

11<sup>th</sup> April 2021



The *Grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, the *Love of God* and the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit be with you all

**And also with you**

Many people today think that seeing is believing, but the opposite is true—believing is seeing. Believing something opens to us the possibility of experiencing it, of seeing it come to pass, and of having that which we believe produce in us many kinds of blessings. What will it take for us to believe? What proof are WE looking for? When we are ready to believe, Jesus is ready with tasks for us and to give us the Holy Spirit. Jesus' abundant grace, as shown by his acceptance of Thomas' doubt, wants nothing more than to move every person and all of society toward faith.

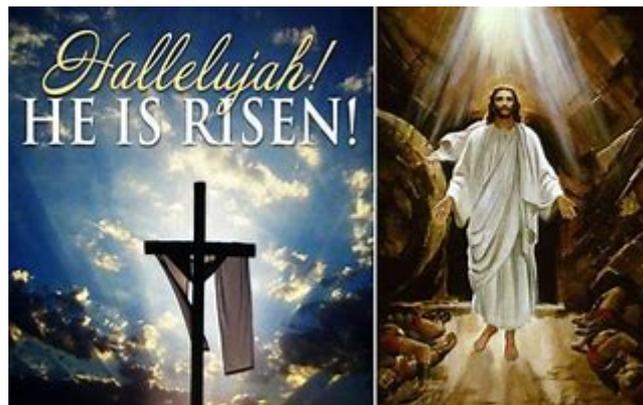
As we are called into worship today,  
 it is sobering to remember  
 that when God appeared on earth in the person of Jesus,  
 most of the world did not recognize him  
 and therefore did not worship him.  
 Today we ask for the faith that will open our eyes  
 to see Jesus for who he is,  
 that we might worship him in truth.  
 People of God, behold and see your God!  
**We open our eyes to see his glory.**  
**We open our ears to hear his wisdom.**  
**We open our hands to offer him gifts.**

**We open our mouths to sing his praise.  
We open our hearts to offer him our love.  
He is Lord!  
A period of silence**

As we reflect on what is God saying to us.  
What is he asking you to do?



**Silence**



**"Christ is alive! Let Christians sing"**

Christ Is Alive (11am, 720p, webstream)  
•5 May 2019



Panoplyimaging

## Christ Is Alive

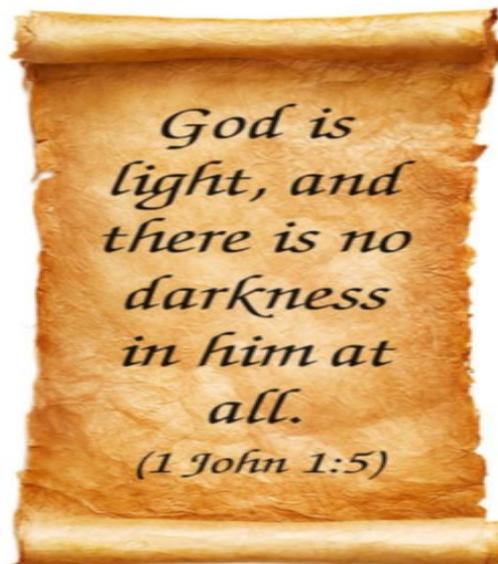
Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
His cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
His love in death shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
to distant years in Palestine,  
he comes to claim the here and now,  
and conquer every place and time.

Not throned above, remotely high,  
untouched, unmoved by human pains  
but daily, in the midst of life,  
our Saviour, with the Father reigns.

In every insult, rift and war,  
where color, scorn or wealth divide,  
he suffers still, yet loves the more,  
and lives, though ever crucified.

Christ is alive! His Spirit burns  
through this and every future age,  
till all creation lives and learns  
his joy, his justice, love and praise.





