

# 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;  
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**3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021**  
**The Eighteenth Sunday**  
**after Trinity**  
**At St Arvans:**  
**Harvest Thanksgiving**

## The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who crowns the year with your goodness and gives us the fruits of the earth in their season: give us grace that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

## A reading from the prophet Joel

Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing-floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame. [2: 21 – 27]

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

## Psalm 126

**R/ Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.**

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 sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.**

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 sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.**

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 sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.**

## A reading from the first letter of St Paul to Timothy [6. 6 - 10]

There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!

Those who are sowing in tears will sing when they reap.  
**Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you:

**And also with you**  
Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Matthew

**Glory to you, O Lord**

*Jesus said to his disciples:*

**'D**o not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly

Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.’

[St Matthew 6.25–33]

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**R/ Praise to you, O Christ.**

### 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)

### For Your Prayers

The farming communities amongst whom we live and work. All who earn their living from the land, the forests and the sea  
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, 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; Martyn Righton-Jones; Nancy Bull; Kevin; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Doris Williams; Serge Bisono

## 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'*

## Sharon

**Jereboam:** Today we are speaking to Sharon, perhaps one of the more controversial people I have interviewed. Is that fair, Sharon?

**Sharon:** I suppose so, yes. I don't intend to be controversial, though. People are sometimes put off by the language I use, rather than by the ideas themselves. And I do believe that I've

helped many people through difficult stages of their lives.

**Jereboam:** An important part of your work is based on your idea of “hidden flow”. Could you explain that, please?

**Sharon:** Yes: let's look at something – maybe a hill, like that one over there. So, if we look at that hill, we see it with our eyes, even though it's quite a long way away. I say that something has flowed from the hill to our eyes. It's the same with sound. I hear you with my ears: the sound of your voice somehow flows from your mouth to my ears. Don't ask me how it happens, but it does... Some years ago I started applying this principle to people. A former friend and I had argued. As far as I was concerned, our friendship was over. Then she died, and suddenly I felt terribly upset about everything. I realised that there had been a “hidden flow” between us, which our friendship had established, and which couldn't be broken, however much we'd argued. So we hadn't really stopped being friends after all; we'd just stopped recognising that we were friends. The same sort of flow exists to an even greater extent between married people – once the flow between them has been created in the first place, it cannot be destroyed. So I work with couples and encourage them to acknowledge and respect this bond.

**Jereboam:** But couldn't you just suggest that they act lovingly towards each other?

**Sharon:** If you tell people to love each other, they tend to try too hard, and they also tend to look for a response from the other person. But if you tell them to strengthen their hidden flow, they act differently: they do little things that accumulate into an atmosphere of happiness. If I may use myself as an example, yesterday I moved a stone, so that my husband wouldn't trip as he returned home. He doesn't even know that I did it, but, because of my intention to help him, I strengthened the hidden flow between us. Our marriage will be stronger as a result.

**Jereboam:** As you may know, my column reports on people who have a connection with Jesus. We haven't mentioned him yet...

**Sharon:** Jesus taught me the most important things in my life, and all my work is committed to promoting his values. He expressed himself differently

from me, it's true, but I think you'll find that my theories match absolutely with his teaching on love and marriage. I hope so anyway.

*Jereboam:* Thank you, Sharon.

### Thought for the Week

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

*St. Francis of Assisi*

### This Week

Today's Gospel ends with Jesus urging us to be like children were in that society - unimportant and with no status. "The kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Then he embraced and blessed the children. At St Arvans Harvest Thanksgiving is celebrated, with its own special readings (*see above*) Monday is the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi.

The first readings at the Eucharist this week offer again a selection of several different Old Testament sources including the reluctant prophet, Jonah; followed by Malachi ("But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays"); and then Joel, ("Then shall you know that I, the LORD, am your God, dwelling on Zion, my holy mountain; Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall pass through her no more.") St Luke's Gospel continues during the weekdays with some of our most familiar and gospel stories. The Good Samaritan teaches us about the nature and meaning of love. In the Mary and Martha story, Jesus nudges his dear friend Martha to calm her spirits and choose carefully what she spends her time on. Luke offers a look at Jesus praying alone before sharing his prayer with us. With the story of the friend banging on the door in the night, Jesus encourages us to "ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." When his opponents try to confuse the people about Jesus' authority, he says, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." We end the week with Jesus emphasizing his relationship with the Father as being

stronger than earthly relationships.

