

# 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

**24<sup>th</sup> July 2022**  
**The Sixth Sunday**  
**after Trinity**

## The Collect

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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 Genesis

The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre and said, 'How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.' So the men turned from there, and went towards Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham came near and said, 'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?' And the LORD said, 'If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.' Abraham answered, 'Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?' And he said, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.' Again Abraham spoke to the LORD, 'Suppose forty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of forty I will not do it.' Then Abraham said, 'Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there.' The LORD answered, 'I will not do it, if I find thirty there.' Abraham said, 'Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.' The LORD answered, 'For the sake of twenty I will not

destroy it.' Then he said, 'Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there.' The LORD answered, 'For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.' [18. 20 -32]

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

## Psalm 138

**R/ When I called,  
you answered me, O Lord.**

I will give thanks to you, O Lord,  
with my whole heart;  
before the gods will I sing praise to you.  
I will bow down towards your holy temple  
and praise your name,  
because of your love and faithfulness;  
for you have glorified your name  
and your word above all things.

**R/ When I called,  
you answered me, O Lord.**

In the day that I called to you,  
you answered me;  
you put new strength in my soul.  
All the kings of the earth  
shall praise you, O Lord,  
for they have heard the words  
of your mouth.  
They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,  
that great is the glory of the Lord.  
Though the Lord be high,  
he watches over the lowly;  
as for the proud,  
he regards them from afar.

**R/ When I called,  
you answered me, O Lord.**

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you will preserve me;  
you will stretch forth your hand  
against the fury of my enemies;  
your right hand will save me.  
The Lord shall make good  
his purpose for me;  
your loving-kindness, O Lord,  
endures for ever;  
forsake not the work of your hands.

**R/ When I called,  
you answered me, O Lord.**

## A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians [2. 6 - 15]

*Brothers and sisters, as you have  
received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue  
to live your lives in him, rooted and built*

up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

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

### Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!  
The word was made flesh  
and lived among us;  
to all who did accept him  
he gave power  
to become children of God.  
**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.

**J**esus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.' And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves

of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

*[St Luke 11.1-13]*

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 deepen our lives of prayer  
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; Liz Evans; Jeremy Richardson  
our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: rene Blakey; Mary Marshall

### 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'*

### Delilah

**Jereboam:** Good morning, Delilah. It's kind of you to speak to me today, particularly considering your condition.

**Delilah:** Oh, it's a pleasure. There's nothing wrong with my mouth or ears. Sometimes it feels as if every other part of me has packed up, but talking and listening aren't a problem.

**Jereboam:** I imagine you must be in fairly constant pain.

**Delilah:** A lot of the time, yes. This area here is the worst – it feels as if someone’s reaching through my skin and squeezing and tugging at everything inside. You’d think I’d be used to it after all these years, but it’s the same old pain, day after day.

**Jereboam:** Look, I’m going to be frank. You know that I was prompted to speak to you because of your belief in Jesus.

**Delilah:** Yes.

**Jereboam:** Well, he’s supposed to have said things like: “ask, and it will be given to you” and: “knock, and the door will be opened to you.” Doesn’t he respond to your prayers? Or don’t you feel that you can ask him to take away your pain?

**Delilah:** It is bewildering, yes. I’ll tell you one thing that doesn’t seem to work so well – just saying words. I did go through the stage of saying things like...well, forgive me for being flippant, but the gist of it was: “Oh Lord, just in case you didn’t hear me yesterday, please sort everything out.” Look where that got me. Simply by formulating words you’re likely to distance yourself from the problem. It’s a bit like peering round an obstacle. Don’t get me wrong: this approach can be useful, but it doesn’t really solve the problem, in my experience.

**Jereboam:** Do you have an alternative idea?

**Delilah:** What I’ve done is to invite Jesus to...how can I put it?...to incorporate himself into the problem. When I feel pain, I try to allow Jesus to enter that pain, to identify with it, to heal it from within. You can’t do that with mere words.

