



Tuesday of Advent III

*The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue,
for me to know how to give a word of comfort to the weary.
Morning by morning he makes my ear alert
to listen like a disciple.
The Lord God has opened my ear
and I have not resisted,
I have not turned away.
I have offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
I have not turned my face away
from insult and spitting.
The Lord God comes to my help,
this is why insult has not touched me,
this is why I have set my face like flint
and know that I shall not be put to shame.
He who grants me saving justice is near! Who will bring a case against me?
Let us appear in court together!
Who has a case against me?
Let him approach me!
Look, the Lord God is coming to my help!*

These words were written by Isaiah in the period before the exile's return, or possibly penned during the long journey back to Palestine. Isaiah is reflecting upon the role and mission of this Hebrew people. For what has begun to dawn on him, expressed in his prophecies of the time, is that the Hebrews have been a people chosen by God for a universal mission to all humanity. Yet the experience of acting out that mission is one of encountering resistance, rejection, insult and persecution, not only from those outside the Hebrew community but also from within the community itself.

Advent confronts us with the question, who and what are we as a community? What do we live for? What is our mission? How do we cope when all our self-understanding encounters dismissal, contempt and rejection from the world and even from within our community?

Isaiah 50:4-7

Service that bears rejection