

# 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, some of our churches remain closed. The Sunday Eucharist is now able to be celebrated with a congregation at St Arvans, although – **please note - for the time being, because of limited space, attendance has to be by prior booking only.**

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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## The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity (A)

### The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of 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 prophet Jeremiah

[15. 15-21]

O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts. I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation. Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail. Therefore thus says the LORD: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them.

And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the LORD. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

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

### Psalm 26    1- 8

#### **R/ Your love is before my eyes**

Give judgement for me, O Lord,  
for I have lived with integrity;  
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.  
Test me, O Lord, and try me;  
examine my heart and my mind.

#### **R/ Your love is before my eyes**

For your love is before my eyes;  
I have walked faithfully with you.  
I have not sat with the worthless,  
nor do I consort with the deceitful.  
I have hated the company of evildoers;  
I will not sit down with the wicked.

#### **R/ Your love is before my eyes**

I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord, that I may go in procession round your altar,  
Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving  
and recounting all your wonderful deeds.  
Lord, I love the house in which you dwell  
and the place where your glory abides.

**R/ Your love is before my eyes**

**A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans** [12; 9-21]

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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

**The Gospel**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
enlighten the eyes of our mind  
so that we can see  
what hope his call holds for us.  
**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*

**F**rom that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.'

But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

*[St Matthew 16.21–28]*

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

## Thought for the Week

"We make idols of our concepts, but Wisdom is born of wonder"

— St. Gregory the Great —

## For Your Prayers

That we may take up our cross and follow Christ

For our planet, that its resources may not be plundered but shared in a just and respectful way.

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: Art Eggert; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: John Meade

**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 the first reading we catch a glimpse of the Prophet Jeremiah who understands the pain of following the Lord and decides not to speak the Lord's name again, "but then it becomes like fire burning in my heart." St Paul's letter to the Romans reflects on the practical meaning of genuine love and authentic discipleship. In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus corrects his disciples' resistance to his warnings about his own passion and death, telling them that if they try to save their lives, they'll lose them. *"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."*

Tuesday is the feast day of the abbot, St Giles and Wednesday that of Saint Gregory the Great, the fifth century pope, theologian and reformer of the Church, perhaps known best for his 'Pastoral Rule,' addressed to bishops and clergy.

The first weekday reading at the Eucharist for the next few weeks will be from St Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthians, offering a look at the struggles and joys of the early life of the Church in Corinth.

Until Advent the weekday gospels will be taken from St Luke, who brings us many of the most vivid stories of Jesus' early public ministry. This week we hear of Jesus teaching in the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor,"* he reads from Isaiah, but his listeners wanted only to see the miracles they had heard about him. He cleanses a man of an unclean spirit - a spirit who recognizes Jesus as the "Holy One of God" when those around Jesus did not. He cures Simon's mother-in-law and then tells the crowds he must leave to spread the good news to other towns. As Jesus comes upon Peter, James and John, he invites the weary fishermen to lower their empty nets one more time. When they bring up nets overflowing with fish, Peter says, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" but Jesus reassures him not to be afraid and says Peter will be catching people now. He tells them, "No one pours new wine into old wineskins." Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins,

and it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. When he is criticised for allowing his disciples to pick grain to eat on the sabbath, Jesus is compassionate toward their hunger and defends them saying, "The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

**Next Sunday:**

The prophet Ezekiel speaks of repentance and a turning towards the Lord, St Paul in the Letter to the Romans tells us: "owe no one anything, except to love one another." In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells us to challenge each other on our behaviour and to pray, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

## A Meditation for Trinity 12

+ It's the last Sunday of August and Summer (which seems to have disappeared for the last few weeks) seems to be very definitely on the way out, although some forecasters are telling us that, with that rather ironic habit of the British weather, things are about to pick up again after most people's holidays are over. The next public holiday in Britain is Christmas Day!

Now, like it or not the reality of life is that when people come together for whatever purpose whether face to face - or as close to that as we can get in these socially distanced times - there are inevitably disagreements and conflicts. But the response of most people when they are confronted with people arguing - whether it's about politics or about religion or whatever is to switch off and run for cover. You can't blame them.

We argue about all kinds of things - and mostly in the history of the human race, about politics and religion. I suppose that's because both are ultimately about meaning - and meaning often in a very personal way, because they define who we are.

Politics - as opposed to the philosophy of politics - is (or, rather used to be, and should be) about the everyday business of getting things done for the greater good of the whole community. On the other hand, the purpose of religious faith is a search for truth, *ultimate meaning*, both about our inner selves and about our place in the world. Yet the Christian faith has always maintained quite adamantly - stridently maybe to our modern ears, accustomed as we are to the prevailing relativism of our culture - that faith isn't primarily about finding a comfortable spiritual life-style option, but about the God who himself searches for us in love and seeks to reconcile us to himself and share his life with us. The truth we believe is revealed to us - and it is revealed in Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, the divine Wisdom, the 'logos' in Greek, the animating principle of reason behind all things, the Word made flesh.

