

# 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 All our Holy Weeek and Easter services will be live-streamed.

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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## 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022 EASTER SUNDAY

### The Collect

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. **AMEN**

### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter began to speak to those assembled in the house of Cornelius: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

[10; 34; 37 - 43]

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

### Psalm 118. 1–2, 14–24

**R Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**  
**This is the day the Lord has made.**

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever.

Let Israel now proclaim,  
'His mercy endures for ever.'

**R**

The Lord is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.

There is a sound of exultation and victory  
in the tents of the righteous:

'The right hand of the Lord has triumphed!  
the right hand of the Lord is exalted!

the right hand of the Lord has triumphed!

**R**

I shall not die, but live,  
and declare the works of the Lord.

The Lord has punished me sorely,  
but he did not hand me over to death.

Open for me the gates of righteousness;  
I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the Lord.

**R**

'This is the gate of the Lord;  
whoever is righteous may enter.'

I will give thanks to you, for you answered me

and have become my salvation.

The same stone which the builders rejected

has become the chief corner-stone.

**R**

This is the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvellous in our eyes.

On this day the Lord has acted;  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

**R**

### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians [3; 1 - 4]

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

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

### **Gradual Hymn**

### **Gospel acclamation:**

Alleluia, alleluia, (Alleluia)

I am the first and the last, says the Lord,  
and the living one;

I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

**Alleluia, alleluia, (alleluia)**

The Lord be with you:

**And also with you**

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John.** [20, 1 - 9]

**R/ Glory to you, O Lord.**

**E**arly on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

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  
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; Sheena; Carole Bates; John Metivier, priest; David Nicholson, priest.

**For the Departed:**

The recently departed; for Robert Bowyer; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: John Watson; Craig Octon; Matthew Hoskins; Keith Jones, 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.*

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

**Gardener, Sharon & Esther**

**Gardener:** 'Morning.  
**Jereboam:** Lovely day, isn't it?

**Gardener:** Makes you glad to be alive, a morning like this...

**Jereboam:** Oh, yes. I tell you what: we could do with some good weather, after all the terrible goings-on of the last few days. What with...Look, would you excuse me, I've just seen that woman over there. She's a friend of mine, and she looks rather upset. I ought to go and check she's all right.

**Gardener:** Of course; you do what you need to do. It was good to meet you.

**Jereboam:** Sharon, are you all right? I imagine you're still upset about Jesus.

**Sharon:** It's even worse than we thought. Jereboam, someone's stolen his body.

**Jereboam:** They've what?

**Sharon:** Exactly what I say. I went to the tomb where they laid his body on the eve of the Sabbath. Someone has rolled away the boulder that was covering the entrance, they've unwrapped his body and removed it. After all we've been through! You wouldn't imagine that people could stoop so low.

**Jereboam:** I must say, that's really awful. I feel quite shaken myself, and I wasn't even one of his followers. People like you must be...

**Esther:** Sharon! Sharon!

**Sharon:** Oh, Esther, have you heard about Jesus? His body's been...

**Esther:** No, he's alive!

**Sharon:** What?

**Esther:** Mary's just seen him.

She started off thinking he was the gardener, but it was Jesus. He's alive!

**Sharon:** But he's dead - I was there when they took his body down from the cross. Mary's making a mistake: she's just too upset to think straight.

**Esther:** She's not upset; she's...she's radiant. There's no question about it: he's alive.

**Jereboam:** Excuse me, but did you say that Mary had thought Jesus was the gardener?

**Esther:** Yes. They were talking for quite a while about this and that. At first she just didn't recognise him, didn't realise what had happened. Mind you, it's understandable. Things like that don't exactly happen every day, do they?

**Jereboam:** No, I suppose not. As a matter of fact I rather think I've just seen him myself, except I didn't notice who he was either. I can't believe I was so stupid:

he was with me and I didn't realise it!  
Come on; let's see if we can find him. He  
was over here...

### Thought for the Week

"Jesus's resurrection makes it  
impossible for the human story to end  
in chaos - it has to move inexorably  
towards light, towards life,  
towards love"

. - Carlo Carretto -

### This Week

On Easter Sunday, we read from the Acts of the Apostles to hear Peter's preaching about the Resurrection. The Letter to the Colossians reminds us "You have died and your lives are hidden with Christ in God." The gospel is from John's Gospel and gives us the first story of that Easter morning - Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and runs to Peter and the "disciple Jesus loved" to tell them. They run to the tomb and discover for themselves that it is empty.

The first readings for Easter Week are from the Acts of the Apostles. We hear Peter's preaching the Good News and experience the first deeds of the Apostles, which parallel the acts of Jesus, including the conflicts he experienced and his power to heal.

