

# 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.,**  
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](mailto:frmichael1@aol.com)

## **31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity**

### The Collect

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 Sirach

The beginning of human pride is to forsake the Lord; the heart has withdrawn from its Maker. For the beginning of pride is sin, and the one who clings to it pours out abominations. Therefore the Lord brings upon them unheard-of calamities,

and destroys them completely.  
The Lord overthrows the thrones of rulers, and enthrones the lowly in their place.  
The Lord plucks up the roots of the nations, and plants the humble in their place. The Lord lays waste the lands of the nations, and destroys them to the foundations of the earth. He removes some of them and destroys them, and erases the memory of them from the earth. Pride was not created for human beings, or violent anger for those born of women.

[10. 12-18]

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

### Psalm 112

#### **R/ Light shines in the darkness for the upright**

Alleluia.  
Blessed are those who fear the Lord and have great delight in his commandments.  
Their descendants will be mighty in the land,  
a generation of the faithful that will be blest.  
Wealth and riches will be in their house, and their righteousness endures for ever.

#### **R/ Light shines in the darkness for the upright**

Light shines in the darkness for the upright;  
gracious and full of compassion are the righteous.  
It goes well with those who are generous in lending and order their affairs with justice,  
For they will never be shaken;  
the righteous will be held in everlasting remembrance.

#### **R/ Light shines in the darkness for the upright**

They will not be afraid of any evil tidings;  
their heart is steadfast,  
trusting in the Lord.

Their heart is sustained and will not fear, until they see the downfall of their foes.

#### **R/ Light shines in the darkness for the upright**

They have given freely to the poor;  
their righteousness stands fast for ever;  
their head will be exalted with honour.  
10 The wicked shall see it and be angry;  
they shall gnash their teeth in despair;  
the desire of the wicked shall perish.

#### **R/ Light shines in the darkness for the upright**

### A reading from the letter to the Hebrews [13. 1-8,15-16]

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. Let marriage be held in honour by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.  
Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?' Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.  
Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

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

### **Gradual Hymn**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Shoulder my yoke and learn from me,  
says the Lord,  
for I am gentle and humble in heart.  
**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.**

**O**n one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place," and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.' He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

[St Luke 14.1, 7-14]

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

## For Your Prayers

That we may follow the way of true humility which leads to God  
All pilgrims – especially for Fr Philip as he walks to Rome, and all who journey to Santiago de Compostela and all the holy places of the faith.  
The people of Gaza, & Israel, & for lasting peace in the Middle East  
For wisdom, restraint and a desire for peace among the nations of the world.  
The government & people of Ukraine and a just and peaceful end to Russia's war of aggression there.  
All who are caught up in war or conflict  
All those without adequate food or shelter  
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, & Archbishop of Wales; Philip, Episcopal Visitor of the Society of the Holy Cross in Wales, & 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 Leo, 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 Jackson; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Elisabeth; Anne-Louise; Mary; Peter; Margaret; Althea; Margi Osborne, Marilyn Humphries

### For the Departed:

The recently departed: John Rowlands; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: John Meade; Jeff Gravelle;

## 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 people whose lives have been affected in some way by Jesus Christ and his teaching*

### Simeon

**Jereboam:** Excuse me, could you spare us a few moments? I'm Jereboam from the Jerusalem and Galilee Gazette.

**Simeon:** Certainly, yes – pleased to meet you. I'm Simeon.

**Jereboam:** Thank you, Simeon. Tell me, please: when I arrived a few minutes ago, there seemed to be quite a tense atmosphere over where Jesus was talking.

**Simeon:** There certainly was – I feel quite drained now. I could see it was going to happen. There's this group of men who hang around at Jesus' meetings, just waiting to make trouble. They try to pick holes in his arguments with really petty comments. Today I suppose they couldn't object to any of his teaching, so they waited until we had a break, and then they complained about some of us eating our snacks without performing the traditional washing ceremony. Honestly, we were having a snack, not performing a ritual!

**Jereboam:** What did Jesus say?

**Simeon:** Well, he spoke about how the external signs of worship

aren't nearly as important as how you lead your lives, and what you say and think. In fact the external rituals can become a distraction.

**Jereboam:** Fair enough, but it's not difficult to wash your hands. Couldn't Jesus go along with the traditional practice, just to keep everyone happy?

**Simeon:** That's a fair point, but I think he deliberately wants to show the contrast between his attitude and what other people say. So I suppose he must know he's being controversial.

**Jereboam:** So at least these other men help to clarify what Jesus stands for.

**Simeon:** Yes, you're right. They don't make life easy for us, though. It's quite stressful dealing with all these interruptions. And everything becomes negative.