**Jereboam:** So you feel he’s inside the painful areas of your body?

**Delilah:** Yes, in my organs, my blood – he’s there everywhere, spreading his strength and comfort through my body.

**Jereboam:** But you’re still plagued with illness and pain...

**Delilah:** Yes, but there are wonderful moments of relief, of release. Of course it would be lovely if those moments were more permanent, but the knowledge that Jesus can offer such release is a consolation that keeps my attention directed towards him.

**Jereboam:** And that still counts as prayer?

**Delilah:** I don’t see why not, although I don’t particularly mind what words you use to describe it.

**Jereboam:** My point is that some people might say you can achieve that relief without Jesus. They might say that you’re just describing the power of the human mind to overcome adversity.

**Delilah:** I know. I’ve had similar discussions with many people before. If God is good, if Jesus is good, why not simply replace the words “God” and “Jesus” with “goodness”? I can’t argue with that; I can only tell you what I believe. To me their argument is like saying, “the sea is wet, so let’s call it ‘the wetness’ instead.”

**Jereboam:** There’s a thought...Thank you, Delilah.

### Thought for the Week

“Prayer is not designed to change God but to change us. The faster we let that happen, the better our prayer is going to be.

- Thomas Keating -

### This Week

Today’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.”

Monday is the Feast of Saint James, the Apostle; Tuesday the feast day of Saints Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Friday sees the feast day of Saints Martha, Mary and Lazarus. The first readings this week continue from the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah delivers God’s messages about the laxity of the rulers. It is a powerful call to conversion for all of us today.

We continue to hear St Matthew’s Gospel this week, entering into sayings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. God’s reign is like mustard seeds and it is like yeast. It’s coming, and growth is small and

slow, but it is assured. It may be compared to a field where an enemy sowed weeds among the good seed. Jesus knows the world is full of both the children of God, and also the children of the Evil One - mixed together. We need not worry. It is God who will judge at the end of time. The Kingdom is like a buried treasure or a merchant’s search for a really fine pearl. It is worth investing all we have in it. The Kingdom is like the net used for fishing which gathers everything in it. At the end of time God will gather all to separate the good from the evil. We hear that Jesus could not work miracles in his home town, because of their lack of faith in him. They thought they knew him and therefore took him for granted. Herod arrested John because John’s preaching was bothering his conscience. He had John beheaded to honor a drunken promise to his niece and an oath to impress his guests.

**Next Sunday** the first reading from Ecclesiastes offers a powerful caution about focusing too much on the things of this world: “Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!” In St Luke’s gospel Jesus tells the parable of the rich man storing up treasures for the future, and he warns, “Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.”

### A Homily for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity

+ On the whole I tend to share the widespread distrust of politicians or public figures – here or anywhere in the world - who wear their religious faith on their sleeve and keep referring to it at the least possible opportunity. On the whole, they tend to be either up to no good, or to have forgotten to have read most of the New Testament, much less to have understood it. But having said that, there’s probably too much of a tendency to reject religious faith altogether and out of hand, as leading to an irrational and probably dangerous source of certainty denied to the rest of humanity. And such is the world in which we now live, that even those who do follow a religious faith tend to wary about saying to someone, ‘I’ll pray for you’ – opting for the more anodyne – ‘you’ll be in

my thoughts.' And, of course, there are probably all kinds of reasons for that, some good, some bad

If we think about it - *and we should* - what we call petitionary prayer - that is, asking God for the things we need, or even just for things we want - is a very strange activity; surely God already knows what we might need, and has already decided whether or not we are given them.

Is prayer, then, about imagining we can in some way change God's mind?

At the heart of our Christian faith lies this very mystery, that we vulnerable, changeable, weak and very often foolish creatures can enter into a relationship with the eternal and almighty God, the source of all being, a relationship so close that it can be called friendship. Jesus in the Gospels tells us to call God our Father. Many of the misconceptions a lot of people have about prayer come about from a wrong emphasis. It must be the case that when we engage in this activity of intercession, praying for ourselves or others, when we bring our requests to him, it is not God who changes but we ourselves who are changed by the experience. As we listen and reflect, we are invited to share in the divine plan for the world, in which we have placed for a purpose.

