

PARISH NEWSLETTER

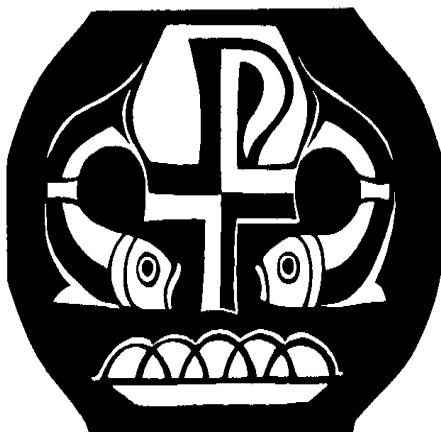
St Arvans with Penterry, Itton, Devauden & Kilgwrrwg

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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2nd August 2020
The Eighth Sunday
after Trinity
Proper 13 A



The Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 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 prophet Isaiah

The LORD says this: Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

[55. 1-5]

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

Psalm 145 8–9, 15–22

**R/ You open wide your hand,
O Lord,**

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great kindness.

The Lord is loving to everyone

and his compassion is over all his works.

**R/ You open wide your hand,
O Lord,**

The Lord upholds all those who fall; he lifts up those who are bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season.

You open wide your hand and satisfy the needs of every living creature.

**R/ You open wide your hand,
O Lord,**

The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving in all his works. The Lord is near to those who call upon him, to all who call upon him faithfully. He fulfils the desire of those who fear him, he hears their cry and helps them

**R/ You open wide your hand,
O Lord,**

The Lord preserves all those who love him, but he destroys all the wicked. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord; let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

**R/ You open wide your hand,
O Lord,**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [9. 1-5]

I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit. I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the

worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
Man does not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from
the mouth of God
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

When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

[St Matthew 14.13–21]

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

Thought for the Week

"The blessing of Prime under the tall pines, in the cool of early morning, behind the hermitage.
The blessing of sawing wood, cutting grass, cleaning house, washing dishes.
The blessing of a quiet, alert, concentrated, fully "present" meditation.
The blessing of God's presence and guidance."

Thomas Merton:
Dancing in the Water of Life.

For Your Prayers

That we may always be fed with the life of Christ
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: George Howell; Jan Evans; Benjamin Vaughan, bishop; Ray Parnell; Edith Sims



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 Isaiah 55 invites us to come to the water when we are thirsty, to come and eat though we have no money. We can stop spending on what fails to satisfy. In the Gospel 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.

Tuesday is the feast day of Saint John Vianney, the famous Cure d'Ars..

Thursday is the Feast of the Transfiguration with its own special readings. Saturday is the feast day of Saint Dominic.

This week we complete the series of readings from the prophet Jeremiah. Saturday gives the hopeful reading from the prophet Habakkuk, "the vision still has its time."

The Gospels continue this week from St Matthew: the disciples watch Jesus walk across the water to reach them in a storm. "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." The Pharisees ask why Jesus' disciples don't follow the dietary laws and Jesus says, "It is not what enters one's mouth that defiles the man; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one." "Who do you say I am?," Jesus asks. Peter declares for all of the disciples, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus sums up our discipleship: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?" The disciples wonder why they could not drive out a demon from a boy, Jesus answers, "Because of your little faith." Faith "the size of a mustard seed," he tells them, is enough.

A Meditation for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity

+ It's strange, and we don't expect it from such a well known episode of the Gospels, but the presence - more than that - the threat - of death is very much in the air in the passage we've just heard. As so often in response to a crisis of some kind, Jesus had withdrawn to a quiet, deserted place to pray, either by himself or with his immediate followers. He had just received the news of the death of John the Baptist at the hands of the puppet king Herod. John, of course, wasn't only the one who had on the banks of the River Jordan announced the beginning of Our Lord's earthly ministry but he was also his cousin. The news was shocking - the detail surrounding the murder was even more so, highlighting the heartless, careless, casual frivolity of the evil of worldly power exercised without responsibility. Jesus was in the wilderness, the desert hills surrounding the Sea of Galilee, to pray without interruption away from the demands of those who flocked to hear him speak. And it is in this context that St Matthew tells us of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand. Somehow the crowds had followed him into the wilderness and had found him there. Always compassionate, he doesn't send them away but heals the sick and teaches them about the kingdom of God. So as evening approaches, the disciples want to send the crowds away to the neighbouring villages to buy food. Jesus however feeds the crowd - more than five thousand we are told with the five loaves and two (probably dried) fish that the disciples have brought with them. We are presented here with a miracle and it's clear that that is how St Matthew intends us to see it.

