

PARISH NEWSLETTER

St Arvans with Penterry, Itton, Devauden, & Kilgwrrwg

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is open for worship at 10 a.m. on Sundays. Places must be booked and social distancing maintained in the building and following services. Again, we stress there is absolutely no obligation to attend in person, and that your own safety and health & those of others must remain paramount. Our broadcast services will continue as follows: Sunday Eucharist at 10. a.m. and a reflection & celebration of Night Prayer on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. are live-streamed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/> 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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4th April 2021
EASTER SUNDAY



The Collect

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. **AMEN**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter began to speak to those assembled in the house of Cornelius: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

[10; 34; 37 - 43]

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

Psalm 118. 1–2, 14–24

R Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

This is the day the Lord has made.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever.
Let Israel now proclaim,
'His mercy endures for ever.'

R

The Lord is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation.

There is a sound of exultation and victory
in the tents of the righteous:
'The right hand of the Lord has triumphed!
the right hand of the Lord is exalted!
the right hand of the Lord has triumphed!'

R

I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the Lord.
The Lord has punished me sorely,
but he did not hand me over to death.
Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the Lord.

R

'This is the gate of the Lord;
whoever is righteous may enter.'
I will give thanks to you, for you answered me
and have become my salvation.

The same stone which the builders
rejected
has become the chief corner-stone.

R

This is the Lord's doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
On this day the Lord has acted;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

R

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians [3; 1 - 4]

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

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

Gradual Hymn

Gospel acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia, (Alleluia)
I am the first and the last, says the Lord,
and the living one;
I was dead, and behold I am alive for
evermore.
Alleluia, alleluia, (alleluia)

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John.

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

[20, 1 - 9]

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



For Your Prayers

That we may rejoice in the glorious resurrection of Christ our Lord
Those throughout the world suffering from the Coronavirus - for 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; Philip; Eirion, John, Gareth & Barbara Howells

For the Departed:

The recently departed: our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose

anniversaries of death fall at this time;
May Fitzpatrick; Betty Clay; Dorothy Kneebone; Joe Dunn; Evelyn Price

Thought for the Week

"Jesus' resurrection makes it impossible for the human story to end in chaos – it has to move inexorably towards light, towards life, towards love."

Carlo Carretto

The Jereboam Interview

We continue our series of extracts from the Jerusalem and Galilee Gazette, an imaginary first-century newspaper. Week by week the correspondent Jereboam interviews various people whose lives have been affected in some way by Jesus Christ and his teaching.

Thanks to the Parish of St Catharine's Chipping Campden & to the author for permission to reproduce 'Jereboam'

The Gardener, Sharon & Esther

Gardener: 'Morning.

Jereboam: Lovely day, isn't it?

Gardener: Makes you glad to be alive, a morning like this...

Jereboam: Oh, yes. I tell you what: we could do with some good weather, after all the terrible goings-on of the last few days. What with...Look, would you excuse me, I've just seen that woman over there. She's a friend of mine, and she looks rather upset. I ought to go and check she's all right.

Gardener: Of course; you do what you need to do. It was good to meet you.

Jereboam: Sharon, are you all right? I imagine you're still upset about Jesus.

Sharon: It's even worse than we thought. Jereboam, someone's stolen his body.

Jereboam: They've what?

Sharon: Exactly what I say. I went to the tomb where they laid his body on the eve of the Sabbath. Someone has rolled away the boulder that was covering the entrance, they've unwrapped his body

and removed it. After all we've been through! You wouldn't imagine that people could stoop so low.

Jereboam: I must say, that's really awful. I feel quite shaken myself, and I wasn't even one of his followers. People like you must be...

Esther: Sharon! Sharon!

Sharon: Oh, Esther, have you heard about Jesus? His body's been...

Esther: No, he's alive!

Sharon: What?

Esther: Mary's just seen him. She started off thinking he was the gardener, but it was Jesus. He's alive!

Sharon: But he's dead – I was there when they took his body down from the cross. Mary's making a mistake: she's just too upset to think straight.

Esther: She's not upset; she's...she's radiant. There's no question about it: he's alive.

Jereboam: Excuse me, but did you say that Mary had thought Jesus was the gardener?

Esther: Yes. They were talking for quite a while about this and that. At first she just didn't recognise him, didn't realise what had happened. Mind you, it's understandable. Things like that don't exactly happen every day, do they?

Jereboam: No, I suppose not. As a matter of fact I rather think I've just seen him myself, except I didn't notice who he was either. I can't believe I was so stupid: he was with me and I didn't realise it! Come on; let's see if we can find him. He was over here...



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

Today on Easter Sunday, we read from the Acts of the Apostles to hear Peter's preaching about the Resurrection.

The Letter to the Colossians reminds us "You have died and your lives are hidden with Christ in God." The Gospel is from St John, I and gives us the first story of that Easter morning - Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and runs to Peter and the "disciple Jesus loved" to tell them. They run to the tomb and discover for themselves that it is empty.

The first readings for Easter Week are taken from the Acts of the Apostles. We hear Peter's preaching the Good News and experience the first deeds of the Apostles, which parallel the acts of Jesus, including the conflicts he experienced and his power to heal.

The Gospels this week are stories of the appearance of the Risen Christ to his disciples. They contain some common elements and appear designed to make it clear that this was not a group of disciples who dreamed up the resurrection, because they were hoping for it so much. In fact, they found it difficult to believe.

The Jesus they saw and experienced was not a "ghost." Instead, he had a body. Monday, is the story of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, as well as the "cover-up story" and pay off of the guards. Tuesday, we read of Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene, through the eyes of John's Gospel. Jesus missions her to announce the Good News to his brothers.

