

PARISH NEWSLETTER

St Arvans with Penterry, Itton, Devauden & Kilgwrrwg

11th October 2020
**The Eighteenth Sunday
after Trinity (A)**

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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The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; 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 Isaiah

O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.

When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled. On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. [25. 1-9]

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

Psalm 23

R/ I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

R/ I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

He revives my soul and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

R/ I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over. Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

R/ I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians [4; 1-9]

My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will

guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

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

The Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth
For revealing the mysteries of the
kingdom to mere children.
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.**

Once more Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was

speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.' *[St Matthew 22. 1-14]*

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

Thought for the Week

" In this crazy world, there's an enormous distinction between good times and bad, between sorrow and joy. But in the eyes of God, they're never separated. Where there is pain, there is healing. Where there is mourning, there is dancing. Where there is poverty, there is the kingdom."
- Henri Nouwen -

For Your Prayers

That we may be faithful to our baptismal vocation
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: Doris Collard.



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 Gospel we hear Jesus tell the story about the King who gave a banquet for his son and invited many guests. It is a powerful story about rejecting Jesus' own invitation and about God's invitation to everyone in the world to become part of a new group of "chosen" people.
Thursday is the feast day of Saint Teresa of Avila, mystic and doctor of the Church, know best for her teachings about prayer and the interior life
Saturday is the feast day of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr of the early Church .
This week we end our look at the Letter to the Galatians and begin two weeks of St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. The letters emphasize the universal church and the unity of this church which brings together

both Gentiles and Jews.

In St Luke's Gospel this week, Jesus is frustrated by the fact that some of the people will not listen to his message. "This generation is an evil generation." When a Pharisee invited Jesus for dinner, the man was shocked that Jesus didn't do the required ritual washing of his hands. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to talk about real purity. He recommends they give money to the poor. But as Jesus continues to challenge the Pharisees, they hatch a plot to get rid of him. Jesus tells his disciples to beware of the "leaven" or "hypocrisy" of the Pharisees. Jesus wants us to acknowledge him, in the face of opposition.

Next Sunday: we celebrate St Luke the Evangelist, the author of both the Gospel bearing his name, and of the Acts of the Apostles.

A Meditation for Trinity 18

+ Before the current crisis, large-scale formal meals and, in particular, wedding receptions could be tricky occasions for all kinds of reasons, but none more so as far as the seating plan is concerned because where people sit has to take account of such little matters as family quarrels, past and present, and who among the guests are likely to get on with each other. It's easier these days - you can't invite anyone!

There is a cringingly funny scene in the film 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' where at a reception the character played by Hugh Grant ends up on a table otherwise composed entirely of his ex-girlfriends. And the wedding banquet in today's gospel parable seems to have been an equally difficult affair, but not because of the seating plan - we don't get anywhere near as far as that!

Those invited, the important people, seem to have had much better things to do than to accept the invitation. This isn't a typical society wedding - or even a celebrity one - where invitations are highly-prized and to receive one is itself seen as some kind of a mark of distinction.

Here, those who have been invited simply won't come. They don't even make polite excuses, they go out of their way to make it clear that they have better things to do. They insult the king and his family and go even further by beating up his

messengers and killing them. They not only abuse the idea of hospitality but jump up and down on it. It's hardly surprising that the king is angry.

He responds by sending out another set of invitations, this time to those in the highways and the byways, to the good and the bad, not to the great and the good, not to the superficially important, but to the very least in his society.

What does the parable mean? To answer that we have first of all to look at the context in which it was said, because if we remember that this parable is addressed not to Our Lord's disciples but to the chief priests and the Pharisees, things start to become a little bit clearer.

On the most obvious level, we can say that the king and his son, represent God the Father and Christ himself. The wedding can be compared to God's own invitation to us all to follow him in the way of life, entering into communion with him, just as wedding guests share in the festivities of the banquet. The messengers sent out to announce the wedding are the prophets, abused, badly treated and even killed by the people to whom they were sent.

And the people who turned down the wedding invitation represent those to whom much has been given, the chief priests, the scribes and Pharisees themselves who Our Lord represents as being far too self important, far too rooted in their own sense of religious propriety even to listen to the invitation which comes from the God they are meant to be serving.

