

PARISH NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is now during the day both for worship and private prayer, Again, we stress there is no obligation while Covid-19 infection rates remain high to attend in person, and that your own safety and health & those of others must remain paramount.

There is now no legal obligation to wear masks in church, but please do so if you wish. If you feel unwell with Covid-like symptoms, or have tested positive, please take part in our church services online rather than attend in person.

Our live-streamed 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

1st May 2022
The Third Sunday
of Easter

The Collect

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; 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

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' [9; 1 - 6]

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

Psalm 30 1 - 5, 12 - 13

**R/ I will exalt you, O Lord,
because you have lifted me up**

I will exalt you, O Lord, because you have raised me up and have not let my foes triumph over me. O Lord my God, I cried out to you and you have healed me. You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead; you restored me to life from among those that go down to the Pit.

**R/ I will exalt you, O Lord,
because you have lifted me up**

Sing to the Lord, you servants of his; give thanks to his holy name. For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, his favour for a lifetime.

**R/ I will exalt you, O Lord,
because you have lifted me up**

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing; O Lord my God, I will give you thanks for ever.

**R/ I will exalt you, O Lord,
because you have lifted me up**

A reading from the Revelation to St John [5; 11 - 14]

I, John, looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!' Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, 'To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!' And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' And the elders fell down and worshipped.

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

Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ has risen; he who created all things,
And has granted his mercy to men.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you.

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John. [21, 1 - 19]

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in

because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God. After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

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

That we may rejoice in the glorious resurrection of Christ our Lord
 The people of Ukraine.
 The peace of the world
 For those standing in the local elections on Thursday and all voters
 Those killed and injured in Ukraine
 Those without adequate food and shelter
 For all migrants, refugees, and all forced to flee from their homelands
 Those who care for the environment and the natural world
 Those here and throughout the world who continue to suffer from the Coronavirus pandemic - for doctors, nurses and all medical staff, all carers, medical scientists and researchers.
 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; Marion Webster; Lorna; Michael; Judith; Lisa; Carole Bates; John Metivier, priest; David Nicholson, priest.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time.
 Jonathan; Isabelle Ingledew; Rose Jones; Harvey Banks; Partick Semple, priest

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.

Our thanks to the Parish of St Catharine's Chipping Campden & to the author for permission to reproduce 'Jereboam'

Isaiah

Jereboam: Good morning, Isaiah. Do you know anything about this story of the 153 fish? Correct me if I'm wrong, but it sounds as if some of the apostles had had a bad night's fishing, then they saw the risen Jesus, who gave them some advice, and suddenly they came up with a great haul of fish.

Isaiah: Well, that's more or less the whole story, as I understand it. I might be getting confused, though: there was a similar event a few years ago, when Jesus was just beginning his ministry, but I think this one's different.

Jereboam: Look, Isaiah, forgive my cynicism, but there's something I find slightly uncomfortable about this story – or at least about some of its possible implications. Would you, as a follower of Jesus, really want to give over every decision to him? There's a suggestion that Jesus seems to sort out every problem effortlessly – for me it all seems a bit too easy, a bit unreal. Do you know what I mean?

Isaiah: Actually, I do know exactly what you mean. I went through a phase of thinking that everything would be easy just because I believed in Jesus. I was really just going round in a dream. What's more, I'd detached myself from some fundamental aspects of life, or of my rôle in life anyway -- I'd shirked responsibility.

Jereboam: But you're supposed to trust in Jesus, aren't you?

Isaiah: Of course. What helped me was to observe some of the members of the Church. They spend so long praying, and I wondered why...or even how they managed it. After all, if you say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," in one sense there isn't that

much more to say. However, these members of the Church told me that an important aspect of their prayer was to try to integrate all aspects of themselves into Jesus – to align themselves as completely as possible with God and with his teaching, as passed on to us by Jesus and by his Church. And when I say completely, I mean physically, socially, intellectually, spiritually...everything.

Jereboam: Still that could just mean trying to choke off any sides of yourself that don't happen to fit the pattern. Isn't that too simplistic?

Isaiah: Maybe I should have put it differently: we're trying to allow every aspect of our lives to be illuminated by God. That's actually a difficult and ongoing challenge....which is what you wanted, isn't it? You don't like the easy stuff!

