

And now I ask you to make the profession of Christian faith into which you were baptised, and in which you live and grow.

Do you believe in God the Father?

All: I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in God the Son?

All: I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

All: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

This is the faith of the Church.

All: this is our faith. We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Introit Hymn:

Jesus Christ is risen today

Collect:

Lord of life and power,
through the mighty resurrection of your Son
you have overcome the old order of sin and death
and have made all things new in him.
May we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
reign with him in glory, who with you and the Holy Spirit is alive,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Collect SPB:

Almighty God, who through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: we beseech thee that as by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

First reading:

Acts 10. 34-43 (SPB Hebrews 13.20)

Second Reading:

1 Corinthians 15. 1-11

Gradual hymn:

Love's redeeming work is done

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia.

Gospel:

Mark 16. 1-8 (SPB St Mark 16.1)

Homily:

In the darkness on the third day after their rabbi's execution, three women check one last time to make sure they have everything they need. Followers of Jesus in his lifetime, they want to be faithful to their teacher in death. Jesus had been robbed of a proper Jewish burial as his death came right on the verge of the Sabbath. The women intend to make this one thing right in a universe turned hopelessly away from God. The Twelve are hiding in a locked room with other disciples for fear they will be found out as followers of Jesus. Meanwhile, the women prepare to be at the tomb as dawn breaks.

In purely human terms, the story of the would-be Messiah from Nazareth in Galilee has come to a brutal end. For the Roman colonial government, Jesus is a minor statistic, yet another Jewish revolutionary crucified in

Rome's ongoing efforts to preserve the peace in Palestine. The ringleader, Jesus, has been publically and cruelly killed. His disciples have vanished for fear of a similar fate. For the keepers of the status quo, this has been a successful Passover festival. Jesus' movement is buried with its leader.

The women arrive at the tomb and looming large is an insurmountable obstacle between them and their task. The women know they don't have the strength to budge the great stone blocking the entrance to the tomb. As they walk to the garden, they wonder, "Who will roll the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

Our Gospel reading for this morning tells us that the women then looked up. The original Greek text [anablepo] for this can also mean the women looked again. The women come upon the tomb and as they expected, the stone is rolled in front of the entrance. They don't stand a chance of getting near Jesus on their own. Then they look again, or perhaps do a double take, and realize that the stone has been rolled away.

Mark has already prepared us for this need to do a double take. It works something like bi-focal vision in Mark's Gospel. Twice in the Gospel, Jesus has healed blind men and allowed them to see again. The word used to describe the two blind men seeing again is the same one used here, to look again [anablepo]. Already in those stories of healing the blind, there was a sense in which spiritual healing allowed the men to see again with physical sight.

In Mark's Gospel, faith gives us the ability to see the world as God sees it. We gain bifocal vision. When we look with the eyes of the world, we see the obstacles and problems. The stone blocks our path and it is too large for us to even budge. We look with the eyes of faith and a different picture comes into focus. God has already removed the obstacles that we could not remove by our own power.

This is seen most clearly in the Easter story. The three women are blocked by an obstacle, which they stood no chance of removing on their own. They ask one another, "Who will roll away the stone?" Yet, when they look again through the eyes of faith, they see that the stone has already been rolled away. The Greek here is in the perfect tense. The stone that blocks their way is already long gone when they do the Easter double take and see the world as God sees it.

What are the stones that need to be rolled away in our lives? All of us can find our way blocked by obstacles too big to budge. The story of Easter tells us that God offers the ultimate leverage to remove the obstacles in your way.

If we rely on our own might, our own abilities, our own wisdom, the stone in our way will be more than we can face. Period. But, when we have the courage to admit we don't have the power to remove the obstacle, we can turn the problem over to God. Then with the eyes of faith, we may come in time to see that the insurmountable obstacle has been rolled away.

Yet, that is not the end of the Gospel reading. The Bible is if nothing else, the most realistic of books, and today's reading is no exception. The women enter the tomb to find an angel, a divine messenger, with the news that Jesus has been raised from the dead and has gone ahead of his disciples to Galilee. It would be wonderful to report that the women were immediately filled with joy.

Instead, we are told that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome fled from the tomb seized by terror and stricken with awe. Rather than spreading the joy of resurrection, we are told, "They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

It is there that the reading ends. Mark's Gospel offers the challenge of a circular story. The Gospel begins with Jesus in Galilee challenging people to come and follow him; at the close of the story, Jesus has once more gone ahead into Galilee holding out the offer of discipleship to any who will come and follow him.

What about us? Would we have the courage to leave the empty tomb and go back to Galilee to take up the task of being Jesus' disciple now that we know the way of discipleship led to the cross and the grave? Even with the triumph of Easter, we can fearfully retreat now that we know the cost of discipleship.

The Gospel offers a dual challenge this Easter. The first is to look at the very real obstacles in our life with the eyes of faith. The things that we are powerless to change are not obstacles to God. Through grace, we can see that God has already removed the problems plaguing us, if we just have the faith to push ahead.

But the second prong of the challenge of the Gospel comes when we push ahead. Just as the women found the stone rolled away only to be struck dumb with terror and awe at the news of Jesus' resurrection, we too can

lose our focus and stop seeing the world as God sees it. The second challenge then is the harder one. Once we have seen that God can remove the obstacles blocking our way, then we must follow where Jesus leads.

The three women that morning did break free from fear. We know that they were all active in the earliest Christian church. They found the courage to follow Jesus even after they had learned the cost they might have to one day pay for their faith in him.

