

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, 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
01291 622064;
Mobile 07867803479
E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

19th May 2024
PENTECOST

The Collect

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, 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 Acts of the Apostles

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were

filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in their native language. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.'

[2. 1 - 11]

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

Psalm 104, 25 - 37

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,
and renew the face of the earth.**

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
in wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,
and renew the face of the earth.**

Yonder is the great and wide sea
with its living things too many to number,
creatures both small and great.
There move the ships,
and there is that Leviathan,
which you have made for the sport of it.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,
and renew the face of the earth.**

All of them look to you
to give them their food in due season.
You give it to them, they gather it;
you open your hand and they are filled
with good things.

You hide your face and they are terrified;
you take away their breath
and they die and return to their dust.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,
and renew the face of the earth.**

You send forth your Spirit
and they are created;
and so you renew the face of the earth.
May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
may the Lord rejoice in all his works.
He looks at the earth and it trembles;
he touches the mountains and they
smoke.

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and
renew the face of the earth.**

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will praise my God while I have my
being.
May these words of mine please him;
I will rejoice in the Lord.
Bless the Lord, O my soul. Alleluia!

**R Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and
renew the face of the earth.**

**A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Romans** [8; 22 - 27]

We know that the whole creation has been
groaning in labour pains until now; and not
only the creation, but we ourselves, who
have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan
inwardly while we wait for adoption, the
redemption of our bodies. For in hope we
were saved. Now hope that is seen is not
hope. For who hopes for what is seen?
But if we hope for what we do not see, we
wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit
helps us in our weakness; for we do not
know how to pray as we ought, but that
very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep
for words. And God, who searches the
heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes for the
saints according to the will of God.

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

For Your Prayers

[Hymn]

Alleluia, alleluia!
Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St. John**

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus spoke to his disciples:

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?" But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.'

[15: 26 - 7; 16:4b - 15]

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

For the Church: that the Holy Spirit may lead us into all truth
That we may unite ourselves with our Rien
For all pilgrims to the holy places of the faith and all who support them
That in Eastertide we may continue to rejoice in the glorious Resurrection of Christ & live in joy and hope
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; Margaret; Margot Davies, Margi; Althea; Eira & Naylor Firth; Ivor Cavill; Jenny Sherwood; James Burnam; Anne Octon..

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Hugh Balmer; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Iris Raven; Barbara Zerny

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'

Silas

Jereboam: Well, Silas, it seems only a few days since everyone was mourning the loss of Jesus after his Ascension. People were searching for the strength and inspiration to continue his work.

Silas: That's right: we felt quite unequal to the task.

Jereboam: But things seem different now.

Silas: Yes – everything changed quite suddenly. It all happened the other day. To begin with, only Jesus' closest friends were involved, but then word was sent round, and we all gathered together and experienced this extraordinary shift in our lives. I want to use the word "upheaval", but that doesn't convey the sense of joy that came over us. It was all quite dramatic, with people expressing our salvation in a variety of wonderful ways.

Jereboam: It sounds extraordinary.

Silas: I can only compare it to something I'd experienced with my children. That was on a much more intimate scale, obviously, and much more gradual. You have children, don't you?

Jereboam: Yes.
Silas: Well, you might recognise what I mean. When my children were young, I often used to remember my own upbringing. I'd try to emulate my parents. I didn't necessarily do everything in the same way as they had done, but somehow in an equivalent way. I found the means to communicate what I had experienced myself. So that's what it was like the other day. The more we all fixed our attention on what Jesus has given us, the more we found our own ways to express that to others – to draw them into our experience, if you like. It felt like inspiration, but closely bound up with our relationship to Jesus and our memories of him. And there was a sense of urgency about it.

Jereboam: What do you mean?

Silas: You know how now and again everything seems totally absorbing, very significant? You tell yourself that life can't always be like that, that you're just passing through a short phase of intense experience...

Jereboam: Yes, I suppose so.

Silas: Well, this experience was absorbing all right, except without that sense of holding yourself in check. It feels like a permanent sense of significance.

Jereboam: We live in exciting times: thank you for sharing your thoughts with us, Silas.

THIS WEEK

Sunday is the great feast of **Pentecost** - the birthday of the Church. The formerly frightened Apostles are on fire. Now they can speak clearly, so everyone can understand them. Jesus gives his peace to his disciples and breathes his Spirit upon them, giving them the mission to forgive and sending them to carry out his desire that we all be one.

*Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.*

Monday is the celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. The return to "Ordinary Time" doesn't mean we forget about the good news of the Resurrection or the gift of the Spirit Jesus promised us. It simply means that we return to a season of reflecting upon the scriptures with "numbers" *ordinal*) until Advent begins on December 1.

During the week, we resume reading St Mark's Gospel where we left it when Lent began. It offers us stories about sacrificing part of ourselves. We hear of the Rich Young Man: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Peter tells Jesus, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus responds, "there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more." When the disciples squabble over who will sit in glory with Jesus, he tells them, "the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Bartimaeus, a blind man recognizes Jesus as "Son of David" and is healed. Bartimaeus follows Jesus. He drives money changers out of the Temple saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer ... but you have made it a den of thieves." We end the week with Jesus evading the trickery of the chief priests who ask him "by what authority are you doing these things?"

Next Sunday begins with **Trinity Sunday**, which always follows Pentecost. It celebrates the mystery of the relationship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit - and their loving support for us in our lives.

"When he comes, the Spirit of truth will guide you to all truth..."

