

# 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

16<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary



### The Collect

Almighty God, who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary and chose her to be the mother of your only Son: grant that we who are redeemed by his blood may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom; 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 book of Revelation

God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. Then another portent appeared in heaven:

a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

[11. 19 - 12. 6]

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

### Psalm 45

11 - 18

**R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises**

'Hear, O daughter; consider and listen closely; forget your people and your family's house. The king will have pleasure in your beauty; he is your master; therefore do him honour.

**R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;**

The people of Tyre are here with a gift; the rich among the people seek your favour.' All glorious is the princess as she enters; her gown is cloth-of-gold.

**R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;**

In embroidered apparel she is brought to the king; after her the bridesmaids follow in procession. With joy and gladness they are brought, and enter into the palace of the king.

**R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;**

'In place of fathers, O king, you shall have sons; you shall make them princes over all the earth. I will make your name to be remembered from one generation to another; therefore nations will praise you for ever and ever.'

**R/ Sing praises to God, sing praises;**

### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Galatians [4; 4 - 7]

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Reader/ This is the Word of the Lord  
**Response / Thanks be to God**  
Alleluia, alleluia!

Mary has been taken up into heaven; all the choirs of angels are rejoicing.

**Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you

**R/ And also with you**

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Luke

**R/ Glory to you, O Lord**

**M**ary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

[1. 46 - 55]

This is the Gospel of the Lord:

**R/ Praise to you, O Christ.**

### Thought for the Week

" The mystery of the Virgin is the first after-effect of the Incarnation. The mystery of the Virgin is like the ripple effect of a stone thrown in the water: the first wave causes all the others. This first concentric circle is the Virgin Mary in relation to the Incarnation. The waves will continue until the end of times, and they are the Church"

Charles Journet  
*Conversations about Mary - Parole et Silence (2001)*



**For Your Prayers**

That we may follow Blessed Mary's example of faith and trust in the promises of her Son.

