

## SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### LECTIONARY #64

READING I Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

#### A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The LORD said to me: **You** are my servant,  
**Israel**, through whom I show my glory.  
 Now the LORD has spoken  
 who formed me as his **servant** from the womb,  
 that Jacob may be **brought back** to him  
 and Israel gathered to him;  
 and I am **made glorious** in the sight of the LORD,  
 and **my God** is now my strength!  
 It is too little, the LORD says, for **you** to be my servant,  
 to **raise up the tribes of Jacob**,  
 and **restore the survivors of Israel**;  
 I will make **you** a light to the nations,  
 that my salvation may **reach** to the ends of the **earth**.

Isaiah = Ī-ZAY-uh

Begin with a humble tone. Pause before you say, "You are my servant."

Proclaim with energy. Keep building energy and end with excitement: "My God is now my strength!"

Pause.

End the reading with a tone of joy.

**READING I** The reading from Isaiah is the second of four poems traditionally referred to as "servant songs." Each of these poems describes a mysterious servant that sometimes seems to be Isaiah himself and at other times, Israel. An enigmatic figure, the servant can be viewed both as an individual and as a community, with the description aptly applied in one verse to the prophet and in the next to the nation as a whole. Whether describing Isaiah, the people of Israel, or an unnamed ideal servant of God, the portrait presents someone intimately involved in God's plan.

Such a servant obediently fulfills the will of the master: the Lord God.

After the first words, in which the Lord says, "You are my servant," the servant himself speaks, telling of God's words, actions, and purpose. The reason that God formed the servant even from the womb is so that the people—referred to either as Jacob or Israel—may be brought back to God. To be brought back has a twofold meaning; it can indicate being brought back from the land of exile or brought back from sinfulness and idolatry. The servant sees God's plan of bringing Israel back both from

exile and from sin, fulfilled only because God is the servant's strength.

In the final verses, the Lord again speaks. God has formed the servant not for the sake of Israel alone, but also for the nations. God will make the servant become a light to the nations so that salvation will reach to the most distant parts of the earth. From beginning to end, the abiding presence and powerful action of God, working in the servant, fulfills the divine intention.

**READING II** The first way that Paul identifies himself for the

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10 (8a, 9a)

**R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

I have waited, waited for the LORD,  
and he stooped toward me and heard  
my cry.

And he put a new song into my mouth,  
a hymn to our God.

Sacrifice or offering you wished not,  
but ears open to obedience you gave me.  
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;  
then said I, "Behold I come."

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,  
to do your will, O my God, is my delight,  
and your law is within my heart!"

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;  
I did not restrain my lips, as you,  
O LORD, know.

READING II 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians**

**Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,**  
and Sosthenes our brother,  
to the **church** of God that is in Corinth,  
to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus,  
called to be holy,  
with **all** those everywhere who **call** upon the name of our  
**Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father  
and the **Lord Jesus Christ.**

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-uhnz

Proclaim slowly. Articulate your words.

Sosthenes = SOS-thuh-neeZ

Address each group in a different tone:

Sosthenes (gently), the Church (formal),  
you (personal), all (broadly).

Smile and say warmly.

church in Corinth is "called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus." Both his call and his apostleship signify that Paul has a commission based on his God-given vocation. As an apostle of Christ, Paul is sent forth to proclaim him and to act as his authoritative representative, much like the followers sent forth by Jewish rabbis of the period. Paul does not fulfill his task as an independent missionary, but does so along with others. In addition to Sosthenes in this letter, Paul names numerous coworkers who share in the mission of Christ Jesus in other letters.

Paul and Sosthenes write to the young Corinthian church. Like the Israelite assembly in the desert, the church (*ekklesia*) is chosen to be God's own people. Though there is continuity with God's people of old, there is something new in the church Paul addresses. They have been sanctified in Christ Jesus. Their identity is thus shaped by Christ who sanctifies them, making them holy, set apart by God and for God.

Paul himself and the church in Corinth are in union with believers everywhere who call on the name of the Lord Jesus. If they are united with the church all around

the Mediterranean, they must first be united with the believers in their own city. Paul seems to be subtly reminding the Corinthian church, fractured by divisions, that they must embody the oneness of the whole body of believers. Paul extends to them the grace and peace that is their gift from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**GOSPEL**

From the opening words of his Gospel, John the evangelist creates a multifaceted portrait of Jesus. In today's Gospel, John the Baptist adds features to this developing picture.