

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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20th June 2021
The Third Sunday
after Trinity

The Collect

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; 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 book of Job

The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb? – when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped?"' [38. 1-11]

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

Psalm 107 1–3, 23–32

R/ Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever. Let all those whom the Lord has redeemed proclaim that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe. He gathered them out of the lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

R/ Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever.

Some went down to the sea in ships and plied their trade in deep waters; They beheld the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. Then he spoke and a stormy wind arose, which tossed high the waves of the sea.

R/ Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever.

They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; their hearts melted because of their peril. They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

R/ Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever.

He stilled the storm to a whisper and quieted the waves of the sea. Then were they glad because of the calm, and he brought them to the harbour they were bound for.

R/ Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever.

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy and the wonders he does for his children. Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

R/ Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever.

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

As we work together with Christ, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.' See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of

righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return – I speak as to children – open wide your hearts also. [6. 1-13]

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

Gradual Hymn

The Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia!
The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice, says the Lord,
I know them and they follow me.
Alleluia.

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Mark **Glory to you, O Lord.**

When evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

[St Mark 4.35-41]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may hold fast to our faith and trust through the storms of life
Respect for human life and thriving.
Those throughout the world who continue to suffer 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; Kim; Elisabeth; Helen Herbert; Dave, John; Sue; Elizabeth.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Desmond Hutchings; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Angela Palmer

Thought for the Week

"I will have nothing to do with a God who cares only occasionally. I need a God who is with us always, everywhere, in the deepest depths as well as the highest heights. It is when things go wrong, when good things do not happen, when our prayers seem to have been lost, that God is most present. We do not need the sheltering wings when things go smoothly. We are closest to God in the darkness, stumbling along blindly.

Madeleine L'Engle

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'

Jereboam this week speaks about John the Baptist in the week that sees the feast of his Nativity

Joanna

Jereboam: If I've understood correctly, you're a cousin of John – the one they call "the Baptist".

Joanna: Yes, that's right: our fathers were brothers. John and I know each other pretty well.

Jereboam: Excuse me for saying this – and I haven't met John myself – but I understand that he's quite a stern man, even perhaps rather angry.

Joanna: No, no, on the contrary: he's very sensitive...open and kind.

Jereboam: Somehow I've been given a different impression.

Joanna: John has always sensed people's full potential. He sees each person's gifts. At the same time it upsets him when this potential is distorted by weakness. That's probably when he

might appear stern. John tries to wash away any negative influences. For him it's almost like a physical process. I suppose that's how he came to start his ministry of baptism.

Jereboam: And he's always known Jesus?

Joanna: Yes. They're related too: in their case I think it's their mothers who have the family connection. Anyway, there was always a strong understanding between the two boys, even though they lived quite a distance away from one another.

Jereboam: I wonder what they used to speak about as children.

Joanna: As I recall, John would often talk about people he met. Jesus didn't say so much, but he'd encourage John. He'd say, "Yes, I think you're right" or "I agree" or something like that. So, whilst John would react to everything and discuss it, Jesus observed a great deal, but you felt that he was waiting for his opinion to mature. John was more immediate, but nothing escaped Jesus' attention.

Jereboam: That's interesting. Just one more thing: is this rumour true about John eating locusts? I can't help feeling intrigued...

Joanna : I'm sorry, I don't know. You'd need to ask him that yourself.

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 we hear the story from St Mark's Gospel about the storm at sea. Jesus calms the sea and asks, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" Thursday is the Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, with special readings. St Luke's Gospel show us the deep faith of Elizabeth and Zechariah as their new born son is named John. "All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, 'What, then, will this child be?' For surely the hand of the Lord was with him."

The first readings at the Eucharist this week speak of the call of Abram and his wife Sarai. Abraham and Lot leave each other, splitting land and herds. God makes a covenant with Abraham, who has no heir, and promises him not only a son, but that he would be the father of as many people as the stars of the sky.

The Gospels this week continue from St Matthew. Jesus continues his challenge to follow him more completely. "Stop judging, that you may not be judged." "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you." "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing." "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." "Who do you say that I am?" When a leper asks if Jesus will cure him, Jesus replies, "I will do it. Be made clean." On Saturday, St Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah, "He took away our infirmities and bore our diseases."

Next Sunday we hear the story of the healing of Jairus' daughter. In the middle of the narrative comes another story of the healing of the woman with a haemorrhage. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.'" Jesus tells Jairus, "Do not be afraid; just have faith." When the girl was healed the people "were utterly astounded."

A Reflection for the Third Sunday after Trinity

+ The words of the disciples in St Mark's Gospel this morning might express the feelings of all of us from time to time, however strong we might feel our faith to be. When the storms of life rage around us, we often can't help ourselves from uttering a word of protest, even of complaint. Why me? Where is God when I need him most?

After all, if we stick to the analogy of this morning's Gospel, God is meant to be at the helm of the ship, in charge, keeping things on an even keel. That's his job. Yet very often from a purely human point of view, which is of course all we can see, God seems entirely aloof from the concerns of mere mortals. The control we think he should show - that is, over everything which affects us personally, is hidden from view.

