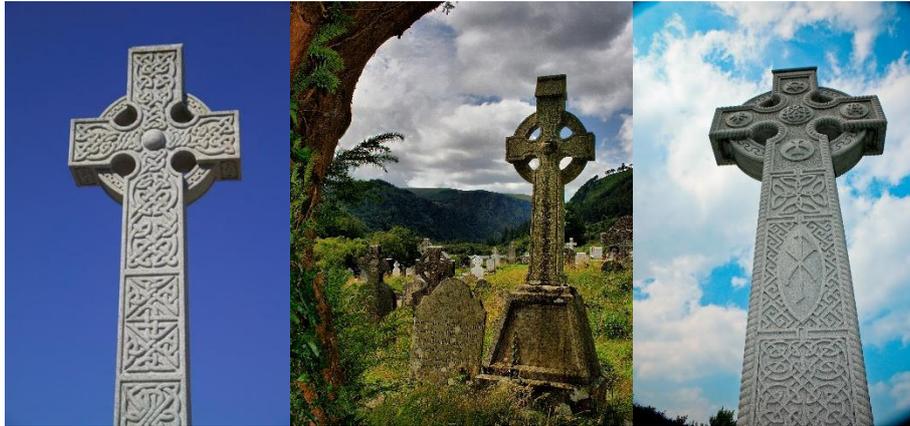


St Peter's Scottish Episcopal Church, Kirkcaldy



Sunday 28th February 2021, Lent 2

Introit Hymn: Stand up, stand up for Jesus

Welcome: Grace and peace to we from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Collect for Purity: **Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of our Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love we, and worthily magnify our holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Summary of the Law: Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
The first commandment is this:
“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.
We shall love the Lord our God
with all our heart,
with all our soul,
with all our mind
and with all our strength.”

The second is this:
“Love our neighbour as ourself.”
There is no other commandment greater than these.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Kyrie: Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect: God of patience and humility, in our love we gave our Son to be rejected and raised up on a cross. Gather us under its shadow and open our eyes to its mystery, that we may share even now in the life that is from above; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with we and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Collect SPB: Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from

all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul: through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen.**

First reading: Genesis 17. 1-7, 15-16 (SPB 1 Thessalonians 4)

Second reading: Romans 4. 13-15

Gradual hymn: As pants the hart for cooling streams

Gospel acclamation: **Alleluia! Alleluia! From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard: 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Alleluia!**

Gospel: Mark 8. 31-38 (SPB St Matthew 15.21)

When gospel is announced:
Glory to Christ our Saviour.

At end: Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.
Praise to Christ our Lord.

Homily:

Imagine the scene. We are one of the group of Galileans who have been singled out to follow the most compelling teacher ever to walk the stony hills of our land. We have been with our beloved leader, the one we call Master or Rabbi, for nearly three years now, and increasingly, we watch as more people come to hear him, entranced by his message about God as a loving father, people longing to be fed, some with words of comfort and many of them literally. And then there are those miserable ones who are sick or blind, who take up his time, but he gives it freely, healing them and giving them sight in the process. But we, we are not one of the crowd, we are the one who just recently has had his name changed from Simon to Peter. We are Petros, the rock, the stone chosen and cut and named by our beloved Master. We declared the conviction of our heart to him when he asked that stirring question: "Who do we say that I am?" And like Simon the fisherman, we are the one with the proper answer. "We are the Messiah."

So now that all of us have imagined the scene and have, somehow, identified with Peter at his triumphant moment of revelation and stunning declaration, let us move with him to the scene that follows. Already, halfway into Mark's Gospel, we are entering the second part that concentrates on Jesus' passion. In today's passage, we are given the first prediction of suffering and death in Mark's singular style of brevity and immediacy. "Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed . . ." "What? Did he say killed?" The disciples forget all their preoccupations, look at each other stunned, fail to hear the end of the prediction, and then turn to Peter because Jesus seems removed, deep in thought—probably in prayer, they think, for he seems to be always connected to Someone else, always praying. And Peter takes charge again. This simply will not do. No one had ever spoken of the Messiah as having to suffer. After all, the word Messiah, Anointed, is a triumphant word. He grasps Jesus by the arm to move him a bit away from the others, and Jesus allows this, listens to him as Peter rebukes him. What is Peter saying? What does the word rebuke mean? Something like this, perhaps: "How can we speak of suffering and death? Didn't we agree just the other day that we are the Messiah, the Son of the living God? and we did not dispute it when I declared it to you. Why are you frightening us? Look at all the crowds following us."

Jesus does not answer him immediately. He pulls away from Peter and turns to look at his disciples, these people he has loved and taught for so many months, the ones on whom he has pinned his hopes that the vision of the kingdom that has set him on fire will do the same for them and that they will continue his mission. He sees that they are stunned and frightened, but mostly confused. He knows that he has the power to change his own course and to comfort them. He remembers his forty days in the wilderness, Satan tempting him with power. Look, if we align with me all these kingdoms will be ours. Just say the word. Forget the one who is pulling us to himself, always to himself, forget our father. Jesus addresses Peter, but his eyes are on all his faithful disciples, for they all matter. If they don't understand, no one will. "Get behind me, Satan!" he cries out again as he did in the wilderness, directly to Peter, reversing what he had told him in their previous encounter. Now his meaning is just as clear: "Peter, we are thinking of all this in human terms. We are thinking of human power and armies and wealth, and even of violence. But the ways of God are different. Don't we know this?"

