

# 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  
01291 622064;  
Mobile 07867803479

**12<sup>th</sup> September 2021**  
**The Fifteenth Sunday**  
**after Trinity**

## he Collect

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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

*The servant of the Lord said:*  
The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he awakens – awakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty? [50. 4-9a]

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

## Psalm 116 1 - 8

**R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him. The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; I came to grief and sorrow.

**R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

Then I called upon the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, I pray you, save my life.' Gracious is the Lord and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

**R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

The Lord watches over the innocent; I was brought very low and he helped me. Turn again to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has treated you well.

**R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

For you have rescued my life from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from stumbling. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

**R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

## A reading from the letter of St James

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

[3. 1 - 12]

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

## Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!  
God in Christ was reconciling  
the world to himself,  
and he has entrusted to us the news  
that they are reconciled.

**Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you:

**And also with you**

Hear the Holy Gospel  
according to St Mark

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**J**esus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' Jesus asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

[St Mark 8. 27-38]

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ**

## For Your Prayers

That we may walk with Christ along the way which leads to Resurrection  
All students in school, colleges and universities and for those who teach them  
Chaplains in higher education  
The people of Afghanistan  
Those who are suffering the effects of climate change throughout the world  
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 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; Rose Pugh; Betty Davies; Rosaleen Dusing; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Mary Impanni

## Thought for the Week

"Experience cannot be allowed to have the final word - it must be judged and shown up as deceptive and misleading. The theology of the cross draws our attention to the sheer unreliability of experience as a guide to the presence and activity of God. God is active and present in his world, quite independently of whether we experience him as being so. Experience declared that God was absent from Calvary, only to have its verdict humiliatingly overturned on the third day." -

*Alister McGrath in 'Mystery of the Cross' (Zondervan, 1990)*

## 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'*

## Rabbi Joseph

**Jereboam:** Today I am speaking with Rabbi Joseph, who will be well known to many of our readers in Caesarea Philippi. Rabbi Joseph, you've recently taken an interest in the teachings of Jesus, haven't you?

**Rabbi:** Yes. Many people had spoken to me about him enthusiastically. Finally last week I was able to attend one of his...well, "meetings" seems too grand a word for it...one of his sessions.

**Jereboam:** And your reaction?

**Rabbi:** I was quite bowled over, to tell you the truth: such integrity, such humility – and such an engaging man. But really, you know, a lot of his teaching isn't that different from what the rest of us might say, if only we had the courage of our convictions. During the past week I've realised that lots of passages from the Scriptures relate very closely to Jesus'

message, except that he doesn't water them down, as other people tend to do – myself included. Take, for example, a couple of texts that I've read in the last few days: "The Lord is my light and my help" and "You keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you". Now what Jesus would say, if I've grasped him correctly, is: "The Lord AND NOBODY ELSE is my light and my help" and "You keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you ALL THE TIME." He just gives it to you straight.

**Jereboam:** I must say I'm surprised at his popularity, given the uncompromising nature of his message.

**Rabbi:** I couldn't agree more, but look at them all, young and old, flocking to him. You know, I'm often told I need to make my teaching more relevant to modern life. Well, Jesus turns all that on its head: it's not a question of him making himself relevant to modern life – he challenges you to make modern life relevant to his message.

**Jereboam:** So you'll continue your interest in his teaching?

**Rabbi:** Definitely: we can all learn, even at my age.

**Jereboam:** I'm glad to hear that.

### 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, the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, we hear in St Mark's Gospel Jesus tell his disciples about his passion, death and resurrection. Peter tries to remonstrate with him, but Jesus rebukes him and tells the disciples and us that to be a disciple is to follow him, not trying to save one's life, but by dying to ourselves and losing ourselves for his sake and that of the Gospel. That is the only path to real life. Monday sees the feast day of St John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor of the Church. Tuesday is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – Holy Cross Day - and on Wednesday we celebrate Our Lady of Sorrows. Thursday is the feast day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century bishops and martyrs Saints Cornelius and Cyprian,

The first readings at the Eucharist this week continue from St Paul's First Letter to Timothy. It begins this week with the great prayer for our leaders. He then says how bishops and deacons should behave. He urges Timothy to be especially caring for the youth. Paul warns Timothy of the troubles of riches. Finally, Paul encourages Timothy to be faithful. In St Luke's Gospel this week, Jesus praises the faith of the Roman centurion who understands Jesus' power to heal. Jesus then raises from the dead the son of the widow of Nain. In response to constant criticism from religious authorities, Jesus compares the critics to children taunting their playmates. We read of the woman who entered a dinner Jesus was attending and wept over his feet, washing them with her tears, showing what real love is. Luke, who highlights the role of women in his gospel, tells us of women who accompanied Jesus and his disciples. Finally, Jesus gives us the Parable of the Sower and its interpretation about how temptations and shallow roots can prevent the Word from growing in us or how "the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life" can choke the Word.

