

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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8th August 2021
The Tenth Sunday
After Trinity

The Collect

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please you; 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 first book of the Kings [19. 4 - 8]

Elijah went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

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

Psalms 34 1 - 8

R/ Turn from evil and do good.

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
I will glory in the Lord;
let the humble hear and rejoice.

R/ Turn from evil and do good.

Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord and he answered me and delivered me out of all my terror.

R/ Turn from evil and do good.

Look upon him and be radiant,
and let not your faces be ashamed.
I called in my affliction and the Lord heard me and saved me from all my troubles.

R/ Turn from evil and do good.

The angel of the Lord encompasses those who fear him, and he will deliver them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good;

happy are they who trust in him!

R/ Turn from evil and do good.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians [4; 25 - 5. 2]

Putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the living bread
which has come down from heaven,
says the Lord.
Anyone who eats this bread
will live for ever.

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.**

Jesus said to the crowd, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.' Then the Jews began to

complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'

They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?'

Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

[St John 6.35, 41-51]

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

For Your Prayers

That Christ the living bread lead us to the life of heaven

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; Peter Heaps, priest; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Edith Sims; Ray Bull

Thought for the Week

"Those who remain silent are responsible"

- Edith Stein -

St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross
(1891 - 1942)

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'

Amon & Azor

Jereboam: Good evening, gentlemen. May I ask you for a few words about Jesus? I imagine that you were with him this afternoon.

Amon: Yes: we were just discussing his teaching as you walked up. Jesus referred to himself as the bread of life, and he compared himself to the manna which God provided for our ancestors in the desert. There's more to it than that though, because Jesus claims to

offer eternal life, in a way that the manna never did.

Azor: When he describes himself as bread, he presumably doesn't mean that we're supposed to start chewing his arm or anything. The point is that he nourishes us in another way -- sustains us, if you like. Amon here made an interesting point...

Amon: Well, yes: bread's a really essential, basic food that we all eat. If Jesus had said something like: "I am the mashed olive of life," it wouldn't have sounded so important somehow.

Jereboam: I'm going to put a question to you. There's a boy who lives down the way from us, and he seems to have developed an aversion to food -- he hardly ever eats. We're all very worried about him. No-one can quite work out what the problem is. It could even be that he has a very harsh view of self-discipline. Now, surely Jesus isn't suggesting that we stop eating normal food?

Amon: I shouldn't have thought so. Apart from anything else, I noticed him eating a snack himself. Do you know whether this boy has been to any of Jesus' sessions?

Jereboam: I don't think so.

Amon: Whatever the problem is, Jesus can probably help. A lot of his message involves respecting the world around us. He teaches respect for people, but respect for food and other things too.

Azor: Without worshipping them or anything.

Amon: No, of course not. It's a question of respecting everything for what it is.

Azor: He also makes you better at receiving. What I mean is: Jesus reminds us that good things come from God and not just from ourselves, and so you end up appreciating them more. Look, why not bring this boy along? Jesus can sort him out, I'm sure.

Jereboam: I might well do that. 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

Today in the Gospel, Some of Jesus' hearers grumble about what they regard as his 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."

Monday is the feast day of St Teresa Benedicta, the philosopher and theologian, Edith Stein, murdered by the Nazis because of her Jewish ancestry. Tuesday is the Feast of Saint Lawrence, deacon and martyr and Wednesday, the feast day of Saint Claire, founder of the female order of Franciscans and friend of St Francis. Saturday sees the feast day of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, priest, who gave his life in exchange for another in the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz.

In the first readings at the Eucharist this week from Deuteronomy, we hear about the entry into the Promised Land. Moses says farewell to the people. Then we have readings from the Book of Joshua, who was the successor of Moses. The people cross the Jordan, with the Ark of the Covenant clearing a path through the river. Joshua speaks to the people as a prophet and recounts all God has done for them. The people renew their covenant at Shechem.

In the daily Gospels from St Matthew, Jesus again warns his disciples about his upcoming passion, death and resurrection, but they are "overwhelmed with grief." Jesus resolves the temple tax question, as if to say, "it will be given you." When the disciples are wondering about "who is the greatest," Jesus points to a child and says the greatest is the one who is humble, like the defenceless child. He tells them to care for each other "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone," and to pray together for anything they need.

When Peter asks Jesus how many times we must forgive, Jesus tells the powerful parable of the servant who is forgiven his debt but doesn't forgive his debtors. Jesus urges us to forgive from our hearts. Jesus tells his disciples about the sacredness of marriage. The disciples tried to prevent people from bringing children to Jesus and he said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Next Sunday is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary with its own special readings. This great feast takes the place of the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity this year.

A Reflection for Trinity 10

+ How does God reveal himself? How does he speak to us? Two fairly crucial questions, you might think, for anyone who wants to take their faith seriously. The American writer Annie Dillard, in her classic book, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* - which is a strange and compelling mixture of natural history, philosophy, theology and mysticism - describes the experience of God as hidden and essentially mysterious, transitory, fleeting, coming and going when he wants to rather than when you demand it. However much you try to stalk God, he nearly always eludes you, until as she says, "the mountains part" - the vision "comes and goes, mostly goes, but I live for it."

George Herbert describes a similar experience - God is always up before us - before the break of day. Again, R.S.

Thomas finds the same to be true:

His are the echoes

We follow the footprints he has just Left ...

The Old Testament reading today tends to agree. Elijah, the prophet, has been inspired by to say things certain things about the conduct of public affairs, both religious and political, which Ahab, the King of Israel, has found impossible to tolerate. As a result Elijah flees for his life into the desert and, after a period of total despair, is fed, but is continually nudged along until he eventually ends up at Mount Horeb - interestingly - and not coincidentally at all - the same place where the Transfiguration of Jesus occurs in the New Testament - where he finally takes refuge.