Jereboam: That's right – there's nothing like a good struggle, if you ask me.

Isaiah: Sounds like you're the perfect man to give this a try.

Jereboam: I'll think about it.
Thanks, Isaiah.

Thought for the Week

"Receive every day as a resurrection from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every rising sun with such sentiments of God's goodness, as if you had seen it, and all things, new-created upon your account: and under the sense of so great a blessing, let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator."

William Law: 'A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life'

This Week

After the events of Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday, Peter longs to return to his old life. "I am going fishing," he says. In a scene reminiscent of the original call of Peter, Jesus appears to the group after a futile night of fishing but is unrecognized by his followers. He calls out to Peter in the boat and tells him where to drop his fishing nets. The fish overflow the nets and they suddenly recognize him: "It is the Lord!" Jesus cooks them breakfast and asks Peter three times if he loves him. Peter, puzzled,

affirms three times that he loves Jesus – just as he denied him three times during the Passion. "Feed my sheep," Jesus says to him.

Monday is the feast day of Saint Athanasius Bishop and Doctor of the Church. Tuesday is the Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles.

The first readings at the Eucharist are from the Acts of the Apostles this week, we hear about of Stephen, the first of the martyrs, and of Philip converting an Ethiopian slave along the road. Next is the story of Saul, persecutor of Christians being blinded and then healed by Ananias in the name of Jesus. The week ends with Peter traveling the region and healing. The gospels for this week are from Chapter 6 of St John's Gospel on Jesus as the "Bread of Life." Like so many stories in this gospel, Jesus teaches from one layer of understanding to another, taking us deeper into understanding his gift of himself to us in the Eucharist. Jesus says, "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life." "The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." "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." "Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood remains in me and I in him." This marvelous dialogue ends with this exchange with his disciples: "Jesus then said to the Twelve, 'Do you also want to leave?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.'"

Next Sunday: Jesus offers comfort to those who follow him: "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

A Homily for The Third Sunday of Easter

+ Easter is a above all a season of movement and mystery. We see it in the Gospels in the appearances of the Risen Lord to his Apostles and disciples. It's a season of fire, water, and light, all the

elements we witnessed at the Easter Vigil are there in the story of Christ rising from the tomb.

The liturgy always starts the season of Easter with a fire. A real fire lit outside our churches, and from it the flame of the Easter Candle was kindled and the new life - the light - of the Resurrection was proclaimed. The love of God shown to us on the cross triumphs over the forces of darkness, hatred, destruction, and death. As we say, Christ is Risen!

So here in the Gospel this morning we hear a story about a breakfast on the beach. A charcoal fire - a barbecue we might call it – on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

The Gospel today is a return to the source of everything. The apostles had gone back home and taken up their former occupations again. Whether they needed to find something to do while they were obeying Jesus' command to wait for him in Galilee or whether they had returned to their former occupation out of the need to keep the wolf from the door, or out of disillusionment, we don't really know. Whatever was their reason, they have started to pick up the pieces of their old lives.

The Risen Christ also is going back to the beginning where he met his disciples for the first time. Then he was a stranger who appeared from out of nowhere, and called them to follow him. Now, he appears to them as a stranger once more; he comes back and calls them to be his disciples again, this time in the light of the resurrection.

The apostles, fishermen again, spend all night working but they catch absolutely nothing until Jesus appears to them on the shore. Children, you haven't caught anything, have you? he shouts to them, and already there is a sense of adventure, something is about to happen. The Risen Lord is far more awake than they are.

"Throw out the net on the other side and you'll find something!" From the result, the net full to bursting point, he also seems to be a better fisherman than they are. And now the Lord who the night before his death invited them to eat an evening meal with him, now invites them to "Come and have breakfast." A charcoal fire is there on the beach with bread and fish on it. They recognise Jesus now. And, of course, for St John this points to the Eucharist, this is how the apostles and disciples will

recognise him and meet him again and again after he goes from them. This is how we meet him now - what we do isn't about churchgoing, but about being made partakers of the divine nature, as Peter himself writes.