**Jereboam:** What do you mean?

**Simeon:** Well, take this afternoon, for instance. Jesus was talking about goodness and purity of heart, and how to honour God in everything you do. He was so enthusiastic – I've never met anyone as positive as he is. Then these sticklers start grumbling, and we end up talking about defilement and negative things. Look, if you don't mind, I think I just need to have a bit of time to myself.

**Jereboam:** Of course.

## THIS WEEK

On the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity the readings encourage us to embrace humility. The first reading from the Book of Sirach says it simply: "Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God." In St Luke's gospel is a beloved story of Jesus saying, "do not recline at table in the place of honor" at a banquet. "For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Wednesday this week sees the feast day of Saint Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church.

The daily readings at the Eucharist conclude St Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians on Tuesday. On Wednesday, we begin a week of readings from the letter to the Colossians, with its gracious salutation and encouragement. The readers are exhorted to see Christ as the "head of the body" noting that all is created "in and through him."

The Gospels now move from St Matthew to St Luke, which we will read on weekdays from now until the beginning of Advent. We will hear the way in which the evangelist will highlight healing, mercy, the poor, women, prayer, the operation of the Spirit and a gospel for a new, universal Israel whose mission is to the whole world.

Jesus teaches in the synagogue and reads from Isaiah: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus heals a man with demons. He heals Simon's mother-in-law, and all the sick they brought him. "I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent." He calls out to three discouraged fishermen to lower their nets, to show them his power. Peter is overwhelmed and protests he is unworthy. "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." At Jesus' persistence, Peter, James and John leave their nets to follow Jesus. The week ends with Jesus' tangling with the Pharisees who challenge the fasting of his disciples. "Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" He deflects the criticism by telling them "no one pours new wine into old wineskins." When his critics note that his disciples were "unlawful" by picking heads of grains to eat, he tells them, "The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

**Next Sunday** we hear Wisdom marvel at God's ways. Paul writes to his friend, Philemon, about Philemon's slave, Onesimus, who is now a convert and in prison with Paul. Paul asks that he be taken back as a son or a brother. In St Luke's Gospel, Jesus tells the crowd that following him will involve radical conversion and require that each person discern if they can prepare for the self-denial required.

## A Homily for Trinity 11

+ Life isn't fair; we don't need anyone to tell us that. We only have to look around us. Someone has said that one of the earliest things we should teach our children is a recognition of the truth of that comment. I'm not wholly sure about that; maybe we should teach them that it ought to be, but certainly in terms of human life and human society there are inevitably those who are commonly regarded as winners and losers; life can be tough, full of struggle and very little is really guaranteed. Our journey through life is often from the earliest moments highly competitive and not everyone can win the glittering prizes society seems to have on offer. Some of course, start out with greater advantages than others and statistics and the social sciences tell us that's unarguably the main determining factor for success in life. At birth we are each dealt a different hand, socially, genetically, intellectually. It's a bit of a lottery, and throughout history human society has always handed out quite a few of its prizes based on status, aggression and the ability to impress and, indeed, dominate in one way or another. In many ways, sometimes without being consciously aware of it, we all tend to compete. That's life - and it always has been, even if that doesn't excuse us if we don't in one way or another try to take the cruel edge off it.. Our own twenty-first century way of social competition (here in the west, anyway) may not be quite so openly unjust and violent as in past ages – although at the moment the jury is out on that one - but human nature hasn't changed that much, if at all. But before you think I'm becoming a convert to a kind of social Darwinism – you know, the kind of view illustrated in that dreadful line now mercifully omitted from Mrs CF Alexander's hymn '*All Things Bright and Beautiful*' – 'the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate' nonsense. There's far too much of that kind of thing around in some places already at the moment, but the point is that it's exactly the atmosphere we **don't** find in today's Gospel. Jesus - in a parable based around a formal dinner or feast of the day - seems to reverse the normal pattern of human social behaviour. Don't go to the highest place, he says. You might suffer the indignity of being asked to

sit lower down. Rather, go first to a lower place and you may be asked to move to a "higher" place and so win greater prestige in front of everybody.

It is a risky thing to do, of course. You might be left sitting in your lower place. To a society which seems to depend on the hard sell, the need for fame and self-promotion at all costs and the desire to become rich, or to hang on to being rich, at almost any price, Our Lord's advice may seem like a recipe for social and economic disaster.

Jesus, of course, doesn't mean us to behave that way literally and in every circumstance. But what he does mean quite clearly is that in the Kingdom of God – and we pray his will be done on earth as it is in heaven remember, such things carry absolutely no weight. In the eyes of God, human status doesn't matter at all. This very definitely gives a somewhat different twist to the whole issue of "humility" which is something Jesus commends to us in the Gospels more than once.