The rest of the story - what happens *after* this morning's Old Testament reading - is probably quite familiar to most of us. When he gets to Mount Horeb Elijah discovers a cave and he waits for God to declare himself again. Eventually in response to the call of God which he hears, Elijah stands outside the cave on the mountain. A fierce wind blows, there is an earthquake and fire blazes up but during these events God has nothing to say, but in the profound silence which follows Elijah encounters God who asks him again

"What are you doing here?" And in effect Elijah is told to go back and get on with the job he has been appointed to do. God speaks to the prophet in hints and whispers, and in the mystery of profound silence. For Elijah, it's in the silence that "the mountains part."

Over the last couple of weeks and for a couple of weeks more, the Gospel readings have been taken from chapter six of St John's Gospel, his account of Jesus as the Bread of Life and what many commentators believe is St John's account of the mystery of the Eucharist. After the feeding of the five thousand the people wanted to acclaim Jesus as their King and Jesus had to flee. The people had not really understood who Jesus is at all. They thought he was another Moses come to feed them with manna in the desert. Jesus needed to teach them to understand that he wasn't merely the provider of food but that he was the food itself. Those who heard him needed to go beyond physical hunger for physical bread and begin to realise that what was being offered them in the person and presence of Jesus was indeed bread from heaven, the bread of life. The Lord is literally claiming literally to be the food, the life-giving nourishment for the life of the world. The closing verse of today's gospel reading speaks of "the bread that came down from heaven." This could as well be the theme of the gospel. And it holds the key to the understanding of what exactly is happening in today's Gospel. The expectation of many of Jesus' contemporaries was that Messiah would literally come down from heaven to restore God's Kingdom to Israel. They were waiting for spectacular events and supernatural manifestations in the sky when they would literally see the Anointed of God coming down in the clouds. So

when Jesus came forward and claimed that "I am He," they weren't able to reconcile the reality in front of them with what they had come to expect would be the case when the Messiah returned. So their instinct is to reject him and his message about himself. They thought they knew precisely who he was. *"Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say: I have come down from heaven?'" (John 6:41-42).*

The real problem that the people of Jesus' time had with the idea of flesh becoming bread was in fact an extension of the problem St John describes them having with the idea of the word becoming flesh - the hidden and mysterious hiding himself again under the forms of physical, material reality. The elusive God becomes all too accessible, If we insist that God must meet our expectations and our reasoning before we can start to believe, then we are in for a huge disappointment, exactly the same disappointment felt by those in the Gospel today who simply cannot accept what Jesus is saying to them.

It's not until the last verse of today's Gospel that Jesus finally tells his followers exactly what this 'Bread of Life' is. His flesh. This is the great paradox of the Eucharist: it is through giving up his body in death that Christ becomes the bread of life. The bread of life is not just given, like the manna in the desert we heard about last week, but given up, given away, surrendered, sacrificed.

The mystery of the Eucharist is the mystery of Christ himself - his broken body and outpoured blood, his brokenness and his sacrifice on the cross. In saying 'Amen' to the body of Christ, we are saying 'Yes' to the call to become his broken body ourselves. As we receive Christ's body in our hands we are putting ourselves in his hands to be broken by him, to be shocked out of what we think we are, where we think we belong, and who we think he is. We come to him to be re-made.

He is both our mysterious food for the journey and the mysterious end of the journey itself. As we offer the Eucharist, we come to see that the consecration of bread and wine to be the Body and Blood of the Lord is brought about for our

consecration - our transfiguration into the those who become like Christ. The risen Christ comes among us in the form of Bread and Wine so that that he may live in us and we might live in him.

And what we do here is to encounter the authentic, the real, presence of Christ. As we've said before we don't come here to be entertained - God isn't in the entertainment business, he has better things to do - but we do come to encounter the Lord in Word and Sacrament and to grow in trust and faith and holiness. We meet him not to be entertained but to be challenged and changed. And here at the altar his mysterious elusiveness is laid aside for a moment and he turns to face us and give us life. The message of the Gospel is that God is with us, and he has a place for us and an eternal future for us whatever our doubts and anxieties might be. What we are doing now in the Eucharist is both a sign of that, and the means of grace - *help in other words* - by which that is brought about. This is the Bread which comes to us as the presence of God. +

SAINT OF THE WEEK

11th August - St Clare of Assisi

Born in 1194, Clare was 18 when she heard St Francis preaching, and was inspired by him. She asked him to help her live her life after the teaching of the Gospel. Francis placed her in a Benedictine convent, despite the protests of her father. But Clare sought a deeper solitude, and she moved to another convent where she was joined by her sister. They remained there until a small dwelling was built for them next to the church of San Damiano. They were joined by other ladies and lived lives of poverty, austerity and seclusion from the world. They were known as the Order of Poor Ladies, although this was renamed in her honour after her death as the Order of St Clare, commonly known as the Poor Clares. They became the second order of the Franciscan family, and their first rule was written by Francis. Unlike the male Franciscan order, who moved around, the Order of Poor Ladies lived in enclosure. They went around barefoot, slept on the ground, ate no meat, and observed almost complete silence. Clare served the sick and washed the feet of the begging nuns. She came from prayer, it was said, with

her face so shining it dazzled those about her. She suffered serious illness for the last 27 years of her life. Her influence was such that popes, cardinals, and bishops often came to consult her—Clare herself never left the walls of San Damiano. Francis always remained her great friend and inspiration. Clare was always obedient to his will and to the great ideal of gospel life which he was making real. Clare died on 11th August 1253.

God of peace, who in the poverty of the blessed Clare gave us a clear light to shine in the darkness of this world: give us grace so to follow in her footsteps that we may, at the last, rejoice with her in your eternal glory; 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

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