

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, private prayer and a time of stillness.

Our current live-streamed services are as follows: **Sunday Eucharist at 10 a.m.**, and it can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/>

and available to watch later

There is an online only reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer (Compline) on Wednesdays or Thursdays at 7 p.m.

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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5th July 2026
The Fifth Sunday
after Trinity

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the prophet Zechariah

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle-bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the
nations; his dominion shall be from sea
to sea, and from the River to the ends
of the earth.

As for you also, because of the blood of
my covenant with you, I will set your
prisoners free from the waterless pit.
Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of
hope; today I declare that I will restore to
you double.

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

Psalm 145 8 - 15

R/ I will exalt you, O God my king,

The Lord is gracious
and full of compassion,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The Lord is loving to everyone
and his compassion is over all his works.
All your works praise you, O Lord,
and your faithful servants bless you.

R/ I will exalt you, O God my king,

They make known
the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your power;
That the peoples may know of your power
and the glorious splendour
of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;
your dominion endures
throughout all ages.

R/ I will exalt you, O God my king,

The Lord is faithful in all his words
and merciful in all his deeds.
The Lord upholds all those who fall;
he lifts up those who are bowed down.

R/ I will exalt you, O God my king,

A reading from the letter
of St Paul to the Romans [7. 15-25a]

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

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

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children
Alleluia.

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ
according to St Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time Jesus said, 'To what will I compare this generation?
It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

“We played the flute for you,
and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”
For John came neither eating nor drinking,
and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son
of Man came eating and drinking, and
they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard,
a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!”
Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.
I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and
earth, because you have hidden these
things from the wise and the intelligent
and have revealed them to infants; yes,
Father, for such was your gracious will.
All things have been handed over to me
by my Father; and no one knows the Son
except the Father, and no one knows the
Father except the Son and anyone to
whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
Come to me, all you that are weary and
are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give
you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and
learn from me; for I am gentle and humble
in heart, and you will find rest for your
souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden

[11.16–19, 25–30]

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

For Your Prayers

That we may always provide a spiritual
refuge for those bowed down by the
pressures and sorrows of the world
Those celebrating or preparing
for marriage
Peace and reconciliation
in our own society
The peoples of Palestine and Gaza, Israel
and the wider Middle East and the Persian
Gulf. For peace and justice throughout
the region.
For world leaders – for wisdom, restraint
and respect for human life.
The government & people of Ukraine
and a just and peaceful end to Russia’s
war of aggression there.
The people of Sudan.
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; the 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; Margaret;
Althea; Margi & Bob Osborne; Jenny
Sherwood, Bob Main, Diane Parnell;
Gaynor McCarthy; Katie

For the Departed:

The recently departed; David Richards;
our own departed loved ones, and those
whose anniversaries of death fall this
week: Tony Hall; Nicola Plant; Alan Price;
Brian Papps.

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*

Obadiah

Jereboam: That was a wonderful
story: thank you.
Obadiah: I’m pleased that you
enjoyed it.
Jereboam: Have you always told
stories?
Obadiah: Well, I’ve been doing it
for almost twenty years now.
Jereboam: Not always the same
story though...
Obadiah: No, no. I’m always
working on new material. At any one time I
probably have four or five stories on the
go.
Jereboam: How long does it take to
come up with a new one?
Obadiah: The whole process can
take several weeks. There’s a lot to
consider: there’s the story-line, obviously,
but then you need to think about the
overall balance, the characterisation, the
style of language...and so on. To think that
I used to rattle these stories off in a couple
of hours in my youth!
Jereboam: That’s what happens
with age, I suppose.
Obadiah: It’s just that I didn’t
bother with all the details when I was
young. Those early stories were probably
pretty dreadful, but my enthusiasm
somehow carried everything along. The
challenge now, of course, is to work on all
the details as conscientiously as I can,
without losing that enthusiasm, that spark.
My father used to give us a good piece of
advice, you know.
Jereboam: What was that?
Obadiah: He used to say to us:
“My dears, don’t ever lose your sense of
wonder.” I always liked that attitude, partly
because it suggested that we had a sense
of wonder to start with. Personally I reckon
that all children do...which obviously ties in
with my story-telling. Children aren’t going
to be interested in all those fancy stylistic
details or whatever. No: you communicate
with them by encouraging their sense of
wonder.
Jereboam: Have you ever heard of
Jesus, by any chance?
Obadiah: Jesus...the name
sounds familiar. He’s not that religious
teacher, is he?
Jereboam: That’s right – he
happens to be in town at the moment. You
know, I have a hunch that you’d

appreciate the way he thinks, particularly with regard to children.

