

# 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  
Fr Michael Gollop,  
The Vicarage, St Arvans  
01291 622064;  
Mobile 07867803479  
E-mail: [frmichael1@aol.com](mailto:frmichael1@aol.com)

**12<sup>th</sup> July 2026**  
**The Sixth Sunday**  
**after Trinity**

## The Collect

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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 Isaiah

Thus says the LORD:

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

[55. 10-13]

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

## Psalm 65 9 - 13

**R/ To you, O God, shall all flesh come,**

You visit the earth  
and water it abundantly;  
you make it very plenteous;  
the river of God is full of water.  
You prepare the grain,  
for so you provide for the earth.

**R/ To you, O God, shall all flesh come,**

You drench the furrows  
and smooth out the ridges;  
with heavy rain you soften the ground  
and bless its increase.  
You crown the year with your goodness,  
and your paths overflow with plenty.  
May the fields of the wilderness  
be rich for grazing,  
and the hills be clothed with joy.

**R/ To you, O God, shall all flesh come,**

## A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans [8. 1-11]

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

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

## **Gradual Hymn**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
The seed is the word of God,  
Christ the sower;  
whoever finds this seed  
will remain for ever  
**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.**

**J**esus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen! Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

[13.1-9, 18-23]

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

### **For Your Prayers**

That we may cultivate the ground in which the seeds of faith are sown.  
Those who follow the Rule of St Benedict, either in community or in secular life.

All seafarers and the work of The Mission to Seafarers  
Those 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; Katie

#### **For the Departed:**

The recently departed; David Richards; Gaynor McCarthy; own departed loved ones, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week: Freddy Cooper; Jane Zorab; Joan Dryland; David Carmichael

### **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*

### **Manasses**

*Jereboam:* Ah, Manasses, I wanted to mention a dream I had the other night.  
*Manasses:* What was that about?  
*Jereboam:* Well, the gist of it was that I had killed someone, and I was in all sorts of trouble as a result. That got me thinking. For the sake of argument, let's assume that I had killed someone in real life (which I haven't, honestly...) Anyway, how would the Church deal with me?  
*Manasses:* Well, obviously we'd regard what you'd done as completely wrong. But at the same time we hold that everyone makes mistakes, and that repentance is a key part of all our lives. I hope that the Church would help you to reconcile yourself with God. This is an issue we've faced constantly over the years. I have to admit that things sound a bit different when you think of some of Jesus' teaching, but then very often he was talking to people who'd never even heard of him before. So, to encourage them to take his teaching seriously, he'd tell stories like that one about the seed falling on rocky ground, or amongst thorns or on rich soil. You know the one?  
*Jereboam:* Yes: I remember.  
*Manasses:* Initially that led us to assume that everything would be straight-

forward, so long as we received God's word whole-heartedly. But that hasn't matched our experience. Over time we've learnt that we actively have to...well, to extend the analogy, we have to keep working to make our soil as fertile as possible, clearing stones, watering the ground and so on. So even committed members fall down and fail all the time – our task is to rebuild, to redirect our lives again and again. We have to remember Jesus' parable day after day, rather than regarding it as a one-off process. I tell you what: if you like, I could introduce you to one of our members who has helped many of us come to terms with our sins.  
*Jereboam:* That would be interesting; thank you.  
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## THIS WEEK

Sunday's readings speak to us of God's fidelity. The promise of Isaiah 55 and Parable of the Sower from St 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."

On Wednesday we remember Saint Bonaventure, bishop and doctor of the Church.

This week, the first readings are from the prophet Isaiah. The preaching of the first part of Isaiah contains powerful words about the infidelity of the people and the kings, God's sanctions so as to purify a people who would be faithful.

On Saturday, we begin reading from the prophet Micah.

In our readings from St Matthew's Gospel, we read more about the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus. He calls us to a bond with him that is even greater than the bonds of family. "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Jesus reproached the towns where he worked miracles, and the people had not repented. Jesus thanks God that, though the wise and the learned remain in unbelief, the childlike are open to God's grace and believe. Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Taking on discipleship we will find that it is easy

and we will find rest in him. When controversy comes up about his disciples' picking grain to eat on the Sabbath, Jesus give a startling response to the judgment of the Pharisees: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Jesus leaves town when the Pharisees want to kill him to fulfill the Prophet Isaiah: "He will not contend or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory."