Jesus will remove the obstacles from our path if we will stop trying to remove them by our own might. Then he will give us the grace to continue the journey. The path is open to each of us. Jesus is still out there beckoning, "Follow me" to those who listen. We only need respond by faith and say yes to the invitation.

For Alleluia! Christ is risen.
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia! Amen.

Intercessions: Composed on behalf of the congregation by a member of the Intercessors Group

Heavenly Father, you have not made us for darkness and death, but for life with you for ever. Alleluia!

Lord, we ask you to help us roll away the stones that form walls separating your Church into different traditions: at times these seem almost like separate entities, a series of Churches within your Church. Let us break down these stone walls, which threaten our unity and at times threaten to block out your light altogether. Today, of all days, let us raise our voices in unison and in harmony in a great hymn of rejoicing and praise: Alleluia, alleluia! He who was dead now lives for evermore!

Lord, raise us from darkness to the light and hope of your presence: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we praise you for the rhythm of the seasons as we once again witness the green blade rising from the dark earth, where it has lain buried for many months. As we see these signs, we have the reassurance that Spring will follow. In the beginning, your creation Adam was a gardener and today your risen Son appeared as a gardener and brought a new beginning for mankind, showing us that through your grace, all can be life.

Lord, raise us from darkness to the light and hope of your presence: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, in this time of intercession, we pray for the College of Bishops and for our Diocesan Bishop Ian, for the congregation at St Saviour Bridge of Allan, for Jo Mulliner their Priest and Lay Readers Nick Price and Sue White. Here in Kirkcaldy we pray for Christine our Rector and all who help with ministry praying that we may all soon return to worship in St Peter's with everyone singing praises and without the need for COVID-19 restrictions.

Lord, raise us from darkness to the light and hope of your presence: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For nations, for leader and governments, that integrity may mark all their dealings. For the Government in London, the Parliament in Edinburgh and the assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland.

In all war-torn part of this world, we pray that you will send your spirit and your light to those who cannot yet see it and that you will guide those who have the power to act in your name for the sake of all humanity. We pray for the people of Syria where the war there has now passed its 10th year. We also pray for the continued safety of Archbishop Stephen of Myanmar where there seems to be no end to the violence of the military regime.

Lord, raise us from darkness to the light and hope of your presence: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for those who are troubled or anxious about the future; for all who have been shielding for most of the past year and are worried about returning to more normal days, all those suffering from the effects of COVID-19, the chronically ill and for all who walk in darkness; for all who are in pain and all who have lost hope: may they find a new vision and comfort in the power and promise of the resurrection. We remember

those from our congregation who are unwell at this time – Hilary Bartlett and Sheila Brown and ask for your blessing on them.

Lord, raise us from darkness to the light and hope of your presence: in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we remember all who have lost those they love and for whom they sorrow greatly. May they be comforted this Easter by the promise of the resurrection. From our year's mind we pray for past members of our congregation Catherine Moonie Ward, Harry Wall and Ina Craig whose anniversaries fall at this time. In a time of silence let us remember all those whom we have loved but may see longer in this life..... May they and all who have died in faith, rest in peace and rise in glory

Father, please hear all these prayers, spoken and unspoken, for we bring them to you through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

Confession

and Absolution:

God is love and we are his children. There is no room for fear in love.
We love because he loved us first. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

**God our Father, we confess to we
and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and in what we have failed to do.
We are truly sorry.
Forgive us our sins,
and deliver us from the power of evil.
For the sake of our Son who died for us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

(May) God, who is both power and love, forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Peace:

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.'
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.
We meet in Christ's Name let us share his peace.

Eleanor Hubbard:

J S Bach "Christians on this Day of Gladness"

Offertory hymn:

Thine be the glory

Communion Prayer:

**God of infinite mercy. We thank we for Jesus our Saviour who feeds his people and gives them eternal life. Though we cannot consume the gifts of bread and wine we thank we that we do receive Christ's saving presence, the forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the risen and ascended life of our Saviour. Amen.
(This prayer is said during the online Provincial service).**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Communion hymn:

As the deer pants for the water

Prayer after Communion: **God of life, bring us to the glory of the resurrection promised in this Easter sacrament.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. Amen.**

Blessing: The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn: The day of resurrection

Please stay for BYO Coffee/Tea and Hot Cross Buns (or anything you fancy)

Sunday 7pm Candle Prayer

**Living God, for the precious gift of life that you have given to us, We give you thanks.
For the enduring presence of your love in this world, We give you thanks.
For the knowledge that you are with us at the close of the day, We give you thanks.**

**On this day, we hear the Gospel words that speak of hope, We hear the cry: Hosanna!
We hear the Gospel words that speak of promise,
We hear the cry: Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!
On this day, we journey in hope as we trust in your promise.**

**Lord, as we journey into Easter, We are conscious that we share in the life of the world.
We are conscious of the presence of those who are near to us,
And of those from whom we are apart. Whether near, or far, embrace us all in your love.**

**Lord, we are conscious of others, Whose life and work is woven into the fabric of our society,
And upon whom we now depend. We pray for them:**

**For delivery drivers and posties, For bin men and cleaners,
For police officers and care workers, Protect them and keep them safe.**

**For nurses and doctors, For scientists and surgeons,
For midwives and ambulance drivers,
Protect them and watch over them.**

**For those who govern on our behalf, For those who make decisions that impact upon us all,
For all who shape our common life, Protect them and increase their wisdom and understanding.**

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
And grant us faith to journey into the week to come,
Assured of the presence of the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.**