As we know, we continue to live in a world which for the most part works on the principle of the survival of the fittest. The Christian identification of God who is in himself truth, reason and compassion, undermines any vision of a God who is so transcendent that he is above reason, and can therefore either sanction the most appalling cruelty and injustice, or is indifferent to it, just so long as we go through the required ritual acts of piety.

The true God who empties himself to share the human condition and who dies upon the cross as the innocent victim of the sins, aggression and cruelty of humanity completely undermines this rule of the strong, the violent and the unjust. Injustice of any kind is incompatible with the nature of the God who reveals himself in Christ. Orthodox Christian theology - even if the practice of the Church has so often fallen short of it - has always said that not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God's nature and that when we do act in this way it is immediately clear that we are acting against the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church he founded.

The Church has always believed that God has humbled himself by the ultimate act of solidarity with us by becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the one just man who has humbled himself; Jesus Christ is the one who was lifted up—exalted, that is—on the cross, and who has been exalted to the heights of heaven.

Yet, at the time of Jesus, the cross was the most scandalous form of execution. It is easy to understand, then, that in today's Gospel, when Our Lord speaks of his coming death and alludes to the manner in which it will happen, the disciples hoped that Jesus was speaking metaphorically: what he was saying was truly horrific for their ears. Having been given such authority just shortly before, being called the rock on which Jesus will build his Church, Peter must have felt himself obliged to challenge in some way what was being said to him.

And it is Peter's protest which provokes a clarification from Jesus about Peter's authority (and allied to that, for subsequent generations the authority of the Church itself) : authority is only authentic when it speaks from God and not just from the standpoint of conventional social attitudes about what might be prudent, or practical or sensible. When Jesus rebukes Peter in the strongest terms he both points out that Peter is speaking purely from a worldly point of view and tells him he is overstepping his role. When Our Lord speaks of 'Satan,' he means the prince of this world, which we could describe as the embodiment of worldly values, the standards which don't come from God. So, he orders Peter to get behind him, that is, not only to get out of the way but literally to return to a position of discipleship - to follow, not to try to lead in a direction other than God's. To an extent the cross has understandably lost its power to shock us in the same way as it shocked Peter and his contemporaries. We associate the cross not only with barbaric

punishment and appalling suffering but also with victory over death. But to those who first heard Jesus it must have been a horrifying prospect. They would have seen its victims displayed at the roadsides as an example to others. It certainly wouldn't have meant to them simply the kind of sacrifices we associate with taking up the cross in our own lives, but literally having to endure this instrument of deadly torture which would inevitably end in an agonising death. Jesus knew he would suffer this particular martyrdom, and chose it as an metaphor for the experience of those who follow him.

Throughout our Christian lives, we continually fall short of our commitment to our faith. Yet we shouldn't lose sight of the truth that we are surrendering our lives to God. We are only truly converted (and remember that conversion is a daily act of will, a daily decision to trust our lives to Christ) if we live out in our daily lives in the light of the truth of the love of Christ.

And we have to remember also that in today's Gospel reading Jesus says: "those who lose their life for my sake will find it." Tough words which take a lifetime's experience and understanding to make sense of them.

We are called to an authentic encounter with God through prayer and service, something which can only unfold to us by our allowing ourselves the space to be aware that we live in that tension between the cross and the resurrection, between brokenness and being made whole, in which our pilgrimage, (our journey of faith) inevitably involves us - that gap, that tension out of which can come healing and the new life of resurrection. The Christian life isn't so much a matter of imitation as of reception; it does involve us in struggle but is really about being open to receive a gift. And that gift is the gift of life - life in all its fullness. +

## 1st September – St Giles

St Giles has many churches, hospitals and hospices dedicated to him, especially those which date from medieval times, which shows that he was a popular saint in the middle ages – but we know very little about him!

He was living in the 7th century and was probably born in Athens from a wealthy family. But he longed for a more solitary life and he headed to France to live a life of prayer. First of all he lived alone in the French countryside, but news of his prayerful life grew and people came to him to live alongside him and seek out his advice and counsel. He then founded a monastery where he and his followers could live. This monastery was a

place of hospitality, especially for those making pilgrimage to the Holy Land or Santiago de Compostela.

He is regarded as one of the fourteen 'Holy Helpers' whose intercession is believed to be especially effective, particularly against disease.

Grant, we beseech you, O Lord,

that the prayers of your holy Abbot,

Saint Giles may commend us to you:

that we, who have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, may by his advocacy find favour in your sight.; Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who being God, lives and reigns with you in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen.**