

PARISH NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is 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

E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

17th July 2022
The Fifth Sunday
after Trinity

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 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 Genesis

Moses spoke to the people saying, The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.'

So they said, 'Do as you have said.' And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

They said to him, 'Where is your wife Sarah?' And he said, 'There, in the tent.' Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.' [18. 1-10a]

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

Psalm 15

R/ Those who do what is right will dwell in the presence of the Lord

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle?
Who may rest upon your holy hill?
Whoever leads an uncorrupt life
and does the thing that is right;
Who speaks the truth from the heart
and bears no deceit on the tongue;

R/ Those who do what is right will dwell in the presence of the Lord

Who does no evil to a friend
and pours no scorn on a neighbour;
In whose sight the wicked are not

esteemed, but who honours those who fear the Lord.

R/ Those who do what is right will dwell in the presence of the Lord

Whoever has sworn to a neighbour
and never goes back on that word;
Who does not lend money in hope
of gain, nor takes a bribe against the
innocent; Whoever does these things
shall never fall.

R/ Those who do what is right will dwell in the presence of the Lord

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians [1. 15-28]

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him - provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully

known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia! Open our heart, O Lord,
to accept the words of your Son.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St Luke
Glory to you, O Lord

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.' [St Luke 10. 38-42]

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 spend time in Jesus' presence in prayer and worship and grow in love of God and our neighbour
For integrity and truth in public life
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. John.

For the Departed:

The recently departed; Colin Jenkins; John Rowlands, priest; Liz Evans; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Joan Dryland; David Carmichael; Joan Neal; Stanley Philips David Marshall, Nancy Shepherd.

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'

Gad

Jereboam: Good morning; you must be Gad. I'm Jereboam – Tirzah suggested that I spoke to you.

Gad: Yes. Do come in, Jereboam. I'm delighted to meet you.

Jereboam: Thank you. Tirzah was just explaining to me why she's reduced her active involvement in your Neighbour Group. To be honest, that surprised me. I'm always so impressed with the good work that you all do, looking after people and so on, and I couldn't understand why she wouldn't want to be part of that work. Tirzah said that such an active life had caused her to lose touch with certain aspects of her faith. She didn't quite put it this way, but she reminded me of that story of Jesus with the sisters Martha and Mary. I'm sure you know the story: Jesus commended Mary for concerning herself only with him, and he told Martha not to spend her time worrying so much about little practical things. You must have to deal with these same issues yourself, considering your very active rôle in the group.

Gad: You're right: it's a tricky problem. Jesus said to Martha, if I remember rightly, "few things are needed", and then added, "indeed only one"...I suppose he meant that the only important thing is to serve him. Personally I have to be on my guard and not forget that principle. It's harder than you'd think.

Jereboam: As Tirzah found...

Gad: Clearly there are always going to be practical aspects to all our lives. It's just that I have to include those in my service of Jesus and not let them detract from it. It's like looking at a tree with lots and lots of branches. The challenge is to keep reminding yourself of how they originally stem from the one trunk – from Jesus, in other words.

Jereboam: So you're not saying that there's anything inherently wrong with the branches.

Gad: Not necessarily, no, but they can distract us. So, like Tirzah, I sometimes lose sight of Jesus amidst all

the busy work that we do. The more active you are, the more you run that risk, I suppose. I probably couldn't manage at all without the help of our community. I need the stillness, the contemplation of people like Tirzah to make sense of my activities and to keep me heading in the right direction. Her prayers help me to connect all I do to my life with Jesus.

Jereboam: Thank you, Gad. I'd like to wish the group well with all its work.

Gad: Thank you, Jereboam. I'll tell the others.

Thought for the Week

"Whenever you feel that a little prayer can't do any harm, you will find that it can't do much good either. Prayer is prayer only when we can say that without it, a man or woman could not live."

Henri Nouwen, "With Open Hands"

This Week

Today's readings speak to us about the relationship between prayer and service. In the Genesis story, Abraham generously cares for three strangers who then tell him that his wife, Sarah, will finally have a son. St Luke's gospel recounts the story of Martha and Mary: Martha ran around serving Jesus while Mary sat at his feet listening. "Mary has chosen the better part,"

Friday is the Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene.

