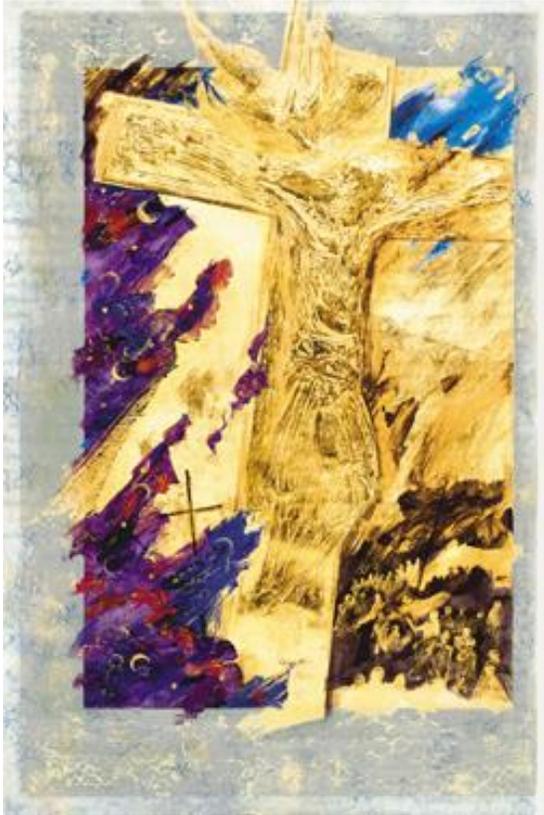


Lenten Reflections

April 17, 2019



During Holy Week, I always struggle with balancing my excitement of the coming Easter with the sadness I feel when reminded of our Lord's suffering and Death - suffering that He endured for my sake. These emotions are mixed with my feelings of whether I journeyed through Lent courageously and bravely walking with Jesus. Did I stick to my Lenten commitments? Did I spend more focused time with Jesus? Did I pray more?

Today's passage in Isaiah is part of one of four "*servant of the Lord*" poems found in the book of Isaiah (42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50: 4-11; 52: 13-52; 52:13-53:12). Here, the servant is speaking directly. The servant doesn't refuse the divine vocation and willingly submits to insults and beatings. This servant reminds me of Jesus and his Passion, especially in verse 6 when the servant says, "*I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard*". This verse shows the humility and generosity of the servant reminding me of Jesus' humility and generosity as he endured his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Throughout Jesus' Passion, he was put to shame. I wonder sometimes why Jesus didn't just save himself or why God didn't just rescue him showing us Jesus is his Son. But Jesus, as prophesied in Isaiah doesn't fight back, doesn't save himself, and doesn't even ask God to save him. He allowed himself to be humiliated and shamed for our sake for the good of all humanity.

These verses speak to me about the hardships I have endured (and have yet to endure) in my life. Isaiah reminds me that when I am dealing with hardships in my life, I can surrender my hardships to God remembering that "the Lord God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced" (Is 50:7). Surrendering my hardships to God is difficult but when I do let go and let God, God helps me to endure the hardships and I am given confidence that just as the resurrection came for Jesus, Easter Sunday will come for me as well. Though there were days this Lent that I may have failed to walk with Jesus as I would have liked to, I am reminded today that Jesus came to help me to carry my hardships and to walk with me through each day of my life.

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Wednesday of Holy Week
Lectionary: 259

Reading 1 [IS 50:4-9A](#)

The Lord GOD has given me
a well-trained tongue,
That I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.
Morning after morning
he opens my ear that I may hear;
And I have not rebelled,
have not turned back.
I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
My face I did not shield
from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help,
therefore I am not disgraced;
I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.
He is near who upholds my right;
if anyone wishes to oppose me,
let us appear together.
Who disputes my right?
Let him confront me.
See, the Lord GOD is my help;
who will prove me wrong?

Responsorial Psalm [PS 69:8-10, 21-22, 31 AND 33-34](#)

R. (14c) Lord, in your great love, answer me.
For your sake I bear insult,
and shame covers my face.
I have become an outcast to my brothers,
a stranger to my mother's sons,
because zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me.

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.
Insult has broken my heart, and I am weak,
I looked for sympathy, but there was none;
for consolers, not one could I find.
Rather they put gall in my food,
and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.
I will praise the name of God in song,
and I will glorify him with thanksgiving:

"See, you lowly ones, and be glad;
you who seek God, may your hearts revive!
For the LORD hears the poor,
and his own who are in bonds he spurns not."
R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.

Verse Before The Gospel

Hail to you, our King;
you alone are compassionate with our errors.

Or

Hail to you, our King, obedient to the Father;
you were led to your crucifixion like a gentle lamb to the slaughter.

Gospel [MT 26:14-25](#)

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot,
went to the chief priests and said,
"What are you willing to give me
if I hand him over to you?"
They paid him thirty pieces of silver,
and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread,
the disciples approached Jesus and said,
"Where do you want us to prepare
for you to eat the Passover?"
He said,
"Go into the city to a certain man and tell him,
'The teacher says, A My appointed time draws near;
in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.'"
The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered,
and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening,
he reclined at table with the Twelve.
And while they were eating, he said,
"Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me."
Deeply distressed at this,
they began to say to him one after another,
"Surely it is not I, Lord?"
He said in reply,
"He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me
is the one who will betray me.
The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him,
but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.
It would be better for that man if he had never been born."
Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply,

"Surely it is not I, Rabbi?"

He answered, "You have said so."