Obadiah: What does he say then?

Jereboam: Oh, you don't want to hear it from me. Why not go along and listen to him yourself?

Obadiah: All right – I might just do that.

THIS WEEK

This week begins with a Sunday that offers pastoral comfort to us all. In the Zechariah reading, the Lord promises Israel, and us, a Saviour who “shall proclaim peace to the nations.”

St Matthew's gospel points to Jesus as the source of that peace, as he affirms his identity as the Son of God. Jesus offers himself as a relief from the burdens of our days, promising “you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

On Saturday we celebrate the feast day of Saint Benedict.

The first readings this week are from the prophet Hosea. Hosea was a powerful prophet to the northern kingdom, tender in expressing God's relationship to Israel in terms he knew. His “wife” was unfaithful to him, yet he still loved her. On Saturday, we begin reading from the prophet Isaiah, beginning with the call of Isaiah himself..

This week St Matthew's Gospel shows us how Jesus calls his Apostles and how he sent them out on mission. Jesus heals an official's daughter, and along the way he heals the woman suffering hemorrhages. When he heals a mute man, the Pharisees accuse him of using evil powers to do this. Jesus continues to heal. He tells his disciples to pray for even more disciples. Jesus selects twelve special disciples, his Apostles (those who are sent), and gives them the power to heal and to proclaim, “The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” They are sent to “Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons.” And they are not to charge for their ministry. They are to be discerning: “Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves.” He tells them that they will be persecuted, “but whoever endures to the end will be saved.” Jesus tells them not to be afraid, for God will protect them.

Next Sunday the readings speak to us of God's fidelity. The promise of Isaiah 55

and Parable of the Sower from Matthew's Gospel remind us that no matter what obstacles we face as his disciples, as sowers of the Good News, God will work effectively through us. “But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty fold.”

A Homily for Trinity 5

+ It's very easy to focus on difficulties and the negative things in life. Newspapers, radio and television news and discussion programmes tend, understandably in many ways, to focus most of their attention on conflict of all kinds, verbal or physical, political or philosophical, and with tragic events on a local or a global scale. These things rightly make the headlines, and in an “information society” and a world in which we are all increasingly interdependent we are instantly informed and vicariously involved in them.

I'm not criticising this in any way at all; despite all the information overload, it's probably better to know than not to know - just so long as we know what to do with the information we get.

A constant bombardment of news, information and relentless self-promotion - in a world where 'X' formerly known as Twitter, 'Instagram' and 'Facebook' rule - *can* leave us stuck in a rut of anxiety, gloom, low self-esteem and negativity and we can very easily become discouraged, pessimistic and even downright cynical. The flaws and problems of the public sphere - and in this, most people will include the institutional Church - are so very clear to see, so obviously intractable and are so off-putting to those who might otherwise be tempted to join in, but can't face all the historical and contemporary baggage that seems to come with it. But today, we are invited in the Gospel to look deeper and further, to look beyond the troubles and anxieties which so often crowd in on us and focus on what we really believe about our relationship with God: that in Christ the world has been redeemed.

At the heart of the message of today's readings are Our Lord's words: “*I am meek and humble of heart.*”

What does he mean by that? Now isn't the time to discuss all the implications of the word “humble” save to say that Our Lord isn't accusing himself of a lack of self-esteem or any other kind of psychological defect. But he is, I think, making a statement about the way he relates to us and to the world he came into in order to lead it back to God.

Jesus is true God as well as true man. the scriptures say that he humbled himself to become human so as to redeem us, to bring us back to God. By becoming a human being, God is able to be seen and touched and understood. His humility takes the form of this great act of solidarity with the human race; he becomes one of us, he experienced the joys and sorrows of human life as we experience them. So the challenge given to us - and there is always a challenge to respond to - is, in some way to be able to do the same: to get alongside others in solidarity and understanding so that this essential truth of the Gospel - the message of the Incarnation - of God with us and for us - can be understood, and shine through all the human defects we bring with us..

But we need to say a few things by way of explanation:

Firstly, in order to do that, we have ourselves to come to know Jesus as meek and

humble of heart. We have to allow his true voice to speak to us in prayer, in worship, through reflection on the scriptures, in his grace - his life - given to us in the Eucharist.

