after all, it was and is in this world that the saints become saints, and it was in this world, that the apostles themselves from being utterly confused about the nature of God, prone to quarrelling and suspicion, having all the faults that we ourselves have, in fact, became those who were prepared to give their lives for the truth; it is in this world and in no other, that the Lord became one of us in the Incarnation. It was also, of course, in this world that Christ was nailed to the cross.

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel that the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a treasure or a pearl of great price. It's only

when we genuinely open ourselves up to God's grace - to the help he wants to give us - will we find something really new and fresh and also really foundational, something which shows the wisdom and truth of the ages. God's grace is essential because without it we only ever have something either tired and dusty or something ephemeral and worthless. The treasure, the pearl of great price, comes without any merit of our own. We come upon it because God in his goodness shares his wisdom with us. As the parable of the dragnet shows, it's not even quite right to say that we come upon it, as one might come across a treasure or a pearl. The Kingdom of Heaven itself draws us in. The treasure belongs to the man who owns the field. The pearl belongs to the one who buys it. And although these gifts of God are free and come to us without our working for them and without our deserving them, they're not cheap. Indeed, when we find the treasure, we have to sell everything we have in order to buy it. When you come across this great treasure, what we might call this ancient youthfulness of the Kingdom of God, we have to give up many other things for the one thing that will give us true joy and true life. Prioritise - 'seize the day,' again!

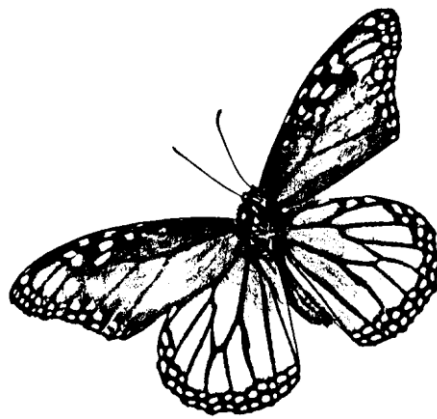
God offers us his wisdom, the wisdom of the ages, but he also gives us something startling and always fresh and original - it's the wisdom of the saints in every age - it's the power of the Resurrection which is always new, always contemporary and completely relevant in the world of today.

+

A Blessing from the Camino from the Cistercian Sisters (OCSO) of Armenteira, Galicia

May the light and love of God
bless and direct your steps
May the roads rise up to meet you
May you open your heart to silence.
And keep with gratitude the joyous
remembrance of the good things
that you have encountered.
May God carry you in his hands
to the arms of St James in Santiago.
And may you go back to your home
full of light and joy.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

*Saturday (July 25th)
was the Feast of St James*



A Prayer in Summertime

Long warm days...
The pace of life slows...
A time for picnics
and rest in the shade...

Lord,
help me to rest a while
in the cooling shade
of your presence.
Slow down
my restless heart
and fill me
with gentle compassion
for all your people.

Anon