



Advent Reflection for Monday, December 18, 2023

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Isaiah 53:4-12

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases,
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.
They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with affliction.
When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.
Out of his anguish he shall see;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out himself to death
and was numbered with the transgressors,
yet he bore the sin of many
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Today's Reflection is by Ben Tyszka

Isaiah 53 discusses the oppression and then redemption of a servant. The oppression is coming from our sins. This is a heavy theme - the passage seems to literally describe injustices we see right now, especially against immigrants and Jews.

While there have always been people and minority groups experiencing suffering, recently it feels particularly acute.

This is asymmetric ... to the downside - both in the beginning of the passage and in world.
I imagine this despised and rejected servant - and a smug group of transgressors. Neither is better off in this situation.

In the United States right now, who's better off when there are hate crimes against Jews, or general inattention and neglect to homeless people or immigrants.

The symmetry comes at the end of the passage:
"Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong,... He made intercession for the transgressors"
The servant becomes powerful, and he even asks God to forgive us.

That's the hope... the redemption.

When I read of injustices against others and hear opposing and insensitive rhetoric it bothers me. I need to remember this hope. Remember that this is the story of Jesus who died for our own iniquities and then we were forgiven.



Ben Tyszka lives nearby on Greenwood Avenue. He and his family started attending Holy Apostles during the pandemic.