**Next Sunday** we are reminded that God has sown good seed, but, of course, an enemy has sown weeds in the same field. We are not supposed to go out there judgmentally pulling up weeds, but to leave judgment to God. The way the Kingdom of God grows is the way tiny seeds grow and the way yeast makes dough rise: it is surprising and slow and almost imperceptible. If we have ears, we ought to hear.

## A Homily for Trinity 6

+ Yesterday we celebrated the feast of St Benedict, the founder of the monastic life in the Western Church - perhaps the Saint whose Rule of community life is most responsible for the preservation of faith, culture and civilised values in what we, somewhat presumptuously, call the 'Dark Ages.' And the Benedictine legacy has had a profound effect on our own Church, too, in the way we approach the balance between worship and prayer and in the way we seek to live out the Gospel in the communities where we live.

Anyway, in his Rule St Benedict uses an arresting image - drawn from the Old Testament - of wisdom standing in the market place - the place where in the ancient world, workers were hired - calling out to whoever will stop and listen to what is being said. And this is the reason Jesus tends to make a distinction between the crowds who come out from the houses and villages to listen to him and the apostles and disciples who have already made a decision to follow him, *those who have already been hired*, as it were, for the work of the Kingdom of God.

To them he can speak openly of God's Kingdom while to everyone else he has to speak in short little stories - in metaphors and parables to stimulate a wish to know more and maybe to come to a decision of

faith, a conversion of heart and mind. What is the parable of the sower all about? Jesus tells his hearers it's about the kingdom - or more precisely the Word of the Kingdom & he likens it to a seed falling into different kinds of soil.

Gardeners know what he's talking about. Parables have different meanings for different people - to expand Jesus' own metaphor - it depends on what kind of ground they're sown into.

We learn their meaning often by living - by our own lives which are by the nature of things unique to us - although we are often very alike, no one quite shares exactly the same experiences in the same way

Someone has said about the parables that we need to learn to live in them as well as by them - that is, we have to immerse ourselves in what they might mean for us as individuals as well as part of the stream of faith and belief which comes down to us from the apostles. Now that faith handed on - 'tradition' we tend to call it - is necessary because it's the accumulated wisdom of the ages lived out by people very much like us in essentially if not in externals. But we have to live it where we are and as who we are - and there's no getting around *that*. I'm increasingly fond of the saying of the composer Gustav Mahler that tradition is the preservation of fire rather than the handing on of ashes. It's the stories we are told, and the stories that we ourselves tell, which make us able to navigate the things of faith in ways that make sense to us. That's particularly true of Jesus' parables. You don't forget them. And that's the point. They tend to be simple, about real life. We can be guided by them. They are stories designed to catch our attention, grip our imagination, and move our feelings. Most people are rightly put off by a distorted, ranting, moralistic version of faith, but they're not engaged either by dry as dust explanations of things that happened long ago and which don't offer us, as the people we actually are, a place in the story that's being told - God's story of freedom and redemption. We need ways of entering the profound mystery who is God whose kingdom is all around us waiting to be discovered. St John tells us that Jesus himself is the Word made flesh - God's reality communicated to us in the person of a living human being like us .

Words are important – they're what we have to try to make sense of things But Christ himself speaks to us though in other ways than speech – someone has described the words we use as symbols of symbols and in that sense twice removed from reality – and I have more and more sympathy with that understanding. But Christ's presence in the world is communicated in more ways than words - he comes among us in other ways than the intellectual - that's what the Sacraments are all about – this Sacrament of the Altar in particular – here through grace within and under the sacred elements of consecrated Bread and Wine, we receive his grace, his life. It's communicated to us as well in other less formalised ways too – often in the beauty and design of the natural world – particularly when we haven't despoiled it – and yet even then it keeps breaking through. Life and hope find a way. We can even see it in each other .....

Some words of caution, though, before we are tempted to divide the world and our fellow human beings into good soil or bad. Sowing seeds is about far more than the results – far more than what we might consider to be success – it's also about the sowing itself and the faithful witness involved in that.

