

# 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  
Parish Priest (Vicar / Rector):  
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The Vicarage, St Arvans  
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23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021  
PENTECOST (B)  
Whitsunday

### The Collect

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, 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 Acts of the Apostles

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a

sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in their native language. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' [2; 1 - 11]

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

**Psalm 104.** 25 - 37

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**

O Lord, how manifold are your works!  
in wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**

Yonder is the great and wide sea  
with its living things too many to number,  
creatures both small and great.  
There move the ships,  
and there is that Leviathan,  
which you have made for the sport of it.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**

All of them look to you  
to give them their food in due season.

You give it to them, they gather it;  
you open your hand  
and they are filled with good things.  
You hide your face and they are terrified;  
you take away their breath  
and they die and return to their dust.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**

You send forth your Spirit  
and they are created;  
and so you renew the face of the earth.  
May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;  
may the Lord rejoice in all his works.  
He looks at the earth and it trembles;  
he touches the mountains  
and they smoke.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;  
I will praise my God  
while I have my being.  
May these words of mine please him;  
I will rejoice in the Lord. Bless the Lord, O  
my soul. Alleluia!

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**  
**A reading from the letter of St Paul  
to the Romans** [8; 22 - 27]

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

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

## [Hymn]

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts  
of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love  
**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.***

*Jesus spoke to his disciples:*

**‘**When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, “Where are you going?” But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.’

[15: 26 - 7; 16:4b - 15]

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

## For Your Prayers

That the Holy Spirit may lead us and all God's people into all truth  
The people of Israel & Palestine and for peace and reconciliation in the Holy land and throughout the Middle East.  
Those throughout the world suffering from the Coronavirus pandemic - 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:  
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; Kim; Elisabeth; Helen Herbert; Dave; John; Sue; Elizabeth.

### **For the Departed:**

The recently departed; Pauline Taylor; John Sherwood; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Rhian Hatcher; Karl Lodwick; Thomas Hudson

## Thought for the Week

“Our good Lord, the Holy Spirit -- endless life dwelling in our souls -- always protects us and gives us peace. Through grace, God's Spirit brings each soul to tranquillity and makes it obedient and reconciles it to God. Our good Lord constantly leads us on this path of mercy while we're in this unpredictable life.”

*Julian of Norwich, "Revelations"*

## 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'*

## Silas

**Jereboam:** Well, Silas, it seems only a few days since everyone was mourning the loss of Jesus after his Ascension. People were searching for the strength and inspiration to continue his work.

**Silas:** That's right: we felt quite unequal to the task.

**Jereboam:** But things seem different now.

**Silas:** Yes – everything changed quite suddenly. It all happened the other day. To begin with, only Jesus' closest friends were involved, but then word was sent round, and we all gathered together and experienced this extraordinary shift in our lives. I want to use the word “upheaval”, but that doesn't convey the sense of joy that came over us. It was all quite dramatic, with people expressing our salvation in a variety of wonderful ways.

**Jereboam:** It sounds extraordinary.

**Silas:** I can only compare it to something I'd experienced with my children. That was on a much more

intimate scale, obviously, and much more gradual. You have children, don't you?

**Jereboam:** Yes.

**Silas:** Well, you might recognise what I mean. When my children were young, I often used to remember my own upbringing. I'd try to emulate my parents. I didn't necessarily do everything in the same way as they had done, but somehow in an equivalent way. I found the means to communicate what I had experienced myself. So that's what it was like the other day. The more we all fixed our attention on what Jesus has given us, the more we found our own ways to express that to others – to draw them into our experience, if you like. It felt like inspiration, but closely bound up with our relationship to Jesus and our memories of him. And there was a sense of urgency about it.

**Jereboam:** What do you mean?

**Silas:** You know how now and again everything seems totally absorbing, very significant? You tell yourself that life can't always be like that, that you're just passing through a short phase of intense experience...

**Jereboam:** Yes, I suppose so.

**Silas:** Well, this experience was absorbing all right, except without that sense of holding yourself in check. It feels like a permanent sense of significance.

**Jereboam:** We live in exciting times: thank you for sharing your thoughts with us, Silas.

## This Week

Sunday is the great feast of **Pentecost** - the birthday of the Church. The formerly frightened Apostles are on fire. Now they can speak clearly, so everyone can understand them. Jesus gives his peace to his disciples and breathes his Spirit upon them, giving them the mission to forgive and sending them to carry out his desire that we all be one.

*Lord, send out your Spirit,  
and renew the face of the earth.*

On Monday we celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. Eastertide has now ended and 'ordinary time has begun, but, of course, that doesn't mean we forget about the good news of the Resurrection or the gift of the Holy Spirit Jesus promised us. It simply means that we return to a season of reflecting upon the scriptures in numbered weeks (after Trinity) until the beginning of Advent

This week we resume reading St Mark's Gospel where we left it at the beginning of Lent. St Mark presents us with stories about self-sacrifice. We hear of the Rich Young Man: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me," Jesus tells him. At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Peter tells Jesus, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus responds, "there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more." When the apostles squabble over who will sit in glory with Jesus, he tells them, "the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Bartimaeus, a blind man recognizes Jesus as "Son of David" and is healed. Bartimaeus follows Jesus. He drives money changers out of the Temple saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer ... but you have made it a den of thieves." We end the week with Jesus evading the trickery of the chief priests who ask him "by what authority are you doing these things?"