### Prayer

Dear Lord, the celebrations are over, the joy of he is risen has gone, the crowds are at home and people are getting back to what was. How easy it is to forget the happiness of our faith, the festive holiday and all the cheer of having something to rejoice about. Today we come to worship on low Sunday, a day which normally is seen as a period where people are feeling rather flat after the fun and joy of Easter. Today is a new day, one which the Lord has made, which is equally as important to any other, yet this week seems to be different. Why Lord is it that we are like this when we should each moment of the day rejoice in faith, be happy in the Lord and put our trust in him, where he is central. Why is it, that we seem to lack faith and hope, and trust instead of saying my Lord you are with me and I continue to rejoice in you, for you have risen indeed, halleluiah. Help those who are struggling with their faith and are in need of prayer...help us all to open our eyes to a new beginning and to tear down the barriers of our fears so that the door of our hearts can be widely opened and we can welcome you in. Lord God we thank you for this new day, help us to open the windows of our homes, churches and lives and allow the spirit of God to come in. Make us holy people where one day you will say, you were good and faithful servants, you warmly welcome me, and I was central at all times. Forgive our worldly ways and help us to look towards your Kingdom come, through the love and actions of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### Story:

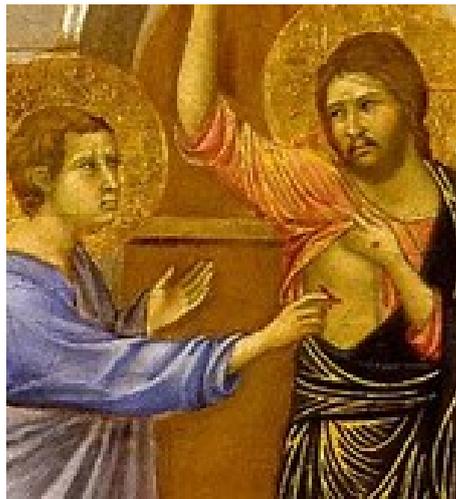
In the God of all comfort, Hannah Whithall Smith tell of a family who move to a town where they know no-one. After his first afternoon of play their young son tells his mother he has met a little girl, and she is so nice he never wanted to move house again. The mother asks what was the girls name and he replies, "Jesus." Surely not, the mother says, "Well, she was so lovely I did not know

what else she could be called but Jesus." May we never be too old to learn from little children. (The friendship book June 2020)

### Thomas' Accomplishments

The Apostle Thomas which we shall hear about in a moment had the privilege to travel and to know Jesus and he learned from him for three years.

Church tradition holds that after Jesus resurrected and ascended to heaven, Thomas carried the gospel message to the east and was eventually martyred for his faith. Because of Thomas, we have these inspiring words of Jesus: "**Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**" (John 20:29,). Thomas' lack of faith has served to encourage all future Christians who have not seen Jesus and yet have believed in him and his resurrection.



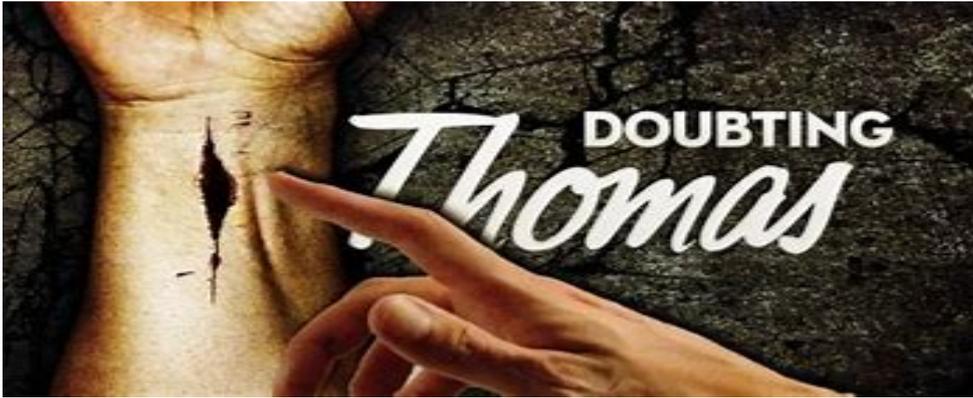
John 20:19-31

### Jesus Appears to Thomas

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus<sup>[a]</sup>), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." <sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and

believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." <sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe<sup>[b]</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



**Short Stories of Faith and Hope**

**Mom Realizes Viral Photo of Boy Standing Alone  
At Flagpole Is of Her Son**



When a friend urgently texted Florida mom Stacey Philpot about a Facebook post she just had to see, she wasn't sure what to expect. The post showed a teenaged boy standing alone at the flagpole and it seemed as if everyone had something to say about him. And that's when it hit Stacey - she was looking at her son! The post showed a boy standing alone at the flagpole praying as part of See You At The Pole Day. This yearly event encourages students everywhere to gather at their school's flagpole to pray for their school, friends, families, churches, and communities. Usually, the event draws a crowd. But at Minneola High School, only one young man turned up. The brave boy stood all alone, praying by himself. A passer-by was so touched, they snapped a photo and posted it to Facebook, saying:

***"I commend the young man that stood alone at Lake Minneola High School's 'See You at the Pole Day.' I weld up [sic] with tears, happy tears, proud tears. I honestly didn't know that it was today until after I had left and heard it on the radio.***

This boy's testimony for his faith is so inspiring!

