

PARISH NEWSLETTER

St Arvans with Penterry, Itton, Devauden & Kilgwrrwg

Our Sunday Eucharist at 10 a.m. and celebration of Night Prayer on Wednesdays at 20.00hrs are live-streamed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook and are available to watch at any time

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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15th November 2020

***The Third Sunday
of the Kingdom***

or the 2nd Sunday before Advent



The Collect

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he 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 Zephaniah

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests. And on the day of the Lord's sacrifice I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who dress themselves in foreign attire. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, "The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm." Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them. The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth. [1. 7, 12-18]

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

Psalm 90 1 - 8, 12

**R/ Satisfy us by your loving-kindness;
so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born, from

age to age you are God.

You turn us back to the dust and say, 'Go back, O child of earth.'

**R/ Satisfy us by your loving-kindness;
so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night.

You sweep us away like a dream; we fade away suddenly like the grass.

In the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

**R/ Satisfy us by your loving-kindness;
so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

For we consume away in your displeasure; we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.

Our iniquities you have set before you,
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

**R/ Satisfy us by your loving-kindness;
so shall we rejoice and be glad.**

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians [5; 1-11]

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come

upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

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

The Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia!
Make your home in me,
as I make mine in you,
says the Lord.
Whoever remains in me
bears fruit in plenty
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.

Jesus said to his disciples,

For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over

to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

[St Matthew 25. 14-30]

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

Thought for the Week

"Instead of condemning others, strive to reach inner peace. Keep silent, refrain from judgement. This will raise you above the deadly arrows of slander, insult and outrage and will shield your glowing hearts against all evil.

- St. Seraphim of Sarov

For Your Prayers

That we may use the gifts and talents given to us by God, and strive to live each day as it were our last.

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; Eirion

For the Departed:

The recently departed: our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: John Kenneth Gravelle; Douglas Higgs; Jeremy Winston, priest; James Griffin



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

The Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary

Time brings us the familiar and powerful parable from **Matthew's Gospel** about the servants who are each given sums of money to invest. We are all called upon to use the gifts we have received as gifts, and to return them, fully developed and utilized.

Monday is the feast day of St Margaret of Scotland, Tuesday that of St Elizabeth of Hungary, and St Hugh of Lincoln, Wednesday St Hilda of Whitby. religious. Saturday is the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

During these last two weeks of the Church's year, the first reading is from the Book of Revelation, with its mystical imagery. Written for readers who were familiar with apocalyptic writings, the writings send a hidden message of salvation to the earliest communities of Christians, and to us.

St Luke's Gospel offers the story of the blind man who hails him, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" An unpopular tax collector, Zacchaeus, climbs a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus and is given personal recognition as Jesus says, "Zacchaeus, today I must stay at your house." Luke's version of the parable of the talents offers praise for the servant who has invested the ten coins and earned another ten.

"Well done, good servant! You have been faithful in this very small matter; take charge of ten cities." He weeps over Jerusalem: "If this day you only knew what makes for peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes." Jesus drives out the sellers from the temple while the chief priests plot against him. Religious leaders try to trap him with a trick question about a woman who marries seven brothers but Jesus refutes them.

Next Sunday is Christ the King.. Jesus tells the parable about how we will all be judged - as a shepherd separates sheep from goats, based upon our care for the poor: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me."

A Reflection for The Third Sunday of the Kingdom

+ In all kinds of ways November seems very much to be a time of endings. The harvests are long over, the long warm days of barbecues and sitting outside in our free time seem unimaginably long ago now, the remaining leaves are coming off the trees, and winter is well and truly on its way. In terms of the liturgical year of the Church we have only today and next Sunday to go before the beginning of Advent and the inevitably run-up to our celebrations of Christmas. So, we are almost at the end of the year, traditionally a time for Christians to reflect on the meaning of the communion of saints, a time for remembering the departed and for thinking about the "last things," the end of life and the end of the world.

But even in the context of all this, today's both today's Old Testament reading and the beginning of the Epistle can sound very alarming. For anyone not carefully nurtured in the Christian tradition all this can read very much like an apocalyptic science fiction story. At a first reading there doesn't seem to be very much hope and grace or "good news," which after all is the very meaning of the word Gospel. These passages, of course, form part of the classic Judaeo-Christian account of the end of the world. But to complicate matters further, throughout the history of the Church there have always been individuals or small groups of people who have taken it upon themselves to brandish these and other similar passages (we think of the Book of Revelation in particular) in the face of those around them and provoke psychosis, fear, panic and a totally unbalanced version of the faith of the Church. We see them around the world in various disguises, some of whom are vocal, not to say vociferous, supporters of the now departing American president.