But there are important loose ends to be tied up. On the night of what we call the first Maundy Thursday going into Good Friday, St John's Gospel shows us Peter warming himself by the side of a fire in the darkness of the High Priest's courtyard in Jerusalem and in his fear and panic denying his Master three times as the cock crows to announce the coming dawn and the impending crucifixion. And as we heard, today's Gospel transports us to the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where in the light of the rising sun another charcoal fire is burning this time with fish cooking on it. And here we see the link made explicit between those two fires of Holy Week and Easter. We are being told that the fire on the beach is the reversal of what happened around the fire in the city courtyard of the High Priest. So, in the Gospel today, after they had eaten, the Lord turns to Peter and asks him three times whether he loves him. And Peter's three denials of Christ, are swept away by his three-fold declaration of love and obedience to the Lord who forgives him and gives him a job to do. He doesn't say that's fine go back to what you were doing before. He says, go and feed my sheep. None of us are forgiven and welcomed by Christ and then forgotten about; life doesn't go on as before - we are always given something to do. We have to listen - really listen - in order to discover what that is.

In some respects, we are fall away, or at least we stumble from time to time, our faith can go through periods of intense struggle and darkness. We don't always know why, sometimes it can come out of a clear blue sky, sometimes - to be autobiographical for a moment - it can be triggered by stress or the sheer autorotation of life, or by grief and bereavement, sometimes by the unkind or unthinking words actions or harsh judgements of others - and we're all guilty of that! As we can see from the Apostles - those called by Christ himself - it's no respecter of persons or of occupations. Suddenly the things which used to fit so neatly together, don't fit any longer and we

become Peter in the High Priest's courtyard.

Those words of Jesus to Peter at the breakfast on the beach are addressed to all of us - to each one of us - we none of us know what life will throw at us - what we will have to go through in one way or another in terms of joys and sorrows, in terms of struggle and suffering, betrayals or paralysing fear, however much we try to hide it or play it down or laugh it off. But as with Peter himself, there is a sense in which none of this - in the perspective of the Resurrection - ultimately matters. Because Christ lives, the suffering, our struggles, our pain or even our defeats and failures, don't define us or diminish us, for we know that Christ has already won the struggle against alienation and death on our behalf and that his mercy and forgiveness are never withheld. In the Church we are an Easter people, formed and renewed by the Lord's mercy and forgiveness. The Church, the faith itself, is meant to be a place for those who know they have been wounded, for those who have stumbled and been helped to their feet. Perhaps in our increasingly harsh and finger-pointing society, it partly helps to explain why the faith of the Church struggles to find a hearing against the loud, siren voices of division and anger and egotistical self-fulfilment. Patience, gentleness, mercy, and forgiveness are in short supply, it seems, wherever we care to look. But we can take immense encouragement and courage, from the fact that they are always in fashion where it really matters - at the heart of the life of God who reaches out to us to share that life - that Resurrection life - that new beginning - with us all. +

Services in the Group for the Third Sunday of Easter

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
Hymns (New English Hymnal) 117; 121; 296; 106

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Penterry

4 p.m. Family Service at Devauden

A Prayer for Ukraine

written by Ukrainain Christians

O Lord our God, look down with mercy on the Ukrainian people. Protect and save them from the unjust aggressors who seek to subdue them. Grant them steadfast trust in your mercy and protection.

O Mother of God, who gave us your miraculous icon at Zarvanytsia, intercede for the Ukrainian people, who run to the shelter of your mercy in their times of need.

O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Grant peace and protection to the people of Ukraine. Give them strength and courage to defend what is good, right, and holy. Keep them safe from harm and provide for all their needs, both temporal and spiritual. Hear our prayers, O Lord, and deliver us from distress, for You are merciful and compassionate and love mankind. To you we give glory: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Upcycling Warehouse in Chepstow (opposite Chepstow Railway Station) is collecting refugee relief goods for Ukraine.

***National Garden Scheme
Gardens Open For Charity***

**Park House,
School Lane, Itton**

**Saturday 7th May
10 a.m. – 7 p.m.**

Adults £5 Children free

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**

SEVERN WYE MINISTRY AREA

PRAYING TOGETHER

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."

JAMES 5:16

Praying Together for our Ministry Area and our local communities

**THE 2nd AND 4th MONDAY
OF EVERY MONTH
7.30 TO 8.30 PM
St Christopher's Church,
Bulwark, Chepstow**