### **Reality Hits Home**

At first Stacey couldn't understand why her friend insisted she break her Facebook hiatus for this picture of a boy standing alone at the flag pole. Then she realized she recognized the boy everyone was talking about. That was her son!

"The little boy I'd rocked to sleep in blue airplane pyjamas when he was sick. The toddler who loved Elmo and couldn't go to sleep without holding his Veggie Tales characters in his hands had captured the attention of our community by standing alone, by doing everything we'd ever taught him, everything we'd ever hoped he would do," Stacey said. "I was completely undone."

Stacey immediately texted her son, Hayden, and told him how proud she was of him. But what he revealed when he got home was even more incredible.

Hayden was just as surprised at all of the attention as his mom. He'd originally thought he'd just pray until someone else came along. But when no one else did, he asked God to use Him.

"He told me with sheer amazement in his voice that as he stood alone and prayed the cry of his heart had been, 'God, as people drive by, let them wonder, let their hearts be pricked.' "

And boy did God answer that prayer!

There are people out there that don't understand why we pray. They see it as wasted effort. But Hayden proved just how powerful prayer truly is! And his proud mom says her son's story is a big reminder for us all.

"Wherever it is in your life you stand alone. . . God sees, He knows, and He can do big things."

Now does that deserve a huge AMEN or what?!

### **"The Saviour died, but rose again"**

#### TROON

Paraphrase 48 - The Saviour died, but rose again

•29 Jul 2020



#### TOP Choir

The choir of Troon Old Parish Church sing verses 5, 8 and 9 of Scottish Paraphrase 48, to the tune St Andrew (Tans'ur). The second collection of paraphrases, authorised by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1781, allowed congregations to sing metrical versions of various passages of scripture, in addition to the psalms.

1 The Saviour died, but rose again  
triumphant from the grave;

and pleads our cause at God's right hand,  
omnipotent to save.

2 Who then can e'er divide us more  
from Jesus and his love,  
or break the sacred chain that binds  
the earth to heaven above?

3 Let troubles rise, and terrors frown,  
and days of darkness fall;  
through him all dangers we'll defy,  
and more than conquer all.

4 Nor death nor life, nor earth nor hell,  
nor time's destroying sway,  
can e'er efface us from his heart,  
or make his love decay.

5 Each future period that will bless,  
as it has blessed the past;  
he loved us from the first of time,  
he loves us to the last.

### Reflection

One Easter Sunday morning, a minister looked out on his congregation and noticed many people who had not been there for a long time attending. Before he began his sermon he said, "Since this will probably be the last time I see many of you for a while, let me be the first to wish you 'A Merry Christmas'"

As we know Easter is one of the times when people rush to church to worship God and then not be seen until Christmas eve. This Sunday is got two names, one being low Sunday for usually the number of attendees is much smaller than the previous week, Easter Sunday, and it can be called Doubting Thomas Sunday. We heard the story of Thomas a moment ago, who would have thought, if you were in the room listening to the conversation between Jesus and Thomas, that today, in the year of 2021, we would be talking about Thomas and how he would not believe until he could see the wounds in Jesus body. This is fair enough, because many today would act the same, they need to see to believe...and Thomas is no different. Through his actions what encouragement we can

receive from him. I am sure not one of us at some time or other have not had our doubts, and that many who do not believe are unable to get over the barrier of doubting. There was an article in the Times magazine which shocked many, it stated, "Mother Teresa's Crisis of Faith," it focused on a startling revelation in Mother Teresa's letters: Despite lifelong labours for God, she had struggled for years with the sense that He had abandoned her. She spoke of "silence," "emptiness," "loneliness." I should add she was not saying she had stopped believing in God. In fact, despite her feelings, Mother Teresa continued to address her prayers to the God she believed was there, even though she felt He was a distance away. Maybe some of you feel like this today...The truth is that Mother Teresa stands in good company among saints with similar struggles, and even with Jesus himself, who cried out from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). That cry may well help us understand Mother Teresa's enduring torment.