The gospels this week are all resurrection appearances. These wonderful stories contain some common elements. They appear designed to make it clear that this was not a group of disciples who dreamed up the resurrection, because they were hoping for it so much. In fact, they found it difficult to believe. The Jesus they saw and experienced was not a "ghost." Instead, he had a body.

Monday, is the story of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, as well as the "cover-up story" and pay off of the guards. Tuesday, we read of Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene, through the eyes of John's Gospel. Jesus missions her to announce the Good News to his brothers. On Wednesday we are treated to Luke's marvelous story of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were sad, because they had hoped the story would have turned out differently. Jesus tells them

why he had to first suffer and die in order to enter into his glory. As they stopped to eat, "he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread." Thursday Jesus appears in the room where the disciples are gathered. "Peace be with you" he says and then eats with them and shows them his wounds. On Friday, we have the powerful appearance in John's Gospel at the Sea of Tiberias. Peter decided to return to fishing. Jesus appears and re-missions him. On Saturday, the week concludes with the summary of appearances in what appears to be an addition to the end of Mark's Gospel.

**Next Sunday**, the Second Sunday of Easter, we get a picture of how the early community gathered around as "Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles." St John's Gospel gives us two post-resurrection stories that feature Thomas, the doubting apostle. "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

### A Homily for Easter Sunday

+ St John's Gospel begins his account of the Resurrection with Mary Magdalene visiting Jesus' tomb in the early hours of the morning while it was still dark. Why was she there? John doesn't tell us but St Matthew does say that 'Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb', but it's the other two Gospels, St Mark and St Luke who give us the detail that the two women were there to anoint the body of Jesus, this being the first opportunity they would have had, the Sabbath now being over.

Of course this visit to the garden wasn't just a matter of curiosity but an act of love. Mary Magdalene, along with Mary the Lord's Mother and John and a few others were there by the foot of the cross when Jesus died; they would have been there, too, when he was taken down from the cross and then laid to rest in the garden tomb. Her love for Jesus was such that she was no act of mere curiosity, but an act of love. Mary's love for Jesus, her faith and discipleship was such that she tries to serve him now even in death by coming to embalm his body in the tomb.

It's a natural human instinct - the same one which leads us today to pray for those we have loved who have died, but also to give them the best and most reverent burial or funeral we can. One of the most difficult aspects of the pandemic was that grieving relatives and friends - with no choice, unlike some, but to obey the legal restrictions, found themselves unable to do that, and to be present to affirm that we believe that our love is stronger and will survive even death itself.

So Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb not just to pay her respects but to perform a final act of love and devotion for her Lord who is now dead. But when she gets there she is confronted by the mysterious truth which stands at the very centre of our faith - that he was not there, he is risen. The tomb was empty.

And she doesn't know what it means - she runs and finds Peter and John and says to them: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." She obviously believes that his enemies have carried out one last act of violence and revenge, and it is only when Peter and John themselves go and discover the tomb to be indeed empty and the body of the Lord, not stolen, but risen, that things start to fall into place and make sense.

Mary herself will meet the risen Christ in the garden, thinking at first that he is the gardener; it's only when he calls her by name that she truly understands.

She comes to the garden early in the morning to anoint his body in death and instead finds that his body is no longer there.

As the priest George Herbert wrote in his great Easter poem:

*I got me flowers to strew thy way ;  
I got me boughs off many a tree :  
But thou wast up by break of day,  
And brought'st thy sweets along*

*with thee.*

However early Mary is up and about, the Lord has already risen; he is up before us. He always is. We don't find him, he finds us.

The loving service that Mary Magdalene intends to offer to the dead body of Christ leads to a discovery which will change the world.

The Lord was not there. The Lamb once slain now lives for ever.

Now, like Mary Magdalene, like the Apostles and all those who encountered

the Risen Lord we, too, are called to tell of our own meeting with him, to tell that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son who died on the Cross and was buried in the tomb, and that that could not hold him and was empty on the morning of the third day. He is not there, he is risen, alleluia!

## Services in the Group For Easter Sunday

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Devauden  
10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans  
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Itton  
3.30 p.m. Evening Prayer at Kilgwrrwg

**Our thanks** to all those who have decorated our churches so beautifully for Easter, and to those who have contributed in any way to the liturgies of Holy week and the Easter Triduum.

**Fr Michael will be off duty** this week after Sunday evening.

## 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**

## 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.**

In connection with this, Emma Low from St Arvans is collecting items to be sent to the borders of Ukraine to assist those fleeing from the violence of the Russian invasion.

They are now in need of **first aid items and dried food (well withinin sell-by date, please)**

**There is a box at the back of St Arvans Church for those who wish to donate.**