

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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10th October 2021 The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

*Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg celebrates
Harvest thanksgiving today*

The Collect

O God, forasmuch as without you we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; 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 Amos

Seek the LORD and live, or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire, and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.

Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground! They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth. Therefore because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.

For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins – you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate.

Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time. Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said.

Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

[5. 6-7, 10-15]

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

Psalm 90 13-17

**R/ O Lord, be gracious
to your servants.**

Return, O Lord; how long will you tarry?

be gracious to your servants.
Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning; so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

**R/ O Lord, be gracious
to your servants.**

Make us glad by the measure of the days

that you afflicted us and the years in which we suffered adversity.

Show your servants your works and your splendour to their children.

**R/ O Lord, be gracious
to your servants.**

May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us;
prosper the work of our hands;
prosper our handiwork.

**R/ O Lord, be gracious
to your servants.**

**A reading from the letter
to the Hebrews** [4. 12-16]

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are the poor in spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St Mark

Glory to you, O Lord.

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; honour your father and mother."' He said to Jesus, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.' Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields – but with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last and the last will be first.'

[St Mark 17.17–31]

This is the Gospel of the Lord
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

That we may give ourselves
wholeheartedly to the service of Christ
Prisoners and their families
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; Mady Gerard; .

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Kevin Brennan;
Cynthia Harris; Joan Green; our own
departed relatives & friends, & those
whose anniversaries of death fall at this
time: Francis John Neal; Doris Collard

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'*

Michael

Jereboam: Our guest today is
perhaps one of the more extreme
followers of Jesus. Is that a fair comment,
Michael?

Michael: I think I know what you
mean, Jereboam, but I'm not keen on the
word "extreme". It strikes me as rather
subjective.

Jereboam: You're quite right. I'm
sorry: I shouldn't be telling people what to
think.

Michael: I do know what you
mean, though: I follow some of Jesus'
teaching more literally than many others
do – particularly the call to sell all our
possessions and give the money to the
poor.

Jereboam: ...which you've done.
Michael: Yes, I did that a few years ago
now. I live from one day to the next,
earning just enough to feed and clothe
myself.

Jereboam: That's all very well, but
what if you don't find work every day, or
you're ill or something?

Michael: I belong to a group of
friends who all follow this way of life. We
support each other, and somehow we
always manage to earn enough to survive.

Jereboam: But you keep nothing in
reserve, in case of emergency?

Michael: No: as Jesus said, God
provides food for the birds, so why should
he not care for us too? For God there
need be no emergency.

Jereboam: And you manage to survive like that?

Michael: Apparently so...

Jereboam: Let me be honest: I really admire you, but – correct me if I'm wrong – you don't have a wife or children to support, do you? You couldn't expect everyone to follow these principles so strictly.

Michael: No, you're right. Parents and married people generally have to find a practical way of fulfilling their responsibilities, whilst still respecting the spirit of Jesus' teaching. Incidentally, that pretty well sums up why we honour the single life just as much as the calling to a married life.

Jereboam: I suppose that what Jesus really meant is that people shouldn't become too attached to their possessions and should be generous with what they have.

Michael: Well...I'm not sure. Jesus could perfectly well have said that if he'd wanted to, but he didn't. He told people to sell their possessions and give the money to the poor. I'd prefer not to alter his words, if you don't mind. It's surely better to remember what he actually said, and then allow people to judge for themselves how far they can adapt their lives to his teaching.

Jereboam: Fair enough...

Thought for the Week

"The Lord does not look so much at the magnitude of anything we do as at the love with which we do it."
St Teresa of Avila

This Week

Today's Gospel tells the story of the rich 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.

On Friday we remember Saint Teresa of Avila, mystic and a noted reformer of the religious life

We begin reading St Paul's letter to the Romans for our first reading at the Eucharist this week. Paul writes to the Christian community in Rome about God's righteousness (mercy or kindness) and justification (making us holy or one with God) which comes to us, not through the law but through faith in Jesus.

Each day this week we hear from St Luke's **gospel** how people gather around Jesus. He declines to give a sign other than the sign of Jonah. At a Pharisee's house Jesus calls for authenticity: "give alms and everything will be clean for you." He challenges the religious practices of the Pharisees which miss the heart of fidelity to God and mercy toward others. Jesus tries to get them to see that, while they honour the prophets, they are no better than their ancestors who ignored and killed them. Instead of hearing him, the religious leaders plot to trap Jesus. Warning his disciples about imitating religious hypocrisy, Jesus tells them not to be afraid, even of death, but to only fear losing their souls.

Next Sunday's Gospel tells the story about two of Jesus' closest friends, the brothers James and John, who want seats of honour in "the Kingdom" they envisage Jesus bringing into being.. We can almost see Jesus shake his head in dismay that they could have missed his point so badly once again. He does not let his disciples get sidetracked into jealousy but calls them together again to give them his message: "Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

A Reflection for Trinity 19

+ Today's Gospel is one of those passages which explain to us the reason we have a Gospel reading at the Eucharist. They are not just excerpts from a kind of biography of Jesus Christ, read to us so that we are familiar with the story. We have a Gospel reading in order to challenge us, to put us on the spot. The words of the Lord challenge us; they demand a response.