The first readings at the Eucharist this week are from the prophet Micah. Later in the week we move on to readings from the prophet Jeremiah, which will continue next week and into the week after.

We continue to hear Gospels from St Matthew's this week. The scribes and Pharisee ask Jesus for a sign to prove his credentials. He says that the only sign will be his death and resurrection. Jesus says to all who follow him: "Here are my mother and my brothers." He tells his disciples the parable of the sower. When asked why he speaks in parables Jesus answers that those who are simple and those with open hearts will hear and understand. Then Jesus explains the parable and the importance of rich soil. Saturday is another "sower" parable with an enemy

planting weeds in a field. "Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning but gather the wheat into my barn."

Next Sunday's readings begin with a reading from the book of Genesis. Abraham pleads for compassion for those few innocent people of Sodom and Gomorrah. God promises him, "For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it." Jesus teaches us to pray in the reading from St Luke's gospel, using the familiar words, "Father, hallowed be your name." He urges us to be persistent in our prayer: "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

A Homily for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

+ The story of Mary and Martha in the Gospel today gives us - in today's world and way of life - an important and timely message. Most of us, I suppose, when all is said and done tend to be more like Martha than Mary. If like me, you're a compulsive worrier, we become anxious and we worry about so many things, our jobs, our families, our finances, the future. There always seems to be so much to do and so little time in which to do it, so much so that we have, unless we try very hard to carve it out and protect it, so little opportunity for the prayer and reflection which alone can keep our everything in our lives in proper perspective. Without the "one thing needful" Jesus speaks about in this morning's Gospel it's all too easy to end up - despite our profession of faith and belief here as we worship - with our relationship with Christ having little influence on the way we actually live. As Jesus himself said in another context "man does not live by bread alone." The obligations of life have to be met, but without the spiritual nourishment which comes to us through prayer, worship and reflection - without the grace of word and sacrament - the deeper realities can fade into the background and *the hope* which is *above all things* the characteristic of a follower of Christ can so easily disappear. Many people who hear the story of Martha and Mary for the first time are a bit perplexed by what seems to be the unfairness of Jesus' judgement. The

practical hostess who extends the hospitality of her household to Jesus and his followers seems to get a raw deal. After all she is only trying to do what she can in the most practical way possible. The obvious frustration which leads to her impatient outburst to Jesus, "*Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself*" is a reaction which in the circumstances is surely not unreasonable! But whatever *our* instinctive reactions might be, it's clear that Jesus takes Mary's side. But why? He seems to be saying that whatever the daily necessities might have been in trying to care for his needs and those of his followers, the immediate demands of the present have distracted Martha from the thing that is most necessary, being in the presence of the one who offers a wholly different kind of nourishment from that offered by practical hospitality, vital though it might be. So what are *we* to make of all this? The fact that this episode comes immediately after the parable of the Good Samaritan in St Luke's telling of the Gospel tends to suggest that Jesus doesn't regard practical service as being of no importance - *in fact he sees it as absolutely central to belief in God* - yet even the Good Samaritan has to take time to sit in the stillness of the presence of God in order to know whether what he does is in fact what God wants and that his values are those of the Kingdom. Martha shows us that friends of Christ are also servants. They serve their Lord, they serve each other, and they serve especially the poor and those in need. Mary reminds us of the importance of prayer and worship. The Lord tells us in this particular instance when confronted by Martha's impatience and resentment that Mary's is the better part, but we all in some way have to combine the virtues of Mary and Martha, by finding a true balance between prayer, worship, and service. St Benedict shows us that these distinctions are not as absolute and set in stone as they might seem - prayer can also be service to those in need, we worship Christ in the poor and suffering he loves. In any case, true prayer, worship which brings us into contact with the overwhelming mystery of God, if it's authentic results in action. Prayer and worship without the practical love and service of other people can

become just a matter of going through the ritual motions. Worse still, they can be a way of trying to construct a hollow substitute for the living God. On the other hand, service without prayer and worship can become misguided, self-serving, fanatical, or just lead to utter exhaustion. We can very overlook the centrality of prayer and silence and listening. Noisy activism - and the world is full of all kinds of it - without reflection and contemplation, saves nothing and no one whereas a real, authentic, continuing encounter with the living God can only lead to the loving service of humanity