**Next Sunday's** Gospel repeats the story of the rich young man who asks Jesus what he can do to inherit eternal life; he already keeps the commandments. Jesus offers him the challenge of the gospel: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor ... then come, follow me." St Mark's gospel tells us that the young man "went away sad, for he had many possessions." When Jesus tells his followers how hard it will be for a rich person to be saved, they are astonished - and worried. They wondered how they could ever be saved. "All things are possible for God," was Jesus' response.

### A Reflection for Trinity 18 *Harvest Thanksgiving*

+ It's the first Sunday of October, every day that passes we notice the hours of daylight getting shorter, the leaves on the trees are beginning to change colour and even to fall. After a dry and warm September, Autumn is now definitely with us. I have to say that this is one of my favourite times of year - on days of fine weather, the cool misty mornings giving way to the hazy sunshine of bright afternoons.

The change in the seasons at this time of year seems more like a natural completion rather than an abrupt change ... the words of the harvest collect describes it very well:

*Almighty and everlasting God, who crowns the year with your goodness and gives us the fruits of the earth in their season: give us grace that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being*

Collects are meant to sum up our prayers; this one does it really well.

So, what is harvest really about? We have to be a little bit careful - there are several traps we can fall into when celebrating it. It's not a celebration of country life - though, of course, there are elements of that in what we do, but it's not today's main purpose...

It shouldn't be about nostalgia for a past way of life - because the human past is ultimately not capable of being returned to - and I'm not sure we would really want to anyway ...

It's not a celebration of human ingenuity, although there are elements of that at

harvest as well - certainly in terms of giving thanks for beneficial technological development and human cooperation ... So what is harvest really about? The practice of our faith when all is said and done is shot through with a concern to see the hand of God even in the tiniest details of life and in the natural world of which we are a part, however much modern life insulates us from it.

Above all, maybe, the reason harvest thanksgiving continues to resonate with many people is that it is an expression of *thankfulness* - a pretty basic religious instinct, but not one which our present culture values very much at all. To get rather theological about it, it's about reflecting in our lives the love of God the Holy Trinity - the love we see flowing out into creation itself, and in the redemption of the world in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the unlimited life of God poured out for us.

And Harvest thanksgiving reinforces the point that we need to learn to live gratefully and to express that gratitude in the way we relate to one another. Harvest couldn't happen without co-operation - even modern mechanised farming depends on co-operation, not only in getting the crops out of the ground but also their being transported, processed, turned into something we can eat. Our food chain is increasingly complex and inter-connected, even if that's something our politicians are just finding out, it seems. To survive we need human community, dedicated to the jobs they do and concerned to do them in the best way they possibly can, and valued by society for what they do.

Again, the harvest depends not only on community but on responsible stewardship. We make use of the accumulated expertise and wisdom developed over the centuries - technology makes that easier and less back-breaking - but it doesn't do away with the need to co-operate with the forces of nature, the sun, the rain, the wind which go into the making of a successful harvest.

We are being told pretty forcibly at harvest time that we are always stewards of the natural world not its absolute owners. When we try to play God - when we ignore the realities of nature - disaster almost always follows as we know from the widespread and uncontrolled use of

pesticides in the past and the grubbing up of hedges, the chopping down of woods and forests and the uncontrolled consumption of fossil fuels - all of which have contributed to the gathering climate emergency and the disastrous loss of animal and plant species we are now seeing at an accelerating rate. So, harvest is also about conservation and ecology; we have to preserve our environment in order to survive, to make the harvests of the future a possibility, to keep faith with our forebears and with our children and grandchildren, and to the God who made the created order and said it was good. That's answered the question as what this has to do with religion and the Christian faith in particular. Our faith is about the whole of life not just the little bits we like to cordon off and call 'religion,' and 'spirituality.'

