

## **Advent Reading for Wednesday, December 13, 2017**

### ***“A Gentle Servant of His Father” (Isaiah 42:1-2)***

Our passage today is the first of what is referred to as Isaiah's four Servant Songs: *“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish...”* (42:1-3).

Though not identified as such, the fulfillment of the first part of Isaiah's prophecy was evident at Christ's baptism. When the voice came from heaven saying, *“This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”* (Matthew 3:17) this certainly expressed the Father's delight in His Son! As our Lord was baptized, *“and the Spirit descended like a dove on Him”*, this too is in harmony with what Isaiah had predicted would characterize His ministry.

The second part of Isaiah's prophecy describes the Servant's gentle manner as He responded to the hatred He experienced from His enemies. Matthew, who points to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies no less than a dozen times, highlights this one as well: *“BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL PLEASED. I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM...HE WILL NOT QUARREL OR CRY OUT; NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS. A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY. AND IN HIS NAME WILL THE GENTILES HOPE”* (Matthew 12:18-21).

Matthew's purpose in including Isaiah's prophecy in this context was to highlight that Christ did not arrive with a military agenda, or great fanfare; He came with gentleness and meekness, declaring righteousness, even for the Gentile nations. Our Lord did not come to stir up a political revolution, or force His way into power. The *battered reed* and *smoldering wick* represent people who were deemed useless by the world. Jesus came to *restore* and *rekindle* such people, not to *break* them. Matthew wanted us to see the compassion of Jesus toward the lowliest of the low.

At Christ's Second Advent, however, His purpose will be very different. He will exercise wrath and vengeance against His enemies, and rule over His eternal kingdom.

But today's passage is meant to remind us of Jesus' heart toward those who are weakest and most vulnerable. His gracious call comes to those most despised by the world. The Apostle Paul made this same point to the church in Corinth, challenging his readers: *"Consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things that are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen...so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that just as it is written, 'LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD'"* (I Corinthians 1:26-31).

**Giving Thanks – Thank You, Lord, for Your merciful heart to the most vulnerable of the world! Thank You for reaching out to us.**