

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

7th August 2022 The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul;
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

The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the LORD came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' The Lord brought Abraham outside and said, 'Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.

[15. 1-6]

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

Psalm 33 12 - 22

**R/ Happy the people
the Lord has chosen as his own**

Happy the nation whose God is the Lord and the people he has chosen for his own. The Lord looks down from heaven and beholds all the children of earth. From where he sits enthroned he turns his gaze on all who dwell on the earth.

**R/ Happy the people
the Lord has chosen as his own**

He fashions all the hearts of them and understands all their works. No king is saved by the might of his host; no warrior delivered by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; for all its strength it cannot save.

**R/ Happy the people
the Lord has chosen as his own**

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, on those who wait in hope for his steadfast love,

To deliver their soul from death and to feed them in time of famine.

**R/ Happy the people
the Lord has chosen as his own**

Our soul waits longingly for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. Indeed, our heart rejoices in him; in his holy name have we put our trust. Let your loving-kindness, O Lord, be upon us, as we have set our hope on you.

**R/ Happy the people
the Lord has chosen as his own**

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews [11. 1-3, 8-16]

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old – and Sarah herself was barren – because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, 'as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.' All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity

to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Stay awake and stand ready,
because you do not know the hour
when the Son of Man is coming
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

Jesus said to his disciples,

Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

[St Luke 12.32-40]

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 live each day in faith and trust in the Lord who saves us
For integrity and truth in public life
The people of Ukraine.
The peace of the world
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; John Rogers; Jeremy Richardson

our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Ray Parnell; Edith Sims; Ray Bull

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'

Mahalon

Jereboam: So what's new in the life of the Church?

Mahalon: Well, we've been hearing a lot recently about what a wonderful gift faith is. Several of the elders have been praising the faith of Abraham, for example.

Jereboam: You know...forgive my rudeness...I never quite see the point of commending faith like that. Presumably the idea is to encourage you to believe more fervently, but that doesn't really make sense. Teach people about your faith, by all means. Encourage them to express their faith through good works: fine...but telling them to believe more strongly - well, surely they can't achieve that just by trying harder, can they?

Mahalon: It's not quite like that. We reassure one another about the value of our faith, encouraging ourselves to have the confidence to believe. That's important. If you're surrounded by enough people who regard your faith as unnecessary or inadequate in some way, their opinions can easily start to affect you. Listen to this: one of our friends was recently advised that she ought to give up her belief in Jesus and her membership of the Church. Apparently she'd become healthier!

Jereboam: What? That's a strange attitude...

Mahalon: It is an extreme example. But even in everyday life you encounter little criticisms or jokes made at your expense. Sometimes they're genuinely meant in a friendly way, and

you like to think that you can laugh them off, but eventually this all starts to have an impact, wearing you down. Then your faith begins to become cautious, wary...it's blunted, if you like. That's one reason why the Church is so important, and why we need to remember the glorious faith of our forefathers. Their resolve reminds us what is possible, encourages us to trust our convictions, and – how can I put this – it urges us to let faith trickle into every last corner of our being.

Jereboam: I see.

Mahalon: ...and by the way I didn't think you were being rude at all.

Jereboam: Thank you.

Thought for the Week

“Above all, always see Jesus in every person, and consequently treat each one not only as an equal and as a brother or sister, but also with great humility, respect and selfless generosity.”

Bl Charles de Foucauld (1858 – 1916)

This Week

Today (Sunday) in St Luke's Gospel, Jesus cautions us to be ready for the coming of the Lord. “Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.”

Monday is the feast day of Saint Dominic, Priest, Wednesday that of Saint Lawrence, deacon and martyr, and . on Thursday of Saint Clare.

This week we begin a sequence of readings from the prophet Ezekiel, a prophet to the people in exile in Babylon. He uses dreams and powerful symbolic visions - at first denouncing their infidelity and then offering hope for restoration and new life.