In September 2014 the Most Rev. Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, said that at times he questioned if God was really there. The International Business Times called it "the doubt of the century." Archbishop Welby's admission had not just "raised a few eyebrows," it declared, but "sparked concerns if the leader of the Church of England would one day renounce Christianity or spirituality as a whole." Another journalist wrote excitedly, "Atheism is on the rise and it appears as though even those at the top of the church are beginning to have doubts." Despite the alarm, the archbishop's remarks were rather tame. He told an audience at Bristol Cathedral that there were moments where he wondered, "Is there a God? Where is God?" Then, he was asked specifically, if he harboured doubts, his response, "It is a really good question. ... The other day I was praying over something as I was running, and I ended up saying to God, 'Look, this is all very well, but isn't it about time you did something, if you're there?'"

I think many of us who are in the driving seat, as a leader of whatever, can begin to get frustrated and begin to wonder why God is putting me through the ringer, while some keep putting barriers up, we so clearly believe he has given us a vision. I wonder if Jesus ever felt like this as he taught the disciples. At times he says you do not understand do you, you don't get it...and they didn't until it was far too late..the Crucifixion had taken place and the resurrection

was occurring. The Australian atheist columnist Peter FitzSimons tweeted, "VICTORY!" after hearing Justin Welby's confession...At times we can wonder where God is and why has he placed us in a position which seems to be pointless, where nobody is listening. We have to believe that God is working and using us for his glory and Kingdom...for his Will shall be done.

Archbishop Welby's candour only makes him human. He may lead 80 million Anglicans worldwide, but he is also a man who knows anguish, rage, incomprehension and the cold bareness of grief. He lost his firstborn child, Johanna, a 7-month-old baby girl, in a car accident in 1983, a period he has described as "utter agony." As a teenager he cared for an alcoholic father. When explaining his thoughts on doubt, he referred to the mournful Psalm 88, which describes the despair of a man who has lost all of his friends and cries out, "Why, Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?" The psalm reads bleakly: "Darkness is my closest friend."

When you are stuck in darkness, it can be suffocating and faith cannot block it out yet the darkness we may be feeling will disappear one day and light shall be upon us...it already is surrounding us now, although it is hard to see it in times of despair...so many people have or do feel like this. Yet through faith we can believe that the dark days will vanish and so it won't seem that we're walking alone, even though at times I know it can feel very lonely...The disciples felt distraught, they lived in darkness after the crucifixion, then the light reappeared...it was Jesus.

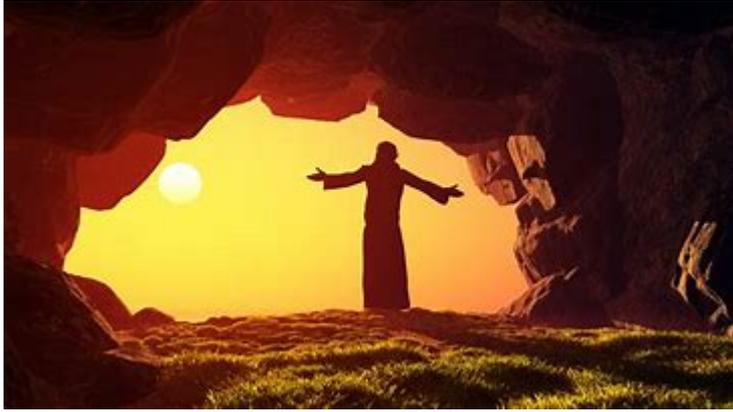
Faith cannot block out darkness, or doubt. When on the cross, Jesus did not cry out "Here I come!" but "My God, why have you forsaken me?" His disciples brimmed with doubts and misgivings.

