

PARISH NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is now open 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

12th June 2022
TRINITY SUNDAY

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; 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 book of Proverbs

Thus says the wisdom of God:

Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live. The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth – when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.'
[8; 1 - 4; 22 - 31]

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

Psalm 8

R/ How exalted is your name in all the earth.

O Lord our governor,
how exalted is your name in all the world!
Out of the mouths of infants and children
your majesty is praised above the heavens.
You have set up a stronghold
against your adversaries,
to quell the enemy and the avenger.

R/ How exalted is your name in all the earth.

When I consider your heavens,

the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars
you have set in their courses,
What are mortals,
that you should be mindful of them?
mere human beings,
that you should seek them out?
You have made them little
lower than the angels;
you adorn them with glory and honour.

R/ How exalted is your name in all the earth.

You give them mastery
over the works of your hands;
and put all things under their feet,
All sheep and oxen,
even the wild beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatsoever walks
in the paths of the sea.
Lord our governor,
how exalted is your name in all the world!

R/ How exalted is your name in all the earth.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [5; 1 - 5]

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

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

Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
The God who is, who was,
and who is to come.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. John. [16: 12 - 15]

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.’

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 show forth in our lives the overflowing love of God the Holy Trinity
The well-being of the earth and everything which lives on it.
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, all medical staff, carers, medical 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; Anne-Louise; Abigail; John Metivier, priest; David Nicholson, priest.

For the Departed:

The recently departed:; Frederick John Davenport; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Caroline Watkins; Nan Jenkins; Doreen Dunn

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'

Leah and Solomon

Jereboam: Congratulations, Leah. Congratulations, Solomon. Is everything going well?

Solomon: Not so badly, thanks, Jereboam. We're a bit tired, but that's to be expected really.

Jereboam: I suppose so. He's a lovely little boy, isn't he? How old is he now?

Leah: He's eight days old. Would you like to hold him for a while?

Jereboam: Well...if you're sure, thank you...This really brings back

memories: I probably haven't held a baby for fifteen years. What a sweet boy... Look, here we are, I'd better give him back to you now.

Solomon: I'll take him: Leah's arms could probably do with a bit of a rest.

Jereboam: Well, he seems to recognise his parents all right. He's obviously very comfortable with both of you. Personally I always think that babies can sense the bond of love between their parents as well. I reckon it gives them an extra feeling of security.

Solomon: I can believe that.

Leah: I didn't realise you were a follower of Jesus, Jereboam.

Jereboam: Strictly speaking, I'm not. What makes you say that?

Leah: You've just neatly described our idea of the Holy Spirit, that's all.

Jereboam: Really?

Leah: Yes: as you know, we worship God the Father and also his Son Jesus. Then there's also the Holy Spirit – the less tangible element that draws us into the loving relationship between God and Jesus. It's a bit like your theory about babies sensing the love between their parents. You've come up with a rather apt metaphor, if you ask me.

Jereboam: Always glad to oblige...

Solomon: You're obviously a natural...you ought to become one of us, you know.

Jereboam: I'll think about it. Anyway, it's lovely to see you all. Best wishes to the whole family.

Leah and Solomon: Thank you.

Thought for the Week

“A Christian receives divine wisdom in three ways: by the commandments, teachings, and faith.

The commandments free the mind from passions. Teachings lead it to true knowledge of nature. Faith leads to the contemplation of the Holy Trinity.”

St Maximus the Confessor

This Week

This Sunday is Trinity Sunday. Here we celebrate the great love God has for us, as Father, as Son, as the Holy Spirit. Monday is the feast day of Saint Anthony of Padua.

The first readings this week continue our readings from 1 & 2 Kings and other Old Testament books. It follows Elijah and Elisha - powerful prophet and agents of God's word for the people.

The gospels this week continue the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew's Gospel. In revealing his new and deeper way, Jesus shares a most counter-cultural law, "offer no resistance to one who is evil." And, he tells us to "Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow." He proclaims, "I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. ... For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?" And, just when we think he is asking the impossible of us, he goes even further, "So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect." He warns his disciples against hypocrisy, "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them." Praying and fasting have their own reward from the Lord. Jesus tells us to keep our prayer simple, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him," and he teaches us the Our Father. Jesus tells us that "The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light." The week ends with his invitation to us to trust in God. "Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?"

Next Sunday we celebrate in our parishes as Corpus Christi, the thanksgiving for Holy Communion. In the great Sacrament of the Eucharist, the central Christian act of worship, the Lord makes himself known to us in the breaking of the bread as he feeds us with his life.