All too often humility has been portrayed as a wholly negative thing, the kind of morbid self-abasement probably motivated by self-hate, or a flight from confrontation, or a false humility born of the desire to be accepted at any cost, or concealing a deep down pride. We all have to be aware of our motivations in the life of discipleship, and these kind of false humility are really not what is being urged on us by Christ in the Gospels. It doesn't square with the vision of God he presents to us. It's not what Jesus himself did.

If we take away the pre - historical mythology, the essential message of the opening books of the Bible is about human pride and estrangement from God. That's a sweeping statement, but from the Christian perspective, the rest of the Old Testament speaks about God's continuing call to the human race, despite our pride and our generally messed-up condition. It also shows us the progressive self-revelation of God to the people of Israel as the One who shows mercy and compassion.

We believe that, in response to our deepest need, God has humbled himself by the ultimate act of solidarity with us by becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the one just man who has humbled himself; Jesus Christ is

the one who was lifted up—exalted, that is—on the cross, and who has been exalted to the heights of heaven, to the presence of his Father. He it is who has invited the whole world to his feast, lifting us up in turn, inviting us to follow his example and join him at the heavenly feast. Repeatedly, Jesus speaks about life in the presence of God as a feast, as a great banquet; we should cherish that because all too often it's been presented to us as a kind of perpetual, gloomy, British Sunday of a few generations ago—although even that much maligned institution has something to commend it by way of contrast to the pressures of the obsessive commercialism of the present day!

Humility, then, isn't a quality we try to acquire out of a sense of self-loathing or British well-mannered self-deprecation. And it's not about taking on the qualities of a door-mat either. Instead, it's about living in God's own fundamental lack of interest in status and our taking on the kindness, gentleness, and courtesy of Christ himself. Perhaps it's something we can only truly hope to reach through an authentic encounter with God through prayer and service, something which can only unfold to us by our allowing ourselves the space to be aware that we all live in that tension between the cross and the resurrection, between brokenness and being made whole, in which our pilgrimage, (our journey of faith) inevitably involves us - that gap, that tension out of which can come healing and the new life of resurrection. The Christian life isn't so much a matter of imitation as of reception; it involves us in struggle, but is really about being open to receive a gift. And our reward won't be in being invited to a higher place at the table, (not in this world anyway), but in enjoying, with Christ the Crucified Risen Lord, the marriage feast of the Lamb. +

## SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

### TODAY

**Trinity 11    31<sup>st</sup> August 2025**

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist  
at St Arvan's

### NEXT SUNDAY

**Trinity 12    7<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist  
at St Arvan's

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

4 p.m. All Age Eucharist  
at St James, Devauden

Readings:

Deuteronomy 30.15-20

Psalm 1

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14.25-33

Daily celebrations at St Arvans on Tuesday and Saturday are at 10 a.m.; Thursday and Friday this week at 9.30 a.m. Wednesday's celebration is at St Mary's Priory, Chepstow at 10 a.m.

Fr Michael's day off is Monday.

For all services in the wider Ministry Area please see [www.severnwyema.co.uk](http://www.severnwyema.co.uk)

### St Arvan's Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August after church

A meeting to hear annual reports on the church's mission, finances and fabric, and to elect officers and representatives for the coming year.

### Devauden Photography Competition

A reminder that the closing date for entries is 1<sup>st</sup> September

For further details see *Fiveways*

## **The Ministry Area**

### **Prayer Group**

meets every Thursday 7.45pm – 9pm

4<sup>th</sup> September St. Andoenus, Moun-ton

For further details

email [david@bedlambeds.com](mailto:david@bedlambeds.com)

11<sup>th</sup> September St. James, Devauden

18<sup>th</sup> September St. Peter, St. Pierre

25<sup>th</sup> September St. Christopher,

Chepstow

2<sup>nd</sup> October The Cedars

9<sup>th</sup> October The Cedars

16<sup>th</sup> October Ann Cooke's house,

Kilgrwg (*please ask David for  
directions*)

23<sup>rd</sup> October and onwards *The Cedars*

## **St Arvans Tea and Chat**

**September 12<sup>th</sup>**

*and usually every second*

*Saturday of the month*

Childrens activity table

*For assistance or a lift*

*please ring Diane on 628084*

### **Music for a Late Summer**

#### **Afternoon**

#### **The Divertimenti Consort**

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 3 p.m.

St James' Church, Devauden

*Free entry with retiring collection*

*for church funds*

*Refreshments*

**'Jazz in the Arv' with**

**The Fraser Smith Quartet**

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 7 p.m.**

**St Arvans Church**

*Tickets £20*

*Bar and raffle*