Secondly, it's vitally important that we realise that when Jesus says in today's Gospel that the mysteries of God's interior life are hidden from the learned and the clever and are revealed to mere children, he isn't making some kind of anti-intellectual statement, but he *is* warning us that there is a certain kind of attitude to 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' that can lead us to despise the very *idea* of revelation, seeing it as beneath consideration and only for fools and simpletons and religious fundamentalists - although that's an accusation that gets thrown around a lot these days, often very inaccurately. But what Our Lord is saying here is that the mysteries of God do remain hidden from those whose intellectual self-sufficiency has become both a barrier to knowledge of God, and to their own inner selves. That information is given instead

to “infants”. What Jesus means is that we are to receive God’s revelation like children. Now that’s a problem for us: we are just not conditioned these days to accept anything whatsoever on trust. In some ways that’s not only understandable but something to be encouraged.

It’s not always *possible* to trust what we are told, it’s sometimes highly dangerous. Blind trust and obedience is the doctrine of the cults. Christian orthodoxy – the authentic teaching, that is - on the other hand is far more complex in its approach, and in its embrace of the God-given, good things of life. We are not, as the Gospel tells us today, called to a kind of puritanical exclusiveness.

We come to God, then, not in a childish or simplistic way, but in a child-like attitude of openness and confidence. We don’t suspend our intelligence but we rather adopt St Anselm’s motto “*I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand.*”

It’s in this light of accepting the Gospel in child-like simplicity of *heart* is then, in the light of having a child-like trust, that the second part of the Gospel passage makes sense. ‘Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.’ We are opened up to the relationship of love that exists between the Father and his Son Jesus and through the Holy Spirit we are changed and transformed by it. * And when Our Lord says in the Gospel “my yoke is easy and my burden is light,” he is not saying that the Christian life will always be easy either. Christ invites us to follow him in a life which should free us from the domination of ego and self-centredness. There can be no glory - no redemption for any of us - without the cross, but with the help of his grace we are given the strength to carry *our own* cross (in whatever forms that may take) with total trust in the God who comes among us to save us and lead us to the joy of God’s kingdom

In many ways that is the nature of the Eucharist which stands at the heart of our experience of Christ. In and through receiving Holy Communion at the Eucharist, we are fed with the life of God and we come into the presence of the crucified and risen Lord. But before we receive, first we offer, we re-present to the Father the saving death of the Son and receive the gift of his resurrection life.

At the end of the Gospel today, Jesus gives each one of us the invitation: “Come to me all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” The Son of God, in his humanity, experienced the same feelings we have. The Gospels show us that he felt intensely the same stresses and struggles we live through. What we need to do is to accept his invitation, the welcome and hospitality he holds out to us. Only then can we find the true selves God has meant us to be, and only then can our restless hearts find rest in the source of all love, life and hope. +

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity 5th July 2026

- 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

NEXT SUNDAY

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity 12th July 2026

- 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist
at St Arvan’s
- 11.30 a.m. Liturgy of the Word
at St Deiniol’s, Itton

Readings:

Isaiah 55.10-13
Psalm 65. [1-8,] 9-13
Romans 8.1-11
St Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

Fr Michael’s day off is Monday this week
Please note: the Eucharist will be celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday at 10 a.m., Friday at 9 a.m.

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

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

Saturday July 11th

and usually every second
Saturday of the month
Childrens activity table

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Thursdays at 7.45 – 9.00 p.m.

From 9th April until 24th September
2026 we will be meeting in Churches
around the Ministry Area:

9th July St. Mary, Penterry
16th July St. Mary’s Priory, Chepstow
23rd July St. Peter, Newchurch
30th July St. Peter, St. Pierre
(*Volunteer leader, please*)
6th August St. Deiniol, Itton
13th August St. Tewdric, Mathern
20th August St. Arvans
27th August St. Thomas Becket,
Shirenewton
3rd September St. Andoenus,
Mounton
10th September St. James, Devauden
17th September St. Peter,
St. Pierre
24th September St. Christopher,
Chepstow
14th May: 14th May St.
Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton

Please join us, everyone is welcome
and no experience is necessary!

Please contact David
on 07887 853479

(david-carne@outlook.com)

for any prayers that you would like us
to include or for any questions that you
have.

Daily Prayer this week

Last week as we reflected about images of Jesus beginning his ministry, we simply let ourselves grow in admiration and attraction to him. This week we take the next step by watching him call and send his Apostles. As we go through each day this week, in the background of our consciousness, we can make an ongoing reflection on our call and mission.

We might pray each morning, for just 30 seconds or so -- when we first stand up beside our bed or when we are in the shower or while dressing -- "Dear Lord, I sometimes forget that I am called by you to be your disciple. I forget that you call me each day to live the mission you give me. Help me be more aware of your call and more faithful in living it today."