The rich man in today's Gospel – in St Matthew's account he is described as a rich young man, St Luke calls him a ruler - is in many ways a first century Jewish role model; he is well-informed and well-instructed in his faith tradition; he takes it extremely seriously, almost more seriously than anything else. When Jesus reminds him of the centrality of the Ten Commandments to living a good life, without a hint that he is being boastful, he simply replies as a matter of fact that he has always kept them. And we are told that Jesus sums him up with a glance and that he loves him; in other words, he believes he is, as he says to another questioner, not far from the kingdom of God. He is impressed by his integrity and his basic goodness.

But Our Lord then goes one step further - as he does - and he says, "There is one thing you lack." And here comes the bolt from the blue: "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor. And you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

In other words, Jesus is saying to us that being conventionally good isn't quite enough to be his disciple. In fact, as we know from the people Jesus does call to his side, one doesn't have to be good in the first place to be called. And I suppose that's quite a relief to all of us!

There is something much more basic even goodness, without which we can't even begin the journey of faith to the kingdom of heaven. And it's the rejection of self-sufficiency, it's a recognition that we don't have everything we need - riches of all kinds, monetary, intellectual, emotional, spiritual. And that there's always something which can act as an obstacle to the call to an ever deeper and more authentic discipleship.

In the case of the man in today's Gospel, it's his great wealth which is the barrier. O.K., he's not a modern global plutocrat, distorting the world's economy, subverting democracy, and telling us how wonderful his charitable contributions are – in fact, today's Gospel is telling us that even they are open to conversion - but his riches do make him unwilling to open his life more fully to God. That's *his* particular stumbling block, and it's a big one. So that's the Word Jesus addresses to each one of us today - the kind of challenge that is intended to put us on the spot.

Like the young man, we can be as good as it is possible to be, but if we think there is nothing more that we need, nothing that comes from outside us, then Christ is effectively left outside, and the doors locked and bolted - from the inside. We shut him out.

If I say that God isn't primarily a God of commandments, I don't mean that good conduct, doing the right thing, isn't important, only that we are in danger of putting the cart before the horse. God is love, a love that is unconditional, overflowing into our world from the three persons of the Trinity. That love we recall here week by week, day by day, as we offer the Eucharist, as we recognise that the life we receive comes from the death and resurrection of the one who cannot hold back his love, who gives himself up for the life of the world.

But from our point of view, it's difficult to admit our need - it humbles us, it takes away the contemporary myth that I stand at the centre of my own world and that I am responsible for my own happiness. And if I do have to rely on someone or something outside me for my happiness and fulfilment, I have to recognise that I may, in fact, never be happy and fulfilled, and then all the angsty demons of modern life crowd in on me undermining my sense of self and my place in the scheme of things. The road back to Eden is barred by sentries holding flaming torches.

But once admit the possibility of an all-loving God, a God who takes risks to restore us to knowing his love, and sharing his life, then all our preconceptions crumble away and fall to the ground. The God who reigns from the cross appeals to us to start from this acknowledgement of our need for his love and to start to live from this point, he appeals to us to recognise that love freely given and freely returned is at the heart of the way the universe is.

And the central issue of faith, of life itself, becomes not so much a matter of ethics or commandments even, but of the service of the Lord who draws us on towards the new life of the Resurrection. In the case of the man in the Gospel, maybe Christ is the divine highwayman who demands of us "Your money or your life!"

And then comes the real point of today's Gospel; an existential question, like all the

questions Jesus aims at us. What does that mean for us? What's our obstacle? What are we going to do about it? We are the rich man. Do we ask Christ to help us change the direction of our lives, to take away our pride and our prickly self-sufficiency, even at the risk of being taken where we would rather not go? Or should we say to him, "No, it's all a bit risky, I'll stay as I am, thank you." The man went away, shocked and grieving, St Mark tells us. But he went away just the same. What about us? +

Saint of the Week

15th October

St Teresa of Avila

Today we celebrate the feast day of a remarkable woman, who lived in a time of great change and upheaval and during her life was misunderstood, misjudged and opposed. Born in Spain in 1515, probably of Jewish ancestry, she was challenged as to whether her vocation lay as a married woman or in the religious life, she chose the latter as she felt that as she was prone to sin it was the safest place for her, and she chose to live her life in a Carmelite convent. In her life in the convent she fell desperately ill with malaria, to the point that a grave had been dug for her. She recovered, although she was paralysed for three years and was never completely well again. She used her illness as an excuse not to pray, but a priest encouraged her to return to prayer. This was something that Teresa did over a period of time and from her writings we have a lovely description of prayer that feels very fresh and relevant to our lives today: "prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us". Her writings, the Interior Castle and the Way of Perfection show her life as a mystic and the development of her understanding of God's love for us. Teresa believed in obedience to God over penance, for her if you do something wrong, you should not punish yourself but change. Aged 43 she became determined to found a new convent and reform the Carmelite order, bringing it back to a life of prayer and poverty. She faced many difficulties and challenges in her work of

reform, but her determination helped her to succeed. A favourite story about St Teresa illustrates the intimate relationship that the saints have with God. When she was on one of her innumerable journeys across Spain, her horse threw her as she was crossing a river. Soaked to the skin she looked up to heaven and said, "*If this is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few of them!*" We should bring everything to God in our prayers, even our reproaches. For a reproach, in the end, is simply our way of offering up to God our incomprehension of what he is giving us.

Merciful God, who by your Spirit raised up your servant Teresa of Avila to reveal to your Church the way of perfection: grant that her teaching may awaken in us a longing for holiness, until we attain to the perfect union of love in 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**