For Thomas, the one who doubted, he was the one who said to the disciples, go with Jesus no matter what the danger, this was after Jesus had returned to Judea and his life was at risk. And it was Thomas who was honest with Jesus and the disciples for he admitted, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (John 14:5, NIV). One of the most memorized verses in all the Bible, Jesus answers, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Like the other disciples, Thomas was no different for he deserted Jesus during the crucifixion. Despite listening to his teachings and seeing all his miracles, and as we well know, at the resurrection Thomas demanded physical proof that Jesus had risen from the dead. I think we may have done the same...His faith was based solely on what he could touch and see for himself. All of the disciples, except John, deserted Jesus at the cross. They misunderstood and doubted Jesus, but Thomas is singled out in the gospels because he put his doubt into words. Jesus did not rebuke for he loved him, and he showed unconditional love which he so freely gives, for Jesus knew Thomas was having a human struggle, human being the word. In fact, Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounds and see for himself. Jesus does understand our battles with doubt, with depression, with stress and feeling helpless, for he invites us to come near and believe. Something many people cannot seem to do. God provides the Bible, with eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life, crucifixion, and resurrection to strengthen our faith. Today, speaking with people, we can hear personal testimonies of God in action...yet people who seem to lack in faith dismiss...because their minds are on the worldly, and not on the spiritual. You know they will never understand until they take a leap of faith. And as a minister friend said to me not that long ago, until they get rid of their personal ego this which stops them being Christ centred.

If we are honest with ourselves, then we will admit that there are times when we possess doubt as Thomas did. I know, I have...let us remember when Jesus came to Thomas and told him to put his finger in the holes due to the crucifixion scars, Thomas began to believe. In much the same way, God uses our faith to help others to develop the eyes of faith so that they, too, may begin to believe without having to rely on sight. They see us having peace that passes all understanding in spite of the trials of everyday life. It is then that our faith becomes a living testimony of trusting and believing in the resurrected Christ so that unbelievers might want to have the faith that also gives us hope in knowing that Christ holds our future just as much as He helps us in the present.

In the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit Amen.



**"Stand by Me"**

Stand By Me | Official Lyric Video

•Premiered on 6 Apr 2020



Allan Hall

Stand by me is a Gospel hymn with lyrics words text written by Rev. Charles Albert Tindley in 1905. It has been recorded by Bob Dylan. This hymn came first and is not the popular song of the same title by Ben E. King. This is a sing along Gospel song.

1 When the storms of life are raging,  
stand by me; (stand by me)  
when the storms of life are raging,  
stand by me. (stand by me)  
When the world is tossing me  
like a ship upon the sea,  
thou who rulest wind and water,  
stand by me. (stand by me)

2 In the midst of tribulation,  
stand by me; (stand by me)  
in the midst of tribulation,  
stand by me. (stand by me)  
When the hosts of hell assail,  
and my strength begins to fail,  
thou who never lost a battle,  
stand by me. (stand by me)

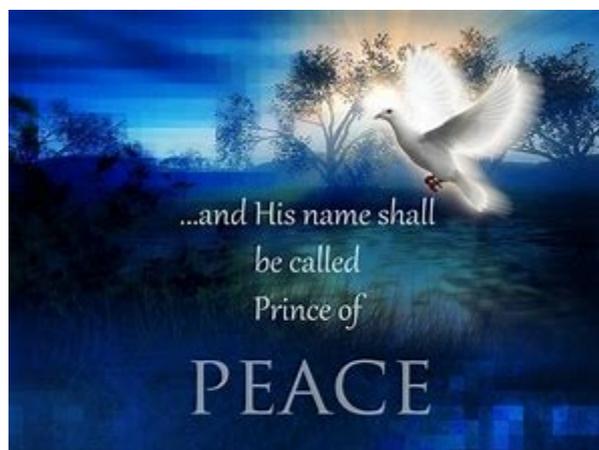
3 In the midst of faults and failures,  
 stand by me; (stand by me)  
 in the midst of faults and failures,  
 stand by me. (stand by me)  
 When I've done the best I can,  
 and my friends misunderstand,  
 thou who knowest all about me,  
 stand by me. (stand by me)

4 In the midst of persecution,  
 stand by me; (stand by me)  
 in the midst of persecution,  
 stand by me. (stand by me)  
 When my foes in war array  
 undertake to stop my way,  
 thou who rescued Paul and Silas,  
 stand by me. (stand by me)

5 When I'm growing old and feeble,  
 stand by me; (stand by me)  
 when I'm growing old and feeble,  
 stand by me. (stand by me)  
 When my life becomes a burden,  
 and I'm nearing chilly Jordan,  
 O thou Lily of the Valley,  
 stand by me. (stand by me)

### **Right hand of fellowship and Peace**

#### **"Peace in Christ"**



Peace be with you.

