

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):
Fr Michael Gollop,
The Vicarage, St Arvans
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1st August 2021 The Ninth Sunday After Trinity

The Collect

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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 Exodus

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of

the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.' Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.' Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'" And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses and said, 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'" In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.'

[16. 2 - 4, 9 - 15]

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

Psalm 78 23 - 29

R/ The Lord gave them grain from heaven.

The Lord commanded the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven. He rained down manna upon them to eat and gave them grain from heaven. So mortals ate the bread of angels; he provided for them food enough.

R/ The Lord gave them grain from heaven.

He caused the east wind to blow in the Heavens and led out the south wind by his

might.

He rained down flesh upon them like dust and winged birds like the sand of the sea.

R/ The Lord gave them grain from heaven.

He let it fall in the midst of their camp and round about their dwellings. So they ate and were well filled, for he gave them what they craved.

R/ The Lord gave them grain from heaven.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians [4; 1 - 16]

I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, 'When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.' (When it says, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body,

joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
Man does not live by bread alone
but on every word that comes from the
mouth of God.

Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

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

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were at the place where Jesus had given the bread, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty' [St John 6.24–35]

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

For Your Prayers

That Christ the Bread of Life may lead us to the banquet of the Kingdom.
For increased devotion to the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist and the Blessed Sacrament.

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. Alan; Marion Webster.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time:
Phyllis Irene Clay; George Howell; Jan Evans; William Rogers; Benjamin Vaughan, bishop; Ray Parnell

Thought for the Week

"There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us."

St John Vianney (1786 – 1856)

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'

Lael

Jereboam: I think I began to understand something the other day.

Lael: What was that?

Jereboam: Well, I've always been rather baffled by the accounts of Jesus healing people...you know, like that lady who was cured of her haemorrhage when she touched his cloak. Now, if Jesus really was the Son of God, I suppose that he could do absolutely anything, but stories like that always seemed a bit improbable to me.

Lael: Until the other day... ?

Jereboam: That's right: I went to see my niece, just before she gave birth to her son, her first child. She was absolutely terrified.

Lael: Poor girl... Was there a problem?

Jereboam: Actually, no. Everything went well in the end – or as well as could be expected: these things are never easy. The point was, though, that I realised that she was terrified, at the very moment that I set foot in her home. I hadn't seen her; I hadn't even heard her speak. I just sensed the fear immediately. I don't understand how these things happen, but I reckon that Jesus' healing of the lady with the haemorrhage must have involved a similar process. I'm sorry if that sounds ridiculous...or disrespectful.

Lael: Not in the slightest: I think I know what you mean. Once a week I deliver something to a lady in the next village. We usually chat for a few minutes, which is pleasant enough, but as soon as I walk away from her house, I feel dreadful. It's as if I've absorbed some fear that lurks inside her. I suspect that many of us pick these things up. Even children may do...maybe particularly children: they're so

open to influences. The biggest problem is that these fears are so hard to deal with, since they don't relate to our own experience.

Jereboam: So what help can the Church provide? You can't exactly say to this woman: "You make me feel bad. I think you need help."

Lael: No – that would be very awkward. Of course we can pray for her well-being. We can also try to foster an atmosphere of friendship. As John says: "Fear is driven out by perfect love." I'd say that love communicates itself just as easily as fear. If you spend time with a loving family or with a group of friends that get on well together, you feel uplifted. So I always try to spend time with good friends after visiting that woman. It makes me feel a lot better.

Jereboam: That's a good idea.

Lael: Jesus was wonderful in that way. You had only to be in his presence for a few minutes, and you'd feel completely restored. Still today we experience that, as we receive his Body and Blood from a priest. Some priests even allow a period of silence after the prayer of consecration. I don't know how long it lasts: it might be hours, for all I know – and we all just bask in the presence of our Lord. It's like a gentle summer breeze – so refreshing.

Jereboam: I'd love to witness that.