A preoccupation with the idea of the end of the world, and the frankly inappropriate delight in which it's engaged in by those with a distorted religious viewpoint, has a quite troubling effect. It either reinforces the idea of a God who is always angry, ready to vent his wrath on the world at the expense of the message at the heart of the Gospel of the love of God and the new

life of the Resurrection, or it reinforces the idea of all Christians as credulous anti-scientific religious fanatics.

We need to read scriptural passages in context and in the context of the whole Gospel, the teaching of the Church down the ages. For instance if we read the whole of, say, chapter thirteen of St Mark's Gospel we see towards the end these words:

"But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

What Jesus is doing is talking of his return at the end of time to judge the world. The details of that return are couched in the kind of language which would have been very familiar to his hearers, part of the tradition of Jewish religious imagery - what we hear in fact from the prophet Zephaniah and others.

However, we also have to say that none of this reduces one bit the seriousness of what we are being told. No, we don't know the time of the end of the world, the end of human history, but it would be foolish in the extreme to console ourselves with talk of first century biblical linguistic conventions and forget that, for each one of us, the end of the world - the end of life - could be at any moment. This year, above all, has emphasised the fragility of human life in a way most of us have never experienced before. And it's always been part of the Church's interpretation of Jesus' words about the end of the world to say that we are meant to live each day of our lives as if it could be the last.

On a practical level, today's readings invite us to meditate on the concept of the end of the world for us. And this isn't meant to make us feel depressed, but as a means of reminding us that everything in this world comes to an end, even our own lives. This is just an adult facing of the facts and not an attempt to evade the inevitable truth for each one of us. So these last Sundays of the Church's year and the first Sundays of Advent are a time for us to reflect, to feel the presence of God, to reflect on how we are living and to ask God to give us the strength to live faithfully no matter what happens. So often we try to wage war against time - either trying somewhat futilely to bring it under our control, or attempt to avoid thinking about its consequences at all by the innumerable forms of escapism available to us in today's culture.

Jesus himself did not attempt to avoid this future, but allowed himself to be delivered to death. The future offered him pain and suffering, yet he freely embraced this future on the cross, so that we ourselves might no longer live in fear of what tomorrow will bring. Jesus is telling us that we are not here in this world to play safe, but to trust that his is the way which leads to life. Of course, we are to avoid doing wrong - that much is essential if we are to be his disciples, but it isn't enough. We are meant to work tirelessly to make the best possible use of our time, our talents and our opportunities.

Everything we have, whether in the spiritual or the material sphere, even life itself, is a 'talent' entrusted to us by the Lord, and, as they say, we 'use it or lose it' *For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.*

Because of his death and resurrection, for us the future is Christ. He is with those who hope and trust in him, leading them through the anxieties of this life to the joy of his eternal kingdom. We are not left to our own devices, or even to our own resources or capabilities. He is the Good Shepherd, who is our guide and our helper along the often difficult pilgrimage of faith. He is with us as we reflect on where we are, where we have come from and where we wish to go.

Death comes to all of us at some point, and we believe there is judgement, but when the time comes for us to experience our own last things we know we will do so in the profound security that on that day the love of God in Jesus Christ will take care of us. The Easter mystery is the one truth which lasts to eternity, and we are part of it and enfolded within it.

November is a time of endings but it keeps bringing us back to the beginning point of the resurrection - the new life which unites us all in Christ. We know that no matter what the future brings, the risen Christ is with those who hope in him, leading them amidst the anxieties of this life to the joy of his eternal kingdom. +

SAINT OF THE WEEK

16th November St Margaret of Scotland

Margaret of Scotland is sometimes also known as Margaret of Wessex. Her father was an English prince, but she was born in exile in Hungary, the country of her mother's birth in 1045, and she grew up in the Hungarian court. The family returned from exile to England, but faced further persecution after William of Normandy conquered England after the battle of Hastings in 1066. The family fled north to Northumbria and Margaret found refuge with King Malcolm III, who she married and together they had eight children. Margaret was regarded as a strong and pious woman who spent much time in prayer, and she had a great deal of influence over her husband. She reformed the royal court, founded monasteries and supported major reforms of Church life as well as considerable works of charity. She died in Edinburgh on 16 November 1093. She is remembered for the happiness of her marriage, for her devotion to prayer and learning, and especially for her generosity to the poor.



God, the ruler of all, who called your servant Margaret to an earthly throne and gave her zeal for your Church and love for your people that she might advance your heavenly kingdom: mercifully grant that we who commemorate her example may be fruitful in good works and attain to the glorious crown of your saints; 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**