**"Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain"**

Now the Green Blade Riseth — Choir of Ely Cathedral

•3 Apr 2011



1finch2finch

The Choir of Ely Cathedral perform the Easter hymn 'Now the Green Blade Riseth,' set to the French carol tune 'Noel Nouvelet':

1 Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

2 In the grave they laid Him, Love who had been slain,  
Thinking that He never would awake again,  
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

3 Forth He came at Easter, like the risen grain,  
Jesus who for three days in the grave had lain;  
Quick from the dead the risen One is seen:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

4 When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

**Intercession Prayer**



Dear God at times we doubt you, yet how come we get into a car and put our faith in the driver...board a plane and never ask questions about the pilots experience, eat a meal and never wondered has the chef put poison in this food, accept a vaccine and assume this will keep us safe ...we put our trust in so many people from carers, doctors, bus drivers, shop keepers, the postman, those who fix our electrical faults, the swimming instructor, we seem to trust so many people yet when it comes to you, folk seem to build a wall between you and them, due to their doubts and lack of ability to trust you. Lord help those who find it hard to believe...show them the way and guide them out of the dark hour they find themselves in, into the light of Christ. Lord we pray for families who are arguing and the gulf is so large there does not seem to be a way back for them. Love has died and now their only hope is to look past what they once had. For life long partners who are turning to divorce, business partners who cannot work together, children having to leave their families due to abuse, people at this moment in time wondering, shall I go, where will I find safety, how can I leave this abusive security...Lord we pray for all who once trusted and now doubt and feel let down by the actions and words of others. For those who do not wish to move on, yet know it is time to go, for people who live on their own, and have decided its soon time to live with 24-hour care assistance...for the chapter of our lives has closed and there is a new chapter waiting to be written, new beginnings are on the horizon. Lord we pray for people who are stuck in a rut and cannot see beyond what they have...help each of us to move forward, take us out of our comfort zones into the light of a new day and break down the human ego which stops you from being central. As the world revolves, help us to change, to listen and to see and be prepared to get our hands dirty. For faith does not stand still. Jesus did not stay in one place, he moved about, teaching, healing, loving, for his world did not consist of one wee corner. In Jesus we learn that life does not remain the same, and today as we hear of the Apostle Thomas, we thank you for his words, for his love of Jesus, and how he managed to move towards a great faith where he became an ambassador of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life as Jesus did for the Christian belief. Help each of us to move from where we are at, to be fully in Christ, may our half-hearted

faith become one which is for Christ alone...help each and every one of us to see more clearly and to remember yesterday has gone, and what is important is today and what the future holds for us tomorrow. Lord Jesus bless each step we take and guide us in your love - as we meet new brothers and sisters along the road we go, may they be like the young boy who told his mother, "well, she was so lovely I did not know what else she could be called but Jesus." May the God of deliverance guide each of us through our doubts breaking down our egos, so we are fully in Christ, who said and we do,

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen**



**"The Church is wherever God's people are praising"**

T & P 144 'The Church is wherever God's people are praising'

•14 Jan 2021



Holy Trinity Church, Dromore

1 The Church is wherever God's people are praising,  
knowing they're wanted and loved by their Lord.  
The Church is wherever Christ's followers are trying  
to live and to share out the good news of God.

2 The Church is wherever God's people are loving,  
where all are forgiven and start once again,

where all are accepted, whatever their background,  
whatever their past and whatever their pain.

3 The Church is wherever God's people are seeking  
to reach out and touch folk wherever they are --  
conveying the Gospel, its joy and its comfort,  
to challenge, refresh, and excite and inspire.

4 The Church is wherever God's people are praising,  
knowing we're wanted and loved by our Lord.  
The Church is where we as Christ's followers are trying  
to live and to share out the good news of God.

### **Benediction**

In the power of the Holy Spirit, we now go forth  
into the world, to fulfil our calling as the people of God,  
the body of Christ. Go in peace



God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest;  
to the Nation, peace and concord;  
to us all Your servants the promise of everlasting life,  
light to guide us on our way, courage to support us,  
and Your blessing to unite us in service  
to You our God and this our Country.  
Amen.

## The Vicar of Dibley time

**Where do Egyptians go when people keep doubting them?**

Into de-Nile

**I've started doubting myself a lot less recently...**

well at least I think I have

**Doubting wife!**

My wife has absolutely no confidence in my ability to repair electrical items around the house.

Well, she's in for a shock!

**What do you call a room full of cynical plumbers?**

A sceptic tank.

