

PARISH NEWSLETTER

St Arvans with Penterry, Itton, Devauden & Kilgwrrwg

9th August 2020
**The Ninth Sunday
after Trinity**
Proper 13 A



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

The Collect

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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 [19. 9-18]

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God, he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are

seeking my life, to take it away.' Then the LORD said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.'

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

Psalm 85. 8-13

**R/ Show us your mercy, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.**

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him. Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

**R/ Show us your mercy, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.**

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

**R/ Show us your mercy, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.**

The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

**R/ Show us your mercy, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [10. 5-15]

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that 'the person who does these things will live by them.' But the righteousness that comes from faith says, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down) 'or "Who will descend into the abyss?"' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Hear the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Immediately after feeding the crowd with the five loaves and two fish, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And

after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

[St Matthew 14. 22-33]

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

Thought for the Week

"Just as at the sea those who are carried away from the direction of the harbour bring themselves back on course by a clear sign, so Scripture may guide those adrift on the sea of life back into the harbour of the divine will."

- St. Gregory of Nyssa -

For Your Prayers

That we may trust in Christ and not fear.
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:

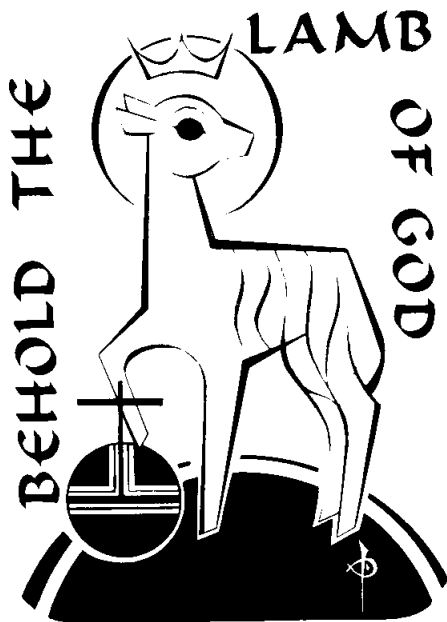
Roy Staples, Ralph Hamilton, Patricia Hamilton; Sylvia; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Amanda Morgan; Naomi; Kim; Elisabeth; Helen Herbert; Cliff Edwards; Kate Lewis; Dave

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Philip Davies; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Ray Bull; Bill Rogers.



ORANTE—THE PRAYING CHURCH



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, 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 him. Monday is the Feast of Saint Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr. Tuesday is the feast day of Saint Clare of Assisi. Friday is the feast day of the twentieth century martyr and priest, St Maximilian Kolbe, who was murdered at Auschwitz.

This week we begin a two week sequence of readings from the prophet Ezekiel. His visions tell of the destruction of Israel to come and the salvation that will follow.

St Matthew's Gospel offers us a number of very familiar stories as we reflect upon God's mercy and our call to imitate his love. Jesus predicts his passion and miraculously resolves a conflict over temple tax. It is not the temple tax for which he will be executed, but for what he reveals about God's love and mercy to sinners. Unless we are humble and trusting like children, we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus tells us the hard work we should go through to reconcile with a sinner. He says that whenever we are gathered together, in his name, he is with us. He tells us to forgive - over and over again - and tells the parable of the servant who is forgiven but won't forgive a fellow servant. Children were not regarded very highly and the disciples tried to bar them from bothering Jesus. Jesus welcomes them - and all the powerless they represent: "for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Next Sunday 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..

A Meditation for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity

We've all experienced moments when we've been confronted with the frightening power of the natural world - a storm at sea, the electrical storms of a few weeks ago - I remember a couple of notable occasions walking the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, firstly over some very isolated and unpopulated mountains towards the sea, when the weather suddenly closed in and the temperature dropped dramatically as an Atlantic storm swept in from the coast, and also on my first pilgrimage walking out of Pamplona

towards the hills being chased by what turned out to be a rather violent thunderstorm: walking in the open wasn't the best place to be! On these kind of occasions suddenly we feel things could so easily go wrong, our carefully ordered plans so easily descend into chaos, apprehension and uncertainty - or worse... Similarly for the disciples - presumably the apostles - who find themselves up against the ferocity of a storm on the Sea of Galilee - in a small boat in danger of being overwhelmed by the waves. This situation clearly wasn't just a passing squall as they seem to have been battling the elements all night until Jesus appears to them.

