

NEWSLETTER

for the Churches of St Arvans, St Mary, Penterry,
St Deiniol, Itton, St James, Devauden & Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg
forming part of the Severn Wye Ministry Area

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is open during the day both for worship and private prayer, Following the lifting of Covid restrictions, Holy Communion may once again be received in both kinds, although there is, of course, no obligation to do so.

Our live-streamed services are as follows: Sunday Eucharist at 10. a.m., and a reflection & celebration of Night Prayer usually on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. They can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/> and are available to watch at any time The St Arvans Parish website can be found here: <http://www.starvanschurch.org.uk/>

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
Fr Michael Gollop,
The Vicarage, St Arvans
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3rd March 2024

The Third Sunday of Lent

The Collect

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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 Exodus

Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of

the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour. [20. 1 - 17]

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

Psalm 19 7 - 14

**R/ You, Lord,
have the words of eternal life.**

the law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent. The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes.

**R/ You, Lord,
have the words of eternal life.**

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever;
the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

**R/ You, Lord,
have the words of eternal life.**

By them also is your servant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is great reward. Who can tell how often he offends? Cleanse me from my secret faults. Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offence.

**R/ You, Lord,
have the words of eternal life.**

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

R/ You, Lord, have the words of eternal life.

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is

written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.' Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

[1; 18 - 25]

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

Gradual Hymn

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory.
God loved the world so much
that he gave his only Son;
Everyone who believes in him
has eternal life.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory.**

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St John

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-

place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' They then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken

[St John 2. 13 - 22]

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

For Your Prayers

That we may take up our cross and walk with Christ along the way that leads to Resurrection
All who are caught up in war or conflict
All those without adequate food or shelter
The peoples of Gaza and Israel
& for lasting peace in the Middle East
The people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to the war there
Those who suffer as a result of the climate emergency
For responsible stewardship of our planet
For compassion and responsibility in those elected to govern us.
For migrants & refugees, and all forced to flee from their homelands

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 Severn Wye Ministry Area, for its priests, licensed lay ministers and all its people.

For the Sick & those in need:

Roy Staples, Ralph Hamilton, Sylvia; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Elisabeth; Anne-Louise; Helen; Mary; Peter; Kenneth Cameron; Ken Reece; Margaret; Margot Davies, Margi; Eira Firth; Sr Ruth Furneaux; Alan Beattie; Leslie Moulden

For the Departed:

The recently departed: our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall this week:
Robert Dare, John Cann.

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)

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'

Merari

Jereboam: I think I remember Jesus telling his followers about how to pray: on their own, in secret and with the door shut.

Merari: Yes, that's right.

Jereboam: I've been thinking though: what about praying together with other members of the Church? That happens regularly. Aren't you contradicting Jesus?

Merari: I don't think so, no. His point was that the important aspect of prayer is

one's relationship with God. You are not demonstrating anything to anybody.

Jereboam: I think we'd all agree with that.

Merari: On the other hand, though, we believe that the Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Church we receive his body and blood; through Jesus, and therefore through the Church, "we are saved and made free", as the saying goes. It follows naturally that we should pray together -- as a family, if you like. Of course we still pray individually, and I like to think that our gatherings grow out of our private prayers. Our worship together is a sort of culmination of everything that we do individually.

Jereboam: That must have implications for how the gatherings are conducted.

Merari: Certainly, yes. There shouldn't be a contradiction between what we do in private and what we do as a community. The sense of awe, the frustrations, darkness, exhilaration, emptiness, the silence...all those are natural parts of prayer, and the community has to allow for them, has to accommodate them. Otherwise I think that people might pray better by themselves. To me, the sense of awe is very important. As a young man I once went to the Temple, expecting to find a quiet corner where I could kneel down and pray. It was such a chaos of bustling, worldly nonsense, that I just couldn't do anything.

Jereboam: Jesus had a similar reaction too, as I recall, clearing out traders from the Temple.

Merari: Yes, I can't imagine that he found dodgy pigeon-sellers any more conducive to private prayer than I do...

THIS WEEK

On this Third Sunday of Lent we hear in the book of Exodus the Ten Commandments given to Moses, St Paul speaks about the folly of the cross which is wiser than human wisdom, and in the gospel we witness Jesus driving the money changers out of the temple. He says, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." St John's Gospel tells us the point: "After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken."