On Wednesday we are treated to St Luke's account of Jesus' appearance to

the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were sad, because they had hoped the story would have turned out differently. Jesus tells them why he had to first suffer and die in order to enter into his glory. As they stopped to eat, "he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread." On Thursday Jesus appears in the room where the disciples are gathered. "Peace be with you" he says and then eats with them and shows them his wounds. On Friday, we have his appearance in St John's Gospel at the Sea of Tiberias. Peter decided to return to fishing. Jesus appears and renews his mission. On Saturday, the week concludes with the summary of appearances at the end of St Mark's Gospel.

Next Sunday, the Second Sunday of Easter, is also known as Low Sunday and more recently, Divine Mercy Sunday.

It is the Octave Sunday of Easter. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles give us a picture of how the early community lived their life of faith by sharing everything in common.

In St John's Gospel, Jesus appears to the Apostles who are hiding in fear, and gives them the gift of his Spirit, calling them to forgive sins. We are reminded that the gospel is written, that we might come to believe in our Lord and have life in his name.

A Reflection for Easter Sunday

Despite everything, the Resurrection took everyone by surprise on the first Easter. No one really knew what to make of it. And in many ways, we've been trying to make sense of it ever since.

In all the Resurrection appearances of Jesus in the Gospels - and, of course, in this morning's Gospel there is no appearance at all, just an empty tomb with the stone rolled back - there is that mixture of belief and unbelief, of incredulity and slowly dawning recognition which becomes itself a sign of the presence of the Risen Lord..

The Apostles and disciples are in some ways both sure but not yet sure. When Jesus does appear to them he was the same and yet transformed. On too many occasions for it to be the effects of shock, he is not immediately recognisable. And so, naturally, they hesitated; it was all too good to be true - people don't come back from the dead. The two disciples in the

well-known story of the walk along the road from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus didn't recognise the risen Christ even after having a profound conversation with him until he did something familiar and immediately recognisable - he broke the bread at table for them, and then he vanished from their sight.

So Christ was the same and yet he was also quite different.

What are we to make of this?

We tend to do the natural thing as people who are used to hearing stories, either in novels or on television and film and now I should probably say audiobooks.. We look at the story of Jesus and, after the horrors of his arrest, trial and execution, we see the Resurrection as a kind of happy ending - the tables are turned and the hero of our story is vindicated and restored.

But we should be very wary about looking at Easter in this way, because it's not actually what we are being told.

The Resurrection isn't the end of a film or a novel - unless it's one of those frustrating stories where we're left wondering about exactly what has happened and what will happen next.

To avoid misunderstanding I'm not saying here that the Resurrection is ambiguous or doubtful, just that it's not what we think it is. And if we think we've understood, I suspect we haven't grasped the reality. Whatever happened to Jesus Christ at his death, the Resurrection isn't a restoration, it isn't a bringing back to life. The Risen Christ that the Apostles see, hear and touch is startlingly, disturbingly, different from the teacher they followed - disturbingly different and disturbingly the same. The Resurrection is literally incomprehensible - dead men don't come back to life, and this dead man clearly shares a radically new kind of life that is quite beyond the experience of those who encountered him. And when he comes among them, he doesn't come with clear answers but with strange hints and illusions and deeply searching questions about the meaning of love, discipleship friendship and life itself.

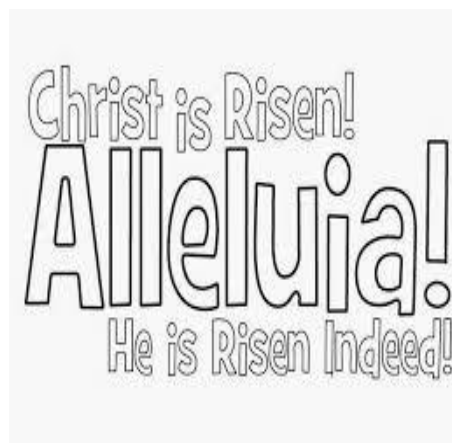
He still does. The Resurrection doesn't come with answers but with huge questions about the nature of things we regard as familiar. The Christ who is risen interrogates the world about the meaning of human relationships, about power and authority, about loyalty and

betrayal and he shows to us the face of the God who turns things upside down. He is the upsetter of applecarts, the destroyer of illusions and the bringer of a life which transcends death. The one thing this resurrection life is not, and that is anything familiar.

So, if we regard the Resurrection as the happy ending to a moving and sad story of a human life, we fatally domesticate it and forget the mysterious wildness of the life of God. We abolish the mystery and consign what has happened at the Resurrection to the category of things we know. And the Resurrection simply won't fit into that. We forget at our peril the overwhelming, blinding eruption of the life of God made present to us in the person of the Risen Christ.

Easter never gives us answers to make sense of the past, only a bewildering sense of wonder as we look to the future. The Resurrection is always looking to the future, asking the questions we find difficult to ask, and raising the hopes we dare not imagine. And whatever the life of the Resurrection is, it's not a past event, we can't consign it to the history of religion and think we're safe from it, or from the One who eternally experiences it and wants to share it with us. It's the life of God itself and - when we give ourselves without reservation after the way of the one who died on the Cross, it happens here and now, and it happens to us when we are least expecting it.

And to end with probably the most important question of all - what does the Resurrection mean for you? +



THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS AT EASTERTIDE

*(This replaces the Nicene Creed
on Easter Sunday)*

Dear friends, through the Pascal mystery we have been buried with Christ in baptism so that we may rise with him to new life. Now that we have completed our Lenten observance, let us renew the promises we made in baptism when we rejected Satan and his works, and promise to serve God faithfully in His Holy Catholic Church.

And so I ask you:-

Do you reject Satan?

I do

And all his works?

I do

And all his empty promises?

I do

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

I do

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting?

I do

God, the all powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. **AMEN**