And for most of us our vocation as disciples of Jesus is to hold the duties of prayer and service together in a kind of constant but creative tension. Choosing the better part, the part of Mary, is not about desperately trying to find a place in our lives life for God, trying to fit him in the odd unoccupied corner, but about co-operating with God in his finding a place in his life *for us*, a place at Jesus' feet, nourished by his word, fed with his life. And as Christians we can be appallingly arrogant sometimes in our belief that we have all the answers to the questions and problems of the world. But we are not *selling* a product or a message, we are meant to be *living* it. We are not salesmen, we are disciples. We are not the teachers of the world, but we try to live as those who are taught - taught by Christ himself.

The Old Testament reading today is important, because it illustrates what we are talking about. This mysterious episode from the very earliest beginnings of the story of the Jewish people has often been seen as a kind of early revealing of the life of God as Trinity. We can think of that very well-known and loved icon by the Orthodox icon writer Andrei Rublev called "the hospitality of Abraham," sometimes confusingly referred to as the 'Old Testament Trinity. Abraham and Sarah receive the three men coming out of the desert in the heat of the day, and despite the inconvenience show generosity to their guests but, in reality, what happens is the reverse of what it first seems to be, because as we see from the story, the three are there to bring God's own generosity to *them*.

At the centre of our Christian faith is an act of humility. At the last Supper, before he institutes the Eucharist, St John's

Gospel tells us that Jesus girds himself with a slave's towel and washes the feet of his disciples to demonstrate the new commandment of love which is the heart of its meaning. Here at the Eucharist we take part in an act of hospitality, not of *our* hospitality to others but, as in the first reading today, of God's hospitality towards *us*. Jesus invites us as guests to a meal at which he is the host and the servant - where he is also the food which is served. Here, at least, we are both Mary and not Martha. BUT ... following the example of Mary, our taking part in the Eucharist and being fed here with God's life enables us to do things in the right order - to choose the one thing needful Jesus speaks of in the Gospel - that is, to spend time in his presence and then be sent out into the world to follow his example of service - perhaps we are called to be Martha as she is meant to be. +

TODAY 17th JULY

**An ORGAN RECITAL
BY JOHN CHEER**

**St Arvans Church
Sunday 17th July 9, 2022
at 5 p.m.**

**Tickets £10 adults
Students £5**

Accompanied children free



...Joy of the organ

**AN ORGAN RECITAL BY
John Cheer**

Programme to include...

BACH: D minor Toccata, An Wasserflüssen
Babylon

VIVALDI arr. BACH: Concerto in A minor

BUXTEHUDE: Prelude and Fugue in D

STANLEY: Voluntary in C

Arr. PINKEVICIUS: Ukrainian Folk Songs
*Presentation on Joy of Learning
Ugandan crafts (cash only)*

Sunday 17th July at 5 pm
St Arvans Church, nr. Chepstow
Adults: £10, including glass of wine
Students £5, accompanied children free

Joy of Learning is a new charity which has been set up to support children who have left Sanyu Babies' Home in Kampala, in particular with their ongoing education

Services in the Group:

5th Sunday after Trinity

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist or Morning Prayer at St James, Devauden

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
(Live streamed)

Hymns (New English Hymnal)
52; 499; 410; 333

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist at Holy Cross,
Kilgwrrwg

***Wine, Wander
and a little light music
at Wyndcliffe Court***

**In aid of St Mary's Church,
Penterry**

**Friday 22nd July
6 – 8 p.m.**

You are invited to enjoy a drink, a wander and a chance to listen to Kate Price performing some old favourites in the beautiful garden at Wyndcliffe Court.

Free entry to include a glass of wine or soft drink.
All donations received will be used to support the maintenance of St Mary's

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**