

Isaiah 50:4–9a
 Psalm 69:8–10, 21–22, 31, 33–34
 Matthew 26:14–25
 Wednesday in Holy Week
 March 28, 2018

There is an important principle in understanding the Old Testament that is called typology. This word is derived from the word “types”. We have in the Old Testament types of stories that find their fulfillment in the New Testament. St Augustine pointed out “the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.”

Today’s reading is a classic expression of typology. In it we hear anticipated

1. The Lord Jesus’ obedience as expressed most fully in the Garden of Gethsemane,
2. His passion culminating in his death on the Cross
3. His vindication on Easter Sunday.

Listen to how Isaiah highlights the obedience of Jesus:

*The Lord God has given me
 the tongue of a teacher,
 that I may know how to sustain
 the weary with a word.
 Morning by morning he wakens—
 wakens my ear
 to listen as those who are taught.*

No one taught like Jesus because no one listened like Jesus. He was always discerning the will of his Father in heaven as each day his ear was awakened to listen for the voice of the Father.

Similarly in our lives, Jesus tells us in John’s Gospel that:

*If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to
 him and make our home with him.*

In our Psalm for today the fruit of such obedience is expressed in this way:

*I will praise the name of God with a song;
 I will magnify him with thanksgiving.
 31 This will please the LORD more than an ox
 or a bull with horns and hoofs.
 32 Let the oppressed see it and be glad;
 you who seek God, let your hearts revive*

Isaiah also anticipates in a vivid way the passion of Jesus, especially his scourging and cruel mocking coronation.

*The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
6 I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.*

This suffering is further expressed in the Psalm where we are told:

**Insults have broken my heart,
so that I am in despair.
I looked for pity, but there was none;
and for comforters, but I found none.
²¹ They gave me poison for food,
and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.**

So to in our lives to live with Jesus means to take up our cross and follow him. Although we will not experience the passion as Jesus did, we know what it is like to experience betrayal, to have insults directed our way because of our Catholic Faith. Times when we have known deep despair and sorrow because of the isolation we can feel and the apparent senselessness that can seem mark so much of life.

But we are also a people who know what Isaiah then expresses:

**The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
⁸ he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
⁹ It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.**

Here is expressed the confidence our Lord knew as he faced Good Friday. Indeed there would be a most glorious vindication, when the tomb would be empty and the Lord alive, never to die again.

I love what St. Paul says at the end of 1 Corinthians 15. This chapter is the most detailed teaching on the meaning of the Resurrection in all of the New Testament. Because Christ has been raised the Apostle encourages us with these words:

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

May we be resolved to be a people of deepening obedience as the Lord awakens our ears each day. May we be resolved to understand that suffering is not meaningless but truly redemptive when we join it with our Lord on the Cross. May we be resolved to know that the Resurrection declares the vindication of all those who seek to live obedient, virtuous lives amidst a world of so much cruelty and meaninglessness.

In so doing we make present in our day these words written by Isaiah 2500 years ago as we are conformed ever more to our blessed Lord and most affectionate Mother Mary.