In the Gospel this week at the Eucharist, Jesus challenges the people in his hometown of Nazareth to look at him in a new way - "No prophet is accepted in his own native place." In a fury, they drive him out of the temple. Peter asks Jesus the limits of forgiveness. Jesus says that we must forgive again and again. He tells the parable about the servant, who though forgiven himself, does not forgive his fellow servants. Jesus has come to fulfill the law and the words of the prophets, not abolish them. When someone claimed that Jesus must be using Satan's power to heal, Jesus responds "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house." When asked to name the "greatest" commandment, Jesus names two, thus putting together the necessity of loving God with our entire being and loving our neighbour as our very selves. The week ends as Jesus tells a powerful story of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple. "I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Next Sunday, we hear Jesus' words to Nicodemus in St John's Gospel. Jesus will be lifted up on the cross to heal us from the power of sin and death. This gospel, which is written like a trial, tells us the verdict. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."

A homily for the Third Sunday of Lent

+ During Lent, we are encouraged to give ourselves space to respond to Christ's call in order to make us more open to God and more available to each other. It's a time when we can learn to live differently, to breathe with a different rhythm and to immerse ourselves in the atmosphere of the Gospels and in those things which have proved spiritually most valuable in the tradition of the Church. Our attitude to the culture of the society in which we live, isn't a question of fighting to preserve our spiritual exclusivity or our ritual purity - we are not Pharisees, after all - but it is a matter of careful

discernment and a striving to preserve true human values - what is of God and what isn't, what leads to life and what doesn't.

God wants us to live and to be, in the words of a modern French theologian, a source of present and future life for each other. So when we pray, when we fast, when we carry out acts of generosity and service to others, when we gather here to offer and to receive Christ in the Eucharist, we never act as isolated individuals, but always in mutual support of one another as members of Christ's Body.

Our belief in the saving power of the cross and resurrection of Christ makes us more fully human - more in tune with the true God-given vocation of humanity - not less. Our Faith says we are more fully human when we acknowledge our dependence on God, when we don't try put ourselves at the centre of the universe. We become more authentically human when we acknowledge both our place in the creation, and our creator. And it is at this point that we need to take on board the meaning of Jesus' words in this morning's Gospel. I *could* say a lot about the driving out of the money-changers in all kinds of contexts, but in terms of the spiritual realities of Lent, we can interpret it as a removal from our lives of things that are unworthy, those things that detract from our relationship with Christ, anything that contradicts what we profess - a kind of driving out of the low level hypocrisy - sometimes even more than that - which, being human, inevitably from time to time we all suffer from in one way or another.

And what about Jesus' words in today's Gospel about the Temple - what could that mean for us today? A bit of background first - in addition to the Law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Temple at Jerusalem was the other great focus of the experience of God for the Jewish people. If we are not careful we can come away from our reading of the Old Testament with a belief that the Jewish faith was entirely a religion of the Book. Not so, before the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 by the Romans, the faith of Israel was

intensely liturgical, focusing on the Temple in Jerusalem as the centre of pilgrimage, the great place of worship and ritual and contemplation, a place which evoked a deep reverence and of joy. We shouldn't underestimate the religious impact of Jerusalem as a place of real encounter with God. It's where he was seen as being most present to the people of the time – it somehow encapsulated the whole religious experience of the Jewish people.

But again, Jesus is saying it's not enough. And here he's building on the message of the later prophets of the Old Testament that the faith of Israel and their experience of God is a gift to the whole human race – they're reaching out beyond the idea of an exclusive relationship of God with one people to something more universal. And this, Jesus is saying, is what he will achieve by his death and Resurrection. "Pull down this temple," he says, "and I will rebuild it in three days." The true Temple he is saying to us isn't something built by human hands. The true place of the encounter between God and the human race is now Christ himself, Christ who is true man and true God. Christ himself has become the place where we meet God's glory, and because God in Jesus shares our humanity - our human-ness - we can respond to him in a relationship which is based not only on awe and majesty, but also on friendship, kinship and intimate understanding. God in Christ becomes our brother. God becomes a human being to lead us into life. And there is more: "Destroy this Temple and I will rebuild it in three days," Jesus says and here he is both predicting his own death and resurrection and saying, that his death will lead to the encounter with God in his risen body being a universal encounter - accessible at all times and in all places - even now, here, today. This is what gives meaning to our human lives; the narrative of human life reaches its conclusion in our sharing in the new life of the resurrection. The cross, that ultimate cynical symbol of negation, becomes, as St Paul says, "the power of God and the wisdom of God," it becomes

the means – the way - which leads us to life.

