

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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23rd May 2021

TRINITY SUNDAY (B)

The Most Holy Trinity

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; 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

In the year that King Uzziah died,
I saw the Lord sitting on a throne,
high and lofty;
and the hem of his robe filled the temple.
Seraphs were in attendance above him;
each had six wings:
with two they covered their faces,
and with two they covered their feet,
and with two they flew.
And one called to another and said:
'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.'
The pivots on the thresholds shook
at the voices of those who called,
and the house filled with smoke.
And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live among a people of unclean lips;
yet my eyes have seen the King,
the LORD of hosts!'
Then one of the seraphs flew to me,
holding a live coal that had been taken
from the altar with a pair of tongs.
The seraph touched my mouth with it
and said: 'Now that this has touched your
lips, your guilt has departed
and your sin is blotted out.'
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
'Whom shall I send,
and who will go for us?'
And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

[6; 1 - 8]

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

Psalm 29

R/ In God's temple all cry 'Glory!'

Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his
name; worship the Lord in the beauty
of holiness.

R/ In God's temple all cry 'Glory!'

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders;
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice;
the voice of the Lord is a voice of
splendour.

R/ In God's temple all cry 'Glory!'

The voice of the Lord
breaks the cedar trees;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

R/ In God's temple all cry 'Glory!'

The voice of the Lord
splits the flames of fire;
the voice of the Lord
shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees
wither and strips the forests bare.
And in the temple of the Lord
all are crying, 'Glory!'

R/ In God's temple all cry 'Glory!'

The Lord sits enthroned above the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned
as king for evermore.
The Lord shall give strength to his people;
the Lord shall give his people
the blessing of peace.

R/ In God's temple all cry 'Glory!'

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

[8; 12 - 17]

We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live
according to the flesh – for if you live
according to the flesh, you will die; but if
by the Spirit you put to death the
deeds of the body, you will live. For all
who are led by the Spirit of God are
children of God. For you did not receive a
spirit of slavery to fall back into
fear, but you have received a spirit of
adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!'
it is that very Spirit bearing witness with
our spirit that we are children of God, and
if children, then heirs, heirs of God and
joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer
with him so that we may also be glorified
with him.

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

[Hymn]

Alleluia, alleluia!
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
The God who is, who was,
and who is to come.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St. John** [3: 1 - 17]

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so

that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'

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

For Your Prayers

That the love of God the Holy Trinity may permeate the whole of our lives
Those who work in tourism and hospitality in our local area

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 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:
Lilian Baynton; Simon Moore;
Paul Belcher; Jeanette White.

Thought for the Week

"The Christian response is contained in these two fundamental dogmas: that of the Trinity and that of the Incarnation. In the trinitarian dogma God is one, good, true, and beautiful because he is essentially Love, and Love supposes the one, the other, and their unity."

Hans Urs von Balthasar

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'

Leah & Solomon

Jereboam: Congratulations, Leah. Congratulations, Solomon. Is everything going well?

Solomon: Not so badly, thanks, Jereboam. We're a bit tired, but that's to be expected, really.

Jereboam: I suppose so. He's a lovely little boy, isn't he? How old is he now?

Leah: He's eight days old. Would you like to hold him for a while?

Jereboam: Well...if you're sure, thank you...This really brings back memories: I probably haven't held a baby for fifteen years. What a sweet boy... Look, here we are, I'd better give him back to you now.

Solomon: I'll take him: Leah's arms could probably do with a bit of a rest.

Jereboam: Well, he seems to recognise his parents all right. He's

obviously very comfortable with both of you. Personally I always think that babies can sense the bond of love between their parents as well. I reckon it gives them an extra feeling of security.

Solomon: I can believe that.

Leah: I didn't realise you were a follower of Jesus, Jereboam.

Jereboam: Strictly speaking, I'm not. What makes you say that?

Leah: You've just neatly described our idea of the Holy Spirit, that's all.

Jereboam: Really?

Leah: Yes: as you know, we worship God the Father and also his Son Jesus. Then there's also the Holy Spirit, which draws us into the loving relationship between God and Jesus. It's a bit like your theory about babies sensing the love between their parents. You've come up with a rather apt metaphor, if you ask me.

Jereboam: Always glad to oblige...

Solomon: You're obviously a natural. You ought to become one of us, you know.

Jereboam: I'll think about it.

Anyway, it's lovely to see you all. Best wishes to the whole family.

Leah and Solomon: Thank you.

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

This week begins with **Trinity Sunday** which always follows Pentecost. It celebrates the mystery of the relationship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit - and that overflowing love which supports us in our lives. Monday is the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This week we recognize the sacrifices made by a

number of martyrs in the Church. Tuesday is the feast day of St. Justin, Martyr. On Thursday we remember the martyrs of central Africa and on Saturday is St. Boniface, Bishop and Martyr.

This week is our only exposure to the Book of Tobit in the two year cycle of weekday readings. The Book of Tobit is a kind of novel in the Wisdom literature tradition. We read the story of the misfortunes Tobit and a young woman, named Sarah. The story is about God's fidelity, even though they are tested, and their perseverance in prayer and works of charity. The songs of praise in Tobit this week are extraordinary.

St Mark's Gospel gives us stories of how Jesus is in the midst of a struggle with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. He tells them the Parable of the tenant farmers, telling them that the stone rejected by builders has become the cornerstone.

