

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

22nd May 2022
The Sixth Sunday
of Easter

The Collect

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; 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

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us.

[16; 9-15]

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

Psalm 67

R/ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, That your way may be known upon

earth, your saving power among all nations.

R/ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

O let the nations rejoice and be glad, for you will judge the peoples righteously and govern the nations upon earth.

R/ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, and God, our own God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

R/ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

A reading from the Revelation to St John [21; 10, 22 - 22.5]

In the spirit the angel carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

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

Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus said: ' if anyone loves me he will keep my word,

and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him.

Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:

And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John. [14, 23-29]

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples:

Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.'

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

On this Rogation Sunday we pray for the well-being of the earth and everything which lives on it.

Farmers and all who work on the land; all who care for the natural world and its creatures.

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 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; Lisa; Carole Bates; Anne-

Louise; John Metivier, priest;

David Nicholson, priest.

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Maurice (Mike)

Menage; Judith Lee; our own departed

relatives & friends, & those whose

anniversaries of death fall at this time.

Rhian Hatcher; Karl Lodwick; Peter Cobb,

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'

Sharon

Jereboam: Sharon, you told me a few months ago about how you help married couples.

Sharon: Not just married couples: I try to help all sorts of people to interact happily with each other.

Jereboam: Can you clear up one point that bothers me, please? Didn't Jesus tell his followers that, if they loved him and kept his commandments, God would love them in turn and would send his Spirit to comfort them?

Sharon: That's right.

Jereboam: Well, I know you're a follower of Jesus and I don't mean to be rude, but aren't you trying to do the Spirit's work? I mean, shouldn't people be spending their time praying instead of listening to your advice?

Sharon: Of course they need to pray. And you're right: if they love Jesus and keep his commandments, God will send his comforting Spirit to guide and watch over them. I just encourage people to be as receptive as possible to that Spirit.

Jereboam: I see...There's another thing too, though. Lots of people have got on very well together without believing in Jesus -- people before Jesus' time, for a start. Didn't any of them receive God's Spirit?

Sharon: Don't forget that Christ has existed from the beginning of time. Recently, as we all know, he became a man and lived amongst us, but he was with God from the very beginning. To me the Spirit cannot exist without Jesus. God the Father, Jesus and the Spirit: they're permanently and inextricably linked together. So I suppose someone who has received the Spirit of God must have been open to Jesus' influence, even if they

didn't realise it.

Jereboam: But surely you either believe in Jesus or you don't...

Sharon: "Belief" can be a difficult word for some people. They don't trust their faith enough to describe it like that. But if we think of being open to Jesus, to God, to the Holy Spirit, that idea somehow doesn't demand such a feeling of confidence. Some people feel happier with that. And others might be open to these influences even without understanding them in our terms. That probably sounds quite rude, but I don't mean it that way.

Jereboam: Don't worry, Sharon...but doesn't conscious belief in Jesus matter to you at all?

Sharon: Of course it does. It's fundamental to me. I think that everyone should develop their faith as much as possible, and so, as a follower of Jesus, I try to honour and glorify him to the best of my ability. All the same, I'm keen not to pass too many judgements on others.

Jereboam: Of course not. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us.

Thought for the Week

"This world is not just a gift from God; it is a challenge for humanity. We have at last come to learn the truth that we have mistreated the natural environment and its resources. The consequences are plain and painful. They are evident in the air that we breathe, the water that we drink, the food that we consume, the emotional and physical problems that we face in our health, but also in our relationships with each other on the local, regional, national and global levels.'

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

This Week

This Sunday is Rogation Sunday, when prayers are traditionally offered for the land and all who work on it, and for the good stewardship of the earth and all its creatures. St John's Gospel offers us comfort and peace in a very direct way. Jesus says "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid."

The Easter season readings from the Acts

of the Apostles continue this week. We read of Paul converting a wealthy cloth trader, Lydia; of the dramatic conversion and baptism of the jailer and his family; Paul's bold speech to the crowd at the Areopagus and his fearless preaching in Corinth, despite the growing threat from the Jews. We also see how followers of Paul catch the fire of his faith and now begin to convert others.

In St John's Gospel this week, we realise we are approaching Pentecost in a few weeks time as Jesus begins to speak of his leaving the earth and of the coming of the "Advocate" - the Spirit of Truth. The image of the Trinity is clear: "when the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father..." To his disciples, the idea of his leaving fills their hearts with grief but Jesus reassures them, "it is better for you that I go" so that the Spirit can come to them. The Spirit "will guide you to all truth." Jesus promises, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, while the world rejoices; you will grieve, but your grief will become joy."

"This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." "Whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you."