In these weeks of Lent God offers his grace to us in a special way - through our own identification with his Son in his passion and death - through our own contemplation of the cross, through our taking of the cross on to our own shoulders - to bring us to healing and change and to our own true human destiny which is life in all its fullness. Our task is to make the most of the time we are given to hear his call and follow wherever it is leading us. +

Thought for the Week

"Lent is a preparation to rejoice in God's love. And this preparation consists in receiving the gift of God's mercy—a gift which we receive insofar as we open our hearts to it, casting out what cannot remain in the same room with mercy."

*Thomas Merton:
Seasons of Celebration:*

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES TODAY

3rd March 2024:

The Third Sunday of Lent

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans
Hymns: (*New English Hymnal*)
374; 94; 457(t: *St Columba*) ; 434

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

4 p.m. Family Eucharist
at St James', Devauden

NEXT SUNDAY

10th March 2024:

**The Fourth Sunday of Lent
Mothering Sunday**

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word
with hymns at St Deiniol's Itton

Readings at the Eucharist :

Numbers 21. 4-9;

Psalms 107. 1-9;

Ephesians 2. 1-10;

St John 3. 14-21

For services in the wider Ministry Area
please see www.severnwyema.co.uk

What's On

St Arvans Drop in Tea & Chat

2.30–4 p.m. at the Meeting Rooms
Everyone Welcome

March 9th and usually
every second Saturday
of the month

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift
please ring Diane on 628084

Our thanks to all who helped at
yesterday's very successful event!

**The Severn Wye Ministry
Area Prayer Group meets
each Thursday at 7.30 p.m.
All are welcome!**

For details see

www.severnwyema.co.uk

***THIS YEAR'S LENT COURSE ***

INTRODUCTION TO Christian Meditation

*"Be still and know that I am
God" Ps.46:10*

A SIX-WEEK LENT COURSE

There is a choice between an
Evening Session or a Daytime
Session

Monday Evenings 19 February
to 25 March at 7.30 – 8.45 pm
at The Cedars, Chapel Lane,
Pwllmeyric, NP16 6LE

or

Tuesday afternoons 20 February
to 26 March at 2.45 - 4.00 pm
at St. Thomas Becket Church
Room, Shirenewton

This course provides an
opportunity for those interested
in finding out about Christian
Meditation to experience the
practice in a small group, to
learn about its origins, and to
discover its relevance as a form
of prayer for the contemporary
world.

For more information contact
Canon Chris Blanchard
- email: frchris2@icloud.com
Tel 07711961237

World Community for Christian
Meditation

A Musical Meditation for Holy Week

**Wednesday 27th March
2024**

**5pm
With**

**Kate Price 'cello
Charles Matthews, piano**

Tickets £10

Available from the Vicarage
01291 622 064

(Profits to St. Arvans Church)

Saturday 23rd March 2024

Severn Wye Ministry Area invite you to join a walk around the
Western churches:

St Peter's Newchurch to Shirenewton setting off 9am

Shirenewton to Mounton setting off c 11.30am

Mounton lunch break c 12.30pm setting off c 1.30pm to Mathern

Mathern to St Pierre setting off c 2.30pm

There will be a short pause for prayers at each church.

Total distance is around 9 miles but you are welcome to join us for all or any
part of the route (and to bring well behaved dogs on leads).

Bring your own refreshments. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear for
the weather and terrain. Toilets available at Shirenewton and St Pierre

All timings approximate

www.severnwyema.co.uk

☎ For more information about the day: Hilary 01291 624924 or 07812 110628

*This is not an official 'organised event' - we all walk independently, and at our own risk.
We can arrange lifts back from St Pierre to cars left at other points on the route*

In case of poor weather, please check the website in case we have to cancel