A Homily for Trinity Sunday

+ All the other great Christian doctrines we celebrate during the course of the Church's year are relatively easy to engage with: at least we can see that they're directly connected to the life and mission of Jesus Christ; but many people seem to regard today's feast of the Holy Trinity as something confusing and inexplicable.

Which, of course, it is, and it has to be. What I *mean by that* is that as soon as we begin to think about God, our reason breaks down because we are very clearly out of our depth, our minds, much less our faltering words simply cannot encompass the height, breadth and depth of God. The distance between the omnipotent, ineffable and unknowable God and we his creatures seems immense.

But, of course, that line of argument won't work either. It's the exact opposite of what we celebrate today on the Feast of the Holy Trinity. Yes, our minds simply can't comprehend the immensity of the mystery of God. But we are not kept at an unbridgeable distance from him; more than that he refuses to keep at a distance from us as, through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus, he has taken the whole of humanity into his own three-fold life of love.

But it's vitally important not to present the inner life of God as a form of theological abstraction, lacking any direct relevance to the way we believe and the way we live our lives. And we should start from the perspective that that we are doing today is celebrating the way God has chosen to reveal himself to us, not our own necessarily flawed and faltering attempts to define him and understand him.

Trinity Sunday celebrates the shattering truth that, as St Augustine said, God is more present to us than we are to ourselves; which is why some writers have spoken of God as 'the ground of our being.' There isn't a distant God somehow managing the universe, or the one who set things in motion aeons ago and then disappeared, but only the God who continually seeks to bring the world into his own communion of love, his own eternal friendship.

Our faith really does stand or fall by this message about the closeness of God who is Threefold Love. Maybe that's why the Gospel means "Good News". When we,

as Christians, speak of God as 'Father' we don't - or at least we shouldn't - mean a distant, authority figure, nor the stern, disciplinarian upholder of family tradition and honour of the ancient world, but someone who knows and cares, as Jesus himself says, even for the sparrows; the one who is pictured in Our Lord's parable of the prodigal son rushing towards his child and embracing him and restoring him to life. We are talking about the One Jesus calls "Abba", a word which more or less defies any attempts at translation, but is much more familiar and informal, conveying care, concern and compassion rather than anything human society has come up with. Once again, the faith redefines, or perhaps *should* redefine, our human concepts and turns things upside down

So as Christians we proclaim the Son who comes to save the world, to draw us to him as, entirely helpless, he offers his outstretched arms to us on the cross - not as some kind of vicarious punishment for our sins as some would have it, but in overflowing love and compassion for the suffering of the whole of creation. And we believe there is only this God who does not spare himself in coming to us and thereby freeing us from all the false gods of hierarchy, merit and self-congratulation: we can't save ourselves, we can only freely respond to the love offered to us through the Holy Spirit, the one who is the personal, searching, healing and transforming one, the one who animates and transmits that love, who even searches the hidden depths of God, as St Paul tells us.

And if today we feel uncomfortable about the all this language about God being Trinity, we are meant, I think, to be a little bit uncomfortable, not because we find it totally baffling or because we think it's a way in which theological insiders down the centuries have complicated an essentially simple faith, but because the Holy Trinity throws down a radical challenge to each one of us, and to anyone ever tempted by the thought of a God who keeps himself uncontaminated, distant and aloof from the concerns and the needs of the world he created. If, as we believe, God is in himself, community, solidarity and ceaseless, creative, overflowing love, then that overflowing love is involved in the life, concerns, and needs of the world, not in the sense - as some might have it - of

bringing about suffering, wars, disasters and pandemics, but in freeing, liberating, the energy of the divine love within each one of us so that the world can be transformed and transfigured. It follows that his Church, and those of us who are members of it, are meant to be involved in the world's joys and sorrows, its struggles and its hopes. And that the Church has a duty, a divine command even, to help bring about the conditions in which the Father's Kingdom is brought into being "on earth as it is in heaven." ... *God is love*, the first letter of St John tells us. What has been revealed to us is that God is an unlimited, restless, dynamic energy of love, and the Three Persons who make up the One God are the three aspects in which that love is revealed to us. At its deepest level, love is self-sacrifice: it's a giving of one's self to another. We see this essential expression of God's inner life, his own infinite capacity to give of himself without limit, revealed in human history in the birth, life and death of Jesus, God the Son, who offers himself upon the Cross for the life of the world – to bring about the defeat of the darkness, within and without. We celebrate today the mystery of the God who is love, the Three in One who cannot by his nature do anything other than share his life and his love with us all.

Services in the Group:

Pentecost Sunday

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
Hymns (*New English Hymnal*)
145; 343; 433; 358

11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word 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**