In St Matthew's Gospel this week we reflect upon God's mercy and our call to imitate God's love. Jesus predicts his passion and miraculously resolves a conflict over temple tax. It is not the temple tax for which he will be executed, but for what he reveals about God's love

and mercy to sinners. Jesus tells us we should "become like children": innocent, loving, trusting, humble. Jesus tells us the hard work we should go through to reconcile with a sinner. He says that whenever we are gathered together, in his name, he is with us. He tells us to forgive - over and over again - and tells the parable of the servant who is forgiven but won't forgive a fellow servant. Jesus speaks about the permanence of the marriage commitment. Children were not regarded very highly and the disciples tried to bar them from bothering Jesus. Jesus welcomes them - and all the powerless they represent: “for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Next Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption. Blessed Mary, as a representative of all the people of God, is brought to share the glory of her Son's Resurrection

A Homily for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity

+ I don't know if you've come across those question-and-answer interviews with famous people which are regularly included in weekend newspaper supplements. I suppose they're meant to be somehow revealing of the inner person, but I've always thought they are a bit pointless because anyone with a sense of self-preservation is going to keep the answers either as bland or as misleading as possible. Don't expect anything profound – although that's probably true of the rest of the content of the Sunday papers as well.

In today's culture there is a great emphasis on self-knowledge. Everything we need to know about ourselves and how to pilot our way through the problems of life lie within us waiting to be discovered and set free. Of course, in many ways that's a healthy realisation, but the complexities of human nature and psychology don't enable that search for self-knowledge to be an easy one - you're not going to find the answer in a newspaper article or a self-help book. Life is constant series of discoveries, not only about the world itself and the *other* people who live in it, but also about the kind of people we are ourselves. Until we are confronted by various situations we never really know how we will react in them, and we can be agreeably surprised or have a

nasty shock when we behave or think in ways we didn't expect. Life is a constant series of revelations about who we are and what our deepest values turn out to be in practice and under pressure. I suppose this is one of the reasons why so-called “*reality*” television programmes (whatever we might think about them) are so popular - things like the really seedily ghastly ‘*Love Island*’ or *celebrity whatever* - whether its people being forced to do ridiculous things in the jungle or be manipulated into romantic relationships and betrayals like rats in a laboratory experiment. We like to think they give us a glimpse of the human reality which lies underneath the facade. Good luck with that!

The real answer to the question as to what in life is most important to us - and this is exactly the point Our Lord is making in the Gospel today - is that the only way of finding out is to look at the way we actually live out our daily lives.

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”

In the Gospel today - and it's been recurring theme in the gospel readings over the last few weeks - Jesus makes the point that, if we are not careful, material possessions can easily end up capturing our hearts, and prevent us from being free to follow the values of the Kingdom – the values of God. So, he challenges his disciples to reveal exactly what it is they really value, following him or being caught up in material wealth, the possessions which themselves end up possessing us. But we are complex creatures. We might say and even tell ourselves that, of course, *God* is the most important single thing in our lives but our actions, unless we are well on the road to sanctity, don't always bear that out.

But for all our modern talk about self-knowledge, about the need to be honest with ourselves and those around us, we are not really any better at it. We only have to begin the day with the Today Programme on the radio to be very aware of the dark arts of media manipulation where for a very long time the aim of politicians being interviewed has been to obscure rather than illuminate.

So we can't be too surprised (and I'll say this very carefully) if we find ourselves surrounded in public life by those whose attitudes to facts and veracity are somewhat more relaxed than we should

be comfortable with. And if only the Church weren't as guilty as the rest in its own internal affairs - a case of physician heal thyself, maybe! Isn't it always! But this kind of approach to life rubs off, we are all spin doctors and PR consultants in terms of our own thoughts and actions - we make our lives and ourselves look as good as we possibly can, sometimes in clear defiance of the facts. Now, this is the reason why here at the Eucharist - the centre of our Christian lives - before we go on to praise God, to listen to him and to receive his life in Holy Communion, we all have the opportunity to examine our lives, our thoughts, our words and deeds in the light of God's holiness and truth and put our hands in the air and say - yes, I have done wrong and I will try to do better next time. And we are all in the same situation. Knowing ourselves is part of the process of growing towards God. When we come into the presence of the one who is Truth it's necessary to be truthful with ourselves and with him.