Not only that, but dormant seeds – can spring up when we're least expecting them and in unexpected places, just waiting for the right conditions to develop. We sometimes see plants trying to break through cracks in concrete and we see them in the middle of ruined buildings, and often they succeed if they're allowed to grow. The important thing is that the seeds are there.

To extend the metaphor, sowing the seed of God's kingdom can often be about preparing the ground – establishing the conditions, improving the soil – especially today where there increasingly isn't an established tradition or culture to rely on, or maybe where the ground itself may have been exhausted or polluted. Perhaps too often it's our proclamation of the message which may have grown stale. But if we are collaborators with Christ, fellow sowers of the seed, we might say we are also the ground into which seed falls. Sometimes, recognising God's Kingdom is about us becoming good soil ourselves, becoming more receptive, so that the Kingdom might grow in us.

Yet at the heart of the parable of the sower is this essential meaning: the sower, of course, is actually Jesus himself, whose significance lies not only what he does, or what he says, but who he is revealed to be - his life reveals that he is truly God among us. It is Christ 'the divine sower' who by his life, death and resurrection, plants the seed of the kingdom of God in our hearts and our minds . And again, as we said, it's up to us what we choose to do about that ....how we cultivate the soil of our own hearts and minds..

## SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

### TODAY

#### The Sixth Sunday after Trinity 12<sup>th</sup> July 2026

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

### NEXT SUNDAY

#### The Seventh Sunday after Trinity 19<sup>th</sup> July 2026

- 9 a.m. Family Service  
at St James, Devauden  
10 a.m. Sung Eucharist  
at St Arvan's  
11.30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
at Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg

#### Readings:

Wisdom 12.13, 16-19  
Psalm 86.11-17  
Romans 8.12-25  
St Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43

Fr Michael's day off is Monday this week  
Please note: the Eucharist will be  
celebrated at St Arvans on 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](http://www.severnwyema.co.uk)

## St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4 p.m.

**Saturday August 8<sup>th</sup>**

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 9<sup>th</sup> April until 24<sup>th</sup> September  
2026 we will be meeting in Churches  
around the Ministry Area:

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

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

Please contact David  
on 07887 853479

([david-carne@outlook.com](mailto: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

This week, we are invited to place our trust in God as we respond more deeply to Jesus' invitation to be his disciples. Being his disciple means being connected with him with a bond stronger than any other bond in our life. It may set us at odds with others. Seeking self-fulfillment will always be frustrating and unattainable. Letting go of ourselves for Jesus' sake brings a fulfillment beyond our imagining. It is not enough to be part of a wonderful family or an outstanding parish community. We need to repent ourselves and make our own commitment. Being smart and clever are not what is required of us. Jesus asks us to be childlike, that is, trusting, dependent, open to learn and receive. Being his disciples means that we come to Jesus in all our needs, especially for the resources we need to serve him. It is as companions of Jesus' own mission that the burden of our mission will become lighter and quite easy. Coming to Jesus will bring refreshment and peace. A sign of our discipleship will never be self-righteousness and judgmental of others. What he desires is that our hearts become like his: full of mercy and love. His own heart is moved with pity for those who are wandering, without direction, as though shepherd-less.

How can we find intimacy with God in the midst of our busy lives, while reflecting on our discipleship? By letting these precious messages of Jesus to us settle into our hearts. If we really hear them, they will become a part of us this week. It doesn't take much time. It takes a focus. Each day, we can let these words of Jesus interact with what is going on in our daily lives. For example, the call to be bonded with him might strike a chord in our hearts. That is, I might recognize that my bond with Jesus is weak, and I recognize a desire for a deeper bond. Or, I might be challenged by the invitation to let go of my need for self-fulfillment in order to really find real meaning in life and the true self within me. Perhaps I might feel the call to repent or to be more trusting and childlike or to be less judgmental and more merciful, as particularly addressed to me. All we need to do is to begin each day simply naming these desires that the readings reveal in us. Then, throughout the day, in the in-between times - dressing, driving, walking from one place

to another, finding myself alone here or there - I can have brief conversations with the Lord asking for these graces. In particularly difficult times, or in times when my weaknesses reveal themselves to me, I can recognize the desire more deeply and express that to the Lord, growing in gratitude for the intimacy and grace I am experiencing each day.

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