We might begin the day talking to our Lord, with our own words: "Lord, I have some challenges to face today. Help me enter those challenges with faith and trust in you. Calm my fears, heal my resistance to placing my trust in you. Then, let me bring your healing to the conflicts and wounds I encounter today."

We might focus on what Jesus said about sending us like sheep among wolves. "Lord, there are so many ways that I have just become a part of the values of the world around me. Give me the freedom to hear your call today and to live it counter-culturally. I want to live more simply and to try to hear the cry of the poor. With your grace, I desire to be freer from the attachments that blind me, so that I might be guided by your Spirit in dismantling unjust social structures. Today, Lord, I place my trust in you."

In these simple prayers, we find ourselves having a new focus each day. While we continue to be busy and do what we are committed to, our days are transformed. In brief conversations with Jesus, our hearts and desires become more closely aligned with his. Practicing this kind of prayer is very fulfilling and soon becomes a habit. We become more reflective as we grow in intimacy with our Lord, in the midst of our daily lives.

As we review our day each evening before going to bed, we recognize God's presence with us that day. Expressing our gratitude each night claims the graces we have received and helps us trust God's presence with us more and more.

With thanks to Creighton University's Online Ministries (adapted)

St Benedict

Co-Patron of Europe 11th July

Benedict was born at Nursia (Norcia) in Umbria, Italy, around 480 AD. He was sent to Rome for his studies, but was repelled by the dissolute life of most of the populace, and withdrew to a solitary life at Subiaco. A group of monks asked him to be their abbot, but some of them found his rule too strict, and he returned alone to Subiaco. Again, other monks called him to be their abbot, and he agreed, founding twelve communities over an interval of some years. His chief founding was Monte Cassino, an abbey which stands to this day as the mother house of the world-wide Benedictine order. Totila the Goth visited Benedict, and was so awed by his presence that he fell on his face before him. Benedict raised him from the ground and rebuked him for his cruelty, telling him that it was time that his iniquities should cease. Totila asked Benedict to remember him in his prayers and departed, to exhibit from that time an astonishing clemency and chivalry in his treatment of conquered peoples. Benedict drew up a rule of life for monastics, a rule which he calls "a school of the Lord's service, in which we hope to order nothing harsh or rigorous." The Rule gives instructions for how the monastic community is to be organized, and how the monks are to spend their time. An average day includes about four hours to be spent in liturgical prayer (called the *Divinum Officium* – the Divine Office), five hours in spiritual reading and study, six hours of labour, one hour for eating, and about eight hours for sleep. The Book of Psalms is to be recited in its entirety every week as a part of the Office. A Benedictine monk takes vows of "obedience, stability, and conversion of life." That is, he vows to live in accordance with the Benedictine Rule, not to leave his community without grave cause, and to seek to follow the teaching and example of Christ in all things. Normal procedure today for a prospective monk is to spend a week or more at the monastery as a visitor. He then applies as a postulant, and agrees not to leave for six months without the consent of the Abbot. (During that time, he may suspect that he has made a mistake, and the abbot may

say, "Yes, I think you have. Go in peace." Alternately, he may say, "It is normal to have jitters at this stage. I urge you to stick it out a while longer and see whether they go away." Many postulants leave before the six months are up.) After six months, he may leave or become a novice, with vows for one year. After the year, he may leave or take vows for three more years. After three years, he may leave, take life vows, or take vows for a second three years. After that, a third three years. After that, he must leave or take life vows. Thus, he takes life vows after four and a half to ten and a half years in the monastery. At any point in the proceedings at which he has the option of leaving, the community has the option of dismissing him. The effect of the monastic movement, both of the Benedictine order and of similar orders that grew out of it, has been enormous. We owe the preservation of the Holy Scriptures and other ancient writings in large measure to the patience and diligence of monastic scribes. In purely secular terms, their contribution was considerable. In Benedict's time, the chief source of power was muscle, whether human or animal. Ancient scholars apparently did not worry about labour-saving devices. The labour could always be done by oxen or slaves. But monks were both scholars and workers. A monk, after spending a few hours doing some labourious task by hand, was likely to think, "There must be a better way of doing this." The result was the systematic development of windmills and water wheels for grinding grain, sawing wood, pumping water, and so on. The rotation of crops (including legumes) and other agricultural advances were also originated or promoted by monastic farms. The monks, by their example, taught the dignity of labour and the importance of order and planning. *[James Kiefer]*

Eternal God,
who made St Benedict to become a wise master in the school of your service and a guide to many called into community to follow the rule of Christ: grant that we may put your love Before all else and seek with joy the way of your commandments; 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.**