Next Sunday we celebrate The Ascension of the Lord. The readings begin with the story from the Acts of the Apostles of Jesus leaving his disciples and promising them the support of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of St Luke tells of Jesus as he led his disciples out "as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven."

A Homily for The Sixth Sunday of Easter

In the Gospel today, Jesus says: *Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*

The idea of "home" can mean different things to different people. For the very young it *should* be a place of complete security, and the possibility of growth and development, for young people home is somewhere to start out from, even to rebel against; as we get older perhaps it is a place to build or to come back to, to revisit even if it's only in our memories or imaginations, although nostalgia is a very

dangerous thing in which to lose ourselves.

These days, of course, We are told that there are young adults who not only are contented at home but can't be persuaded by their parents to want to leave at all; and now increasingly due to economic pressures such as ever higher house prices they tell us there are those who can't afford to leave home at all.

And we should never forget that there are those who because of abuse or incompatibility find home anything but a place of happiness and security who can't wait to get out and never want to go back. And, of course, there are people who have had a good home and are happy to leave it for the adventure of starting off being on their own. There are those who have never really had a home and are always looking for one, perhaps without realising it. There are those too who go through life always searching to recover a sense of something lost which perhaps they feel is beyond recovery,

So the concept of home can be highly ambiguous; its a place where we can be happiest and potentially the most unhappy. In human experience, it can be a place of total acceptance but it can also be place of danger, conflict and betrayal. The Church is meant to be a home for the whole human family. It's one of the meanings and implications of that word "Catholic" which we say Sunday by Sunday in the Nicene Creed. The Church is our home and it's where we should encounter the Risen Lord and begin to find our ultimate and final home in God. If it isn't a place where we can find a home, and be at home and be able to welcome others into it, it can only be an institution, which is somewhere where no one can be truly at home, but only somewhere we can be abused or bullied, crushed, or ignored. The Church is meant to be the house of God, but like any other home it can be the scene of controversy and argument. Last week we heard the outcome of an argument in the Acts of the Apostles. Some traditional Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem to tell the recent converts at Antioch, who hadn't ever been Jews: Unless you are circumcised, unless you conform to the dietary requirements of the Law of Moses you cannot be saved. Whereupon disagreement and argument broke out, which was eventually settled in

Jerusalem, in the very first Council of the Christian Church.

It's a mistake to think that the household of the faithful must be immune from controversy. A family where people never disagreed about anything would be incredibly dull. A closed club of the like-minded can have nothing to say to the world which Christ has come to redeem. A Church with no disputed questions wouldn't be alive at all. The history of the Church's disagreements, though, to our shame - goes way beyond speaking the truth in love. But debates, disagreements amongst Christians aren't always a sign of ill-will and disloyalty either to Christ himself or to each other. They rather show how alive the gospel is, how it continues to challenge us at every level of our experience, and how the Holy Spirit is still with the Church leading us into all the truth. They can also teach us something about living together in spite of our differences, listening to one another, and being made the stronger because of that. It can teach us another aspect of that word 'catholicity' - of essential unity practised in diversity.

Of course, it depends very much on what the disagreements are about and what implications they may have; but it's when the Church ceases to feel it can be a home, or that it's someone else's home and not ours, that our greatest problems begin, and in many ways the Church then ceases to be what God means it to be. But whatever differences and controversies may break out, the Church of Christ, in whichever of its divided parts we find ourselves, is nevertheless our spiritual home. We are not asking for complete security - outside the heavenly Jerusalem we'll never find that. The only real security is the presence of the Lord himself - and that can mean a fairly uncomfortable, challenging ride. But this must be the place where, as at the Last Supper, the beloved disciple can lean back against the Lord in the confidence of being accepted and loved. It's where we make a home for one another, the place where everyone finds understanding and an open ear.

We sometimes seem obsessed with hierarchies of one kind or another - the Church can be horribly pompous and solemn about the all wrong things from time to time - but in the household of faith, within the Body of Christ, there just isn't

anyone who is more fortunate or privileged in the sight of God, the Holy Trinity. There isn't any benefit here in being wealthier, or fitter, or younger, or more well-balanced, or born with more potential advantages in life, socially or genetically or whatever.

Jesus says,

Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

Even if in this life we are told we have no abiding city, God makes a home for us here in the Eucharist. Each of us can say and mean:

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

The Risen Lord himself comes in to eat with us, and we with him. The Life we receive together around this table gives us a taste of our final home, when we shall be citizens of that city which is lit by the glory of God. +

Services in the Group: The Sixth Sunday of Easter

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
Hymns (New English Hymnal)
237; 493; 351; 263

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with hymns
At St Deiniol's, Itton

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.**

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