Lael: Do come along; you'd always be welcome.

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 continue the Sunday gospels from the 6th chapter of St John, and the Bread of Life readings. Jesus tells the crowd, "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."

Wednesday is the feast day of Saint John Vianney, priest. Friday is the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord.

The first readings at the Eucharist this week continue the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. This week our readings are from the Book of Numbers for the first several days and from the Book of Deuteronomy on Saturday.

In St Matthew's Gospel this week we hear some marvellous words about faith and discipleship. The "feeding of the five thousand" comes after the disciples ask Jesus to send the crowd away because they didn't know how to feed them. Jesus tells them to "give them some food yourselves" and blesses the loaves and fishes. Jesus comes to his disciples across the water in a storm, and invites Peter to come to him, across the water; when Peter comes, he takes his eyes off Jesus and goes down. A persistent Canaanite woman begs Jesus for help for her daughter. When he refuses, she persists and he replies, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" and Peter replies, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." But when Peter tries to stop Jesus from talking about the hardships that are ahead, Jesus tells him, "Get behind me, Satan!" He gives his followers a guide for their lives: "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." The disciples wonder why they could not drive out a demon from a boy, Jesus answers, "Because of your little faith." Faith "the size of a mustard seed" is enough.

Next Sunday we finish our third Sunday with the Bread of Life readings from the 6th chapter of John's Gospel, meditating on the words of Jesus who reveals that he is the bread of life. Some of his hearers grumble about these shocking words. Jesus says, "I am the living bread that

came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

A Reflection for Trinity 9

+ As we've discovered at the Vicarage having emptied a house recently (probably unnecessarily, but we won't go into that) that over time we all tend to acquire and accumulate a lot of *stuff* - some of which is necessary and essential, some of which simply adds to the enjoyment of life, and some of which is just really quite useless - the sort of thing we later wonder, '*why on earth did I buy that?*'

But even if we try to embrace a simpler lifestyle - other than a kind of fashionable minimalism - there are certain things we do need: the real basic necessities of shelter, clothing and most of all food and drink. We need food simply to keep going - without it we starve. Even hermits have things they can't do without.

But food has a lot more significance for us than just survival. It's not just the essential fuel for physical existence; human civilisations have always given eating and drinking a much greater social and cultural role in life than just that bare, functional, utilitarian aspect.

Instinctively, it seems, when we have anything important to celebrate we do it by gathering together to eat and drink.

Weddings, baptisms, significant birthdays or anniversaries are all celebrated to the accompaniment of food and drink.

Feasting - having a meal together - is a normal human response to notable occasions in our lives; even funerals are marked by the mourners gathering afterwards to talk and eat and drink together. It's why the social isolation imposed by the pandemic has been so difficult for many of us

And, again, even the everyday business of living involves eating together during the course of the day. Perhaps one of the most dire effects of modern living has been the downgrading of the family meal; there's something about eating together which holds people together. The fast food culture of 'food on the go,' take-aways, and even maybe meals served on trays in front of the television - food used in a somewhat puritanical way merely as refuelling so we can get on with something

much more important - is a real symptom both of a decline in civilised values and the neglect of the real human contact and conversation which we need to keep us together as families and friends and as a wider community and even perhaps as a country, however you want to define that. So it's not *that* easy to make a clear distinction between food which we need just for bodily sustenance, and the nourishment that shared meals give to the whole person, that is body, mind and spirit.

Look at the first reading today from the Book of Exodus; the children of Israel were desperately hungry and as a result they become rebellious. They challenge their leaders, Moses and Aaron and we are told they were given food - both bread in the form of manna, and meat as flocks of quail covered their encampment. The people of Israel were wandering after their flight from Egypt through the wilderness of Sinai on their way to the land which God had promised them. Exodus describes the promised land as 'a land flowing with milk and honey', filled with flocks and herds, with crops and vineyards - all given to the Israelites as a gift from God; they took them by conquest, after God had given them victory, they hadn't worked to produce them. As the Israelites settle in the land and as their relationship with God deepens, they are called again and again to live in a right relationship both with God himself and with one another, and more often than not the Scriptures describe this relationship in terms of food and feasting. In fact the looked-for "Day of the Lord," the fulfilment and the end of history, is described metaphorically as a great banquet where the faithful will be served with the finest wine and the richest food imaginable.