In today's Gospel the disciples ask Jesus: Don't you care that we are about to perish? It's a sentiment we can all identify with to a certain extent and probably more strongly at particularly difficult moments in our lives.

The storms of life confront us in different ways. We probably don't need to say any more about a pandemic that's been with us for fifteen months or so. But concern about a sick or a dying friend or relative, worries about being able to keep our jobs and support our families, anxiety that we'll just be taken for granted, fear that we'll be left alone, that those whom we love will somehow stop loving us. These are normal human concerns - part of the physical and psychological condition of being human, although we would be forgiven for feeling that they are given a somewhat harder edge by the society in which we are living now with its endemic instability and its lack of common, shared, human and cultural values.

And if we want to think beyond the personal to the global and the political (although of course they are not that easily disentangled, as what we've been living through has hammered home,) wider world issues only add to the sense of threat which hovers over human lives: governments which appear to be unable to tell the truth to us, wars which seem far away yet have repercussions on our streets, racial or religious tensions which threaten to affect us all, an climate which

seems to be out of control and in the less affluent world, people everywhere suffering and going without. Even in terms of our faith, we often appear to be seeing a divided Church spiralling into decline and irrelevance.

We might be forgiven, however strong our faith might be, for wanting to lodge a protest. Even with God. Don't you care? We are going down!

Throughout the history of our faith we can see times when people did exactly that. The psalms are full of protests to a God who seems to be leaving his people to fend for themselves. "Lord why do you sleep. Do not cast us off for ever" and so on.....

But does this display a lack of faith? I don't think so. In fact, quite the reverse, we don't call upon someone which doesn't exist or doesn't or can't care. The difficulty is of course that we don't always look for him or for signs of his activity in the right places. We look for outside demonstrations of power or whatever, we don't look with ourselves or among ourselves.

The disciples themselves learnt by hard experience who Jesus was, who this person was whom 'even the wind and sea obey'. By their experiences with him alongside them they are led to a profound faith in him, although as we know, that faith continued to be tested; they kept falling short of what was expected of them until they were transformed as a community and as individuals with it by the unfolding drama of the Cross and Resurrection and the gift of the Spirit to the Church at Pentecost.

It is then that they come to an acceptance of the fact that the Jesus who has the power over the wind and the waves is also the Lord who enters the human condition in order to suffer with us and for us; that his authority is most profoundly seen not in these kinds of demonstrations of dramatic power but in solidarity with us and sharing the vulnerability and fragility of what it is to be human. The Christ of power *is* the Christ of suffering. The power is seen through the suffering and the solidarity.

Perhaps it comes down to the question of what it is we really want from God. Or far better, what God really wants most to give to us. Most of us will readily agree that Jesus in the Gospels shows tremendous care for those he encounters. Just after

this episode in St Mark's Gospel we see him casting out demons, healing a woman who has been in pain for twelve years, raising the daughter of Jairus to life. St Mark also shows us Jesus gained a reputation for insisting that the law – religion itself - should serve peoples' deepest needs and hopes, not enslave them, for promising freedom to captives, for defending the widow and the orphan. This is not a man, nor a God, who remains aloof from human experience. The storm blows up on the lake but we have to remember that Jesus is in the boat with his disciples, not controlling events from outside. His total confidence in his Father - the assurance which leads to the acceptance of the cross - is mirrored in the image we have of him falling asleep in the boat in the face of the rising wind and storm. It is this total identification and unity with the Father which he wishes to pass on to us through his presence with us, through his sharing of his life with us. That's what we are here for now.

There's far more to life than avoiding shipwreck. We are offered a faith that has confidence that the journey – whatever happens on the way - will ultimately end well, and that he who guides us won't forsake us. And that's a faith we will never be rebuked for holding on to. +

The Nativity of St John the Baptist

24th June

Why does the Church celebrate the Nativity (the birth) of St John the Baptist? We are told in the Gospels that John surpasses all the prophets, of whom he is the last

He is the 'Great Forerunner,' the one who prepares the Way of the Lord and who recognises the Saviour when they were both in their mothers' wombs.

Celebrated on Mid-Summer's Day, the Nativity of St John the Baptist can be said to anticipate the feast of Christmas and is one of the oldest and most important festivals of the Christian Church.

Falling when it does, today's feast also 'baptised' the various pre-Christian celebrations of Mid-Summer and the solstice, many of which became naturally associated with St John's Eve or St John's Day. John the Baptist himself is described by Jesus in St John's Gospel in this way: "He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light" (*St John* 5. 35) The birth of St John, then, also celebrates the triumph of light over darkness in the message of salvation in the coming of Christ which John comes to announce and prepare.

In many places in the rest of Europe, "Saint John's fires" are lit on mountains and hilltops on the eve of his feast. As the celebration of Mid-Summer, Saint John's Day has been surrounded by many folklore traditions including, in Germany and parts of Scandinavia, the blessing of herbs and the cutting of divining rods.