

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** You are now asked to wear face masks in church unless you have a valid medical reason for not doing so.

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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27th September 2020
**The Sixteenth Sunday
after Trinity (A)**

The Collect

O Lord,
we beseech you mercifully
to hear the prayers of your people
who call upon you;
and grant that they may both perceive
and know what things they ought to
do, and also may have grace
and power faithfully to fulfil them;
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 prophet Ezekiel

The word of the LORD came to me:
What do you mean by repeating this
proverb concerning the land of Israel,
'The parents have eaten sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on
edge'? As I live, says the Lord GOD,
this proverb shall no more be used by
you in Israel. Know that all lives are
mine; the life of the parent as well as
the life of the child is mine: it is only
the person who sins that shall die. Yet
you say, 'The way of the Lord is
unfair.' Hear now, O house of Israel:
Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways
that are unfair? When the righteous
turn away from their righteousness
and commit iniquity, they shall die for
it; for the iniquity that they have
committed they shall die. Again,
when the wicked turn away from the
wickedness they have committed and
do what is lawful and right, they shall
save their life. Because they
considered and turned away from all
the transgressions that they had
committed, they shall surely live; they
shall not die. Yet the house of Israel
says, 'The way of the Lord is unfair.'
O house of Israel, are my ways
unfair? Is it not your ways that are
unfair? Therefore I will judge you, O
house of Israel, all of you according to
your ways, says the Lord GOD.
Repent and turn from all your
transgressions; otherwise iniquity will
be your ruin. Cast away from you all
the transgressions that you have
committed against me, and get
yourselves a new heart and a new
spirit! Why will you die, O house of
Israel? For I have no pleasure in the
death of anyone, says the Lord GOD.
Turn, then, and live.

[18. 1-4, 25-32]

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

Psalm 25, 1 - 9

**R/ Remember, O Lord,
your compassion and love**

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my
God, I put my trust in you; let me not
be humiliated, nor let my enemies
triumph over me.

Let none who look to you be put to
shame; let the treacherous be
disappointed in their schemes.

**R/ Remember, O Lord, your
compassion and love.**

Show me your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long

**R/ Remember, O Lord, your
compassion and love.**

Remember, O Lord, your compassion
and love, for they are from
everlasting.

Remember not the sins of my youth
and my transgressions;
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness, O
Lord.

**R/ Remember, O Lord, your
compassion and love.**

Gracious and upright is the Lord;
therefore he teaches sinners in his
way.

He guides the humble in doing right
and teaches his way to the lowly.
All the paths of the Lord are love
and faithfulness to those who keep his
covenant and his testimonies.

**R/ Remember, O Lord, your
compassion and love.**

**A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Philippians [2; 81-13]**

If then there is any encouragement in
Christ, any consolation from love,
any sharing in the Spirit, any
compassion and sympathy, make my

joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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

The Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your word is truth, O Lord,
consecrate us in the truth
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 entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’ Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what

authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?’ And they argued with one another, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” he will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “Of human origin,” we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.’

[St Matthew 21.23–32]

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

Thought for the Week

“God is the brightest of lights which can never be extinguished, and the choirs of angels radiate light from the divinity. Angels are pure praise without any trace of a bodily deed.”
--St. Hildegard of Bingen

For Your Prayers

That we may be faithful to the promises we made in baptism
Those to be ordained to the Sacred Ministry at Michaelmas, and those awaiting ordination. ..
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; Dave

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Edwin Bridge; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time:



A Prayer of Spiritual 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 second reading we hear Paul exhorting the Philippians, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" offering us a powerful image of Jesus' humble, self-less service. In St Matthew's Gospel Jesus offers a story about two sons, one who agrees to work in the vineyard but doesn't; the other who tells his father he will not work but then quietly goes to work. It is a story that challenges the chief priests and elders of the people, "Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you."

Tuesday is the Feast of St Michael & All Angels with its own special readings. Wednesday is the feast day of Saint Jerome. Thursday is the feast day of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, and on Friday that of the Guardian Angels, with a special gospel.

The first readings at the Eucharist throughout this week are from the Book of Job. We witness both Job's despair and his faithfulness in his most trying times and end with his praise of God's glory. St Luke's Gospel continues to give us stories of Jesus "resolutely" on the way to Jerusalem and the suffering that faces him there. He is not welcomed in a Samaritan village but rebukes the disciples who want revenge on the village. He encourages his followers: "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God." He holds the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida accountable for ignoring his message despite "mighty deeds done in your midst"

saying "whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." As his 72 followers returned to Jesus, they marvelled at the power given them in his name as he praises his father for revealing wisdom "to the childlike."

Next Sunday

A parable about tenants who were entrusted with their master's fields is at the heart of next Sunday's liturgy of the word. We hear Jesus again challenge the religious leaders with this story of the tenant farmers who refused to listen to the master's servants (the prophets) and abused and killed his son (Jesus) in an attempt to usurp his inheritance. Jesus tells them, "Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

A Meditation for Trinity 16

+ Most people are aware of that classic comment of St Augustine: "God make me good, but not yet." St Augustine went on to become one of the greatest writers, theologians and Saints of the early Church, but his remark does highlight the ambivalence of much of the human response to spiritual realities.

