

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
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The Vicarage, St Arvans
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Mobile 07867803479
E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

28th September 2025 The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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 prophet Amos

Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, the notables of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel resorts! Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from

the stall; who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.

[6. 1a, 4-7]

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

Psalm 146

R/ Praise the Lord, O my soul!

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, O my soul!
I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God
all my life long.
Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.
When their breath departs,
they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.

R/ Praise the Lord, O my soul!

Happy are those whose help
is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith for ever;
who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

R/ Praise the Lord, O my soul!

The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up
those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.
The Lord watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked
he brings to ruin.
The Lord will reign for ever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the Lord!

R/ Praise the Lord, O my soul!

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to Timothy [6. 6-19]

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen. As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus Christ Christ was rich,
but he became poor for your sake,
to make you rich out of his poverty.
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

‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them." He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."'

[St Luke 16. 19-31]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may be faithful and committed in our following of Christ
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: Nancy Whitcobe; Barry Carlino; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Doris Williams

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

Ezekiel

Jereboam: Can you explain something to me, Ezekiel?

Ezekiel: I'll try.

Jereboam: What's all this about "Jesus saves us from our sins"? I keep hearing it, and it just doesn't make sense to me. To start with, I wondered if it meant that Jesus prevents you from sinning – you know, lead us not into temptation, and so on – but it doesn't say that, does it? That would be something like: "Jesus stops us sinning."

Ezekiel: ...which I'm afraid he doesn't.

Jereboam: But: "Jesus saves us from our sins." What's all that about?

Ezekiel: Personally I'd prefer it if we said: "Jesus saves us from the consequence of our sins."

Jereboam: The consequence being...

Ezekiel: ...exclusion from the kingdom of heaven.

Jereboam: So Jesus prevents that exclusion?

Ezekiel: This is how I see it: the kingdom of heaven can admit only what is godly – so, to the extent that

we sin, we separate ourselves from it. It's all a question of our relationship with God. For thousands of years Jews have offered sacrifices, in order to cancel out the damage to that relationship caused by their sins. Now Jesus has made it possible for our sins to be covered by his own sacrifice.

That's how he restores our relationship with God, makes us ready to enter the kingdom of heaven...and so saves us from the consequence of our sins.

Jereboam: But that implies that you still believe in a punishing God.

Ezekiel: No, I don't know about that. As I said, we forego the opportunity to enter heaven by moving away from what is godly, although we hope that Jesus' sacrifice will nullify the effects of our sins. Obviously we can also try to lead godlier lives. But once we die, we can't ourselves change our relationship to God. Others can pray for us and help to make us worthy of heaven, but, as far as our own efforts are concerned, our relationship to God will stay as we have formed it during our lives. I don't know if that's punishment exactly; it's just the way it is. I suppose we punish ourselves really. It's a bit like that story Jesus told about the rich man who wouldn't offer anything to the beggar at his gate.

Jereboam: Was that the beggar called Lazarus?

Ezekiel: That's right; well done! Well, the point is that the rich man had rejected God during his lifetime, and he couldn't do anything to change that after his death. What follows is left to the mercy of God.

Jereboam: I think I'm beginning to understand. Thank you, Ezekiel.

TODAY

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is the focus of the Luke's Gospel on the Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time. This is a classic story of how the tables are turned in the afterlife. The rich man has it good in this life and ignores the plight of poor Lazarus. In the afterlife, it is the rich man who is in torment and

Lazarus is the one who is enjoying heaven. The double irony comes when the rich man asks that Lazarus be sent to warn his brothers. Jesus responds: "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead." Will we listen to the one who has risen from the dead?

There are a number of feast days this week: On Monday, Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels; on Tuesday, Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church; Wednesday, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, Doctor of the Church; on Thursday we celebrate the Holy Guardian Angels; and on Saturday, Saint Francis of Assisi.

The first readings at the Eucharist continue with the prophet Zechariah, writing in the period of recovery after the exile. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God, with faithfulness and justice." The Book of Nehemiah, like Ezra, chronicles this period of history. The prophet Baruch gives us a prayer of the people in captivity and God's reply, "Fear not, my children; call out to God!"

Again, during the week we continue to hear St Luke's Gospel, as the disciples argue about who is the greatest. Jesus points out a young child and asks them to strive to be the "least" not the greatest. Jesus stops his disciples from preventing people, not of their group, from healing, because they are with Jesus, too. He stops the disciples from "calling down fire from heaven" on the Samaritan people who didn't give them a good reception. People come up, offering to follow Jesus, but have excuses for why they can't do it now. Jesus calls them to not "look back" once they have said, "yes." He sends his disciples to other towns: "The harvest is rich but the workers are few." Jesus warns the people blessed by the graces of his visits there, but who have not changed their ways. He prays, "I give you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike."

Next Sunday in St Luke's Gospel we hear about the apostles asking Jesus, "Increase our faith." Jesus assures them they only need faith the size of a mustard

seed. Then, Jesus makes it clear that as disciples our role is that of servants.

A Homily for Trinity 15

In the first reading today we hear from the Prophet Amos who is saying hard truths to the complacently wealthy and falsely secure of the land of Israel. They eat the finest food, drink the most expensive wine, and enjoy their lives without a thought for those who do not share their good fortune. They find their security, Amos says, not in God, but, to quote the Gospel from a few weeks ago, in the abundance of their possessions. As a result, the Prophet tells them, because of their total lack of concern for the well-being of their own people, they will be deprived of everything and be the first to go into exile.

Following on from this, we hear in the today's Gospel the continuation of Jesus' words to his disciples, but now intended for the ears of the Pharisees. Last Sunday's Gospel told the story of the dishonest steward who used his position to win favour with those who would have to help him when he was told he would be dismissed. And it seems that the Pharisees are slowly getting the idea that Jesus sees them too as having misused their position and as loving to accumulate power through possessions and a love of reputation and titles of honour. So today we hear a parable which is direct, simple and unmistakable. The purpose of it is to attract the attention of the Pharisees' complacent attitude to life and the things of God and, for that matter, our own attitudes too.

We know the story very well - traditionally it's known as the story of Dives and Lazarus (the rich man and Lazarus). A very rich man feasted "sumptuously" the Gospel says, every day. In total contrast there was a very poor man - someone who lacked everything - named Lazarus who lay at the door of the rich man every day. He was dressed in sores and the dogs licked his wounds. A sign in Biblical Judaism of utter degradation - dogs weren't seen as the loyal, faithful friends and domestic companions they are in our own culture.

The Pharisees hear this and know Jesus is speaking of his belief that they are those who, in Amos' words, are those who are at ease in Zion, those who lounge

around oblivious to the cries of those in need. The parable intensifies the warnings Jesus has been offering them. Lazarus dies and is taken to sit at the side of Abraham. The unnamed-rich man dies and is removed to a place of great torment. He begs Abraham whom he sees in the far distance to send Lazarus down with a drip-drop of water. The request is denied. So he begs Abraham to have Lazarus sent to go and warn his brothers to repent. In contrast to his previous thoughts which have all been about himself and his own needs this request almost seems like a breakthrough; he begins to give thought to others. And as a result Abraham's crushing refusal is all the more devastating.

"Moses and the prophets" have spoken to Israel about the demands of justice, charity, and community. The rich man's brothers and by implication, those among the Pharisees who were confronting Jesus, haven't listened to them. Then St Luke adds a final twist to the story.

The rich man asks to have at least rise from the dead and tell everybody about the truth of God's demands for justice and the human misuse of wealth and material things. Abraham concludes the long-distance conversation by affirming that if people have not listened to and lived by the teachings of Moses and the Prophets, they would surely not listen to even someone who would rise from the dead. The use of the name Lazarus here can't be a co-incidence. Jesus will rise from the dead, but his resurrection would not convert all human hearts, especially those who find all the security they think they need in the good things of this world. In Jesus' story, as someone has said, Lazarus was literally the doormat over which the rich man in the parable tripped up on his way to eternity. Those who embarrass our consciences often are. It has been said many times that the only things we can take with us into the next life are those things we have shared or given away and, through the values we have absorbed, the people we have become, rather than the things we have possessed.

This morning's Gospel invites us to loosen our grip on the gifts we have received (material and non-material.) We really are committed to believing that they are not our own to do with precisely as we want

without thought for the consequences, or the plight of those in need. Everything is gift, not reward, and we are meant to be responsible stewards of that gift for the good of everyone. As we know from another parable there are no limits placed by our Lord on the definition of who exactly is our neighbour. Today's Gospel invites us to examine our consciences about using our power, our influence, or our money to benefit only ourselves at the expense of those who don't share our good fortune.

And, given the news over the last few days, we could leave it at that, couldn't we, and have a few minutes quiet reflection on the direction things are heading in today's world and what the Gospels and the Old Testament prophets have to say about that?

But we can't quite leave it there; it would be too easy. The most important lesson to take away is that Jesus' parable in today's Gospel is aimed at all of us. Whether our wounds are physical, emotional, or spiritual, whether we are Dives, the rich man, or Lazarus, the beggar, the principle remains the same: God can use the painful consequences of our actions, or what others do to us in order to draw us into a deeper relationship with him. In the parable, of course, it's too late for the rich man, and we can see that he doesn't really repent after death either, but the message of the Gospel is that there is hope of redemption for us if we really listen to what is being said. As we endure the pain of being hurt, or the different pain inflicted on our own souls by hurting others, and the scars begin to form, those marks can either become a source of bitterness ... or of repentance and a turning towards the God of mercy and compassion.

When that happens, God doesn't remove the scars entirely; the pain may stay with us for a lifetime. However, as someone has written, these marks no longer accuse us, they no longer have any power to determine our future. They have been transformed into reminders of God's love and mercy. As they were for St Paul himself who writes in this morning's epistle of the necessity for us to take hold of *the life that really is life*.

And with these scars, we are turned a little bit more into the image of the One who was wounded for our sins, and the sins of the whole world - and in his Resurrection

still bears the scars of wounded humanity - the Lord and Saviour who at this holy sacrifice is made present on our altars for the redemption of the whole world. +

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

Trinity 15 28th September 2025

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan's
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Deiniol's, Itton

NEXT SUNDAY

Trinity 16 5th October 2025

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan's
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
at St Mary's, Penterry.
4 p.m. Family Eucharist
at St James, Devauden

Readings:

Habakkuk 1.1-4; 2.1-4
Psalm 37.1-9
2 Timothy 1.1-14
St Luke 17.5-10

Daily celebrations at St Arvans on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday are at 10 a.m.; Friday at 9.30
Wednesday the Eucharist will be celebrated 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

St Arvans Tea and Chat

October 11th and usually every second Saturday of the month
Childrens activity table

For assistance or a lift
please ring Diane on 628084

The Ministry Area

Prayer Group

meets every Thursday 7.45pm – 9pm
4th September St. Andoenus, Moun-ton
For further details

email david@bedlambeds.com

2nd October The Cedars

9th October The Cedars

16th October Ann Cooke's house,
Kilgrnwrrg (*please ask David for
directions*)

23rd October and onwards *The Cedars*

'Jazz in the Arv' with

The Fraser Smith Quartet

Friday 21st November 7 p.m.

St Arvans Chuch

Tickets £20

Bar and raffle