If we're not very careful, our faith and belief can all too easily slip into a hobby activity for those of us who have the time and space to indulge it. It's much better to think about our lives of prayer and worship and the everyday realities of living as being an integrated whole rather than being in separate compartments, because if our faith doesn't inform the whole of life then what's the point of it at all? But what we can do and what we can offer in stark contrast to the casual cruelty of many human institutions is to emphasise that theology and philosophy of wholeness and to give space for reflection and thanksgiving, space for prayer and meditation - not to make us feel better about ourselves, but to in order to orientate our lives to God's way of doing things, to give an alternative vision to the rather one dimensional and unsatisfying utilitarian attitude of this contemporary society.

That's something those who have gone before us - for all their faults and failings - would have understood very well, even if they wouldn't have put it in quite the same way ...

Harvest Thanksgiving is saying to us: Live thankfully, live as stewards who will be accountable for the things we possess, live as those who travel together on the pilgrimage of life and faith, companions who share the Bread of Life given to us in the Eucharist, live as those who receive our good things from God and whose real home isn't here and now but is the heavenly city.

We are here to thank God for life; to thank God for our food; to thank God for our family and friends; to thank God for the opportunity of living our lives in, despite the sometimes appallingly wet weather, and the beyond appalling standard of many of our elected representatives, what is still really not such a bad place to live, and also - and perhaps most importantly - to thank God for the ability to express that gratitude in acts of giving, sharing and generous love, particularly to those most in most need, here and throughout the world.

We are here today before the altar - in the presence of Christ, the source of all truth, beauty and life, He who the poet Dante called "the love which moves the sun and the other stars," we can only bow down before him and adore in hope and joy. We kneel before him who also bowed down to share our humanity and the life of the world, and in Holy Communion seek to enter into that love which doesn't make slaves of us, but alone is able to set us free. This is the true harvest, the harvest of the kingdom of heaven. +

## Saints of the Week

4<sup>th</sup> October

### St Francis of Assisi

St Francis is one of the best loved saints of the Church. He was born in 1181, his father was a prosperous silk merchant. He was given the name Giovanni, but his father changed this to Francesco - in honour of the business that he did with France. As a young man he lived the high life that was typical of a wealthy young man at the time. But despite his brightly coloured clothes and lavish living, he became disillusioned with this way of life. In 1202 he joined a military expedition and was taken prisoner. During his captivity an illness forced him to re-evaluate his life. On a pilgrimage to Rome he stopped to pray in the church of San Damiano where he had a mystical vision of Jesus as he prayed in front of an icon of the crucifixion. Jesus said to him "Francis, go and repair my house which as you can see is falling into ruins". Francis took this to mean the church he was praying in and sold some of his father's cloth to pay for the restoration. This displeased his father and Francis spent several months travelling around the area of Assisi as a beggar. In

1208, whilst at Mass, the Gospel from Matthew recounting the commissioning of the 12 disciples was read and Francis became inspired to devote himself to a life of prayer and poverty. Within a year he had 11 followers who travelled around preaching the Gospel. He set out to imitate Christ through emptying of himself, and to make poverty a holy way of life. He was torn between a life devoted entirely to prayer and a life of active preaching. He chose the latter, but had times of retreat to spend time in silence with God. He never intended to found a religious order, but the Franciscan Order grew quickly and is still very recognisable with their brown habits. He was never ordained a priest, but he was ordained a deacon, and he had a great reverence for the priesthood and their role in the celebration of the Eucharist and prayed fervently for priests. On the feast of the Holy Cross in 1224 he received the stigmata, the marks of the wounds of Jesus at his crucifixion and he died two years later.

O God, you ever delight to reveal yourself to the childlike and lowly of heart: grant that, following the example of the blessed Francis, we may count the wisdom of this world as foolishness and know only Jesus Christ and him crucified, 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**

**The St Deiniol  
Lectures  
Monday October  
4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**

Professor John Clarke,  
Professor Emeritus in the  
History of Ideas, Kingston  
University, London,  
on:

**“Mysticism: its  
Relevance Today”**

*followed by open discussion*

**Itton Village Hall, NP16 6BP  
Itton Road, Chepstow (B4293)**

*To allow for Covid safety  
measures, please pre-book  
(Post a request on this website)*

NB: Please wear masks on  
entry to the hall - you can  
remove them once seated.