A Homily for Pentecost

+ Unexpected gifts are often the best – they bring us the greatest joy – and they can come in all kinds of ways – unlooked for hospitality, kindness, appreciation, words of encouragement. And in some ways as we see from today's readings, the gift of the Holy Spirit was both expected and unexpected by the apostles gathered together in Jerusalem. In today's Gospel Jesus speaks to them about the Advocate he will send them after he goes from them., the one who will lead them into all truth. But we can be pretty sure they didn't know exactly what was about to happen. Today - Pentecost - is the great feast of the *gift* of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the one who communicates to us all the benefits of the Son's passion, death and

resurrection here at the end of Eastertide. Pentecost makes Easter a reality for all time. Today sums up what we have been celebrating for the last 50 days. Today is the Birthday of the Church.

Eastertide is summed up and communicated to us today in the gift of the Spirit and today's first reading offers us an insight into what the experience of the first Pentecost meant to those who were there at the time. It doesn't linger very much at all on the description of the physical event of the tongues of fire, the sound of rushing wind and the violent noise, but it speaks at length about the experience of those who were gathered in Jerusalem from every nation on earth. They heard these people from Galilee - the Apostles - speaking their own languages, so that each one of them was able to hear them really preaching in their own language about the marvels of God.

We can see here what the Church is intended to be (and that's what we say in the Creed - 'one holy, catholic and apostolic', that is, truly universal, for all peoples and cultures, for all times and places, where there is room for everyone, somewhere where we experience the life of God in a common home, where we speak the same language of faith, where we share a common spiritual life..

Jesus had promised this indwelling of the Holy Spirit; in St John's Gospel, Jesus prays to the Father that his disciples might see his glory and he tells them that he and the Father would make their home in each one of them – and come to them and transform their lives. What we see in the Acts of the Apostles is the action of the Holy Spirit on individuals and on the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, things were changed and a new world order began to be slowly ushered in. We can be cynical about Christian history - sometimes justifiably, but we also forget sometimes the debt we owe, even if we're not particularly religious or even spiritual - including the whole idea of what it means to be an individual person, with an individual conscience and inalienable rights. The God-given duty to be 'Christ's in the world,' to show compassion to the poor and to those in need. These weren't attributes of the ancient, classical world, they come from the Gospels.

But to go back to the first Pentecost, and Blessed Mary and the Apostles gathered

in the Upper Room - the result of the Spirit's indwelling not only transfigured the apostles as individuals, it also changed their common life: the Acts of the Apostles says *"the whole company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common."*

This is radical stuff - radical for the ancient world which was based around a rigid social hierarchy - it's pretty radical for us to hear today as well.

But before we get too carried away, we have to remember that the early Church wasn't just a social movement, nor was it a political ideology - it was the result of the Kingdom of God slowly breaking through into a broken, fragmented world. The world itself - the whole creation - St Paul reminds us is groaning in labour pains, trying to give birth to the Kingdom of God. In order for the Gospel message to change the world, God must first change *each one of us*; and that can only begin when we as individuals are open to the gifts and the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

The first Pentecost was marked with exuberance, confidence, and above all an overflowing joy - we see this very clearly in today's first reading. The message of Pentecost is that is that things which seemed impossible begin to happen, and a message that seemed difficult to fully comprehend or adequately express is widely proclaimed. Pentecost is a moment of completion - the Spirit comes to complete the saving work of Christ - that is, to bring it to completion in us.

Today is a new beginning. Pentecost invites us to make our own response to the story of our salvation - to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Today marks the moment where we enter into the mystery of salvation. As someone has written Pentecost is our gateway to eternity.

But there's always a tension isn't there? Today's outpouring of love and joy meets us as we are - people who are on a journey to the fullness of the kingdom but who are still in transit, not having arrived. The startling completeness of Christ's own self-giving and his showing forth of God's love offered without reservation demands of us in return a response which is total and absolute. As Isaac Watts' hymn says, it "demands, my soul, my life, my all," and

we are by no means always ready or able to give that.

And that's where the tension is: that's why our conversion is always gradual, incremental - needing to be renewed daily if not hourly. Our Pentecostal joy (if I can put it that way) is always a work in progress. Pilgrimages, as some of us know all too well, not only *can* be painful, but in some way it's part of the deal, part of what we sign up for. And our vocation as Christians is to walk as pilgrims along the way that leads to the vision of God. We can't yet quite see or experience the fullness of the glory that is promised to us in the Easter message.

When Jesus leaves his disciples, he doesn't leave them comfortless - he sends then the Spirit, the advocate, the one who brings comfort, the one who journeys with us, who enables the life of Easter to permeate every aspect of our lives. Pentecost isn't just an annual feast to mark the end of Eastertide. In fact, it tells us there is no ending - Easter is eternally *now*. The Church is given the Holy Spirit so that we can begin to live the new life that we are offered. This is the way that Easter joy triumphs over our fears, our anxieties, our uncertainties and hesitations and even our outright failures and gives us the courage to walk onwards. +

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

Many thanks to those who took part in our Rogation Walk yesterday and to all who arranged refreshments along the way and at the end of the day.

St Arvans Drop in Tea & Chat
2.30-4 p.m. at the Meeting Rooms
Everyone Welcome

June 8th and usually every second Saturday of the month

Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift please ring Diane on 628084

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES TODAY

19th May 2024:

PENTECOST

9 a.m. Family Service

at St James, Devauden

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

Hymns: (New English Hymnal)

431; 138; 137; 140

11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

at Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg

NEXT SUNDAY

26th May 2024:

TRINITY SUNDAY

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvans

The St Arvans AGM will be held after the Eucharist.

Readings at the Eucharist :

Isaiah 6. 1-8 [9, 10];

Psalms 29; Romans 8. 12-17;

St John 3. 1-17

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