Of course we are not always going to succeed; human nature, divided against itself, as it always is, can often leave us open to charges of hypocrisy. Such conflict is part of living. It's also a vivid illustration of the importance of trying to get our vision of God right - or as right as we possibly can given that we are speaking of a profound mystery beyond our human understanding. But far from being something which doesn't really matter, doing the right thing depends on our believing the right things about God, and his mercy, compassion and love. We may not in the Church always get our vision right and in balance, and we may *sometimes* struggle towards an adequate reflection in our lives as to who God is, and get things *disastrously* wrong. As we know, the effect on human lives can be absolutely catastrophic. Religious history is littered with examples of that. Religion can be a very dangerous business. When it comes to issues as vital as these, wrong answers coming from an inadequate vision of God can be very costly indeed. Relationships have been wrecked, lives have been wasted, and people have become trapped in costly and dangerous illusions, because of that. *'What is most important to us in our life?'*

This is the vital question: what *does* actually matter to us in our lives, & the

other possibly even more vital follow-up question of *what do we want* to matter to us in our lives? We have to put it this way because our faith - our experience of God - always draws us on from what *we are now* to what *we are meant to become* - John Henry Newman put it this way: "*To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.*" And what he meant by that is the need to be aware that life is meant to be a development, leading us out of clouds and shadows into light. The Gospel today takes these issues very seriously. There's a sense of urgency running through Jesus' words: have your lamps ready for when the master arrives. We don't have all the time in the world. The choices we make are important for us although we have to remember, too, that God's mercy and understanding and forgiveness are without limit. What we shouldn't ever do is either to think our choices don't really make any difference or, on the other hand, to try to place our own limits on God's mercy. It's not getting everything right that in the end is the important thing, but having the trust to take every day a faltering step in the direction of Christ and the values of the Gospels.

A great deal hangs on that - if we can bring ourselves to do that, help will be given. +

Services in the Group: 8th Sunday after Trinity

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
(*Live streamed*)
Hymns (*New English Hymnal*)
433 (*omit* *); 342; 353; 186

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with hymns at
St Mary's Pentery

There is a daily (*except Mondays*) said
celebration of the Eucharist at St Arvans
at 9 a.m.

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.**

What's On

Ministry Area Barbecue

In the field at St Mary's Penterry -

Sunday 14th August at 1pm.

Everyone welcome

- especially children.

All diets catered for. If you would

like to come, please let us know by

10th August. Either reply to this

email, or contact Fr Philip Averay

Tel 01291 620980

email: revphilipaveray@gmail.com

Open Garden & Barbecue

at St Arvans Vicarage

Friday 26th August

Garden open from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Donations. Plant Stall

Barbecue at 7 p.m. Tickets £10

In aid of St Arvans Church funds

Fashion Show

Autumn Trends from Harts of

Monmouth.

Friday 9th September at 7.30 pm.

In St Arvans Memorial Hall.

Tickets from Jean Papps

to include a glass of wine

Harts will present their autumn stock

of good quality, mainly smart casual,

clothing.

Concert in aid of the Friends of St Mary's Priory, Chepstow

Saturday 8th October 7.30pm

The Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra

with soloist Caron de Burgh will

present:

Handel : The Arrival of the Queen of

Sheba

Vaughn Williams: Rhosymedre

Rameau: L'entree de Polymnee

Marcello: Oboe Concerto in D minor

Faure: Pavane

Mozart : Symphony no 40

Tickets £10 - on the door or available
in advance from Chepstow bookshop

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**