It's a natural if fallible human reaction. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews had it right when he says, "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Once we allow God into our lives without trying to hold anything back, we lose control and life will never be the same again. The following of Christ makes demands, it's not always a comfortable ride. St Augustine, with the formidable insight that he had into the psychology of faith, recognised that fact way before his final conversion. Hesitation is a natural response perhaps to something unseen and therefore, we think, less immediate. We can put off making a decision. But unseen doesn't necessarily mean unreal. This coming week, the Church celebrates two feasts of the mysterious, the unknown and the unseen, the feast of St Michael & All Angels on Tuesday and that of the Guardian Angels on Friday. They remind us that the greatest reality there is, is one which we cannot now see and touch and feel, but is all around us nevertheless.

John Henry Newman, another saint who was well aware of the personal, psychological aspects of faith, said this, "Persons commonly speak as if the other world did not exist now, but would after death. No: it exists now, though we see it not. It is among us and around us." That's something which, of course, makes our response to faith now all the more vital, even if we have a tendency to say 'yes' and 'no' at the same time. And today's parable in the Gospel seems to have been addressed precisely to this situation. Jesus asks us to pay attention to those two words we've already spoken of which either influence our lives or can send them off in a new direction. 'Yes' and 'no'. Those two very simple words which can have a profound effect on the direction of our lives. If we mean them. And if we mean them, we will act upon them. Otherwise we don't really mean them.

The parable, as all the parables, is very familiar in terms of our own experience. This kind of thing happens over and over again. The first son, at his father's request to go and work in the family vineyard, declared quite openly: "No, I will not go." We are not told why he refused. He could have been lazy, he could have been reluctant to change his plans for the day, he may have felt put upon and always being unfairly asked to do things. However, he changed his mind. again we are not told why. All that comes across from Jesus' words is that he reconsidered his initial response and turned up for work after all.

The second son in contrast to his brother said an equally emphatic "yes" to his father's request. But he didn't act on it. Again we don't know why. He may have forgotten, he may have thought it wasn't urgent, he may never have intended to go in the first place. All we do know is that his 'yes' gives way to a very emphatic 'no'. Now, although we might like to think we would be completely unlike either of the sons and that we would have said 'yes' in the first place and meant it and go on to act on it, we have to recognise that at some level there is a part of each son in us. We know very well that sometimes our actions do not always match our promises or our good intentions. We sometimes give our word but don't always keep it in

.... all kinds of ways and situations. We turn our 'yesses' into 'noes'. This is at the heart of Jesus' attack on the scribes and Pharisees, the religious establishment of his day, and it's directed at all kinds of formalism in religious faith. If what we say and what we pray isn't reflected in what we do - in the way we live our lives and the way we treat others - then what value is there in it? And that's the point Our Lord is making when he says to the chief priest and the elders - the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

But, of course, the opposite can happen too. Some people may in the beginning throw up their hands in horror and revulsion and say, "no, that's not for me," but as time goes on they begin to see things differently and change their minds. Lots of people come into a relationship with God that way. Throughout the history of the Church we are presented with people who in various ways knowingly or unknowingly had said 'no' to God, and then later changed their minds and the direction of their lives and became heroic men and women of faith - Saints. St. Augustine, I suppose, is the classic example, but there have been many others, including St Francis and Ignatius of Loyola . No one will be judged by a single act or by just one stage of his or her life, but by the whole of their lives.

So, as those who have made a solemn commitment in baptism to following Christ, in order to fulfil our promises we have consciously to hold on to, deepen and reinforce our initial 'yes' to God. And that means giving our full attention to daily prayer, regular worship, service to others, a willingness to grow in faith by whatever means present themselves to us in the course of our lives. We have to learn to see God in all things as St Ignatius would say. And that means we have to keep on struggling however difficult, however dried up, things seem to get.

We can fail, we can fall down, we can miss the mark - or whatever metaphor we want to use - and still be redeemed by the grace of God. In fact this is the experience of each one of us.

Every 'no' of the past can be turned into a 'yes' here and now, today. There is always time to reconsider our decision because

whatever we do or say, or don't do and not say, we can still hear the call of grace as Christ waits to invite us into his Father's kingdom. We think we are searching for him, but in reality he is searching for us, and he is not that easily put off. +



September 29th: The Feast of St Michael & All Angels

Angels are messengers from God, and today, in fact, we celebrate the feast of the three biblical 'archangels', Michael, Gabriel and Raphael . Angels are found throughout scripture, but only the three we celebrate today are named. Michael appears in Daniel's vision in the Old Testament and defends Israel against its enemies. We also read about Michael in the Book of Revelation, as in John's vision he leads God's armies into the final battle over the forces of evil.

Gabriel also appears in Daniel's vision, and announces Michael's role in God's plan. Gabriel is also very familiar to us in Luke's Gospel as he visits Mary and gives her the news that she is going to bear a son, Jesus.

We read about Raphael in the book of Tobit, and Raphael guides Tobit's son through a series of adventures.

So traditionally:

Michael – protects

Gabriel – announces

Raphael – guides

Everlasting God, you have ordained and constituted the ministries of angels and mortals in a wonderful order: grant that as your holy angels always serve you in heaven, so, at your command, they may help and defend us on earth; 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.**