**People say I'm a sceptic,**

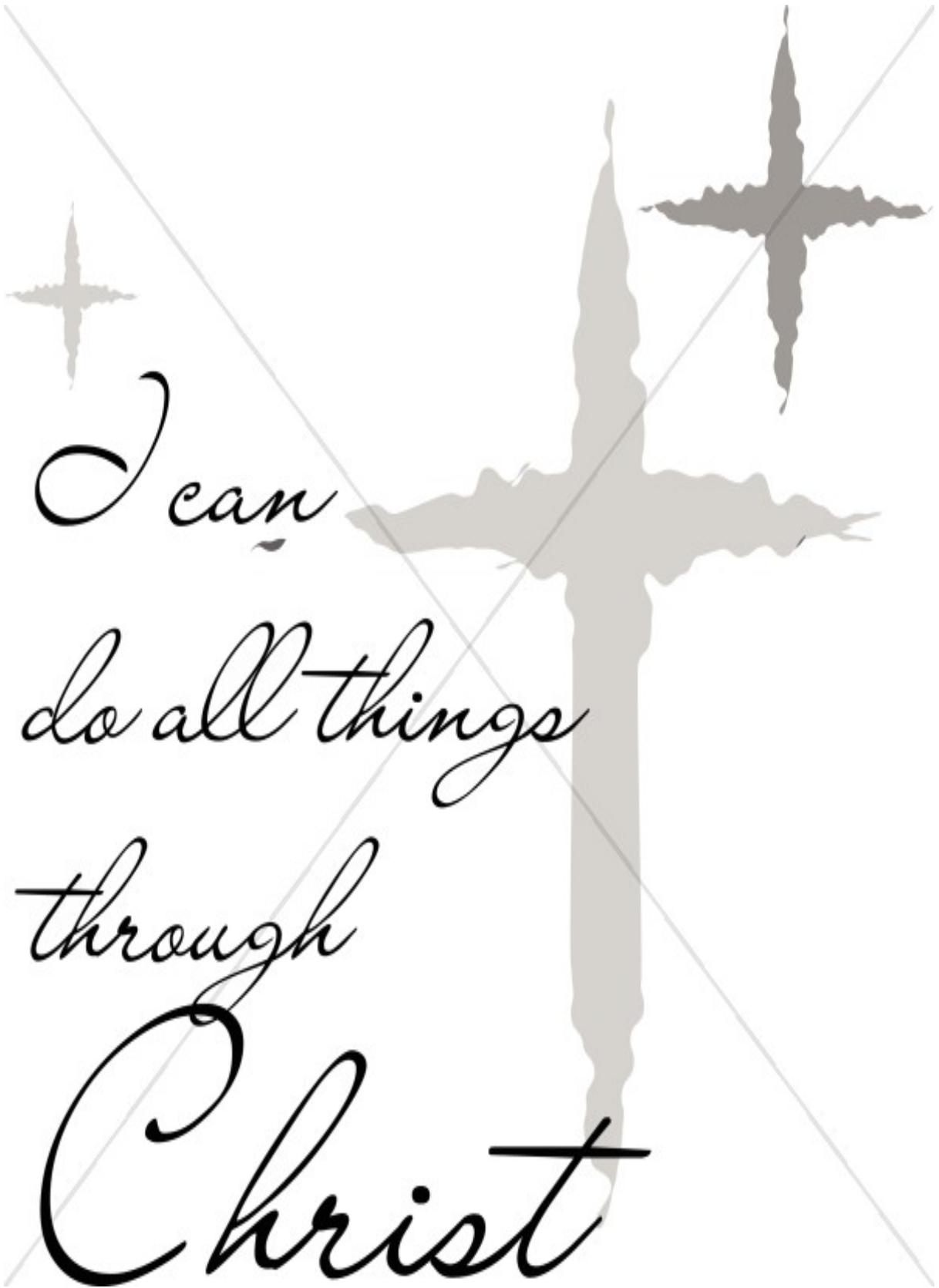
but I'm not so sure...

**What did the sceptical marine biologist say before her first day of work?**

I think I'm just gonna test the waters...

**What was Noah's wife's name -**

Joan of Ark



*"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?" (Luke 12:25-26)*

### **Prayer**

Lord, I pray that you will help me to cast my burdens upon you rather than try to solve them myself. I understand that worry is an attempt to control things for which I have no control. Rather, I will concentrate on praying for and seeking your counsel for my life. Help me draw close enough to you that I give you everything; that I communicate with you openly about my fears, cares, and burdens. Amen.