There are, of course, those who rule out such demonstrations of divine power as impossible; those who tend to scoff at miracles suggest that Jesus persuaded everyone, by his charismatic example, to belatedly share their picnic lunches with one other. Such reductionism and minimalism - such, if I dare say so, rather banal draining of the Gospels of the richness of their meaning - misses the whole drama of this story and its symbolism which reaches back into the past of the people of Israel and forward

into the life of the Church, the New Israel, as the Fathers called it.

The fact that the crowds are in the wilderness with no food is intended to suggest the journeying of the children of Israel in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt where God himself feeds them and leads them to the Promised Land. Here God, through his Son, the Christ, also feeds them.

And if he reaches back into the past to give meaning and continuity to the present, Jesus also reaches forward into the future. St Matthew has told us that Jesus took the bread and fish, blessed them, broke them and distributed them to these hungry crowds. Taking, blessing, breaking and distributing are explicitly meant to be a kind of pre-echo of the Last Supper, where Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the apostles to eat. St Matthew uses the same vocabulary, describing the same actions, - it was probably far more obvious to the early Christian congregations listening to Matthew's gospel in the original Greek.

The symbolism doesn't stop there, of course because these are the same actions we perform at the Eucharist today, where the priest, standing in the person of Jesus and acting in his name, takes bread, blesses it, breaks it and distributes it to the people of God.

So this story of the feeding of the five thousand is far more than a visual representation of the compassion of God towards people in need. It's a deeply symbolic story, a historical incident which points us forward to the Eucharist, to our reception of the Bread of eternal Life. As so often in the Gospels, in the person of Jesus past, present, and future come together. Through this story Matthew shows us firstly that Jesus is the new and greater Moses, the person to whom the Law was revealed. Matthew is telling us here that Jesus is truly the Messiah, the giver of the new law of love, the Saviour of God's people, come to inaugurate God's kingdom, come to lead his people to the banquet of eternal life, of which the Eucharist is a foretaste - a preparation.

The Transfiguration

And in the background of this we are meant to see the stark contrast between this great sign of the feast of the Kingdom

of heaven with the decadence of the feast St Matthew has described a few verses earlier in his Gospel, where Salome entraps Herod into taking the life of St John the Baptist, at a feast heavy with the grotesque banality of intrigue and deceit in the court of a earthly tyrant. The compassion of the Christ healing the crowds in the wilderness is directly contrasted with the moral sickness of the power-obsessed Herod who kills the last and greatest of the prophets to appease an empty-headed dancer and the evil intentions of her mother.

We said that this story is not only triggered by a death, but surrounded by death, and so it is because the Eucharist itself can only come about through the sacrificial death of the One who feeds us with his life. Here at the altar - at the Eucharist - we present that death - that one perfect and sufficient sacrifice - as the only acceptable offering we can make in praise and thanksgiving for our sharing in his Resurrection life. This is the promise of our heavenly destiny: Christ feeds us with his life to fit us for the life of the Kingdom. The Kingdom which is very much evident here in the present, but whose fullness is yet to come ... +

The Feast of the Transfiguration falls on Thursday this week – August 6th. In his poem, The Transfiguration, Edwin Muir speaks of the Transfiguration of all things in Christ - a profoundly Christian meditation on the theme of the redemption of all creation. Below is an extract

“The shepherds’ hovels shone,
for underneath
The soot we saw the stone
clean at the heart
As on the starting-day.
The refuse heaps
Were grained with that fine dust
that made the world;
For he had said,
‘To the pure all things are pure.’
And when we went into the town,
he with us,
The lurkers under doorways, murderers,
With rags tied round their feet for silence,
came
Out of themselves to us and were with us,
And those who hide within the labyrinth
Of their own loneliness
and greatness came,
And those entangled in their own devices,
The silent and the garrulous liars, all
Stepped out of their dungeons
and were free.
Reality or vision, this we have seen.
If it had lasted but another moment
It might have held for ever! But the world
Rolled back into its place,
and we are here,
And all that radiant kingdom lies forlorn,
As if it had never stirred; no human voice
Is heard among its meadows,
but it speaks
To itself alone, alone it flowers and shines
And blossoms for itself while time runs on.

But he will come again, it’s said,
though not though not
Unwanted and unsummoned;
for all things,
Beasts of the field, and woods,
and rocks, and seas,
And all mankind
from end to end of the earth
Will call him with one voice “

Next Sunday:

On the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Elijah finds God not in the thunder and driving wind, but in a gentle breeze and silence. In the Gospel Peter’s fear gets the better of him, when Jesus calls him out of his boat into a stormy sea. Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus and would have perished without Jesus to rescue