In a way, this kind of prayer sums up the Christian mystery, the wonderful truth that the Father invites us, his adopted children, to share in his life. This is the powerful reality of the vocation we have been given in baptism, when every member of the body of the Church joins with Christ, its head, in interceding for the world and all its needs.

But I'm not saying that we should think of ourselves as the few just men and women saving the rest of humanity from perdition. There's a certain horrifically self-regarding lack of humility and grace in that; yet we can, I think, see the resemblance to Abraham in today's first reading, who crucially makes no claim to have any superior merits, but only pleads before God for mercy to be shown to others. And here again this first reading makes it progressively clear that Abraham doesn't change God's mind, but seems to be led along a rather steep learning curve by which he is made to discover that God's mercy and his justice are the same. And they're not the same as we sometimes think they should be.

It's appropriate then, that the disciples in today's Gospel are led to seek guidance from Jesus in how to pray only after they have seen Our Lord himself praying. For Jesus not only teaches us to call God our Father, but also shows us, in his life, death and resurrection, what it means to be children of God. St Luke shows us Jesus as a strikingly prayerful figure, never afraid to make known to his Father his deepest desires: for instance in the garden of Gethsemane before his arrest and trial, he doesn't hide from the Father his fear of his impending death, praying so hard for the cup to pass him by that he sweats blood, even as he submits to the will of God.

Jesus' prayer to the Father never detracts from, but always reinforces, his own uniquely intimate relationship with the Father. In Christ we are shown a life lived in complete union and identification with the Father. And almost unbelievably this is what we are called to do too. The unity with the Father which the Son has by his very nature, we can share by adoption as we grow in *our relationship* with Christ. Why, then, are we sometimes reluctant to make petitionary prayers? Perhaps we see it as the most primitive, the most childlike kind of prayer, like asking for a new bicycle - or whatever it is that children want most these days - at Christmas. Yet we are told that to come into the presence of God we have to become like little children, and not to be afraid to be seen as vulnerable, open and in need of help.

Perhaps we want too much sophistication, somewhere in our imaginations we want to see God as too grand to be bothered with the trivia and minutiae of our lives; perhaps we are embarrassed at the smallness of our needs compared with the larger problems of a broken world or those afflicted by the violence, injustice and inequity of our increasingly fragmented human community. Perhaps we think it's all too intimate, preferring an elusive God we have to construct ourselves from the fragments and hints we discover along the path of life, or construct one made conveniently in our own image?... But Jesus' parable in today's Gospel of the persistent friend, a story which is deliberately off-the-wall, strange, puzzling and ridiculous, doesn't let us shy away from this kind of prayer.

Whatever the fullness of its meaning, this story coming after his teaching of the 'Our Father' as the pattern of authentic prayer, is surely meant to encourage us not to be afraid to pray as the people we are and not to put on a pious act. Jesus seems to present us with two possible images of God, that of the sleepy and decidedly irritable friend and that of the loving father. Perhaps he is asking us which of these we imagine God to be? Should we be wary, reluctant to intrude, or should we have the confidence to trust?

Prayer isn't a process of trying to change God's mind, but allowing him to change us - to align our hearts and minds with him, to form us as his children. Prayer is never about twisting God's arm, but about bringing the whole of our lives, our tragedies, our desires and our hopes for ourselves and others, under the mercy and compassionate gaze of the God who Jesus invites to call "Father." Above all, prayer is about growing more and more in our relationship with the heart of all things, and to know the wonder and the intimacy of the friendship of the Holy Trinity, who is always at work to draw us from destructive alienation and sadness, to free us from our failure to become who we are meant to be, so that we - and the whole of creation - may come to share the inheritance of the Saints in light. +

### Services in the Group: 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans  
(*Live streamed*)  
Hymns (*New English Hymnal*)  
388; 406; 427; 357  
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
at St Deiniol's Itton

## 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.**

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> AND 4<sup>th</sup> MONDAY  
OF EVERY MONTH  
7.30 TO 8.30 PM  
St Christopher's Church,  
Bulwark, Chepstow**