**Next Sunday** is Trinity Sunday, which always follows a week after Pentecost. It celebrates the un-knowable mystery of the relationship between the Father, Son and

the Holy Spirit - and their loving support for us in our lives.

*"When he comes, the Spirit of truth will guide you to all truth..."*

## A Reflection for Pentecost

+ Today we come both to the end of our Easter celebrations, and in one sense their high point, the Feast of Pentecost, the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The word 'Pentecost' means "fifty days" after the Passover, and the original Pentecost was day on which the Jewish people of the Old Testament celebrated the Giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai and the beginning of the covenant, the solemn agreement, with God and with each another. It was a celebration of their becoming the people of God.

One of the absolutely crucial insights of the shared Jewish / Christian tradition is that God is a God who is present to us, and who makes ethical demands. In other words, God's love for us is such that it manifests itself in a concern for who we are, what we become and how we live. God reveals himself to us not primarily in esoteric personal spiritual "experiences" and feelings, but through the life of the community, the people of God, in worship and prayer and through those inspired sacred writings we call the Scriptures. We are not left on our own to map out a way to the divine, to discover what is right, the things which lead to holiness and the life of God. We are shown the way.

We are not very familiar with the stories of the Old Testament these days. But we do need to be reminded of them because so much in the New Testament – not to mention the back-stories of our own literary and musical culture – only makes sense in reference to them. One of the most significant stories of the Book of Genesis is the myth, the metaphorical tale of the Tower of Babel which gives the account of human beings deciding to build a tower that would reach up to heaven. In this way they would have access to the Divine whenever they wanted, and the various interpretations of the story tell us that it was an attempt to manipulate God, if not to make him altogether superfluous. But in the process, the story goes, they began to speak different languages, there was no more communication, no more understanding among them, they were

### 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)*

scattered, and could no longer work together. The result was a proliferation of languages and human misunderstanding. Of course, it's a mythological device to explain the reality of a divided humanity, but it's more than that – for the Old Testament it's a symbol – like that of the expulsion from Paradise - of division and disintegration, and the alienation of the human race from one another and from God.

So today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, the description of the first Pentecost, would have been very clearly understood as the reversal of the Tower of Babel story.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, people are able to understand one another again. It's an account of the healing of divisions and the restoration of human unity.

The Tower of Babel was a human initiative, a human effort, at Pentecost the gift of the Spirit, the gift of the life of Christ, is a divine initiative, a divine gift to the Church, the people of God.

It's an incredible story. At the Ascension Jesus commands his disciples to spread the Good News from Jerusalem to all Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. How could this be possible, surely the task was beyond the capabilities of twelve, uneducated, rural fishermen from Galilee and their followers? How could they hope to go out and speak to the sophisticated Greek and Roman culture of the ancient world, much less convince it of the truth of what they were saying? They were a tiny splinter group of an obscure provincial religion, and even certainly the establishment figures of their own tradition were hostile to them. So what do they do? They pray and wait for Christ to do what he had promised - to take the initiative, to act decisively. And as soon as they are given this gift of the Holy Spirit, they go out fearlessly proclaiming the Good News. By the help of God, they make the unbelievable and the impossible come about.

The Apostles themselves; from a small group of frightened and bewildered men, are transformed into the driving force of love, compassion and sheer conviction which leads the Church in just a few generations to spread out to the ends of the known world, and to transform the ancient world's way of looking at human beings and human life beyond all recognition.

Renewal and change are always necessary, but never easy things to experience, as we are finding out at the moment. But the message from these two episodes, the Old Testament story, the myth of the Tower of Babel, and the New Testament account of the first Pentecost, is that it is we don't achieve anything if we attempt to rely only on our own resources. If, like the Apostles and their followers, we realise that we have to wait on God in prayer, we find the flame of the Holy Spirit will renew us and change us.

To be followers of Christ we are told very clearly that we first have to die to our old selves and rise again with him. We are not promised an easy life or '*comfort*' in either a physical or psychological sense, but we are promised "the sure and certain hope of resurrection" if we unite ourselves with Christ's suffering and death. He gives us the assurance of his presence with us, the promise that we are never without him, never left abandoned as orphans in a hostile world.

As Christians, as members of the Body of Christ, we are always in need of the Holy Spirit's gift of discernment so that we can pick our way carefully through the challenges which face us, and perhaps the most difficult of all to negotiate is the temptation faced by every generation of Christians to be completely at ease in the culture of the society which surrounds us. We're never meant to be. We are called as part of the Church to be agents of society's interrogation by the values of the Gospel of God's love. I use those words very carefully = the values of the gospel of God's love.

So, we're meant to ask searching questions both of ourselves and the world in which we find ourselves. And we always need to discern what it is God is really calling us to do and to be in the world of today. To do that, we have to listen, we have to reflect and not just react, we have to give ourselves the space to be able to hear God's authentic voice in whatever way it comes to us, and not just hear our own voices coming back at us from a kind of religious echo chamber. As a Church, and as members of it, we need more and more to be open to the gift of the Holy Spirit who is the source and channel of the inexhaustible freshness and vitality of the life of God, and the presence of Christ with us +