We know, too, that the worship of God at the Temple in Jerusalem, for much of the Old Testament period the very heart and centre of Jewish religion, also involved the ritual use of food, whether it was the bread of the presence, or the animal sacrifices which re-emphasised the Covenant between God and his people. So food is important in the faith tradition from which we ourselves trace our descent. But this isn't a religious history lesson - the Gospel this morning helps make it clear that with the coming of Jesus, with the coming of God among us as one of us, he gives to his people a new kind of

spiritual sustenance, which to begin with, even Our Lord's disciples found hard to understand and accept.

Jesus gently, jokingly almost, rebukes the crowds of people who flocked after him following the feeding of the five thousand. He says to them, you are only following me because you ate all the bread you wanted, not because you understood what I was really saying.

He then goes on to explain that he himself is the bread which comes down from heaven. The bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world is the Presence of Jesus himself. Like the manna in the wilderness it is a free gift from God, but those who eat this bread will never hunger again, they are fed with the very life of God himself and will come to share eternal life, the everlasting life of the Blessed Trinity. The bread of life isn't just Jesus' words or his teaching, it isn't even confined to the relationship we have with him through faith and in prayer: it's the actual presence of Jesus Christ, his continuing real presence with us and among us and for us.

Christ, the Bread of Life, is God's own offering of himself for the life of the world. And at the Eucharist Christ gives himself to us quite *literally* as the Bread of Life. Here at the altar as we represent, as we offer, the sacrifice of Calvary, he lives among us in the bread which is changed into the real presence of Jesus himself. Here he doesn't just give us gifts, but he himself is the gift. The Bread of the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, isn't only a symbol of the New Covenant sealed with the blood of the Lord himself - it is the Lord himself come among us in the form of a Sacrament. That's why what we do isn't just another form of religious service among many: where the Eucharist is, there is the Church.

This isn't the bread of human feasts and celebrations, this isn't the vital but limited bread we need for mere survival, this isn't the bread of modern consumerism which satisfies only momentarily and leaves us wanting more and more stuff. This is the life of heaven come among us, this is God with us. This is the Bread from heaven, Christ himself: - "whoever comes to him will never be hungry, and whoever believes in him will never thirst." +

Feast of the Transfiguration

On 6th August we celebrate the occasion, recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospel, on which Jesus, as he was beginning to teach his disciples that he must die and rise again, revealed himself in shining splendour to Peter, James, and John.

Moses and Elijah were present, and are taken to signify that the Law and the Prophets testify that Jesus is the promised Messiah. God the Father also proclaimed him as such, saying, "This is my Beloved Son. Listen to him." For a moment the veil is drawn aside, and people still on earth are permitted a glimpse of the heavenly reality, the glory of God.

It is such an important occurrence in the life and ministry of Jesus that it is given its own feast day.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Feast of the Transfiguration has been celebrated since the late fourth century, and is one of the twelve great festivals of the Eastern Orthodox calendar. In the West it was observed after the ninth century by some monastic orders, and from 1457 it has been observed generally..

Ministry Area Prayer

Dear Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to work together as a Ministry Area.

May we engage with each other with faith and encouragement.

May we manage each situation with wisdom and mutual respect.

May we serve with integrity, creativity and purpose.

May we speak with openness and gentleness.

May we offer our gifts, time and finances with generosity.

May we face each challenge with courage and the desire to grow through it.

May we all be drawn deeper into our relationship with You and be known as your disciples.

Help us to show your love, proclaim your Good News and grow your Kingdom in this place.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN