

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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E-mail: frmichael1@aol.com

5th October 2025

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

The Collect

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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 Habakkuk

The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw. O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law becomes slack and justice never

prevails. The wicked surround the righteous – therefore judgement comes forth perverted. I will stand at my watch-post, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. Then the LORD answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

[1. 1-4; 2. 1-4]

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

Psalm 37 1-9

**R/ Put your trust in the Lord,
take your delight in him.**

Do not fret because of the wicked;
do not be envious of wrongdoers,
for they will soon fade like the grass,
and wither like the green herb.
Trust in the LORD, and do good;
so you will live in the land,
and enjoy security.

**R/ Put your trust in the Lord,
take your delight in him.**

Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you
the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.
He will make your vindication
shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause
like the noonday.

**R/ Put your trust in the Lord,
take your delight in him.**

Be still before the LORD,
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret over those
who prosper in their way,
over those who carry out evil devices.

Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath.
Do not fret—it leads only to evil.
For the wicked shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the LORD
shall inherit the land.

**R/ Put your trust in the Lord,
take your delight in him.**

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy [1. 1-14]

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I am grateful to God – whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did – when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love

that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

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

Alleluia, alleluia!
Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And with your spirit

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Luke **Glory to you, O Lord**

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you. Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!"'

[17.5–10]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may find perfect freedom in the 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; Ken Smith

For the Departed:

The recently departed: Nancy Whitcombe; our own departed relatives & friends, and those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Serge Bisoño; Francis Neal

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

Rachel

Jereboam: I didn't realise you'd been injured, Rachel.

Rachel: Yes, for several weeks now it's even been difficult to walk.

Jereboam: What happened?

Rachel: Well, you remember I had that accident years ago...

Jereboam: Yes.

Rachel: My back's been weak ever since then. I always have to be careful. Then a few months ago I went to stay with my uncle. He set me jobs to do all day long – and I mean all day, every day for nearly two weeks. A lot of it involved heavy work. I still don't understand why he asked me to do so much: he knew all about the accident.

Jereboam: So you did everything he asked...

Rachel: Yes: I remembered what Jesus had said about us being like servants. He'd told us to think like this: "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty." So I just worked and worked, and I assumed that I was doing the right thing. Then by the end of it all I realised that my body really couldn't cope.

Jereboam: And what's happened since then?

Rachel: For most of the time I've been lying flat on my back, trying to recover. As you can imagine, I've asked myself all sorts of questions. Was I wrong to follow Jesus' teaching? Or did I follow it in the wrong way? In the end I thought of those other words of his: "love your neighbour as yourself." That implies that you're supposed to love yourself.

Jereboam: I suppose it does.

Rachel: It had never occurred to me in that way before. So then I wondered what loving yourself might entail. I decided that it must involve looking after yourself physically, doing what supports your own health and

well-being. It's a bit like looking after a plant: if it needs water, you water it. If it needs sunlight, you put it in the sun, and so on. Surely you have to care for yourself in the same sort of way. We are all part of God's creation, after all...Anyway, I told myself that I had to consider the limitations of my body when I accepted tasks.

Jereboam: But how do you balance that with your life of service, as Jesus recommended?

Rachel: Maybe I'm wrong – I'm not exactly an expert at this sort of thing – but I think he was teaching us about our attitude. He told us that we can't expect privileges, we can't be exempt from fulfilling our responsibilities of service. Somehow we still have to couple that with caring for ourselves. Does that all sound reasonable to you?

Jereboam: Well, you know that I'm not an expert either; I'm not even a follower of Jesus in the normal sense. But yes, that all sounds very sensible to me.

Rachel: Thank you, Jereboam.

TODAY

On 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

The first readings at the Eucharist this week offer again a sampling of several different Old Testament sources including the reluctant prophet, Jonah; then Malachi ("But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays"); and Joel, ("Then shall you know that I, the LORD, am your God, dwelling on Zion, my holy mountain; Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall pass through her no more.")

St Luke's Gospel continues during the weekdays with some of our most familiar and beloved gospel stories. The Good Samaritan teaches us about loving. In the Mary and Martha story, Jesus nudges his dear friend Martha to calm her spirit and

choose carefully what she spends time on. Luke offers a look at Jesus praying alone before sharing his prayer with us. With the story of the friend banging on the door in the night, Jesus encourages us to "ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." When his opponents try to confuse the people about Jesus' authority, he says, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." We end the week with Jesus emphasizing his relationship with the Father as being stronger than earthly relationships.

Next Sunday we hear the story about Jesus healing ten lepers and only one of them coming back to give thanks, and that one was the foreigner. It reminds us of the importance of gratitude.

A Homily for Trinity 16

+ One of the accusations most often levelled against the Christian faith is that it instils in its followers an unhealthy sense of guilt - that it's life denying rather than life affirming. In a culture like that of today which sees believing in yourself as an important virtue, if not *the only* important virtue, what is thought to be the *over* emphasis on humility in the Christian scheme of things is seen as something fundamentally wrong and self-destructive. Now before we dismiss criticisms like this out of hand, if we are scrupulously honest, we have to admit that the way the faith is distorted at times, now as well as in the past, can very easily lead someone to that false conclusion. I remember shortly after I was ordained (longer ago now than I care to admit) someone making exactly that point to me, that if we are not careful in our proclamation of the faith we can end up destroying precisely those vital elements of self-belief and self-worth which prevent the human personality sliding into neurosis and sickness. The person who said that to me had suffered from manic depression since she was a teenager and needed (as we all do to a great extent) to know that the essential person that she was could be valued and loved by God *precisely* for who she was. We come to God as we in the knowledge that he loves us as we are and that he will lead us to become what we were always meant to be.

But *is it true* that the Church or the Scriptures tell us that human beings are worthless?

On the surface, today's Gospel would tend to lend credence to that. Jesus says in the Gospel that his followers should expect no rewards but to regard themselves as "worthless slaves" The master sees no reason to thank the slave since he is a possession and exists only to serve and to obey.

If that *is* the whole story of the relationship of humanity to God, then so much for the concept of human freedom. The appalling God of the children's novels of the atheist author Philip Pullman becomes a reality and we really are better off without him. If God is to be seen only as the master and we as nothing but his slaves, then belief in God suddenly looks much less than a matter of live shared and returned. But as always, we have to put the words of Jesus in their total context and not look at them in isolation. As we always should, we have to read them with the eye of a 2,000 year old tradition and not simply as they appear isolated on the page. The point the Lord is making in the Gospel today, with a traditionally rabbinical emphasis, if not exaggeration, is that our relationship with God isn't about earning credit and brownie points. We can't put God under an obligation to us and even the very best service we can offer him is something God can expect since there is nothing whatsoever that doesn't already belong to him. When we come to God, when we commit our lives to him as disciples of Christ, we have to abandon the whole idea of merit.

So what we are not meant to do is to take this passage at the end of the Gospel this morning as somehow defining our entire relationship. If we really were nothing more than worthless slaves for which God has no regard whatsoever, then the whole history of salvation recounted in the Old and New Testaments together makes no sense. What we believe the Bible to be is a recounting of the love of God which will stop at nothing to bring salvation and redemption to the human race, the actions of a God who will not let go, who will not stop loving his creation – all his creation and not just the human part.

It would become hard to see how God could love human beings, if he sees them merely as slaves. One of the problems of human ideologies and philosophies of all

kinds is that very often they end up in unimaginable horror simply because they devalue our essential humanity. Only when a master sees a slave as a human being, someone with whom he has some kind of equality, can there be any kind of love between them, for love requires equality.

Of course, we then have to ask the question as to what kind of equality can there be between God and ourselves? And strictly speaking, we might think there can be none at all. But when it comes to God and *what we think is possible*, however, things are never how they first seem. The really quite extraordinary thing which the Christian Church teaches is that God really does love human beings. We have the dignity, we believe, of being made in the image of God. Our failings and sins may obscure that image and likeness, but they can't destroy it. But most particularly we believe God showed his love for us by becoming one of us. Christ came among us and shared our humanity.

This love of God is shown to us by an act of unimaginable solidarity and generosity. Though we can't be equal with God, even though we fail to be what we are intended to be through Christ's death and resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit we are not just healed but lifted up to God's level, made god-like, made to be people who can be loved by God and love in return. This is the fact of redemption which we present and offer up in the Eucharist which we celebrate and treasure as being at the heart of our worship of God.

There's a profound difference between humility and being made to feel humiliated. There is no place or any excuse for *that* in any presentation of the Christian faith. We are of value because God loves each one of us for who we are and desires the very best for us. We are of value because Christ, the Word made flesh has shared our humanity and has made it holy.

Being humble and being humiliated, then, are two quite different things. Real humility is not about considering ourselves to be utterly worthless or thinking that our nature is totally depraved and corrupt as the Calvinists would have it, but about being able to recognise what is good in ourselves and then to realise it all comes from God. Our lives are valuable - *they*

are of eternal value - but we receive them from God and therefore owe everything we have and everything we are back to God: that's what our "slavery" amounts to. Just that and nothing more - certainly nothing sinister or humiliating, quite the reverse.

And the strange thing is (and like so many aspects of the faith we can only realise this from the inside and not looking in from the outside) the strange thing is that when we recognise what we owe to God and accept our status as his servants, it becomes possible to recognise our liberation as children of God. It is in God, in being disciples of Christ, and in the service of the values of the Gospel that we find the most radical and far-reaching freedom of all. As one of the collects in the Prayer Book version of Morning Prayer says very directly and succinctly when speaking about our relationship with him: "whose service is perfect freedom" +

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, Mounton
For further details
email david@bedlambeds.com

2nd October The Cedars
9th October The Cedars
16th October Ann Cooke's house,
Kilgrwrrg (please ask David for
directions)
23rd October and onwards *The Cedars*

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

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

NEXT SUNDAY

Trinity 17 12th October 2025

10 a.m. Harvest Thanksgiving
Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan's
11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word
at St Deiniol's, Itton

Readings:
2 Kings 5.1-3, 7-15c;
Psalm 111
2 Timothy 2.8-15;
St Luke 17.11-19

Or at St Arvan's:
Harvest readings Year C
Deuteronomy 26.1-11
Psalm 100
Philippians 4.4-9
St John 6.25-35

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

Fr Michael's day off is Monday.

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

**'Jazz in the Arv' with
The Fraser Smith Quartet
Friday 21st November 7 p.m.
St Arvans Church
Tickets £20
Bar and raffle**