

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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25th July 2021
St James, Apostle

The Collect

Merciful God, whose holy apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ and followed him even to death: help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world, to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay; 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 Acts of the Apostles

At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius.

The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword.

[11. 27 – 12. 2]

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

Psalm 16

**R/ Those who go out weeping,
carrying the seed,
will come again with joy,
shouldering their sheaves.**

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.

**R/ Those who go out weeping,
carrying the seed,
will come again with joy,
shouldering their sheaves.**

Then they said among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

**R/ Those who go out weeping,
carrying the seed,
will come again with joy,
shouldering their sheaves.**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses of the Negev.
Those who sowed with tears will reap with
songs of joy. Those who go out weeping,

carrying the seed, will come again with
joy, shouldering their sheaves.

**R/ Those who go out weeping,
carrying the seed,
will come again with joy,
shouldering their sheaves.**

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians. [4. 7 - 15]

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So, death is at work in us, but life in you. But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture – 'I believed, and so I spoke' – we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
I chose you from the world
to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last, says the Lord.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you
R/ And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Matthew [20: 20-28]

R/ Glory to you, O Lord

The mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him.

And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.'

But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?'

They said to him, 'We are able.'

He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said,

'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord:

R/ Praise to you, O Christ.

For Your Prayers

That, sustained by their prayers, we may follow the Apostles in their faithful witness to Christ and his resurrection.

All pilgrims, especially to the Shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela.

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:

Thought for the Week

"The geographical pilgrimage is the symbolic acting out an inner journey. The inner journey is the interpolation of the meanings and signs of the outer pilgrimage. One can have one without the other. It is best to have both"

Thomas Merton (1915 – 1968)

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 is based on the Year B sequence of readings – St John 6. 1-15

Daniel

Jereboam: This evening we are speaking to one of our youngest contributors. May I ask how old you are, Daniel?

Daniel: I'm eleven.

Jereboam: Very good... So, my friend, tell us your story.

Daniel: Well, our parents took us along to the meeting with Jesus this afternoon. It was going to be a long day, what with all the walking and the listening and everything, so we took some bread and fish to eat. It was my job to carry it. Then after Jesus had spoken to everyone for about an hour or so, he suggested that we all had a break for a bite to eat. It turned out that I was the only one of all those people there who had brought any food. Of course I offered it to the gentleman that came round, and somehow they shared it out amongst the whole crowd. It doesn't make sense, because there was only enough for our family, really. But everyone had a good lunch from it – hundreds of us there were, maybe even thousands.

Jereboam: Obviously one explanation is that other people had food with them too.

Daniel: It would be a pretty strange coincidence if they'd all brought just barley bread and fish. No, I really think that I was the only one.

Jereboam: Can you explain it, then?

Daniel: No, not at all. It was different from anything I've ever seen. And the food wasn't quite the same when you ate it either – it was sort of new. I know this sounds stupid, but it seemed even healthier than usual food.

Jereboam: Thank you for telling us about it. I'm certainly not going to say that you're stupid. Too many unexpected things have been happening around here recently.

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 celebrate the feast of St James the Greater, brother of John and son of Zebedee, the fisherman. James, together with Peter and his brother, form the inner circle of the Apostles as witnesses of what Jesus said and did.

Monday is the feast day of Saints Joachim and Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, . Thursday that of Saint Martha. Saturday is the feast day of St. Ignatius Loyola,

During the week, we come to the third and final week of readings from the book of Exodus. Moses carries down the Ten Commandments from God but breaks them in a fury when he sees the people worshipping a golden calf. He meets face to face with God in a tent in the desert and invites God to come with them on their journey. Moses' face is so radiant after meeting with God, it is covered with a veil. Moses builds a movable meeting tent for their journey, and puts the arc of the commandments in it, and in a cloud by day and with fire by night, God was with them. On Friday and Saturday we have two days of readings from the book of Leviticus which is the third book of the set of five books that begin the scriptures, called the *Pentateuch*. It is a book of liturgical practices governing the ministry of the priestly descendants of Levi. Here we read about the great Jewish festivals and Jubilee years. The gospels are from St Matthew, with stories worth pondering and reflecting on. We hear of the tiny mustard seed which

grows into a towering bush, the explanation of the parable of the weeds in the field. Then we again hear how the Kingdom is like a treasure or a pearl a merchant makes great sacrifices to obtain. With the story of the fishing net tossed into the sea, we consider how everyone is gathered by God at the end of time to be judged. Jesus comes to his hometown to teach but took offense at him. "A prophet is not without honour except in his native place and in his own house." We end the week with the sad story of Herod, not wanting to be embarrassed in front of his guests, ordering John the Baptist beheaded.

Next Sunday continues 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."

A Reflection for the Feast of St James

++ One of the truly remarkable things about the Christian Gospel, and one of the most wonderful, is how God calls people to share his life without any sign at all that they might be worthy of it. The apostles illustrate this perfectly. Most of them weren't outwardly holy, they weren't the obvious candidates at all; they were people like us with all the human faults and failings one could possibly imagine. Jesus didn't call the obviously pious, the deeply learned or the well - connected. Instead he called to his side an unimpressive collection of men who are consistently slow to catch on, who fail to listen to his teaching and who repeatedly get things desperately wrong. It's almost as if Jesus is saying to us - *if these people can follow me, then anyone can*. Yet we also must remember that these were the men who, with only one exception, were called after the Resurrection to offer their lives for their Lord. They heard the call and they answered it.

Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?'

But they got things wrong, spectacularly so, in the case of the brothers James and

John in this morning's Gospel. They either went along with their rather forceful, pushy mother or they put her up to it in asking for a special place in the Kingdom of God. You can almost hear Jesus' sigh of exasperation – (or is it amusement, I'm not sure?) before he tells them it can't be done, boys, it's not how it works?

The story of the Apostles is essentially one of hard lessons learned. Jesus' response to the other apostles' indignation at the two brothers' outrageous request is one which should probably be framed and put on the wall of everyone who holds any kind of office in the church, or – for that matter – anyone who calls themselves a Christian:

'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.

It will not be so among you"

It's one of the hardest lessons of all, given the way the world works, and what we might call the 'institutional Church' is far from faithful to it much of the time. So are all of us, maybe.

But the thing about the Apostles is that they do learn the lesson.

The Christian faith isn't about pretending to live in a nice, clean, respectable, 'spiritual' world. It is about salvation - which is often a dirty, difficult, messy business. The greatest proof of that, surely, is the person of Jesus himself. It's difficult sometimes to take this in in our cynical world, but he wasn't just another guru on the make - someone who, for a price, will sell us the secret of a life of contentment and undisturbed inner peace; but he was broken and killed on a hill outside Jerusalem, the innocent victim of power and baying crowds, and the darker side of human nature - God himself in Christ bringing about our redemption, our freedom from sin and alienation and death, as only he can.

For however painful and bewildering our experience of the world may be, however apparently intractable the messes we keep getting ourselves into, it is in *just this* reality, not a pretend world of perfection, that God's will is mysteriously working itself out. After all, it is in *this* world that the saints became saints, and still become saints, and it is in this world, that St James, from, according to the Gospels, being an insufferably arrogant young man became the model of a person of faith -

the first of the apostles to shed his blood for the truth. It's in this world and in no other, that the Lord became one of us in the Incarnation.

Sometimes we can't see that we are moving towards God at all; perhaps we don't need to see that -- the essential thing, surely, is that we allow God's grace to move us in the right direction, rather than trying to go in search of whatever it is we happen to find attractive.

St James, because of the history of the pilgrimage to Compostela, where his body is said to lie, is usually portrayed in art and iconography as a pilgrim - with hat, staff, and book of the Gospels - is seen as someone on a journey, not just to a holy place, but to the life of heaven itself, drawn on by the grace and love of Christ himself. And the reason why pilgrimages have always been a popular part of the Christian faith is that they in some way represent our lives of faith in microcosm. The Christian life is always one of movement - it is always a journey, a pilgrimage, if you like, towards the life of God. And we pursue it in what we might call a holy democracy, with acceptance, an essential equality, and a reluctance to judge.

So in our ever moving lives of faith, even the slightest gesture in the direction of goodness is always worth making, and though we all have to aim at the *highest* good, we ought not to be too worried if we often don't seem to be getting very far. Because we live by faith, not by sight, and the mystery of God's grace isn't part of a do-it-yourself human programme of self-improvement.

And that has implications for how we look at each other, not just at ourselves. We all too easily make our judgements in terms of what we *think* we know about other people, or our inevitably partial glimpse into what their lives actually are, or even - and don't underestimate our propensity to do this - a rather ungracious obsession with other peoples' all too apparent failings.

We cannot know about the hidden workings of God's grace in the lives of those around us. At the end of the day, we must remember that it is the crucified and risen Lord, not we, who will come to judge. Only then will we really know the truth about ourselves and each other. From this morning's Gospel what judgement would we have made about James, yet we

honour him today as one of the great heroes of the faith, one of the princes of the new Jerusalem? It's not *our* judgement that matters. We are not here to judge but to *be* judged. And if the logic of the cross holds true, Christ's judgement may hold quite a few surprises. The Saints are already witnesses to that. +

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

SAINT OF THE WEEK

25th July – St James

James is the son of Zebedee and brother of John. The two were called by Jesus as they worked with their father in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had already called another pair of brothers from a similar occupation: Peter and Andrew. "He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him" Two incidents in the Gospels describe the temperament of James and his brother. Saint Matthew says that their mother came—Mark says it was the brothers themselves— to ask that they have the seats of honour in the kingdom. "Jesus said in reply, 'You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?' They said to him, 'We can'" (Matthew 20:22). Jesus then told them they would indeed drink the cup and share his baptism of pain and death, but that sitting at his right hand or left was not his to give—it "is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father" (Matthew 20:23b). It remained to be seen how long it would take to realize the implications of their confident "We can!". The other disciples became indignant at the ambition of James and John. Then Jesus taught them all the lesson of humble service: The purpose of authority is to serve. They are not to impose their will on others, or lord it over them. This is the position of Jesus himself. He was the servant of all; the service imposed on him was the supreme sacrifice of his own life. James was apparently the first of the apostles to be martyred. "About that time King Herod laid hands upon some members of the church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also" (Acts 12:1-3a). His remains are said to be at Santiago de Compostela, which is a great place of pilgrimage.