**Daily Homily: Here is My Servant**

**Monday of Holy Week**

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Isaiah 42:1-7
Psalm 27:1, 2, 3, 13-14
John 12:1-11

With the exception of Holy Thursday, the first readings during Holy Week are all taken from the prophet Isaiah and are known as the four oracles or songs of the Servant of the Lord.

The first oracle or song, which we read today, introduces the Servant of the Lord who will establish justice upon the earth. The second song, which we will read tomorrow, tells of the Servant being chosen from the womb to restore not just the twelve tribes of Israel but to bring God's salvation to all nations. The third details how this restoration will come about through the Servant's suffering. The fourth, proclaimed on Good Friday, reveals how the Servant's affliction and suffering, offered for sin, leads to life and the justification of many.

Today's song first reveals that the Servant, who is chosen by God and does what is pleasing to God, will be anointed by the Spirit. This anointing of the Servant occurred on the day of Jesus' Baptism, when John the Baptist saw the Spirit descend in the form of a dove and rest on Jesus. The voice of the Father is heard: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). In the Gospel today, Jesus is anointed by Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. The anointing of the Spirit prepared Jesus both for his public ministry of teaching, healing the blind and the lame, casting out demons, working miracles, and for his passion; the anointing of Mary is an immediate preparation for Jesus' passion and death as the Suffering Servant. Jesus tells her to keep the rest of the oil for the day of his burial.

The first reading continues on and God declares that his Servant will succeed in his mission to establish justice on the earth. He will not falter or be discouraged, for the Lord is his light and salvation, for the Lord sustains him. Jesus invites us to pray without ceasing for the establishment of justice: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). The prayer for the kingdom is a prayer that God reign over all nations. In his mission, Jesus will not seek notoriety for his accomplishments: he will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. Nor will Jesus promote violence toward the oppressed: a bruised reed he will not break. The Servant will bless and forgive, not destroy and condemn.

God, Isaiah proclaims, is the Creator of heaven and earth. God is the creator of all men and all living beings. He is the one who is able to empower his Servant for his mission of restoring justice to the world, an original justice that was lost by through the sin of Adam. The restoration of justice entails a new doctrine, a teaching that will reach to the coastland, to ends of the earth. The Suffering Servant will be a light for all nations and open the eyes of the blind and free those who live in darkness. But, above all, the Servant will himself be set as a covenant for the people. This Servant is Jesus, who, as our merciful and faithful high-priest, will establish the new and everlasting covenant and promulgate the new law of charity.