Again, as with so many of the Gospel stories their sheer familiarity to us tends to get in the way of our understanding their true significance. Miracles have so often been presented to us as just random, magical, supernatural happenings - about which, as twenty-first century people, we are understandably sceptical - that we don't realise what is being said to us. In this case 'walking on water' has entered the language - not necessarily in the most reverent (or relevant) way - and we treat it less seriously and probably with a bit more levity than perhaps we should.

The clue to the interpretation of this incident happens when Christ reaches the boat and calls to the disciples, 'It is I, do not be afraid' We are meant to pick up on this greeting as a divine claim, linked with similar proclamations in the Gospel according to St Matthew in which Jesus reveals that He is God, and, of course, those well-know declarations of Our Lord in St John's Gospel when he begins with the words, I AM.

Here of course, Jesus identifies himself with the divine power which alone can bring order out of chaos. The evangelists - the writers of the Gospels - all recognise, and want us to recognise too, that this power of Jesus is not some magical ability out of myth and legend but springs from his very identity, his very being. Here Jesus deliberately echoes the words of the Lord to Moses on Mount Sinai: I AM who I AM. Say this to the People of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.' What the original Greek has Jesus saying to the disciples - and it's obscured in English translation unless we make ourselves aware of it - is not so much ' It is I! Do not be afraid' as ' I AM -- do not be

afraid' - very much a claim in keeping with the Christian Church's constant belief that Jesus is the Incarnate Son of God . We are being told here that, just as with the terrified disciples on the lake, we should be unafraid of the storms of life because of who Jesus is: the Lord, the Creator God who moves over the stormy waters, who walks upon the primal chaotic waves of the sea and brings from them life, meaning and goodness.

And if a story appears in all four Gospels echoing this theme of Jesus' power over the waters of the sea, then we may be sure that it is something absolutely essential to our faith - something Christ himself intends us to take on board. Here we have perhaps the most central theme of all - from which everything else flows - : that Jesus Christ is 'I AM', the Creator God of the Old Testament, ' And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.'

Without this there is nothing, forgiveness, redemption, resurrection, everlasting life and an eternal future for each one of us. And the second part of today's Gospel takes up that theme, that very point: Peter walks out on the water towards Jesus, but he is overcome in fear by the violence of the storm. This is often how we find ourselves. In the face of the destructive voices which dominate our world we can feel helpless, unable to resist the terrible destructive power of the violent, and the irrational, the seeming randomness of what the world throws at us.. Yet Jesus Christ reaches out to hold us as we begin to sink beneath the waves. As with St Peter, he raises us up to be with Him, so that our hearts and hands and voices can be used to build God's Kingdom.

Saint Peter recognises the claim Our Lord is making and he says to him - again, literally in the Greek - 'If you are, tell me to come to you?' He doesn't want to share in what appear to be Jesus' magical powers, but rather he sees that if the Creator of all things who alone can bring order out of chaos, who strides the waters of the deep as the psalmist says, is revealing himself in the person of a human being, is sharing in our humanity, then it is possible for us to share in his divinity, to allow us to conquer in ourselves the chaos and destructiveness of our fallen world. He has come into the world to us to invite us to come to him, over the water.

But Peter also sees that this is possible

only in response to an invitation from Jesus to come to him; the way to walk the waters of the deep is to keep his eyes fixed firmly on Jesus - when he turns away and notices the frightening power of the wind and the waves, it is then that he begins to sink.

We have to keep our eyes fixed on the eyes of our fellow human being, Jesus of Nazareth, true God and true man, Son of Mary, Son of God, our Creator and our Saviour.

Again, our faith is not about magic, or random miracles, but about a relationship, lived in love, with the Living God who transcends the limitations of the world and our own earthly existence.

And we see this relationship most clearly here at the altar. Christ is present, drawing us to himself, leading us to share his divine life. +