So, the invitations go out to what we might call the alternative guest list, those who were found in the streets. Jesus is clearly referring here to any category of people who didn't make up the religious establishment of Jerusalem and occupied Palestine. But, of course, as always, these words of Jesus are not only relevant to those to whom they were first addressed. The parables are aimed at us, too., and he is saying that the message of the Kingdom, the invitation to share in salvation and eternal life is now open to absolutely anyone and everyone. One could almost say this is a description of the Church as it is meant to be, humanly speaking: they went out and brought in 'everyone they could find, bad and good alike.' St Augustine saw the Church Christ founded, the Church which was the new

Israel, the continuation of God's invitation to salvation to the human race, as a hospital for sinners and a school for following the Lord, rather than the 'holy huddle' of popular mythology, a gathering of the elect, or the perfected, or even the gathered community beloved of ecclesiastical bureaucrats these days. Do we say that often enough? Perhaps we do, but the message doesn't always get across.

Jesus is clearly saying that we are all potentially under the same judgement as the chief priests and the Pharisees. Having accepted the invitation to the heavenly banquet, to the marriage feast of the lamb, having accepted the call to follow Christ, we can't just rest on our laurels. There's never a time when we are able to say, "I have been invited by God to the Kingdom of Heaven. I've made it. That's it!" Because once we accept the invitation to enter into a relationship with God, we are always called to go ever more deeply into relationship with Him, and that implies that we can't just sit still, doing nothing more. Faith is called a pilgrimage for a reason, it's a journey of faith; we have to keep moving. It's what St John Henry Newman meant when he said "to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

And I think that's where that rather puzzling episode at the end of the parable about the king's confrontation with the man without a wedding robe comes in. By the logic of the parable, everyone who has been invited and accepted the invitation has entered into the kingdom.

But the clue to the meaning of this is in the use of the words 'wedding garment.' In the culture of the time, accepting an invitation carried with it certain obligations, an invitation to the wedding banquet - whoever you were - meant dressing and behaving in an appropriate way. This guest has no formal wedding garment - it's not that he doesn't have the means to get one, but that he essentially can't be bothered to take the trouble to get one - in other words he is neither growing nor working towards a closer relationship with God. It's all taken far too casually The invitation to follow Christ, is clearly a calling that requires from us both a freely chosen response and a commitment to the values of the Kingdom of God. We need to be clothed in the wedding garment, a phrase which again seems to

Saint of the Week 15th October Saint Teresa of Avila

suggest the commitment we made in baptism and our own taking on of this commitment, allowing the baptismal gifts of faith, hope and love to grow in our spiritual lives and be reflected in the way we live and respond to others. When there is so much bad news, turbulence and uncertainty in the world, we have to remember that Christ calls to us with words of hope and encouragement. We are not meant to be either presumptuously casual, or anxiously despairing in our relationship with God, but in trust to keep walking onwards in faith, hope and love, to bring something of the light and warmth of God's mercy to the suffering, the perplexed, all those in need of it. And we are sustained in this above all by the gift of Jesus himself in the offering of the Eucharist. What we are doing now is the promise and foretaste of the heavenly banquet promised in today's first reading from Isaiah, referred to by the Lord in today's Gospel. Here we are fed with Christ's life itself, here we are constantly being brought into contact with the values of the kingdom, given the grace to deepen our communion with Him and with one another +

Teresa was a remarkable woman, who lived in a time of great change and upheaval and during her life was misunderstood, misjudged and opposed. Born in Spain in 1515 to a noble family – although her paternal grandfather had been a convert from Judaism - she was challenged as to whether her vocation lay as a married woman or in the religious life, she chose the latter as she felt that as she was prone to sin it was the safest place for her, and she chose to live her life in a Carmelite convent. In her life in the convent she fell desperately ill with malaria, to the point that a grave had been dug for her. She recovered, although she was paralysed for three years and was never completely well again. She used her illness as an excuse not to pray, but a priest encouraged her to return to prayer. This was something that Teresa did over a period of time and from her writings we have a lovely description of prayer that feels very fresh and relevant to our lives today: “prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us”.

Her writings, the Interior Castle and the Way of Perfection show her life as a mystic and the development of her understanding of God's love for us.

Teresa believed in obedience to God over penance, for her if you do something wrong, you should not punish yourself but change. Aged 43 she became determined to found a new convent and reform the Carmelite order, bringing it back to a life of prayer and poverty. She faced many difficulties and challenges in her work of reform, but her determination helped her to succeed.

A favourite story about St Teresa illustrates the intimate relationship that the saints have with God. When she was on one of her innumerable journeys across Spain, her horse threw her as she was crossing a river. Soaked to the skin she looked up to heaven and said, “*If this is how you treat your friends,*

no wonder you have so few of them!” We should bring everything to God in our prayers, even our reproaches. For a reproach, in the end, is simply our way of offering up to God our incomprehension of what he is giving us.

Merciful God, who by your Spirit raised up your servant Teresa of Avila to reveal to your Church the way of perfection: grant that her teaching may awaken in us a longing for holiness, until we attain to the perfect union of love in 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.**