**Next Sunday** we hear Jesus tell his disciples about his passion, death and resurrection for a second time. He knew that, along the way, they had been arguing about who was the greatest. He gathers the Apostles and says to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all."

## A Reflection for Trinity 15

+ In this morning's Gospel Jesus asks his disciples an important question - perhaps the most important question of all. 'Who do people say that I am?' he says to them. He's not asking them that out of idle curiosity, he's not conducting a kind of impromptu PR focus group designed to tweak his public image into something more acceptable, and he's not undergoing some kind of crisis of self-perception where he needs a bit of human reassurance that he's on the right track. He wants to know because the answer is absolutely vital. And they tell him what people are saying about him – that he's continuing the message of John the Baptist about the coming of the Kingdom of God and the need to repent, that he's Elijah, who wasn't only the greatest, not to mention the most dramatic, of what we would call the Old Testament prophets but someone who was widely expected to reappear to usher in the end of the world, that he's one of the other prophets whose message about God's mercy and justice and the necessary connection between religion and doing the right thing could be seen in Jesus' own teaching. All the sort of things which would be expected and understandable in the swirling rumour mill of an essentially oral culture. But then we have to picture Jesus looking straight at those around him and asking them directly, "But who do you say that I am?" I other words, it's all very well to repeat the word on the street, and other people's opinions, but what do you think? As so often it's Peter who comes back with a direct answer – 'You are the Messiah,' that is, God's anointed one, the Christ – the one who comes from God to liberate the people of Israel. And again, as so often, it's Peter who both *gets* it and *doesn't* get it. When Jesus tries to explain the exact path which that liberation will take – the path of suffering, rejection and sacrifice which will lead to resurrection – Peter will have none of it, and is maybe hanging on to the conventional, traditional hope at the time that the Messiah would come as a triumphant political and military leader who will bring about the restoration of the past glories of God's people. It's then that Jesus says to Peter very explicitly, and even angrily, that his way is not the way of the world, but that of the

God who acts in mystery and paradox in way the world can't understand. And he calls the crowd and his disciples and tells them without any sugaring of the pill that the way that leads to life is the way of renunciation, self-sacrifice and the cross. And there we have it.

Christ promises us the life of the Resurrection, but the only path to that new life is by losing the one that we have now. Following Jesus – not being ashamed of him - as he says at the end of the Gospel today - means living with him and following his teaching and his example, and that might well entail rejection by others just as it did for Jesus himself. The values of the Gospel are not the values of the world; by attempting to live them out, we will inevitably be going against the spirit of the age, and quite a few of the values of a lot of other people around us. That's always been the case, and we should always be aware of it, because the Gospel is *never* the spirit of the age – perhaps most particularly at those times when we think it is.

But trying to live out the Gospel – to live by its values - is the way to proclaim the Kingdom whose coming we pray for in the words Jesus himself taught us, and which we repeat at this Eucharist before we come to the altar receive his life and his grace. In many ways this is what giving up our life in order to save it means – this is the way of the cross which leads to resurrection.

So, 'who do *you* say that I am?' is the vital question asked by Christ of each one of us. It's *the* existential question of all time, because our answer to that is the answer to our own identity. Who we say he is, makes it clear who we are. We are no longer searching for our identity in a world of confusing questions but very few answers. If we follow Christ, the answer to the question of who we are becomes apparent – and we are not defined in the way the world always wants to define us and value us, and then divide us – in terms of job status, social class, education and background, nationality or postcode, or bank balance. We are defined – we are valued as the people we truly are – in our relationship with him as he leads us more deeply into the mystery who is God.

The way we come to answer his question, "*But who you say that I am?*" determines everything. +

## 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 / Feast day of the Week

15th September

### Our Lady of Sorrows

*Sometimes called*

*Mary at the foot of the Cross*

In St Luke's Gospel, as Jesus was presented in the Temple, Simeon prophesied to Mary that "a sword will pierce your own soul too" (*Luke 2:35*). This prophecy was fulfilled as Mary stood by the cross, watching Jesus die. In this moment of intense pain for Mary, Jesus gives her to us as our mother and us as her children (*John 19: 26-27*).

Mary knows sorrow at the foot of the cross, the unimaginable pain of watching her son die. But she also knows the unbounded joy of the Resurrection – she knows that death is not the end. And so, as our mother she stands with us in our own moments of sorrow, grief and pain and shows us her motherly love. But she also points us beyond that to the joy of the Risen Jesus.

At the foot of the cross, Mary is a sorrowful figure; but she is also a powerful one. She stood watching Jesus die; but she did so fearlessly while the other disciples has fled. She looked on the wounds of his broken body, but she saw in them the salvation of the world.

By being at the cross at that moment, she too faced persecution – but her faith was strong.

May Mary, our mother, guide us through our times of sorrow and pain, and that we may follow her example to stay faithful as we face the crosses we must carry in our lives.

O God, who willed that, when your Son was lifted high on the Cross, his Mother should stand close by and share his suffering, grant that your Church, participating with the Virgin Mary in the Passion of Christ, may merit a share in his Resurrection.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

