Lenten Meditation – Original Text by Roseanne McDougall, SHCJ, USA

**The “Suffering Servant Songs” in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah**

The **First Servant Song1** draws attention to God’s Servant, entrusted with a mission: to be a sign of God’s covenant, and to announce “new things” about to spring forth.

In the **Second Servant Song2**, the Servant is deeply humbled, yet trusts God who responds, “I give you, as a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

Then, in the **Third Servant Song3**, despite daunting challenges, the Servant is strengthened to serve God. Difficulty, challenge, struggle have become graced stepping-stones along the path to teach others, and to sustain the weary.

Finally, the **Fourth Servant Song4** recalls the Servant’s life and offers a commentary on the mission and service of the Servant; it offers rich food for reflection.

The detailed imagery in each of Isaiah’s “Songs,” draws us to contemplate the Word made Flesh, who literally embodies the deep love of God for us, for all of humankind.

* Was there ever a time when God seemed to ask you to be light for others?
* Has challenge ever become a "graced stepping-stone"?
* What food for "reflection" did you find in the Fourth Servant Song, especially in Isaiah 53:4-12?

1First Servant Song, Isaiah 42:1-7

2Second Servant Song, Isaiah 49: 1-7

3Third Servant Song, Isaiah 50:4-9

4Fourth Servant Song, Isaiah 52:13-53:3 and Isaiah 53: 4-12

Resource:

Carroll Stuhlmueller in “Deutero-Isaiah and Trito Isaiah” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary,* 1990 edition, (The Servant Poems) 330-331.

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