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:**

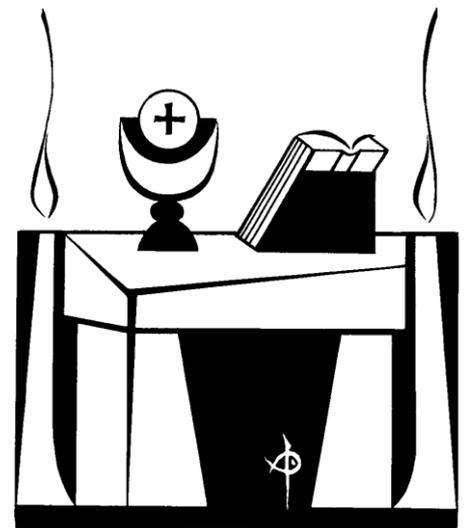
The recently departed: Philip Hughes Davies; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Sid Belcher; John George Hughes, bishop; Mary Aplin; Patrick Clay.

~~~~~

**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

Today we celebrate the great feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is crowned with glory, and is brought to share in the glorious resurrection of her Son and her Saviour..

Wednesday is the feast day of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, abbot and doctor of the Church.

We continue reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. His sharp and biting calls for conversion give way his prophesy about God's fidelity and mercy, especially in the field of dry bones that come to life. In this week's Gospels from St Matthew we hear teachings of Jesus about discipleship. Jesus tells a rich, young man to sell what he has and give it to the poor. "Then come, follow me." The man went

away with sadness because "he had many possessions." When Jesus tells his disciples how hard it is for the rich to be saved, his disciples worry, but he says "for God all things are possible." Jesus says there will be a great turning of the tables - the last being the first and the first falling to last place. But, he tells them the parable of the landowner that hires workers throughout the day, including the last hours. When he pays them all the same, the workers who worked all day grumbled. Jesus asks, "Are you envious because I am generous?" He adds again, "The last will be first, and the first will be last." A king gives a wedding banquet for his son but many were too busy to come. Others killed the servants who carried the invitation. "Many are invited, but few are chosen." When asked the greatest commandment he gives the double command of loving God and neighbor. Jesus warns against the self serving ways of the religious elite. He says, "The greatest among you must be your servant."

**Next Sunday:** In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus asks his followers what people are saying about him. Then he asks the real question, "Who do you say I am?" Peter's direct answer, "You are the Christ" prompts Jesus' reply that Peter would be given the keys to the kingdom of heaven and would be the rock upon which his church would be built.

### St Bernard of Clairvaux (feast day 20<sup>th</sup> August)

He was born in 1090 near Dijon, of a noble family. In 1112 he joined (and induced others to join) the monastery at Citeaux the heart of the Cistercian reform. At that time Citeaux was poor and far from flourishing; it was Bernard's influence which was to save it and strengthen the whole Cistercian movement. After a few years, he became Abbot of the new foundation of Clairvaux, where, once he had learn to reduce the demands he made on the monks, community life flourished; and gave rise to daughter foundations in France and elsewhere (e.g. Rievaulx in Yorkshire, Whitland and Margam in West Wales, and Boxley near Maidstone in Kent. Nearby Tintern was a Cistercian foundation also.

St Bernard's life is something of a paradox, since although the Cistercians practiced seclusion from the world and its affairs, he was increasingly drawn into the world of church politics. though always as a mediator - e.g. in obtaining recognition for the Order of Knights Templar. He was also one of the foremost preachers of the Second Crusade; its failure, although not his fault, was a grave disappointment to him.

At the same time he is a distinguished writer and theologian; his reflections on the Love of God; on the Song of Songs, and his praise of the Virgin Mary have never lost their influence. He favoured in particular the development of mystical prayer within the ordinary monastic cycle. A larger-than life figure, not without his faults, he led the Cistercian expansion to a total of some 500 houses; he died in 1153 and was canonised in 1174.



St. Bernard

### A Meditation for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Today's feast is really about discipleship, that of Mary and of our own. It reinforces that realisation which many of us have come to over the last few difficult months that the things we thought really mattered to us - the ability to enjoy life with a feeling of security and the ability to look to the future with a degree of confidence aren't as important - or as achievable - as we thought they were.

When we as Christians honour Mary what are we celebrating? It's not simply an accident of biology, because Mary's motherhood - her role as what Greek theology calls her - the "Theotokos" - "the bearer of God" - is no accident; it was her voluntary co-operation with the process of

humanity's redemption - it is essential to her discipleship - and in the highest degree possible she represents the true human response of faith. We honour her always as the first Christian. But Mary begins her pilgrimage of faith as someone who overcomes her fear, someone who takes the incalculable risk of setting out into the unknown. She has trust and obviously a massive inner strength and purpose - she is far from being the rather, submissive and anaemic object of devotion she is sometimes portrayed as - but despite what she is told she has no idea what she is letting herself in for. Her "yes" to God at the Annunciation has consequences quite beyond the ability of any human being to contemplate. Her faith is able to guide her through the darkness to lies beyond but her immediate experience of discipleship doesn't protect her at all. Mary's first experience of discipleship is as hard and cruel as one could imagine, giving birth far from home and family, unable to find adequate shelter, after that life as an exile in a foreign country, fleeing from Herod's persecution. Her vocation - like all followers of Christ - is to embrace the reality of the cross - she does so spiritually long before she is called to witness its reality, standing with the apostle John at the foot of Calvary.

If we join her in the following of her Son, what are we promised?

Well, first of all, not immunity from the tensions and sufferings of being human (how could we be given that our faith celebrates the becoming human of God himself?), not an absence of mess and confusion, not freedom from the distress caused by our own weaknesses and betrayals or those of others, not protection from disappointment and rejection, and infidelities of all kinds ( and it's our own that are the most difficult to accept and move on from) The Christian faith isn't a kind of spiritual rabbit's foot which we carry around with us to stop things going wrong. Very often the impression is given - or "picked up" that it is - and that's when faith can so very easily fail. Bad things do happen to good people .The whole point about

the Gospel is that it is in many ways God's own protest movement against the way things are - both with the world in which we live and with the way we human beings have made it and ourselves. The

Gospel this morning is a great affirmation of faith and hope in God's promises despite the injustices we see around us and within us.

What we are celebrating today is the triumph of faith despite all this. As the first disciple, as the type - the model - of the Church, Mary is among the first to share in the fullness of her Son's victory over death and evil. In her glorification we see our own - a sign of our own sure and certain victory, of our own true homecoming, of our pilgrimage ending in an experience of life, beauty and truth in the presence of God.

And Mary shows us that despite everything, the life of faith and discipleship is not only possible but essential to the living of an authentic human life lived in the full knowledge of our contingency, of our littleness. In her, hope becomes a reality. Sharing in the experience of the cross will lead to the new life of Resurrection. Following the path of faith will lead us to life in all its fullness, in God's time, in God's way. Our exile will end in glory.

I'm going to end with a short passage from one of the most interesting and important Anglican theologians of the last century, John Macquarrie: his point is that Blessed Mary's Assumption, like all the saving events of our faith, is not a one-off event, but a continuing process which involves all of us:

"... Christians can affirm that beyond reasonable doubt at some time in the first century of our era in some Christian community in the near East, the Blessed Virgin Mary fell asleep and went to be with her Son to receive the glory he had promised to bestow on his own.

That would seem to be something that can be affirmed on the basis of the New Testament, and we may say that this is the classic moment of the Assumption and is worthy in itself to be celebrated, But it is the beginning of a vaster (dare we say, cosmic or universal?) assumption.

That vaster assumption is in progress now. Wherever in the Church militant here on earth there is a gleam of true glory, a faithful act of discipleship, a prayer offered in faith, a hand stretched out in love, there is assumption, human life is lifted up to God by God,

We believe too that in the Church expectant, souls are being perfected toward the day of Jesus Christ, Finally in

the Church triumphant, the work will be complete, and with Mary and all the saints, the people of God will have attained to his eternal kingdom of glory, peace and light." +

