

CLINCARTHILL PARISH CHURCH – Reflections for Lent 2023 (Week 4)

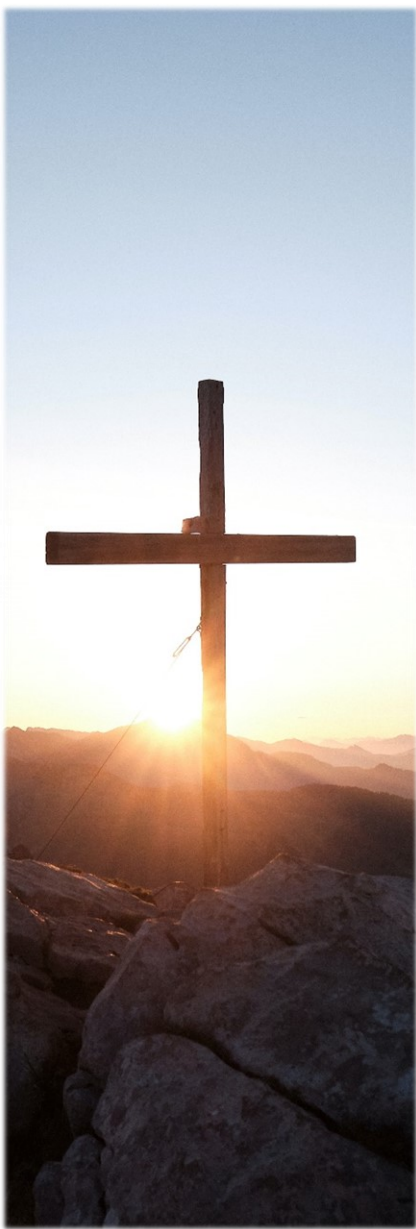


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Before you begin your reflection:

Take a few moments to become still, letting go of distractions, thoughts, busyness, etc. Settle into your chair, allow your body to become relaxed, let go of any tension you may feel by breathing out. As you breath in, let the Spirit bring peace.

Read the following Bible passage slowly, perhaps reading it twice:

The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary.

He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears;

I have not been rebellious; I have not turned away.

I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard.

I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced.

Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

He who vindicates me is near.

Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other!

Who is my accuser? Let him confront me!

It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me. Who will condemn me?

They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.

Isaiah 50: 4-9 (NIVUK)

This is one of Isaiah's "Servant Songs". Christians understand that the Servant of God whom Isaiah depicts in this passage is Jesus. Isaiah's words give us an insight into Jesus' own attitude to his crucifixion.

Reflective thoughts:

- The Gospels tell us that Jesus courageously made his way to Jerusalem fully aware that he was going to be 'mocked and flogged and crucified' there. Are you facing the prospect of an unpleasant situation or difficult days ahead? Ask Jesus to be with you and to give you courage and hope for the future.
- Jesus always obeyed God, his Father. He even went willingly to the cross because he knew that that was the Father's will for him. Are you aware of disobeying God in particular ways just now? Ask God to forgive you and give you strength to change.
- 'Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.' Reflect prayerfully on what it means for you to know that God declares you 'Not Guilty', for Jesus' sake.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the example of Jesus' sinless life and courageous service. Thank you that he loved me so much he went to the cross willingly to save me. In this season of Lent, help me to learn better what it means to serve and obey you in love. Amen.