Haven't I spoken to us about God's kingdom?" He sees Peter's anger and then confusion and immediately his great sadness. And he knows that his dear disciple will go through much agony of spirit and grief before he understands. Now he must teach all of them once again, he must make them understand the values of the kingdom.

His first words are terrible. Do we want to follow me? It will not be easy. I am not promising you power or wealth or importance. First, we recognize that God is the centre of our existence, not we, ourselves. "Take up our cross," he tells them, "and follow me."

In our days, this command is used profanely. "I too have my cross to bear," someone says of a simple annoyance, and we who have been confronted by the gospel cringe. But in that day, Jesus' listeners knew what the sentence meant in all its horror. The condemned had to carry their own means of the most horrid death to their crucifixion. This was an awful saying to the ears who first heard it. They knew the reality of Roman cruelty. Later they would come to recognize their teacher's words more fully: "If we can recognize our own self-centeredness and then discard it, we may follow me. If we understand that the life I call we to lead may cause our own death, we may follow me."

They quickly learned what we are invited to learn every day. The life we are called to live as Christ-followers is filled with paradox. We gain by losing. We are saved by dying to self. The first become last. The last, the despised, become first. This is no happiness gospel. This is no prosperity gospel. We are not called to make millions while others go hungry. We are not called to live in mansions when others have nowhere to lay their heads.

The gospel of Christ is not casual. It is not reserved for those who say the right words while their lives speak of prestige and power.

It may not seem that way in this unequal and unjust society of ours. In times of distress, we ask: "Does God not hear us?" And then we remember Gethsemane and Christ's tears and sweat, and then, the terrible silence. Yet, he did pick up his own cross and obeyed.

The Old Testament Lesson and St. Paul speak of faith and covenants and promises fulfilled because of Abraham's trust in God. Jesus' trust in God brought him to the cross. It is the only way we have for understanding what he means when he warns us of the cost of following him. And yet, who would not want to follow him? As Peter said when inspired by the Holy Spirit, "We, Lord, we alone have the words of life eternal." Thanks be to God.

Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,**

**and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father.
With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

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

Let us pray, thanking God for his loving faithfulness and bringing to him our own concerns and the needs of the world around us.

Lord, we pray for your church during this season of Lent. We pray that all of us who believe in you will be strengthened to remain faithful to our calling; to work for understanding and unity where we have created divisions and to show your love and compassion to each other and to all your children. We pray for Mark our Primus and Ian our Bishop. We ask for your guidance in our ministry at St Peters.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for the countless numbers of your children who suffer in this world because of violence, oppression and injustice. We pray for all who suffer because of flood or drought, lack of food, clean water or medical help and supplies. We pray for ourselves that we may learn to see more clearly the needs of your children and to respond to those needs for they are our brothers and sisters.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for our own communities and churches. We thank you for our families and friends and pray especially for those in particular need today. We pray that your peace and love will surround them bringing them comfort and strength. We pray for all members of our congregation who are ill in hospital or at home, and we ask that you restore them to health in body, mind or spirit.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord, we thank you for those who have travelled before us on the way of the cross and are now at peace in your eternal presence. Help us to live in the assurance of your promise to us that this road of faith will lead into your kingdom. In our years mind we remember John Edwards Thomas, Gerrard Buxton, James Marriott, Eva May Moodie

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord we thank you that you receive our prayers with grace, mercy and love. Trusting in your compassion and faithfulness we commend to you all those for whom we have prayed and commit ourselves to seeking to do your will and to bringing in your kingdom here on earth. 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: We meet in Christ's Name let us share his peace.

Offertory hymn: Dear Lord and father of mankind

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: Be still for the presence of the Lord

Concluding Prayer: **Creator of heaven and earth, we thank we for these holy mysteries, which bring us now a share in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessing: Christ give we grace to grow in holiness, to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among we and remain with we always. **Amen.**

Dismissal: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Recessional hymn: Guide me O thou great redeemer

7pm Candle Prayer

**God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
May we hear the call of your Son
And turn once more to embrace the good news he proclaims.
In the times in which we live,
Grant us grace to do so.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
Your Son has embraced time
And became truly human for us and for our salvation.
As we face the hard challenges of these days
May we know that we are embraced by your Son.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
Be with those for whom this day is hard
And who long for respite.**

**Be with those who seek to bring healing and comfort
And grant them wisdom and compassion to do so.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God whose kingdom is near
And who knows the times in which we live,
Be with us as we resolve to journey with your Son
In the days that lie before us.
Whether in the wilderness, or by the living waters,
May we know your presence ever renewed.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

Registered Charity SCO10443 St Peter's Episcopal Church