They almost arrest him. His opponents try to ensnare Jesus with question about the temple tax, but he isn't trapped by them. When they question him about the resurrection, Jesus tells a parable which teaches that God is the God of the living. "to love your neighbour as yourself is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When asked which is the first commandment, Jesus gives two - highlighting the equal importance of love of God and neighbour. Jesus is both Son of David and Messiah and Lord. Jesus warns of those who abuse widows on spiritual pretexts and tells his disciples to notice the widow who gave from her poverty.

Next Sunday we keep as Corpus Christi, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. We celebrate the sacramental presence of Christ with us his people until the end of the ages - his life shared for the life of the world.

A Reflection for Trinity Sunday

+ Today's feast, that of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, for some people seems to be both too abstract and too specific at the same time. On the one hand people see the Church's belief in God as Trinity as being an inexplicable piece of theological abstraction. On the other hand,

some people say how can you be so specific about a God who is mysterious and unknowable.

It's probably not an exaggeration to say that many people's relationship with God (present company excepted, of course!) is that he is out there somewhere, but very much at arms length if not very much further away - at a distance watching the world revolve, not really involved, and ultimately not anything we have to be too concerned about.

But, of course, that's completely contrary to anything Christians should believe and that the Church has ever taught - the opposite of what we celebrate today on this Feast of the Holy Trinity. Human beings are not kept at a distance from God, he is not at a distance from us - but through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus, he has taken our humanity into his own three-fold life of love.

As what we are doing this morning in the Eucharist makes absolutely clear: there is no distance between us and God, as we exist *in God*, and there is no distance in God himself between the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit as they form a perfect and complete unity.

As we've said before, it is fatally easy on Trinity Sunday to present the inner life of God - the life of God as he has revealed himself to us - as a weird form of theological abstraction and continue along that road until the waters rise above our heads and we can take no more. But what we are doing today is celebrating the way God has chosen to reveal himself to us and not the way we have worked out who he might be. It is his revelation of his inner life that we celebrate today.

Celebrating the Trinity isn't like taking apart a piece of machinery in order to see how it operates and then having trouble trying to fit the pieces back into some kind of working order, but it's a celebration of that staggering truth that God is more present to us than we are to ourselves; that God is truly present to the world with the presence of pure love with which he loves himself. In him we live and move and have our being. There is no distant God managing the universe but only the God who loves the world so much, that he brings the world into his own communion of love, his own eternal friendship. Our faith is centred around this profound mystery of the closeness of God who is

Threefold Love.

Maybe that's why the Gospel means "Good News". When we as Christians speak of God as Father, we don't mean the stereotype of a stern and unbending Victorian parent, or the essentially legal concept of the Roman paterfamilias as the head and lawgiver of an extended family, much less the idea of an overbearing, oppressive, toxic masculinity somehow transposed into the Godhead. If that's how the faith comes across, then something has gone tragically wrong in those who teach and preach it. No, we are speaking of the one who knows and cares, as Jesus himself says, even for the sparrows, the one who is pictured in Our Lord's parable of the prodigal son rushing towards his child and embracing him and restoring him to life. The one Jesus calls "Abba", a word which really defies translation, but which is certainly not formal, and anything but coolly distant.

We only have human language with which to struggle to construct analogies to describe the ultimate mystery. The point, though, about the Christian faith is that it isn't confined by those familiar concepts, but that it radically re-defines them as it then radically redefines the way we live and respond to one another.

Today we are meant to feel uncomfortable about the doctrine of the Trinity. For two reasons, firstly because we are confronted with the inadequacy of language to express the most profound of all mysteries, and secondly because it throws down a challenge to each one of us and to anyone who ever might be tempted by a belief in an abstract, uninvolved God out there somewhere who has nothing to do with the daily reality and detail of our lives.

If God really is this love who is involved with our world and who has embraced us, then, of course, we must love him and embrace all that he embraces. God is love, the first letter of St John tells us, and the doctrine of the Trinity isn't *our* way of coming to grips with that idea, but *his* way of revealing that truth about himself to us. God is an unlimited energy of love and the Three Persons who make up the One God are the three aspects of that love. The Father loves the Son who loves the Father in return and the Spirit proceeds from the eternal exchange of that love. At its deepest level, love is self-sacrifice: a total giving of one's self to another. We know

that imperfectly and partially from our own human experience of love, and we see this expression of God's inner life, his own infinite capacity to give of himself in order to restore his creation, revealed in human history in the Son's death on the Cross for the life of the world.

The true centre of our faith is that love that results in sacrifice, and the centre of all our worship is what we are doing now as we are gathered around not only a communion table of loving hospitality but also the altar of sacrifice. Here we see revealed the mystery of God in Christ, not only coming among us but giving his own life that we might live. Here we are brought to a living expression of God the Holy Trinity who shares his love and his life with us from this altar, a God who is love, love overflowing and poured out, and cannot but share his life and his love with us all. +

The Feast of the Visitation

May 31st

The feast of the Visitation celebrates the visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth in the hill country of Judea, shortly after Mary receives the angel's message at the Annunciation. St Luke records the leaping for joy John the Baptist in his mother's womb at the presence of the unborn Christ.

Elizabeth greets her with the words, *Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!* Mary proclaims that great outburst of hope known to us as the *Magnificat* ("My soul doth magnify the Lord") which has become a part of the daily official prayer of the Church as the New Testament canticle at the office of Evening Prayer. .